



# The Middle East Partnership Initiative

## *Arab Civitas Fosters Civic Education and Engagement in Schools and Communities*

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**Arab Civitas**, a regional civic education network established by a grant from the Middle East Partnership Initiative to the Center for Civic Education in Los Angeles, is promoting civic awareness among young people in ten countries in the Middle East and North Africa. The new

**Arab Civitas** website at [www.arabcivitas.net](http://www.arabcivitas.net)

**Training of Trainers:** With a regional office in Amman, Jordan, **Arab Civitas** conducts civic education training and professional development, provides information to in-country coordinators, and fosters the development of a network of civic educators across the region. Schools and youth organizations use two Center for Civic Education programs that have been translated into Arabic in the nine countries that, to date, participate in **Arab Civitas**.

--**Project Citizen** is a highly interactive academic program to help young people monitor and influence public policy while developing support for democratic values and principles, tolerance, and feelings of political efficacy. Students cooperate to identify a public policy problem in their community, conduct research of the problem, evaluate alternative solutions, develop their own solution in the form of a public policy, and create a political action plan to enlist authorities to adopt their proposed policy.

--**Foundations for Democracy** promotes civic competence and responsibility among youth, teaching four concepts key to social and political life: authority, privacy, responsibility and justice. The curriculum is interdisciplinary and interactive; beginning at the kindergarten level, students build the skills needed to become responsible citizens.

Youth are exhibiting a “**passion for change**” in the Arab Middle East. MEPI’s support to the Center for Civic Education has enabled **Arab Civitas** to train more than 3,000 teachers in civic education. The teachers have introduced civic education activities to more than 65,000 students in over 500 schools in nine countries.

### **Project Citizen Team Achievements:**

Student teams have investigated many ambitious themes, including truancy, childhood safety, environmental hazards, Internet access and even playground bullies. Examples include:

**Jordan** – Students at the University of Jordan documented unsatisfactory medical care in the

university’s medical center and reported to the school administration. The University worked with the Student Council to improve services, buy new equipment, and hire more doctors. In another project, Jordanian middle school students improved public safety by curbing commercial traffic on a popular pedestrian street.

**Egypt** – Eighth grade students in an economically disadvantaged region of Cairo focused on why some students were abandoning school for work. Their investigation resulted in a new payment schedule for school fees and started a “young teachers” group to tutor classmates who are falling behind in their academic work.

**Morocco** - Classrooms at one school will be warmer and dryer thanks to junior high students who persuaded the Ministry of Education to investigate their claims of leaky schoolhouse ceilings. Officials followed up to assess and repair the roof problems.

**West Bank** – A Project Citizen team documented unsanitary conditions and inadequate services offered by the emergency room of a local hospital. The students’ research promoted additional community awareness of medical practices and resulted in an overhaul of hospital procedures.

**Lebanon** - Secondary school students in Beirut documented the inadequacy of consumer protection laws in keeping spoiled food from the shelves of local stores. Their work led to an information campaign focused on developing greater consumer awareness.

**MEPI** is a Presidential initiative that supports economic, political, and educational reform efforts and women’s empowerment in the Middle East and expanded opportunity for all people of the region.

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