



REVIEW OF THE OFFICE OF MIDDLE EAST PROGRAMS YOUTH INITIATIVES

October 2010

This report was prepared for the U.S. Agency for International Development by the International Business & Technical Consultants, Inc. (IBTCI) and the Aguirre Division of JBS International, Inc. under Task Order 263-10-032 of the Evaluation Services IQC RAN-I-03-09-00016-00. Its authors are Dr. Frank Schorn, Leyla Moubayed and Sarah Auten.

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Acronym List

AWSI	Arab World Social Innovators
IBTCI	International Business and Technology Consultants, Inc.
IIE	Institute of International Education
IP	Implementing Partner
LOP	Life of Project
MENA	Middle East and North Africa
MEPI	Middle East Partner Initiative
MEYMI	Middle East Youth Media Initiative
OMEP	Office of Middle East Programs
PS	Peace Scholars
SOW	Scope of Work
StC	Save the Children
TOEFL	Test of English as a Foreign Language
ToT	Training of Trainers
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In August, 2010, USAID's Office of Middle East Programs (OMEP) contracted the International Business and Technology Consultants, Inc. (IBTCI) and the Aguirre Division of JBS International, Inc. (JBS) (hereinafter referred to as the research team) to conduct a review of four regionally-implemented youth programs. The research team's programmatic review examined four programs that OMEP funds across the MENA (Middle East and North Africa) region: the Arab World Social Innovators (AWSI), the Middle East Youth Media Initiative (MEYMI), Siraj, and the Peace Scholarships Program. These four programs comprise the bulk of OMEP's youth programming in the region.

Methodology

This programmatic review examined these four regional youth programs to determine whether the assumptions made during their design were correct or if they need to be adjusted for future programs. The review also documents the lessons learned and best practices from these pilot programs that can be used to inform the design and implementation of other regional or single-country youth programs. The following questions guided the research and analysis:

1. **Beneficiaries:** Who were the originally intended / final beneficiaries of each program in terms of age, gender, economic situation, and country location? Were common definitions of youth used among the four initiatives? What systems were established to document final program beneficiaries?
2. **Hypotheses:** What were the original assumptions / hypotheses about the needs of regional youth? Were these original assumptions / hypotheses shown to be valid? If not, why not? Are there any significant differences among youth needs / experiences across the countries which benefited from these programs which were not originally identified but which became apparent during program implementation?
3. **Sustainability:** How has each program addressed the issue of sustaining program investments in youth? Have any of the programs developed tools or methodologies to measure whether skills are being applied or whether the programs are meeting the overarching objective of countering extremist ideology? Are any of these tools or methodologies appropriate for wider regional dissemination / adaptation?
4. **Challenges:** What were the challenges each program faced in implementation? How were the challenges addressed? What kinds of insights do these challenges provide for further work with youth in the region?
5. **Information Sharing:** Was there any contact or information sharing among these four OMEP activities? If not, why not? What measures could be put in place to ensure more effective communication and sharing of information among similar activities in the future?
6. **Future Research Agenda:** Based on the experiences with these four activities, what are elements of a future research agenda related to youth development in the region? What gaps in learning and knowledge sharing would these four programs identify?

Data were collected between August 31 and October 3, 2010. The primary research team was stationed in Cairo during this time and liaised with the USAID OMEP team, as well as with the implementing-partner representatives and program participants in Egypt. Five countries in the region in addition to Egypt were the focus of the research: Jordan, Morocco, Lebanon, Palestine and Yemen. The Cairo team established a network of local data collectors in each country who gathered information from the programs' stakeholders and submitted their findings to the Cairo team who developed the regional data set.

Data were collected from a variety of stakeholder groups in order to gather a wide range of perspectives on youth programming, including: representatives of the OMEP office and relevant USAID staff; implementing partner representatives; and the programs' participants themselves. The evaluation utilized a mixed-method research design that gathered data through both quantitative and qualitative methods, including the following activities: 1) Literature review; 2) Implementing Partners' Workshop; 3) Qualitative Interviews, including semi-structured interviews and focus groups; 4) Online Survey; and 5) Direct Observation. Table 1 shows the sample by location and stakeholder group.

Table 1. Sample by Country, Stakeholder, and Data-Collection Instrument¹

Stakeholders	Egypt	Jordan	Lebanon	Morocco	Palestine	Yemen	Totals
OMEP staff	5	0	0	0	0	0	5
Implementing Partners	8 ^a	2	2	0	2	2	16
Program Participants by Country and Data-Collection Type							
In-depth interviews	2	7 ^c	6	4 ^c	5	9 ^c	33
Focus Groups	2	0	2	0	2	2	8
Observations	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
Online Survey	22	20	14	4	9	21	95 ^b
Country totals	39	29	24	8	19	34	158
^a Includes two U.S.-based interviews with implementing partner representatives ^b Includes four respondents living in Oman and one respondent who did not indicate a location. ^c Includes participants from a group interview with the Peace Scholars who attended the Cairo workshop in September.							

¹ Respondents by program are as follows: Peace Scholars (2 IP interviews and 14 participant interviews), Siraj (11 IP interviews and 16 participant interviews), AWSI (2 IP interviews and 3 participant interviews), MEYMI (1 IP interview).

KEY FINDINGS

Beneficiaries

As each of the four programs is working with a different cohort, they each define their target beneficiaries according to different parameters.

Siraj. The Siraj program targets youth between the ages of 18 and 30. Recruitment focuses on youth who are interested in civic engagement and youth workers who are already involved in youth-serving organizations. Some 58.6% of the Siraj beneficiaries are young women. Siraj does not focus solely on those from economically disadvantaged or rural backgrounds; they consider all Arab youth to be vulnerable in that their voices are not always heard.

Peace Scholars. The Peace Scholars program originally targeted university students who had completed two years of study but in the second year of implementation, expanded availability to students who had only completed one year of study. Although the IPs sought to achieve an equal balance of male and female participants, 60 percent of the participants were female and 40 percent were male. Participants were required to have a strong academic background and sufficient English-language ability to be successful in U.S. university classes. The IPs tried to select participants from underserved peri-urban and rural areas, but identifying potential participants with sufficiently strong English-language ability proved to be difficult.

MEYMI. The stated target demographic for the *Al Jami3a* program is “Arab males and females between the ages of 18-24, of all socioeconomic classes.” The program’s characters are university students from a variety of Arab backgrounds, including Egyptian, Saudi and Lebanese students, living together in one community. The character profiles, intended to serve as role models for young Arab youth viewers, include strong female characters with well-defined goals, and individuals who face problems common to their target demographic: drug use, smoking, family and career issues.

AWSI. The Arab World Social Innovators focuses on an entirely different demographic: their target participants are not Arab youth *per se* – “just social entrepreneurs and innovators.” Their youngest participant is 27 years old, their oldest is 57, and the average age for all 22 participants is 39. AWSI does not have any age restrictions in their selection criteria, nor parameters for which sectors the social innovators’ programs target. Although the participants themselves are not necessarily from marginalized backgrounds, the projects they implement do target pressing social and economic problems.

Each program’s implementing partner organization is responsible for tracking their beneficiaries individually. Peace Scholarships maintain a database of their participants’ contact information and network with them using a variety of technological tools to maintain contact with participants; AWSI uses similar methods. The Siraj programs are managed locally, with the result that each country office is responsible for tracking their local beneficiaries. There was no evidence of a centrally-managed, comprehensive database of all of the participants.

One request that was made repeatedly by both implementing partners and program participants

was to establish a comprehensive database of USAID youth program participants, similar to what the U.S. State Department uses for its programs. Everyone felt this database would be a major asset to USAID programs, as it would facilitate stakeholders' abilities to network with others in the region that have similar interests and goals.

Hypotheses

One hypothesis that was common to all four programs examined under this study was the assumption that youth in the MENA region are marginalized or disenfranchised and programs should work to integrate them better into their communities and societies. However, defining what constitutes a marginalized or disenfranchised community was a subject of debate. In general, most of the respondents agreed that youth in rural areas and poor communities have fewer opportunities to fill leadership roles and fewer resources with which to better their communities, as well as fewer role models for youth change agents that would inspire them to take initiative.

The programs also sought to promote leadership ability. Feedback from program participants indicated that these programs have been effective in promoting volunteerism among participants and improving their leadership skills. Some 91 percent of survey respondents said that participation in the program had "greatly" or "somewhat" increased their leadership skills; 83 percent reported having volunteered with organized groups that aim to improve social and economic conditions in their area and 54 percent had formed such a group. Of those who had formed a group, 82 percent reported filling a leadership role in that group and 89 percent said that their experiences in their program had helped them to fill a leadership role.

Sustainability

Although each of the four programs has been implemented in slightly different ways, many of their strategies for promoting sustainability are similar. The programs focus mainly on outcomes that will be sustained following withdrawal of the donor funding, including increased capacity of the youth participants in areas such as leadership, community development, and empowerment. As one of the goals of regional youth programs is increased social engagement at the regional level, an enduring hallmark of OMEP's youth programs will be the regional networks that these programs have created. Respondents to the online survey continue to communicate with contacts they made in the program, with at least 90 percent of respondents maintaining contact with individuals outside their home country or region. Overall, about 95 percent of the respondents found these contacts to be either very or somewhat beneficial to the personal development, and about 88 percent found them very or somewhat beneficial to their professional development.

Challenges

Language Barriers. Language was identified as a programmatic challenge in all programs. The variety of Arabic dialects that are used across the countries in which OMEP programs are implemented limited the depth of interaction of the program participants during the trainings and networking events. Due to the paucity of training materials in Arabic, the Siraj project had to develop its own Arabic-language toolkit to reach out to the non-English speaking youth.

Access Issues: Security, Mobility and the Legal Environment. Access challenges were attributed to a wide variety of factors such as geographical or political boundaries, security issues, cultural norms or access to technology. In regards to limited mobility of young women who may face opposition from family members to volunteer outside the home, IP representatives dialogued with the community to educate them about the program and to highlight the benefits of youth participation.

Networking. The lack of mobility of some participants and geographical distances limited the quantity of direct interaction that participants experienced. These face-to-face opportunities to collaborate and share resources were seen as one of the primary benefits of a regionally-implemented program, but all of the respondents who commented on this issue expressed a desire for more regional workshops, trainings and networking events.

Regional Diversity in Youth. Designing and delivering a training program that is relevant and accessible to the diverse groups found in the MENA region requires sufficient flexibility to reach all target audiences.

Outreach to Partners and Participants. Identifying and engaging local partners with the same level of commitment and passion can be challenging for a regionally-implemented program. Adequate follow-up was also a challenge when beneficiaries live in many different countries. Sustained momentum created by the training and program activities could be affected if there is not a locally-based representative to follow up with it.

Information Sharing

Information from this review clearly indicates that communication among the four programs was minimal and if any, occurred outside formal, structured information-sharing systems and mechanisms. Some of these contacts were initiated by the implementers themselves at the projects' inception phase. Some respondents had networked with other donors and program implementers on a limited basis, but again, these collaborations were facilitated by chance.

Finally, a couple of implementing partners mentioned collaborating with UN Agencies such as UNICEF or UNFPA, as well as with other organizations such as the World Bank and Oxfam. However, these alliances were serendipitous and most often established on a personal, rather than an institutional basis. All of the implementing partners expressed desire for more comprehensive and organized cooperation between donor agencies.

Future Research Agenda

During the IP Workshop, the IP representatives were asked to identify five to ten research topics that OMEP should undertake to provide greater insight into youth issues and youth programming in the MENA region. Based on the topics that were discussed in the previous sessions, the participants identified the topics that would be most useful in developing improved programs for youth in the MENA region. Themes included needs assessments and more geographically disaggregated studies on drop-out or unemployment rates. Baseline studies and longitudinal tracking of program outcomes were also suggested.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Defining Marginalized Youth. USAID’s definition of what constitutes a “marginalized” or “disenfranchised” youth is not clearly defined and that the OMEP programs would benefit from a more clearly-defined vision of these target beneficiaries.

Recommendation: *Conduct research in order to identify the communities with the greatest needs on a sub-national scale.*

2. Multiple Levels of Administration among Implementing Organizations. Adopting a hybrid model of program administration, with local offices administered by a regional management core, would establish the necessary level of coordination to track beneficiaries and outcomes across countries, and simultaneously allow the model to adapt to local contexts.

Recommendation: *Build a hybrid model of program implementation into project design.*

3. Programming Models: A Peace Scholar versus a Siraj Participant. The Peace Scholarship program had a more profound effect on youth’s skills, abilities and attitudes than the Siraj program. Yet Siraj’s youth-led initiatives strategy was an asset to the program because it ensures that implementers have sufficient flexibility to adapt activities to local contexts and youth’s interests. It also builds legitimacy for USAID programs because the activities are developed by the youth themselves.

Recommendation: *Promote youth-led initiatives but focus on quality, rather than quantity, of participants.*

4. Recruitment of Girls. In some cases, implementing partners had to work with the local communities to earn their trust and support for young women’s involvement.

Recommendation: *Continue to work with local communities to enable girls’ participation.*

5. Defining the Youth Cohort. The Siraj program defines youth as being between the ages of 18 and 30. Based on their experiences, this age range is appropriate for these programs.

Recommendation: *Continue to work with youth between the ages of 18 – 30.*

6. Length of Exchange Scholarships. Reducing the length of the exchange may enable USAID to reach a larger number of beneficiaries in future programs.

Recommendation: *Continue to offer regionally-implemented youth programming.*

7. Expanded Tracking of Beneficiaries. Respondents requested that USAID develop a database of individuals who have participated in youth programs in order to promote networking and to enable long-term tracking of program outcomes.

Recommendations: *Conduct long-term impact evaluations to better understand the impact of leadership-building efforts. Utilize social networking to maintain contact with participants.*

8. Internal Organizational Development. The implementation of the four OMEP youth initiatives has developed the implementing partners' capacity in youth programming and design.

Recommendation: *Promote further capacity development of local implementing partners.*

9. Facilitate Networking among Implementing Partners. Implementing partners rely on USAID to facilitate contacts between partners. These networks could be beneficial resources for other USAID investments in the region – including speakers, mentors and youth workers, as well as sources for identifying participants for future programs.

Recommendation: *Conduct Annual Workshops with Implementing Partner Organizations.*

10. OMEP's Role in the Region. There is great potential for the OMEP office to fill the role of information disseminators that would help to promote networking throughout the region. Stakeholders asked for more information in order to take advantage of the great potential existing in the region

Recommendations: *OMEP should expand their facilitation role across the region. OMEP should take the leadership in the identification and dissemination of research reports and studies that are produced either by its own research center or through one of its implementing organizations.*

I. Introduction

In August, 2010, USAID's Office of Middle East Programs (OMEP) contracted the International Business and Technology Consultants, Inc. (IBTCI) and the Aguirre Division of JBS International, Inc. (JBS) (hereinafter referred to as the research team) to conduct a review of four regionally-implemented youth programs. The youth cohort in the Middle East region is of critical importance to the region's current and future prosperity and security. The youth bulge phenomenon – reflecting the demographic reality of a significant population explosion in the last decades of the twentieth century, with the resulting population now entering the age demographic of 15 to 30 – has received much attention in the Middle East region, with young people between those ages comprising about a third of the total population. High unemployment rates in this population (often estimated to be as high as 25 per cent and more)² potentially lead to disaffected youth that in turn may create social unrest.

In an effort to address these youth issues on a regional basis, OMEP has funded a number of interventions focused on developing youth's leadership and advocacy skills, civic engagement, critical thinking, and technical and vocational skills. These programs are consistent with OMEP's strategic objectives of empowering youth to make constructive choices for success in a global society, focusing on providing positive leaders and role models for Arab youth, promoting mainstream values through the media, and increasing Arab youth's opportunities for economic and social engagement.

The research team's programmatic review examined four programs that OMEP funds across the MENA (Middle East and North Africa) region: the Arab World Social Innovators (AWSI), the Middle East Youth Media Initiative (MEYMI), Siraj, and the Peace Scholarships Program. These four programs comprise the bulk of OMEP's youth programming in the region.

Arab World Social Innovators (AWSI). This program provides grants to 22 social entrepreneurs to support their work on pressing social and economic issues in their communities. Mentorship, peer support, and assistance finding additional investors are other forms of support the program provides. Synergos in of New York City implements AWSI.

Middle East Youth Media Initiative (MEYMI). MEYMI, implemented by the Cairo-based firm *Al Karma*, is a project that utilizes media to promote tolerance, mutual respect, gender equity, and critical thinking skills. MEYMI is currently in the process of developing a television program, *The University (Al Jami3a* in Arabic), that will begin broadcasting in October 2010.

Siraj. The Siraj program is implemented by Save the Children (StC); it provides leadership and advocacy training for Arab youth in a workshop-style format. The program also works to promote gender equity and to provide positive role models for youth. In collaboration with another StC-implemented program, Naseej, artistic

² The Middle East Youth Initiative (<http://www.shababinclusion.org/section/topics/employment>) provides a number of recent studies examining the situation of youth employment in the region.

expression (music, dance, visual arts) is used as an outlet for youth to express themselves. The StC office in Jordan manages the regional Siraj program, except in Egypt, where StC's Cairo office oversees its activities.

Peace Scholarships. World Learning/IIE implements this program, which has provided scholarships for 48 university students from the Arab world for one year of study in the United States. The participants also received leadership training and attended workshops on topics such as diversity or skill-building. The program gave priority to applicants from disadvantaged and marginalized groups, e.g., rural applicants, with a special focus on females.

II. Methodology

1. Review Objectives

This programmatic review examined these four regional youth programs to determine whether the assumptions made during their design were correct or if they need to be adjusted for future programs. The review also documents the lessons learned and best practices from these pilot programs that can be used to inform the design and implementation of other regional or single-country youth programs. This activity was not designed to be a full-scale program evaluation; rather, it provides insights into the four programs' life of project (LOP) experiences and documents their key parameters.

2. Research Questions

The following questions guided the research and analysis:

- 1. Beneficiaries:** Who were the originally intended / final beneficiaries of each program in terms of age, gender, economic situation, and country location? Were common definitions of youth used among the four initiatives? What systems were established to document final program beneficiaries?
- 2. Hypotheses:** What were the original assumptions / hypotheses about the needs of regional youth? Were these original assumptions / hypotheses shown to be valid? If not, why not? Are there any significant differences among youth needs / experiences across the countries which benefited from these programs which were not originally identified but which became apparent during program implementation?
- 3. Sustainability:** How has each program addressed the issue of sustaining program investments in youth? Have any of the programs developed tools or methodologies to measure whether skills are being applied or whether the programs are meeting the overarching objective of countering extremist ideology? Are any of these tools or methodologies appropriate for wider regional dissemination / adaptation?
- 4. Challenges:** What were the challenges each program faced in implementation? How were the challenges addressed? What kinds of insights do these challenges provide for further work with youth in the region?
- 5. Information Sharing:** Was there any contact or information sharing among these four OMEP activities? If not, why not? What measures could be put in place to ensure more effective communication and sharing of information among similar activities in the future?
- 6. Future Research Agenda:** Based on the experiences with these four activities, what are elements of a future research agenda related to youth development in the region? What gaps in learning and knowledge sharing would these four programs identify?

3. Data Collection Approach

This evaluation utilized a mixed-method research design that gathered data through both quantitative and qualitative methods. Data were collected from a variety of stakeholder groups in order to gather a wide range of perspectives on youth programming. These stakeholder groups included:

- Representatives of the OMEP office and relevant USAID staff knowledgeable about youth programming;
- Implementing partner representatives with experience during the LOP; and
- The programs' participants themselves.

Data were collected between August 31 and October 3, 2010. The primary research team was stationed in Cairo during this time and liaised with the USAID OMEP team, as well as with the implementing-partner representatives and program participants in Egypt. The latter includes those who reside in Egypt and individuals who came there from elsewhere in the region.

Five countries in the region in addition to Egypt were the focus of the research: Jordan, Morocco, Lebanon, Palestine and Yemen. The Cairo team established a network of local data collectors in each country who gathered information from the programs' stakeholders and submitted their findings to the Cairo team who developed the regional data set.

The following data collection tools and instruments were used to collect data on the four programs: 1) Literature review; 2) Implementing Partners' Workshop; 3) Qualitative Interviews, including semi-structured interviews and focus groups; 4) Online Survey; and 5) Direct Observation. These data collection methods are described below.

1. Literature Review

The research team conducted a desktop study of the literature available on OMEP's programs, including quarterly and annual reports, contractual documents, other documentation relevant to the four programs, and pertinent literature that provided a rich perspective into best practices in youth programming in the region. The information from all these sources provided a knowledge base of each program's implementation process, as well as a broad perspective on donors' regional programs and experiences. This information and perspective informed the review's field work and analysis.

2. Implementing Partners' Workshop

The Cairo-based team coordinated with the OMEP office to conduct a one-day workshop with the four programs' implementers (Synergos, Save the Children, World Learning/IEE and Al Karma) to collect information on their implementation experiences. The workshop took place on September 15, 2010 at the USAID office in Cairo and was attended by ten implementing partner representatives and seven USAID staff members. The major themes covered in the workshop included programmatic assumptions that influenced the development of these programs;

challenges of the implementation process; benefits and challenges of the regional implementation model; best practices in youth programming; sustainability; and suggestions for a future research agenda. While a separate report was written to document the workshop's outputs, the information gathered during this event is also incorporated into the findings of this report. A copy of the workshop agenda and list of participants is in Appendix A.

3. Qualitative Information Collection

Semi-structured interviews and focus groups were used to collect qualitative information. The former was used for interviews with these stakeholder groups: representatives of the OMEP office; implementing partners (IPs) in Egypt, Jordan, Yemen, Palestine, Lebanon and the United States, and program participants from each of the six focus countries. Focus groups were conducted with program participants in Egypt, Lebanon, Palestine, and Yemen.

Information from the semi-structured interviews and focus groups was collected from three of the four OMEP Youth Initiatives: Peace Scholarships, the Arab World Social Innovators and Siraj. These instruments were not used with MEYMI's target population because its television program has not yet aired so it does not yet have beneficiaries.

a. Semi-structured Interviews

The in-depth, semi-structured interviews generated key data that provided insight into the attitudes and experiences of key stakeholder groups. Individual interviews were conducted in a private environment that helped put respondents at ease and encouraged them to express their views candidly. Comparing the responses from the interviews and the focus groups enabled the research team to assess the reliability of the information from the two different sources.

The in-depth interviews produced a large volume of qualitative data and provided a context that allowed the Team to examine each program individually, as well as identifying themes common to all four programs. The semi-structured interview schedules used with the IP representatives, program participants, and the focus groups are in Appendix B. The qualitative data gathered is included in Appendix C.

b. Focus Groups

Focus group locations were selected to be conveniently located for the people in the groups, such as hotel meeting spaces or IPs' offices. The focus group questions were designed to complement the information from the semi-structured interviews, with the added benefit of allowing debate and dialogue among the respondents. Focus groups enabled the research team to gather opinions and experiences from a wide range of voices efficiently and thoroughly. These groups allow people to speak in an intimate, small-group discussion as well as providing differing perspectives and time to debate their relative merits.

c. Recruiting Interviewees

Recruitment for the in-depth interviews and focus groups focused on identifying a mix of respondents from the three programs that have beneficiaries (Siraj, Peace Scholars and AWSI). For the individual interviews, the local data collectors traveled outside their home cities to interview people in other areas. A few in-depth interviews were conducted by telephone. The research team identified the focus group respondents from a list of beneficiaries provided by each IP and contacted them by email and/or telephone. The criteria for recruiting focus group respondents were 1) those willing to attend and 2) those who lived close to the focus group locations. Therefore, to some extent, the pool of focus group respondents was self-selected because it consisted of people who responded to JBS’s repeated attempts to contact them. The criterion of living close to the focus group location further narrowed this sample.

d. Summary of the Sample

Table 1 shows the different data collection methods by location and stakeholder group.

Table 1. Sample by Country, Stakeholder, and Data-Collection Instrument³

Stakeholders	Egypt	Jordan	Lebanon	Morocco	Palestine	Yemen	Totals
OMEP staff	5	0	0	0	0	0	5
Implementing Partners	8 ^a	2	2	0	2	2	16
Program Participants by Country and Data-Collection Type							
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Focus Groups	2	0	2	0	2	2	8
Observations	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
Online Survey	22	20	14	4	9	21	95 ^b
Country totals	39	29	24	8	19	34	158
^a Includes two U.S.-based interviews with implementing partner representatives ^b Includes four respondents living in Oman and one respondent who did not indicate a location. ^c Includes participants from a group interview with the Peace Scholars who attended the Cairo workshop in September.							

³ Respondents by program are as follows: Peace Scholars (2 IP interviews and 14 participant interviews), Siraj (11 IP interviews and 16 participant interviews), AWSI (2 IP interviews and 3 participant interviews), MEYMI (1 IP interview).

4. Online Survey

A quantitative, online survey complemented the qualitative data from interviews, focus groups and the Cairo workshop. The online survey was designed to collect information from the program participants about their experiences during the programs, as well as their opinions on issues such as sustainability, capacity building, and networking activities related to their programs. The survey was available online between September 17 and October 1, 2010.

The online survey was prepared in Arabic and in English. The team sent invitations to participate in the survey to all program participants for whom they had email addresses, a total of 602 individuals (including 22 AWSI participants, 44 Peace Scholars and 536 Siraj participants). In order to increase the number of respondents and decrease the bias of potentially over-representing this group, the local data collectors contacted individuals for whom the team did not have email addresses by telephone to encourage their participation. The final results of the online survey were: 95 online surveys completed; 48 percent by Siraj participants, 33 percent by Peace Scholars, 10 percent by AWSI participants and 10 percent did not identify a program. The online survey in English and Arabic is in Appendix B and the data analysis is in Appendix D.

5. Direct Observation

Local data collectors coordinated with the local IP representatives in order to observe any program activities scheduled to take place during the data collection period. Only one activity was held concurrently with the data collection--Siraj conducted training on its toolkit. The Palestinian data collector attended this event and her observations are included in Appendix C.

A. Methodological Considerations

The research team did their best to address the challenges associated with gathering and analyzing qualitative data for this study. Like all studies, however, the methodology has strengths and weaknesses and those that may have influenced the data must be noted.

- The largest challenge to the overall methodology of this study was response rate. This was an issue particularly in bringing together enough respondents for a focus group and in soliciting respondents for the online survey. The following subsections consider the response rates for each of these data collection methods, as well as the potential impact on the data quality.
 - **Focus Groups:** In several locations local researchers had difficulty assembling a sufficient number of respondents for focus groups. This issue was most notable in Jordan, where two efforts to organize a focus group were unsuccessful and instead produced only two individual interviews. Local researchers in Egypt and Lebanon contacted up to sixty individuals in order to identify 12 who agreed to attend the focus groups; only half of them actually attended. Those who did not attend the focus groups were contacted for individual interviews, but there was a low response to the interviews

also. The potential bias is that the people who participated in these two data-collection activities are not representative of the larger pool of those who did not participate.

- **Online Survey:** In the case of the online survey, while all of the Peace Scholars and AWSI participants had emails listed in the contact information provided by the IPs, only half of the Siraj program's 1145 beneficiaries provided by Save the Children had emails on file. Thus, from the 1212 total potential contacts in all four programs, 602 individuals were contacted by email to participate in the online survey. The local data collectors attempted to contact those without email addresses by telephone, but due to constraints of time they were not able to reach all the rest of the beneficiaries. The 536 potential respondents from Siraj represented 89 percent of the full list of 602 program participants with contact information; only 7 percent were Peace Scholars and 4 percent were AWSI participants. The Siraj participants therefore are over-represented in the online survey, which does skew the overall findings toward their perspective. The research team has disaggregated many of the survey findings presented in this report by program in order to mitigate this issue. Overall, the sample size of 95 respondents represents 16 percent of the 602 contacts provided by USAID and is an acceptable response rate given surveys of this type. Additionally, with an estimated 95 percent confidence level and a confidence interval of 10, an appropriate sample size for 602 potential contacts is 83 respondents. So the sample size obtained is within the acceptable levels for analysis.
- The number of AWSI participants who responded to invitations to participate in the research study was very small. This was the case for both the qualitative and quantitative data collection. This may be due to the fact that Synergos, the AWSI implementers, had just completed their impact evaluation of the program and the participants probably had "survey fatigue." Additionally, AWSI does not target youth as beneficiaries *per se*, so our potential respondents may have felt they had little to contribute to the study.
- It is important to note that a number of the Siraj participants who were interviewed indicated that they had very limited contact with the program. This may have limited the number of participants sufficiently engaged with Siraj to participate in the online survey.
- The timing of the data collection period was not ideal for encouraging participation. Due to the fact that many of the programs are closing out and the OMEP office felt it was urgent to collect data before this occurrence, the activity was scheduled to take place during Ramadan and Eid ul-Fitr. This schedule significantly complicated data collection for a variety of reasons, including the availability of respondents to meet with the data collectors, as well as the availability of the data collectors themselves to begin work during a major Muslim holiday.
- Due to a number of delays in starting the data collection process, including the Eid holiday, data collection for this review was done during a two-week period to conform to the timeline in the SOW. This time constraint in turn limited the local researchers' travel to rural communities to interview program participants there, although a concerted effort was made to interview people outside the capital cities. The range of stakeholders also influenced data collection as in some locations it was focused more on one stakeholder than another. This is

especially true in Egypt, where the OMEP team is located. Researchers invested a significant level of effort in conducting in-depth interviews with USAID staff and IPs, which resulted in a smaller number of program participants being interviewed in that location.

- The people who were willing to participate in the different types of data collection were a self-selected group. It cannot be assumed that this group is representative of all the different types of potential respondents in the programs. The self-selection may introduce a bias in the data—e.g., more of those with stronger opinions chose to participate than those with relatively neutral opinions—but such biases are common to all surveys based on voluntary participation. It is just important to note that the data for this review, like all survey data, are subjective and cannot be assumed to be representative of the larger group/s.

III. Findings

A. Beneficiaries

Research Questions: Who were the originally intended / final beneficiaries of each program in terms of age, gender, economic situation, and country location? Were common definitions of youth used among the four initiatives? What systems were established to document final program beneficiaries?

As each of the four programs is working with a different cohort, they each define their target beneficiaries according to different parameters. The following section identifies how each of the four programs defines their beneficiaries.

Siraj

According to the implementing partner representatives interviewed from Siraj their program targets youth between the ages of 18 and 30. They especially attempt to identify youth who are interested in civic engagement and youth workers who are already involved in youth-serving organizations. They network with their youth beneficiaries to identify additional youth-serving organizations with which they can partner. According to the Siraj implementing partner representative in Jordan, they are often approached by young people with ideas for projects who are above the age of 30 but they cannot work with them due to the age restrictions.

When the Siraj program started, they intended to maintain a gender balance between the beneficiaries, but found that “once offered safe space and a good reason to get out of the house and be engaged in their communities,” young women were more engaged in the program. According to one of the Siraj implementing partner representatives who participated in the IP Workshop, 58.6% of the Siraj beneficiaries are young women.

In terms of targeting vulnerable populations, Siraj does not focus solely on those from economically disadvantaged or rural backgrounds. They consider all Arab youth to be vulnerable in that their voices are not always heard, so they seek to create a space for them to establish a “sense of self” and “belonging” in their communities. The IPs did not report any changes to the final program beneficiaries.

Peace Scholars

The Peace Scholars program originally targeted university students who had completed two years of undergraduate work, and was implemented in eight countries: Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Oman, Palestine and Yemen. However, in the second year of implementation, the program expanded its availability to students who had only completed one year of studies. The IP representatives felt that this change increased the pool of qualified candidates, and in some respects, was better for the participants to have two years of university remaining when they returned to their home countries after the exchange experience because the last two years of school are more specialized.

In terms of gender, although the recruitment process sought to achieve an equal balance of male and female participants, the implementing partners anticipated that they would have more difficulty finding young women whose families would be willing to let them travel alone to the United States for an academic year, especially in more conservative countries like Oman and Yemen. This proved to be less challenging than they had anticipated but the IPs did report that it was more difficult to find female participants in rural areas and (perhaps unexpectedly) in Morocco in particular. Ultimately, out of 48 participants, 60 percent were female and 40 percent were male.

The Peace Scholarship program also required that participants have a strong academic background and sufficient English-language ability to be successful in U.S. university classes. Simultaneously, the IPs tried to select participants from “underserved peri-urban and rural areas.” However, identifying potential participants from these areas with sufficiently strong English-language ability proved to be a difficult combination to fulfill. Although the program required students achieve at least a 500 score on the TOEFL, the IPs interviewed suggested that, for future programs, it might be more effective to lower the required TOEFL score to 400 – 450, and then provide an intensive English-language training to the students prior to their departure for the United States. This change would widen the pool of qualified candidates from economically disadvantaged or rural communities.

MEYMI

As the Middle East Youth Media Initiative’s main vehicle of intervention will be a television program that will be aired across the region, they expect to reach a wide demographic audience. However, the stated target demographic for the *Al Jami3a* program is “Arab males and females between the ages of 18-24, of all socioeconomic classes,” according to the Al Karma representative interviewed in Egypt. The program’s characters are university students from a variety of Arab backgrounds, including Egyptian, Saudi and Lebanese students, living together in one community. The character profiles, intended to serve as role models for young Arab youth viewers, include strong female characters with well-defined goals and individuals who face problems common to their target demographic: drug use, smoking, family and career issues. As this program is still in the planning and implementation phase, the implementing partners did not report any changes to these target beneficiaries.

AWSI

The Arab World Social Innovators focuses on an entirely different demographic: their target participants are not Arab youth *per se* – “just social entrepreneurs and innovators.” Their youngest participant is 27 years old, their oldest is 57, and the average age for all 22 participants is 39, according to the Synergos representatives interviewed in the United States. (One survey respondent identified themselves as an AWSI participant and reported his age range as 18-22. However, the research team, confirming with Synergos that their youngest participant was 27, concludes that this was an error on the part of the survey respondent.) AWSI does not have any age restrictions in their selection criteria, nor parameters for which sectors the social innovators’ programs target. Although this program is lumped together with the youth programs that OMEP

implements, the IP representatives said they also coordinate with contacts interested in economic growth issues, though they reported that this is not a perfect fit for their activity, either, as they target social entrepreneurs. The program is implemented in five countries in the MENA region: Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco and Palestine. Although the participants themselves are not necessarily from marginalized backgrounds, the projects they implement do target “pressing social and economic problems.”

The online survey captured demographic profiles of the 95 respondents who completed it. Information gathered included respondents’ age, gender, marital status, level of education, employment status, and standard of living. The following section breaks down these data by program; although not all are statistically significant at the .05 level, it does provide a snapshot of the types of participants that OMEP youth programs serve and mirrors the target groups identified by the beneficiaries. For example, the Peace Scholars program recruited a higher number of female participants than males; the largest percentages of participants have at least some university or college experience, and most of the AWSI program participants’ ages are above what is considered to be the youth category.

Some interesting points to note are the low rates of respondents who identified themselves as “needy” or being from “rural” areas. While these are self-reported categories, and may also be influenced by the fact that the survey was administered online, few respondents identified themselves as being from what would traditionally be considered marginalized groups. The full results are listed below in Table 2.

Table 2. Survey respondents’ demographic characteristics (in %)

	Peace Scholars	AWSI	Siraj	Total
Age				
14-17	0	0	4.5	2.4
18-22	41.9	11.1	22.7	28.6
23-30	54.8	11.1	50.0	47.6
31+	3.2	77.8	22.7	21.4
Gender*				
Male	43.3	77.8	65.9	59.0
Female	56.7	22.2	34.1	41.0
Marital Status				
Married	6.7	55.6	43.2	31.3
Not Married	93.3	44.4	56.8	68.7
Highest Level of Education Attained*				
Did not complete secondary	0	0	2.6	1.3
Graduated from secondary	0	0	10.3	5.3
Some university or college	25.0	22.2	23.1	23.7
Bachelor’s degree	57.1	44.4	41.0	47.4
Master’s degree	14.3	22.2	23.1	19.7
Doctorate degree	3.6	11.1	0	2.6
Employment Status*				
Employed	48.4	77.8	52.3	53.6
Not employed but seeking work	38.7	0	36.4	33.3
Not seeking employment	12.9	22.2	11.4	13.1

	Peace Scholars	AWSI	Siraj	Total
Standard of Living*				
Needy	6.5	11.1	9.1	8.3
Able to satisfy basic needs	48.4	33.3	59.1	52.4
Well-off	45.2	55.6	31.8	39.3
Description of Home Location*				
Urban	87.1	77.8	95.2	90.2
Rural	12.9	22.2	4.8	9.8
Distribution of length of participation by program				
< 1 week	3	0	7	4.7
< 1 month	0	0	20	11.8
1-5 mos	0	11	16	9.4
6-11 mos	60	11	11	29.4
12+ mos	37	67	45	44.7
Sample size	31	9	44 ^a	84 ^b
<small>* not statistically significant at the .05 level ^a One AWSI participant did not respond to these questions ^c Does not include the 9 survey respondents who did not identify a program</small>				

Defining Arab Youth

As each of the four programs defines their beneficiaries differently, there is no clear sense of a general consensus as to what constitutes an “Arab youth.” Siraj focuses on youth between 18-30, MEYMI’s target demographic is 18-24. In comparison, the AWSI program does not target youth at all, yet it is grouped with the youth programs for lack of a better fit. In sum, these programs adopt no clear age range to define youth in the Arab world.

Geographically, most of these programs are implemented in the many of the same locations throughout the MENA region: Siraj, Peace Scholarships and AWSI are all implemented in Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon and Palestine. Regional implementation was considered to have both advantages and disadvantages: although there are many similarities between the societies of the Maghreb, the Levant and the Hijaz that make networking useful, there are also distinct differences that can complicate regional implementation. The most often cited issue was the linguistic differences between the various Arabic dialects that make communication more difficult. Moroccans, in particular, noted that they had some initial problems communicating with their counterparts from Lebanon, Jordan, and Yemen, for example. However, once these obstacles were overcome, Moroccan participants reported a deep appreciation for their expanded ability to dialogue with their counterparts in other Arab countries.

Morocco is especially difficult because it is so different from the Levant in terms of geopolitics and access to people. There are prohibitive costs and linguistic barriers, but they do fit in well in terms of their experiences, funds and practical challenges on the local level ... Moroccans made a lot of connections with their Egyptian counterparts...

-- AWSI Implementing Partner Representative

This experience with the PS program helped me a lot ... linguistically ... My friends in PS helped me to learn these other dialects, because no one in Qatar would understand me if I spoke Moroccan dialect. Culturally, Morocco is close to Europe, and different from the Middle East and the Gulf states – food, habits, traditions, etc. Because I was familiar with it from PS, it was not a big deal to adjust.

-- Peace Scholar from Morocco

In developing the *Al Jami3a* program pilot, the implementing partners for the MEYMI program did a comprehensive study of youth attitudes in the region, entitled *Youth in the MENA Region Final Research Report*. This study focused on their target demographic of Arab youth between the ages of 15 and 25. They engaged 3,497 respondents in seven countries: Egypt, Morocco, Lebanon, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and Yemen, and explored a wide variety of topics such as education, media, families and relationships, politics, religion and careers. In general, this study found that few Arab youth have had opportunities to travel outside of the region: whereas some 33 percent had traveled to other Arab countries, fewer than 10 percent had traveled to Europe or the United States. As direct experience with another culture does tend to increase mutual understanding, this dearth of travel to the West represents an opportunity for promoting exchanges.

In addition, the MEYMI study found that Arab youth identify most strongly with their community, in preference to an Arab or global identity. The lack of inter-regional travel may be a factor that influences this perspective. It may limit the extent to which Arab youth adopt a global outlook, increasing their marginalization and reducing their tendency to identify with a global community. This underlines the need for increased networking among Arab youth – between countries in the region as well as with the wider world.⁴

Tracking Beneficiaries

Each program's implementing partner organization is responsible for tracking their beneficiaries individually. Methods of varying sophistication are used to accomplish this task. World Learning and IIE (Peace Scholarships) maintain a database of their participants' contact information and network with them using a variety of technological tools, including a website dedicated to the program as well as social media tools like Facebook and Linked In. Synergos (AWSI) uses similar methods. However, these two programs focus on a much smaller number of beneficiaries and are implemented from a central location, which makes tracking much simpler. As both Peace Scholars and AWSI are nearing program close-out, both programs have had summative evaluations conducted to document final program outcomes.

In the case of Save the Children (Siraj), the number of beneficiaries is much higher; up to 40,000 individuals receive newsletters and access to the Siraj website. In addition, the Siraj programs are managed locally, with the result that each country office is responsible for tracking their local beneficiaries. As a result, there was no evidence of a centrally-managed, comprehensive database of all of the participants. In attempting to conduct outreach to each location focused on for this activity (Egypt, Jordan, Morocco, Lebanon, Palestine, and Yemen) the research team

⁴ Middle East Youth Media Initiative. (2008). "Youth in the MENA Region Final Research Report." p. 11-16.

compiled a list of 1,433 participants. These data were gathered by contacting each local office directly and requesting their beneficiaries list. These lists were submitted in a variety of formats (Word, Excel), in both Arabic and English.

One request that was made repeatedly by both implementing partners and program participants was to establish a comprehensive database of USAID youth program participants, similar to what the U.S. State Department uses for its programs. Everyone felt this database would be a major asset to USAID programs, as it would facilitate stakeholders' abilities to network with others in the region that have similar interests and goals.

B. Hypotheses

Research Questions: What were the original assumptions / hypotheses about the needs of regional youth? Were these original assumptions / hypotheses shown to be valid? If not, why not? Are there any significant differences among youth needs / experiences across the countries which benefitted from these programs which were not originally identified but which became apparent during program implementation?

The OMEP office was established in 2005 and implemented its first programs in FY2007. According to the “Middle East Regional 2007 Performance Report: Operating Unit Performance Summary” document the OMEP youth programs portfolio was designed with the objective of “improving critical thinking, promoting positive progressive values and helping to create a network of the next generation of young leaders.”⁵ At the time that these programs were launched, OMEP focused on developing youth as community leaders as a counter-terrorism measure. The four programs sought to use “networks, leadership training and media to promote positive ideologies, tolerant attitudes and moderate behavior among youth.”

Since the implementation of these four programs, the overarching objective of countering extremist ideology has been overshadowed by the goals of establishing regional networks and supporting youth leadership development. While the programs may work to discourage youth from developing extremist ideologies by increasing their community involvement, providing space for youth to voice their opinions and creating positive role models, it has not been a prime focus for the implementing partners.

As part of our evaluation process, we have just reviewed the problem statement for the first time in three years and we were shocked to find that [preventing extremist ideology] was even in there ... We are trying to promote social, economic and societal transformation, which may result in greater regional stability, but this is not a direct goal of the program.

-- AWSI Implementing Partner Representative in the United States

Program participants’ reactions to the question of whether their program was successful in countering extremist ideology fell under three general categories: (1) they felt that those prone to extremism would not participate in a USAID-funded program in the first place; (2) they felt that the leadership and community participation were successful in discouraging extremism; or (3) they were offended by the question and felt it unfairly stereotyped Muslims.

People who take part in this program don’t even think about extremism for they’re constantly occupied with the program, they have certain aims to achieve and things to accomplish.

-- Siraj Participant in Jordan

This question is the reason why the youth in the region are stigmatized and portrayed as potential terrorists while the real reasons for the terrorism problem is double standards, racism, poverty, ignorance, religious discrimination, and oppression.

-- Siraj and AWSI Focus Group Participants in Lebanon

⁵OMEP. (2007). Middle East Regional 2007 Performance Report: Operating Unit Performance Summary. (USAID) Washington D.C.: USAID. http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PDACK993.pdf

Assumptions about the Needs of Regional Youth

While the implementing partners have not focused overtly on countering extremist ideology, they have focused on targeting marginalized and disenfranchised youth throughout the region. One hypothesis that was common to all four programs examined under this study was that youth in the MENA region are marginalized or disenfranchised and programs should work to integrate them better into their communities and societies. Overall, the workshop attendees said that they considered the term “disenfranchised” to have negative connotations that seem to insinuate that youth do not have a place in society. While youth influence varies by location and individual, most respondents felt that youth are outside of the information and policy-making circles in general across the MENA region, and they saw a need to promote their leadership and communication skills to enable Arab youth to become change agents in their communities.

However, defining what constitutes a marginalized or disenfranchised community was a subject of debate, especially among the IP representatives who attended the IP Workshop. In general, most of the respondents agreed that youth in rural areas and poor communities have fewer opportunities to fill leadership roles and fewer resources with which to better their communities, as well as fewer role models for youth change agents that would inspire them to take initiative. While what constitutes “marginalized” does vary from place to place, a more clearly-defined definition of which communities are marginalized in a given location may help the IPs to target communities of greater need more effectively.

Each program has operationalized different definitions of marginalized based on their target beneficiaries: for example, the Peace Scholars seek out individuals of lower socio-economic status from rural communities who may not have an opportunity to expand their horizons, while the Siraj program seeks to reach all Arab youth to create healthy, well-adjusted individuals. In addition, the various programs have design components that are intended to increase youth’s ability to be change agents in their communities: Siraj creates space for youth to develop their own voices and develops youth-led initiatives to promote leadership capacity; Peace Scholars expands participants’ horizons and networking opportunities by bringing participants to the United States for an academic year and developing their sense of community activism; MEYMI provides role models and demonstrates coping mechanisms that youth can use to deal with social challenges; AWSI supports community-level development projects that inspire social change. Each strategy fills a different niche in supporting youth development.

Feedback from program participants during the interviews, focus groups and survey indicate that these strategies have been effective in promoting volunteerism among participants and improving their leadership skills. Some 91 percent of survey respondents said that participation in the program had “greatly” or “somewhat” increased their leadership skills. As Table 3 shows, 83 percent of respondents reported having volunteered with organized groups that aim to improve social and economic conditions in their area and 54 percent had formed such a group.

Table 3. Participants’ Involvement in Social and Economic Groups (in %)

	Peace Scholars	AWSI	Siraj	Total
Volunteered with organized groups that aim to improve social and economic conditions	83.3	100.0	79.5	83.1
	n = 30	n = 8	n = 39	n = 77 ^a
Formed organized groups that aim to improve social and economic conditions	36.7	87.5	60.5	53.9
	n = 30	n = 8	n = 38	n = 76 ^b
^a 1 Peace Scholar, 1 AWSI and 7 Siraj respondents did not respond to this question				
^b 1 Peace Scholar, 1 AWSI and 8 Siraj respondents did not respond to this question				

Of those who had formed a group, 82 percent reported filling a leadership role in that group and 89 percent said that their experiences in their program had helped them to fill a leadership role. These encouraging numbers suggest that OMEP programs are identifying and working with those youth who possess leadership potential, and providing them tools and resources to accomplish their leadership goals.

Table 4. Participants’ Leadership Roles in Social and Economic Groups (in %)

	Peace Scholars	AWSI	Siraj	Total
Filled Leadership role in this activity	75.0	100.0	81.3	82.1
	n = 16	n = 8	n = 32	n = 56 ^a
Experiences helped to play a leadership role	88.2	87.5	90.3	89.3
	n = 17	n = 8	n = 31	n = 56 ^b
^a 15 Peace Scholars, 1 AWSI and 14 Siraj respondents did not respond to this question; the survey included a skip pattern for those who did not answer “yes” to the previous questions				
^b 14 Peace Scholar, 1 AWSI and 15 Siraj respondents did not respond to this question; the survey included a skip pattern for those who did not answer “yes” to the previous questions				

In the IP workshop, participants also debated the nature of change that the OMEP programs are trying to create: some IP representatives were concerned that “change” did not equal “reform.” Programs are designed with the assumption that empowered youth will automatically begin to act as change agents in their communities. One of the IP representatives from MEYMI made the following observation.

The “change” premise is based on creating awareness and promoting alternative role models ... [this] awareness will trigger a change in attitudes and behaviors. Youth lack role models ... [we] need to create role models that relate to youth and where youth will see themselves. This will hopefully initiate a process of critical thinking and thus, posing questions about the existing ways of thinking, behaving.

-- MEYMI Implementing Partner Representative in Egypt

Yet other IP representatives at the IP Workshop argued that these role models are not well-defined. Programs should seek to “define those who can serve as role models in their communities – those with common characteristics of having dynamic personalities, active in

their societies, and possess the characteristics and tools of leadership.” These individuals can be inspired by providing positive role models and mentors, civic engagement opportunities, and critical thinking and decision-making skills.

The Siraj IP representative in Jordan identified another assumption: when the Siraj trainings started, the implementers assumed that “youth in the Arab world do not know what they want.” This led the implementers to “offer them trainings, job opportunities depending on their skills.” However, this assumption was later revised, because the IPs realized “that youth know what they want but they do not know how to invest their knowledge and skills. As a result, there was a better concentration on conducting trainings and workshops on how to better sell yourself, marketing skills trainings ... on a higher level and more expanded.” This builds upon the Siraj theme of creating space for youth-led initiatives. Respondents from the Siraj program (both implementers and participants) highly valued the youth-led strategy of Siraj and saw it not only as a means to build youth capacity for leadership and communication, but also as a means to build legitimacy for the program as an indigenous product of the community. The value of this home-grown approach to programming should not be overlooked in future program design.

Differences between Youth in the Region

The dialectical difference between countries in the region was the most often-cited divergence among youth in the region; it was the factor that IPs cited as being the biggest obstacle for implementing a program regionally. However, respondents also expressed the opinion that youth in particular countries display common characteristics that are related to the socio-political situation in their home communities. These were often related to gender roles and the level of freedom that young women have to undertake activities outside their home – females in Yemen and Morocco were most often restricted in their ability to undertake volunteer activities in their communities or travel to distant locations.

You always need to know the culture – it was an issue, the dress, the language, differences between men and women in Yemen. If you are willing to implement a program in all countries, you have to take into consideration these cultural differences programmatically, to adjust for the culture and provide assistance to bridge the differences.

-- Siraj Implementing Partner Representative in Jordan

In other cases, respondents felt that youth in different countries displayed distinct personas because of the political climate and relative levels of opportunity they enjoy. For example, youth in Palestine and Lebanon were thought to be more creative as a result of their political struggles; youth in Yemen were considered to be hard-working and willing to sacrifice in order to take advantage of relatively scarce opportunities; youth in Egypt were highly active in the social and political spheres. While these characteristics are obviously generalizations and could easily become stereotypical, they do underline the perceptions that local context does affect participants’ abilities and attitudes.

Those who face wars like in Palestine and Lebanon tend to have better abilities and show more creativity when it comes to youth work, whereas in Jordan the youth relies on governmental jobs and relaxation, with the presence of a class more aware of pure creative youth work. As for Yemen's youth, they find shelter in Siraj program and as a way to relieve their suppressed energies. As for Egypt we are witnessing a youth Revolution in a significant way, which means more rights and awareness for the youth.

-- Siraj Implementing Partner Representative in Jordan

C. Sustainability

Research Questions: How has each program addressed the issue of sustaining program investments in youth? Have any of the programs developed tools or methodologies to measure whether skills are being applied or whether the programs are meeting the overarching objective of countering extremist ideology? Are any of these tools or methodologies appropriate for wider regional dissemination / adaptation?

Although each of the four programs has been implemented in slightly different ways, many of their strategies for promoting sustainability are similar. This is especially true for Siraj, AWSI and the Peace Scholarships: the IP representatives who participated in the workshop as well as those responding to the in-depth interviews stated that, in their view, their programs focus mainly on outcomes that will be sustained following withdrawal of the donor funding. These include the increased capacity of the youth participants in areas such as leadership, community development, and empowerment. That is, among workshop participants and interviewees alike, there was very little expectation that local partners had the capacity to take on these initiatives once USAID funding had ended. Of more interest to the IPs was sustaining impact among participants rather than sustaining project activities. This underlines, in their view, the importance of taking steps to ensure that the youth and youth organization beneficiaries who had benefitted from the programs now possess the right mix of skills and capacity to continue their development work after the project closes. This was the kind of sustainable change that they felt could withstand the test of time. As seen in Table 5, results of the online survey show most Peace Scholars have attended workshops while members of AWSI and Siraj have participated mostly in workshops and trainings. These activities are considered to have relatively long-term effects.

Table 5. Distribution of activities attended by program (in %)

	Peace Scholars	AWSI	Siraj
Workshops	27%	31%	40%
Seminars	16%	6%	18%
Conferences	12%	25%	13%
Trainings	20%	38%	28%
Study Abroad	25%	0%	0%
Total	100%	100%	100%

Most respondents of the online survey stated that participating in their project provides a great deal of relevance to their current activities (67 percent). This outcome was expected before the administration of the survey. However, when this sense of relevance is correlated with the various areas of development, survey results show strong relationships with personal development and leadership skills. As seen in Table 6, the highest correlation coefficients are between the sense of relevance and personal development (0.4851) and the sense of relevance and leadership skills (0.4847). Thus, while respondents find participation in their project very applicable to their activities in general, they find it more relevant because it enhances their personal development and leadership skills.

Table 6. Correlation between Activity Relevance and Participants' Development

Program Activity	Correlation
Technical and professional knowledge	0.4632
Personal development	0.4851
Leadership skills	0.4847
Exposure and understanding	0.2645
Access to networks	0.414

Several of the interview respondents discussed how the concepts and principles that their program promoted will continue past the end of USAID funding. For example, the Siraj implementing partner representatives from Yemen said that they expected networking between participants through the Siraj website would continue. The main issue for them was losing the name recognition (and thus the credibility) that Siraj has built over the last three years. Other Siraj implementing partners said that the toolkit they have developed has been shared with other organizations, and this would continue to benefit the youth sector after the program ends.

Nahdet el Mahrousa will ensure the sustainability of the Siraj project ... [by] using the toolkit training content with their program beneficiaries once a month ... University students clubs [will] use the toolkit to train their mid-level members' students ... This will ensure that the toolkit will continue being used and developed.

-- Implementing Partner Representative in Egypt

The issue of sustainability for MEYMI is slightly different. As the primary vehicle for their intervention is media, they are relying on the success of the role models the show's characters provide to Arab youth as the sustained impact of the project. As the show has not yet aired, there were no direct beneficiaries to interview, so the efficacy of these role models has yet to be determined, though reviews in focus groups have reportedly been very positive.

As one of the goals of regional youth programs is increased social engagement at the regional level, an enduring hallmark of OMEP's youth programs will be the regional networks that these programs have created. In the online survey, respondents were asked whether or not they continued to communicate with those who they met in the program and, if so, were these contacts outside their home country or region, and were the contacts beneficial to their personal and professional development.

The number of respondents who continued to communicate with those they had met in the program was very high. All 31 of the Peace Scholars continued to communicate with their long-distance colleagues and all of these contacts included individuals from another country or region. Almost 90 percent (87.5%) of AWSI respondents continued communication with their long-distance contacts that were all outside the respondents' home country or region. The same proportion (90%) of the Siraj respondents also continued communication, about 63 percent outside their home country or region. Table 7 details the program participants' responses.

Table 7. Participants' Networking with Contacts Made During the Program (in %)

	Peace Scholars	AWSI	Siraj	Total
Respondents who continue to communicate with contacts made during the program	100	87.5	90	93.7
Contacts included individuals or groups from another country or region	100	100	62.9	81.9
	n = 31	n = 8	n = 40	n = 79 ^a

^a One AWSI respondent and 6 Siraj respondents did not answer this question

As a follow-up survey respondents were asked whether they found these contacts to be beneficial to their personal and professional development. Overall, about 95 percent of the respondents found these contacts to be either very or somewhat beneficial to the personal development, and about 88 percent found them very or somewhat beneficial to their professional development. Tables 8 and 9 below provide these data disaggregated by program.

Table 8. Continued contacts were beneficial to personal development (in %)

	Peace Scholars	AWSI	Siraj	Total
Very beneficial	48.4	42.9	62.2	54.7
Somewhat beneficial	48.4	57.1	32.4	41.3
Neutral	3.2	0	2.7	2.7
Not very beneficial	0	0	2.7	2.7
	n = 31	n = 7	n = 37	n = 75 ^a

* not statistically significant at the .05 level
^a Two AWSI participants and 9 Siraj participants did not answer this question

Table 9. Continued contacts were beneficial to professional development (in %)

	Peace Scholars	AWSI	Siraj	Total
Very beneficial	32.3	42.9	55.6	44.6
Somewhat beneficial	54.8	57.1	30.6	43.2
Neutral	9.7	0	11.1	9.5
Not very beneficial	3.2	0	2.8	2.7
	n = 31	n = 7	n = 36	n = 74 ^a

* not statistically significant at the .05 level
^a Two AWSI participants and 9 Siraj participants did not answer this question

Finally, in regards to building a regional network, 83 percent of respondents reported that participation in this program had contributed greatly or slightly to their regional and international understanding, and 75 percent said their access to regional and international networks had increased greatly or slightly as a result of their participation. According to the AWSI Draft Evaluation Report, 88 percent of the Innovators felt that the regional implementation model was of high value, versus a national implementation strategy, because it “promoted networking, communication and idea exchange among innovators,” as well as “pride and moral support the

social innovators received for being recognized at a regional level.”⁶ Overall, these data suggest that the OMEP regional programs are achieving at least some impact in building a regional network, which can promote sustainable outcomes after the life of the project.

At the same time, there is room for these networks to grow and expand. The best example of this potential is found in the Siraj program. Although Siraj does promote a regional youth network through its website, some of the participants who were interviewed were not aware of the website or were not using it effectively, as they suggested offering this service which already exists. Other Siraj participants said that they thought the program would benefit from more regional meetings that brought Siraj participants from various countries together to meet and find synergies that could develop into regional networks.

Last October, we had our first regional conference in Cairo. This should have been done a long time ago. Siraj could have had regional benefits that were not realized. By the time the conference came, everyone knew the program was ending, so energy was very low. I am sure they would have had a lot more regional networking if this had been done earlier.

-- Siraj participant from Jordan

Respondents for the AWSI Draft Evaluation Report also requested more face-to-face training sessions and meetings to facilitate regional network-building. “The social innovators considered the face-to-face training to be the most effective method of capacity building for them. During the lifetime of the program, AWSI held only two meetings for program participants. These events were the most important and useful to them.”⁷ Clearly these events are highly valued and effective means of building capacity and networking opportunities. Virtual meetings were not considered to be as effective or useful to participants.

Some 91 percent of the survey respondents indicated an interest in continuing contact with USAID through alumni networking events. This suggests that long-term tracking of participant outcomes could help USAID to determine whether the gains that participants are reporting in terms of building regional networks and leadership skills persist some five to seven years after participants complete their programs. Improved engagement of alumni could enable USAID to maintain the necessary contacts to conduct these longitudinal evaluations. Interview respondents also suggested that program alumni are engaged in mentoring future program participants.

I was involved in the MEPI program – the first year, they have an event, and the next year, they bring back the alumni of this activity to help organize the same event. We meet with each other, get training, go to the US, and we acquire skills that the local USAID Mission could benefit from.

-- Peace Scholar from Jordan

A final point about sustainability comes from a Siraj participant in Jordan. She was a participant and officer for the Siraj program since its inception, but she reported that she felt the program had recently changed. She said that, in the interests of promoting sustainability and ensuring that the program would continue after USAID funding ceased, the implementing partners had

⁶ OMEP. (2010). Arab World Social Innovators Draft Evaluation Report. Washington, D.C. USAID, p. 14.

⁷ *Ibid*, p. 18.

introduced certain innovations to the program that she felt diminished the role that youth played in the organization.

For long periods I had networked with them, and I was really passionate about Siraj, but at some point, things stopped. They wanted to improve the program, to establish a club space to guarantee the program's sustainability, but it changed the program. It started being more like the other youth programs in Jordan – just building success stories but not really making change. You could feel how the spirit of the program changed and the youth didn't accept it. They don't want to be part of some of these average youth programs, these corrupted programs. Youth can feel it when they really belong.

-- Siraj Participant in Jordan

Thus, while sustainable programs are clearly a desired outcome for USAID-funded activities, it is important to promote sustainability in a way that honors the intent of the program and the motivations of those who are engaged in it. Youth in the MENA region are particularly sensitive to any perceived political agenda in U.S.-funded programs, so it is important to ensure that youth do not perceive any underlying political motives that might inhibit the program's success. Allowing the youth's interests and ideas to be the catalyst for program development was seen as a particularly effective strategy in preventing this perception from developing. Change, according to an implementer, must be organic and endorsed locally to be effective. Therefore, looking forward, community support and buy-in are essential elements in any successfully-implemented youth initiative.

D. Challenges

Research Questions: What were the challenges each program faced in implementation? How were the challenges addressed? What kinds of insights do these challenges provide for further work with youth in the region?

Challenges faced during implementation can be grouped into two general categories: (1) challenges that are specific to the MENA region, and (2) challenges related to a regional programming model.

Implementation Challenges in the MENA region

Language Barriers. Language was identified as a programmatic challenge in all programs. The AWSI Draft Evaluation Report states: “Innovators expressed that having English as the primary means of communication was a barrier and affected their participation. They would have found the activities more useful if Arabic had been the main language.”⁸ According to the report, the AWSI IP (Synergos) had made arrangements to provide some English language classes to the Innovators to alleviate this issue. As mentioned earlier, the Peace Scholars selection process required a minimum TOEFL score of 500 to be eligible for the program. Although the PS IPs (World Learning/IIE) sought to minimize the impact of this challenge by extensive recruiting efforts, this requirement limited the pool of applicants from rural and marginalized communities, who were less likely to have sufficient exposure to English to achieve this level of proficiency.

Though the original intent was to select participants from underserved peri-urban and rural areas the TOEFL requirements made this selection difficult.

-- Peace Scholars Implementing Partner in Egypt

Language also limited the depth of interaction of the program participants during the trainings and networking events. The variety of Arabic dialects that are used across the countries in which OMEP programs are implemented can complicate communication and training efforts. This was especially challenging in providing training to a diverse group such as the Peace Scholars participants, where students from Morocco and Lebanon may not be able to communicate effectively in their respective Arabic dialects. This made the month-long, Cairo-based training a challenge, but also encouraged the Peace Scholars to work collaboratively to ensure that participants understood each other.

Due to the paucity of training materials in Arabic, the Siraj project had to develop its own Arabic-language toolkit to reach out to the non-English speaking youth. Based on response to the online survey, where respondents chose independently to take the survey in English or in Arabic, the Siraj participants were the most likely to choose the Arabic-language version, suggesting a lower level of comfort in reading English. Out of 46 respondents who identified themselves as Siraj participants, 30 selected the Arabic version and 16 took the English version.

⁸ AWSI Draft Evaluation Report, p. 19.

In contrast, the Peace Scholars, who spent a year in the United States and are presumably more comfortable in reading English, 29 out of the 31 respondents took the survey in English. About half the AWSI respondents selected Arabic. While this is not a scientific measure, it does suggest that the Siraj program participants do not have as great a confidence with English as did the Peace Scholars. Providing Siraj training materials in Arabic would ensure that they are accessible to the beneficiaries.

Access Issues: Security, Mobility and the Legal Environment. The IPs identified access to certain target groups and areas as challenging. Difficult access may be attributed to a wide variety of factors such as geographical or political boundaries, security issues, cultural norms or access to technology. Examples include: delayed implementation of the Siraj project in Lebanon due to security issues; limited participations by Palestinians in international travel and events due to their lack of ability to leave Israel; limited participation of young women in certain of Siraj’s mixed-sex youth events due to cultural norms; and limited access to communication technologies constrained networking via the internet.

In some cases, such as the delayed implementation in Lebanon, these issues simply required patience and persistence in order to get the program started. In cases of limited mobility, implementing partners made accommodations to mitigate the issue as best they could, such as using web-based virtual conferencing to include Palestinian participants in training sessions and networking events. In regards to limited mobility of young women who may face opposition from family members to volunteer outside the home, IP representatives dialogued with the community to educate them about the program and to highlight the benefits for the community of youth participation.

In tribal areas where people didn't accept the program either for security reasons or as a result of some religious ... perspective of youth volunteers, particularly girls ... we conducted several meetings and presentations with sheikhs, dignitaries and preachers of mosques and some parents and teachers. We talked about many issues related to voluntary work and the resulting benefits for the communities and youth.

-- Siraj Implementing Partner in Yemen

Laws and legal regulations under which civil society organizations operate vary widely across the MENA region. For example, in the case of AWSI, channeling financial grants to the Innovators in Egypt proved to be much more challenging than to Lebanon where the laws on international donations are less restrictive. The AWSI Draft Evaluation Report identifies “interference of the political powers” and “no cooperation from the local government to facilitate the bureaucratic process that NGOs face such as licenses, paperwork, procedures, etc.” as major challenges. Synergos overcame these obstacles through “mobilizing local pressure” and “building balanced relations with political parties.”⁹ For Siraj, Save the Children provided the legal umbrella under which the youth initiatives were able to implement their activities in Egypt similarly to their local partner Nahdet El Mahrousa that provides the legal frame for their incubated innovators’ social enterprises.

⁹ AWSI Draft Evaluation Report, p. 16.

Challenges of the Regional Programming Model

Both the implementing partners and the program participants stressed the importance and potential benefits of regional programming, especially in terms of networking, despite the challenges involved with such regional initiatives. Besides the common implementation and logistical challenges regional programs face in terms of managing, monitoring and following up/sustaining the program results, all of the programs identified challenges they faced in promoting regional networks, adapting to regional differences, and collaborating effectively with partners and participants.

Networking. The challenges that are present in nationally-implemented programs are magnified in a regional program, where the number of beneficiaries is larger and they are more widely dispersed. The lack of mobility of some participants (especially Palestinians) and geographical distances (especially for Moroccans) limited the quantity of direct interaction that participants experienced. These face-to-face opportunities to collaborate and share resources were seen as one of the primary benefits of a regionally-implemented program, but all of the respondents who commented on this issue expressed a desire for more regional workshops, trainings and networking events. As the cost for these events is high, it is important to provide sufficient funding to enable these events to take place on a regular basis and account for the expense of bringing participants from more distant locations.

Regional Diversity in Youth. In considering whether youth needs across the region are similar enough to be targeted by the same project, the implementers felt that designing and delivering a training program that is relevant and accessible to the diverse groups found in the MENA region requires sufficient flexibility to reach all target audiences. The Siraj project has continuously adjusted its training toolkit based on the experiences and input of youth across the region, adapting it to the different country programs in order to make it more relevant to local contexts. As the Siraj program is designed to be flexible and provide space for youth to develop individual initiatives, each country's program is slightly different. While this is considered a main strength of the Siraj program, it does require administration at the regional and national levels to coordinate activities and be sensitive to local communities' needs.

Youth are sufficiently similar across the region to be targeted by the same program as long as there is sufficient flexibility to accommodate different youth needs.

-- Peace Scholars Implementing Partner in Egypt

Outreach to Partners and Participants. Identifying and engaging local partners with the same level of commitment and passion to the program goals can be challenging for a regionally-implemented program, as the entire program is managed from one central location. Adequate follow-up with program participants also is a challenge for a regional program in which beneficiaries live in at least five different countries. Sustained momentum created by the training and program activities might be affected if there is not a locally-based representative to follow up with it. Those limitations can be mitigated by having national representatives in each country where the program is implemented, to handle local outreach.

One additional challenge was cited by both Peace Scholars and Social Innovators that does not fit neatly into the two categories: choosing between their project and a career. Entrepreneurial endeavors require significant time investments, as well as capital, and a number of participants had to postpone or abandon their projects in order to support themselves and their families. The AWSI Draft Evaluation Report cited “balancing between the obligation to further the initiative [and] the need to earn a living” as a major challenge of the program.¹⁰ The project alleviated this issue by including a personal salary in the annual financial award, so that participants could focus on their initiatives. However, the Peace Scholars program did not offer this option, and some participants identified this as a major challenge to their continued investment in their projects.

Some people can make the project their career, but others have bills to pay ... it's kind of hard for the project to be implemented, to bring back income and be a career, this takes a couple of years at least. So it's either you stop your life and do your project, or you get your career and the project has to wait for a few years. So it was a very hard decision ... to have to stop and think: should I do this or that? I never thought it would be either/or. I thought it was something that would work together somehow.

-- Peace Scholar from Morocco

¹⁰ AWSI Draft Evaluation Report, p. 17.

E. Information Sharing

Research Questions: Was there any contact or information sharing among these four OMEP activities? If not, why not? What measures could be put in place to ensure more effective communication and sharing of information among similar activities in the future?

Information from this review clearly indicates that communication among the four programs was minimal and if any, occurred outside formal, structured information-sharing systems and mechanisms. However, some of the IP representatives indicated that they had done some networking with the other OMEP projects, as well as with other youth-serving organizations active in the region. Based on survey and interview findings in this study, it appears that the Peace Scholars program was the most adept at building bridges with the other OMEP programs.

We did some networking with some of the Social Innovators ... some working with Alam Simsim. We networked with Siraj, Injaz to identify participants.

-- Peace Scholars Implementing Partner at the IP Workshop

We did use a Synergos program (AWSI) participant as a speaker/presenter for the [Peace Scholars] workshop on social entrepreneurship.

-- Peace Scholars Implementing Partner in the United States

Some of these contacts were initiated by the implementers themselves at the projects' inception phase, either in the general framework of meetings with youth organizations doing similar work or in seeking nominations of youth candidates to participate in their programs. The IP representatives from the AWSI program also mentioned that some of their participants also benefit from Siraj financial assistance but there was no direct coordination on these issues between the implementers on the organizational or programmatic levels.

The AWSI project was particularly resourceful in facilitating networking opportunities for the Innovators. According to the AWSI Draft Evaluation Report, Synergos arranged training volunteers from the firm Booz Allen Hamilton to provide management consulting services to the Innovators. AWSI participants were also effective in networking with local business communities: 24 percent of the Innovators had identified funding sources in their local communities. They also networked with international organizations, including "Save the Children, the Canadian International Development Agency, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, [and] UNDP..."¹¹ However, the AWSI Evaluation Report also report that Innovators had limited results in initiating a network between the program participants themselves due to the fact that the Innovators work in different sectors of interest. In contrast, feedback from interviews with the Peace Scholars evinced much stronger networks among the participants themselves but fewer external networking opportunities.

¹¹ AWSI Draft Evaluation Report, p. 16.

The Implementing Partners of the four projects did not share information systematically across projects. These relationships were not facilitated by USAID until the IP Workshop, which was the first opportunity organized by USAID for IP representatives of the four programs to meet and share their experiences. All of the workshop attendees expressed enthusiasm and appreciation for this opportunity and these types of activities should be conducted more frequently. Activities such as the focus groups also provided opportunities for the youth respondents to share their various experiences.

Finally, some of the program implementers pointed out the importance of coordination with other donors that have projects and resources targeting the same sectors of assistance where opportunities exist for collaboration and leveraging of resources that would aid in avoiding redundancy of programming. A couple of implementing partners mentioned collaborating with UN Agencies such as UNICEF or UNFPA, as well as with other organizations such as the World Bank and Oxfam. However, these alliances were serendipitous and most often established on a personal, rather than an institutional basis. All of the implementing partners expressed desire for more comprehensive and organized cooperation between donor agencies.

F. Future Research Agenda

Research Questions: Based on the experiences with these four activities, what are elements of a future research agenda related to youth development in the region? What gaps in learning and knowledge sharing would these four programs identify?

During the IP Workshop, the IP representatives were asked to identify five to ten research topics that OMEP should undertake to provide greater insight into youth issues and youth programming in the MENA region. Based on the topics that were discussed in the previous sessions, the participants prioritized subjects that would help them develop improved programs for youth in the MENA region. The most important of these subjects are:

1. What soft skills are most important to youth; are they country-specific or do they follow regional trends?
2. What can be learned by more in-depth research on vocational education and training? Why is there a gap between youths' skills and employers' needs despite all the efforts to improve the former? Why are youth not engaging in vocational training? Why are women not more attracted to technical fields?
3. How can media be used more effectively to reach program goals?
4. What informal youth organizations exist in the region, including religious groups, and how might USAID engage these groups?
5. Leadership – what is a leader? How can leadership skills best be assessed?
6. Volunteerism – what are the attributes of a volunteer and what motivates people to volunteer in their communities?
7. What is the connection between the level of democracy in a particular country and the level of youth engagement in development?
8. What are the characteristics of the best enabling environment – e.g., democracy and its correlation to youth development?
9. What attracts youth to extremist groups? What are the various push/pull factors, negative and positive?
10. What types of baseline assessments of youth in the region are needed to reveal key issues relating to attitudes and “soft skills”? If we consider effective leaders to be tolerant, what are those existing tolerance levels? What levels of attributes such as critical thinking exist? What are the levels of collaboration between youth within a country and across the region?

11. What do youth aspire to? What attitudinal issues affect employability (e.g., everyone aspires to be a doctor or a lawyer)?
12. Who are the most important role models? What are their attributes?
13. What do youth consider to be their main assets at this time?
14. What tools and resources exist that could be useful (such as a tool called ADAPT that has been applied successfully)?
15. How can links with existing research resources (e.g. the Brookings Institution) be engaged and strengthened, so as to avoid reinventing the wheel?

While the issue of defining marginalized communities was not revisited during the workshop session on the future research agenda, the IPs clearly sought further guidance on this issue. Research activities that map out disadvantaged populations on a sub-national scale could be a useful tool for identifying these communities for high-priority locations.

Respondents to the semi-structured interviews also were asked about their information and research needs. Many of these echoed themes that were suggested above, which most frequently included needs assessments and more geographically disaggregated studies on drop-out or unemployment rates. Baseline studies and longitudinal tracking of program outcomes were also suggested.

More research should be done before the implementation of a project so that implementation is carried out effectively and efficiently ... We [also] have to have information about the living standards and living needs in every country as well as identify job market needs.

-- Siraj Participant from Lebanon

Larger scale research but [on] a smaller group. Not saying 'of the youth in the Middle East, 94% are such and such.' For me, this doesn't happen, it's not measuring anything.

-- Peace Scholar from Morocco

Finally, many respondents requested a database of other projects and program participants existing in the region. Although there was a strong desire for regional networking expressed by respondents of all types and from all locations, this was always mitigated by a sense that without such a database, synergies were only achieved through serendipitous meetings.

USAID has never brokered these relationships and they would have to facilitate introductions. Otherwise, it would have to be just a chance meeting.

-- Implementing Partner from the United States

Information needed for such a movement would be a database of all youth groups that have formed initiatives in their own societies ... This first step would be essential in order to form a committee of representatives of those groups in order to discuss the next steps.

-- Focus Group Respondent in Lebanon

Create a website or portal through which the [program] participants can communicate as well as foster meetings for [program] youth committees.

-- Implementing Partner from Lebanon

In several cases, program participants themselves were uninformed about youth-focused events in their local areas. They suggested that USAID develop a newsletter that would be sent to all youth program alumni in the region, to inform them of youth-focused events in their communities and across the region.

It is a pity that we in Bethlehem area do not know much about Siraj activities in Nablus, not to mention Siraj regional activities.

-- Siraj Participant in Palestine

We get really disappointed when we see on the news that they had such-and-such event for youth in your country and we didn't know about it.

-- Peace Scholar from Morocco

IV. Conclusions and Recommendations

1. Defining Marginalized Youth. Each of the four programs examined in this study has been implemented slightly differently, but they all seek to empower youth, promote leadership and build capacity among youth in the MENA region in order to reduce their sense of disenfranchisement. The IP representatives felt that USAID’s definition of what constitutes a “marginalized” or “disenfranchised” youth is not clearly defined and that the OMEP programs would benefit from a more clearly-defined vision of these target beneficiaries. In addition, each program’s understanding of this concept and how it is manifested in their target communities affects the program’s implementation. For example, recruitment for the Peace Scholars program sought to find youth in rural communities or areas with low socio-economic status. In contrast, the Siraj program considers all Arab youth to be marginalized, so the entire youth population of a country is considered potential participants. This broader definition certainly aids in recruiting participants, but may not reach those whose needs are greatest.

Recommendation

Conduct research in order to identify the communities with the greatest needs on a sub-national scale. Implementing partner representatives clearly sought more specific guidance in defining marginalized communities. Sub-national mapping of the communities with the greatest need would provide clear direction for recruiting processes and make the implementation process more efficient. It would also ensure that IPs are targeting the most appropriate beneficiaries to meet the overarching goal of reducing youth marginalization.

2. Multiple Levels of Administration among Implementing Organizations. Youth across the MENA region have many similarities that make regional programming useful to streamline program delivery and eliminate duplication. However, differences between youth in the region must be taken into account in order to ensure that programming is relevant and useful to the participants. Adopting a hybrid model of program administration, with local offices administered by a regional management core, would establish the necessary level of coordination to track beneficiaries and outcomes across countries, and simultaneously allow the model to adapt to local contexts.

Recommendation

Build a hybrid model of program implementation into project design. Implementing partner firms should have a presence both in Cairo (to manage the activity at the regional level, maintain a comprehensive participant database and liaise with the OMEP office and other implementing partner representatives) and in each country in which the program is implemented. A local presence was seen as a huge asset by program participants, as it gave them a greater sense of USAID’s commitment to the project and aided adaptation to local contexts.

3. Programming Models: A Peace Scholar versus a Siraj Participant. Based on the data gathered, the Peace Scholarship program had a more profound effect on youth’s skills, abilities and attitudes than the Siraj youth program experiences. Siraj’s youth-led initiatives strategy was an asset to the program because it ensures that implementers have sufficient flexibility to adapt

activities to local contexts and youth's interests. It also builds legitimacy for USAID programs because the activities are developed by the youth themselves, which alleviates any potential concern about an underlying political agenda. While some of the Siraj respondents who were involved as trainers and facilitators of ToT displayed a high level of motivation and civic engagement, there were a larger number of respondents who were marginally involved in the program and thus experienced a smaller impact than the Peace Scholars. Considering the intensive program investments in the Peace Scholars versus the minimal trainings, involvement and commitment of the Siraj program participants, it is not surprising that the Peace Scholarship program had a more profound impact on its beneficiaries. The fact that many of the respondents who were identified as Siraj participants had little to no knowledge of the program suggests that the lack of structure may affect the quality of the program.

Recommendation

Promote youth-led initiatives but focus on quality, rather than quantity, of participants.

Building on the lessons learned from the Peace Scholars and Siraj experience, a larger investment in a smaller number of participants produced a greater impact in the program's beneficiaries. It is possible to replicate the success of the youth-led initiatives with other activities, and this should be a priority for any youth-focused activity in the MENA region. However, the number of beneficiaries should be limited to a number that is feasible in order to maximize the investment's impact on each participant.

4. *Recruitment of Girls.* Implementing partners expected the recruitment of female participants to be a challenge due to social norms in the MENA region limiting women's activities outside the home. In some cases, this was not as difficult as they expected it to be but in other cases, implementing partners had to work with the local communities to earn their trust and support for young women's involvement. However, when young women did participate in these programs, it enabled them to become more involved in their communities, which was seen as a positive outcome by participants and IPs alike.

Recommendation

Continue to work with local communities to enable girls' participation. Liaise with community leaders to explain the benefits of development activities and promote transparency. These strategies have been shown to be effective in increasing girls' participation and should be used more widely.

5. *Defining the Youth Cohort.* The Siraj program defines youth as being between the ages of 18 and 30. Based on their experiences, this age range is appropriate for these programs. The fact that AWSI is grouped with the youth programs is somewhat problematic because most of their participants are outside this age range and have different needs and concerns than younger individuals. Many of the participants from Siraj and Peace Scholars reported that their primary concern was employment; conversely, the AWSI participants who responded to the online survey were all employed or were not seeking work. In addition, whereas the AWSI participants were working on established projects, a number of the Peace Scholars reported that they were forced by economic concerns to choose between working on their project or getting a job. They were concerned about their ability to pursue their dreams and still support a family. While the

decision to have AWSI grouped with the youth programs is understandable from a programmatic perspective (social entrepreneurship projects require many of the same resources that the Peace Scholars' activities need), it is not a perfect fit.

Recommendation

Continue to work with youth between the ages of 18 – 30. Based on feedback from the respondents, this is the appropriate age range for these types of interventions. Potential participants below the age of 18 will still be completing their secondary education, and will be focused on preparing for graduation exams. Those older than 30 may benefit from programs, but have different priorities, as shown by the AWSI participants who responded to the online survey.

6. *Length of Exchange Scholarships.* The Peace Scholars program was highly successful in developing leadership potential and increasing mutual understanding, but with less than 50 beneficiaries, its scope was limited. Funding a student to travel to the United States and study for a year in an American university is expensive. However, the IP representatives from the Peace Scholars program felt that most of the desired benefits are achieved within the first semester of the exchange. Reducing the length of the exchange may enable USAID to reach a larger number of beneficiaries in future programs.

Recommendation

Continue to offer regionally-implemented youth programming. Although implementing partners and participants acknowledged the challenges of regionally-implemented programs, the general consensus was that the potential gains far outweighed the challenges. As the regional office, OMEP is in a unique position among the USAID Missions in the MENA region to adopt a regional lens in designing and implementing youth programs. This perspective was highly valued by all respondents, who recognized the potential inherent in building regional networks for increasing cooperation and collaboration between youth in the region. As three of the four programs examined in this review are scheduled to end in the coming months, OMEP has an opportunity to design a new array of programs that build on the key lessons learned from the implementation of Peace Scholars and Siraj. Specifically, these lessons include: youth ownership of the program increases relevance, flexibility and legitimacy of the project, and a clearer definition of target beneficiaries increases the IPs ability to identify and recruit participants with the greatest need.

7. *Expanded Tracking of Beneficiaries.* A large number of respondents – both IPs and participants – requested that USAID develop a database of individuals who have participated in youth programs. They felt that this lack of information inhibited youth's ability to identify potential contacts for networking who have similar interests and activities. In addition, as many of the expected outcomes of these programs take time to be fully realized, program implementers and beneficiaries alike feel that USAID should maintain contact with these program alumni and evaluate project outcomes at least five years after the programs end, in order to better understand the impact of their programming on the lives of the young people who participate in the program.

Internet-based tools such as social networking sites could assist in the tracking and contacting of these individuals after their involvement in the program ends.

Recommendations

Conduct long-term impact evaluations to better understand the impact of leadership-building efforts. While this type of research does require long-term tracking of beneficiaries, the current strategy of assessing impact immediately after a program ends does not capture the full value of USAID's investment. Implementing partner representatives recommended allowing at least three to five years for youth to apply the skills they have learned and to capitalize on the networks these programs have built, before assessing the success of the activity. This is especially important for a youth program, where the beneficiaries are working to establish themselves and may not have sufficient perspective to identify all of the benefits they have reaped from their participation.

Utilize Social Networking to Maintain Contact with Participants. These types of websites offer two distinct advantages: 1) they are an inexpensive means to disseminate information about events and resources of interest to youth participants, and 2) they would assist OMEP in maintaining contact with program alumni over a longer period of time. Participants requested regionally-focused electronic newsletters, which are excellent strategies for sharing programs' success stories and keeping stakeholders engaged after their program ends. Partner organizations could assist in developing content by providing regular and current materials on the successes and challenges/solutions to challenges of their programs.

8. Internal Organizational Development. The implementation of the four OMEP youth initiatives has developed the implementing partners' capacity in youth programming and design. The lessons learned from these experiences will be put to good use in future programming should such opportunities open up. As one of the implementing partner representatives from El Karma edutainment acknowledged, their involvement with the MEYMI project and USAID has benefitted them greatly in terms of internal organizational development with such programs.

Recommendation

Promote further capacity development of local implementing partners. The experience of working with USAID is beneficial to their organizational development and promotes sustainability of program activities even after the program itself has closed out.

9. Facilitate Networking among Implementing Partners. Implementing partners rely on USAID to facilitate contacts between partners. These networks could be beneficial resources for other USAID investments in the region – including speakers, mentors and youth workers, as well as sources for identifying participants for future programs. IPs expressed interest in sharing resources, best practices and lessons learned in youth programming, but networks for this are not yet well-established. One implementer cited as an example the MEYMI “Public Opinion Research Report” that made available information about youth characteristics, role models, that would have provided valuable insights into ‘youth issues’ to guide their programming and implementation but it was not widely disseminated.

Recommendation

Conduct Annual Workshops with Implementing Partner Organizations. These events should undertake a shared review of the programs' last year's achievements and challenges and also reflect on a collective vision and relevant strategies as to how these challenges can be tackled in the upcoming year. One of the biggest benefits of regional programs is the potential to share resources; this has not been maximized to its full potential thus far. Facilitating relationships with implementing partner organizations through regularly-scheduled networking events will enable these organizations to expand cooperation and leverage USAID's investments.

10. OMEP's Role in the Region. There is great potential for the OMEP office to fill the role of information disseminators that would help to promote networking throughout the region. Lack of information was evident across stakeholders – from IP representatives to program participants, respondents asked for more information in order to take advantage of the great potential existing in the region. The OMEP office could develop and administer a regional database of program participants, facilitate relationships between implementing partners to encourage sharing of resources, and organize regional workshops and events that bring youth or IPs from across the region together. These types of activities were highly valued and viewed as a necessary step in building successful regional networks. In addition, many of the research ideas suggested by respondents already exist; OMEP could assist in the dissemination of these resources, which would enhance the value of USAID's investment in research on youth issues in the region. Innovative tools such as social networking sites could be used to keep stakeholders informed, while simultaneously enabling USAID to maintain contact with program participants over a longer period of time.

Recommendations

OMEP should expand their facilitation role across the region. Stakeholders identified a need for information such as regional participant databases, improved coordination between implementing partner organizations, and periodic notification of events and resources relevant to youth programming in the region. These stakeholders rely on the OMEP office to facilitate introductions between partners, organize regional meetings and networking events, and disseminate research that would be relevant to youth development in the region. This review illuminated the fact that these relationships do not occur spontaneously and stakeholders rely on OMEP to facilitate introductions and provide the information necessary for them to take initiative where appropriate to establish their own relationships.

OMEP should take the leadership in the identification and dissemination of research reports and studies that are produced either by its own research center or through one of its implementing organizations. Respondents identified a large number of regionally-based studies and information gaps that OMEP could fill. Dissemination of these reports in a comprehensive manner would ensure that USAID's investment in developing this information would be fully maximized, and promote a culture of research that is not as prevalent in the MENA region at the current time.

Appendix A: Workshop Agenda and Participant List

WORKSHOP AGENDA	
Session I 9:00 – 10:30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welcome: OMEP Deputy Director Jim Wright • Introduction to the workshop objectives, program, and activities • 10-15 minute program presentations: accomplishments and opportunities • Review and prioritize a list programmatic assumptions noted in the review of literature – small groups
Coffee Break: 10:30 – 11:00	
Session II 11:00 – 1:00	Developing a list of Challenges and Lessons Learned: Best Practices for youth programming <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overview and discussion • <i>Small group assignments: What refinements could occur in each program to assure greater impact? What were the indicators of program success? Who should be the beneficiaries?</i>
Lunch Break: 1:00 – 2:00	
Session III: 2:00 – 3:30	Recommendations for sustainability of program investments for youth: impact assessments tools: What follow-up is needed for each Program <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overview • <i>Small group assignments: Suggestions for strengthening Regional Networking and information dissemination. What challenges were faced in the implementation of a regional program and how to best overcome them?</i>
Closing Session 3:30 – 4:30	Outline Research and information needs for improved future regional programming for youth. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Summarize Strengths and Weaknesses of youth programming in the region • Closing remarks – OMEP Deputy Director Jim Wright

Workshop Participants

	Name	Organization	Program	Position
1	Liz Khalifa	Institute of International Education	Peace Scholarships	Director
2	Yasmine El Bendary	Institute of International Education	Peace Scholarships	Program Manager
3	Mr. Tarek Amin	El Karma Edutainment	Middle East Youth Media Initiative	Managing Director
4	Mr. Mohamed Tantawi	El Karma Edutainment	Middle East Youth Media Initiative	Commercial Director
5	Tamer Kirolos	Save The Children	SIRAJ – Jordan	Deputy Country Director
6	Saba Mobaslat	Save the Children	SIRAJ – Jordan	Interim Director for Program Quality & Development -Youth Sector Manager
7	Mehrinaz El Awady	Save the Children	SIRAJ Egypt	Program Quality and Support Manager
8	Ali Abdel Mohsen	Save the Children	SIRAJ Egypt	Siraj Program Officer-Egypt Country Office
9	Sabah Badri Bakeer	Save the Children	SIRAJ Yemen	Siraj Program Officer-Yemen Country Office
10	Shareef Mohammed Al Ashwal	Save the Children	SIRAJ Yemen	Siraj Program Officer-Yemen Country Office
USAID-OMEPE				
1	Refaat Shafeek	USAID	OMEPE	Regional Monitoring & Evaluation Specialist, OMEPE
2	Wafaa El Adawy	USAID	OMEPE	Project Management Assistant, OMEPE
3	Jim Wright	USAID	OMEPE	Deputy Director, OMEPE
4	Amira Radwan	USAID	OMEPE	Senior Media Specialist, Democracy & Governance Office
5	Mike Reilly	USAID	OMEPE	Program Officer, OMEPE
6	Dr. Adly Hassanein	USAID	OMEPE	Regional Development Research Manager, OMEPE
7	Amira Taha	USAID	OMEPE	Regional Development Research Analyst, OMEPE

Interview Questions for Implementing Organizations

BENEFICIARIES

1. How were the original target beneficiaries defined for your program in terms of age, gender, economic status and geographic location?
2. Did these target beneficiaries change over the life of the program? If so, in what way? What was the motivation for this change?
3. In your projects' case, how did each of you define the category of "youth?" With the experience that you've now had, would you change that definition?

HYPOTHESES

4. When the program started, what were your assumptions about the needs of youth in the region in terms of further academic training, employability, entrepreneurial skills, etc.? Did this change over the life of the project? If so, in what way?
5. What common needs or experiences do youth have between countries in the region that would impact how USAID develops youth programs?
6. What significant differences exist among youth between countries that should be taken into account in providing development assistance?
7. How did the regional nature of the project(s) more effective? What benefits and obstacles do you see from working from a regional perspective?

SUSTAINABILITY

8. What steps has your program taken to promote sustainability?
9. Has your program developed tools or methodologies to measure whether the skills that participants learn in your program are applied in other contexts?

10. Are any of these tools or methodologies adaptable for wider regional dissemination?

PROGRAMMING CHALLENGES

11. What challenges did your program face in the design, implementation, and follow-up process? When you encountered challenges, what did you do? What kinds of changes did you make in your programming as a result?

12. What kinds of lessons learned do these experiences offer that could be applied to further youth development work in the region?

INFORMATION SHARING

13. Has your program engaged in any information sharing with the implementing partners of the other OMEP activities, prior to this meeting?

a. If so, what type of information was shared? Did you find this exercise useful to your program's success?

b. If not, why not? Were there obstacles that discouraged this type of collaboration?

14. How could information exchanges be facilitated to make dialogue more frequent and effective for future programs?

15. Have you dialogued with or collaborated with other donors besides OMEP through this project?

FUTURE RESEARCH AGENDA

16. Based on your experiences and observations what research is needed on Youth?

17. What gaps in learning and knowledge sharing have you identified through your own experiences that OMEP should be aware of in developing future youth programs?

NB: The above are sample questions that might not be applicable in all interviews. The Local Researcher will have to exercise his own professional judgment as to what questions are applicable in each interview.

***Interview and Focus Group Questions for
Program Participants / Beneficiaries***

1. Based on your own personal experience and your interaction with other youths during the “program”, what are the common challenges that youth are facing across the region?
2. By order of importance (as in negative consequences), what do you consider are the most critical ones?
3. Do you consider that the “program” was successful in addressing these challenges?
4. If Yes, identify successful cases and analyze the elements that made it successful
5. If No, identify areas of the “program’s” weaknesses that could be improved for better targeting of the underlying youth issues
6. Do you think that the program youth initiatives were successful in drawing youth away from “extremism”? If yes, how? If no, Why?
7. What should be the goals of Regional Programs for youth?
8. Are there any benefits to be drawn out of regional programs for youth? What are these benefits? Were they made available in your program?
9. Why did you participate in your program and what were your expectations?
10. Was your program relevant given your professional and career needs?
11. What activities were most useful and least useful?
12. What new skills and/ or change of attitudes do you now have given your participation in the program?
13. How can you help develop regional support networks among youth?
14. If you were in charge of designing youth regional programs, what would be your research / information needs that we can assist you with?

OMEP Youth Participant Survey

1. BACKGROUND

Thank you for your participation in this survey. All of the information that you share with us is strictly confidential. We do not identify participants by name or position. Only aggregated statistical data will be reported. Your name will not be used without your permission.

1. Name (optional)

2. Sex

Male

Female

3. Marital Status

Married

Not Married

4. Age Range

14 - 17 years old

18 - 22 years old

23 - 30 years old

31 and over

5. Level of Education

Did not complete secondary school

Graduated from secondary school

Some college or university

Bachelor's Degree

Master's Degree

Doctorate (Ph.D.)

Other (please specify)

6. Are you currently employed?

Yes

No

OMEP Youth Participant Survey

7. If you are not currently employed, are you looking for work?

Yes

No

8. Which statement best describes your standard of living?

Needy

Able to satisfy basic needs

Well-off (satisfy basic needs and have money left over)

9. Which location best describes the area where your home is located?

Urban

Rural

10. In which country do you currently reside?

Egypt

Jordan

Palestine (West Bank or Gaza)

Morocco

Yemen

Lebanon

Other (please specify)

11. Have you lived in this country since your participation in this program?

Yes

No

If no, please identify where you lived and for how long.

	5
	6

2. PROJECT INVOLVEMENT

OMEP Youth Participant Survey

12. In which program did you participate?

- Peace Scholars
- Arab World Social Innovators (AWSI)
- Siraj (Youth Leadership Development Initiative in the Arab World)

13. In which year did you begin to participate in this program?

- 2006
- 2007
- 2008
- 2009
- 2010

14. Overall, for how long did you participate in this program?

- Less than one week
- Less than one month
- 1 - 5 months
- 6 - 11 months
- 12+ months

What types of initiatives did you participate in? (you can select more than one option)

15. Training and Capacity Building

- Workshops
- Seminars
- Conferences
- Trainings
- Academic Study Abroad

Other (please specify)

16. Financial Grants

- less than \$1,000
- between \$1,000 - \$5,000
- more than \$5,000 but less than \$10,000
- more than \$10,000

OMEP Youth Participant Survey

17. Networking Activities

- National events
- Regional meetings
- Mentoring activities
- Peer support
- Experience exchanges
- International conferences

Other (please specify)

18. How did your participation in this program affect you in the following areas?

	Greatly increased	Slightly increased	Did not change	Don't know/not applicable
Technical and professional knowledge	jn	jn	jn	jn
Personal development	jn	jn	jn	jn
Leadership skills	jn	jn	jn	jn
Regional and international exposure and understanding	jn	jn	jn	jn
Access to regional and international networks	jn	jn	jn	jn

3. RELEVANCE

19. How much of what you learned through participation in this project can you put into practice in your current activities?

- A great deal
- Some
- A little bit
- None
- Don't know/not applicable

20. How would you rate the relevance of this project in supporting your personal and professional goals?

	Extremely useful	Somewhat useful	Neutral	Not very useful	Not at all useful	Don't know/not applicable
Personally	jn	jn	jn	jn	jn	jn
Professionally	jn	jn	jn	jn	jn	jn

OMEP Youth Participant Survey

4. SUSTAINABILITY

21. Since you completed your initial training and program activities, has the project offered your support and networking opportunities?

- Yes
- No (if no, please skip to question #26)
- Don't know/not applicable

22. If yes, what type of networking or support has been offered? (you can select more than one option)

- Website
- Newsletters
- Graduate organization
- National networks
- Regional networks
- Other networking events (meetings, seminars, conferences, etc.)

Other (please specify)

23. If yes, have you participated in these activities?

- Yes
- No

24. If you have participated in these activities, how would you rate their quality?

- Excellent
- Good
- Average
- Poor
- Very Poor

25. If you have participated in these activities, have you found them to be useful to your personal and professional development?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know/not applicable

OMEP Youth Participant Survey

26. Do you plan to participate in future program networking events?

Yes

No

Don't know/not applicable

27. If you have not been offered any networking opportunities, do you think that they would be beneficial to your personal and professional development?

Yes

No

Don't know/not applicable

28. Do you have any suggestions to improve networking and alumni events?

29. Do you continue to communicate with individuals and organizations you met through this program?

Yes

No

If yes, how many?

30. If yes, are these individuals from a different country or region than where you live?

Yes

No

31. If yes, are these contacts beneficial to your personal and professional development?

	Very beneficial	Somewhat beneficial	Not very beneficial	Not at all beneficial	Don't know/not applicable
Personal development	<input type="radio"/>				
Professional development	<input type="radio"/>				

32. This program is implemented regionally in the Middle East and North Africa. Do you see any benefit to this regional implementation?

33. Do you see any drawbacks to the regional implementation?

OMEP Youth Participant Survey

5. IMPACT

34. Since you started to participate in this program, have you volunteered with any organized groups that aim to improve social and economic conditions?

Yes

No

35. Since you started to participate in this program, have you formed any organized groups that aim to improve social and economic conditions?

Yes

No

36. If yes, did you fill a leadership role in this activity?

Yes

No

37. If yes, did your experiences in the program help you to play a leadership role?

Yes

No

OMEP Youth Participant Survey

38. Please tell us how the following leadership skills and abilities were affected by your participation in this program

	Significant growth	Modest growth	Little or no change
Being self-reliant and independent	jn	jn	jn
Speaking in public	jn	jn	jn
Listening to others' suggestions or concerns	jn	jn	jn
Expressing your ideas and feelings	jn	jn	jn
Being tolerant of others who are different than you	jn	jn	jn
Leading a team and motivating others	jn	jn	jn
Being flexible	jn	jn	jn
Solving problems	jn	jn	jn
Changing your plans to adapt to new opportunities	jn	jn	jn
Working to make changes in your community	jn	jn	jn
Willingness to take risks	jn	jn	jn
Negotiating with colleagues	jn	jn	jn
Summarizing complicated ideas	jn	jn	jn
Working within a budget	jn	jn	jn
Knowing how to advance your career	jn	jn	jn

39. How would you rate your satisfaction with the program overall?

- Very satisfied
- Somewhat satisfied
- Neutral
- Somewhat dissatisfied
- Very dissatisfied
- Don't know

OMEP Youth Participant Survey

40. What was the most beneficial outcome of your participation in this program?

41. In what ways could the program be improved?

42. Would you recommend this program to a friend or family member?

Yes

No

THANK YOU FOR YOUR COOPERATION AND PARTICIPATION IN THIS SURVEY!

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1. خلفية عن المشارك

نكر للبيانات التي ستزودنا بها سترقى سرية. لن يتم استخدام أسماء أو مناصب المشاركين. كل ما سيتم تناوله البحث هو البيانات الإحصائية التي يتم تجميعها وحسب. لن يتم استخدام اسمك من دون إذن مسبق منك.

1. الاسم - إختياري

2. الجنس

jm ذكر

jm أنثى

3. الوضع الإجتماعي

jm أعزب

jm متزوج

4. الفئة العمرية

jm 14 - 17

jm 18 - 22

jm 23 - 30

jm فوق الـ 30

5. مستوى التعليم

jm لم يتم إكمال المرحلة الثانوية

jm تم التخرج من المرحلة الثانوية

jm دراسة بضع سنوات في الكلية أو الجامعة

jm شهادة إجازة

jm شهادة ماجستير

jm شهادة دكتوراه

غير ذلك: رجاء حدد/ي

6. هل أنت موظف حالياً؟

jm نعم

jm لا

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7. إذا لم يكن وظيفتك تبحث حالياً عن فرصة عمل؟

jm نعم

jm لا

8. الدخل/مستوى المعيشة

jm معدم

jm قادر على تلبية الإحتياجات الأساسية

jm ميسور

9. موقع السكن

jm في المدينة

jm في الريف

10. بأية بلد تقيم حالياً؟

jm مصر

jm الأردن

jm (فلسطين) الضفة الغربية أو غزة

jm المغرب

jm اليمن

jm لبنان

غير ذلك - حدد رجاءً

11. هل تقيم بهذا البلد منذ مشاركتك في هذا المشروع؟

jm نعم

jm لا

إذا كان الجواب نفيًا، يرجى كتابة تقييماً لإقامة

2. الإنخراط بالمشروع

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12. بأي مشروع شاركت؟

طلاب السلام

المبدعون الإقليميون في العالم العربي (AWSI)

مبادرة تنمية القدرات القيادية للشباب في العالم العربي - سراج

13. بأي عام شاركتكم بهذا المشروع؟

2006

2007

2008

2009

2010

14. بصورة عامة، ما هي مدة مشاركتك في المشروع؟

أقل من أسبوع

أقل من شهر

أشهر 1 - 5

شهر 6 - 11

أكثر من 12 شهر

ما هي المبادرات التي استغدت منها؟ - يمكنك إختيار أكثر من خيار

15. تدريب وبناء قدرات

ورش عمل

ندوات

مؤتمرات

تدريب

دراسة أكاديمية في الخارج

غير ذلك

16. منح مالية

أقل من \$ 1000

بين \$1000 - 5000

أكثر من \$5000 وأقل من 10,000

أكثر من 10,000

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17. نشاطات التشبيك

- نشاطات وطنية
- اجتماعات إقليمية
- توجيه
- دعم من النظراء
- تبادل الخبرات
- مؤتمرات دولية

غير ذلك

18. كيف أثرت مشاركتك في هذا البرنامج على النواحي التالية؟

	ارتفعت بشكل ملحوظ	ارتفعت بشكل طفيف	لم تتغير	لا أعلم/لا ينطبق
معرفة فنية ومهنية	jn	jn	jn	jn
تطوير وتنمية الذات	jn	jn	jn	jn
مهارات قيادية	jn	jn	jn	jn
إنفتاح وتفاهم إقليمي وعالمي	jn	jn	jn	jn
الوصول إلى الشبكات الإقليمية والدولية	jn	jn	jn	jn

3. الأهمية

19. إلى أي مدى ستوظف ما إكتسبته من خلال مشاركتك في هذا المشروع في نشاطاتك الحالية؟

- إلى أبعد حد
- بعض الشيء
- القليل
- لا شيء
- لا أعلم/لا ينطبق

20. كيف تقيّم أهمية هذا المشروع في دعم أهدافك الشخصية والمهنية؟

	فعال للغاية	فعال بعض الشيء	حيادي	غير فعال بعض الشيء	غير فعال بالمطلق	لا أعلم/لا ينطبق
شخصياً	jn	jn	jn	jn	jn	jn
في	jn	jn	jn	jn	jn	jn

4. الإستدامة

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21. هل يقدم مشروعك الدعم والتشبيك بعد إكمالك مرحلة التدريب الأولي وإنخراطك في البرنامج؟

jm نعم

jm لا

jm لا أعلم/لا ينطبق

22. (إذا كان الأمر كذلك، ما نوع التشبيك والدعم الذي تم تقديمه؟ (يمكنك إختيار أكثر من خيار)

موقع إلكتروني

نشرة

جمعية متخرجين

شبكة وطنية

شبكة إقليمية

نشاطات تشبيكية - إجتماعات، ندوات، مؤتمرات

غير ذلك

23. إذا كان الأمر كذلك، هل شاركت في أي من هذه الأنشطة؟

jm نعم

jm لا

24. إذا كان الامر كذلك، كيف تقيّم نوعية هذه النشاطات؟

jm ممتازة

jm جيدة

jm عادية

jm ضعيفة

jm ضعيفاً

25. إذا كان الأمر كذلك، هل وجدت مشاركتك في هذه النشاطات مفيدة على صعيد أهدافك التنموية الشخصية والمهنية؟

jm نعم

jm لا

jm لا أعلم/لا ينطبق

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26. هل تخطط للمشاركة في تجمعات مستقبلية/ أو أنشطة تشبيكية؟

jm نعم

jm لا

jm لا أعلم/لا ينطبق

27. إذا كان جوابك على سؤال بالنفي، هل تجد أنه من المفيد الحصول على نظام تشبيك ودعم لمساعدتك في الحفاظ على مكاسيك من المشروع؟

jm نعم

jm لا

jm لا أعلم/لا ينطبق

28. إذا كان الجواب إيجابياً، يرجى وضع لائحة بالإقتراحات وشرحها

29. هل مازلت تتواصل مع الأفراد والمنظمات التي إنتقيتها خلال المشروع؟

jm نعم

jm لا

إذا كان الامر كذلك، كم مرة؟

30. إذا كان الأمر كذلك، هل هؤلاء الأفراد أو الجمعيات من بلد/منطقة أخرى؟

Ⓔ نعم

Ⓔ لا

31. إذا كان الأمر كذلك، هل تجد أن هذه العلاقات مفيدة لتطورك الشخصي والمهني؟

	مفيداً	مفيدة إلى حد ما	لرغمكثيراً	ليست مفيدة على الإطلاق	لا أعلم/لا ينطبق
التطوير الشخصي	jm	jm	jm	jm	jm
التطوير المهني	jm	jm	jm	jm	jm

32. يطبق هذا البرنامج في عدة بلدان في المنطقة. هل تجد هناك فائدة من تطبيق هذا البرنامج على الصعيد الإقليمي؟

33. هل من عوانق؟

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34. منذ بدأت المشاركة في هذا المشروع، هل تطوعت بأي مجموعات منظمة تهدف إلى تحسين الأوضاع الإجتماعية والإقتصادية؟

نعم jn

لا jn

35. منذ بدأت المشاركة في هذا المشروع، هل شكلت أي مجموعة منظمة تهدف إلى تحسين الأوضاع الإجتماعية والإقتصادية؟

نعم jn

لا jn

36. إذا كان الأمر كذلك، هل إتخذت أي دور قيادي في هذا النشاط؟

نعم jn

لا jn

37. إذا كان الامر كذلك، هل ساعدتك خبراتك في هذا المشروع على لعب دور قيادي؟

نعم jn

لا jn

38. أرجوك أعلنا كيف تأثرت المهارات والقدرات القيادية التالية بالخبرات التي إكتسبتها خلال إخرطك في البرنامج.

	تغيير جزئي أو معدوم	تغيير متواضع	تغيير كبير
الإستقلالية والإعتماد على النفس	jn	jn	jn
التحدث أمام العامة	jn	jn	jn
الإستماع إلى إقتراحات الآخرين وهواجسهم	jn	jn	jn
التعبير عن أفكارك ومشاعرك	jn	jn	jn
تقبل إختلاف الآخرين	jn	jn	jn
قيادة فريق وتحفيز الآخرين	jn	jn	jn
المرونة	jn	jn	jn
حل المشكلات	jn	jn	jn
تغيير الخطط لتلائم والفرص المتاحة	jn	jn	jn
النشاط من أجل إحداث تغيير في مجتمعك	jn	jn	jn
الإستعداد لتحمل المخاطر	jn	jn	jn
التفاوض مع الزملاء	jn	jn	jn
تلخيص الأفكار المركبة/المعقدة	jn	jn	jn
العمل ضمن ميزانية	jn	jn	jn
معرفة كيفية تطوير مهنتك	jn	jn	jn

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39. كيف تقيّم مستوى رضاك عن هذا البرنامج بشكل عام؟

jm طيلاً

jm راض

jm محايد

jm غير راضي

jm غير طيلاً

jm لا أعلم

40. ما هي النتيجة الأكثر إفادة لك نتيجة مشاركتك في هذا المشروع؟

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	6

41. بأية طرق يمكن تحسين البرنامج برأيك؟

	5
	6

42. هل تنصح بهذا البرنامج لصديق أو فرد من أفراد العائلة؟

jm نعم

jm لا

! شكراً لوقتكم

Appendix C: Qualitative Data

IMPLEMENTING PARTNER INTERVIEWS

Interview Report – World Learning

Date: 08/09/2010

Country & Location: Washington, D.C.

Researcher Name: Sarah Auten

Organization and / or Relevant Program: Peace Scholars

They were seeking undergraduate candidates who have displayed leadership and who are already involved with their communities – university organizations, etc. Three parts:

1. Academic skills they might not have gotten at home – technical skills
2. Leadership skills and organizational skills – 1 month orientation emphasized
3. Diplomacy skills – State Dept. visits, gaining understanding of the US and linkages
4. Regional networking – placement designed to build these regional networking relationships, clustered in their universities so there would be one student from Egypt, one from Morocco, one from Lebanon, etc.

Their oldest candidate was 23-24 years old – required them to have completed at least 1-2 years of undergraduate work as the minimum.

Students were nominated by their universities, or through recommendations from local social scientists. Selected students from disadvantaged backgrounds who were studying at university and had spoken English language abilities. It was difficult to find women from the poorer regions. They tried to recruit from the universities that were not the “most visited” areas. They felt the nomination process was the best way to target those who would be best qualified.

Students submitted references, writing samples and an idea of what they wanted to get from the program.

Changes to this recruitment: changed requirements to only one year of university. This increased the number of students who would qualify for the program. In some ways, it worked out better for students to have two years of university when they went back home.

Interviewed about 20-25 individuals to get 4-5 finalists, - recruited 3-4 students per country per year. One was the alternate. 48 overall.

Targeted 50% women which they overachieved – they thought this would be harder.

Did one year of academic training in the US

They went into this activity intending to build a regional network. They balanced their needs through school selection. Focused on all sectors, ie. Law, arts, humanities, business,

engineering political science, nursing, etc. – some sectors were more difficult than others to transition to another university.

Got a mix of religions – Christians, Muslims, etc.

Required they return to their home countries for two years after the program.

Hypotheses

They may not have had opportunities to be involved in volunteerism through a community program. Sought a broadening of the academic experience – critical thinking, American education system, etc. Diversity of the American education community – went to larger universities for placement. Expanded thinking – public diplomacy intentions.

Experience America component – visited US attractions, stayed with American families during Christmas holiday, visiting the Hill, did a lot of outreach in their university communities to build new leaders. Letting go of stereotypes of Americans and others.

Participants' interests – employability, building independence, gender awareness, privacy for females. These intersected with USAID goals – volunteerism, respect for differences, good for attitudes but also employability.

Regional differences – knew them before going in, but saw them firsthand during visits. Omani/Yemeni versus Palestinian/Lebanese/Jordanian women. Some Omani female students didn't want their women to come. These regional differences did affect placement – they selected smaller schools for participants from more isolated backgrounds, e.g. Colorado State.

Obstacles to a regional program – numbers of participants recruited could have been much larger. Need more than 6-8 people per country – this is really not enough for them to network.

Didn't get the 3rd year extension – talked about doubling the participation numbers but USAID cancelled the program. There was a lot of demand for a regional program, so lots of disappointment when the program was not continued.

In terms of regional networking between implementers and programs, there was none. They didn't even really know about the other regional programs that OMEP was implementing. Had asked USAID for regional program participants database, like the one that State Alumni have access to. They could have used other local institutions that the other programs work with for recruitment, networking, etc. They did use a Synergos program (AWSI) participant as a speaker/presenter for their workshop on social entrepreneurship (Ehad Abdu). Also worked with Injaz, which was facilitated by the Peace Scholars program implementer. There were some linkages, but they were serendipitous, not organized.

Sustainability

Developed a lot of tools, e.g. Survey Monkey surveys to track impacts. They did annual evaluations – impacts of the experience, types of organizations the participants were involved with, etc. What is your perspective on global issues after participating in the program?

They track the students community involvement in the US – ask their supervisors in the organization they're working with to report on their success. Students logged 1818 hours volunteering in more than 100 organizations.

They also use social networking – NING site, Facebook, Linked In. They are helpful tools to disseminate information to the participants.

Challenges

Their biggest challenge was the program ending.

Second biggest challenge – the grants program. None were approved by USAID. 13 applied, 4 were group applications, which spanned across the two years of participants. They had workshops focused on grant proposal development and networking. USAID's justification was that the grants did not reflect the level of sophistication that they wanted to see in a grant application. But they are 20 year olds being judged at an NGO level. The criteria were not clearly defined – short timeline for development and they didn't all understand what was expected of them.

They did have the learning proposals, and 20 of those were funded. Leadership seminars, cultural ambassadors, etc.

Within the program, they have noticed a trend among the students - there is a lack of motivation to academic success in the second semester. The students are balancing community services with a new country experience, leadership and academics, networking with the other scholars, their academics suffered. The program needed better motivational tools to keep them focused on their studies.

Lessons Learned

Want to have more emphasis on job seeking skills. All of the students are acutely aware of the unemployment situations in their home countries but it was not a prime aim of the program.

Needed:

- Career counseling
- Job hunting techniques
- Guidance
- Meetings with potential employers to see what kind of attributes they look for in a job applicant
- Financial management

However, they do feel that many more of their students are employable after this program. Through their grant proposals, the students are showing interest in development work as a career,

which they became more politically and socially aware of development as a career as a result of this program. They would increase the focus on how these jobs work and what skills are needed.

Future Research Agenda

Consider looking at a year versus semester-long program. Most of the value happens in the first semester of their experience. Could get more “bang for the buck” out of a semester program. They did not feel it would be an issue for the students to be gone for half of an academic year. Overseas institutions are more flexible than they thought.

Volunteering, internships and job preparation. What skills can be developed and how can we do it? Not just volunteerism for the sake of itself.

Information sharing – communicating through social networking sites with groups so that you can facilitate introductions to others in the region.

Activity coordinators introduced to each other in a one-day meeting.

Extremist Ideologies

Absolutely eliminated their stereotypes about the US. Clear view of the role of religion in the US – see it first-hand. The integration of religion into society and its role. Freedom.

2 Yemeni students did a proposal for an anti-terrorism activity.

They chose schools where there was a lot of diversity, Middle East connections (such as other exchange students, mosques and halal shops nearby), history of work with the ME, so the students felt integrated. They shared rooms with American students, which was sometimes an issue.

The students understood that it wasn't a propaganda program.

Interview Report –El Karma Edutainment

Date: Tuesday 31st August 2010 at 11:00 am **Country& Location:** Cairo – Egypt
Researcher Name and Contact: - Leyla Moubayed and Frank Schorn

Minutes of the Meeting:

- Edutainment: Educate through entertainment. It is a model that aims at reaching out to people through media with a social content heavily based on research
- Their first experience with “Alam Simsim” – a program for Parental Outreach to prepare young children for school- reached over 45,000 mothers in more than 150 Local Communities in Egypt (funded by USAID under an agreement with the Egyptian Ministry of Education)

- Media is a communication mean that reaches very large audiences – the masses- should be used to promote social change and to counteract the propaganda of religious fanaticism
- USAID approached them with the idea!
- TV broadcasting with companies like MBC will reach out to the whole Arab World
- According to Mr. X, research has shown that people’s attitudes and behaviors are positively altered after going through one of the programs conducted by Alkarma Edutainment
- The “change” premise is based on creating awareness and promoting alternative “Role Models” and awareness will trigger a change in attitudes and behaviors
- Youth lack role model ...need to create role model that relate to youth and where youth will see themselves. This will hopefully initiate a process of critical thinking and thus, posing questions about the existing ways of thinking, behaving!
- This model is based on extensive and continuous research in between all stage from the content development to production, post production and broadcast. It is a very expensive model!
- Aljami3a is a drama that deals with youth issues such as relationships, drugs, gender issues, mutual respect and understanding, as well as day-to-day issues that affect the youth in this part of the world.
- According to Mr. X, this series is the first of its kind in the Middle East and it aims at promoting critical thinking, democratic values, free speech and self-expression, gender equality...
- Target Demographic: Arab Male / Female 18 – 24 yrs old of all socioeconomic classes
- As far as Mr. X is aware of, they are the only production company in Egypt that are applying this edutainment model
- Production suffered a lot of delays due unforeseen factors especially the limitations imposed by the American University of Cairo...according to them, this is the ideal place for “locating” such a youth storyline!
- For Mr. X, this project with USAID has managed to have side benefits on his company in terms of internal organizational development
- According to Mr. X, Media should be effective in the Middle East to promote an alternative model to religious extremism

Researcher Summary Conclusions and Findings:

- Expensive program but with a very large outreach to the region and to youth
- If the program will attract the interest of youth will remain to be seen after the broadcast of the series
- With the delays and cutting of the funding, the remaining activities (focus groups, evaluation exercises, interviews with the actors,...) that will aim at promoting, re-enforcing the message and at assessing the impact of the series on youth might not take place!!!!

- Finally, whether information alone will trigger critical thinking and a change in behavior and attitudes is uncertain!

Interview Report

Date: 22/09/2010

Country& Location: Beirut, Lebanon

Researcher Name: Karim Dagher

Organization and / or Relevant Program: Al-Majmoua/SIRAJ

Minutes of the Meeting:

In the framework of the Review of the Office of Middle East Programs (OMEP) Youth Initiatives an interview was held with Ms. X in Beirut. The interview started at 11:30 am and lasted until 12:10 am.

During this meeting, Ms. X explained that Al Majmoua was sub-contracted by Save the Children (USA) to carry out the implementation of the SIRAJ program in Lebanon. Al Majmoua was chosen because of its broad network of representation offices providing the project with a nationwide coverage as well as its extensive experience in providing micro-credits. Al-Majmoua drafted a proposal describing its methodology for implementing SIRAJ in Lebanon and was approved by Save the Children.

SIRAJ, in Lebanon, is a 1 year program encompassing 5 major activities/projects. The most important result that SIRAJ aims to achieve is provide participants with networking as well as funding to carry out projects that aim to improve their leadership skills. Ms. X stratified the SIRAJ participants into 3 age groups:

- a) Children: 7-14 years of age
These participants are mainly middle school students who engage and participate in awareness activities on the premises of their schools as well as attend activities conducted by older participants.
- b) Teenagers: 15-18 years of age
These participants are mainly high school students who participate in Leadership skills enhancement and promotion activities.
- c) Adults: 18-25 years of age
These participants are mostly university students, youth workers and activists who represent the majority of the targeted beneficiaries and who are given funds to implement small projects.

Sustainability was not included in the proposal and therefore Al-Majmoua the implementing partner's responsibility ended as soon as the activities were carried out. Ms. X proposed 2 main recommendations with regards to sustainability:

- Direct Follow-up that is not limited to the lifetime of the project.
- Create a website/portal through which the SIRAJ participants can communicate as well as foster meetings for SIRAG youth committees.

Researcher Summary Conclusions and Findings:

Al-Majmoua's role in the project is limited to providing technical assistance to the SIRAJ participants. Sustainability was not imposed or at least regarded in the design phase of SIRAJ in Lebanon.

Interview Report – Implementing Partner

Date: Wednesday September 8, 2010

Country& Location: Cairo – Egypt

Researcher Name and Contact: Leyla Moubayed and Frank Schorn

Organization and / or Relevant Program: Institute of International Education – Peace Scholars

Minutes of the Meeting:

- The meeting started with an overview of the Peace Scholarships project presented by X

- The Peace Scholarship was designed by OMEP and released for bidding with a Scope of Work

- IIE was very happy with the design of the project and with the set of activities that were covered in the scope of work: leadership training, experience America, community work ...as IIE was heavily invested in leadership development, exchange programs and scholarships. The regional component was an added challenge...they considered that IIE core mission and values were brought together in this project

- The original intent was to select participants from underserved peri-urban and rural areas but the English language and TOFEL requirements made this selection difficult

- The contract was for two years with an additional one option year. Actually, they were very taken back when they got the news that they have to close the program by end September

- In answer to the question as to how this program was different and what was the learning experience: ***It is the integration of complementary activities that builds on each other: It is Learning and Doing!***
 - 1- Pre-departure training /4 weeks orientation in Egypt - diversity, conflict resolution, build tolerance ...majority had never been abroad...it is the coming together of a diverse group of youth from the region ...most of them have never been abroad.
 - 2- One year of academic experience in the US with experience America, cross cultural experiences...
 - 3- Community Engagement with training in various community oriented activities in the US
 - 4- Leadership training and other additionally related topics while in the US
 - 5- The grants component that aimed at putting into practice some of the learned values and materials

- The learning grants were successful but the larger community grants applications (for up to US\$5,000) were all rejected by OMEP – USAID

- OMEP considered the community grants **as an indicator** for the success of the program in imparting leadership and civic / community engagement to the Youth/Peace Scholars and were unhappy with the projects that were proposed...

- According to IIE, the Scholars and the program management thought they had one full year to design, propose and implement the program. Instead, OMEP – USAID instructed them to design and implement the project before end September...thus, the scholars had to review their projects' ideas and propose other projects that can be finished in a month!

- **Cross regional networking:** More of social bonding between participants but no projects or activities that aimed at cross regional networking. There was in country (cross country) collaboration on one or two of the projects

- **Success:** In addition to the leadership training, academic studies and community experiences, IIE considers that their alumni are now much better prepared for the job market...much more employable, they have a competitive edge over other students who did not go through this experience/project

- On the issue of the one year study abroad courses not counting within the students' regular academic degree in their country, IIE feels that the subjects that were selected by the students have added to their broader knowledge if not specifically to their formal degrees

Lessons Learned:

- To be more aware of OMEP expectations of the program

- For regional collaboration, the project would be in need of more resources

- The project is more successful (more of a life changing experience in terms of learning) in countries whose socio-political system is more closed i.e. less democratic and with participants coming from economically deprived communities/countries

- In country collaboration Yes (Algerian Alumni example) ...across region NO

- For regional collaboration we needed to have more resources

- **On the topic of future research,** IIE would like to have some measure or criteria for individuals that can take initiatives + civic conscious - Baseline measure of some embedded responsibility and readiness for civic engagement

Researcher Summary Conclusions and Findings:

It was very difficult to elicit responses to questions such as learning experiences and challenges ...beyond the usual program / project presentation of activities and successes of their alumni and defending some of the criticism that has been already raised by OMEP ...etc.

Interview Report

Date: Tuesday 21st September

Country& Location: Cairo – Egypt

Researcher Name and Contact: Leyla Moubayed

Organization and / or Relevant Program: Nahdet El Mahrousa – Local Partner of Siraj – Save the Children

Minutes of the Meeting:

- Nahdet El Mahrousa, is a local Egyptian youth NGO that was established in 2003.
- (NM) aims at engaging and supporting youth to make a positive change and lasting impact on Egypt's cultural, economic and social development.
- Nahdet El Mahrousa's core program is the "Incubator of Innovative Social Enterprises" where it identifies and encourages educated youth with a core idea for social development-social entrepreneurs- to put their idea into a business plan and helps them with technical, financial and organizational support i.e. incubating the business of social entrepreneurship.
- "(NM) currently incubates several active projects in the areas of youth development, arts and culture development, health services, the environment, linking education to employment, promoting the culture of research and development and preparing emerging young leaders and development practitioners.
- Nahdet El Mahrousa relationship with Siraj –Save the Children started with their "Junior Incubator for Social Enterprises program" that is funded by UNICEF. This program targets 90 younger people (14 – 24 years old) from disadvantaged background in three geographic areas.
- These young people are supported through intensive training –more than 30 days of training and learning by doing activities such as visiting and volunteering with local community based NGOs.
- At the end of the capacity building activities, the young junior incubator will develop his own community initiative that will be funded and supported by NM. The end objective is engaging young individuals in volunteerism, community initiatives and civic engagement.
- The relationship with Siraj came about when the Junior Incubator program was looking at developing training materials for the capacity building of the Young Incubators. They were referred to Siraj/Ali Mohsen who shared with NM the toolkit and also provided facilitators and trainers for ToT training.
- Siraj/ Ali, was also part of a core consultancy group on the Junior Incubator program training materials and topics development for the Junior Incubator program
- Mrs. X thought that the training materials that they borrowed from the toolkit (3 sets) were good, interactive and attractive to the Junior Incubators. The Siraj facilitators and trainers were also rated well by Mrs. X as they managed to engage the youth during the training and capacity building activities.

- As far as Mrs. X is aware of, this is the only interaction and relationship that (NM) shared with Siraj

- When I inquired about their (NM) commitment as “identified local/national partner” to take on the toolkit and the Siraj project approach to insure its sustainability, Mrs. X said that she is not aware of any such partnership. Others in NM might be privy to such a partnership but she does not know about it! (Siraj last report mentions Nahdet El Mahrousa as their local partner for sustainability of the Siraj project)

- When I inquired what, in her opinion, would be the ideal age group target to train youth on leadership, open mindedness, cross cultural awareness, positive role models (as everybody seems to be using this term) she said, it has to be young enough to be still open to learning (18-24) but at the same time this target group would require longer training and support work to develop into an active, motivated and civically engaged individual

Researcher Summary Conclusions and Findings:

- The Siraj toolkit seems to be well regarded as an interactive training and valid materials for capacity building of youth but so far, nobody has seen the full toolkit...still under development!

- The Siraj of the month might have limited exposure (“a tool to a certain category of society”) as it will require that youth actually know how to read and or take the time to read (doubtful in lots of cases)

- Nahdet El Mhrousa seems to be well regarded as a National Egyptian NGO

Interview Report

Date: Thursday 23rd of September

Country& Location: Cairo – Egypt

Researcher Name and Contact: Leyla Moubayed

Organization and / or Relevant Program: Nama’a – Local Partner of Siraj – Save the Children

Minutes of the Meeting:

- X is a youth volunteer with Siraj since 2007 – She is also a leader of one of Nahdet el Mahrousa incubated projects

- X started her involvement with Siraj in a training event in 2007- The objective was to start the development of the toolkit training manual for youth

- The Siraj project targets youth age 18 to 30 years old – Youth interested in civic engagement and youth workers already involved in programs with organizations working with youth

- X also participated as a trainer/facilitator in a youth training event in Yemen ...always as a volunteer

- The toolkit topics and content were basically completed in 2008 following one year and a half of consultations through workshops involving youth (Youth and Youth workers)

- Y, another volunteer was hired as a consultant to organize and finalize the toolkit in 2008- the next phase of the toolkit involved working on the design to make it more suitable to the content following which it was decided to break the whole package into three major sections/sets: Discover- Develop – Initiate
- The toolkit is a process in continuous development ...mainly the reason why it was so late in being finalized
- X participated in the launching of the toolkit early this week in Mneyh. There was in this launching event roundtable discussions around the sustainability of the toolkit
- The roundtable discussions came out with numerous propositions the most viable of which is the suggestion of a university students club to use the toolkit to train their mid-level members' students. The university clubs have usually a large membership base and this will insure that the toolkit will continue being used and developed.
- The university club also proposed to adopt a similar –Siraj of the month- approach with the university students –identifying success stories and publishing them in the university magazine
- Other suggestions and propositions for the sustainability of the toolkit were proposed but due shortage of time (X came very late to our appointment and I was tied up with another commitment) we did not have the time to discuss
- When I raised the subject of Siraj claiming that Nahdet el Mahrousa will be the local Egyptian organization that will insure the sustainability of the Siraj project and toolkit (Siraj last report) – X replied that her organization (she has an incubated project with NM) will be using the toolkit training content with their 'program beneficiaries' once for a month every year (please refer to NM report)!
- Considering her level of involvement with Siraj as a volunteer most of the other review questions were either irrelevant or did not elicit any relevant response from X.

Interview Report

Date: September 19, 2010 **Country& Location:** Palestine- Hebron

Researcher Name and Contact: Fa'ida Awashreh

Organization and / or Relevant Program: Palestinian Center for Communication and Development (PCCD), SIRAJ

Minutes of the Meeting:

X started by saying that the Siraj project is a big failure, including both procedures that were followed and activities that were implemented by the Siraj office so far. Additionally, there are no youth initiatives were produced by the youth.

X said that the partnership was not respected by Siraj, as the training is being delivered from Siraj side without any consultation of the PCCD. X questions the procedures of integrity of the selection of the training agency. He also said that the training does not serve PCCD goals and that the training methods employed are not serious and that it is a waste of time and effort and resources. Jamel said that PCCD was supposed to implement 2 training courses but this did not take place. Due to this, PCCD has actually, but not officially, left Siraj project and ended their

engagement which started in April 2010. Siraj on the other hand, was not interested and made no efforts in solving this issue with them, according to X.

Asking him if they tried to fix their relationship with Siraj by involving the regional management, X said that he doubts that the regional management or even USAID will take the side of the PCCD as all sides, based on previous experiences, are corrupt.

Asking him about the reason on not ending PCCD's involvement officially, X said this is because they, at PCCD, were interested in making the project's success even with what was said. This thing was contradicted surprisingly few minutes later when X said that they at PCCD will try to fail the focus group sessions to be conducted for this evaluation, when he learnt about this from the local researcher!

As for the youth issues, X said that youth are looking for practical opportunities that empower them with skills needed for life in general and work in specific. He said that this was not provided in Siraj training. He added that the youth has a huge energy and many talents that need to be discovered. Needs assessment should be conducted with the youth before designing any program or implementing any activity. Also real partnerships should be developed with youth CBOs as they are the real ones who are aware of their communities' needs. Also, this is important in maintaining the sustainability of projects and their impacts.

There is a need to conduct needs assessment based on the youth perspective and not the organizations' or the donors'. The youth in Palestine has their own interests and concerns, such as difficulties of employment and education access, in addition to those concerns that are shared with the youth in the region.

X concluded by saying that Siraj office made use of PCCD contacts by approaching the CBOs and the youth. Then they had no respect or commitment to the partnership agreement.

Researcher Summary Conclusions and Findings:

- PCCD has a very tense relationship with Siraj office, where PCCD is felt to be resentful on all things with Siraj
- PCCD seems to be not assuming its role in the Siraj project and opted not to be involved or engaged in the actual implementation.

Interview Report

Date: 22/09/2010

Country & Location: Beirut, Lebanon

Researcher Name: Karim Dagher

Organization and / or Relevant Program: Al-Majmoua/SIRAJ

Minutes of the Meeting:

In the framework of the Review of the Office of Middle East Programs (OMEP) Youth Initiatives an interview was held with Ms. X in Beirut. The interview started at 12:15 pm and lasted until 12:40 pm.

With Ms. X, the discussion aimed to assess the implementation of the SIRAJ program in Lebanon. Ms. X limited the rate of individuals who passively participated in SIRAJ and were not committed to 20%. Committing the participants to attend activities especially workshops was difficult and there was a constant need to confirm and re-confirm their attendance.

When asked about the gap between the design phase of the project and implementation phase Ms. X answered that it is minimal since Al-Majmoua had a solid experience in implementing such projects. Changes were made in order to adapt to the needs of the beneficiaries in the various regions covered by the program. Beneficiaries have different needs. During the project design the assumption was that similar challenges are faced by youth all across the region. Ms. X added: “We need to prioritize with the youth in order to make the activities more relevant”.

In the future, OMEP has to concentrate on enhancing the social skills of the beneficiaries. Interpersonal relationships play a major role in promoting the objectives of youth initiatives such as SIRAJ. Carrying out focus groups is also crucial to allow OMEP to create more relevant initiatives as well as enhance the impact of its current initiatives.

Interview Report – Implementing Partner

Date: Tuesday 21st September

Country & Location: Cairo – Egypt

Researcher Name: Leyla Moubayed and Frank Schorn

Organization and / or Relevant Program: Save the Children – Siraj Project

Minutes of the Meeting:

- Siraj - Youth Leadership Development in the Arab World
- X is the officer in charge of the program – Y provides quality control and supervision

Siraj works with:

- Young people themselves older than 14 and not yet 30
- Youth Workers and Role Models
- Organizations working with youth

-“**Siraj**” is about providing Arab youth with inspiring and affirmative role models and networks that demonstrate positive and practical ways to contribute to their society and economy.

According to X, Siraj is a

1- Toolkit: Distinctive qualities of the toolkit: 100% based on youth experiences and input. Not a manual, but a toolkit for self discovery – Building on assets rather than needs. Has been the product of experiences and inputs from hundreds of youth through workshops in all the 5 countries- Is in Arabic language valid for all Arabic speaking countries and not a translation of some foreign material. Is divided into different sets-Can be used by individuals and groups-is based on experiences and examples from the Arab world itself

- The toolkit took so long to develop because they were continuously improving it, from the content to the design. The toolkit is planned for launching on the 22nd of September and when we asked for a copy...X said that this is the only copy he has!!!

- While continuously under development, the toolkit was used during the workshops and youth training events

2- Networks... is a informal network of support and connections. Siraj is a mediator to connect youth

3- Events supports youth initiatives mostly with technical support and assistance linking them with other youth NGOs and initiatives that can provide space, volunteers.... Very minimal financial assistance if any!

- The training events take place based on perceived needs. It does not target the same beneficiaries with in depth and long term training with defined sets of training topics and number of days

- The training is two types, one related to the toolkit and the second is what youth ask for

- All their youth trainers/facilitators are volunteers

Siraj of the month is an example of positive youth development through actions that are publicized-published in magazines!

- The original proposal of Siraj included a mapping of all youth organizations and activities and when we inquired if such information has been collected, is organized and available somewhere in a data base- the answer was negative

- The program funding levels is 2 million over 2 years in 5 countries

- The regional aspect of the project seems to be totally absent, the 5 countries Siraj program officers meet every 6 months for sharing and planning for the next period.

- **Sustainability issues:** A volunteer from Jordan will continue updating and maintenance of the website- The toolkit - they are looking for local partners to continue rolling out the Siraj of the Month and the toolkit?!

- **Information sharing with other Youth initiatives-USAID implementing partners ...none that they know about!**

Researcher Summary Conclusions and Findings:

- Siraj is being managed by a very dynamic, committed and idealistic youth X...nevertheless, such projects with a funding levels of US\$2 millions over 2 years needs a project management frame and a performance based M&E planning

- The initial program of Siraj was based on an award –grant from Naseej for the youth following the training – Somehow, a fall out took place between Save and the Ford Foundation (that was funding Naseej) following which the 2 programs separated. Everyone is giving a different version of the reason for the fall out...this change made of Siraj “the Youth SPACE” that is being promoted today!

- Sustainability: The activities of the program will close with the program ...the toolkit will be used in training events mostly of Save depending on availability and needs. A loose network *is* a loose network

Interview Report

Date: September 19, 2010 **Country& Location:** Palestine- Halhul/ Hebron

Researcher Name: Fa'ida Awashreh

Organization and / or Relevant Program: Save the Children/ Siraj

Minutes of the Meeting:

X:

The idea of having Siraj as a regional project is very interesting, as it enables the youth in the region to interact with each other. However, it is challenging when it comes to the actual implementation.

Siraj is a good project as it views and deals with the youth in the region as a developmental factor, despite the political barriers. 90% of the set goals for Siraj Palestine, as per the project plan, have been achieved. In general, the project was a successful one, however, there were many challenges including the lack of technical assistance provided to Siraj Palestine by the regional management of the project. This assistance was needed specially with the fact of the difference in the political contexts of the countries in the region and the lack of staff members working on Siraj Palestine.

Among the challenges also was working in Gaza, as it took long time to find a partner there and this is mainly due to the USAID procedures and requirements including the ant-terrorism contract "ATC", as there are good organizations in Gaza but many are not willing to sign the ATC document.

Another challenge is the announcement of the sustainability plan of the project, which came in January/February 2010, just seven months before the closure date of the project (September 2010). This required revising the budget and the activities, creating a chaotic situation in the project lately, specially with surprising refusal of the no-cost extension of the project till December 2010, as Siraj Palestine previously received promises of this extension.

The toolkit is another challenge, as it was not ready and available, in its final version, in the regional meeting which took place mainly to discuss it. This toolkit was supposed to be distributed on organizations working with Siraj project, for the purpose of maintaining sustainability of the project as well. This did not receive the attention of the regional management of the project, rather they focused and requested only reports and evaluations.

Also, there were some requested activities that had no real impact and was a repetition of other projects, such as mapping of youth organizations.

As for the partnership, the idea behind adapting and transferring Siraj principles and methods to the local organizations is good. However, on the ground there were problems with this as the partner, The Palestinian Center for Communication and Development "PCCD", seemed to be not adapting same principles and method of Siraj and was driven only by financial interests. PCCD did not assume its role, contributing so little in training and working and following up with beneficiaries. They barely attended the training and made no efforts for the sake of the project success.

Y:

Siraj is a wonderful project. It has achieved its goals. The problem was that there was two years with no impact as planned activities by then were not implemented. We can say that the project started from the zero point since I joined it 2 years ago, not much was accomplished before.

Siraj is not clear enough in terms of its activities, specially after being split form Injaz Ford-funded project years ago. It is true that there was a flexibility in implementing activities, however, at the end you still feel there is no clear scope of work for Siraj. This is not only here in Palestine, but also in the region.

Our approach was to work, in partnership with PCCD, with marginalized good youth community-based organizations (CBOs), those who do not have the access for international finds but are well known and received by their communities. The aim was to build the capacity of by training them on the toolkit and working with them as volunteers. Voluntary work is the real success work area for Siraj. In Hebron now Siraj has about 60 active youth volunteers. We developed an agreement that we sign with our volunteers, which we sent to the regional Siraj offices for their benefit, outlining rights and duties of volunteers.

To sustain Siraj work, we work now with 14 CBOs in Hebron, Bethlehem and Jericho, where we have already an excellent experience with 3 CBOs which we know they will be a key for sustainability. However, we also worked in the beginning with CBOs in Ramallah, but there was no real interest in Siraj which made us shift the focus to the south area here specially with the fact that Siraj office is based in the south, making managing the project much easier also.

PCCD nominated 13 youth CBOs through which we targeted the beneficiaries. The criteria of our beneficiaries included ages of 14-30, active youth in marginalized areas who are interested in youth issues and willing to contribute to their communities. We train them on the toolkit concepts so that they can become trainers for other youth in their communities.

Though it is a regional project with similar activities, each country implements activities differently. Also, there no real communication between youth in the region. The only thing that took place with this regard is the regional meeting in Egypt, which not youth were involved in. Exchange of experiences between the youth in the region did not take place.

Back to sustainability, we work not only with the CBOs to ensure this, but also with the ministry of youth and sports. With CBOs we meet weekly and sometimes bi-weekly to follow-up with them . We make field visits to ensure the right implementation of activities.

We have a problem of working on the publicity of Siraj as we did not have sufficient funds allocated for working with media. We tried approaching the private sector to help with this but with no success. We worked on this issue through our volunteers but this proved not to be as effective as needed.

The Palestinian youth have energy and ambitions. However, they need to be empowered with skills of presenting themselves and preparation for work life. Siraj, through, the training on toolkit, succeeded in tackling this by improving the public speaking and expression skills for youth and enhancing the voluntary spirit.

Researcher Summary Conclusions and Findings:

- Siraj staff members are satisfied with the results of the project, especially the training and youth initiatives
- Lack of communication and guidance provided by regional management to Siraj Palestine is a challenge.
- Though it is a good project, Siraj lack the actual dimension of being a regional project to the Palestine youth as they are not exposed to the other regional Siraj projects
- Partnership with PCCD was not a successful model, and Siraj staff members are not happy with this fact.

Interview Report

Date: September 27, 2010 **Country& Location:** Jordan

Researcher Name: Mais Salameh

Organization and / or Relevant Program: Save the Children/ Siraj

BENEFICIARIES

1. How were the original target beneficiaries defined for your program in terms of age, gender, economic status and geographic location?

The original target beneficiaries were defined in the USAID proposal from 15-30 years old based on that the age was identified. There was a gender balanced in every event or workshop, even the success stories are categorized between males and females. The economic status was not an issue but they were always concerned on having youth with a background of good qualification in education and culture. For an example: “the Jordan River Foundation has recommended 20 youth to participate in one of Siraj activities, in fact that only 3 out of these 20 were formatter and capable to join the program”. The geographic location is nationwide.

2. Did these target beneficiaries change over the life of the program? If so, in what way? What was the motivation for this change?

There was a big change among the beneficiaries over the life of the program in terms of expanding their opportunities in life and opening doors for them to participate in other events and offer job opportunities, exchanging thoughts and encouraging their friends to approach the program and motivate the youth to seek such a program. For an example: “there was a young man who loves photography, he participated with Siraj in the capacity building project, through taking pictures and helping with events and therefore Save the Children has asked him to be the photographer for one of its events and this has opened for him the chance to pursue his passion and career”.

3. In your projects’ case, how did each of you define the category of “youth?” With the experience that you’ve now had, would you change that definition?

They depended on the age group in defining the category of 'youth.' As many people used to approach Siraj with ideas of projects but they were above the age of 30 and this was not applicable with the USAID regulation of age group.

HYPOTHESES

- 4. When the program started, what were your assumptions about the needs of youth in the region in terms of further academic training, employability, entrepreneurial skills, etc.? Did this change over the life of the project? If so, in what way?**

The most important aspect of the program in the first 3 years was the capacity building for youth, the implementers had the idea that all the youth do not know what they want and therefore they used to offer them trainings, job opportunities depending on their skills. Through their experience they realized that the youth know what they want but they do not know how to invest in their knowledge and skills, as a result there was a better concentration on conducting trainings and workshops how to better sell yourself, marketing skills trainings for youth. The trainings became more on a higher level and more expanded.

- 5. What common needs or experiences do youth have between countries in the region that would impact how USAID develops youth programs?**

From experience they see that youth need a better representation, the program has started recently to work on youth and involve them in media and skip any part of discussing or speaking about youth problem. As they see better involvement from youth and more trust in them in terms of their commitment, energy and creativity. They mentioned that most of the youth feel that many illusion boundaries really exists and steps in their ways. There should be a partnership between youth and people to encourage them and make them feel the importance of their opinions.

- 6. What significant differences exist among youth between countries that should be taken into account in providing development assistance?**

There are differences among youth between countries. In Jordan the youth do not have the energy to pursue their needs, they depend on the accessibility in their country and the culture of shame plays a big role in Jordan, on the contrary in Yemen you feel the youth are willing to do anything to get what they want and this is because of the hard situation in their country and the difficulty in the availability of many things. Many creative people in Lebanon and Palestine exist and the culture of shame does not exist as in Jordan. In Egypt there are many active, effective and new ideas from youth as it is considered a big country.

- 7. How did the regional nature of the project(s) more effective? What benefits and obstacles do you see from working from a regional perspective?**

The regional nature of the project has become more effective through the diversity in thoughts and results among all the countries which they all circulate their results from the workshops and connect it with each other, and this gives a sense of enrichment to the program as there are always new and different ideas. The obstacle they face is the communication between all the regions, there is always a small conflict in the communication. For an example: "if an incident happens and one of other implementers in other region does not know, the miscommunication occurs." If there is a chance to have a

based office that they can report to the updates and this office circulate the updates to the rest.

SUSTAINABILITY

8. What steps has your program taken to promote sustainability?

Siraj has approached Princess Basma Youth Resource Center to work together on a youth leadership program. Needs assessment and recommendations were made on what are the needs to work on for youth. Focus groups were conducted to identify the needs for youth and build their capacities.

9. Has your program developed tools or methodologies to measure whether the skills that participants learn in your program are applied in other contexts?

M&E tools were developed from the beginning of the program to understand and reach out to the needs of youth, in addition to the trainings for 5 days. What they realized that these trainings are not enough, therefore they created an initiative plan which has the results of this planning.

10. Are any of these tools or methodologies adaptable for wider regional dissemination?

Yes, these tools and methodologies are adaptable regionally. When they develop any tool they take into account all the countries in the region, for example the language, as in Lebanon they do not add the word USAID on any questionnaire. And these tools are approved from all the countries in the region.

PROGRAMMING CHALLENGES

11. What challenges did your program face in the design, implementation, and follow-up process? When you encountered challenges, what did you do? What kinds of changes did you make in your programming as a result?

- Communication between all the regions as it was mentioned before.
- Limited budget and this affect on their ability to travel between the countries if there is an important event and one of the youth wants to attend this event there is no budget to allow him to travel.
- Also the limited budget is affecting on the youth, as they have ideas and initiatives that could be implemented and taken into consideration, but with regards to the limitation in budget these ideas could not be processed.

To overcome these challenges they started looking for sponsorship and networking between the beneficiaries and the donor. For an example if there is someone who is interested in health we connect this person with the ministry of health.

12. What kinds of lessons learned do these experiences offer that could be applied to further youth development work in the region?

The lesson learned is to never isolate youth, always include them and involve them from the beginning of the project to get the benefit out of them. For an example: “ we brought some youth to Haya Center to volunteer their in some way, the process was not really effective as they were not really able to do what they want. When we proposed to them

the idea of their role they came up with many ideas and events that could be done in this field”.

INFORMATION SHARING

13. Has your program engaged in any information sharing with the implementing partners of the other OMEP activities, prior to this meeting?

They had an idea about this evaluation and the purpose of it.

a. If so, what type of information was shared? Did you find this exercise useful to your program’s success?

They know about the purpose of this evaluation to see the impact of the program and what the best ways to sustain the project are.

b. If not, why not? Were there obstacles that discouraged this type of collaboration?

14. How could information exchanges be facilitated to make dialogue more frequent and effective for future programs?

Social media, websites, more regular meetings with the OMEP as there are no regular meetings with the OMEP.

15. Have you dialogued with or collaborated with other donors besides OMEP through this project?

She has no idea and is not involved

FUTURE RESEARCH AGENDA

16. Based on your experiences and observations what research is needed on Youth?

Research on what are the needs that could be figured out for youth, as more fundraising and conduct small scale project.

17. What gaps in learning and knowledge sharing have you identified through your own experiences that OMEP should be aware of in developing future youth programs?

Many new projects starts from Zero and they pass in the same phase that any other pervious projects have passed through and in order to avoid repetition and benefit from the old projects they should build up based on the old projects. This matter is not really effective or used here.

Interview with Save the Children Siraj – Yemen

They focused on youth 14-29, divided this into three groups: 14-18, 19-24, and 25-29. They targeted beneficiaries who were poor, of a more closed mind-set, street youth

They have a database for youth – trainers, orgs, initiatives, media volunteers, etc.

Making space for youth, with computers, websites, 2-day workshops, youth conference – regional workers. They provide the support and the youth organize everything themselves. No ministers or high-level adults involved. The youth find the problems they want to address,

identify local donors to support this. Work as a competition between teams in the 1-month program.

Regional aspect – when Siraj started, trainers traveled regionally to train them. Translated their toolkit into 4 languages. Through their website, the youth in different countries can communicate with each other and network. They had a regional meeting in Egypt for youth in all the countries to work together. Arab marketing for youth – Yemenis ask for another initiative like this. Youth were sharing and strategizing to improve the program, to address their challenges and to share ideas.

International orgs that they partner with – UNICEF, UNFPA, Oxfam (violence against women)

Hiring – the private sector accepts (hires) the youth that they train – it is prestigious to participate in Siraj, the name is known there.

They are a small organization in Yemen but growing a lot.

YEP program – media center, active in Yemen only.

Arab Citizen Initiative – new program they're doing. Implementing ideas from the regional workshop .

We choose partners that are strategic to the organization, Ministry of Youth working in their programs. More local orgs, NGOs – they have one partner for training, one for outreach in the schools, community orgs, mosques, etc.

Program ends in September, closeout July 2011. Siraj activities will continue under another program. Just losing the name recognition that the program has built. Have to develop a new website, etc.

Interview Report - Implementing Organization

Date: Thursday 23rd of September

Country& Location: Cairo – Egypt

Researcher Name and Contact: Leyla Moubayed

Organization and / or Relevant Program: Synergos – Arab World Social Innovators

Minutes of the Meeting:

- X has been referred to us as the locally based consultant for Synergos/ Arab World Social Innovator program
- X has been involved with Synergos as a consultant during the first year of the program – in the start up phase, candidate selection and recruiting process. He was in charge of Egypt, Lebanon and Morocco. Now he is just a volunteer
- The program has another consultant in charge of Palestine and Jordan

- X is an Ashoka fellow – the program based on which the Arab World Social Innovators is modeled.
- The Arab World Social Innovators AWSI program is currently starting the selection of the second cohort of Social innovator with funding from other donors
- AWSI is looking at Social Entrepreneurs and not deprived or vulnerable individuals
- Their program do not target youth in particular as their “beneficiaries” ...some of their program participants are close to 50 years of age. He has no idea as to why AWSI was lumped under OMEP youth initiatives
- For the second cohort - the program management is looking at amending some of the issues that they felt were “weaknesses” in the first phase of the program such as insuring more gender balance in their “beneficiaries”, more diversity and improvement in recruitment
- Some of the program implementation challenges according to X were 1- the lack of mobility of individuals from certain countries such as Palestine and 2- the different legal environments between countries. For example, it is very difficult for institutions / organizations to receive donations from international sources. The security and legal permits needed to receive such donations are very stringent in Egypt contrary to Lebanon
- For X, the most benefits / value of the program is in the international connections networks / memberships with international organizations and events – international exposure and networks that it created for the program participants
- There were some minor levels of networking between the program participants regionally such as between Lebanon and Egypt when the innovators were involved in the same sector namely the environment in this case
- Reference the training, the individual participants benefitted differently as their initial baseline – levels of knowledge and development of their organization was different. Nevertheless, all were in need of management training skills improvements which was provided by Booz Allen as part of their social entrepreneurship program

The training has been changed to provision of ad hoc basis - a one to one coaching and mentorships

Interview Report - Synergos

Date: 31/08/2010

Country& Location: Washington DC

Researcher Name: Sarah Auten

Organization and / or Relevant Program: AWSI

They are surprised to see their program included in this evaluation, as they do not target youth beneficiaries per se – just social entrepreneurs and innovators. Their youngest participant is 27, their oldest is 57 and the average age is 39. They do not have any age restrictions in their selection criteria, or parameters on which sectors the beneficiaries can target (does not have to be an activity that targets youth either – the entrepreneurs’ programs run across all sectors, e.g., agriculture, education, business, etc.). OMEP just put them in the “youth programs bucket” but in some ways it would be a better fit for them to be grouped with economic growth programs, and they do work with the EG office in OMEP as well as the youth team – this is not a 100% perfect fit either as AWSI is focused on social entrepreneurship.

They are currently doing an impact evaluation – collecting the data right now, and they are happy to share these results with us when the report is complete. (This will be available by mid-September. Follow up with her during analysis phase.) A few of the social innovators are doing programs that target youth, so they will point out who these individuals are when they send the contacts list, so that we might find those most useful to our evaluation.

Regional Lens

As part of their evaluation, they have been surveying their participants on their perspectives about being part of a regional program, as well as their experiences in the implementation process and the lessons learned.

About 85% of the respondents they have reached are thrilled to be part of a regional program. There are not many regional programs out there, and for those who have participated in previous USAID programs, this is their first time being part of a regional network. The participants are now starting to connect with one another (at the end of the program) and they see a real benefit from this – it is value added to their program.

However, it has been a challenge from the implementation perspective – most especially in linguistic differences (regional dialects, esp. for Moroccans), as well as issues of geographic distance that makes convening the participants difficult. They have to meet in Jordan because the Palestinians have a difficult time traveling, and this creates a lot of logistical hurdles. However, they do feel that the challenges are worth it because being a regional program has so many advantages.

Morocco is especially difficult because it is so different from the Levant in terms of geopolitics and access to people. There are prohibitive costs and linguistic barriers, but they do fit in well in terms of their experiences, funds and practical challenges on the local level. You just need to fund it better so that they can be better engaged. The Moroccans have made a lot of connections with their Egyptian counterparts, because the program is dealing primarily with the Berber population in western Egypt and they have natural cultural and historical ties to the Moroccans.

The regional model is a core challenge in the training process. USAID promotes a lot of face-to-face training, but to bring the Moroccans to Jordan for a 3-day training session is very expensive, with funding for travel, planning and coordination. It becomes very cost-prohibitive with the travel expenses and HR/LOE.

#4 – Needs of Youth in the Region

We have no standards. They model their criteria after Ashoka and their belief that entrepreneurs don't have to be formally educated. They just have to have great ideas, ethical fiber and proof of concept.

However, they have found that 90% of their participants have undergraduate degrees even though they didn't screen for that in the selection process.

AWSI is rare in that they allow applications to be submitted in Arabic, although they do require a minimal standard of English language ability. This is a real advantage for the participants – while spoken English does allow them access to the global business network, they have found that spoken English ability is more important than written, and that the participants often are better in speaking than writing English.

Implementation

The program was going to be managed at the local level – they had an implementer in Egypt and Lebanon but there was not enough money to have a local implementing representative in each country. This has resulted in unbalanced assistance among the countries that do and do not have a local rep. It would be better to have a local rep in each country to serve the beneficiaries directly.

The program was supposed to be a 3-year program. They spent more than the first year in start-up mode (hiring staff, selecting beneficiaries, etc.) so the innovators didn't start their activities until January 2009 (about a year and a half into the program). It is finally picking up momentum just when the project is slated to end. It would be much better to have a 4-year project cycle, so that there is sufficient time for start-up activities, and the innovators need about 2 years to get their projects off the ground and fully active. They suggest renewing the project for another 2-3 year cycle, to do a second round of beneficiaries and to provide more support to their established participants.

Sustainability

Do you mean for AWSI as a program or for the projects that the participants are implementing?

Originally, the budget was \$1 million USAID funds with a GDA matching requirement, so that the overall envelope was about \$2 million. 75% of the matching could be in-kind contribution. This type of funding stream makes the program unsustainable because USAID is going from \$1 million to zero in one cycle. It would be better to “dial down” the assistance and increase the regional buy-in simultaneously, so that a 2nd iteration would be \$500K USAID and the 3rd iteration would be something like \$250K. It takes time and a lot of work to get this type of local buy-in. A graduated withdrawal would better ensure sustainability.

Countering Extremist Ideology

As part of their evaluation process, they have just reviewed the problem statement for the first time in three years – they were shocked to find that this was even in there. There was lots of language about security and stability, but this program has drastically changed over its life cycle – this was not the purpose of the program from the beginning, they want to encourage social entrepreneurship. It is not about terrorism, it's about social and economic development. This has not come up since the design phase, and going into the region with this language would compromise their ability to reach people on the ground. This is frankly Bush-era language. They

are trying to promote social, economic and societal transformation, which may result in greater regional stability, but this is not a direct goal of the program.

Information Sharing

A few of the Innovators also get funding from Siraj. They don't remember a lot of other collaboration, except that they met with the Save the Children rep from Amman. Siraj does similar entrepreneurial grant makings.

USAID has never brokered these relationships, and they would have to facilitate introductions. Otherwise, it would have to be just a chance meeting.

However, they would say that these types of relationships would be beneficial during the implementation phase (not particularly useful now that they are in close-out mode). Cross-program collaboration could streamline services, make connections between implementers and better understand how and what support is available.

Also, facilitating relationships with other groups that work with social innovators could be helpful. DFID, CIDA, the Danes, Swedes and Norwegians, corporate sponsors in the region. They did connect with the World Bank to meet the needs of the innovators. Many have a profound presence in the region – these relationships would be useful to prevent redundancy in programs, as they see a lot of other donors doing the same types of programs, and they could collaborate on training. GTZ has a program to promote female Social Innovators, which could have been an opportunity for collaboration.

Future Research Agenda

They can't comment on that because they don't know what it currently is.

They have a great relationship with USAID, who provides them the supportive space to implement the program. However, having said that, six of their innovators have projects in Egypt and no one from the OMEP office has ever conducted a field visit to better understand their activities. They have met some of the beneficiaries to discuss challenges but this was more from an evaluative perspective, not just to better understand their efforts. They would like to see more site visits – even outside Egypt – would like to see OMEP more involved, but there is not that culture at USAID. When they wanted to discuss the value of experiential learning, they got push back. They put it on paper but site visits are not incentivized in USAID culture.

Interview Report

Date: 22/09/2010

Country& Location: Amman, Jordan

Researcher Name: Mais Salameh

Organization and / or Relevant Program: SIRAJ

Have been identified since the beginning of introducing the grant and writing a suggestion of the program.

There hasn't been any change. It stayed the same, from the age of 14 till 30.

The known definition is sufficient, but it's possible to raise the age of the youth category.

Expectations were that we work on the youth leadership, its meaning and how it's used in life... and then we realized that the youth have an understanding of themselves, those around them and leadership roles. So we decided to start with another plan, youth initiatives and creative activities, to have a realistic base where they can implement what they already know and as an experiment where they can measure the validity of their knowledge.

The existence of bureaucracy, favoritism, the lack of "smart Syllabi" in schools in addition to the many slogans without any real implementation of development and respect towards the ability of the youth, all these factors affect the developing program of the American agency.

The existences of cultural and financial differences in countries affect the tendency of the youth to give, for those who face wars like in Palestine and Lebanon tend to have better abilities and show more creativity when it comes to youth work, whereas in Jordan the youth relies on governmental jobs and relaxation, with the presence of a class more aware of pure creative youth work. As for Yemen's youth, they find shelter in Seraj program and as a way to relieve their suppressed energies. As for Egypt we are witnessing a youth Revolution in a significant way, which means more rights and awareness for the youth.

From the beginning, the regional dimension supplemented Siraj's tools with a lot of knowledge and cultural dialogue. Furthermore, the regional dimension had other benefits attributed to the website and all the dialogues on Facebook. Those dialogues acted as perfect channels for free speech and cultural interaction.

Some of the obstacles faced were the high costs of tangible communication with other countries and the difficulty of bringing them together, the cultural differences which show a gap between the needs of the youth from one country to another.

Partnership, training and enabling a local partner: Princess Basma Center.

Yes.

Yes, it's a follow-up tool which was circulated among countries.

I've been working in this program for only a year. One of the major challenges faced was the ability to establish a network among the youth, for the other groups weren't available, also, the ability to reach the required number with the presence of high qualities for work, in addition to ensuring a good partnership by which we can keep up the program sustainable, after the program ends.

The presence of already-made-plans, to keep the program running through choosing an appropriate partner to follow up on the work from the beginning, so we can depend on him and his staff to keep the program running in a more successful way.

The question is not clear, and I don't have any information regarding the subject.

Through more meetings, not only for those in charge, at the end, meetings are the most important thing for those running the projects.

Research about the role and involvement of the youth in Media
Research about the means of entertainment for the youth.
Research about the lack of interest of reading of the youth.
Research about the real motives of the youth's interest about the youth's programs.

PARTICIPANT INTERVIEWS

Participant Interview Report

Date: 20/10/2010

Country & Location: Cairo, Egypt

Researcher Name: Sarah Auten

Organization and / or Relevant Program: Siraj Participant – Egypt

Motivation for Participation: I was invited to the kick-off workshop in 2007. They explained the project and I found it interesting. I am the leader of X, an NGO that has a youth sector focus, so I am interested in networking and regional program goals in relation to [this NGO]. The toolkit for leadership and the agenda to develop this is a good match for us. We wrote a proposal to join Siraj but we were not selected.

After the workshop, I didn't have contact or involvement with them since this time. I had connections with the project coordinator for an activity for the National Council for Child and Motherhood, received some information about Siraj project activities, but not really a part of the program since [the NGO] wasn't selected.

Common Challenges of Regional Youth: I am currently writing a proposal to find regional donors for a leadership program. The real challenge of youth development is financing – it is hard to find donors interested in youth programs – they are more interested in natural resources, AIDS, women's empowerment, but youth issues are at the bottom of the priority list. When you have a program to develop youth, people aren't interested in funding this. Need development through leadership programs.

Second largest issue youth face is the logistics of a regional program. It is hard to gather together participants from different countries (Syria/Lebanon, Egypt/Lebanon) especially Palestinians – they can't come to Egypt because of their political situation. So we either have to postpone or exclude them. It is not sustainable and the situation is always evolving, so even if you think you can bring them, the situation changes on the ground.

Third, language is also a problem because of English – most materials are in English and not all participants can communicate fluently. It is hard to do trainings if you have to use a translator – those who do speak English have to hear everything twice and it's boring for them.

Goals of a Regional Youth Program: As I am already running a youth program, our main goal is to develop real understanding for the youth situation in the Middle East region. To develop the leadership necessary to lead this development. The population of youth is large and in the future they will have power and be a majority. We need leaders who can transfer the message to a wider community. We are all in the same region, we speak the same language, face the same issues of literacy and women's empowerment across all countries. We have the same perspective, more or less, to our problems. We need to develop better strategies for youth to communicate and work together to solve these problems.

Sometimes you feel that relations between countries in the region is not the best and youth don't always work together. We need to forget about the past. ALL youth are having the same dreams, the same vision and develop strategies to address our problems. We have the same challenges and we have to work it out.

Challenges of a Regional Program: We need to explore the network of German youth working with Arab youth. Not only a benefit to the ME region – other nationalities, other cultures to open youths' minds. Different cultures can cause conflict. You have to set parameters and find commonalities to encourage dialogue – it's not just about what's different. Find commonalities.

How could USAID support youth networks in the region: To put it on their agenda. You have to focus more on these activities. Over the last two years, I have not seen any outcomes.

They designed a toolkit for leadership – I have never received it and I am responsible for more than 300 youth between 14-22. Even if organizations are not selected, they should share these tools with the wider NGO community, but they are not promoted. The people surrounding Siraj never got any benefits. These assets should be more widely distributed.

Also, monitor feedback from those who do use it – look at their challenges and make improvements. Don't just design it and distribute it without making any refinements.

Information and Research Gaps: Unemployment should be a focus point. Immigration to Europe/US/Canada resulting in brain drain. All youth dream to leave their country – there must be a big impact of this – why do they want to leave? How could we make them stay? It is a problem to figure out the reasons and design useful tools – we need to understand the situation better in order to resolve it.

Participant Interview Report

Date: 18/10/2010

Country & Location: Cairo, Egypt

Researcher Name: Sarah Auten

Organization and / or Relevant Program: Siraj Egypt

I am currently contracted by the Amman office of StC to develop the toolkit. I was also involved in previous activities such as the workshop in the early stages of the toolkit development. I heard they were developing some kind of toolkit for youth and I liked the idea of these activities. I helped with the Lebanon and Yemen implementation and then 3-4 months later, they asked me to work on the development of the toolkit. I am now 24 years old; I was then 21 or 22, so it was a good chance for me to work and build my experience. I had done a lot of youth initiatives before this. In Oct. 2007, we delivered the first draft, and another draft in April 2008. In the last month, it has been finalized.

We are working to make something innovative so the design process took a long time. We did not want to repeat the old strategies. The toolkit sums up the success of the program at the end stage after Siraj ends. It is intended to enable these activities to continue.

How to build initiatives: 3 stages.

1. Self-discovery and self-involvement
2. Development of a positive self-image – appreciate your strengths and develop interactions with the community
3. Initiate action

Defining youth leaders as those who make a difference or influence their community.

Toolkit coming in two packages – 1 for youth, 1 for youth workers

Why did you choose to participate in Siraj: I liked how they give a chance to young people. Many programs get stuck in the way they manage the program. Save the Children was more credible – giving younger people a chance to make their own programs. This was very risky. The program was run by young people – Noor was 28, very dynamic, effective in meeting young people's expectations and giving them opportunities.

I have suffered through youth programs run by older people – they don't give young people the space they need.

It is also good in providing freedom to do different activities to develop. Broad objectives like youth networking. This can be done in different ways with different activities. Each country has a different program – e.g., Amman is different from Egypt. Every program officer has the freedom to decide what is appropriate for their location. It is a very innovative model.

Benefits of regional program: I have worked in many different countries in the region. Each country needs a program like this – it promotes active roles for young people. In talking about regional platforms to change is the inspiration – the toolkit is regional. A program that is just implemented nationally does not have the same regional aspirations for networking.

Siraj has not been implemented well. We need more regional meetings – we've only had one so far and it happened at the end of the program. There are managerial and logistical issues. But we need this regional exchange of ideas and regional networking.

Drawbacks of a regional program: It's not that bad but sometimes the regional office is good and well-organized, it reflects on the other offices. Less-supportive regional offices can influence the quality of local offices. When you have a good manager, all the officers are comfortable. The management style changes and things change. StC's new manager has not been powerful enough to make decisions and this affected the program and the toolkit development due to the upheaval.

USAID should provide more management oversight, not just implementation. There were some gaps. They should go to the local offices more to be more involved and participate.

Common challenges of youth in the region: Participation on a political level. Community-level participation is more frequent; youth have had more freedom to move in their local communities but are not nationally involved. Only about 16% participate in elections. There are big families in Egypt and when the family decides to vote for one candidate, all of the family members will vote the same.

Only about 2% of youth in Egypt have done community work – this indicates a need for programs that promote community participation. This is a challenge because opportunities are rare.

Also confidence and capacity building for youth – we need to build the skills to enable them to seize opportunities.

Work more on environmental issues – more supportive and secure to work with NGOs and youth organizations.

How could USAID support regional youth networks? I have witnessed different levels of networking – most are physical networks such as forums or workshops, but they have not made good use of ICT-based platforms for networking. Even on a physical level, they haven't explored creative methods. They should be more innovative in networking strategies and make better use of cyberspace.

At the same time, networking cannot be the ultimate objective. They should be working on community participation. Networking is only meaningful as a tool for people to work together. It's just creating the supporting environment. But there is a real need for community development – when I started school, I was studying medicine but I shifted to social sciences in light of the opportunities available.

Research and Information Gaps: The research level of youth in the region is very weak. There is no literature for them to be more effective in understanding their status. We need more research on this. Siraj is working on mapping youth organizations and programs. Every map that comes out, there is no methodology to follow up with, or to update the findings, so they are very limited in their usefulness. It's not about doing the research work but about following up on the research to keep it current.

Also, there is a gap between researchers and practitioners. The outcome of the research gets more theoretical so it's not as practical or useful to practitioners. We need a mediator who will work on presenting findings and translating them into practical tools for the field.

Interview Report

Date: 18/09/2010

Country& Location: Hazmieh, Lebanon

Researcher Name: Karim Dagher

Organization and / or Relevant Program: AWSI

In the framework of the Review of the Office of Middle East Programs (OMEP) Youth Initiatives an interview was held with Mr. X in Hazmieh in the southern suburbs of Beirut. The interview started at 11:05 am and lasted until 11:40 am.

Mr. X explained that Souk El Tayeb is not a youth initiative. Souk El Tayeb deals with farmers and producers in agriculture and food production, the target was defined as of the occupation. Souk El Tayeb introduced the food production and the cooking element; more than 55 % of our partners are women. Mr. X added that Souk El Tayeb is a nationwide project and covers all the Lebanese territories, specifically in agricultural areas. We had also have implemented some school awareness projects to encourage the youth to eat healthy and buy organic products.

Our goal is to economically empower producers and create a market and a demand for their services and products. We also aim to promote healthy living and organic agriculture.

On the other hand we suffer from lack of funding and we are always looking for better ways to support the producers and farmers.

Interview Report

Date: 17/09/2010

Country& Location: Beirut, Lebanon

Researcher Name: Karim Dagher

Organization and / or Relevant Program: Peace Scholarships

In the framework of the Review of the Office of Middle East Programs (OMEPE) Youth Initiatives an interview was held with Mr. X in Beirut. The interview started at 5:00 pm and lasted until 6:05 pm.

Mr. X is one of the 7 university students who obtained a Peace Scholarship from Lebanon. He considers that the main challenge for the youth in the region to be the lack of opportunities. He also considers skills development and orientation as well as access to funding sources to be also major obstacles. He raised a key concern vis-à-vis religion and traditions that are also the reason behind discrimination and lack of strong networking channels between the youth in the region. According to Mr. X, Peace Scholarships had been successful in tackling these challenges. It allowed the participants to eliminate the stereotyping that existed amongst students from the region. It provided participants with an out of the box experience which allowed X to reevaluate his beliefs. Both the academic and the change in lifestyle contributed to that. Follow-up was the main weakness of this program. Sustainability has been disregarded since all the follow-up he had has been an online survey in 2 years.

Peace Scholarships has numerous benefits. According to X it provided him with the exposure and experience he needed that allowed him to improve himself as well as his career and academic prospects.

X considers the program to be great, however the segregation of international students from the local students in the dorms has not allowed him to sensitize American students and try to break the stereotyping they have with regards to Arabs. He considered the “Experience America” allowance that provided him with the opportunity to discover the numerous states and make new friends. He also considered the workshop held in Jordan before his departure to the U.S.A. to be of great importance. On the other hand, most of the self-improvement workshops he attended in the United States were not functional. Moreover, the pre-departure file should be more practical and more extensive.

When asked about ways through which he can help develop regional support networks among the youth, he considered that this can only be done through regional initiatives. Regarding identifying important information/research that he would need is a mapping of the specific

needs/challenges of the youth in every country. This should be stratified into 2 main categories: the needs of youth living in rural areas and the needs of the youth living in urban areas.

Interview Report

Date: 20/09/2010 **Country& Location:** Zahleh, Bekaa (55 km from Beirut), Lebanon

Researcher Name: Karim Dagher

Organization and / or Relevant Program: SIRAJ

Minutes of the Meeting:

In the framework of the Review of Office of Middle East Programs (OMEP) Youth Initiatives an interview was held with Ms. X. The interview started at 10:00 am and lasted until 10:30 am.

After asking Ms. X a couple of questions the researcher was aware that she did not play an active role in SIRAJ and did not partake a leading role in any of the SIRAJ activities. Ms. X accompanies her friend who invited her to attend a workshop in the framework of the sessions that were held in Hasbaya, Bekaa. She is neither aware of the significance of SIRAJ nor has been informed of its objectives. When asked about her assessment of the workshop she replied that it was fun but she did not consider it relevant.

After the researcher took the time to explain to Ms. X what the program is about and what are its objectives, she showed enthusiasm and wished to play a more active role but was soon disappointed after she was informed that the program in Lebanon is concluded.

Ms. X concluded that she would like to participate in future youth initiatives.

Researcher Summary Conclusions and Findings:

The Researcher had 3 confirmed meetings in Zahleh. Only Ms. X was able to show up. The other participants were contacted again; one person did not answer his mobile phone, another apologized due to a force majeure.

Interview Report

Date: 23/09/2010

Country& Location: Beirut, Lebanon

Researcher Name: Karim Dagher

Organization and / or Relevant Program: SIRAJ

Minutes of the Meeting:

In the framework of the Review of The Office of Middle East Programs (OMEPE) Youth Initiatives an interview was held with Mr. X in Beirut. The interview started at 10:00 am and lasted until 10:40 am.

Mr. X participated in the production of the documentary that was done within the framework of the Charity project implemented by LIU- Lebanese International University students. He is a senior student in Public Relations and works as a waiter during the day and a bartender in events and when an opportunity is available.

Mr. X identified tolerance to be a major challenge for the youth in the region. He also considers that young people do not have a fair chance in the job market. Some individuals are not qualified but yet manage to find a job easily due to the influential position of their relatives as well as the religious affiliation of the employer. He also believes that the youth in the region are being stereotyped and are perceived to be a threat as opposed to an opportunity for change. He believes that SIRAJ was able to partially tackle those challenges by providing the youth with a funding option that allowed them to express themselves through community oriented project. He considers that future youth initiatives should aim to break boundaries between the youth in the region as well as the youth all around the world.

SIRAJ allowed Mr. X to discover Lebanon and it has exceeded his expectations. He considered that SIRAJ provided his university club with the means to implement a project they wanted to do and had full control over the design and implementation. He also added that he is not yet able to assess the impact of his experience in SIRAJ on his career, but he enjoyed the experience although no follow-up was done. SIRAJ is small scale. In order for it to have the required impact it should allow youth to communicate on a regional platform. Sustainability was also ignored and this minimized the impact of the project.

Researcher Summary Conclusions and Findings:

Although X's contribution was limited to assisting the production of the documentary and has not participated in any workshops or other activities. Nevertheless, the project was successful in allowing X to broaden his horizons as well as sensitize him about the importance of having an open mind and accepting the views and perceptions of his teammates.

Interview Report

Date: 21/09/2010

Country& Location: Beirut, Lebanon

Researcher Name: Karim Dagher

Organization and / or Relevant Program: SIRAJ

Minutes of the Meeting:

In the framework of the Review of Office of Middle East Programs (OMEPE) Youth Initiatives an interview was held with Mr. X in Beirut. The interview started at 10:30 am and lasted until 11:30 am.

X participated in Siraj program as INTERSOS Lebanon NGO Program Manager; he was looking forward to be part of the sustainability team of the program in South of Lebanon.

He identified the common challenges by order of importance to be the limited opportunities for youth to participate in the local or central decision making that is related to youth programs and initiatives, in addition to the lack of governmental strategies related to tackling the challenges facing the youth. Other major problems like unemployment and emigration of university graduates and skilled individuals. He believes that somehow by offering spaces to youth to express freely and covering sometimes their points of view that they may not be able to do without the support of the program. The financial part is not the main concern it's just an encouragement. The emotional benefit and capacity building is the priority. He added that the follow-up and support of program staff increased and enhanced the youth ability and capability to initiate and be strong in facing their communities with what they see and what they suggest.

The success of the program to tackle these challenges is mainly the result of providing some youth groups who had good ideas for activities in their local communities with financial support.

On the other hand, when asked about the ability of such initiatives to draw the youth away from extremism, he mentioned that the youth should have at their disposal free "anti-extremism" leisure centers to meet and pass their time usefully. The challenge is that the youth in the region are highly influenced by the decision makers and religious authorities. In principle most individuals prone to extremism will not participate in a USAID funded program.

He considers that the main objectives of the future initiatives should cover exchanging lessons learned by setting up a regional youth committee which carries out regular meetings that would follow the implementation of the programs and be participating in its sustainability.

Mr. X regards the program to be very relevant to his professional and career needs. The most useful activities are the regional meetings. On the other hand, the least useful activities he mentioned were the hit and run activities like distributing "awareness material" that most of the time end up in a garbage bin. On the other hand, through these initiatives I learned to face the reality and assess the situation (strong points vs. negative points) then to analyze and draw conclusions. This program also helped Mr. X to have a clear strategy where about his future goals and expectations.

When asked how can he contribute in developing regional support networks among youth he answered: "I can support by linking the youth groups am in contact with, I can also help in capacity building of these youth to be united over a common problem to face it united". In the design of youth regional programs the most important information needed are statistics about youth dropout rate from schools as well as information regarding the emigration of the youth.

Researcher Summary Conclusions and Findings:

X is one of the rare candidates I have been able to meet who spearheaded activities within SIRAJ. He is dynamic and enthusiastic. He is also one of the rare individuals who truly believes in the potentials as well as the benefits of donor funded youth initiatives.

Interview Report

Date: 25/09/2010

Country& Location: Saida, Lebanon

Researcher Name: Karim Dagher

Organization and / or Relevant Program: SIRAJ

Minutes of the Meeting:

In the framework of the Review of the Office of Middle East Programs (OMEP) Youth Initiatives an interview was held with Ms. X in Saida, South Lebanon. The interview started at 10:05 am and lasted until 10:35 am.

Ms. X is head of a small association next to Saida. She considers 3 major challenges to be the most common for the youth in the region:

- Skills vs. employment opportunities
- Salaries vs. living requirements
- Security

SIRAJ is not able to directly tackle these challenges, but if combined with other initiatives they can make a difference. She added that SIRAJ has also major limitations. Some youth groups proposed to carry-out activities and initiate ideas that have a much wider scope but did not receive adequate financial support.

The Program weakness is that it didn't give the same opportunity to all different youth groups from different countries to have the enough planning time Lebanon was the last country in which SIRAJ was launched. The preparation phase was rushed and planning was brief thus not allowing us to design the scope and scale projects which we would have liked to implement. The extremism problem does not exist among the beneficiaries of SIRAJ.

Ms. X considers regional initiatives to be very important. "Whenever the youth from different countries meet and discuss their problems and the way every one is facing or tackling them the more experienced they become about ways in which they can fight those obstacles.

Ms. X believes that more research should be done before the implementation of projects so that

implementation is carried out effectively and efficiently. And when asked if she was responsible for the design of the project what information would she need, she replied: “we have to have information about the living standards and living needs in every country as well as identify the job market needs”.

Interview Report

Date: September 23, 2010 **Country& Location:** Palestine- Nablus

Researcher Name: Fa'ida Awashreh

Organization and / or Relevant Program: Siraj

X, 22 years old, from Bethlehem, attended the training on the Siraj toolkit in Bethlehem in July 2010. The training lasted for 5 days, from 9:00 am till 5:00pm. She said that the training was wonderful as the trainer has excellent skills and employed significant methods.

Topics also were interesting and useful especially leadership, team work and community work.

X said the training increased her self confidence and she learnt also how to consult with team members in making decisions. Also, her communication skills developed and that she became more capable of expressing herself and delivering her message.

The training day used to start at 9:00 am and last till 5:00 pm. Though the duration is long we used to feel the time fly by so fast. If there is a similar advanced training, I will attend it, especially if it is with the same trainer (ABC), X said.

According to X, there was no weakness in the training. However, if it was longer it would have covered more important topics and in deep. Such training courses are very important because youth need skills to enter the job market after graduation. Usually, schools and universities focus on theoretical topics and method and therefore youth are not exposed to practical issues and to these skills and they get surprised and sometimes confused when they graduate and join the job market without being prepared.

The training that I attended helped me, and I think the others, a lot in gaining some skills like public speaking and organizing the community work. I hope that this will help me in future in finding a job, after graduation, X said.

X is aware that Siraj is a regional project. However, she does not know much about it in other countries. She hopes that she will have an opportunity to travel to any country and meet with other youth in the region. This is very important in knowing other youth experience, they can inspire us and I think we can do the same to them, X said.

The youth initiatives that Siraj support are something very important and useful to both youth and their communities. They allow youth to translate knowledge they gained from training into an actual work on the ground by employing new skills and methods gained. Through this they assume their roles in their communities and feel valuable and also appreciated by their people.

I hope that there will be a youth network that gathers youth from the country and region together where they can learn from each other and inspire each other by exchanging ideas. I can work on recruiting members for such a network as I have many friends' good contacts in my town. It is really pity that we in Bethlehem area do not know much about Siraj activities in Nablus, not to mention Siraj regional activities.

At the end, X said that there should be other projects like Siraj because there are many youth who did not have the opportunity of participating in Siraj activities, as there was a limitation on number of beneficiaries.

Researcher Summary Conclusions and Findings:

- The idea of gathering youth from different countries with different experiences is demanded by youth.
- Siraj activities are appreciated by beneficiaries specially the training on the toolkit.
- Siraj project seems to be visible only at the very local level, as there is no communication between different localities in Palestine, not to mention the regional level.
- Youth should be empowered more with skills to assume their important role in their community development.

Interview Report

Date: September 19, 2010 **Country & Location:** Palestine- Ramallah

Researcher Name and Contact: Fa'ida Awashreh

Organization and / or Relevant Program: Arab World Social Innovators (AWSI)

X is a community activist. He participated in the AWSI program as he thought it could be a developmental opportunity for him. However, his benefit was not up to the desired level as he said he benefited 40% from the AWSI program, where the main benefit from the program was materialistic, as he received a laptop and n amount of money for the initiative.

X expected the AWSI program to provide him with an opportunity to network with USAID or organizations that work in the fields of democracy, media, human rights and development in the United States and Arab countries such as Lebanon, Jordan and Egypt . However, this did not take place at all during the program. Rather, X thinks that AWSI made used AWSI participants to generate some funds.

He also expected to have an advanced capacity building program but this did not happen, as training courses AWSI participants were provided with were basic ones which X himself already delivers training in, including communication skills and leadership.

X said that the program regional coordinator did not play his role effectively and this was one of the program weaknesses.

According to X, the AWSI program could have been a significant one as there are no other similar programs, but it seems that the program management did not employ this effectively which was reflected negatively on the program implementation. Also, he believes that the program's actual aim was creating a media campaign that can be used for fundraising.

X added that in order to be effective youth regional programs should enable youth of examining some youth initiatives in the region, where they can learn not only about the initiatives but also create a network that can provide updated information on recent developments about the region.

However, thought it was for a short period, the one-week visit that he made to the United States was very helpful for him in understanding and addressing the American people. He said that he feels now more confident communicating with the American people and delivering the Palestinian message.

Asking him about the challenged youth face in the region, X said that the Arab youth has a huge energy but they are not supported, rather suppressed by their dictator governments especially in Egypt, Tunisia, Algeria and Palestine, and that their initiatives are fought inside their countries. He said also that civil society organizations in the region countries are not being helpful if youth are not serving their agendas. Youth voices are not heard and their initiatives are not adapted by their governments. To address youth issues effectively, youth should be provided with support at all levels. Creating a formal body that can work as an umbrella for social innovators can be very helpful in organizing and professionalizing social innovators' work, allowing more chance of networking with relevant organizations. This needs to be brainstormed and discussed between innovators at the regional level.

X finished by saying that in Palestine there are huge amounts of money that are spent by organizations with no impact on the community. On the other hand, he continued, there are many innovators who have ideas and the will to create a change, however, they lack the resources needed.

Researcher Summary Conclusions and Findings:

AWSI program was not a successful experience for X due to the following:

- It did not provide a real capacity building for participants
- The regional coordinator did not perform his role well
- The networking aspect was not paid attention to by the AWSI management
- No needs assessment was made to participants
- Youth in the region share same problems and concerns. They also face same challenges.

Interview Report

Date: September 27, 2010 **Country& Location:** Palestine- Bethlehem

Researcher Name and Contact: Fa'ida Awashreh

Organization and / or Relevant Program: Arab World Social Innovators (AWSI)

X, 37 years old, participated in the AWSI program seeking more empowerment, as an executive manager of Students Forum, in his fields of interests concerning youth involvement and participation in the political process in Palestine.

According to X, youth in the region lack funds for implementing initiatives which they have and develop. This issue is one of the challenges that youth face in the region, along with other challenges such as the suppression of governing authorities and the political system as well as the traditions and norms that restrict youth. However, the most challenging one, in terms of negative consequences, is the political systems that govern the countries in the region

The AWSI program succeeded, to some extent, in addressing some of challenges youth face. With the availability of the funds, provided by the AWSI program, more youth bodies have been formed and therefore the voice of youth have been heard better, employing for this television programs, workshops and awareness sessions. Also, some marginalized areas, such as Al-Rashayda, Tqou', Jananta and some camps in Bethlehem areas, were accessed for the first time and became engaged with the youth parliament, which is affiliated to the Palestine Youth Parliament.

Also, in X's opinion, the AWSI program initiatives, through enhancing many concepts in the youth mentality, including forgiveness, political participation and importance of knowing each other, contributed to drawing youth from "extremism."

According to X, regional youth programs should develop the networking between youth initiatives, programs as well as organizations in the region where youth can benefit from exchange of experiences. To X, this benefit was concluded in the AWSI program, specially through the visit that he made to the Jordan, where he had the opportunity of learning, in close, about the Jordan Valley initiative (Rabee' initiative), that aims at encouraging investment in that marginalized areas.

In general, X thinks that the AWSI program was a successful one where he benefited from the majority of activities. The most beneficial was the training courses in the field fundraising, networking and communications skills. Also, X thinks that English training courses that innovators took in Palestine were useful too. On the other hand, the least useful activities, was the local meeting with the president of Al-Quds university as the meeting was limited only to discussion, which later was not translated into anything on the ground.

X can help in developing regional support networks among youth by employing his studies and reports on the needs and status of the youth in the region, as well as through actual engagement in other regional initiatives. However, a provision of a database on youth in the region is needed.

Researcher Summary Conclusions and Findings:

- AWSI program for X was a successful experience where he benefited from about 70% of the program activities.
- The networking between youth initiatives and programs/ organizations in the region could have been better.
- Youth in the region face similar challenges including of political system, lack of funds for their initiatives and restrictions of norms and tradition.
- An inclusive database on youth in the region is needed.

Interview Report

Date: September 23, 2010 **Country& Location:** Palestine- BirZeit/Ramallah

Researcher Name and Contact: Fa'ida Awashreh

Organization and / or Relevant Program: Peace Scholarship Program

X is 21 years old, studying English and translation at Birzeit university. Currently she works at Palestine television in the International Relations section as a part time job.

She was a peace scholar in 2009-2010. She started the program with a pre-departure orientation course in Egypt where she, due to visa problems, joined the other 24 Peace scholars late, for only the last 10 days. According to X, this orientation activity was the least activity she benefited from the whole program. X said that the training was very intensive, the setting for some topics was inappropriate and that some presentations of speakers were boring such as the Project planning topic. However, the presentation that was made on the "Presentation Skills" was very beneficial as it included a theoretical aspect presented a professor, followed by implementation, and then practical presentations made by scholars themselves.

Also, in the orientation, there were restrictions on the free time of scholars in Egypt as they were required to go together, the group of 25 scholars, to the same place the thing that X and other scholars did not like.

Asking her about the reasons behind participation in the program, X said she participated to expand her experience opportunities, develop her personality and to learn to live independent. This was concluded by X.

She aimed also by participating in this program at gaining new experiences from other youth and this has been concluded. Her self confidence has also increased. Also, she benefited at the academic level as her writing skills in English have significantly developed, during her study at the University of Arizona in Tucson, where she was placed.

In general, she liked the Peace Scholars program. She believes that it added much to her personally and academically. She became more open to others and more respectful to differences between people in the region and outside the region as well. All of this is what behind the peace scholarship program and for her it has been concluded.

Youth in the region lack self confidence and life skills. They were not raised to think and express themselves freely. They do not have the skills of imagination and creativity. This, according to X, is due the inappropriate educational system. She believes that the Peace Scholars Program contributed to changing positively all this, allowing scholars to think freely, express themselves and open to others.

Youth need to be more involved in regional and international programs so that they can learn more about the world and the differences between themselves. They also need to exchange experiences so that new applicable useful experiences can be employed in their countries.

Also, youth need to gain new skills that prepare them for work. It would be very useful to be exposed to the real work before they graduate from universities.

Problems and challenges:

- 1- There were very strict financial rules and procedures in the program that did not allow scholars, who are in different places with different situations, to benefit the best way.
- 2- Inflexible policy of university in the selection of academic courses as international students are given the last priority in selecting courses.
- 3- Pre-departure orientation month was almost a failure and a waste of time, money and effort as it did not help much, with its courses content.
- 4- No effective follow up on scholars by the World Learning

Researcher Summary Conclusions and Findings:

- Gathering youth from different countries with different experiences is very useful where it enables youth to open to each other.
- Except for the pre-departure orientation that took place in Egypt, the scholarship program was successful and concluded its goals
- The scholarship program experience enabled youth to enhance self confidence, openness to others and accepting differences. It impacted positively scholars' attitudes.

Interview Report

Date: September 19, 2010 **Country& Location:** Palestine- Ramallah

Researcher Name and Contact: Fa'ida Awashreh

Organization and / or Relevant Program: Peace Scholarship Program

X is a peace scholar of 2009-2010. She was based at the University of Colorado in Colorado. She

participated in this program to represent her country and her people. Also, she aimed at gaining new experiences from other youth and this has been concluded by her.

Currently, X is studying English and translation at BirZeit University, 3rd year.

In general, she liked the Peace Scholars Program which included courses and workshops on useful topics including project management, proposals development and fundraising which youth at schools and universities are usually not exposed to.

X benefited a lot from these topics specially the project management which provided her with information on steps needed to start up a project. However, according to X, many of speakers, including an American and Saudi speakers, addressed these topics based on their countries' contextual analysis, which made topics look inappropriate to her and inapplicable to Palestine, the country that has its own characteristics that need to be taken into consideration.

Another problem with the program's training courses is that there was a variance in the levels of students which affected the efficiency and benefit from courses and workshops that were organized during the period of the program. Some training topics, such as communication skills and leadership, were very familiar to some students including herself. This is especially true with the training that was conducted in Egypt.

At the personal level, X also benefited from the program. This included providing her with a different experience to live on her own in a different country with a different culture, study in a university with a new system. Also, this opportunity has changed some of her attitudes where she became more accepting and respectful to others when listening to and/or addressing others. Also, the peace scholars program enabled her to network with others. She also learned a lot of how to market herself.

At the professional level, her experience in the United States, through the peace scholars program, created new interests and opened for new professional areas to think about. She thinks that the peace scholars program revealed that she likes to do a universal academic work and community development in future.

As for the youth initiatives that were addressed in the peace scholars program, X said that they are community initiatives derived by youth themselves based on their community needs' assessment. The youth initiatives have nothing to do with extremism. A problem on the initiatives is that their duration is short, 3 months, starting June 2010 and ending in September 2010.

X believes that youth in the region have similar problems and situations. Therefore, she thinks that such youth programs provide an opportunity to exchange ideas and experiences between the youth from different countries and benefit from each other, in addition to developing youth personalities at different levels.

However, X thinks youth programs should include bringing American youth to the region, in addition to sending Arab youth from the region to the United States. She thinks this exchange

will help in drawing away the fear of having the region youth “brainwashed” in the United States.

As for the Colorado university, where X studied, she said that she was lucky to be in that university as everything was well organized including the availability of resources that serve international students. She believes that this was a major factor among factors that entailed the success of her experience.

Researcher Summary Conclusions and Findings:

- Gathering youth from different countries with different experiences is useful
- Youth should be attracted in a practical way, with real issues of interest to them
- Youth should be educated more and more about their important role in their community development.
- It is important to ensure the relevance of youth programs content to the youth countries’ context.
- Students from the country should be placed at international universities/organizations that have international resources to be provided with.

A regional network of youth can be created by encouraging real partnership between youth from the region countries “joint initiatives”.

Interview Report

Date: 30/09/2010

Country& Location: Morocco

Researcher Name: Sarah Auten

Organization and / or Relevant Program: Peace Scholars Morocco

X participated in the PS program as a representative from Morocco, but now lives in Qatar working for Chevrolet as manager of the service department.

I think the biggest challenge facing youth in the region is poverty and employment. A lot of people have diplomas but cannot find a job – they are well-educated but can’t find employment. I developed a project to link employers with potential job seekers, but it did not work well because the system is dominated by the government. They have their own agency that places people in jobs and charges them half their salary in return for the service. Mine was a free service.

After this project didn’t work, I started thinking of something else – in secondary schools and universities in Morocco, they do not develop students’ study and professional skills. They never take courses on effective learning strategies, time management, research skills, organizational skills, etc. So I developed a program do to this for people, to conduct volunteer-led sessions, once or twice a week to teach people professional skills. When people graduate, they don’t have the necessary skills for job seeking (interviewing skills, CV development, etc.). I wanted to find the right people to train them on a volunteer basis. In our culture, volunteer work is not really

emphasized or institutionalized. I found people who would provide training sessions on a volunteer basis, wanted to develop a website to post scholarship and internship opportunities to help students advance their careers and studies. I talked to the British Council about this and a Moroccan Association that promotes civic education and volunteerism, who were willing to help but instead found that I needed to get a real job first before trying to create new programs. I looked for a job in Morocco for one year and then found an opportunity in Qatar, so I moved.

Benefits of a Regional Program

The Peace Scholars are from the same region but different countries – this experience with the PS program helped me a lot when I went to Qatar – I knew what to expect linguistically, from the dialectical issues especially. My friends in PS helped me to learn these other dialects, because no one in Qatar would understand me if I spoke Moroccan dialect.

Culturally, Morocco is close to Europe, and different from the Middle East and the Gulf states – food, habits, traditions, etc. Because I was familiar with it from PS, it was not a big deal to adjust.

It was a great opportunity to meet friends from other countries. We do stay in touch – about 2 months ago, a friend from Lebanon came to Qatar to visit, still stay in touch with program participants from Yemen, Egypt, about 12-13 of them in all, email, Facebook.

Everyone was afraid when Algerian students were added to the program because of their country's political problems with Morocco. But there weren't any – which was surprising. I learned that the problems are only with governments, no with people. I now have Algerian friends in Qatar and there are no issues.

Goals for Participation

I knew a friend who did a Fulbright exchange to the US – he told me good things about scholarships and how they increase mutual understanding, it's an opportunity to explore the beautiful nature and culture of the US – there is lots of diversity. He built my image of the US before I went. Also, I was a student of American Studies in Morocco for my undergraduate, so this experience helped me to understand my education firsthand.

The selection process was very competitive. My expectations were met – even when I came back, I met with the Fulbright guy and we compared experiences, and the PS program had provided a richer experience – I got to see things he didn't see.

It was also a great opportunity to practice English – this is hard to learn in Morocco because not a lot of people speak it. So it was a good chance to learn American culture and English language. I made a lot of good friends I am still in touch with – people living in America from Turkey, Libya, Peru, etc.

One thing that could be improved about the program is that it is a non-degree program. This didn't really meet my expectations. It became a lost year academically. The program would be better as a Master's program or a degree program. The best thing I got out of it was my English skills.

Interview Report

Date: 25/09/2010

Country& Location: Sana'a, Yemen

Researcher Name: Abdulwahed Thabet

Organization and / or Relevant Program: SIRAJ

X is single and 23 years old. He had his bachelor degree in mass media two years ago. Unfortunately, he has not found a job up to date. Whenever, and where ever he applied for a job, he was always refused due to the fact that he has no hands-on experience. From a family struggled to educate him and his other brothers and sisters, he was expecting that he would find a job within a short period of time.

He used to dream that he would help his parents in raising and educating his other brothers and sisters.

Through one of his friends he had heard about Siraj and its activities. Aiming to spend most of his free time in a useful way, he went with a some hope that he would have some friends to chat with and practice some activities that may help him in gaining some of the hand-on experience that was required by the employers.

In 2007, X joined Siraj Youth Leadership Development Initiative program. He participated in many initiatives and benefited through capacity building activities such as Workshops, Seminars, Conferences and training, in addition to participated in many T.O.Ts. activities. X also got about \$1000 as financial grants. Furthermore, he benefited from Experience Exchange.

X now feel that he has a good experience since he has actively participating in administrating a website, publishing a newsletter, and many other mass media Initiative. He said that Siraj was the best, since Siraj played a great roll to restore his trust and aspiration. He aims to put what he has learned in to practice through taking a leading role in many activities such as designing and publishing awareness campaigns in many issues concerning Youth like; education, unemployment, capacity building. He is also planning to conduct many training workshops to transfer the experience and skills he gained to other people in need.

When asked if he see any benefit to this program being implemented regionally. He ensured that such practice would create more opportunities to exchange experience and lessons learned. When it was about the obstacles, he expressed that the most hindering obstruction would come by the end of the program where no hope from others to tackle youth problems. Consequently, the youth will lost the right track for their futures, especially in the current situation in Yemen

where the priority is given to fighting in many confronts such as Sa'adah war in the north and the separation movement in the south, and fighting Al-Qaidah, in addition to the mass corruption spread out all over Yemen.

Researcher Summary Conclusions and Findings:

X is one of the common youth who faced lots of obstacles threatened their rights to find out the bright future. The USAID funded Program SIRAJ made their lives full of energy and enthusiasm.

Interview Report

Date: 25/09/2010

Country& Location: Sana'a, Yemen

Researcher Name: Abdulwahed Thabet

Organization and / or Relevant Program: Siraj Association

X is a 21 year-old. He is studying Business administration university of science and technology in Sana'a. Living with his well off family, he had lots of free time and was looking for some beneficial activities that could make him positive and useful in his society, in addition to gain several social and practical leadership skills.

Aiming to reach his goals, he joined Youth Leadership Development Initiative- Siraj in 2008. X said gained lots of benefits in capacity building through workshops, training, and through attending Cairo conference. He also got a lump sum of about \$1000 as financial grants to finance some of the social awareness campaign in his area. In addition, X benefited from some networking Activities like the national events and experience exchange.

When he was asked to evaluate his participation in (OMEP), and what were the affects, he assured that his personal development and leadership skills has greatly increased. Regarding technical and professional knowledge, regional & international exposure & understanding and Access to regional & international networks, he assured that there were slight increase.

Through his participation in the program and the great deal of benefits he acquired, X has completely put into practice all what he acquired into in many of his current and the planned activities.

Evaluating the relevance of the project in supporting his personal and professional goals, he extremely admired the extreme effectiveness of the project.

Regarding sustainability, Mr. X said that his project offers support and networking through Internet website and networking with donors involving in youth development. He participated in many of the well-liked activities, and found them very beneficial regarding his professional and personal development goals.

Mr. X is planning to lead and participated in future networking activities. He already started many initiatives concerning social awareness campaign aiming youth of the age 13-18 years old about the damage effects of using drugs and related to HIV.

When asked to evaluate how his leadership skills and abilities were affected by his time in the program, Mr. X assured that there were significant changes in many of his personal characteristics. The most important of which are being self-reliant and independent, speaking in public, listening to others' suggestions or concerns, expressing your ideas and feelings, being tolerant of others different than him and many other important aspects.

In general, X is very happy with program and with the significant success achieved. The program also helped him to have a clear strategy where about his future goals and expectations.

Mr. X recommend that the program is very beneficial and hope that many youth can benefited from the great USAID funded program.

Interview Report

Date: 28/09/2010

Country& Location: Sana'a, Yemen

Researcher Name and Contact: Abdulwahed Thabet

Organization and / or Relevant Program: Life Makers Association -Sana'a- Yemen

Minutes of the Meeting:

Miss.X was interviewed in Life Makers Association Office in Sana'a. The interview started at 16:00 and ended at 16:45.

She is one of the staff running Life Makers Association Office in Sana'a. She was graduated from Sana'a University three months before became a member of Youth Leadership Development Initiative in the Arab World (Life Makers Association) in 2009.

Miss. X originally from a well off family.

She has been working with the program for about one year and yet gained a significant technical and professional experience and personal development. Miss Halah has attended several workshops, Seminars, and training. In addition, she attended many regional meetings, experience exchange and International Conferences.

With regards to Leadership skills, Regional & international exposure & understanding, and Access to regional & international networks she said that she was slightly benefited due to the fact that she already had a great deal of those characteristics. She added that she would put, what

she has learned, into practice in her current and futures activities. One of the activities that she is planning is a project is the development of self confidence for youth, and the other to conduct workshops and conferences to discuss youth related issues.

She has done many voluntary activities. Within her association, she participated in conducting training on the use of computer and also volunteered as a teacher of English language for some groups of youth. She has sufficient opportunities for leadership especially that she aims two work with International Organizations.

She does still stay in touch with people she met during her participants in different events. She is open minded girl and likes to build many relations regardless gender issues.

When she was asked to what extent did her leadership skills and abilities were affected by the program she stated that there were remarkable changes in all of her characteristics, except for solving problems where the changes was modest.

Researcher Summary Conclusions and Findings:

In general, she was satisfied with the program.

Interview Report

Date: 28/09/2010

Country& Location: Sana'a, Yemen

Researcher Name and Contact: Abdulwahed Thabet

Organization and / or Relevant Program: Tawtin Association

Minutes of the Meeting:

The interview with Mr. X was held in Sana'a. The interview started at 15:30 and ended at 16:30.

X participated in Siraj program as a participant from Tawtin Association Sana'a; He got a B.A. in Economics, unemployed and looking for a job. Since he joined the program in 2008, he was greatly benefitted from several capacity building activities to build his career and his personal characteristics aiming to be one of effective staff in voluntary worker in Tawtin Association.

X participated in several events of networking, the most important of which is the Evaluation workshop held in Cairo-Egypt. He evaluated his participation in the program with a great respect since he was Greatly affected in the Technical and professional knowledge, Personal development, Leadership skills in addition to the other areas. He also added that he would put, what he has learned, into practice in his current activities.

He planned and led several activities of charity related events such as conducting field surveys to identify the poor families that deserve receiving aid support. He also plays a major role in capacity building of youth in areas of personal and professional development.

When asked to what extent his leadership skills and abilities were affected by the program he answered: "There was significant growth in most of the characteristics with the exception of summarizing complicated ideas".

X is very satisfied with the program. And the most beneficial outcome of his participation in the program are development of leadership skills, speaking confidently in public, leading a team and motivating others, solving critical problems, being flexible and tolerant of others different than him.

Researcher Summary Conclusions and Findings:

X has made a great effort to develop his personal characteristics and tried the best he could to maximize the benefits from the program in favor for himself and to work voluntarily to serve the community he loves.

Interview Report

Date: 25/09/2010

Country & Location: Sana'a, Yemen

Researcher Name and Contact: Abdulwahed Thabet

Organization and / or Relevant Program: Siraj Association

Minutes of the Meeting:

X lives in Yemen, he is an unemployed youth in the age range 18-22 years. In 2007, he participated in the Leadership Capacity Building Initiative for youths in the Arab world (Siraj).

Answering the question about the initiatives he had benefited from, he said that they were a) the workshops and b) training, he also added that he had worked as a trainer. Within this context, X would like to be a regional trainer in Human Rights. He participated in the establishment of Holool (solutions) Organization for combating Poverty and Unemployment.

X looks at the networking activities as exchange of expertise and attendance of international conferences. The participation in the program has a remarkable impact on his leadership skills. Assessing the importance of the program and whether he would use what he got from the program in his present activities, his reply was that he would use what he got a little bit, and felt that it was somehow ineffective on the personal level, but it was professionally effective a little

bit.

Regarding sustainability, he stated that he has not provided any support or networking since participating in, and joining the program. He has no plans for future participation or networking as he is now busy with priorities he has set for his private volunteer work. He also stated that he maintained good and continuous contacts with the individuals and organizations he had met while participating in the project.

Researcher Summary Conclusions and Findings:

The Impact: Regarding the impact questions, X answered them positively. The project has remarkable impacts on his ability to speak publicly, his leadership of teams, flexibility, problem solving, changing of plans to accommodate the present available opportunities and negotiations with mates. Despite the impacts mentioned above, he seems to be not generally satisfied with the program.

Interview Report

Date: 25/09/2010

Country & Location: Sana'a, Yemen

Researcher Name and Contact: Abdulwahed Thabet

Organization and / or Relevant Program: life Makers Association

Minutes of the Meeting:

X is female, bachelor in the age range 23-30 years. She is a university graduate, employed and lives with her parents in Yemen . In 2006, and for more than 12 months, she participated in the Students for Peace project. She benefited from all the project's initiatives particularly the workshops, seminars, conferences and training. She was interested in the networking activities especially since she got support from the counterparts and benefited from exchanging expertise.

The project had a very remarkable impact on her self-development, leadership skills and regional and international understanding. Regarding the importance of the project, she said that she would utilize to the utmost of what she got from the training , and that it was personally very effective and it was professionally a little bit effective.

Regarding sustainability, she stated that her project provided networking and support after she had completed her initial training phase, and that through the networking she had received in-kind and financial support. X assessed this kind of activities as very good and her participation as useful. Thus, she plans future participation, and maintains period contacts with her project mates. She finds that this relationship with her previous mates as very useful on the personal development and somewhat good on the professional development. She thinks that it would be

more useful if the project is implemented regionally to exchange knowledge and expertise and finds that the main obstacle is the difficulty of going to the different regions.

Researcher Summary Conclusions and Findings:

X answered positively all the impact questions. She is generally happy and fully satisfied with the project and that the project made a drastic change to the best in her skills and leadership capacities.

Interview Report

Date: 29/09/2010

Country& Location: Sana'a, Yemen

Researcher Name and Contact: Abdulwahed Thabet

Organization and / or Relevant Program: SIRAJ Association

Minutes of the Meeting:

BENEFICIARIES:

The original target beneficiaries are defined based on some characteristics. The most important is that is to be between 18-30 years of age, as well as we targeted to access to the largest number of girls to achieve a participatory work. The program also aims the unemployed youth, especially university graduates on several geographical levels in rural and urban areas in all governorates.

The program changed the targeted age group of beneficiaries to the age group of 14-30 year. The reason behind that is that some many heads of households depend on this group to help them to support in livelihoods costs. Consequently, large numbers of both sexes has enrolled.

During the implementation of our projects, from time to time we used to discuss the definition of youth category and reach the appropriate definition to make the program beneficial for youth as well as the overall society. The change of age group is an example of changing the definition of youth.

HYPOTHESES:

When the program started we assumed that it would be a challenge to find the adequate number of volunteers to work for and work with because of the economic situation facing most of households. However, the number of volunteers reached 125 thousand young men and women. In contrary, the economic situation, lend us a hand in getting such a great demand for our activities and services.

The common needs of youth, and consequently would impact how USAID develops youth programs consist of two major needs. The first one is the need for capacity building to improve personal and professional knowledge and skills, and the second is financial grants. Regarding the common experiences of youth have, and consequently would impact how USAID develops youth programs are the better understanding and appreciation of the USAID program that would make significant change in their live, in addition to the experience they have acquired in terms of voluntary works.

The significant differences exist among youth between countries that should be taken into account in providing development assistance represented of the obvious difference regarding the perceptions and attitudes towards several issues such as the importance of education, economic participation in a better quality, especially for females. In addition, the differences inherited from the bad habits and traditions with regard to females. Moreover, the inadequate and contempt perception for certain professions and trades.

The regional nature of projects is more effective, since the regional program is much stronger, where they have a better resources and skilled leadership.

The regional barriers are that plans are delayed, especially financial when the delayed budget. as well as the inability to convene meetings for staff at the regional level.

SUSTAINABILITY:

Regarding promoting sustainability we have selected two specialized and powerful association working with youth at large scale in voluntary work. Our selection was based on the evaluation we had done. We had many presentations about the program, signed the contracts. We also trained their staff and youth volunteers, as well as their participation in the regional meeting held in Egypt. And finally we delivered the database and files for the two associations.

PROGRAMMING CHALLENGES

The program faced challenges some of them due were in tribal areas, where people didn't accept the program either for security reasons or as a result of some religious men perspective of youth volunteers, particularly girls.

The operational budget is very small, and do not meet the needs of the program.

To overcome the challenges We conducted several meetings and presentations with sheikhs, dignitaries and preachers of mosques and some parents and teachers. We talked about many issues related to voluntary works and the resulting benefits for the communities and youth.

The lessons learned from these experiences that could be applied to further youth development work in the region are as follow:

- To identify the temperament and behavior of the tribal society and find the proper methods to deal with them to achieve the supportive work environment.
- Discover resources in several areas and work to harness and utilize these resources to help communities.
- Work with government people in charge of youth issues.

INFORMATION SHARING:

The program participated in the evaluation workshop held in Cairo. During the workshop we developed good relationships with the implementing partners of the other OMEP activities. We shared programs and the experiences of successful initiatives.

The information sharing could be smooth the progress of making the dialogue more frequent and effective for future programs through the establishment of a joint websites as is the case in the program with partners in the region. Through connects with the regional events of those working youth field. And through exchange of information and experiences on multiparty initiatives and workshops in this regard.

Through Cairo meeting the program had several dialogues with USAID, UNICEF, UNFPA, and the World Bank and agreed on cooperation lead to support the program financially and logistically.

FUTURE RESEARCH AGENDA:

Based on the experiences and observations, the program needs many research on Youth. The most important of them are a research on unemployment among youth, research on youth education. And research on conditions of youth refugees, as well as marginalized youth.

The program identified the gaps in learning and knowledge sharing that OMEP should be aware of in developing future youth programs. The most important as their priority are; the integration of youth in the institutions of civil society and knowledge sharing among these organizations, help youth to enroll in universities and schools to complete their education and reduce drop-out in various stages of education, and to provide enough opportunities for youth to participate locally, regionally and internationally in several skills and branches of learning.

Interview Report

Date: 21/09/2010

Country & Location: Amman Jordan

Researcher Name: Mais Salameh

Organization and / or Relevant Program: Siraj – Jordan

Proving who's better and who works as one team in group work

How to prove himself among other volunteers and also how to distinguish himself among other volunteers.

News concerning the youth, that benefit them and the news of 5 countries nationwide contributed to offering job opportunities, the youth were happy with the program, for there was a follow-up on the program.

There's something in the Program called Sirajat of the month, these are contributions made by each person in every country where they offer a contribution which reflects positively on their society. The person offers a project that comes to his mind in which he considers important and beneficial for his society or his region.

Since the program is in 5 countries, there should be a connection between these 5 countries to encourage voluntary work and develop their experiences and deliver it to as much people as possible.

People who take part in this program don't even think about extremism for they're constantly occupied with the program, they have certain aims to achieve and things to accomplish.

The main objectives of Siraj are many, including events and activities about the youth. These events attract them according to their interests and hobbies. Awareness workshops like those about drugs draw the attention of the youth to their dangers. One of the goals too is to create a spirit of camaraderie.

There are many positive benefits that increase the knowledge and chances of the youth in life, also it helps in increasing the youth's views on life where they can benefit and help others benefit from this program. These benefits were available for the youth which made them interested in other youth's needs.

He participated in the program because he wanted to go through the experience of volunteering and to fulfill his curiosity. His expectations were that the program includes some programs outside of the Arab world, developing the means of the program like the events and workshops.

The program was very convenient for him because it increased his level of knowledge relevant to his career.

In his opinion, all the activities of the program were beneficial, he didn't find any of the activities non-beneficial. The fact that his hobby is working on websites, he found the workshop "Radio tech technical" very beneficial.

His interests were limited to what he wanted to do during the day such as going out with friends and spending his time for leisure, but after he joined Siraj program, he started thinking of his needs as a young man and how he can develop his thoughts and skills in helping others in order to help his society.

Freedom of speech by developing a new site for the youth, where they can express themselves and what they think concerning local issues. He doesn't want to leave Siraj, he wants to stay in the program to help developing it in the future.

He would want your help in inquiring and doing research as he wants to open a radio station for the youth, airing their ideas and concerns through focus groups. Through that radio station, the youth can also look for jobs and discuss their problems and solve them.

Interview Report

Date: 21/09/2010

Country & Location: Amman Jordan

Researcher Name: Mais Salameh

Organization and / or Relevant Program: Siraj – Jordan

One of the greatest challenges is university, most of the students participating in this study are university students who cannot coordinate between their studies and volunteering in this program.

The inability to coordinate between work, studying, volunteering in this program in addition to the time conflicts.

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Permanence and sustainability: The young volunteers have lots of thoughts, ideas and goals that have to be achieved but the problem is with the discontinuity of the program; it makes it hard for volunteers to achieve their goals.

Lack of activities in this program for the past 18 months.

Lack of volunteers and their discontinuity with this program which causes a problem in coordinating the time between those who are participating.

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There were 600 people in the last seminar/conference for this program. But the people there did not understand the nature of the program. Even though the main goal of the seminar was to discuss the challenges and goals of the program, but sadly no argument or discussion took place. The failure to ensure to gather all the volunteers to discuss or develop a solution for the challenges was one of the problems that contributed to the failure to address these challenges.

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The program was able to address some of these challenges, such as gathering the volunteers for specific activities or events, where they managed to bring a large group of participants. Involving the youth in the planning.

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Sustainability and continuity of the program, for the program needs to be continued, because it's simply great and useful. People should work on sustainability to achieve all the desired goals of this program.

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There weren't any extremists in the program to start with, either the executives or the targeted group.

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Further expansion of the number of participants involved in this program.
Increasing awareness among the youth about the concept of development and voluntary work.
Increasing their participation in making a difference in their communities.
Increasing the awareness of the youth to volunteer in the neighboring areas.
Exchanging the experiences among the youth in this area, were the program was implemented.

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The exchange of their way of thinking and to benefit from their ideas and experiences.
Learning things from the program, such as the value of time and the sense of responsibility towards things.
Correcting some of the bad habits and traditions.
The importance of time, importance of excelling and pursuing the work. No matter what develops in the world, what experiences the youth gains, there's always more to learn.
Learning how to accept others
Self-esteem.
Most of the things learned from the regional youth programs were available in the region in Seraj program.

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I participated in the program as a volunteer, in addition to the reputation of "Save the Children" it added more positivity to my life, as it was an important period in my life.
It was expected to increase the depth of my voluntary work.
Drawing smiles on peoples' faces through positive work everywhere through Seraj.
I had expectations to learn new things such as planning and organizing, the value of positive work, respecting time and never to underestimate the simplest things, by appreciating others, and the thing they offer.

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The program was very useful, the name "Save The Children" is enough to be stated on a resume, in addition to dealing with the experienced, practicing staff in this field.

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I benefited from each and every activity in this program, and there wasn't any activity that I haven't benefited from. As for the percentage of the benefit, well this differs from one activity to the other. Every activity has a positive benefit on the person himself.

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Dealing with time more precisely.
The skill of accepting others.
Self value/self appreciation.

The skill of deep evaluation of the issue of individuals' management and dealing with emergencies.

The skill of being able to organize things.

Taking responsibility and showing willingness to initiate action.

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Searching for other sponsors to support some regional activities,

Thus the continuity of the program (seraj) and positive independence for those who are working in Seraj to achieve the best support for the program.

Making a network of volunteers through coordinating and networking among the youth of other regional countries.

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Field survey and assessing the needs of the community that will benefit from the program.

Trying to gather as much information as possible.

Networking with particular governmental organizations in this program, like the number of population (statistics).

Good planning of things.

Referring to a strong staff that is capable of implementing a regional program.

Benefiting from the experiences of workers in the same field of work.

Providing a plan of action that suits the size of the project to be changed.

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Interview Report

Date: 23/09/2010

Country & Location: Amman Jordan

Researcher Name: Sarah Auten

Organization and / or Relevant Program: Siraj – Jordan

Ms. X was a volunteer from the beginning of the Siraj program in Jordan and served as an officer in developing the program in Jordan.

Siraj changed my life – even now, I can see how much it affected my life path. I was an activist in the past but Siraj was different because it had a vision. The workers and officers, everything was different. Their vision matched mine – it provided the space for youth and youth workers to express themselves, to be part of the process.

I participated in doing trainings for them and was a Siraj of the Month – providing role models for other youth.

I also gained skills, identified best practices for youth programming in approaching the project with the mentality of being part of the program that is for youth, by youth.

Suggestions for Improving Siraj

More recently, I stopped being with them all the time because I changed jobs and didn't have as much time. They could provide more flexibility for youth who work in Jordan.

At the same time, the program has dropped down – there are management issues that have come up with some of the new employees. For long periods I had networked with them, and I was really passionate about Siraj, but at some point, things stopped. They wanted to improve the program, to establish a club space to guarantee the program's sustainability ... they were improving it to guarantee the sustainability but it changed the program. It started being more like the other youth programs in Jordan – just building success stories but not really making change. You could feel how the spirit of the program changed and the youth didn't accept it. They don't want to be part of some of these average youth programs, these corrupted programs. Youth can feel it when they really belong.

Why did you choose to participate in Siraj?

I learned about it from a person I know who was working to develop Siraj at the beginning. From everything we knew about it, even from that point, you could tell that Siraj was different. It is a youth group that really respects the youth mentality – it has high credibility. I could feel that it was a space for youth, to develop their training skills, develop youth activists and make them more exposed to development of the youth sector.

What are the benefits of being part of a regional program?

I was from the beginning involved in the regional meetings to plan the program as one of the officers. This regional implementation really affected the mentality. There were lessons to be learned from each country. Jordan and Egypt were the strongest programs – they really trained the other workers, especially in Yemen. We interacted a lot with them. The youth workers did not see this as much but as an officer, I saw this exchange of ideas.

Siraj should have done something earlier to impress this idea of the regional flavor. It was never something related to the participants; it was mostly at the management level.

Last October, we had our first regional conference in Cairo. This should have been done a long time ago. Siraj could have had regional benefits that were not realized. By the time the conference came, everyone knew the program was ending, so energy was very low. I am sure they would have had a lot more regional networking if this had been done earlier. The regional aspects should be linked in at the youth and youth worker level too – but the management did benefit.

Drawbacks to a Regional Program

We all know that they are very different countries – Yemen, Jordan, Palestine, Egypt and Lebanon. While Jordan and Palestine are sister countries, Yemen is a challenge - but the benefits are more than the negatives. You always need to know the culture – it was an issue, the dress, the language, differences between men and women in Yemen. If you are willing to implement a program in all countries, you have to take into consideration these cultural

differences programmatically, to adjust for the culture and provide assistance to bridge the differences.

Common Challenges for Youth in the Region

For sure – cultural, political and social status is about the same for all youth in the region. They have the same issues: they don't have space to express themselves, adults don't trust their opinions or judgments. They face high unemployment. Youth are all facing these same issues, though maybe they have different causes or ways to address them. I could feel these similarities in the last conference – we want to convince everyone that we can do it. Youth are not the generation of the future; we are the generation of the present. Youth compose maybe 60% of Jordanian population. We don't want to just stay home and wait for a job. Siraj tired to minimize these issues successfully.

In my current job, I manage a youth program. I could only do this because of my experiences with Siraj. I have perceptions of the youth sector in Jordan and I know this because of Siraj. At the personal level, this program really affected people and they are delivering the message to others.

How could USAID help to support regional youth networking in the region?

Not USAID – they're the donors but we're the implementers. They just monitor the program, the details are with the implementers.

So if you were going to design a youth program, what would be its goals?

It would have different components – especially working with youth, this is very important. Other sectors don't need to be as diverse. In youth, there is a lack of capacity that the sector needs to address. So I would want to have a capacity building component. Also, it would just repeat the same old boring trainings, it would offer applied, practical and interactive trainings that build youth's communication skills. Offer them something they can implement in their own lives.

It would also have an application component and a component related to youth's own issues. For example, in Jordan we are having elections coming up. Everyone knows that the elections want to engage the youth, but some don't have food to eat – elections are not their priority. You have to build on their own needs in the different areas – be aware of the needs in Amman versus some rural village in the south. It would have media components and exchange visits between countries. Activities the youth can implement themselves by hand before thinking of the politics. It would also engage other sectors – e.g., environment, work with NGOs and CBOs and let the youth have an impact on their society.

If you were designing a program, what kinds of research and information would be helpful to you?

The designers need to go themselves to the place where the program is implemented. Managers don't visit the villages they are implemented in. You need to be close to them – don't implement ON or FOR them – implement WITH them. Hope them to make something for themselves. Hear their needs and desires and make them part of the design.

Conduct a needs assessment on their own interests – there are these hot topics that are repeated over and over but instead, you can guide them to be creative about their own needs and goals. It's not always about money or employment – it can be about singing, art, hobbies and talents. Provide them the space to express themselves in whatever way they want. You can't force them in anything. That does not work with youth. Guide them and provide a framework for their dreams.

FOCUS GROUPS

1st Focus Group Report

Date: September 14th, 2010

Country& Location: Cairo – Egypt

Researcher Name and Contact: Leyla Moubayed and Frank Schorn

Number of Participants: 7 participants

Organization(s) and / or Relevant Program (s): (4) Peace Scholars, (2) Siraj, & (1) AWSI

Focus Group Discussions:

- 7 participants out of the total 12 that confirmed attendance actually showed up to the meeting
- The facilitators opened up the focus group discussions by introducing the objective of the review and the purpose of the FG meeting: Feedback and review of the benefits and challenges of their “experiences” as participants/ beneficiaries of the 3 programs
- Each program was introduced by one of the participants in a 5 minutes presentation
- It was obvious during the presentation session that the program participants had no prior knowledge of each others' programs
- The discussion questions were: What were your expectations? Were they met? What are the benefits that you got out of the program? What remains? How the program should be in the future?

Program Overview:

- *Synergos*: It is about supporting the innovators, selected very creative people with a program (NGO or company), financial prize + training by Booz Allen + Networking through attending international events and membership with Int'l organizations

- *Peace Scholars*: Targeted the undergraduate students - Leadership skills+ training + 1 year studying abroad + Experience USA + Field visits + travel within US (museum visits...) + community service in the US and Cairo

- *Siraj*: Supporting and developing leadership programs + Developing a tool kit + participating in youth activities + Supporting thru networking and connecting youth initiatives in addition to promoting exceptional youth success stories in the media and supporting youth volunteer community initiatives ...

Benefits and Recommendations

- *Peace Scholars*: They learned how to deal with other people better in a more positive way, how to plan for money, how to reach your goals, cross cultural experiences, open mindedness, became more flexible in their thinking ...think outside the box, have more confidence and can affect others. They have a better understanding of their own culture (as a representative of Egypt in the US), in addition to exposure to other cultures ...not only the US. They gained a regional perspective and got in emotional bonding with the other Scholars (social network). The program was a life changing experience.

Reference the end of training community project, they thought they had a year to plan and implement the project for US\$ 5,000 instead and due to the closure of the program they had to plan and present a project to be implemented by end September...thus, the project ideas had to be changed to be adapted to this short time frame. USAID rejected all community projects.

Suggestions to improve future programs: More time for the community projects and more experience in civic engagement ...do some work with NGOs at the management level to get more knowledge of the way projects are designed and implemented (trainees). Additional support and follow up.

Siraj. Support (not financial) technical support and networking, learned how to interfere in your community, matching needs and availability through exchange and support between youth initiatives and NGOs, participated in youth activities, Siraj created an open platform, training on differences between working with people and on people. Siraj is like internet very wide and open and support initiatives. It is a program from the community and to the community...Civic engagement

Suggestions to improve future programs: More regional events...exchange between countries

Synergos: Recommend more visits (like he is in Siwa) very far, and the people from the program never came to visit

Gained great networking and benefits of training

Needs of Youth according to the participants

- Unemployment issues,
- Programs in Arabic so larger number of people can be approached
- Teach youth how to set up their own business
- Building a modern educational system in Egypt with scholarship and all facilities so everyone can learn

Focus Group Report

Date: Tuesday September 21st 2010

Country & Location: Cairo – Egypt

Researcher Name and Contact: Leyla Moubayed

Number of Participants: 5 participants

Organization(s) and / or Relevant Program (s): Siraj – Save the Children

Focus Group Discussions:

- - 5 participants out of the total 9 that confirmed attendance actually showed up to the meeting
- - All the participants were from Siraj –Save the Children program
- - Considering the small number of people that attended and the fact that they came in gradually rather than all together, I conducted interviews with them rather than a focus group discussion
- - The questions focused on the following: How did you come across Siraj? What is your involvement with Siraj? and What are the benefits that you gained from the program?
- - Most of the participants are what Siraj refers to as “Youth Workers”, only one of them is “youth” in the sense that he does not belong nor is involved as volunteer or staff with any other NGO. The “youth” X actually attended trainings based on the toolkit and followed up with the development of his “own youth initiative” which he is trying to implement and find funding for.
- - Distilling most of the inputs from the discussions we can report the following:
- Most of the participants participated with Siraj as facilitators, trainers and volunteers for organizing youth events
- Siraj *expanded their experiences, skills and knowledge* in terms of working with youth to new ways, new geographic areas, and an expanded vision. All of this was achieved through volunteering with Siraj and networking through Siraj (before this involvement they were limited to their own organization ways of doing things)
- Siraj created for them a way *of networking and sharing* that did not exist before
- Siraj provided a **legal umbrella** for the youth initiatives (very important in the Egyptian environment of NGOs where the government has to provide a legal permit for every initiative and interferes very closely with NGO work and funding)
- Siraj provided a different model for youth work: Instead at identifying the needs of youth, Siraj’s approach was asset based i.e. let’s identify what you have as a starting point and build from it

Siraj provided additional exposure into youth work, more civic engagement and volunteerism

Researcher Summary Conclusions and Findings:

- Siraj seems to be a loose network of support and networking with undefined borders, undetermined activities and very vague objectives ...flexible and open to adjust activities and support as sees fit - A network of exchange and support among youth, youth workers, youth initiatives and activities.
- The regional aspect of Siraj as a program is not existent
- All of Siraj's "experiences" and information is not documented in any form: The project did not create any database of information regarding youth organizations, initiatives, names of leaders...etc. that could be beneficial for later work with youth
- Siraj in Egypt seems to be solely dependent on the efforts, engagement and networking initiatives of one individual, Y.
- If we look upon these numbers maybe we can draw our own conclusions as to the sustainability, benefits or the level of engagement of all three programs' participants: This focus group invited by email and later phone calls a total of 28 individuals:
 - **Peace Scholars:** Four of them have been invited but none of them attended or responded to the email invitation. One has confirmed attendance but did not come.
 - **AWSI:** 5 Social Innovators were invited by emails. None of them replied to the invitation and we were unable to reach all 5 by telephone either because we did not have the correct number or because they did not reply to their emails
 - **Siraj:** 19 were invited by email. Following phone calls 2 confirmed attendance and actually participated. Y sent additional list of 8 youth that confirmed their participation and only 3 of them came

Focus Group Report

Date: 21/09/2010

Country& Location: Beirut, Lebanon

Number of Participants: 7

Organization(s) and / or Relevant Program (s): Peace Scholarships / SIRAJ

Focus Group Discussions:

In the framework of the Review of Office of Middle East Programs (OMEP) Youth Initiatives a focus group meeting was held at the Holiday Inn- Dunes in Beirut. Four participants from SIRAJ and 3 Peace Scholars have participated in this meeting which started at 5:00 pm and lasted until 8:00 pm.

Identifying the challenges facing the youth in the region was the first topic to be discussed. Participants considered the low number of job opportunities as to be the major concern for the youth. Their main fear is not to find a job that fits their academic background, being underpaid as well as marginalized in case they apply for a job in countries where their qualifications are needed (primarily the United States and Europe). The second most relevant concern is the security and stability of their country and community. The lack of career guidance is the third and last challenge they have identified and consider their ability to make the right choices to be flawed by the educational system which does not provide students with enough exposure and information regarding their choices in life.

When asked if the program they participated in addressed those challenges successfully, Peace Scholarship participants all agreed that their experience was very fruitful. They were able to gain exposure and learn about other cultures. This allowed them to start thinking “out of the box”. Volunteering is one of the activities they have identified as lacking in their community but is forged in the culture of the American people. They also considered the resources that they had access to as well as the professionalism of the university staff to have positively contributed to the success of their program. On the other hand, SIRAJ participants considered the program to be of low appeal and relevance, except for the funding part, as well as ineffective when it comes to tackling the youths concerns. Although SIRAJ is a nationwide program, it has failed to create a platform through which the participants can communicate and form networks.

The participants were offended when asked if they consider that this program would draw youth in the region away from “extremism”. They considered this question to be the reason why “the youth in the region are stigmatized and portrayed as potential terrorist while the real reasons for the terrorism problem is double standards, racism, poverty, ignorance, religious discrimination, and oppression”. Another participant added: “I can see how this program is aimed to change my perception vis-à-vis the United States and its citizens, but I cannot understand how someone would consider this initiative to change a person who is brainwashed from an early age in an isolated environment and facing extreme poverty due to an illegal occupation and oppression. We come from “normal” families and have a rather open education which according to my experience most individuals in the U.S. do not possess”. Therefore, eliminating stigmatization and creating a network of American and Arab youth should be added as an objective in all the programs targeting the youth.

When asked about the reasons behind their participation in the program, SIRAJ participants considered it to be an opportunity to do a project and could not express a benefit other than funding and sponsorship. One candidate added: “SIRAJ came at the right place in the right time; we needed money to implement a project we had always wanted to carry out. They provided us with the financial means and acted as a sponsor and we are thankful for that”. On the other hand, Peace Scholarships participants considered their program to be an opportunity to boost their chances if they wish to enroll in a postgraduate program in the U.S. as well as a potential career enhancer. The program is also appealing and provided a great opportunity to study abroad. The program had 4 major benefits. It enhanced their interpersonal skills and provided the candidates with a solid education and training. They also considered community service to have had a great impact on their experience and hope to encourage this activity within their respective

communities. This experience also allowed them to learn more about themselves and think out of the box. One participant mentioned that proposal development training is the single best formation she ever had and believes that it has resulted in a solid enhancement of her of her potentials and capabilities.

All participants have agreed that a portal is needed in order to enhance networks among the youth in the region.

The participants were then asked to provide recommendation for future initiatives. The recommendations are the following:

Peace Scholarships:

- More guidance to participants in the inception phase through an orientation program or any method which allows the participant to forgo a smooth transition and understand what is expected from him/her.
- Select Universities with an extremely active international office.
- In order to increase interaction, participants should reside in dorms.
- Better academic advice and placement services especially before traveling so as to help participants understand the program they have enrolled in as well as choose their courses more intelligently.
- Enhance communication between World Learning and International Students' Offices.
- Follow-up with students when they return to their countries.

SIRAJ:

- More professional staff to support the project.
- Choose better local partners.
- Invest in the qualifications of participants.
- Create a national and regional SIRAJ network which works on peer to peer basis

Researcher Summary Conclusions and Findings:

Peace Scholarships have been more effective in achieving the desired objective. SIRAJ candidates were not properly supported and sustainability was totally disregarded. The candidates also formed the impression that SIRAJ is more of a marketing campaign. The level of commitment of SIRAJ participants is very low. Out of 54 SIRAJ participants contacted 11 agreed to attend and only 4 showed up.

Focus Group 2 Report

Date: 23/09/2010

Country& Location: Beirut, Lebanon

Researcher Name: Karim Dagher

Number of Participants: 7

Organization(s) and / or Relevant Program (s): SIRAJ

Focus Group Discussions:

In the framework of the Review of the Office of Middle East Programs (OMEP) Youth Initiatives a focus group meeting was held at the Holiday Inn- Dunes in Beirut. Seven participants from SIRAJ have participated in this meeting which started at 5:00 pm and lasted until 8:00 pm.

The participants have agreed that the common challenges that youth are facing across the region are the following (listed in order of importance; most to least):

1. Conflicts based on politics, Religion (Sectarianism)...
2. Poverty & Unemployment
3. Personal Space: Youth are always in need for personal space in order to meet, interact, share, talk, write, and express all in a peaceful and healthy environment.
4. Lack of rules and regulation/System which allow youth engagement in the society
5. Lack of education systems
6. Lack of supports (there is a lack in supporting youth initiative)
7. Drugs

Not all have agreed that SIRAJ has been able to tackle those challenges. There is a common belief that more needs to be done or a different approach should be undertaken. The program was successful in providing support, funding and an interactive space between the participating youths. SIRAJ program did not focus on drawing the youth away from extremism. However the goals of Regional Programs for youth should focus on eliminating the challenges listed above.

When asked if the program is beneficial, the participants agreed that it is but there was also a consensus that there was an exaggeration in marketing the project objectives.

Z, from the LIU- Student Movement-TALABA said: "I participated in the Siraj project, since its title was supporting youth leaders in the Arab world, and from my position as a leader in our club, I decided to join the committee in order to learn the project objectives and methodology in addition I wanted to get exposed to participants thoughts and ideas, as well as to add a value to the project. My expectation from the SIRAJ project for the future is building partnerships with youth groups and initiatives throughout their communities."

According to the participants, the most useful activities were the ones that aimed to enhance the engagement of youth in the civic society, and enhancing their contact with people. The least useful activities were those activities that focus on distributing flyers, and mainly lecturing.

Moreover regional support networks can be attained by encouraging the youth initiatives and groups to have some sort of a committee for a common field of work, i.e. different youth groups from different programs working together and sharing ideas. These groups can be organized and structured in a way that will serve the goals of their programs. Information needed for such a movement would be a database of all youth groups that have formed initiatives in their own societies with the goals they want to achieve, along with their contact information. This first step would be essential in order to form a committee of representatives of those groups in order to discuss the next steps.

Focus Group

Date: September 20, 2010, 3:30-4:40 pm **Country & Location:** Palestine/ Dura- Hebron

Researcher Name and Contact: Fa'ida Awashreh

Number of Participants (list & Details attached): 12

Organization(s) and / or Relevant Program (s): Siraj

Focus Group Discussions:

Contact and involvement with Siraj:

Participant 1: We implement initiatives. We worked with the SOS village children in Bethlehem.

Participant 2: We worked on a new idea as we organized an electronic competition for students. We also participated in the training where we learned how to express ourselves.

Participant 3: Our group conducted an awareness session on active youth organizations in the area.

Participant 4: We organized session but on solar system. Also, we attended the training on Siraj toolkit.

Participant 5: We implemented activities for children with special needs.

Participant 6: Our initiative was working in the school's garden. I also participated in the training on the toolkit.

Participant 7: We did some painting and planting works at Salah Eddin school.

Participant 8: We organized a workshop for children where we implemented educational activities. They had fun and benefited, and so did we.

Participant 9: I participated in the camp where I learnt how to work within a team.

Participant 10: I participated in the training and I used to be arrogant. I used to think that I am special and did not accept the "No" from any one. I found out that there are others who are special too and learnt how to deal with everyone.

Reasons for participating in Siraj activities:

- To develop my personality
- To assume a role in my community and contribute positively
- To change myself positively so that I can contribute to changing the community positively too.

- To learn new knowledge and skills
- To learn new skill that can help in finding a job
-

The most useful activities and new skills learned:

- Camps as they gather people together where skills of communication, team building and others can be developed practically.
- Voluntarism: I used to be a volunteer, however, with working with Siraj this concept has been deepened and developed more.
- Learning how to develop a proposal and design a project was a new thing to us
- I learnt that you can always learn and do new things and it's never late for anything.
- What I really benefited for the first time from Siraj is how to be within a diverse group and still manage to work with it.
- The training topics made me discover who I am.
- Speaking before others and leadership skills were something new to me.
- We became more well received by our communities and they respect us more now.

Challenges that youth faced during engagement with Siraj:

- Duration of initiatives is short especially that we're students and that we have academic commitments.
- Norms and traditions in the community do not allow implementing all activities. For example we wanted to have a camping activity but not all parents accept sending their children to this kind of activity. Also, some girls refuse to join Siraj activities because they gather boys and girls.
- There were some ideas of initiatives that were turned down by Siraj, as they are expensive initiatives beyond Siraj budget, as we were told.
- Some of the initiatives were started but not finished. An example is the educational drawing on the walls of schools.
- We do not know much about other countries' initiatives. We like to get in touch with them.
- There was no communication even between groups of Hebron. Not to mention that we do not know anything about Ramallah and Nablus groups

Challenges that youth in the region face:

- Unemployment
- Lack of awareness to their communities' issues
- Lack of self confidence
- Lack of support provided to develop youth talents and initiatives
- Societies' marginalization of youth
- One participant who attended the regional meeting in Egypt said that she felt in the regional meeting of Egypt that youth concerns and challenges in the region are similar. However, what is significant in Egypt is that youth organizations support and appreciate their volunteers and promotes the volunteerism concept.
- Youth in the region enjoys more freedoms than youth in Palestine who suffer from occupation that restricts all kinds of freedoms. However, this makes the youth more determined and stronger in their accomplishments.

Sustainability and Networking with other youth organizations:

Siraj Youth Council: Dura and Tarqumia youth clubs are discussing the idea of developing this council to include all Siraj-affiliated youth CBOs as well regional youth CBOs. This will help in sustaining the projects and its principles

Researcher Summary Conclusions and Findings:

- The participating youth have energy, will and good ideas of implementing initiatives.
- Participants are pleased with Siraj activities and are attached to the project and would like to continue working on youth initiatives as they find them useful.
- Participants are not exposed to the regional work of Siraj and do not communicate beneficiaries in other areas.
- Siraj project empowers youth with new skills and knowledge.

Focus Group

Date: September 20, 2010 **Country& Location:** Palestine/ Dura- Hebron

Researcher Name and Contact: Fa'ida Awashreh

Number of Participants: 11

Organization(s) and / or Relevant Program (s): Siraj

Focus Group Discussions:

Facilitator (after introducing each other) asked participants about their **contact and involvement with Siraj?**

Participant 1: We implement initiatives. We approached a very marginalized school that is surrounded by Israeli settlement and implemented activities for children there.

Participant 2: we worked on educational paintings and drawings at the walls of the school. Students and teachers liked it

Participant 3: I participated in the training and the camp that Siraj organized. Also I was involved in the initiative of improving the physical environment of schools through planting trees and flowers

Participant4: There are many wonderful initiatives. We worked on an agricultural project where we took care of the school's garden and now we have agricultural products that we sell and generate some income from.

Participant 5: I participated with other 16 youth members in the training and it was wonderful. The training motivated me and it included a topic on planning. Also, it developed the skills of public speaking.

Participant 6: I participated in the camp, where there was photographing activities and there was also a trip to Bethlehem. I liked the camp activities very much.

Participant 7: I took a training on Siraj toolkit and I will train others on it. I also worked on organizing, along with others, activities for the Mother's Day.

Participant 8: I follow up with the participating youth on their implementation of their initiatives. I do this as a voluntary work, because I believe this is important for youth as well as for the community..

Participant 9: I took the training on the toolkit. I wanted to go to the meeting in Egypt but I, along with other 4 male participants, was returned back as there was a problem with the visa to enter Egypt.

Participant 10: I participated in the training and implemented activities, with other children through the fun day initiative, for the SOS children in Bethlehem. Doing this made us feel proud and that we did something kind and moving for children.

Participant 11: I participated in both the training and the camp. I liked everything. The training was useful and the camp was fun.

Reasons for participating in Siraj activities:

- To develop my self
- To benefit personally and implement initiatives that benefits other girls at school.
- My sister told me it's a good opportunity and encouraged me for joining
- To get to know others from the surrounding areas
- To make use of free time
- To gain skills that help me in finding jobs
- To have fun and make new friends
- To contribute to changing community into better

The most useful activities and new skills learned:

- Learning how to form and lead a group
- Speaking before others
- Thinking positively when you have problems
- Drama training
- Photographing activity in the camp was a good thing as I got to master it now
- Communication skills training is useful as I feel now more confident and able to deliver my message
- I became more daring in approaching others and expressing myself.

Challenges that youth faced during engagement with Siraj:

- Duration of initiatives is short especially that we're students and that we have academic commitments.
- Norms and traditions in the community do not allow implementing all activities. For example we wanted to have a camping activity but not all parents send their children to this kind of activity. Also, some girls refuse to join Siraj activities because they gather boys and girls.

- There were some ideas of initiatives that were turned down by Siraj, as they are expensive initiatives beyond Siraj policy, as we were told.
- Some of the initiatives were started but not finished. An example is the educational drawing on the walls of schools.
- We do not know much about other countries' initiatives. We like to get in touch with them.
- There was no communication even between groups of Hebron. Not to mention that we do not know anything about Ramallah and Nablus groups

Challenges that youth in the region face:

- They have ideas and energies but no one listens to them or help them translate their ideas into projects
- Parents and community sometimes discourage youth
- Youth has free time and they do not spend it in useful activities. They should learn how to spend it effectively.
- We, the Palestinian youth, are different from other youth. Youth in the region are free enjoying many recreational activities unlike us.

Researcher Summary Conclusions and Findings:

- The participating youth have the energy, will and good ideas of initiatives. Siraj could make use of these energies and employed them positively through implemented initiatives
- Participants are pleased with Siraj activities and are attached to the project and would like to continue working on youth initiatives as they find them useful.
- Participants do not communicate with other youth in the country or in the region, and do not know about each other's initiatives or regional initiatives
- Youth implemented good initiatives that empowered youth with new skills and knowledge.
- The majority of participants did not hear the name of Siraj partner before "PCCD". Few heard about it and they think that it was not helpful to the project and was not available in many of the project's meetings or other activities.

Meeting with the Peace Scholars Sept. 27, 2010

What are the common challenges that youth face in the region?

That's a wide question.

Education is probably one of the biggest challenges.

It's one of them and one of the biggest but it is a challenge because of the political instability in the region. The wars are affecting education, health and ...

But that applies only to certain countries. It's not true in Jordan. I think the education system should be developed in Jordan, there should be more career advising for students. And I think that more innovative educational tools should be used – especially at the higher education level. This is more used now at the basic education level. Instead of having a more passive class, it should be more interactive, questions, videos, even presentations.

In Morocco, we have a big issue with education, ever since a study was conducted that ranked Morocco second to last in terms of education. This is due to different aspects – teaching methodologies, language of instruction... Arabic, French, Berber dialects, a multi-lingual sphere ... which makes it more difficult for students due to linguistic diversity. Also inappropriateness of training, because we have some tracks at the university that do not help students to gain the skills they need in the job market. So you get human sciences, history, philosophy, geography that do not necessarily help graduates to access the job market.

Lack of extracurricular activities. The volunteering concept is not ... it should be more encouraged. The students have a readiness to help but don't have the communicative potential to integrate social orientation. Need more support from academic systems or other groups within the university system.

Are there a lot of youth-led initiatives in the university?

There are so many of them in numbers but they are not effective in their implementation or how long they last.

They don't get the support. People have a lot of amazing ideas out there but when you're talking about implementing them, you need financial support, structural/institutional support, making it easy for youth to turn the idea into a reality. The challenges and stability – some part of the Arab world, you're talking about corruption and disappointment for youth who want to implement an idea, the corruption makes it difficult. So when you're talking about challenges, I think corruption is a big one.

For example, in Jordan, the situation is developing since maybe 5-6 years ago. The queen started a lot of initiatives for education, which made a lot of difference in the last few years. But this is mostly focused on basic education.

Not so many opportunities to meet people from other regions, from outside of the Arab world, there are not a lot of opportunities. In Morocco, we have a lot of sub-Saharan students but not a lot of others outside of this area.

What should be the goals of a regional youth program? What should it achieve?

Eliminate the stereotypes between cultures – even through the media.

Have a program that lasts for a while. The PS program is a nice idea, the trainings, the cross-cultural experience, but it only lasted 2 years. It should be a longer time

There should be exchange programs for other students to come to our region, not just us going to them.

There should be a MENA exchange program. For me, to get into this program, I gained a lot of information about students from Morocco, from Yemen, Oman, Lebanon.

Also, it's important to follow up with students who have participated in these programs – maybe 2 years, 5 years later. This is really important at the beginning (when they first return from the program) because when you go back home, you really need a support network, someone to remind you of the objectives, it's really important to build this community to get through the process of reintegration.

Are there ways this could be done better?

The question is how to still connect these people across the region despite the geographical distribution.

USAID is still struggling with this – to decide whether it is worth it to have a regional program, or just to have it implemented in one country.

No, I think it is really important to have this type of regional program. Just as an example, when I went back home and wanted to start certain projects and needed funding, I always asked some of the other Peace Scholars for their suggestions about people or organizations that are likely to support these projects.

It provides networking opportunities

Also providing training and other support opportunities – it passes around the world.

Any other ideas for goals for regional programs?

The exchange part is really important, but in looking at youth programs, I think the regional aspect is really important. It was an aspect that was attractive to me – to work with other youth in the region. If it's a choice between having 100 people and just having an idea, or getting ten people together and actually implementing these ten projects, I will choose to focus on the ten people. More quality, more implementing and making sure that these ten ideas happen. Need resources, actual objective of the project is to make it happen.

I would address some civic responsibility. Now at USAID, they have a project in Jordan focusing on the upcoming election.

Maybe include the government – they have so much influence, if it was supported by the government, maybe it would be more accepted?

Also, if we could connect people from a certain country to the USAID Mission in that country, this would be beneficial.

Have you ever contacted the USAID Mission in Morocco?

Yes, that's why I bring this up. I recently had a conversation with Jim Wright, and there were people from the Morocco Mission, and they weren't particularly responsive to my needs.

The same thing happened to me.

I think a way to do that – I was involved in a program – the first year, they have an event, and the next year, they bring back the alumni of this activity to help organize the same event.

So using the alumni more effectively?

Yeah, exactly.

We meet with each other, get training, go to the US, and we acquire skills that they local USAID Mission could benefit from.

And more networking opportunities.

What are the benefits to being in a regional program?

Visiting the US and going to the US. The academic opportunity to enroll in a US school, I learned many new teaching methodologies, and I am interested in bringing them back to my country.

On the regional level, having to meet students from other countries, apart from knowing about other cultures on a deeper level, to discover that there is someone out there with the same goals that you have, that he is working on something that I have been dreaming of for such a long time. So having someone who has common ground, also from the region, you can learn from each other.

And also rethinking certain aspects – unity, diversity, overcoming language barriers ... it has been frustrating to try to speak to the other Peace Scholars

When we talk about our countries, our situations, we get a better understanding of each other. I am not sure if we can find solutions, but it helps us to have better understanding.

Were there surprises, about other countries in the region?

Yeah a lot.

Like last year, when we came to Egypt, they took us to certain areas where there was a lot of poverty. That was surprising for me. Shocking

Also narratives of struggle related to war and peace. Some of them were surprising. But also peace initiatives as well.

Not knowing about the problems in Yemen, and even in Palestine, that was surprising. I didn't follow politics that much, but when you talk to someone about their personal experiences, it is a different perspective.

I was surprised by my personal potential. Writing skills. Indre is my biggest fan, she reads everything I write, and she's very supportive.

Drawbacks to being a regional program?

Sometimes, I have this problem when I came back to Jordan after seeing the American dream and how everything is useful for the students, I want to know why we don't have this. We are human too. Does this make sense? It's good to be aware to go to the States was beneficial, but it can be frustrating when you come back and you don't have that thing. I almost wish I didn't know about it.

If it's on a regional level, some countries may get a more effective way of coaching. Following up with the participants. If it's managed locally, as well as regionally, it would be more effective.

I really wish that the PS program was a degree program. It is less attractive as a non-degree program.

It is systematic - as soon as you apply for a job or something, the first thing they ask you is if it is a degree program. And they say, like, okay ... it's non-degree.

There is a big risk in stopping everything for this program, especially what we witnessed when we came back. It worked out eventually, but if it was a degree program or at least the credits could transfer, it would be better.

From our parents' point of view, at least in our region, it would be more accepted if it was a degree-granting program.

It was beneficial, but it would be even more so if it was a degree program.

I also see that the PS program is more focused on leadership at the personal level. They mentioned some things about developing the professional level but it's not that much, not enough for us. Most of these scholars are going for a Masters, they have a high level of academic learning and most of them need some experience to get into the workforce. That might be something to consider.

About the project grants – I didn't apply for one, but all of the people who applied for them didn't get it. That can discourage them, they were kind of rejected, after they spent a lot of time

planning for this project, coming up with ideas of how to implement it, and they were expecting USAID to fund them. So I think that was a bummer.

But for example, I participated in one of the learning grants and that was a good experience.

I think also, following up on this, I would have preferred if – even if you reject the project, provide us feedback – amend this, and then you resubmit it, and then change it again. You should have more time to amend it, so that you don't get just to the rejection point, but “you need to fix this, and this,” and it will work out. The rejection from the people who actually have sponsored you comes a little bit more bitter than anyone else. And also on the project level, some of us – I went for one year, and I graduated already, but it was either your project or your career. Some people can make the project their career, but others have bills to pay or something – it's kind of hard for the project to be implemented, to bring back income and be a career, this takes a couple of years at least. So it's either you stop your life and do your project, or you get your career and the project has to wait for a few years. So it was a very hard decision, at least for myself and for some of the other scholars, I know, to have to stop and think: should I do this or that? I never thought it would be either/or. I thought it was something that would work together somehow. A lot of us worked with the community before we went to the States, so coming back, we had more obligation to do it, but we were blocked. It became harder. For me, it was easier before going. Coming back, it was a little bit complicated.

It's like the experience in the US adds so many more expectations for ourselves, and for the community, and for our families. So we have to negotiate all of these and then either set priorities or take one and leave the other.

So the things you would have been satisfied with before you went to the US ...

It raised the bar. Yeah. Exactly.

Can I add, I do understand that there were some time restrictions for the training of the project. But I would suggest that USAID redirect our proposals to other programs that they are related to.

So, looking at the things that you proposed and using them as models for what needs to be done?

Or at least connecting us to organizations or other programs that are sponsored by USAID or can help us. It was only the time restriction.

What new skills or changes in attitudes did you experience through this program?

Regarding studying, taking classes, it's different for me in my university. Organizing, more in-depth research.

On a personal level – I felt like it was good because I learned how to be more responsible for myself which was kind of challenging because you have to live by yourself, you do everything by yourself.

You're talking about independence.

Yeah and that shows – my parents now are shocked by some stuff I do, because “oh, that was not you – you're showing more responsibility in your actions.”

X was my roommate, and she's very organized. She has a million notes and she sticks them up everywhere. And I'm very disorganized, so we're complete opposites. In the beginning, it was “X, why are you doing this and she was like – why are you doing this?” but when I came back, everyone who knew me before said “oh, you became more organized.” And I said “I lived with X for one year, so I should be more organized.” And she taught me to do this for everything. So on a personal level, we learned from the trainings and everything, but we also learned from each other – the skills that I didn't have but Y had it, but she taught me. The sessions were very helpful, but the personal contact made it more – you gain it without realizing it. Like, I didn't take notes that, to be organized, you do this and that but I saw her doing it and it grew on me somehow. And she became a little bit disorganized.

I think on the personal level, going to the US and meeting people – it helps me to deal with people according to their backgrounds. When I was in Morocco, you deal with people only according to their status. But when I went to the US, it was different. To deal with an American person or a Chinese person – you need to improve your communication skills to reach them.

Team work. I am an individualist when it comes to work – in the past. But since I joined PS, especially last year in Egypt (during the training) it was so intense for me to work in a group. It was challenging but a good experience, and now I enjoy team work more than I used to.

That's not something you've had a lot of exposure to in the past, teamwork?

Yeah.

Stressing certain values like cultural diplomacy, and here I have an incident to share. With A and B, we used to go to Rotary Clubs to give presentations about the PS program, and I remember we were having one of these meetings with a room full of Rotary members. This was this old person who raised his hand after A's presentation on development, and he was like, “according to my understanding, there is no legal state that is called Palestine.” And A, I mean, I really love the way that he reacted – he was really composed and managed to keep calm and answer in a very eloquent way that it is our responsibility as Peace Scholars to work for the advancement of solving the conflict in the region in a way that would allocate for both countries.

So you were educating people?

Yes.

What could USAID do to help support youth networking in the region?

Question: do USAID Missions in the region coordinate between each other?

Not really. But they could – if you suggested it.

Well, I was thinking if that level of coordination existed before, then we could use it as a model. But since it doesn't, then it's our responsibility to make this model.

How would you use that as a model?

The way they connect to each other, we could extract lessons from that. How would USAID Morocco work on a project with USAID Egypt.

You think that would be good?

Definitely.

You're saying they just work locally?

Yes, they have the OMEP regional office, but the local Missions tend to work locally, with Washington or with the regional office.

I mean we're speaking about regional networking – they should start from the organization.

Exactly.

I think keep running projects like this, to develop the regional networking. If it doesn't have to be on a larger scale, it would be just development of a workshop or a summer training course for people from the Middle East, that would help a lot to develop this regional network.

And I think for smaller initiatives, a fresh initiative, it's better to keep things on a smaller scale. Coordination between let's say, offices or organizations in the region of, let's say, North Africa alone – Algeria, Tunisia, Morocco, Libya.

Okay, so ... North Africa needs its own thing?

[Laughter]

I'm not sure how this can relate to a regional level, but keep us – youth participants – informed of the monthly events.

Yes, that's very important.

Like, being on a mailing list, send us a newsletter.

You get a newsletter from the PS program, but not a USAID Youth newsletter, right?

Oh, no. And we get really disappointed when we hear on the news that they had such-and-such event for youth in your country and we didn't know about it.

I'm not sure how feasible is this, but how about creating some internship opportunities for people from different countries, through the summer. That would help a lot, I guess.

Okay, what kinds of things would be interesting to you?

Um, I'm not sure – it would depend on the major, I guess. Probably working in a company, in whatever department is relevant, it would help our employability.

Also, maybe not just the major but on the interests.

If you were designing a youth program for USAID, what kinds of information and research would help you to achieve this goal?

Is this research available to everyone?

I think it could go either way – USAID is looking for useful research ideas either internally or for everyone.

I think the MENA region is unique in that each country in the region is unique and within the region, there are sub-regions that are also unique. So I'm not sure, if while doing research, people are being representative enough in their sample populations they're researching.

Personally, if I'm doing research on youth, I would like to know what are the competencies that youth in the MENA region lack – the needs that should be developed either on a professional/career level or personally. Also, what are they resources available to them, so you could benefit this.

I think it's the presentation of the country itself – in some countries in the region, you can be a citizen of the country and still not know about all of the different groups in it. So don't focus so much on the elite in society – most of the research is done at this level, either in education or at the international level. Some colleges or universities, but focus on more those who are not in schools, marginalized groups, what do they have in mind. On a larger scale in research but in a small group. Not saying, of the youth in the Middle East ... 94% are such and such ... for me, this doesn't happen, it's not measuring anything from my point of view.

Also, evaluate what is out there in terms of governmental and non-governmental initiatives, what are their strengths and weaknesses?

Also, I don't know if this relates to the question, but for example, it would be nice – if I'm going to the US, I really don't know what they know. I need to do the research, but it would be nice to know, what should we take from our culture, what misunderstandings do they have about us?

Also, whoever is doing the research, the objective should be actually understanding or knowing ... sometimes people do research to make an activity and they already think they know the results. Start on a more neutral level, without any bias, making sure to understand without any pre-conceptions or judgments.

Focus Group1

Date: Sept.28,2010 **Time:** 11:00

Country& Location: Yemen

Researcher Name: Abdulwahed Thabet

Number of Participants: Nine

Organization(s) and / or Relevant Program (s): Siraj

Focus Group Discussions (1):

Common challenges faced by young people:

- Difficulties in entering the labor market because of the technical and administrative hurdles. The employers required many documents such as business guarantees and certificate of experience.
- It is difficult for those who carry out community-based activities to provide financial and human resources required and it is difficult to find volunteers at no cost to perform the tasks because of the prevailing economic situation, or perhaps because of the narrow-minded distortion of the work of the volunteer. The community-based activities are exposed to misinterpretation of its goals. This happens from the some young people coming from rural areas towards voluntary work.
- Most of heads of households in both rural and urban think that upon graduation, young graduate supposed to join employment and get income to support his family.

The most serious challenges:

- Lack of social awareness and the low level of perception and culture prevailing in the society.
- The impact of security situation doesn't help to conduct community-based activities.
- Some people classify community-based activities on the basis of party affiliations and therefore do not leave room for young people to carry out voluntary work as supposed.
- There is the marginalization of young people regarding their participation at work or even at their households. Parents and other old people don't rely on them. This negative perception may have a negative effect on young people.
- The poor quality of basic education, where education where not given the right attention,

consequently ends with the lack of friendly environment for young people.

- There is also education dropout in various levels, especially with girls causing early marriage and this does not help girls to complete their education and join employment. Those problems are due to the restrictions of certain customs and traditions.

The success of the program in addressing these challenges?

The program has some impact in addressing these challenges. The reason of this little impact comes from the big challenges that need a comprehensive strategy and adequate resources, and before that comes the most important factor represented by the political will.

Successful cases of the program participants

- Most of youth have perceived noticeable changes in their Lives. They have carried out many useful community-based initiatives, and have made great successes.
- Before participating in the program some youth of both sexes were not able to properly deal with people and not able to talk in public. After they benefitted from the program they became capable to speak in front of the public through training and awareness-raising and various youth initiatives.
- Some youth joined other programs but could not get major change in their live nor in their previous programs. But when they joined the USAID funded program they conducted many successful initiatives. One of the successful initiatives is Themar initiative started about two years ago. Youth of Themar initiative have made significant successes that through the change they made in others.
- The program gives youth considerable confidence of themselves through the simple ideas that turn into big projects.
- The program has developed the leadership skills of youth by through their involvement in decision-making.
- The program has achieved means of communication and networking among youth from different Governorates, and established many youth committees.

The success of the program in drawing youth away from “extremism”:

- Yes, Siraj and the co-partners work to draw young people from the emptiness facing lots of youth and offered them many opportunities that make them successful. The program educate them on the legitimate means of livelihood and reintegration into the community to be active and influential in the development of a sense of belonging and loyalty through beneficial

initiatives.

What should be the goals of Regional Programs for youth?

- To participate in improving youth capacity building and provide them with the necessary tools that help them in enter the world of successfulness.
- To participate successfully in addressing youth problems and suggest the appropriate methods of solving these problems.

The benefits that can be drawn out of the regional youth programs, consequently available in Yemen program:

- The program was successful in addressing many of the problems faced by during implementation.
- The program has provided opportunities for participation and training for young people through conducting training, workshops, and also gave the opportunity to travel at the regional level and learn through the experiences of others.
- To raise awareness among young people about the importance of training and rehabilitation and to clarify the missed opportunities.
- Raise public awareness through youth volunteers and their staff and coordination with other youth organizations.
- The program worked to achieve the compatibility of its programs with others training programs like the Tool Kit training manual (Discover, Develop, initiate) to improve skills.
- The program established a database of volunteers with more than 2000 volunteers.
- The program made great changes among people, especially young people in giving them a space of freedom and the opportunities and them to choose their way according to the orientation of the areas that they like.
- The toolkit made them think in a different way and build according to their perceptions of the resources available on the base to reduce costs and efforts.

What should be the goals of Regional Programs for youth

- Networking and exchange of experiences and cultures, among youth of different governorates, and among the youth of the region to know each other tradition, principles and achievements of the networks to reach the best utilization of each other knowledge's in the future.

- Create of young leaders with certain ideas to continue the program's objectives in education and culture for the liberation of young people

Reasons of participation in the program and expectations:

- Because the program takes care of youth and address their problems and the desire to rehabilitate the neighborhood and youth groups that are not absorbed the idea.
- Because the program provides opportunities for youth to develop themselves and create relationships with the community.
- To benefit from free time and practice useful activities instead of wasting time in the places of shisha and khat.
- To identify their capabilities and what youth can provide to their society.

Expectations:

- The program cares about issues of civil society and the strengthening of youth experiences and skills which can benefit him and society.
- The program is causing the changes in order to make youth able to access to jobs and create relationships with other organizations, particularly the International organizations to serve the Yemen and the whole world.
- To have the opportunity to train young people on various life skills.
- To create a mature and conscious youth that could serve the other youth and society by contributing their service with Siraj.

Was your program relevant given your professional and career needs:

- Yes, the program was of significant successes in both professional and career needs

What activities were most useful and least useful?

- The most useful activities are training, workshops, networking, conferences and the opportunity to travel at the regional level and learn through the experiences of others. In addition to Financial Grants

The research / information needs that can assist us in designing youth regional programs:

- Assessment of Youth needs.
- Field Studies to explore knowledge, attitudes and practice of population towards youth

and related issues.

Focus Group2

Date: Sept.28,2010 **Time:** 16:00

Country & Location: Yemen

Researcher Name and Contact:

Number of Participants: Nine

Organization(s) and / or Relevant Program (s): Siraj

Common challenges faced by youth:

- The low standard of living for the family that made it difficult to teach their children.
- Wrong behaviors practiced in the community, including smoking habits, chewing khat.
- The low level of awareness among the society of the importance and value of volunteer work.
- Some young people lack the skills to communicate.
- Widespread unemployment among young people.
- Scarcity of platforms used by young people to communicate their thoughts and opinions.

Non-involvement of young people in decision-making and self-expression and giving them more opportunities to participate.

The most serious challenges:

- The low level of living.
- Low level of education output despite plentiful output not commensurate with the needs of the labor market.
- Low level of teaching staff in terms of quality and quantity, and lack of parents interest in teaching their children.
- Youth get used to engage in easy traditional jobs instead of the normal business professional.
- There is no confidence of Yemeni labor. Where business owners put many obstacles in front of him as they request many documents like the pledge/ gage, work experience.
- Some companies and government organizations prefer foreign workers to Yemeni workers

The program success in addressing the challenges:

Program has been successful in changing some attitudes and beliefs through the programs and initiatives.

Successful cases: the impact of the program is significant in changing behaviors as well as some customs and traditional wrong behavior through many projects on the integration of youth in labor market. And others have established their own projects, as a result of the significant efforts done by some of the successful association working in this area such as Life Makers association. Life Makers association was successful in making changes among youth to get rid of some customs and terrible traditions. Regarding SIRAJ program, it has worked to change many of the customs and traditions, particularly in the rural areas concerning the perception of girls where the girl is constrained not to be able to participate in volunteer work. However, it was to do a number of initiatives that have worked to change and to give young people an opportunity to participate in management and decision-making, especially in the youth program (Tamkeen/enabled).

The success of the program in drawing youth away from “extremism”:

Yes, by stimulating young people to engage in volunteer work for the community.

What are the goals to be achieved by regional youth programs?

- Invest in the capacity of youth properly so as not to feel persecuted.
- Building the capacity of youth, both in terms of dealing with the community or in the development of their own abilities and remove fear and mental barriers These programs have strengthened the confidence in the delivery of their ideas to the community.

The benefits that can be drawn out of the regional youth programs, consequently available in Yemen program:

- The program was successful in addressing many of the problems faced by during implementation.
- The program has provided opportunities for participation and training for young people through conducting training, workshops, and also gave the opportunity to travel at the regional level and learn through the experiences of others.
- The program made great changes among people, especially young people in giving them a space of freedom and the opportunities and them to choose their way according to the orientation of the areas that they like.

Reasons of participation in the program and expectations:

To participate in training courses that develop skills of youth.

Yes, expectations have been achieved. And from day to another there is some changes to improve aspects of communication for youth in order to free them from fear and obstacles and to achieve their goals in the service of their community.

Was your program relevant given your professional and career needs:

- Yes, the program was of successful in improving most of our professional and career needs

What activities were most useful and least useful?

- The most useful activities are training, workshops, networking, conferences and the opportunity to travel at the regional level and learn through the experiences of others. In addition to Financial Grants

What are the research needs for the design of youth programs?

- Designation of the project and the area targeted.
- Conducting research to determine the problem - its size and impact.
- To shed light on the problems.
- The use of similar programs and build upon the previous.
 - The use of secondary sources during the processing of field survey for this purpose.

Field visit -Training on Siraj Toolkit

Date: September 23, 2010

Place: Al-Yasmeen Hotel, Nablus

This is the third day of the 5-day training on Siraj toolkit. About 20 trainees, between ages of 18-25, attended this training.

The training is an interactive activity that provides training concepts through exercises. In each topic, trainees are divided into groups where each group is assigned a task. Trainees are requested to finish the assignment within a limited time. After that, a reflection is made by the

trainer on the assignment, by discussing concepts that the assignment aimed at delivering to trainees. Trainees are also given the chance to reflect on their work.

An example on this is an assignment on the team work and team building. After finishing assignments by trainees, the trainer introduced relevant concepts including, but not limited to, time management, communication skills, efficiency in using resources, setting goals, leadership qualities, motivation and distributing roles and responsibilities.

Through this methodology of delivering the training, trainees not only learn concepts but also they actually practice them, which makes the learning process more meaningful and fun as well. One of the trainees said that the training has already started developing his personality by increasing self confidence, and developing the will to serve the community. He said that the trainer's methods that are employed are useful, wonderful and fun. However, when asked if he is involved with other Siraj-related activities, he seemed to know nothing about Siraj!

In the training session was available also Mohammed Yaseen from the Youth and Sport Directorate in Nablus, who expressed his full satisfaction and pleasure with the training. Mr. Yaseen said that the training is not traditional and the trainer is really wonderful with positive influence that can already be felt on trainees. Asking him about the project contacts, he referred to Siraj staff, and did not recognize the partner, PCCDS, when mentioned to him.

Mr. Yaseen also added that selection of trainees, as well as their community – based organizations (CBOs) is done by them in the Ministry of Youth and Sport.

Meeting with the trainer, Haasan Karaja, revealed that trainees has ambitions and energies. However, given their community backgrounds, they have no opportunities of making use of these energies. They are also concerned with finding employment opportunities.

The training, according to Mr. Karaja, aims at empowering youth with a group of skills that develop their personalities so that they can assume responsibilities in their communities. He said that he has already felt the impact of training on youth in other areas where they positively changed by engaging more with their communities.

As he delivered the same training in the different areas of Siraj project, Mr. Karaj said that Hebron trainees are the weakest and that they may require further training. On the other hand, Bethlehem group is the strongest among the Siraj groups.

Asking him about the challenges that are related to training, Mr. Karaja said that the training should have been planned to be delivered in an early phase of the project so that there will be a time to follow-up with trainees and not couple of months just before concluding the project. However, the training itself is a good activity that Siraj planned well.

Frequencies

Frequency Table

Sex

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Male	55	57.9	59.8	59.8
	Female	37	38.9	40.2	100.0
	Total	92	96.8	100.0	
Missing	System	3	3.2		
Total		95	100.0		

Marital Status

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Married	31	32.6	33.7	33.7
	Not Married	61	64.2	66.3	100.0
	Total	92	96.8	100.0	
Missing	System	3	3.2		
Total		95	100.0		

Age Range

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	14-17 Years Old	2	2.1	2.2	2.2
	18-22 Years Old	25	26.3	26.9	29.0
	23-30 Years Old	41	43.2	44.1	73.1
	31 and Over	25	26.3	26.9	100.0
	Total	93	97.9	100.0	
Missing	System	2	2.1		
Total		95	100.0		

Education Level

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Did not complete secondary	1	1.1	1.2	1.2
	Graduated from secondary	4	4.2	4.8	6.0
	Some college or university	20	21.1	24.1	30.1
	Bachelors	41	43.2	49.4	79.5
	Masters	15	15.8	18.1	97.6
	Doctorate	2	2.1	2.4	100.0
	Total	83	87.4	100.0	
Missing	System	12	12.6		
Total		95	100.0		

Currently Employed?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	51	53.7	54.8	54.8
	No	42	44.2	45.2	100.0
	Total	93	97.9	100.0	
Missing	System	2	2.1		
Total		95	100.0		

Looking for Work?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	30	31.6	73.2	73.2
	No	11	11.6	26.8	100.0
	Total	41	43.2	100.0	
Missing	System	54	56.8		
Total		95	100.0		

Standard of Living

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Needy	7	7.4	7.5	7.5
	Able to satisfy basic needs	51	53.7	54.8	62.4
	Well-off	35	36.8	37.6	100.0
	Total	93	97.9	100.0	
Missing	System	2	2.1		
Total		95	100.0		

Type of Home Area

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Urban	79	83.2	88.8	88.8
	Rural	10	10.5	11.2	100.0
	Total	89	93.7	100.0	
Missing	System	6	6.3		
Total		95	100.0		

Country of Residence

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Egypt	22	23.2	24.4	24.4
	Jordan	20	21.1	22.2	46.7
	Palestine	9	9.5	10.0	56.7
	Morocco	4	4.2	4.4	61.1
	Yemen	21	22.1	23.3	84.4
	Lebanon	14	14.7	15.6	100.0
	Total	90	94.7	100.0	
Missing	System	5	5.3		
Total		95	100.0		

Lived Here Since Participation

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	88	92.6	94.6	94.6
	No	5	5.3	5.4	100.0
	Total	93	97.9	100.0	
Missing	System	2	2.1		
Total		95	100.0		

In Which Program?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Peace Scholars	31	32.6	36.0	36.0
	AWSI	9	9.5	10.5	46.5
	Siraj	46	48.4	53.5	100.0
	Total	86	90.5	100.0	
Missing	System	9	9.5		
Total		95	100.0		

Year of Program

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	2006	5	5.3	5.8	5.8
	2007	12	12.6	14.0	19.8
	2008	27	28.4	31.4	51.2
	2009	33	34.7	38.4	89.5
	2010	9	9.5	10.5	100.0
	Total	86	90.5	100.0	
Missing	System	9	9.5		
Total		95	100.0		

Length of Program

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Less than one week	4	4.2	4.7	4.7
	Less than one month	10	10.5	11.8	16.5
	1-5 months	8	8.4	9.4	25.9
	6-11 months	25	26.3	29.4	55.3
	12+ months	38	40.0	44.7	100.0
	Total	85	89.5	100.0	
Missing	System	10	10.5		
Total		95	100.0		

Training - Workshops

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Workshops	71	74.7	100.0	100.0
Missing	System	24	25.3		
Total		95	100.0		

Training - Seminars

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Seminars	34	35.8	100.0	100.0
Missing	System	61	64.2		
Total		95	100.0		

Training - Conferences

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Conferences	29	30.5	100.0	100.0
Missing	System	66	69.5		
Total		95	100.0		

Training - Trainings

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Trainings	53	55.8	100.0	100.0
Missing	System	42	44.2		
Total		95	100.0		

Training - Study Abroad

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Academic Study Abroad	27	28.4	100.0	100.0
Missing	System	68	71.6		
Total		95	100.0		

FinGrnts - Less than \$1000

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Financial Grants - Less than \$1000	21	22.1	100.0	100.0
Missing	System	74	77.9		
Total		95	100.0		

FinGrnts - \$1000 - \$5000

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Financial Grants - \$1000 - \$5000	10	10.5	100.0	100.0
Missing	System	85	89.5		
Total		95	100.0		

FinGrnts - \$5000 - \$10,000

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Financial Grants - \$5000 - \$10,000	3	3.2	100.0	100.0
Missing	System	92	96.8		
Total		95	100.0		

FinGrnts - \$10,000+

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Financial Grants - \$10,000+	16	16.8	100.0	100.0
Missing	System	79	83.2		
Total		95	100.0		

Netwkg - National Events

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	National Events	35	36.8	100.0	100.0
Missing	System	60	63.2		
Total		95	100.0		

Netwkg - Regional Meetings

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Regional Meetings	43	45.3	100.0	100.0
Missing	System	52	54.7		
Total		95	100.0		

Netwkg - Mentoring

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Mentoring	19	20.0	100.0	100.0
Missing	System	76	80.0		
Total		95	100.0		

Netwkg - Peer Support

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Peer Support	22	23.2	100.0	100.0
Missing	System	73	76.8		
Total		95	100.0		

Netwkg - Experience Exchgs

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Experience Exchanges	50	52.6	100.0	100.0
Missing	System	45	47.4		
Total		95	100.0		

Netwkg - Intl Conferences

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	International Conferences	13	13.7	100.0	100.0
Missing	System	82	86.3		
Total		95	100.0		

Tech/Prof Knowledge

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Greatly Increased	43	45.3	52.4	52.4
	Slightly Increased	31	32.6	37.8	90.2
	Did not Change	6	6.3	7.3	97.6
	Don't Know/Not Applicable	2	2.1	2.4	100.0
	Total	82	86.3	100.0	
Missing	System	13	13.7		
Total		95	100.0		

Personal Development

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Greatly Increased	61	64.2	75.3	75.3
	Slightly Increased	13	13.7	16.0	91.4
	Did not Change	6	6.3	7.4	98.8
	Don't Know/Not Applicable	1	1.1	1.2	100.0
	Total	81	85.3	100.0	
Missing	System	14	14.7		
Total		95	100.0		

Leadership Skills

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Greatly Increased	56	58.9	68.3	68.3
	Slightly Increased	19	20.0	23.2	91.5
	Did not Change	5	5.3	6.1	97.6
	Don't Know/Not Applicable	2	2.1	2.4	100.0
	Total	82	86.3	100.0	
Missing	System	13	13.7		
Total		95	100.0		

Regional/Intl Understandg

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Greatly Increased	51	53.7	62.2	62.2
	Slightly Increased	17	17.9	20.7	82.9
	Did not Change	9	9.5	11.0	93.9
	Don't Know/Not Applicable	5	5.3	6.1	100.0
	Total	82	86.3	100.0	
Missing	System	13	13.7		
Total		95	100.0		

Access to Reg/Intl Netwks

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Greatly Increased	34	35.8	41.5	41.5
	Slightly Increased	27	28.4	32.9	74.4
	Did not Change	17	17.9	20.7	95.1
	Don't Know/Not Applicable	4	4.2	4.9	100.0
	Total	82	86.3	100.0	
Missing	System	13	13.7		
Total		95	100.0		

How much of what you learned can you put into practice?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	A great deal	56	58.9	66.7	66.7
	Some	22	23.2	26.2	92.9
	A little bit	4	4.2	4.8	97.6
	Don't Know/not applicable	2	2.1	2.4	100.0
	Total	84	88.4	100.0	
Missing	System	11	11.6		
Total		95	100.0		

Personal Relevance of Project

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Extremely useful	60	63.2	71.4	71.4
	Somewhat useful	16	16.8	19.0	90.5
	Neutral	6	6.3	7.1	97.6
	Not at all useful	2	2.1	2.4	100.0
	Total	84	88.4	100.0	
Missing	System	11	11.6		
Total		95	100.0		

Professional Relevance of Project

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Extremely useful	37	38.9	45.7	45.7
	Somewhat useful	31	32.6	38.3	84.0
	Neutral	8	8.4	9.9	93.8
	Not very useful	1	1.1	1.2	95.1
	Not at all useful	4	4.2	4.9	100.0
	Total	81	85.3	100.0	
Missing	System	14	14.7		
Total		95	100.0		

Support and Networking Offered since Pgm Ended?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	53	55.8	66.3	66.3
	No	13	13.7	16.3	82.5
	Don't know/not applicable	14	14.7	17.5	100.0
	Total	80	84.2	100.0	
Missing	System	15	15.8		
Total		95	100.0		

Alumni - Website

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Website	38	40.0	100.0	100.0
Missing	System	57	60.0		
Total		95	100.0		

Alumni - Newsletters

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Newsletters	18	18.9	100.0	100.0
Missing	System	77	81.1		
Total		95	100.0		

Alumni - Graduate organization

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Graduate organizations	10	10.5	100.0	100.0
Missing	System	85	89.5		
Total		95	100.0		

Alumni - National networks

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	National Networks	18	18.9	100.0	100.0
Missing	System	77	81.1		
Total		95	100.0		

Alumni - Regional networks

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Regional networks	30	31.6	100.0	100.0
Missing	System	65	68.4		
Total		95	100.0		

Alumni - other networking events

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Other networking events (mtgs, seminars)	28	29.5	100.0	100.0
Missing	System	67	70.5		
Total		95	100.0		

If offered, have you participated in alumni activities?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	54	56.8	84.4	84.4
	No	10	10.5	15.6	100.0
	Total	64	67.4	100.0	
Missing	System	31	32.6		
Total		95	100.0		

If participated, how was the quality?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Excellent	17	17.9	29.3	29.3
	Good	34	35.8	58.6	87.9
	Average	6	6.3	10.3	98.3
	Very Poor	1	1.1	1.7	100.0
	Total	58	61.1	100.0	
Missing	System	37	38.9		
Total		95	100.0		

If participated, were they useful to pers/prof dvlpmt?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	54	56.8	85.7	85.7
	No	2	2.1	3.2	88.9
	Don't know/not applicable	7	7.4	11.1	100.0
	Total	63	66.3	100.0	
Missing	System	32	33.7		
Total		95	100.0		

Do you plan to participate in the future?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	71	74.7	91.0	91.0
	No	3	3.2	3.8	94.9
	Don't know/not applicable	4	4.2	5.1	100.0
	Total	78	82.1	100.0	
Missing	System	17	17.9		
Total		95	100.0		

If not offered, would they be beneficial?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	39	41.1	76.5	76.5
	No	4	4.2	7.8	84.3
	Don't know/not applicable	8	8.4	15.7	100.0
	Total	51	53.7	100.0	
Missing	System	44	46.3		
Total		95	100.0		

Communicate with those you met in the program?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	74	77.9	93.7	93.7
	No	5	5.3	6.3	100.0
	Total	79	83.2	100.0	
Missing	System	16	16.8		
Total		95	100.0		

If yes, from a different country or region?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	59	62.1	81.9	81.9
	No	13	13.7	18.1	100.0
	Total	72	75.8	100.0	
Missing	System	23	24.2		
Total		95	100.0		

If yes, are contacts beneficial to personal developmnt?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Very beneficial	41	43.2	54.7	54.7
	Somewhat beneficial	31	32.6	41.3	96.0
	Neutral	2	2.1	2.7	98.7
	Not very beneficial	1	1.1	1.3	100.0
	Total	75	78.9	100.0	
Missing	System	20	21.1		
Total		95	100.0		

If yes, are contact beneficial to profssnal development?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Very beneficial	33	34.7	44.6	44.6
	Somewhat beneficial	32	33.7	43.2	87.8
	Neutral	7	7.4	9.5	97.3
	Not very beneficial	2	2.1	2.7	100.0
	Total	74	77.9	100.0	
Missing	System	21	22.1		
Total		95	100.0		

Volunteer with social and econ groups?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	64	67.4	83.1	83.1
	No	13	13.7	16.9	100.0
	Total	77	81.1	100.0	
Missing	System	18	18.9		
Total		95	100.0		

Formed grps that improve social and econ conditions?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	41	43.2	53.9	53.9
	No	35	36.8	46.1	100.0
	Total	76	80.0	100.0	
Missing	System	19	20.0		
Total		95	100.0		

Filled Leadership role in that group

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	46	48.4	82.1	82.1
	No	10	10.5	17.9	100.0
	Total	56	58.9	100.0	
Missing	System	39	41.1		
Total		95	100.0		

Did experiences in prgm help to fill leadership role?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	50	52.6	89.3	89.3
	No	6	6.3	10.7	100.0
	Total	56	58.9	100.0	
Missing	System	39	41.1		
Total		95	100.0		

Self-reliant and independent

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Significant growth	34	35.8	45.3	45.3
	Modest growth	24	25.3	32.0	77.3
	Little or no change	17	17.9	22.7	100.0
	Total	75	78.9	100.0	
Missing	System	20	21.1		
Total		95	100.0		

Speaking in public

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Significant growth	30	31.6	41.1	41.1
	Modest growth	19	20.0	26.0	67.1
	Little or no change	24	25.3	32.9	100.0
	Total	73	76.8	100.0	
Missing	System	22	23.2		
Total		95	100.0		

Listening to others' suggestions or concerns

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Significant growth	35	36.8	47.9	47.9
	Modest growth	19	20.0	26.0	74.0
	Little or no change	19	20.0	26.0	100.0
	Total	73	76.8	100.0	
Missing	System	22	23.2		
Total		95	100.0		

Expressing ideas and feelings

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Significant growth	31	32.6	41.9	41.9
	Modest growth	22	23.2	29.7	71.6
	Little or no change	21	22.1	28.4	100.0
	Total	74	77.9	100.0	
Missing	System	21	22.1		
Total		95	100.0		

Tolerant of those different from you

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Significant growth	32	33.7	43.2	43.2
	Modest growth	20	21.1	27.0	70.3
	Little or no change	22	23.2	29.7	100.0
	Total	74	77.9	100.0	
Missing	System	21	22.1		
Total		95	100.0		

Leading a team and motivating others

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Significant growth	31	32.6	42.5	42.5
	Modest growth	21	22.1	28.8	71.2
	Little or no change	21	22.1	28.8	100.0
	Total	73	76.8	100.0	
Missing	System	22	23.2		
Total		95	100.0		

Being flexible

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Significant growth	32	33.7	43.2	43.2
	Modest growth	22	23.2	29.7	73.0
	Little or no change	20	21.1	27.0	100.0
	Total	74	77.9	100.0	
Missing	System	21	22.1		
Total		95	100.0		

Solving problems

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Significant growth	26	27.4	35.1	35.1
	Modest growth	29	30.5	39.2	74.3
	Little or no change	19	20.0	25.7	100.0
	Total	74	77.9	100.0	
Missing	System	21	22.1		
Total		95	100.0		

Changing plans to adapt to new opportunities

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Significant growth	30	31.6	40.5	40.5
	Modest growth	25	26.3	33.8	74.3
	Little or no change	19	20.0	25.7	100.0
	Total	74	77.9	100.0	
Missing	System	21	22.1		
Total		95	100.0		

Working to make change in your community

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Significant growth	31	32.6	41.9	41.9
	Modest growth	21	22.1	28.4	70.3
	Little or no change	22	23.2	29.7	100.0
	Total	74	77.9	100.0	
Missing	System	21	22.1		
Total		95	100.0		

Willingness to take risks

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Significant growth	28	29.5	38.4	38.4
	Modest growth	25	26.3	34.2	72.6
	Little or no change	20	21.1	27.4	100.0
	Total	73	76.8	100.0	
Missing	System	22	23.2		
Total		95	100.0		

Negotiating with colleagues

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Significant growth	30	31.6	40.5	40.5
	Modest growth	25	26.3	33.8	74.3
	Little or no change	19	20.0	25.7	100.0
	Total	74	77.9	100.0	
Missing	System	21	22.1		
Total		95	100.0		

Summarizing complicated ideas

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Significant growth	23	24.2	31.5	31.5
	Modest growth	28	29.5	38.4	69.9
	Little or no change	22	23.2	30.1	100.0
	Total	73	76.8	100.0	
Missing	System	22	23.2		
Total		95	100.0		

Working within a budget

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Significant growth	25	26.3	34.2	34.2
	Modest growth	29	30.5	39.7	74.0
	Little or no change	19	20.0	26.0	100.0
	Total	73	76.8	100.0	
Missing	System	22	23.2		
Total		95	100.0		

Knowing how to advance your career

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Significant growth	23	24.2	31.9	31.9
	Modest growth	28	29.5	38.9	70.8
	Little or no change	21	22.1	29.2	100.0
	Total	72	75.8	100.0	
Missing	System	23	24.2		
Total		95	100.0		

How satisfied are you with the program overall?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Very satisfied	37	38.9	48.7	48.7
	Somewhat satisfied	28	29.5	36.8	85.5
	Neutral	7	7.4	9.2	94.7
	Somewhat dissatisfied	2	2.1	2.6	97.4
	Very dissatisfied	1	1.1	1.3	98.7
	Don't know	1	1.1	1.3	100.0
	Total	76	80.0	100.0	
Missing	System	19	20.0		
Total		95	100.0		

Recommend to friends or family?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	75	78.9	98.7	98.7
	No	1	1.1	1.3	100.0
	Total	76	80.0	100.0	
Missing	System	19	20.0		
Total		95	100.0		