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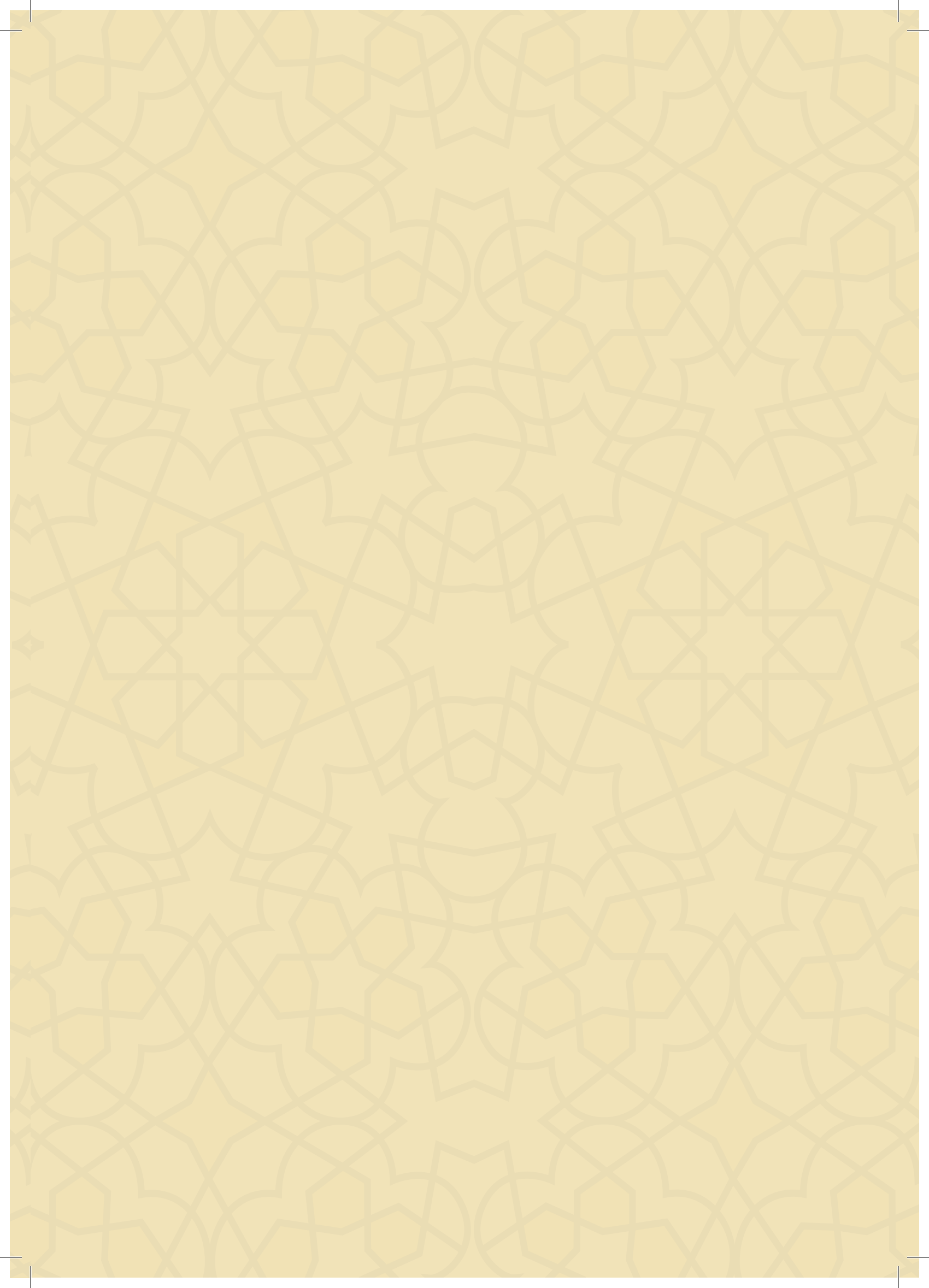


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ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORT 2015



Regional Electoral Support Project
Middle East and North Africa



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Regional Electoral Support Project Middle East and North Africa

REGIONAL COMPONENT OF GLOBAL PROJECT FOR ELECTORAL CYCLE
SUPPORT II (GPECSII)

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BACKGROUND

The Middle East and North Africa region continues to face grave challenges in protecting human rights including the right to civic and political participation. The optimism following the revolutions and “Arab Spring” of 2011 which forced the region into a period of political reform, has been overshadowed in recent years by conflict, violence and backsliding on public space for voice and participation. Today the region is plagued by an unprecedented migration crisis with a record number of internally displaced persons and refugees fleeing war and conflict, many of whom are denied basic rights; spaces for voice and participation and civil society are shrinking and the falling oil prices are placing even further stress on the economies; all of which puts the region’s transition to democracy at a disadvantage.

Despite these challenges and the disillusionment with the 2010 and 2011 revolutions, there are rays of hope for the region and for the expansion of democracy; there are instances of progress and achievements that reflect the continued determination of the people not to give up and continue their fight for the protection and promotion of human rights in the Arab region including the right to self-determination. The Tunisia case is far from perfect but it does illustrate what is possible in the region; credible elections taking place and women being elected to parliament, Tunisia gives hope to those who want to see the region and its people live in peace and stability, with their human rights protected by the state including their right to decide who their leaders are and how they are governed. Even in these difficult times, there are change agents determined to realize the hopes and dreams of all those that lost their lives during the 2011 revolutions, to bring and consolidate democracy and strengthen institutions that promote and protect human rights.

There is greater public awareness today of the need to protect and promote civic and political rights; and greater recognition by governments of the ramifications of denying and violating those rights. The positive steps and achievements realized by Arab institutions and organizations on democracy-related issues in the past few years cannot be ignored, nor can the strong commitment of societies in carrying out the process of political reform be ignored. In a number of states, electoral institutions and the practice of elections have become an important part of the political agenda, and electoral and political participation a main goal in civil society organizations’ programs. From a regional perspective, this commitment is expressed through regional cooperation, desire for mutual understanding of electoral and democratic norms, principles and institutions, and through the exchange of experiences and lessons learnt.

It is within this context that the Regional Electoral Support Project for Middle East and North Africa, the Arab States component of UNDP’s Global Project for Electoral Cycle Support (GPECS)¹, implemented its activities in 2015, engaging and supporting entities and initiatives that promote democratic institutions, raise public awareness and knowledge on democratic policies and practices, and strengthen regional cooperation in these areas. With support from the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA), the project continued to focus on the following main outputs: strengthening regional cooperation; enhancing regional knowledge and know-how on electoral issues; and promoting the greater and more effective role of women and youth in the electoral process. The Project saw significant achievements and contributions towards the enhancement of credibility, inclusivity, effectiveness and sustainability of electoral processes and institutions in the MENA region. This report documents those achievements, highlighting the Project’s interventions in 2015, the challenges and lessons learnt and reporting against the outputs and indicators established in the project document.

1. http://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/ourwork/democratic-governance-and-peacebuilding/inclusive-political-processes/electoral-systems-and-processes/global_programmeforelectoralcyclesupport/

KEY ANNUAL ACHIEVEMENTS

In 2015, the regional electoral support project made significant progress towards its goals and objectives with the following key successes to report for the year:

• Launch of the Organization of Arab Electoral Management Bodies (ArabEMBs)

Following more than a year of consultations including the formation of a preparatory committee in 2014 to look into the creation of a regional entity dedicated to strengthening regional cooperation on electoral matters, the Project supported the coming together of electoral management bodies from six Arab countries on 8 June in Beirut (Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Palestine, Yemen) to formally launch the Organization of Arab Electoral Management Bodies (ArabEMBs). The organization also held its first general assembly on the sidelines of the launch event. The general assembly took the following decisions at its first meeting:

- Activating an interim period of six months during which the secretariat and executive board work on operationalizing the new organization
- Appointment of executive board members
- Appointment of an interim secretary general
- Confirmation of Amman, Jordan as the headquarters of the new organization

Within six months of the launch event and with the support of the regional electoral support project, the newly established organization expanded its membership with the addition of Sudan as its seventh founding member and with positive discussions underway with other EMBs in the region; the new organization also pursued cooperation with other similar networks resulting in signing of memorandum of agreements with Association of European Election Officials (ACEEEO) and the Venice Commission. In addition, ArabEMBs also focused on enhancing regional exchange of information and knowledge through the holding of a regional workshop on voter registration; the workshop brought together, for the first time, voter registration experts from nine Arab EMBs to share experiences and lessons learnt on voter registration and to identify areas of possible regional cooperation. In December 2015, the organization also developed a comprehensive communication strategy covering all aspects of the organization and its future programmatic and public outreach activities. The secretariat continues to focus on finalizing the registration of the organization to have its legal status in Jordan.



H.E. Nouhad Machnouk, Lebanon's Minister of Interior and Municipalities - Lebanon at the launch of the ArabEMBs (Beirut)



Group photo following agreement on the charter of the newly established Organization of Arab Electoral Management Bodies (ArabEMBs) (Beirut)



Signing of the charter of the Organization of Arab Electoral Management Bodies (ArabEMBs) at the launch of the new organization in June (Beirut)

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS of ArabEMBs

- Expanding membership by an additional country (Sudan)
- Establishing international cooperation through signing of memorandum of understanding with the Association of European Electoral Officials (ACEEEO) and Venice Commission
- Organizing regional workshop on voter registration
- Holding its first general assembly and three executive board meetings
- Developing and adopting a comprehensive communications strategy

• Strengthened collaboration and partnership with the League of Arab States on promoting the professionalization of elections in the region

Regional and south-south cooperation continued to be a key priority and one of the main pillars of the project in 2015. The year witnessed the consolidation and reinforcement of partnerships with the League of Arab States, Mexico National Elections Institute (INE), ArabEMBs and with national and regional initiatives working on strengthening democracy and the field of elections. The League of Arab States is a key partner of the Project and in 2015, in collaboration with UN's Electoral Assistance Division (EAD), in the Department of Political Affairs, a number of initiatives took place that consolidated the partnership, promoted mutual goals and objectives, and paved the way for broader engagement and impact on elections in the region. Key among them included the advocacy for and endorsement by LAS Council of the holding of LAS's first ever conference on elections. The Security Council endorsement of the proposal by the Election Department of the League of Arab States represents a major achievement by the Department which has worked extensively over the past year to promote the professionalization of elections in the region. The conference, which will take place in May 2016, will be the first time electoral bodies of 22 Arab countries come together to exchange experiences on the practice of elections in their respective countries; this dialogue is an important step towards expanding the dialogue on elections and democracy in the region. The Project also partnered with LAS on the holding of regional capacity development initiative through BRIDGE², participation in regional and international conferences including Latin America's Democracy Forum, and assessing the UN-LAS BRIDGE programme to review impact and future needs.

• Promotion of regional south-south cooperation on elections and democratic practices (with Mexico's INE, OIC, and others)

The Project applies south-south cooperation as a cross-cutting strategy with all key interventions having a component of south-south cooperation where the exchange of experience and ideas from other countries in the south is promoted through the Project's various activities and initiatives of the Project. A particular priority has been placed on the Latin American experience given the similarities that the two regions share. Under the framework of an MOU signed in 2014 between the Project and Mexico's National Electoral Institute (INE³), in 2015 the Project carried out joint initiatives to promote the sharing of ideas, experiences and lessons learnt between Latin America and the Arab States. In an effort to promote and advocate for broader discussions in the Arab States on elections and democracy, the Project supported the participation of an Arab delegation (LAS, ArabEMBs, civil society, media and youth groups) at the 6th Latin America Democracy Forum held in Mexico from 21-23 October 2015. The event encouraged the League of Arab States and ArabEMBs to look into the feasibility of organizing and institutionalizing a similar practice for the Arab States region; as a first step forward in this direction, the League of Arab States will organize the organization's first conference on elections. In addition to the Democracy Forum, the Project also collaborated with INE on the holding of a regional training on results management system (RMS) and the importance of a strong RMS to the professionalism and credibility of an electoral process, as well as to the prevention and mitigation of electoral violence; the training brought together Latin American experts to share the different aspects of RMS and how Latin American EMBs tackled some of the same challenges currently faced by their Arab counterparts.

2. BRIDGE stands for Building Resources in Democracy, Governance and Elections. It is a modular professional development program with a particular focus on electoral processes. See: <http://www.bridge-project.org/en/>

3. INE is a renowned electoral institute that brings together the experiences of Latin America on elections and engages with electoral management bodies from all around the world to share experiences and impart knowledge on electoral topics



The Arab Panel at the Sixth Annual Latin America Democracy Forum held in October (Mexico City)

In addition to its partnerships with INE, the Project continued to work with and support EAD in strengthening its engagement with the Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC). In 2015, the Project extended its support to the OIC-UN Jeddah Roundtable Discussion on the Role of Civil Society in supporting Electoral Integrity through domestic election observation. The Jeddah discussions were aimed at bringing together regional and international civil society organizations engaged in election observation to review their role in improving the field of elections through observation and to identify good practices that can benefit the Arab region.

- **Enhanced regional capacity and knowledge on elections through trainings, conferences and workshops**

A key pillar of the Project is to strengthen electoral knowledge among stakeholders in the region; through trainings, conferences and workshops on electoral topics, the Project contributed to enhancing the knowledge and know-how of people and institutions engaged in the field of elections. Reaching nearly 900 persons directly through its activities in 2015, the primary stakeholders of the Project in 2015 were electoral management bodies, civil society organizations, youth and women groups and networks, and regional entities including LAS and ArabEMBs. Interventions included bringing together over 100 civil society representatives from sixteen Arab countries to raise their awareness on good practices in electoral dispute resolution, and the role CSOs can play make dispute resolution more effective and help prevent and mitigate electoral violence. The Project also facilitated the first gathering of Arab voter registration experts from 9 countries, to share experiences and form a committee to share information and tools in VR and develop guidelines and good practices in voter registration in the region.



Participants at the 'Regional Workshop on Electoral Dispute Resolution and Civil Society' held in October (Beirut)

• Promotion of the participation of women and youth in political and electoral processes

The Project, in collaboration with UNDP's regional gender unit, designed and implemented activities that promoted networking among women groups, enhanced awareness and knowledge on civic and political participation of women and youth, and their role throughout the electoral cycle. Through conferences, workshops and trainings, the Project strengthened the capacity of the network of women in constitution making, created a database of more than 7,000 youth engaged and interested in civic and political participation, imparted problem solving and leadership skills to 105 young men and women active in their communities. The Project carried out BRIDGE trainings including BRIDGE workshops on Gender and Elections, conducted in collaboration with the International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES) in April 2015. The regional workshops were attended by 22 women coming from 15 Arab countries and belonging to institutions and organizations of different nature (LAS, parliaments, EMBs, CSOs, Media, political parties, the UN). Through these initiatives, women and men including youth came together to identify challenges they face in the region and strategies and solutions for enhancing youth and women's participation in civic and political life.

Women and Youth

- Wide dissemination of information on youth initiatives led to more than 7,000 youth expressing interest in taking part in regional civic and political participation initiatives.
- More than 100 youth trained on leadership and problem solving skills.
- 350 officials from 18 Arab Countries discussed and agreed on SDGs and gender.
- More than 4 million impressions and tweets posted on SDGs and gender in the Arab States.
- Representatives from government, civil society and regional organizations from 22 Arab countries benefit from BRIDGE trainings.
- Awareness raised within the League of Arab States and the Arab Women Organization on the importance of and strategies for enhancing women's political participation.
- Networking encouraged among women constitution makers.

• Development and distribution of electoral knowledge products in the Arab States

The need for and development of electoral knowledge products adapted to the Arab region and to Arabic-speaking users was identified at the start of the project and has remained an important focus area during implementation. The Regional Project, in cooperation with regional and international organizations and other UN agencies, continued to work in the design, development and distribution of electoral knowledge products as part of its technical support to electoral stakeholders.

In 2015, the Project enhanced stakeholder access to electoral knowledge products and tools. The project completed the development and dissemination of an online course on the 2014 Results Management Systems Manual and made available in Arabic the UNDP/UN Women guidebook entitled 'Inclusive Electoral Processes: A Guide for Electoral Management Bodies on Promoting Gender Equality and Women's Participation'; a highly useful publication for EMBs with practical recommendations on how to promote the participation of women within EMBs as well as throughout the electoral cycle. In 2015, the Project also continued the distribution and dissemination of knowledge products produced in 2014 including the a) the first lexicon of election terminology which was uploaded to UNITERM, promoted at the annual conference of JIAMCATT, the main international terminology forum, and distributed extensively b) results management systems manual, and 3) a report on inclusive political processes. The demand for these resources, particularly the Lexicon, has been great with civil society organizations as well as EMBs requesting additional copies of the publication. The Project also required electoral staff from different EMBs to take the online e-course on RMS, as part of the training on the topic. During 2015, more than one third of the users of the e-courses were from the Arab states.



Youth taking part in the First Social Innovation Camp for Arab Youth held in June (Amman)

• Support to and partnerships with UNDP country offices, national projects and Regional Hub

UNDP country offices and national electoral projects continued to be an important partner for the regional project in ensuring coherence in electoral assistance among the Arab States as well as in designing, developing and implementing regional initiatives that are of relevance to national stakeholders. The Regional Project engaged with national projects in reviewing and planning regional initiatives at its annual chief technical advisors meeting, holding joint interventions including collaboration on substantive and operational aspects of events, and providing advisory services through missions by Project staff as well as the deployment of consultants to national electoral projects and country offices. In addition, the Project worked extensively with the UNDP Arab States Regional Programme in the implementation of its activities, particularly the gender output which is led by the Regional Programme's Mosharka Project. The Mosharka Project supports the design and implementation of all of the Project's gender initiatives and some of its youth activities; the Regional Project provides Mosharka with a staff member that is shared between the Regional Project and Mosharka in the implementation of its gender and youth activities. In 2015, the Project also implemented initiatives jointly with the Regional Hub Amman, in particular the holding of the first Youth Innovation Forum which was a partnership between the Arab States Regional Programme, the Regional Elections Project, and UNDP Egypt.

ACTIVITY RESULTS

This section of the documents showcases the results and interventions of the Project in 2015 in line with the annual workplan, and the output areas as defined in the project document. It provides a comprehensive review of the activities supported and undertaken, and highlights where relevant the collaboration with national, regional, and/or global organizations in carrying out that support. In 2015, the Project continued to work with key institutional partners including the newly established ArabEMBs, the League of Arab States, Mexico's National Electoral Institute, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, United Nations Electoral Assistance Division, UN Women and UNDP offices at the country level. These partnerships have not only contributed to the success of these activities but also help pave the way for their sustainability.

Output Result 1: Strengthened regional cooperation and networking

Launch and establishment of the Organization of Arab Electoral Management Bodies (ArabEMBs) principles and institutions, and through the exchange of experiences and lessons learnt.

A key achievement of the project in 2015 was the formal launch and establishment of the ArabEMBs, representing the first such professional organization dedicated to promoting cooperation on all aspects of election management in the region. The new organization seeks to enhance professional development and the exchange of experiences on election administration, ensure electoral integrity and transparency. The work of the preparatory committee formed in June 2014 and tasked with reviewing the feasibility of a network of EMBs in the region resulted in the formal launch of the new organization exactly one year later, in June 2015. Electoral management bodies from six Arab countries (Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Palestine, Yemen) formally signed the charter in a launch event in Beirut in June 2015, establishing the new organization with its secretariat in Amman, Jordan.

"Today, we are laying the basic building block towards the professionalization of elections management in the Arab region and the preparation of the qualified cadres required to ensure the integrity, fairness and transparency of elections."

ArabEMBs President, Dr. Imad Al-Sayeh.



Signing of the cooperation agreement between ArabEMBs and ACEEEO
 Mr. Zsolt SZOLNOKI, ACEEEO Secretary General
 Dr. Iurie Ciocan, Chairman of the Central Election Commission of Moldova
 Dr. Emad Alsayah President of ArabEMBs



Signing of cooperation agreement between ArabEMBs and the Venice Commission
 Dr. Gianni Buquicchio, President of the Venice Commission
 Mr. Hisham Kuhail, Member of ArabEMBs Executive Board

The regional project supported ArabEMBs throughout this period, providing technical advisory services as well as operational support in carrying out its meetings and activities. Within six months of the launch event and with UNDP support, the newly established organization expanded its membership base with the addition of Sudan as its seventh founding member and with positive discussions underway with other EMBs in the region; in addition to working on expanding its membership, the new organization also focused on enhancing regional exchange of information and knowledge through a jointly organized regional workshop on voter registration held in October 2014. The workshop brought together, for the first time, voter registration experts from nine Arab EMBs to share experiences and lessons learnt on voter registration and to identify areas for regional cooperation. In December 2015, the organization also developed a comprehensive communication strategy covering all aspects of the organization and its future programmatic and public outreach activities. The secretariat continues to focus on finalizing the registration of the organization to have its legal status in Jordan. Key results and achievements of ArabEMBs and the Regional Project include:

- Confirming Sudan's membership in ArabEMBs
- Establishing international cooperation through signing of memorandum of understanding with the Association of European Electoral Officials (ACEEEO) and Venice Commission
- Organizing regional workshop on voter registration (VR) resulting in the formation of a regional committee of Arab VR experts committed to enhancing knowledge, information and cooperation on VR in the region
- Holding its first general assembly and three executive board meetings
- Developing and adopting a comprehensive communications strategy
- Participating in the Sixth Latin America Democracy Forum in Mexico City
- Participating in the Regional Workshop on Results Management Systems in Mexico City
- Participating in the 24th Annual Conference of ACEEEO in Moldova
- Working on operational matters of the Secretariat including developing human resource plan and procedures, budget forecasts, and continuous engagement with Jordan government machinery for the legal establishment of the regional organization in Jordan

ArabEMBs INTERIM PERIOD ARRANGEMENTS

PRESIDENT: Dr. Emad Alshadly Alsayah, Chairman, High National Election Commission Libya

EXECUTIVE BOARD

PRESIDENT: Safaa Al Musawi, Commissioner, Independent Higher Election Commission Iraq

MEMBERS: Hesham Kuhail, Chief Electoral Officer, Central Election Commission Palestine; Abdullhakim Chaab, Commissioner, High National Election Commission Libya; Badrieh Al Bilisi, Assistant Secretary General, Independent Election Commission Jordan

ACTING SECRETARY GENERAL: Badrieh Al Bilisi, Assistant Secretary General, Independent Election Commission Jordan

• Reinforcing partnership with the League of Arab States

Under the framework of an agreement signed between LAS and UN Electoral Assistance Division (EAD), the Project continued to partner with LAS's election department to promote the professionalization of elections in the region and strengthen the knowledge and capacity of LAS staff engaged in election observation and technical assistance. In 2015, the Project implemented the following interventions with LAS:

- Train the Facilitators BRIDGE training, Casablanca, 16 – 25 August

The regional project and LAS partnered to strengthen the field of elections in the Arab States through the training of facilitators using the internationally recognized BRIDGE electoral curriculum program; the Train the Facilitators event (Casablanca, Aug 2015) resulted in the training of LAS staff (7 of the 17 participants were women) to become facilitators of the BRIDGE election training curriculum. This training is part of the Hub's broader partnership with the League of Arab States' Electoral Affairs Department, supporting their efforts to enhance knowledge and capacity on elections, as well as to increase the number of electoral experts in the Arab States.

- Share experiences and knowledge in relation to electoral process management and electoral systems from an observation point of view;
- Learn more about the best practices, failures and problems relating to such topics in the world;
- Strengthen skills of LAS staff;
- Facilitate and encourage co-operation among stakeholders (electoral bodies, observers, voters and partners) in electoral process management;
- Develop appropriate recommendations for LAS for the next stages;
- Present the electoral system of their countries and its impact; and
- Select qualified facilitators for the TtF workshop, which will take place later this year.



Graduates of the BRIDGE Train the Facilitators training held in August (Casablanca)

- LAS participation at the 6th Latin America Democracy Forum, Mexico City, 21-23 October

As part of its efforts to expose Arab States to the experiences of other regions, the regional project supported a delegation of LAS representatives to take part in the 6th Latin America Democracy Forum held in Mexico City. The Forum was organized by the Mexican Electoral Institute (INE) and co-sponsored by UNDP, OAS, IFES and IDEA to create space for reflection, analysis and open discussion on new configurations and challenges of facing democracy in Latin America. The feedback from the event was very positive with the Arab delegation recognizing the value of a broad forum where the views and perspectives of different sections of society are discussed and debated in a positive atmosphere, with the overall goal of generating ideas and ways of strengthening electoral democracy; there was a consensus among the group on the need for a similar forum in the Arab States and requested UNDP to explore the possibility further. The event was a learning opportunity for the Election Department of LAS who will be organizing LAS' first ever conference on elections in the Arab States in May 2016.

• Reinforcing collaboration with the Organization of Islamic Cooperation

In 2015, the Project together with EAD continued to engage with the Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC). In particular, the project supported the UN and the OIC Joint Roundtable Discussion on 'The Role of Civil Society in Supporting Electoral Integrity through Domestic Elections Observation' held from 26-29 July in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. This Joint Roundtable was an opportunity for civil society organizations engaged in monitoring elections to exchange views and lessons learned on the topic, as well as to share good practices within and outside the region through networking with other international entities working in the field of elections.

• Strengthening south-south cooperation with Latin America through Mexico National Electoral Institute (INE)

The Project continued to prioritize south-south cooperation as a means to encourage democratic behavior and practice through mutual support and encouragement between countries facing similar challenges. Under the framework of the MOU signed in 2014 between the regional project and INE, the Project implemented the following initiatives that enabled south-south knowledge exchange, best practice information sharing and collaboration on electoral topics between Latin America and the Arab States:

- Training on Results Management System, Mexico City, 23-27 November

The training on results management systems (RMS) brought together experiences from Latin America and the Arab States on the principles of a strong RMS and its impact on the credibility and acceptance of an electoral process. Discussions focused on how measures at various points in the electoral results collection, processing and dissemination process can enhance transparency and help mitigate electoral violence. National examples from Tunisia, Lebanon, Guatemala, Panama and Mexico were exchanged and participants held interactive discussions on voting and counting procedures in the different countries, how and when results are aggregated and disseminated and their impact on the credibility and acceptance of the election, the role of political actors, civil society, media and other stakeholders and determining at what stage of the process they should engage in discussions on RMS. The training also covered exit polling and quick count as measures to enhance transparency and confidence in elections and how the elections administration could make the best possible use of these tools, as well as the role of ICT in RMS including issues of cost, outsourcing, sustainability and the risks. The training also included representatives from IFES and CAPEL.



Representatives from Mauritania and the League of Arab States at the Regional Workshop on Voter Registration held in September (Dead Sea)

- Arab Session at the 6th Latin America Democracy Forum, Mexico City, 21-23 October

An Arab delegation including representatives from the League of Arab States (LAS), the Organization of Arab Electoral Management Bodies (ArabEMBs), civil society, media and youth groups took part in the 6th Latin America Democracy Forum held in Mexico City. The Forum was organized by the INE and co-sponsored by UNDP, OAS, IFES, IDEA to create space for reflection, analysis and open discussion on new configurations and challenges of democracy in Latin America; The high-level event included a session on the Arab States where Arab panelists from a cross section of society presented an overview of the challenges and opportunities for democracy in the Arab States including a discussion on enhancing the values of citizenship and representative government. Each panelist focused on the realm of experience where he or she exercise his/her professional activity. The feedback from the event was very positive with the Arab delegation recognizing the value of a broad forum where the views and perspectives of different sections of society are discussed and debated in a positive atmosphere, with the overall goal of generating ideas and ways of strengthening electoral democracy; there was a consensus among the group on the need for a similar forum in the Arab States and requested UNDP to explore the possibility further.

Output Result 2: Knowledge generation and capacity enhancement of electoral stakeholders

As part of the Regional Project's efforts to strengthen electoral knowledge and capacity within the region, a number of initiatives were undertaken in 2015 to enhance capacity of electoral stakeholders and increase their access to electoral knowledge and information in Arabic. The 2015 initiatives include workshops, conferences, BRIDGE trainings, the annual meeting of chief/technical advisors (CTAs) for the Arab region, and the production and dissemination of knowledge tools, further described below.



Youth celebrate receiving certificates at the end of the Youth Leadership Forum held in October (Amman)

• Targeted thematic workshops on topics of priority to the region

- **VOTER REGISTRATION:** In partnership with the ArabEMBs, the Regional Electoral Support Project organized a workshop for voter registration staff of EMBs which took place from 29 September - 1 October in the Dead Sea, Jordan. The workshop focused on the status of voter registration within the Arab region and on international voter registration practices and principles. It was the first of its kind, bringing together EMB staff from nine Arab countries on a topic of high importance to the region to share experiences, knowledge and lessons learnt on voter registration. The workshop was attended by fifty-one (51) participants; among them, staff members from the electoral bodies of Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Mauritania, Palestine, Sudan, and Tunisia, electoral experts coming from a number of international organization, representatives of the Electoral Department of LAS, and the Commissioner of the Central Electoral Commission and member of ACEEEO. A key outcome of the workshop was the formation of a regional committee of EMB voter registration staff tasked with strengthening regional knowledge and capacity on voter registration through cooperation and collaboration.



Speech by UNDP Regional Hub Amman Manager Dr. Khaled Abdelshafi at the Regional Conference on Electoral Dispute Resolution and Role of Civil Society held in October (Beirut)

- ELECTORAL DISPUTE RESOLUTION AND CIVIL SOCIETY: Recognizing the important role civil society plays in democratic participation and political development, the Project organized a workshop for civil society organizations on electoral dispute resolution (EDR). The Electoral Dispute Resolution Conference, held between the 5-7 of October 2015 in Beirut, Lebanon, was a great opportunity to raise awareness on the importance of EDR and the role of CSOs and media in strengthening and making more effective national EDR systems and mechanisms. The conference also included presentations and discussions on international good practices and mechanisms of EDR, the utility of Alternative Electoral Dispute Resolution, country cases analysis, and the challenges the region faces when it comes to EDR. Finally, this conference was also an occasion for the two Arab regional election observer networks Arab Network for the Monitoring of Elections (ANDE) and Election Network in the Arab Region (ENAR) and other CSOs to come together, share experience, and establish or reinforce cooperation and networking. The participants included more than 100 representatives of civil society organizations coming from sixteen (16) Arab states: Lebanon, Iraq, Jordan, Syria, Palestine, Egypt, Sudan, Libya, Algeria, Tunisia, Morocco, Mauritania, Bahrain, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, and Yemen. Among the CSOs, women and youth organizations were also represented.

- RESULTS MANAGEMENT SYSTEM: In partnership with Mexico's INE, the regional project organized a workshop on Results Management Systems in Mexico City from 23-27 November. The workshop brought together electoral administrators from the Middle East and North Africa as well as Latin America to share knowledge and raise awareness on RMS practices all over the world, with a particular focus on the two regions, adopting a comparative approach.



Participants at Mexico's National Electoral Institute (INE) during a training on results management systems held in November (Mexico City)

• Enhancing electoral capacity through BRIDGE trainings and workshops

in order to respond to the need of developing regional capacity and deepening knowledge on electoral issues, the Regional Project continues in its efforts to promote BIDGE —Building Resources in Democracy, Governance, and Elections— curriculum which is made by and for election administrators to better understand the electoral process. BRIDGE curriculum and trainings are a result of a partnership between five (5) leading organizations: International IDEA, UNDP, the United Nations Electoral Assistance Division (UNEAD), IFES and the Australian Electoral Commission (AEC). In 2014, the LAS adopted the BRIDGE curriculum as part of its capacity building programme and continued its partnership with the regional project to carry out BRIDGE trainings and workshops in 2015.

- **Train the Facilitator” (TtF) Training:** as part of its continuing efforts to develop a pool of electoral experts that can act as electoral trainers for the region, UNDP and the LAS conducted the second “Train the Facilitator” (TtF) training from 16-27 August in Casablanca, Morocco. The ten-day training aimed to accredit another group of highly qualified facilitators and assess participants’ capacities to be able to develop new BRIDGE materials as well as run long-term trainings and professional programs in the region. Seventeen (17) participants coming from nine countries attended the workshop; thirteen (13) of them belonging to LAS staff and four (4) to UNDP. All of the seventeen participants received semi-accreditation as facilitators.

- **Workshop on Introduction to Electoral Administration and Electoral Systems:** the BRIDGE workshop “Introduction to Electoral Administration and Electoral Systems” was the first to be held in May 2015 in Cairo, Egypt. The objective of this five-day workshop was, on the one hand, to build and enhance capacities of LAS staff from different departments in selected areas of electoral process management and electoral observation, and on the other, to identify among the participants the candidates for the following TtF training. The workshop saw the participation of twenty-four (24) participants, including twelve (12) women, coming from nine Arab countries, namely Algeria, Egypt, Iraq, Libya, Kuwait, Morocco, Palestine, Saudi Arabia, and Tunisia. This workshop was also the occasion for two semi-accredited facilitators to become workshop facilitators.

• Production and promotion of knowledge products and online tools

In 2015, the regional project continued to produce and disseminate knowledge products accessible to the Arab speaking population. In particular, the following initiatives were supported as part of the project’s effort to ensure electoral knowledge and information is available in the region and in the local language:

- **A guide for electoral management bodies on promoting gender equality and women’s participation:** the Project supported the translation and dissemination of a new publication, jointly produced by UNDP and UN Women, on the role of electoral management bodies in encouraging the participation of women across various points in the electoral cycle. The Guide offers concrete examples of steps that can be taken to remove remaining barriers that continue to affect women’s participation in electoral processes. Divided into two parts, the Guide presents strategies to mainstream gender equality within the organizational structure of EMBs (to ensure women participate at all levels of decision-making; data collected is disaggregated by sex; that the organization formalizes its commitment to gender equality through a gender policy) and in the organization and administration of the election by the EMB (voter education and outreach; candidate and voter registration processes; ensuring all voters are able to securely access a polling station).

- **Results Management System online course:** A Results Management Systems e-learning course was launched in early 2015, following the EC–UNDP RMS Manual developed in 2014. The Project partnered with the EC-UNDP Joint Task Force to develop the e-learning course which consists of e-learning modules on results management systems in use around the world. The course offers students a global overview of RMS practices, provides an analysis of the advantages and disadvantages of each systems, and helps users in considering which is the more appropriate option for their country, as well as the most likely to be accepted on the ground taking into consideration both the political context and the social and cultural background. According to user data, 30% of visitors who attended the EC-UNDP Joint Task Force e-learning course were from the Arab States.

- Lexicon of Electoral Terminology: The Lexicon, launched in 2014, has been an important resource tool at the national, regional and global level. It has been invaluable for translators and interpreters working to enhance regional access to electoral information, knowledge and experiences. At the national level, Somalia has recognized the need and value of an electoral Lexicon given the recent spread of electoral topics in the country; UNDP Somalia is supporting the electoral body to adapt the Lexicon to the local language and context. There was also an increased interest in the Lexicon at the global level, with the publication making it on the agenda of the annual conference of JIAMCATT, the main international terminology forum held in New York in March 2015, where a presentation and discussion was held on the Electoral Lexicon and the prospects of the reference tool for other regions and thematic areas. The tri-lingual Lexicon (Arabic, French, English) was also discussed at the 2015 NATO Conference on Terminology Management held in November 2015 in Brussels where participants recognized the Lexicon's collaborative data collection process (especially among NATO terminologists who cover 28 countries) and the fact that all the terms were vetted and approved by specialists and were producer-driven, an intersection of terminology and phraseology.

In 2015, the Project supported further dissemination and promotion of the Lexicon through uploading on the Global UNTERM Portal, and additional hard copies distributed through workshops and conferences taking place at the national, regional and global level; an additional 500 copies were requested by the League of Arab States for dissemination to its members.

- Interactive report on Credibility of Electoral Processes: this e-learning tool allows electoral administrators, practitioners and stakeholders to still benefit from the content of the "Reinforcing Credibility and Acceptance of Electoral Processes" 2014 publication, through a more user friendly format.

- ACE Arabic Electoral Knowledge Network – Arabic Page and Knowledge: with UNDP a partner of the ACE online electoral knowledge platform, the regional project works to strengthen the Arabic section of the ACE website. The publications and knowledge products supported by the Project are uploaded and made available through the ACE site; furthermore, the Project supported ACE partners to identify the needs of the Arabic ACE website and developed terms of reference for the recruitment of an expert to manage the Arabic site, and promote dialogue among Arab-speaking electoral practitioners and experts; this will be undertaken by the Project in 2016.

4. Joint Inter-Agency Meeting on Computer-Assisted Translation and Terminology

5. www.unterm.un.org An online database compiled to support the diverse and wide-ranging demands of United Nations language staff for terminology and nomenclature. It is on the Internet to facilitate the efforts of people around the world who participate in the work of the United Nations but do not have access to the Secretariat's intranet.

6. See: ACE Electoral Knowledge Network: <http://aceproject.org/>

KNOWLEDGE PRODUCTS	LINKS
Inclusive Electoral Processes: A Guide for Electoral Management Bodies on Promoting Gender Equality and Women's Participation	http://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/librarypage/democratic-governance/electoral-systemsandprocesses/guide-for-electoral-management-bodies-on-promoting-gender-equali.html
ACE Electoral Knowledge Network - Arabic Site	http://aceproject.org/ero-ar
Lexicon for Electoral Terminology	http://www.arabstates.undp.org/content/dam/rbas/doc/DemGov/Arabic-Lexicon-of-Electoral-Terminology-UNDP-2014.pdf OR http://www.ec-undp_electoralassistance.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=147&Itemid=103
BRIDGE modules translated and customized in Arabic	http://bridge-project.org/en/curriculum/curriculum-files/category/5-modules.html (link to the BRIDGE modules) http://bridge-project.org/en/curriculum/how-to-download-curriculum-files.html (link to Curriculum files download)
Written Report on Reinforcing the Credibility of Electoral Processes (AR,EN,FR)	http://www.ec-undp-electoralassistance.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=147&Itemid=103
Interactive Summary Report on Credibility of Electoral Processes (AR,EN, FR)	http://elearning.ec-undp-electoralassistance.org/
E-course on Results Management Systems (AR,EN)	http://elearning.ec-undp-electoralassistance.org/
Publication on Results Management Systems: Catalogue of Options (AR,EN)	http://www.ec-undp-electoralassistance.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=147&Itemid=103
Video: "Irreversible – Women's full participation in Constitution-Making processes: Testimonies from the frontlines" (AR/EN)	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IS1n08eFRUQ&feature=youtu.be

• Partnership and collaboration with UNDP country offices, national electoral projects and Regional Hub

- **Coherence in electoral assistance** - UNDP country offices and national electoral projects continued to be an important partner for the regional project, as well as an effective vehicle for reaching and engaging with stakeholders. The Project recognizes that both the connection between electoral projects at the national level and the regional exchange and initiatives produce longer term results. On the regional level, the support UNDP provides to country offices and national electoral projects includes:

- Technical assistance and promotion of the exchange of knowledge and lessons learned among national projects;
- Quality assurance;
- Support to electoral assessments and project development;
- Additional programming support and trouble shooting support to projects when needed.

In 2015, the Project worked closely with all UNDP electoral projects in designing and implementing its regional initiatives; the annual regional chief technical advisors meeting facilitated vibrant discussion on electoral assistance in the region as well as finding strategies for more effective engagement between the national and the regional project. National projects also helped to identify thematic topics that should be highlighted at the regional level; for instance, the UNDP Lebanese Elections Assistance Project identified electoral dispute resolution as an important thematic area and partnered with the regional project on organizing the EDR conference 'Raising Awareness on Electoral Dispute Resolution' held in October in Beirut. Similarly, the electoral team in Libya led the design and development of a regional initiative on voter registration which included the first regional workshop bringing together electoral experts from Arab EMBs, as well as the development of a mapping of voter registration systems and practices in the Arab States.

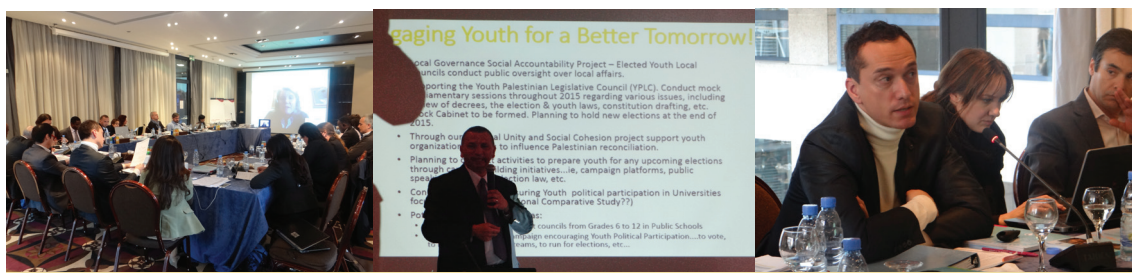
- Annual CTA meeting: definition of best practices and recommendations for enhancing the field of elections in the Arab region

During the Annual Regional CTA Meeting held in January 2015 in Beirut, Lebanon, the chief technical electoral advisors, electoral experts and select governance focal points of UNDP country offices of Djibouti, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Somalia, Sudan, Tunisia and Yemen, met together with the electoral experts from the Project and representatives from UNEAD and GPECS in order to review the electoral initiatives of 2014 and set priorities for 2015. In particular, the meeting came up with the following activities and initiatives to promote in 2015: a) identify and strengthen the capacity of electoral experts from the region through specialized capacity building initiatives in exposure to regional and national best practices; b) support the UNDP country offices and national electoral projects to expose their electoral experts to regional initiatives; c) promote networking and linkage of experts within existing organization in the region such as the League of Arab States, the Organization of Arab EMBs, the electoral management bodies and other governmental institutions, the UNEAD roster, and UNDP offices; and d) facilitate experience and transfer of knowledge within the region. The meeting included UN/UNDP advisors and experts from Djibouti, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Somalia, Sudan, Tunisia, and Yemen..

- **Operational support** – In 2015, the Regional Project participated in the exchange of operational support with national projects and country offices. There was strong commitment from national projects and country offices as demonstrated by the extensive operational support received in the holding of regional events, as well as in facilitating the participation of national stakeholders in regional activities. The Regional Project also provided operational support to national projects, mainly facilitating recruitment and procurement services that benefited both the regional and national electoral projects.

- **Advisory services** – Through the Regional Project team as well as its specialized consultants, the Project provided advisory services to country offices and national electoral projects. Support provided by the Project's team of experts included participation in Needs Assessment Missions (NAMs), strategic review and recommendations on electoral assistance at national level, development and review of terms of references, and in identifying and recommending experts for national staff and consultancy posts. In addition, the Project also deployed its specialized consultants to support national projects in the areas of voter registration (Jordan), voter education (Egypt), communications (Jordan), and strategic planning (Libya).

- **Regional Hub** – in addition to national project and country offices, the Regional Project collaborated with the UNDP Arab States Regional Programme. The key partnership was with the Regional Programme's Mosharka Project which led to the implementation of the gender output; this included collaboration on the design and implementation of all gender activities under the project, as well as in cost-sharing of staff costs (i.e. a national gender analyst recruited by the Regional Electoral Project supports Mosharka in the implementation of electoral gender activities). Other collaboration with the Regional Hub included the holding of the Youth Innovation Forum which was a partnership between the Arab States Regional Programme, the Regional Elections Project, and UNDP Egypt.



Annual UNDP regional meeting of electoral advisors held in January (Beirut)

Output Result 3: Increased political participation of women and youth

The regional project contributes to the outcome of increased participation of youth and women through three main strategies: a) enhancing regional knowledge and awareness on the importance of women and youth participation in electoral and political processes in the Arab States, b) promoting networking among individuals and groups actively engaged and working on enhancing women and youth participation, and c) mainstreaming women throughout project activities. Below are further details on the activities and initiatives undertaken in 2015 that contributed to this outcome.

• Enhancing regional knowledge and awareness on the importance of women and youth participation in electoral and political processes

- Women and constitution making: Conference on Women's Full Participation in Constitution-Making and Legislative Reform Process, Amman 10-12 February

Focusing on constitution making and legislative reform processes, the regional project jointly with UNDP's regional Mosharka project organized a conference on the role of women and their full participation in constitution making and legislative reform. The event was the first of its kind, organized in collaboration with the network of women in constitution making and legislative reform in the Arab States, it enabled the sharing of strategies, experiences, good practices, and lessons learned of the role of women in the constitution making and legislative reform processes in the Arab States. The conference was focused on the process of constitution-making, with discussions on the entry points for women to play an active role in constitution making process.

The conference saw the participation of 23 women leaders from 12 countries who led the constitution making processes in their countries, in addition to representatives from the Arab Women Organization (AWO), and the Inter-Peace Network. The workshop outcomes included:

- A short guidance tool that highlights the importance of women and girls' full participation in every aspect of constitutional reform and the precedent that establishes for their full participation in the latter stages of the transition and beyond.
- Documentation (video) on the vital roles women and girls played in the process of constitutional reform, including pushing for the reforms.
- Distillation and documentation of the lessons learned which strategies led to greater participation or results.
- Strengthened networks for sharing knowledge, strategies and tools.
- A workshop report distilling the lessons learned for dissemination at the country, regional and global levels.

- Women and SDGs: Conference on Women in the Arab region and the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda, Cairo 29 – 1 December

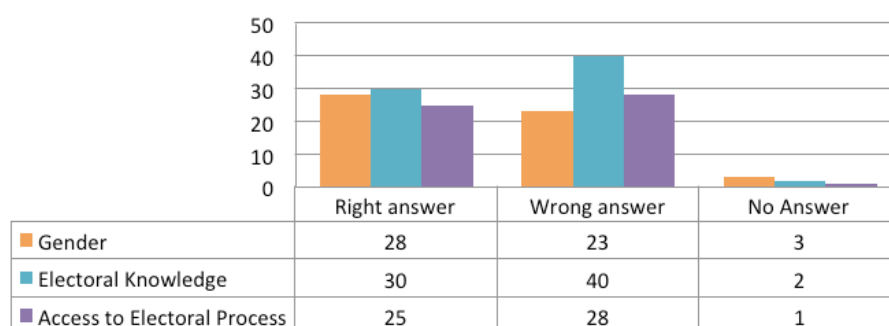
The regional electoral project supported UNDP's regional Mosharka project to convene a high level conference on women and SDGs in partnership with the Arab Women Organization, UN Women, and League of Arab States. The conference focused on the implementation of the post 2015 SDGs with respect to the important issues of gender equality and women's empowerment. The conference served as a platform to facilitate thematic, policy and technical discussions on the endorsed SDGs and how they impact the key areas of gender equality and women's empowerment. The conference was guided by more than 20 expert papers commissioned on each of the 17 SDGs and resulted in a) a set of guiding recommendations for the 17 SDGs, highlighting strategic interventions to promote women's role in each of the goals; and b) the creation of a Platform for Action to implement the Sustainable Development Goals 2030 for with recommendations for governments, regional and national women machineries and women organizations to guide coordinated collective action and efficient mobilization of resources to ensure that that gender equality, equity and justice are central in national planning processes aiming to achieve the SDGs. The Arab Women Organization will lead in advocating for the recommendations as an integral part of the implementation of SDG's in the Arab Region. The conference saw the participation of nearly 350 participants (80% women) from 18 countries including representatives from NGOs, government and academia.

- BRIDGE Gender and Elections: increasing awareness on women's political representation and participation 19 – 30 April

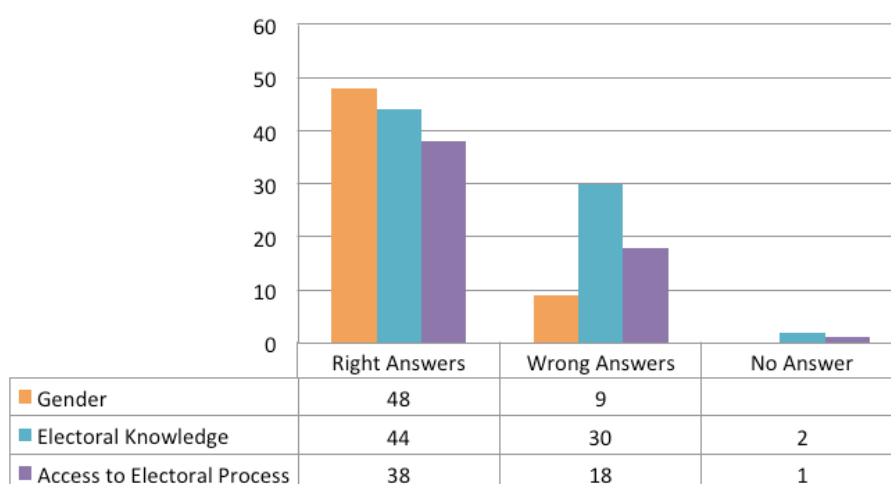
To raise awareness on the role of women in elections, two BRIDGE regional workshops on Gender and Elections were conducted in collaboration with IFES and LAS in April 2015 in Tunis, Tunisia. The two regional workshops, that took place between 19 and 23 and the 26 and 30 of April, saw the participation of twenty-two women coming from twelve Arab countries and belonging to institutions and organizations of different nature (LAS, Parliaments, CSOs, Journalist and Media, Women Governmental Ministries and departments, Observers, and Potential Candidates). The trainings followed the BRIDGE curriculum on gender and elections, and examined ways to to increase women's participation; the participants came out with a set of recommendations targeting three categories of stakeholders: civil society and media organizations, political parties and legislative authority and EMBs. The workshop was highly appreciated by the participants, especially the BRIDGE methodology with its emphasis on transferring knowledge in a highly participatory manner.

Below are results of the pre and post workshop tests measuring participants' level of knowledge and progress over the course of the workshop, illustrating enhanced knowledge of electoral topics covered by the course material. The results of the final evaluation, shown below, indicate that 95% of workshop participants expect to utilize in their field of work the knowledge they gained from the workshop.

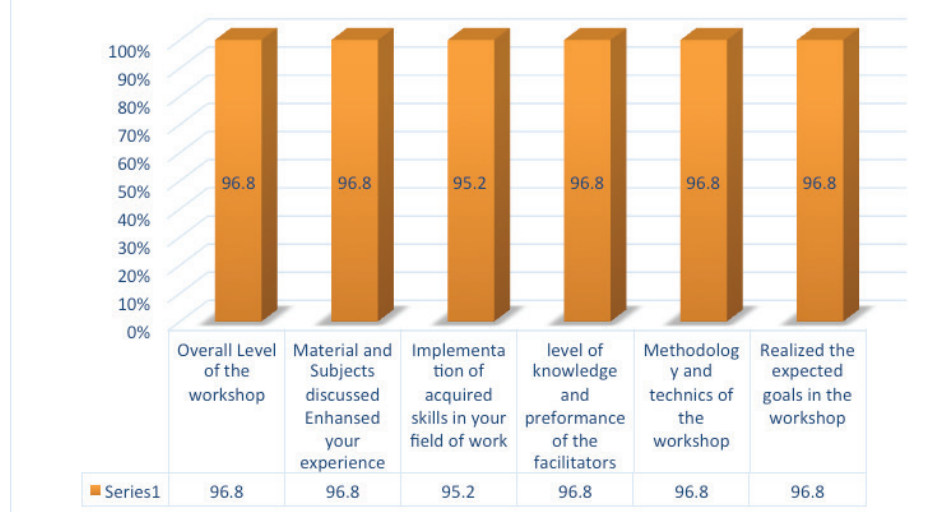
Pre Workshop Test



Post Workshop Test



Final Evaluation





BRIDGE Gender and Elections: Training held in April (Tunis)



Breakout session at the 'Women and SDGs' conference held in December (Cairo)



Sima Bahous UNDP Assistant Secretary-General, Assistant Administrator and Director of the Regional Bureau for Arab States



Youth present their solutions at the First Youth Innovation Forum held in June (Amman)

- Youth present their solutions at the First Youth Innovation Forum held in June (Amman) Youth and Innovation: First Social Innovation Camp, 13 - 15 of June 2015 in Amman, Jordan

As part of its youth engagement strategy, the regional project supported an initiative by the Regional Hub, and in partnership with UNDP Egypt, that brought together 65 young men and women from 19 Arab countries to discuss key development challenges facing the region. Through social innovation methodologies —namely design thinking— participants were divided into groups to identify the challenges of development in the areas of education, employment, entrepreneurship, health, conflict and peace building, religion and identity, young women leadership and participation in public space, and civic engagement. After the discussion, participants came up with concrete solutions (campaigns, projects, ICT tools, caravans) to fill the gaps existing in the mentioned areas. Through the Innovation Camp, UNDP provided a platform for Arab youth to exchange ideas and to think creatively, as well as to empower themselves in being the ‘designers’ of their own future. The camp was a collaborative space of co-design and direct civic engagement. Moreover, thanks to a series of follow up activities with the teams, the consolidation of the ideas of some of the participants was possible. Among the tools and projects designed by the teams to address development challenges in the region, the most successful were the followings:

- **My Keyboard:** this team created a first prototype of an application that connects students to teachers using technology, and are currently testing it. They are also developing a game focusing on Arabic language, putting into practice the lessons learnt during the “Games for Social Change Workshop” organized in Cairo.

- **Learn and Take off:** this project was carried out by a young woman from Iraq. The Project, which is functioning with success, consists of the establishment of small caravans in remote rural areas, with the help of the private sector and volunteers, to educate the children of those communities.
- **Contribute for Change:** this team is working on an application that connects volunteers of organizations, the private sector and governments of the Arab states interested in carrying out activities oriented towards sustainable development.
- **Her voice:** a Facebook page aimed at raising awareness by sharing women success stories.
- **Light:** a game focused on entrepreneurship and risk-taking that is being finalized by two young participants who, after the Innovation Camp, attended the “Games for Social Change” workshop held in Cairo.
- **Afkar:** a business incubator created by a Syrian participant who is extremely active in the field of youth entrepreneurship and startups, and is now looking forward to developing the network of young entrepreneurs in the region.



Youth present innovative solutions at the Youth Leadership Forum held in October (Amman)

- Youth and Leadership: Youth Leadership Forum, Amman 8-15 October

To enhance the capacity of youth to engage more effectively as leaders in their communities, the Project in partnership with UNDP's regional Mosharka, held a youth leadership forum targeting 40 young Arab women and men between the ages of 18-30 from 18 countries. The event was held in collaboration with MBC TV and co-sponsored by AL Amal MBC Foundation with an overall goal of teaching key leaderships, enabling the exchange of knowledge and experience on the different fields of youth leadership, and provide a platform for discussions on how youth can contribute to sustainable development. The leadership forum lead to the creation of a database of young men and women eager to play leadership roles in their respective fields, and to network and work together with their peers from other Arab countries. Twenty of the forty participants were selected to attend the first week of the Arab Knowledge Forum, which was held in Dubai.

- **Promoting networking among individuals and groups actively engaged and working on enhancing participation**

One of the strategies of the Project is to establish and strengthen regional networks and networking among stakeholders working to enhance women and youth participation. To this end, the Project (in partnership with Mosharka) continued to support the Network of Women Constitution Makers which was established through project initiatives in 2014. Bringing together the women constitution makers helped to further the relationships between the female leaders as well as provided an opportunity to further advise them on the importance of networking on this particular topic, and the value of women working together to achieve common goals. In addition to promoting the network of Women Constitution Makers, the Project also implemented initiatives with the Arab Women Organization which it recognizes as another key regional player in furthering the cause of women in the Arab States. Initiatives undertaken jointly with the AWO included BRIDGE workshops, a Women and SDG conference as well as the workshop bringing together women constitution makers.

Furthermore, with more than 500 persons taking part in its regional women and youth initiatives, the Project strengthened relationships and networking between individuals and organizations committed to enhancing women and youth participation in civic and political life in the Arab States.



Participants at the Regional Workshop on Voter Registration in the Arab States held in September (Dead Sea)

• Mainstreaming women throughout project activities

In 2015, the Project made concerted efforts to include women in its activities as part of its gender mainstreaming strategy. The table below illustrates the gender breakdown of participants taking part in project activities in 2015.

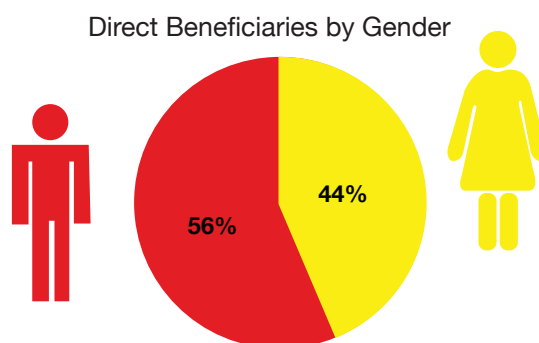


Table 1. PROJECT PARTICIPANTS BY GENDER			
Event	Total Participants	Males %	Females %
ArabEMBs Launch, June 2015 – Beirut (Lebanon)	145	60%	40%
Joint Roundtable Discussion on The Role of Civil Society in Supporting Electoral Integrity through Domestic Elections Observation, June 2015 – Jeddah	13	77%	23%
VI Latin America Democracy Forum, October 2015 – Mexico City	13	70%	30%
Regional Workshop on Voter Registration, September 2015 – the Dead Sea	37	86%	14%
Regional Conference on Electoral Dispute Resolution, October 2015 – Beirut	49	78%	22%
RMS Workshop, November 2015 – Mexico City	15	80%	20%
BRIDGE workshop “Introduction to Electoral Administration and Electoral Systems” with LAS, May 2015 – Cairo	24	50%	50%
BRIDGE “Train the Facilitator” with LAS, August 2015 – Casablanca	17	59%	41%
BRIDGE Workshop “Gender and Elections”, 19-23 April 2015 – Tunis	22	0%	100%
BRIDGE Workshop “Gender and Elections”, 26-30 April 2015 – Tunis	22	1%	99%
Workshop on Women’s Full Participation in Constitution Making Process, February 2015 – Amman	23	0%	100%
First Social Innovation Camp for Arab Youth, June 2015 – Amman	74	55%	45%
Youth Leadership Program, October 2015 – Amman	37	40%	60%
CTA Annual Regional Meeting in the Arab States, January 2015 – Beirut	32	60%	40%
Arab Women in the SDG– December 2015, Cairo	350	30%	70%

CHALLENGES

The following lessons learnt and challenges have been identified through the implementation of the 2015 work plan:

- Shrinking space for civic and political life continues to make the inclusion of civil society organizations, women and youth increasingly difficult;
- Limited availability of Arab speaking electoral experts;
- Need for collecting of data on youth participation in project activities and initiatives;
- Required continuous coordination and collaboration required with country offices and national electoral projects with varying modalities of engagement depending on country circumstances; this continued to require flexibility and close coordination throughout project implementation;
- Establishment and operationalization of the new Regional Hub Amman which posed some challenges through the moving of offices and transitioning to new operating procedures;
- Security conditions in certain countries of the region (especially Iraq, Libya, Yemen) continued to pose a major challenge to the project both in terms of limiting locations for regional events, and making travel and visa processes more complex and cumbersome; and
- Closure of national electoral projects in Iraq, Egypt and Yemen limited access to certain electoral stakeholders; while a challenge, it is important to note that this also opened additional engagement opportunities between the Regional Project and country offices on electoral assistance.

FINANCIAL STATUS

In 2015, the Project delivered a total of USD 2,773,287.95 with the following breakdown of expenditure by the three key output areas.

Outcome Area	Total Expenditure in USD
Outcome 1: Strengthened Regional Capacity and Knowledge on Electoral Issues	1,215,567.68
Outcome 2: Increased Participation of Women throughout the Electoral Cycle	228,603.51
Outcome 3: Formal and Informal Mechanisms in place to enable Youth CSO's and Youth Civic Engagement in Government Led and Other Political Processes	279,370.78
Outcome 4: Electoral Advisory Support and Project Management	1,049,745.98
Total	2,773,287.95

FUTURE DIRECTION

There is continued need and desire for regional cooperation, sharing of knowledge and experiences and promoting democratic principles and practices in the Arab States. Whether it's EMBs or women and youth active in their communities, it is clear from the Project's interventions in 2015 that people in the Arab States are continuing to look for space and platforms to engage regionally on the ways and means to more effectively engage in civic and political life, and have an impact on the future direction of their countries and societies. It is under this context that the Regional Electoral Project identifies the following as key areas of focus in 2016:

- Promoting continued regional cooperation on electoral and broader democratic practices through partnership and collaboration with the Arab Electoral Management Bodies (ArabEMBs) and Election Department of the League of Arab States (LAS), Arab Women Organization (AWO), Network of Women Constitution Makers, and Network Women Judges
- Providing continued capacity building support to ArabEMBs as it establishes itself, and operationalizes its secretariat
- Enhancing electoral knowledge through partnerships with Arab universities interested in incorporating electoral topics into its programs and curriculum, including running courses on electoral topics
- Developing a pool of Arab speaking electoral experts
- Facilitating cooperation and information sharing among national electoral information and training centres
- Strengthening coherence in electoral assistance in the region through wider engagement with national, regional and international technical assistance providers
- Prompting synergies between national initiatives in the region, including between EMBs, CSOs as well as UNDP projects
- Promoting networking and cooperation between youth organizations engaged in enhancing civic and political participation

RESULTS MATRIX:

progress against output level indicators

Output Result 1	Indicator	Progress in 2015
Output 1.1 Strengthened regional exchanges among countries and enhanced South-south cooperation	- No. of regional initiatives supported bringing together EMBs, CSOs, regional electoral stakeholders (Target: minimum of 4 regional initiatives)	7 regional initiatives were held: 1) Launch and first General Assembly of the Organization of ArabEMBs; 2) Regional Voter Registration Workshop; 3) Regional Conference on Electoral Dispute Resolution; 4) Annual Regional Electoral Meeting in the Arab States; 5) Regional Workshop on Results Management Systems; 6) Four BRIDGE workshop and trainings
	- No. of countries involved in regional initiatives (Target: 18 countries)	21 countries (Algeria, Bahrein, Djibouti, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Palestine, Mauritania, Morocco, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia, UAE and Yemen)
	- No. of formal agreement or exchanges between regional EMBs that resulted from UNDP support (Target: 2)	3 : 1) Launch of ArabEMBs; 2) Regional workshop of EMB experts on voter registration; 3) Regional training of EMBs on results management systems;
	- No. of regional engagement by EMBs, CSOs and LAS on electoral issues (Target: 5)	Total 8: - 2 BRIDGE trainings with LAS (Train the Facilitators (TtF) and Introduction to Electoral Administration) - 1 Regional conference on EDR with CSOs - 1 Regional Workshop on Voter Registration with ArabEMBs - 2 BRIDGE workshop with Arab Women Organization - 1 regional conference on SDGs with Arab Women Organization - 1 Regional workshop on women and constitution making with Arab Women Organization (AWO)

Output Result 1	Indicator	Progress in 2015
Output 1.2 knowledge generation and capacity enhancement of electoral stakeholders (EMBs, CSOs, MPs, constitutional experts, leaders) on parliament and electoral reform in the region	- No. of organizations trained on electoral issues (Target: Minimum of 15 organizations trained on electoral issues)	38 total organizations. See attached annex for list of names.
	- No. of trainings organized with electoral stakeholders (Target: Minimum of 6 trainings organized at regional level by the project)	Total 7: - 4 BRIDGE trainings: TtF; Electoral Administration; two gender and elections BRIDGE trainings - 1 regional workshop on VR organized with the Organization of ArabEMBs - 1 regional workshop on electoral dispute resolution - 1 regional training on results management systems
	- No. of knowledge products finalized and disseminated to electoral stakeholders (Target: Minimum of 3 knowledge products disseminated)	2 new knowledge products: Guide on Gender and Elections; e-learning course on Results Management System; and distribution and dissemination of the Lexicon, RMS manual and Dead Sea Conference report.
	- No. of trainers and trainees benefiting from electoral education (Target 20)	Total 41: -17 through BRIDGE TtF -24 through BRIDGE "Introduction to Electoral Administration and Electoral Systems"
	- No. of Arabic training materials/ guides produced and disseminated for regional consumption (Target: 2)	Total 5: 2 new products produced in Arabic: e-learning course on RMS, Guide on Gender and EMBs 3 knowledge products distributed in Arabic (Arabic Lexicon of Electoral Terminology; Results Management System manual; Credible Electoral Processes Conference Report)

Output Result 2	Indicator	Progress in 2015
Output 2.1 Strengthened capacity of electoral bodies to mainstream gender in all its processes	- No. of EMBs supported on gender mainstreaming in the area of electoral administration (Target: 7 EMBs)	Total 8 EMBs: Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Palestine, Yemen, Libya, Tunisia, Iraq
	- No. of regional women's networks supported (Target: 2)	Total 2: - Arab Women's Organization (AWO) - Network of Women Constitution Making
	- No. of policies proposed or in place by EMBs that ensure gender-sensitive processes (Target: 1)	
Output 2.2 Enhanced regional cooperation, partnership and knowledge for the advancement of gender equality and women's empowerment in constitution and electoral processes among EMBs and Women's groups and political leaders.	- No. of Regional policy recommendations shared by EMBs, parties, CSOs with electoral stakeholders on women's participation in politics (Target: 2)	Total 4: - Recommendations from Gender and Elections BRIDGE Training - Recommendations from SDG and Women Conference - Recommendations from Youth Leadership Forum - Recommendations from Workshop on Women and Constitution Making
	- No. of women's groups trained/ supported (Target: 2)	Total 2 - Arab Women's Organization - Network of Women Constitution Makers
Output 2.3 Enhanced capacities of women as candidates in the electoral process	- No. of women from the region that take part in trainings (40% of all participants)	Total 49% of all project participants were women – see table on gender breakdown in the document for further details
	-No. of women candidates for elections	Data not collected
	- No. of Arabic material produced and disseminated on women and political participation (Target: 2)	Total 2: - Guide on Gender and EMBs, translated and disseminated - video on best practices in women's role in constitution making (see list of project publications)

Output Result 3	Indicator	Progress in 2014
Output 3.1 Enhanced participation of youth in national political processes	- No. of youth friendly policy initiatives targeting increased youth participation in politics implemented in the region by electoral stakeholders (EMBs, CSOs, youth ministries) (Target: tbd)	Data not yet available
	- Formulation of regional policy on engagement of youth in the political process	Arab States action plan on youth engagement still under development
	- No. of events/dialogue initiatives between youth/CSO/government supported (Target: 2)	Total 2 events: - Youth Leadership Forum in Amman; - First Youth Innovation Camp in \ Amman
	- No. of trainings/ events/networks supported. (Target 5)	Total 12 events with youth participation
Output 3.2 Increased awareness on the role of youth in the electoral process	- No. of youth that take part in regional initiatives	- 2 youth organizations at the EDR conference - 1 youth organization at the VI Latin American Democracy Forum - 65 youth at the Youth Innovation Camp - 40 youth at the Youth Leadership Forum - 10 youth at the SDGs conference
	- No. of regional initiatives support for youth (Target: 2 regional initiatives)	

REFERENCES

The following documents were consulted in the preparation of the annual progress report:

- Brochure, Establishment of the Organization of the Arab Electoral Management Bodies, June 2015, Beirut, Lebanon
- Joint BRIDGE Assessment Report, UNDP-LAS, March 2015, Cairo, Egypt
- Meeting Report, Annual Regional Electoral Meeting in the Arab States, January 2015, Beirut, Lebanon
- Report, Regional Workshop on Voter Registration - Arab States, September-October 2015, Dead Sea, Jordan
- Report, Regional Conference on Raising Awareness on Electoral Dispute Resolution, October 2015, Beirut, Lebanon
- Report, BRIDGE Introduction to Electoral Administration and Electoral Systems, May 2015, Cairo, Egypt
- Report, BRIDGE Gender and Elections, April 2015, Tunis, Tunisia
- Report, BRIDGE Training of Facilitators, August 2015, Casablanca, Morocco
- Report, Regional Workshop on Women's full participation in Constitution-Making processes, February 2015, Amman, Jordan
- Report, First Social Innovation Camp for Arab Youth, June 2015, Amman, Jordan
- Report, Regional Training on Results Management Systems, November 2015, Mexico City, Mexico
- Report, Women and SDG implementation in the Arab States, December 2015, Cairo, Egypt

LIST OF ORGANIZATIONS THE PROJECT ENGAGED WITH IN 2015

Regional Organizations

Arab Women Organization (AWO)

League of Arab States

Organization of Arab Electoral Management Bodies

Regional and National Civil Society Organizations

Academy for Peace and Development (Somaliland)

Alalag press center / Leading member of SHAMS Platform

Arab Network for the Monitoring of Elections (ANDE)

Arab world Democracy and Electoral monitor (Al Marsad)

ATED / Mourakiboun

Bahrain Transparency

Bahrain Woman Society

Centre for Democracy (Morocco)

Coalition Contre La Corruption En Mauritanie (3CM)

Committees for the defense of democracy freedoms and Human Rights in Syria(C.D.F)

Egyptian Association for Community Participation Enhancement

Election Network in the Arab Region (ENAR)

Elshraq Centre / Leading Member of SHAMS Platform

Hammurabi Organization for Human Rights and Democracy Monitoring

Identity Center for Human Development/Integrity Coalition for Election Observation

Iraqi Election Information Network

Lebanese Movement for Transitional Justice

Libyan Academy Organization

Maat for Peace, Development and Human Rights

Mauritanian Network for Election Monitoring

Moroccan Observatory of Parliamentary Work

National Civic Forum Sudan

National Coordinator of Algerian Nation Observatory

National Observatory of Voters Rights

National Society for Human Rights

Nazra for Feminist Studies

Organization Diversity

Palmyra center against discrimination in Syria(PDAMSY)

Shams Network for Monitoring Election

South Youth Organization (SYO)

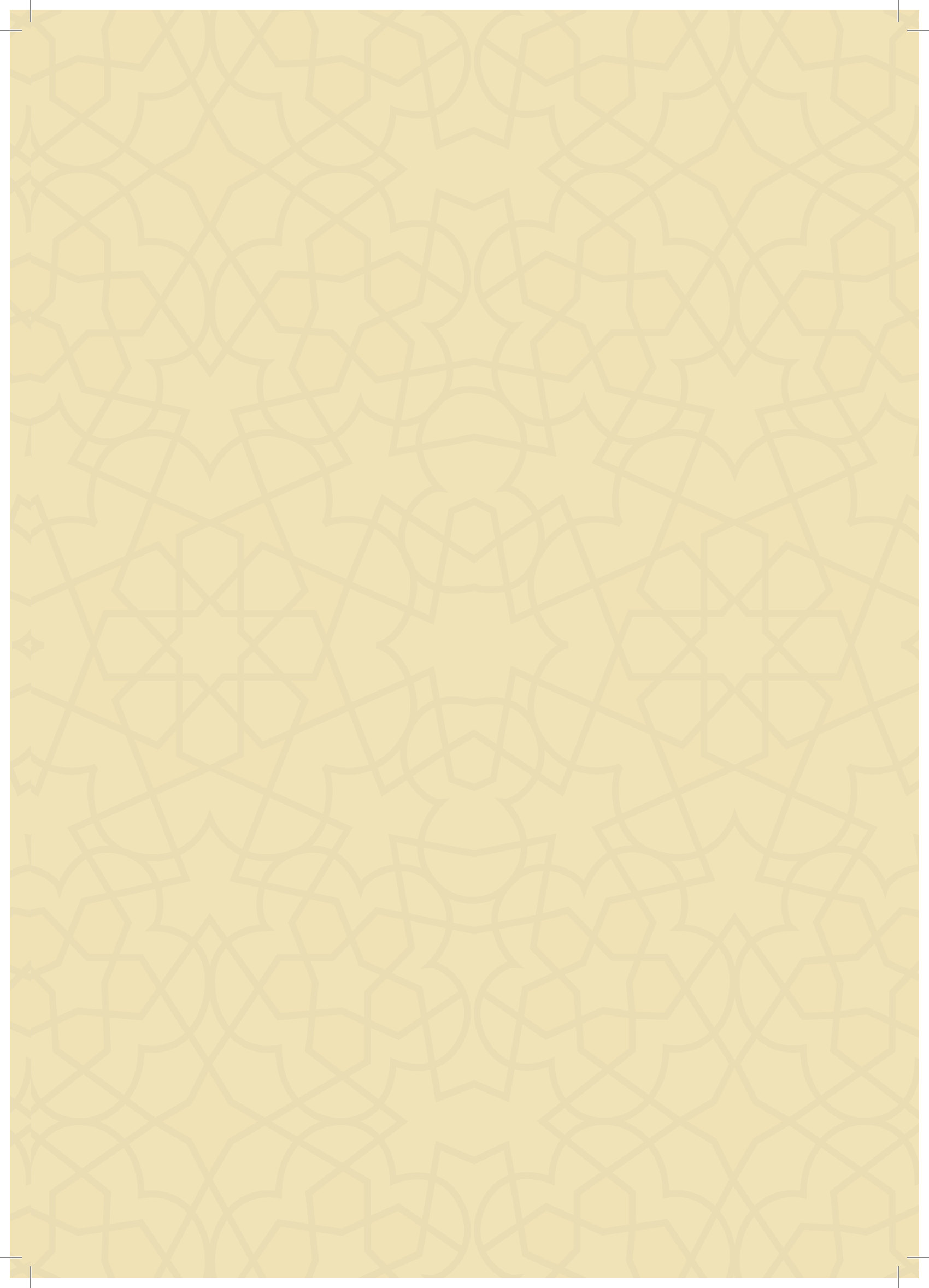
Student Association for Youth Development

Syrian Federation for Human Rights Organizations and Bodie(F.HR.SY)

Yemen for Democracy and Electoral Network (YDEN)

Yemeni coalition for elections

Youth Without Borders



GPECS II 

Global Project
for Electoral Cycle Support II

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