

RELEASE IN FULL

The Bahrain Dialogue Project**Implementer:** National Democratic Institute for International Affairs**Project Timeline:** Jul-11 to Jul-12**Budget:** \$370,000.00**Active Country:** Bahrain

This six-month project works in parallel to Bahrain's National Dialogue by engaging diverse political and civic groups, providing comparative examples and models of reform and offering consultative assistance as all sides seek a positive way forward. International mediation experts from South Africa participated in two delegations to Bahrain in May and June 2011, led by NDI's partner, the Project on Justice in Times of Transition (PJTT), to share their experiences and provide government, pro-government, and opposition leaders with direct access to individuals who successfully guided previous political transitions. The project has had little forward movement since summer 2011 due to the delegations' problems receiving visas to enter Bahrain. However, NDI is now (as of April 2012) working with PJTT to send a 10-member Bahraini delegation from various political affiliations and organizations to South Africa in order to draw on South Africa's past successful models for dialogue and negotiation that were used to bring opposition and government leaders to the table without pre-conditions. Specifically, the delegation would focus on fostering dialogue among government representatives, opposition groups, and civil society organizations and also discuss methods for constitutional development and reform in Bahrain. NDI and PJTT experts would offer models for addressing key issues and challenges in Bahrain and assist the delegation in identifying potential openings for dialogue.

The Kuwait project below was run and managed from NDI in Washington, DC. We include it in this list for situational awareness and because there may have been some minor logistical assistance provided by staff working at NDI's Dubai Office. That said, there is no information in MEPI's grants file linking NDI's Dubai Office to this activity.

Kuwait International Election Observations*

Implementer: National Democratic Institute for International Affairs

Project Timeline: Jan-12 to Feb-12

Budget: \$25,000.00

Active Country: Kuwait

This funding supported NDI's participation in an international election observation mission in Kuwait on February 2, 2012. Five NDI observers were invited by the Kuwaiti Government to monitor election polling stations and report potential violations to authorities. They also worked alongside approximately 300 domestic monitors and shared best practices and built local capacity in observation processes. The Kuwait Transparency Society covered all program costs; this funding was only used to cover the NDI team's travel, local transportation, meals, and lodging costs.

NDI GULF PROGRAMMING Department of State

Summary of DRL Funding to NDI in the UAE

Internet freedom:

- **FY10 Internet freedom grant:** We have a \$1.35m grant to NDI, signed in June 2011. This grant supports digital safety trainings for MENA activists and bloggers. These workshops take place in Istanbul and Beirut and take a “train-the-trainer” model, with participants expected to then lead digital safety programs within their own countries (under NDI’s continued guidance). The workshops include training on circumvention and secure communications.

There have been no Emirati participants in trainings and no workshops held in the UAE. Gulf-wide, there were 4 Yemenis and 3 Bahrainis involved in a January training in Istanbul; there was 1 Yemeni involved in a March training in Beirut. NDI’s Dubai office is not involved in administering this program. In fall 2011, NDI attempted to recruit someone to work on the program out of the Dubai office, but did not find anyone with the right skills and decided to drop it. In NDI’s words, “Since then and beyond that, nothing related to this program has been run, managed, or even linked to the Dubai office,” nor has the office referred any participants for workshops.

- **FY09 Internet freedom grant:** We have an FY09 grant to NDI, signed and started in August 2010, that originally *would* have had an Iran component involving the Dubai field staff. We switched that country pilot to Belarus, so there has never been any Iran or MENA work under this grant, and no involvement by the Dubai office.

Saudi Arabia grant:

- **FY07 Saudi Arabia grant:** In 2008 DRL funded a Saudi Arabia program for \$680K that focused on accountable and transparent governance which we believe was managed out of the UAE office (included no in-country trainings). The project ended early 2011, and we believe there were no program activities in UAE and most or all of the trainings were held in Turkey.

Iran

*DRL had an FY 2005 program managed out of the Washington office, that ended on June 30, 2007, to support Iranians working on democratic reform.

Near East Regional Democracy Fund –NEA/USAID

NDI runs a NEA-USAID Iran Program. **One staff member, Slobodan Milic, is based in Dubai. Their project is an online program which aims to increase awareness of the absence of personal freedoms for Iranian citizens and draw attention to the issue during the parliamentary election season.** Activities include an online platform that provides a vehicle for uploading, reporting and mapping of human rights issues occurring around the parliamentary elections. The program launched in September 2011. No program activities take place in Dubai, nor would Iranians travel to Dubai for this program.

Although the program includes guidance on the safe and effective use of technology, as do most of USAID-NEA's online programming, this program does not deal with issues of circumvention or more general internet freedom/electronic communications objectives.

Additional details:

- Slobodan Milic was released on bail a couple of hours ago. Les Campbell believed that there was a travel restriction, so he is in his apartment in Dubai for the time-being.
- According to NDI, the UAE's allegations in general are "completely false" and NDI has records to prove it. The allegations go back to 2005 and are less focused on recent/ongoing activities. Les believes that UAE is more interested in NDI's actual activities in the Gulf and that the Iran-focused activities out of Dubai will be less of a concern for them.

Summary of MEPI Programming Managed from NDI's Dubai Office (2008-present)**Expanding Support for Political Reform**

Implementer: National Democratic Institute for International Affairs

Project Timeline: Sep-07 to Jan-12

Budget: \$3,790,000.00

Active Countries: Yemen

Also worked in Bahrain, Kuwait, and Qatar (Sep 2007 – Nov 2010)

Program components in Bahrain, Kuwait, and Qatar were managed from the Dubai office and ended in November 2010. Over the course of approximately three years, **NDI built the capacity of ministers of parliament, local councils, and CSOs to effectively communicate with constituents.** CSO capacity was also strengthened in the areas of strategic planning, fundraising, and advocacy campaigning. In addition, political candidates and their supporters in Bahrain, Kuwait and Qatar also learned how to run issue-based campaigns with a focus on voter outreach, message development, new media, and “Get Out the Vote” field organizing. In Bahrain and Kuwait, the project put particular emphasis on preparing women candidates for election.

A large portion of the total amount of funds was used in **Yemen** over the course of the award, and these funds were managed through **NDI’s office in Sana’a.** NDI worked with established and emerging political parties to: inform them on political and electoral process issues and models; facilitate internal discussions to aid parties in reviewing and defining their positions on process options and reforms; and support constructive negotiations among political parties. NDI has facilitated dialogue between the two major political factions to foster parliamentary and electoral reform. The project also strengthened the capacity of parliamentary committees to develop strategic plans to address legislative challenges. NDI also completed a pilot project to strengthen the ability of local councils in six targeted districts across three governorates to develop, implement and monitor local budgets and to integrate civil society in budget development and oversight processes. NDI has also served as advisor to five Yemeni local grantees that have formed a countering early marriage network.

Saudi Women's Community Advocacy Project**

Implementer: National Democratic Institute for International Affairs

Project Timeline: Sep-10 to Jun-12

Budget: \$400,000.00

Active Countries: Yemen

***From September 2010 – October 2011 project funds were directed for work in only Saudi Arabia but did not place. In November 2011, funds were redirected for work in Yemen.*

This project was conceived as a women’s community advocacy project with the following key objective: “Saudi women’s knowledge and understanding of skills

needed to advocate with municipal councils and local authorities on behalf of community issues of concern to women are strengthened.” The intent was to train five women from four cities (a total of 20 women) across Saudi Arabia in the specific areas of policy advocacy, new media as an advocacy tool, and network building. These women would then work as city-teams to build local women’s networks and enact a localized advocacy campaign on an issue of their choice. Due to sensitivities raised by the SAG Ministry of Foreign Affairs in late 2010 and 2011 regarding training events held in the Kingdom with foreign trainers (for all USG programming), Embassy Riyadh raised concerns about the potential for friction with the SAG over this project given its forward-leaning “advocacy” approach. As a result, participant recruitment was halted, and the planned project activities never occurred.

The scope of the project was revised in October 2011 to build the capacity of Yemeni political parties in skills necessary to engage in non-violent political dialogue, including crisis management, conflict mitigation and negotiations. The remaining funds were redirected to NDI’s Yemen office.

Enhancing Young Women's Political and Civic Engagement in Kuwait

Implementer: National Democratic Institute for International Affairs

Project Timeline: Jul-11 to Jan-13

Budget: \$850,000.00

Active Country: Kuwait

This project provides approximately 40 young Kuwaiti women the opportunity to gain hands-on experience working on policy issues and developing public service campaigns. The project features dual-tracked mentorships and internships at local CSOs or in government/policy-focused offices, allowing participants the opportunity to work together on policy issues during and after the February 2012 elections. NDI is also providing intensive capacity building training to young women interested in participating in the electoral process as candidates or campaign managers and facilitating linkages with civil society to ensure community issues are being addressed by legislators. The NDI project manager had been residing since February 2012 in Kuwait to oversee the project. She had a 90-day tourist visa that she planned to regularly renew on trips to Dubai when meeting with NDI’s Dubai HQ team. The project manager is now in Washington until the situation is resolved. Embassy Kuwait is well aware of this project, and the Public Affairs team has been actively involved in attending project training events and meetings. Our Embassy Kuwait MEPI team has also met on several occasions with NDI’s program team, including members of the NDI Dubai staff.