MENA Common Ground Institute

Call for Applications – Egypt Civil Society Scheme

About the MENA Common Ground Institute
Over the past four years, dialogue processes have erupted in several transitioning countries, with official national dialogue mechanisms that evolved in Yemen, Libya and Tunisia, with varied outcomes. These national-level conversations are but one form of the dialogues that are increasingly in demand. **Localized and less formalized dialogue processes** are also in great need of experienced dialogue facilitators, inside mediators, and safe platforms for dialogue.

As groups and individuals continue to cope with how to effectively interact with their governments and with each other, there is a **huge need to bring forward constructive ways of engaging across difference** in order to foster stability and sustainable development across the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region.

Building on its 23 years of experience working in the MENA region and 33 years worldwide, a physical presence in 6 countries in MENA and 100 full-time staff based in the region, Search for Common Ground engages at this critical time by initiating the **MENA Common Ground Institute (CGI)**.

The MENA Common Ground Institute (CGI) is a **regional, flexible initiative to enhance dialogue quality in the MENA region**, with the overall goal to foster collaborative dialogue on local, regional and national levels in the region.

**Pilot on Tunisia and Egypt**
CGI aims at being a leading regional initiative uniquely dedicated to building capacity and promoting civil society engagement in dialogue approaches and peace. It will foster social entrepreneurship in dialogue initiatives, inspire and equip emerging leaders to engage in dialogue efforts, and raise awareness of the general public to adhere to and support local, national and regional dialogue enterprises. CGI will ultimately engage all countries in the MENA region.

**CGI has commenced its operations in January 2015** with a one-year pilot engagement on **Tunisia** and **Egypt**, in partnership with the virtual exchange organization, **Soliya**.
In the framework of the pilot initiative in Tunisia and Egypt, CGI will deliver the following objectives and outputs:

**Objective 1 - Build capacity of a new generation of Arabic-speaking dialogue design and dialogue facilitation experts**

- Output 1 - Dialogue facilitation online course (in English) for 12 civil society organizations and 60 activists in Egypt and Tunisia – basic and advanced courses offered.
- Output 2 - Tunisia and Egypt dialogue network meetings
- Output 3 - Dialogue facilitation online course (in Arabic)

**Objective 2 - Support dialogue initiatives and raise their acceptance by communities, unions, civil society, media and local governments**

- Output 4 - Tunisia and Egypt sub-grant schemes to support two community dialogue processes – two grants awarded.
- Output 5 - Specialized Dialogue Process Design workshop to strengthen capacity of two civil society organizations (one in Egypt and one in Tunisia)

◊ The call regarding the sub-grant scheme (Outputs 4 and 5) will be launched in March 2015.

**Objective 3 - Celebrate, research and reward best dialogue practices**

- Output 6 - One CGI Fellowship offering two-week research opportunity either in Tunisia or in Egypt to a researcher based in MENA.

◊ The call for the CGI Fellowship (Output 6) will be launched in May 2015.

**Target groups**

- Civil society organizations in Tunisia and Egypt interested in piloting dialogue methodologies to address community issues (Outputs 1-5).
- Research centers, think tanks, universities and academic institutes in MENA (Output 6).

**Dialogue Facilitation Course (Output 1)**

In 2015, CGI will organize two rounds of Soliya’s online Basic Dialogue Facilitation Course and two rounds of Advanced Dialogue Facilitation Course. Both Courses will be in English. Participants who successfully complete Basic and Advanced Facilitation Courses will have the chance to join Soliya’s flagship Connect Program as Soliya facilitators.
All participants will be invited to gather for a national one-day event (June 2015) to connect offline, deepen learning and exchange on best practice on dialogue methodologies applied in communities (Output 2).

A pilot Dialogue Facilitation Course in Arabic will also be offered over Summer 2015 (Output 3).

**Logistics and Fees**

All courses are online, using Soliya’s web-conferencing application. Participation will require typical web-cam, microphone/headset, and high-speed internet connection. Courses are free of charge.

**Eligibility and Deadline for Submission**

This call for application is open to civil society organizations registered in Egypt. CGI will select 6-8 civil society organizations in Egypt. Each organization will propose a minimum of five individuals (members of the Board of directors, advisers, volunteers or staff) who will enroll in this program.

Interested Egyptian civil society organizations must complete and submit the online application form by March 4th, 2015.

**Selection Criteria**

The CGI Selection Committee will select CSOs based on the following criteria:

- **Legally registered** civil society organization in Egypt;
- Previous experience in *piloting dialogue* methodologies to address community issues;
- Actively engaged civil society organization with *sufficient capacity* and prior experience in project management;
- Appropriate *profile of individuals* proposed to enroll in the Dialogue Facilitation Courses. Criteria to assess those individuals include a) gender balance; b) good English proficiency; c) demonstrated interest in and prior experience engaging in dialogue facilitation and dialogue process design to address community issues; d) commitment to engage throughout the whole duration of the course.

*For queries and/or more information, please contact us at menacgi@sfcg.org*