



The Middle East Partnership Initiative *Leaders for Democracy Fellowship Program*

“...we have to join together in 21st century partnerships to build vibrant civil society, to demand accountability from democratic institutions, to insist on the rule of law, to help build independent and capable judicial systems and respect for human rights.”

Secretary Clinton, May 13, 2009

The **Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI)**, located within the Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs at the U.S. Department of State, assists efforts to expand political participation, strengthen civil society and the rule of law, empower women and youth, and foster economic reform throughout the Middle East and North Africa (MENA).

The **MEPI Leaders for Democracy Fellowship Program** is a three month program in the United States that provides young civic and democratic reform leaders from the Middle East and North Africa with the opportunity to complete academic coursework, participate in practical, skill-building experiences, and network with like-minded reformers and activists inside and outside the region.

This program begins with six weeks of academic coursework that includes topics on leadership and democracy, and communication and conflict resolution, among others, at the Maxwell School of Syracuse University in upstate New York. Fellows will complete relevant seminars and workshops that address theoretical debates as well as active skills building sessions.

After completing the academic portion of the program, participants engage in a six-week professional assignment with political, non-governmental, or public policy organization of professional interest in Washington, DC. Through this program component, participants gain a practical understanding of the interactions between government and civil society, while also gaining valuable knowledge, skills, and professional contacts to benefit their professional pursuits in their home countries.

The fellowship covers international and domestic travel, health insurance, lodging, and per diem. An alumni event is held in the region annually.

Eligibility:

The program is open to applicants between the ages of 25 and 40 with a bachelor's degree and English language fluency to function successfully in an American academic and professional environment. Applicants also should have five years of work experience, as well as leadership skills and the capacity to apply the opportunities presented by the fellowship in a way that would benefit an organization, sector, or specific community. Fellows travel to the U.S. unaccompanied.

Application Requirements:

Interested applicants should submit an updated resume and an essay of no more than 1000 words (written in English), which answers the following questions:

- How will a MEPI Leaders for Democracy Fellowship enable you to better lead your community or country towards greater democracy and citizen participation in the institutions and activities of government?
- What do you hope to gain from this program and what are your plans to apply the lessons you learn upon your return?
- What changes do you hope to bring about in your country during the next 10 years?

Potential applicants should contact the U.S. Embassy in their country for additional eligibility and application requirements.



2009 Fellows gather at the State Department for their program orientation

To Apply:

Potential applicants should contact the U.S. Embassy in their country for more information, and completed application forms should be submitted directly to the Embassy. Applicants who are subject to J-1 visa restrictions, are employed by the U.S. Government, or are the spouse or child of a U.S. Government employee, will not be considered for this program. Applicants will be informed of the status of their applications by a point of contact at their relevant U.S. embassy.