



Mutual Mentorship Program

- Between Europe and the MENA region and across generations

In light of increased polarization, erosion of democratic principles and challenges to rules-based world order, it is more important than ever to bridge gaps, promote mutual understanding and engage in dialogue. Recent developments and geopolitical shifts have reshaped political dynamics in Europe and the MENA-region. While underscoring the need to address significant challenges, it also brings along opportunities for new engagements. By bringing together practitioners of inclusive peacebuilding and sustainable development and learning from one another, building connections across regions, sectors and generations we can address shared challenges and promote meaningful cooperation. Seeking to advance practices of mutual learning and inclusive dialogue, the Swedish Dialogue Institute for the Middle East and North Africa is now piloting a new program called *Mutual Mentorship Program – Between Europe and the MENA region and across generations* which will be running over the course of nine months.

The [Swedish Dialogue Institute for the Middle East and North Africa](#) works to promote effective and inclusive dialogue across various thematic areas. By encouraging open exchanges of ideas, knowledge, and experiences, the Institute aims to enhance mutual understanding and strengthen connections not only between Sweden, Europe, and the MENA region, but also across sectors (such as public or private sectors, civil society, academia, journalists etc.) and mixing different generations.

Building on its work on EU-MENA relations and Intergenerational Dialogue, the Institute is now launching a mutual mentorship program aimed at connecting (English or Arabic speaking) individuals from different generations and sectors across Europe and the MENA region. This program seeks to bring our previous work on these frameworks into practice for example, the guidance note on intergenerational dialogue.

By identifying mentoring pairs from different generations and regions, the program will serve as a platform for exchanging diverse perspectives and fostering cross-regional and cross-generational learning through mutual

mentorship. Participants will foster connections, engage in discussions, and jointly collaborate on regional and global challenges within the Institutes key thematic areas; Peace and Security, Sustainable Development, and Inclusive Participation.

Building on each other's experiences, the program aims to equip mentoring pairs with new skills and perspectives to be integrated into their professional and personal life.

Methodology

- **Intergenerational Dialogue:** One of the primary methodologies will focus on fostering intergenerational dialogue, creating interactive and open spaces where individuals from different age groups can share experiences, and learn from one another. This approach aims to bridge the gaps between current and future changemakers, promoting exchange of knowledge, perspectives, and inspiration.
- **EU-MENA Relations:** Emphasis will be placed on exploring and strengthening the relationship between Europe and the MENA region. Given the geographic proximity and historical ties, these regions are deeply interconnected. The shared landscape brings both opportunities and challenges. Yet, disinformation and polarized media narratives often deepen mistrust between people in these regions. Our approach aims to foster mutual understanding and promote stronger collaboration.
- **Collaborative Partnerships:** In the light of conflicts and pressing challenges in the two regions, mentoring pairs will collaborate on mutually beneficial projects or ideas, focusing on knowledge exchange and problem-solving related to the main thematic areas.

Main thematic areas for mentor pairs to focus on:

- **Peace and security** with focus on inclusive peacebuilding in the MENA-region
- **Sustainable development** with focus on economic empowerment, innovation, entrepreneurs and green transition in MENA and between Europe and MENA
- **Inclusive participation** geared at including women, youth and other underrepresented groups in peacebuilding and sustainable social and economic development in the MENA-region

Format and Participants

The program will bring together 30 participants, organized into 15 pairs, from diverse age groups and professional backgrounds, representing both the MENA region and Europe. Participants will be paired based on their expertise and shared interests in the thematic areas.

Throughout the program, participants will engage in monthly pair meetings as well as virtual and in-person workshops. Costs of accommodation and travel of “in person” related activities will be covered by the Institute. If the mentoring pairs are interested, the program could culminate in mutually beneficial and jointly developed projects or ideas. Participation in other activities organized by the Institute may become relevant.

The intended end of the pilot program is in November, coinciding with the Institute’s annual conference, which will provide a platform for mentor pairs to present and reflect on their experiences, further explore initiatives and ideas, and inspire participants to drive positive change beyond the program.

Criteria for Participants

- Aged 18 and above
- Interested in, and experienced with, one or more of the following thematic areas:
 - Peace and security
 - Sustainable development
 - Inclusive Participation
- Willing to commit to the 9-month program.
- Available to participate in, and engage with, the Institute-organized activities during the program.
- Demonstrates openness to cross-regional and cross-generational learning.
- Strong interpersonal and communication skills for mentorship exchange.
- Open to:
 - Contribute with, and receive, advice.
 - Foster mutual growth and learning.
 - Develop a collaborative idea to work on jointly.

Selection Process

The selection process will primarily be conducted through an open call for applications which will be shared across our networks and social media platforms, ensuring broad visibility and access. All applications will be reviewed and filtered according to established criteria. We aim to select 15 pairs from diverse backgrounds, sectors, and generations from the MENA region and Europe.