



SNAPSHOT

Young Leaders Work Non-Stop for a New Generation



Halima Mrad

Team members celebrate following their work at the “20 Hours” marathon.

“It was a triumph for Tunisia altogether and a leading first step toward a more democratic and stable status quo.”

--Build Tunisia in 20 Hours audience member

Telling Our Story

U.S. Agency for International Development
Washington, DC 20523-1000
<http://stories.usaid.gov>

December 2013 - Transferring political energy into voter participation is a challenge for post-revolution Tunisia. Future elections are an opportunity for a new generation of Tunisians to make their voices heard, but only if they cast their votes. Young Tunisians were instrumental in the events of the revolution and first election in October 2011. It is paramount that they remain active voting citizens in order to shape their country’s post-revolutionary future.

USAID’s Office of Transition Initiatives (OTI), in partnership with the Association of Young Leaders Entrepreneurs (YLE), a youth mentorship association, developed a two-phase activity aimed at increasing participation of young Tunisians in the voting process entitled *Countdown: Build Tunisia in 20 Hours*.

The first phase began in Tunis from December 20-22 as a three-day workshop on the theme “How to Get Tunisian Youth to Vote.” Project development and presentations were the main topics for the 100 participants. Following the workshop, participants put their knowledge into practice during a non-stop 20-hour marathon work session. The large group was divided into 10 teams for a competition to develop the best project for increasing youth voter participation in Tunisia.

In the second phase on December 28th, teams exhibited their projects to the whole group, as well as a panel of judges. Technology was a common feature in the projects, as six teams used hand held devices and social media in their plans. Judges then announced the five projects selected as finalists, and the overall winning project: an initiative which invites football stars to foster voter awareness, unity and election enthusiasm at football tournaments. Winning team members received an electronic tablet each as a prize. A team member spoke for all participants, “In 20 hours we have created great initiatives. Imagine what we could do in 20 years!” Another exclaimed, “Thank you USAID for giving me such an opportunity.”

The finale was attended by 100 invited guests from local youth associations. This group was delighted at the creativity of the plans. An audience member noted, “The Countdown allowed these talented individuals to voice the best of their ideas and left the jury and guests in awe!” A video of the events and highlights of the *20 Hours* marathon can be found [here](#).