

## THE CHALLENGE

Over 42 percent of Tunisia's population of approximately 11 million is under the age of 25. While Tunisia has achieved consistent economic growth in recent years, the country remains plagued by high unemployment—with youth unemployment rates at 26 percent—and especially high rates among university graduates (39 percent) and young women (29 percent).

Despite the flourishing of Tunisian civil society since the January 14th revolution, very few local NGOs currently have the organizational capacity or technical capability to implement effective training programs for Tunisia's unemployed youth. It has also been difficult for NGOs to establish the business linkages necessary to place young people in internships and jobs in the private sector, or the networks with the public sector necessary to improve the employment prospects for large numbers of youth and sustain them over the long term.

## THE INITIATIVE

With the support of the Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI), the International Youth Foundation (IYF) is implementing Tunisia Works, a two-year program to build the capacity of local organizations and institutions to support high-quality youth employability, entrepreneurship, and civic engagement projects in four regions across the country. Program implementation is underway in Bizerte governorate and the greater Tunis area, and is being scaled up to reach Béja and Jendouba governorates in the coming year.

IYF will draw on its global experience in youth workforce development programming to strengthen local organizations and improve the employment prospects of Tunisian youth through its tested alliance-based approach, which brings together key community stakeholders from the public, private, and civil society sectors to assess challenges facing youth and to develop coordinated strategies to address those challenges. The Tunisia Works program will also create unique opportunities for youth to be engaged in these local alliances—tapping young Tunisians' vitality, energy, and creativity to contribute to positive change in their own lives and the lives of their peers.

## ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES

By the end of this two-year program, IYF will have developed a cadre of local life skills trainers and master-level trainers and built the capacity of its local partners to design and implement effective youth employability training—ensuring that the impact of the program will be long-lasting and sustainable. The capacity of at least six Tunisian youth-serving organizations will be enhanced to deliver high quality, market-driven services for young people in their communities. As a result, 4,400 youth (ages 18-35) will benefit from employment or entrepreneurship training, with 60 percent of them either placed in internships or jobs, or starting their own businesses. In addition, a nationwide network of youth-serving organizations will be created and linked virtually to share lessons learned, best practices, and success stories. These alliances will help strengthen public-private partnerships in Tunisia dedicated to improving the prospects and conditions of the country's underserved and unemployed youth.

## DONOR

Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI)

## CONTACT

Jean-Pierre Isbendjian, Regional Program Director  
[j.isbendjian@iyfnet.org](mailto:j.isbendjian@iyfnet.org)

Imed Zouari, Tunisia Country Director  
[i.zouari@iyfnet.org](mailto:i.zouari@iyfnet.org)

