

Middle East Institute

2008 Annual Report



Mission Statement

*“...to promote
knowledge of
the Middle East
in America
and strengthen
understanding of
the United States
by the peoples
and governments
of the region.”*

Letter from the President

Like all of us, the Middle East Institute (MEI) has felt the effects of the current recession. We have not let this slow our momentum, however.

- Three major conferences were held in 2008, featuring a dozen regional speakers and 1,200 conference attendees. However, these expert voices reached far beyond just those people in the room, as downloads of MEI podcasts have soared to over 60,000 around the world.
- Forty-five Adjunct Scholars lectured on current Middle Eastern affairs in over 250 venues in the US and abroad. More than 10,000 people attended these events.
- The Summer Cultural Series held in MEI's Islamic Garden has become an annual event at the Institute, introducing hundreds of people every year to the food, music, art, and dance of the region. In 2008, the series highlighted Morocco, Turkey, and Israel.
- In 2007, someone read an article from the prestigious *Middle East Journal* once every ten minutes either through the MEI website or one of multiple electronic subscription services. In 2008, that number grew to once every four minutes.
- The Publications Department added nearly 100 original policy and research papers to our website, www.mei.edu, available free to the public. This is a 312% increase over 2007.
- The Department of Languages and Regional Studies launched an innovative program for the training of Arabic teachers from around the US. Thirty educators participated in this pilot program.
- The Sultan Qaboos Cultural Center successfully launched the Indian Ocean in World History website in fall 2008. This educational tool received exceptional reviews when introduced to groups including the National Council for Social Studies.
- Circulation continued to grow at the George Camp Keiser Library. Generous donations of original source materials greatly increased the library's holdings, and the addition of online chat features has made this vast compendium more readily accessible to the academic community in DC and abroad.
- In 2008, MEI recommitted itself to educating the next generation of Middle East experts. A record number of young people joined MEI last year as interns in the Leadership Development program. Many of these future leaders have gone on to serve in the government, work with nonprofit organizations, or study as Fulbright Scholars overseas.

There is still so much we can accomplish, but fulfilling our mission will depend on the generosity of our donors, grants, and membership. MEI is a modest-sized non-profit organization with an operating budget of \$2.5 million and a net asset value of \$4 million. Our work relies on contributions from those who share our belief that America's knowledge of the Middle East is vital to building secure and mutually beneficial relations.

Wendy Chamberlin
President

MEI's Impact in 2008

MEI's Reach



Los Angeles Times



The New York Times



Le Monde

Newsweek



THE JERUSALEM POST



The Washington Post



The Miami Herald

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL



Chicago Tribune

For more than 60 years, MEI has pursued its mission and developed a well-deserved reputation for expertise and balanced analysis. The need for what we offer has never been greater — nor has our impact.

- Reporters appreciate our Scholars' rapid response and rely on them to provide accurate information at times of crisis. The 24/7 availability of our Communications Department to field media queries and coordinate our experts' responses has provided added value to MEI's media relations. MEI scholars were cited more than 1,400 times in print, broadcast media, and blogs worldwide.

- During the year, MEI and its Scholars were cited in a variety of US and international media outlets, including Al-Jazeera, Associated Press, BBC, Bloomberg, *The Boston Globe*, CBC-TV, *The Chicago Tribune*, *The Christian Science Monitor*, CNN, Cox Newspapers, *The Daily Star*, *The Economist*, *The Guardian*, *The Jerusalem Post*, *Los Angeles Times*, McClatchy News Service publications, *The National*, *The New York Times*, *Newsweek*, NPR, PBS, Reuters, *U.S. News & World Report*, Voice of America, *The Wall Street Journal*, *The Washington Post*, and many more. Based on circulation statistics, MEI reached a potential global audience of roughly 220 million through TV appearances, print, and online citations.

- In 2008, every 4 minutes, someone in the world electronically accessed and read an article from *The Middle East Journal* — a 150% increase in usage over 2007. Online accesses to *MEJ* grew 130% in the last year as well. The *Journal's* expanded online presence helped its readership grow to more than 65,000 (estimated), an 18% increase since 2007.

- More than 1,000 language students of all ages came to MEI in 2008 to learn Arabic, Hebrew, Persian, and Turkish, both in traditional weeknight classes and in MEI's expanded intensive weekend courses. In the summer of 2008, MEI launched a teacher training program as the pilot towards establishing a national center for the training of teachers of Arabic and Persian.

- MEI's 62nd annual conference, held in November, set an attendance record, with more than 600 attendees.

- MEI published nearly 100 online publications in 2008, an increase of more than 300%.

Facilitate

MEI is a catalyst for dialogue, exposing different communities to diverse ideas.

A priority in 2008 was to expand the forum MEI provides, ensuring a sound basis for informed decision-making by American policy leaders and the general public.



MEI's Summer Garden Cultural Series attracted some 600 attendees who enjoyed the region's cultural diversity.

Conferences and Programs

MEI organized numerous programs in 2008 to deal with current events and the complex issues of the region, ranging from book launches to policy presentations by newsmakers and a special Cultural Series in MEI's Islamic Garden.

- In 2008, MEI organized 46 events and four major conferences featuring noted speakers from across the US and the region. At these events, MEI hosted over 3,500 people, with media coverage of these events extending far beyond that.

MEI Scholars

Our experts possess decades of experience in the region and help facilitate dialogue through the media by providing informed and balanced commentary.



- In 2008, MEI scholars were cited more than 1,400 times in print, broadcast media, and blogs. They spoke to approximately 10,000 people in more than 250 speaking events around the US and internationally.

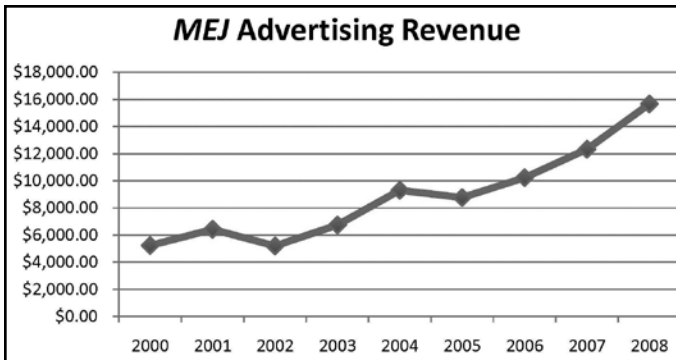
- In a constant effort to strengthen the depth and breadth of our expertise, MEI added eight new scholars in 2008 with backgrounds in energy, economics, nuclear proliferation, Iran-Israel relations, Israeli politics, the Gulf states, and Turkey.

The Middle East Journal

- In 2008, *MEJ* launched an electronic edition. All print subscribers receive access to the electronic edition, which includes a fully searchable archive of all *MEJ* articles through 2004. We now offer an electronic-only subscription for the convenience of readers in those countries where reliable delivery of hard-copy subscriptions had been a persistent problem, and for readers who would like to be able to access the *Journal* at any time and from anywhere. In 2008, nearly 200 people subscribed to the electronic edition, making it self-sustaining in its first year of operation. Approximately 25% of *Journal* subscribers made use of the electronic edition, accessing

Journal articles over 38,000 times.

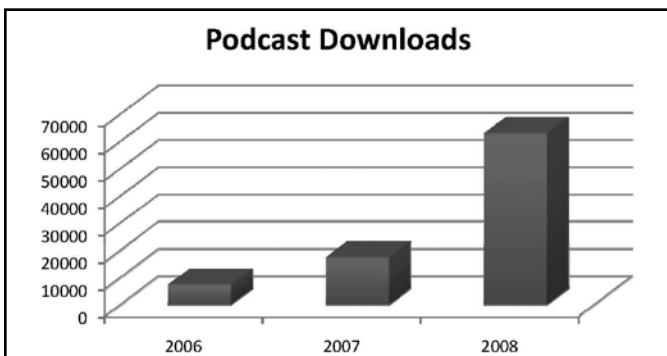
- The entire back run of the *Journal* since 1947 is now available on the JSTOR subscription service, available through many research libraries and universities. Forthcoming issues continue to be available through Proquest, and, thanks to agreements signed in 2008, are also available through EBSCO and Project MUSE subscription services. These new initiatives significantly expanded the *Journal's* digital footprint, which led to a nearly 130% increase in electronic accesses of the *Journal* in 2008 compared to 2007.



- *MEJ* continues to set records in terms of its advertising revenue. For the third consecutive year, advertising revenues hit an all-time high. In 2008, ad revenues reached \$15,665, eclipsing 2007's previous high-water mark by over 20%.

- The *Journal* expanded its Resource Series CD program, launched in 2006, to include more countries and issues. The CDs cover everything from Political Islam to Nuclear Proliferation to Women in the Middle East and include *Journal* articles, *Commentaries*, *Policy Briefs*, and other MEI publications.

- In 2008, the circulation management system was overhauled, permitting us to identify and remedy past problems in order to better facilitate delivery to subscribers and members around the world. Due to these new circulation practices, the *Journal* experienced a two-thirds drop in mis-mailed issues, an aggregate drag on revenues.



www.mei.edu

- By improving our in-house recording technology, MEI posted audio coverage of almost all of our 2008 events online. This has drawn increasingly greater traffic to the website, and brought our top-notch speakers to an audience exponentially larger than can be accommodated in our Boardman Room. Our podcasts were downloaded more than 60,000 times in 2008.

- 2008 marked the first full year of production for the Institute's three new online publications, *Policy Briefs*, *Viewpoints*, and *Encounters*. The year saw the publication of 17 *Policy Briefs* on topics ranging from climate change in



the GCC to Lebanese security; 8 *Viewpoints* covering the Western Sahara conflict, Iran’s parliamentary elections, and many other topics; and 16 *Encounters* providing vignettes of the University of Qatar, traveling in Sudan, marriage advertisements in Saudi Arabia, and much else besides. Among these publications were two Special Editions of *Viewpoints*: the first, entitled “Israel: Growing Pains at 60,” was released to coincide with the 60th anniversary of the country’s founding; the second, “Iraq’s Refugee and IDP Crisis: Human Toll and Implications,” covered a wide range of issues relating to the refugee crisis. Each Special Edition was comprised of over 210 and 140 pages respectively of maps, statistics, bibliographies, and other resources. The release of these two publications led to two of the highest traffic days on the MEI website in 2008.

Outreach

MEI’s mission to strengthen understanding between Americans and the people of the Middle East led the Communications Department to organize two briefings for delegations of American community leaders.



- Six presidents and provosts of American liberal arts colleges traveled to the United Arab Emirates for meetings with their counterparts at Emirati universities, as well as with government education officials and non-profit leaders. As a result, faculty and student exchanges were established between the schools, and the American institutions have increasingly incorporated Middle East programming into their curriculum.

- Eleven editorial page editors from American newspapers gathered in Washington, DC for two days of briefings on a range of Middle East issues. Meetings were held at the State Department, Pentagon, Office of the US Trade Representative, the UNDP, and others, as well as with MEI’s own Scholars. By gaining access to these policymakers, the group has been given the tools to write or select informed, balanced opinion pieces for their publications.

Educate

MEI believes educated citizens will demand constructive policies that build lasting relationships between the United States and the Middle East.

Already an accredited education institute, in 2008 MEI became a more dynamic and vital educational center, both in Washington, DC and beyond the Beltway. Through a vibrant internship program, a language training program, and the Sultan Qaboos Cultural Center, we continued to contribute to the education of the next generation of Middle East experts.

MEI: 2008 By The Numbers



220 million

The potential global audience reached by MEI in 2008 through TV appearances and print and online citations.



Over 1,000
Students registered in 15 languages and regions

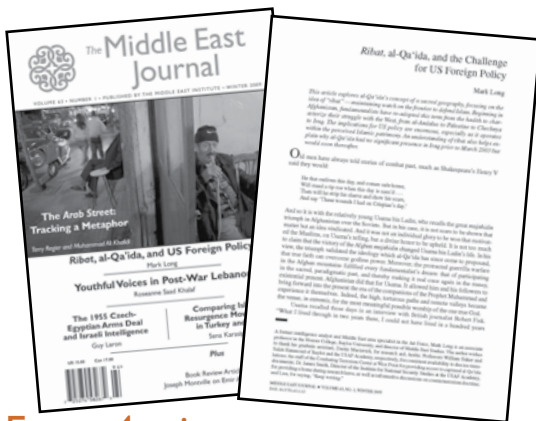


600

Record attendance at MEI's 2008 Annual Conference.



Over 5,000
Average weekly website, www.mei.edu



Every 4 minutes

Someone in the world downloaded and read an article from *The Middle East Journal*.



More than 100,000
People attended the 2008 Annual Conference at 257 different locations

The Numbers



red for MEI's lan-
nial studies classes.



visitors to MEI's
i.edu.



0,000
talks by MEI Schol-
nt venues in 2008.



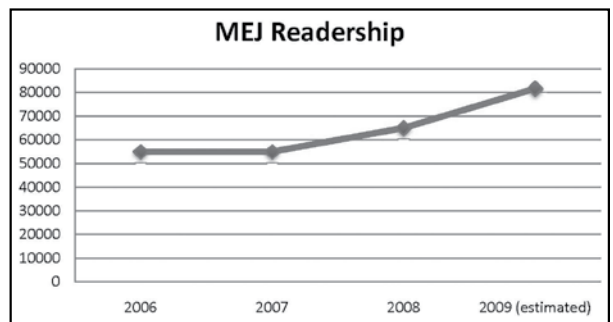
3,500

People attended events at MEI in 2008; media coverage of these events reached thousands more.



60

Students from across the US and around the world interned at MEI in 2008.



18%

Estimated growth of *The Middle East Journal's* readership in 2008.

Department of Languages and Regional Studies

MEI launched several initiatives in 2008, in addition to its robust and well-respected language courses in Arabic, Hebrew, Persian, and Turkish.

- In 2008, MEI taught 1,013 students in classes. MEI also expanded its language program, offering 6 intensive courses in Arabic and Persian on weekends and inaugurating a fifth academic term during the winter.



- The Language Department negotiated contracts with non-profit and government organizations to franchise MEI language programs using the organizations' facilities.
- With funding from a STARTALK grant, MEI offered a very successful summer program as the pilot towards establishing a national center for the training of teachers of Arabic and Persian.

- MEI also renewed its State Education License through December 2010 and applied to the Accrediting Council for Continuing Education and Training for re-accreditation of its program.

The George Camp Keiser Library

The Library is the intellectual cornerstone of MEI, housing one of the most comprehensive Middle East collections in Washington, DC. More than 25,000 books, 300 periodicals, and a large collection of CDs and DVDs are accessible to students, researchers, and the general public.

- In-house usage of the Library has increased to the point that usage of the reading room is near full capacity on any given day. Patrons included MEI scholars, interns, students, members, government officials, and the general public.
- The Virtual Reference Library service launched and requests were made from throughout North America and around the globe.



- The Library posted two new research guides on its website in 2008: *Weapons of Mass Destruction in the Middle East* and *Syrian Foreign Policy*. More are being prepared and will be launched over the course of 2009.
- Dr. Fahim Qubain donated several thousand Arabic books to the Library. Many of these books are housed only in large research libraries; some are available exclusively at the Middle East Institute's library. The volumes are academic in na-

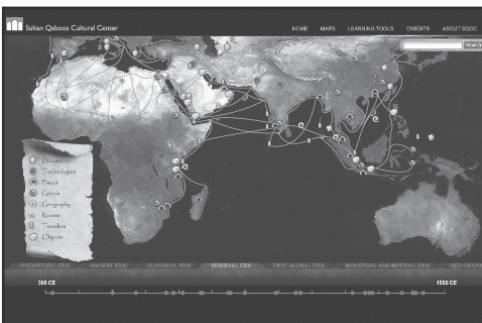
ture, and the subjects include important primary and secondary source material on Middle Eastern ethnic and religious minorities, politics, and history.

- Inter-Library Loan service was re-established, allowing for the expansion of the Library's academic reach; the Library's books consequently have been used by scholars and professionals in and beyond the DC area.

Sultan Qaboos Cultural Center

The Sultan Qaboos Cultural Center's (SQCC) mission is to increase understanding between the peoples of Oman and the US. In its third year of operation, SQCC more than ever achieved this goal.

- SQCC resumed its Summer Institute held in partnership with MEI's Department of Languages and Regional Studies. The Institute is a series of free lectures by well-regarded academics on Oman and Gulf- related cultural and social issues, ending with a gala dinner. The number of registered students grew from 54 in 2006 to 129 in 2008, an increase of over 130%.



- SQCC completed its Indian Ocean in World History website, which debuted at the November 2008 National Council for Social Studies Conference in Houston, Texas. An estimated 4,000 educators and experts saw the website demonstrated at the Houston conference. In addition, SQCC sponsored training sessions for 137 teachers, representatives of the Middle East Outreach Council, and others on how to make the best use of it. The response has been overwhelmingly positive. Organizations such as the Smithsonian Institution, with a website audience of over 987,000, posted a hyperlink to SQCC's Indian Ocean website on their site.

- SQCC worked closely with the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, the nation's cultural center, during 2008 to prepare Oman's participation in the Center's "Arabesque: Arts of the Arab World" Festival. The Kennedy Center selected SQCC to partner with in producing its only work commissioned for the Festival, "Oman...O, Man!" This dance theater production, created by Emmy Award winner Debbie Allen, brings young Omani and American dancers on the stage and addresses the issue of cultural misperceptions in an appealing and entertaining way. It debuted in March 2009.

The MEI Internship Program

2008 was a banner year for the Middle East Institute's thriving internship program, with more than 60 interns working in all of MEI's departments. MEI interns helped to organize and staff a highly successful Annual Conference, wrote research papers with scholars, provided logistical support for MEI's operations, and took a leadership role in writing web content and in other web development projects.



MEI interns meet former Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf.

- We received 235 applications from across the US and the Middle East and selected 60 for internships — equating to almost four applicants for every internship. Interns came to MEI from all over the United States and the world, including such countries as South Korea, Turkey, Iran, Tajikistan, Lebanon, the UAE, and Romania.

- Interns took part in MEI's Intern Development Series, which took them to the BBC's offices in Washington, National Geographic, the Freer and Sackler Galleries, the RAND Corporation, and the Embassy of Egypt for meetings with professionals working in Middle East-related

fields. Interns also held roundtable discussions at MEI with intelligence and foreign policy experts, academics, and diplomats.

- During the summer, MEI hosted more than 100 interns from a broad range of think tanks, Congressional offices, NGOs, and corporations at an intern networking event in MEI's Islamic Garden. MEI, in partnership with other Middle East focused organizations, also established a Washington Intern Summer Series of events, which included a career development event on Capitol Hill. These initiatives firmly established MEI as a center for students and recent graduates launching careers in Middle East affairs.



- A panel discussion and networking event on living in the Middle East was put on by MEI interns and was well-attended by DC-area interns and young professionals interested in learning more about working and studying in the region.

- MEI's 2008 interns have gone on to launch dynamic careers in Middle East affairs, working in such sectors as international exchange and education, development, academia, and defense and intelligence. MEI's 2008 intern

group is currently well represented in the Middle East itself, with former interns working as teachers, journalists, and other professionals in Sudan, Tunisia, and Jordan.

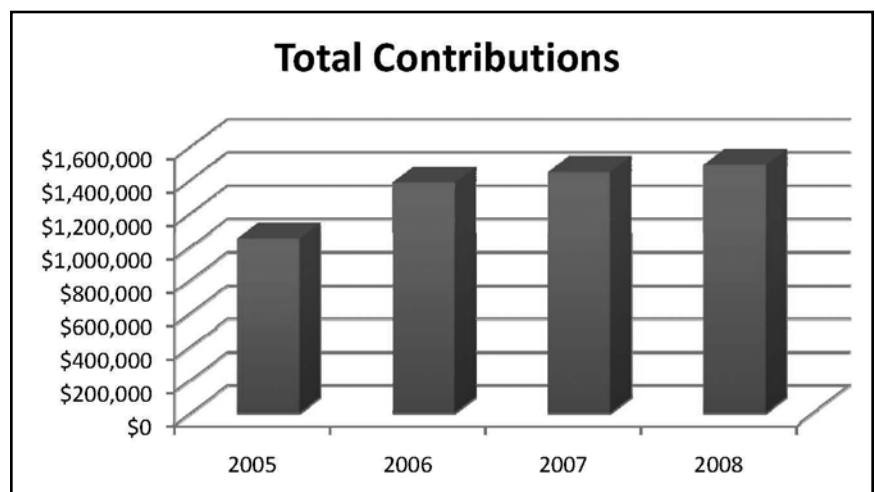
Funding: A Lesson in Resourcefulness

The fundraising climate is increasingly challenging. Organizations must become more innovative, efficient, and resourceful while simultaneously continuing to demonstrate impact and relevance.

In 2008, MEI relied on a mixture of corporate partnerships, individual stewardship, and foundations to diversify our funding portfolio.

- In FY 2008, MEI raised \$1,489,976.53 in contributions, an increase of 7.4% from FY 2007 due to in-kind contributions.
- For every dollar that MEI raises, 85 cents is allocated back to programs and services.
- The 2008 Annual Conference raised 64% more funds than the previous year, while costs increased only slightly.
- MEI attracted three new grants.

MEI has developed metrics to demonstrate to its donors that contributions achieve results. The greatest testament to the validity of MEI's mission and organization is the continued financial support of MEI, despite this period of economic difficulty.



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Financial Statement

December 31, 2008 and 2007	2008	2007
ASSETS		
Current Assets		
Cash and cash equivalent	\$625,458	\$1,054,496
Board designated cash	233,898	144,820
Total cash and cash equivalents	<u>859,356</u>	<u>1,119,316</u>
Certificate of deposit	-	106,986
Accounts receivable	183,044	4,543
Prepaid expenses	<u>36,120</u>	<u>37,859</u>
Total current assets	<u>1,078,520</u>	<u>1,348,704</u>
Property and Equipment		
Property and equipment, net	1,016,625	898,290
Other Assets		
Investments	1,836,854	2,295,263
Security deposit	<u>200</u>	<u>200</u>
Total other assets	<u>1,837,054</u>	<u>2,295,463</u>
Total Assets	<u>\$3,932,199</u>	<u>\$4,542,457</u>
LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS		
Current Liabilities		
Accounts payable	13,689	32,351
Accrued expenses	102,276	69,772
Deferred revenue	<u>175,930</u>	<u>141,849</u>
Total current liabilities	<u>291,895</u>	<u>243,972</u>
Net Assets		
Unrestricted net assets		
Undesignated	1,397,822	1,536,984
Board designated	<u>2,070,752</u>	<u>2,440,083</u>
Total unrestricted net assets	3,468,574	3,977,067
Temporarily restricted net assets	<u>171,730</u>	<u>321,418</u>
Total net assets	<u>3,640,304</u>	<u>4,298,485</u>
Total Liabilities and Net Assets	<u>\$3,932,199</u>	<u>\$4,542,457</u>

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