

# Annual Report Highlights 2022



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In the autumn of 2022, the Institute moved into its permanent premises, co-located with the Embassy of Sweden in Amman, and was inaugurated in connection with the state visit to Jordan by H.M. King Carl XVI Gustaf. Furthermore, the Institute's Advisory Committee was appointed. In November 2022, alongside its inauguration and the first meeting of its Advisory Committee, the Institute also held its first major regional conference on 'Inclusivity in Peace and Development'.

In the first half of the year, in the lead-up to the Stockholm+50 conference that took place in Stockholm in June and the UN Climate Change Conference (COP27) that was hosted by Egypt in November, a key priority for the Institute was regional dialogues on climate change, in particular with a view to contribute to inclusive participation in climate action.

Other key areas that the Institute has continued to work on has included dialogues on peace building, and on the agendas for Women, Peace and Security (WPS) and for Youth Peace and Security (YPS). The Institute has also continued its work on youth participation, gender equality and questions related to democratic development and freedom of expression.



*Their Majesties King Carl XVI Gustaf and Queen Silvia and H.E. Foreign Minister Billström at the inauguration.  
(Photo credit: Pontus Lundahl/TT)*

## ADVISORY COMMITTEE

In accordance with its regulation, the Dialogue Institute has an Advisory Committee to provide the Director with proposals for activities. The Committee also participates in the evaluation of various activities.

In 2022, the Advisory Committee was appointed for a three-year term. It is a distinguished group of leaders from the MENA region and Europe, representing a breadth of expertise and perspectives. The chairman of the Committee is Dr Omar Razzaz, former Prime Minister of Jordan.



The Advisory Committee is expected to hold two regular meetings per year. Members of the Committee is also invited to participate in various discussions and projects. [Here](#) is a presentation of all the distinguished members of the Advisory Committee.

### Meetings of the Advisory Committee

**The first meeting** of the Committee was held on November 16<sup>th</sup>, 2022. It was an in-person meeting, which took place in connection with the formal inauguration of the Institute and the regional conference on 'Inclusivity in Peace and Development'.

The meeting served as an occasion for the Advisory Committee to become more familiar with the work and vision of the Institute, for teambuilding and exchanges, and for the Institute to get valuable input for its future work plan. The discussions covered insights regarding regional trends and development, as well as advice on target groups, areas of work and working methods. The meeting was attended by most members of the Dialogue Institute's eminent Advisory Committee. For more information about the meeting, see the [full report](#).



*The first meeting of the Dialogue Institute's Advisory Committee.*

## INAUGURATION AND REGIONAL FORUM

### Inauguration of the Dialogue Institute

Even if the establishment of the Dialogue Institute in Amman began in 2021, it was only in November 2022 that the Institute could move into its permanent office in Abdoun, where it is co-located with the Embassy of Sweden. In connection with the state visit to Jordan by Their Majesties King Carl XVI Gustaf and Queen Silvia, the Institute was formally inaugurated.

Their Majesties, accompanied by H.E. Foreign Minister Tobias Billström and other members of the delegation, participated in a reception, at which the Institute's Director, Charlotta Sparre, made a presentation on the background, mandate and activities of the Institute. The Institute's Advisory Committee participated in the meeting and shared their reflections on the importance of dialogue.

### Regional Forum on Inclusivity in Peace and Development in the MENA Region

Alongside its formal inauguration, the Dialogue Institute hosted its first large in-person forum on the theme of 'Inclusivity in Peace and Development in the MENA region' on November 17<sup>th</sup>, 2022.

The meeting was a one-day regional roundtable conference, which brought together some 50 participants and thought leaders from across the MENA region and Europe, representing diverse parts of society – public sector, civil society, private sector, academia, think tanks, media, international organisations, and other experts. Members of the Institute's Advisory Committee played key roles as speakers and moderators.

Through a solution-oriented and interactive set of conversations, the conference aimed at exploring how to create more inclusive and participatory processes and enhance interdisciplinary collaboration between diverse sectors of society in work on peace and development, in the MENA region and between the region and Europe.



*Engaging discussions in the Regional Forum on Inclusivity in Peace and security, November 2022.*

The discussions addressed the underrepresentation of women and youth in policy and decision-making processes and the need for intergenerational and gender-sensitive dialogues. During the discussions participants highlighted the need for safe and conducive spaces for sharing information, experiences and ideas regarding the challenges and opportunities in these fields, as well as the need to strengthen connectivity and networks amongst professionals and organisations, from different parts of society and from across the region.

The conference resulted in a set of policy recommendations and ideas on implementation. These included a) bridge existing multiple trust gaps (between generations, between state and citizens, etc.); b) place people at the center when designing and implementing programs (including youth and women); and c) break silos between different sectors of society (public sector, private sector, civil society, etc.). Participants also stressed that the relationship between EU and MENA requires transformative dialogues to foster better mutual understanding and spaces for jointly developing new ideas on how to address mutual challenges, such as security, economic developments, green and digital transitions.

More information can be found in the [full report](#). The [opening session](#) is also available to watch in addition to this [short video](#) from the conference.

## SUMMARY OF MAIN ACTIVITIES IN 2022

Below is a summary of the main activities carried out by the Dialogue Institute. They are divided into the different thematic areas – peace and security, sustainable development and inclusive participation.

### PEACE & SECURITY

#### WOMEN, PEACE, AND SECURITY (WPS)

Since many years the Dialogue Institute has arranged and/or participated in many activities on the Women, Peace and Security agenda. During this spring the Dialogue Institute continued engaging with others, incl. UN Women, think tanks, NGOs and local peace builders.

How Inclusive is a Sustainable Tomorrow? LIVE Webinar

*On the Occasion of International Women's Day*

**SAVE THE DATE**

 MARCH 10, 2022  
11:00 AM -12:30 PM  
(Beirut time)

#IWD2022

**Webinar: “How Inclusive is Inclusive Peacebuilding?”**

On the occasion of International Women's Day 2022 the [Issam Fares Institute for Public Policy and International Affairs](#) at [American University of Beirut \(AUB\)](#) and the Dialogue Institute hosted a panel discussion/webinar titled “How Inclusive is a Sustainable Tomorrow?”, building on a similar event in 2021<sup>1</sup>. Speakers from various sectors of society and different countries in the region explored ways to overcome gender discrimination and inequality in the context of climate change and peace building, through inclusive processes. They shared their experiences in relation to peacebuilding efforts and the roles they play in promoting inclusion in decision-making processes. The panellists focused on the importance of increasing women representation, as well as the relationship between the Women, Peace, and Security Agenda (WPS) and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

For more information see the Institute’s website: [Webinar on Women, Peace and Security](#), with a [Summary report](#). The event can be watched at [YouTube \(#IWD2022 Webinar\)](#).



*Meeting with the MENA Coalition for Youth, Peace and Security.*

<sup>1</sup> [How Inclusive is Inclusive Peacebuilding](#)

## YOUTH, PEACE, AND SECURITY (YPS)

Building on a series of workshops arranged by the Dialogue Institute, the [Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation](#) and the [MENA Coalition on Youth, Peace & Security](#) in 2021<sup>2</sup>, the Institute has continued its engagement on the YPS agenda.

In March, the Dialogue Institute took part in a strategic retreat arranged by the MENA Coalition on Youth, Peace & Security. In connection to this, the Institute hosted a networking meeting to provide an opportunity for the MENA Coalition to meet with government representatives, UN agencies, donors, CSOs and others actively engaged in the YPS agenda, peacebuilding, human rights, and/or advocacy efforts in their communities across the MENA. This networking meeting aimed at contributing to intergenerational dialogue and to a more effective multi-stakeholder approach on how to advance the YPS agenda in the MENA region, recognizing the vital role that young people play in building peace and preventing and resolving violence and armed conflict.

During the spring discussions have also been held with different Swedish actors, incl. the Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs, the Folke Bernadotte Academy (FBA) – the Swedish agency for peace, security and development – and the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) on how Sweden can continue to support young peacebuilders in the MENA region. The Dialogue Institute also hosted a meeting with the MENA Coalition on Youth, Peace & Security and Swedish civil society organisations, working in the MENA region.



*Networking event with the MENA Coalition for Youth, Peace and Security.*

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<sup>2</sup> For information see: [January workshop on Youth, Peace and Security \(YPS\)](#) and full [report](#) and [December workshop: Recommendations from Young Peacebuilders in the MENA region](#)

## Collaboration with the Folke Bernadotte Academy on YPS

In December 2022, a delegation from the [FBA \(Folke Bernadotte Academy\)](#) visited Jordan and the Dialogue Institute held a series of meetings and consultations on the Youth, Peace and Security (YPS) Agenda.

During the visit, the Institute hosted a roundtable discussion bringing together esteemed youth leaders and representatives from government and civil society, for a discussion on youth participation and the implementation of the YPS Agenda in the MENA region. Key takeaways included recommendations to increase interactions and trust building among different actors, to increase awareness, strengthen intergenerational dialogue, to enhance the work on capacity-building (on all levels), and on changing narratives.



*Roundtable discussions together with the Folke Bernadotte Academy (FBA) on advancing the YPS agenda.*

Another roundtable discussion was held with representatives from the UN, the EU and donor community, to discuss issues related to the implementation of the Agenda for Youth, Peace, and Security (YPS) in the MENA region. The discussion focused on the need for collaborative efforts in advancing agendas on peace and development and on ways to contribute to better youth inclusion. Challenges that were highlighted included the existing intergenerational gap and lack of opportunities and spaces for dialogue between generations, where young people are often not involved in the policy and decision-making processes.

Participants emphasised the importance of meaningful and effective youth participation and stressed that initiatives by the younger generation are often insightful and innovative. They underscored the importance of partnerships between various stakeholders, including governments and civil society. They called for a strengthening complementarity across the respective mandates of humanitarian-, development-, and peace actors, and to improve the coordination and collaboration amongst the donor community.



OTHER ACTIVITIES ON PEACE & SECURITY

**Regional workshop on peacebuilding**

In June the Dialogue Institute partnered with the [Principles for Peace initiative](#) in organising a regional workshop on the “Peacemakers’ Covenant”, a policy proposal emerging from the global participatory process aiming at developing a new set of principles, standards and norms to reshape how peace processes are structured, sequenced and actualized. The workshop that was held in Amman, Jordan, brought together members of the [International Commission on Inclusive Peace](#) with scholars and peace practitioners from the Middle East and North Africa region. The meeting served as an opportunity to gather inputs and perspectives from the regional context.

Points that were highlighted included calls for stronger emphasis on justice and transitional justice; stress on local ownership and external powers needing to be more humble and focusing on playing supporting roles; and stress on inclusion and pluralism, moving from cosmetic inclusion to genuine engagement with broad spectra of society.

For more information see the Institute’s website: [Regional Workshop on Peacebuilding - Sweden Abroad](#) and [a highlight report](#).



Regional workshop on peacebuilding in collaboration between the Dialogue Institute and Principles for Peace.

# SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

## CLIMATE CHANGE



### Roundtable Discussion - Creating Inclusive Processes to Address Climate Change in the MENA region

On April 7, the Swedish Dialogue Institute for the Middle East and North Africa hosted an interactive, online round table discussion on the theme of “Creating inclusive processes to address Climate Change and Environmental Issues in the MENA region”. The gathering brought together over 60 people from across the MENA region and beyond, representing governments, civil society, academia, the private sector, donors, and international organizations, in a mix of panel discussions and smaller breakout sessions.

Key recommendations included pushing for the inclusion of more women and youth at policy, negotiating, and decision-making levels; seeking greater inter-generational and inter-sectoral exchange; prioritizing educational efforts and adapting language and messaging to the local context; pursuing decentralized solutions and involving local government in policy and implementation; engaging the private sector; leveraging the knowledge and experience of academic institutions and think tanks; and gathering more robust and relevant data and evidence of climate change.

For more information see: [Round table - Creating inclusive processes to address climate change.](#)



*Panels on inclusivity in addressing the climate agenda at Stockholm Forum on Peace and Development.*

## Stockholm Forum on Peace and Development: Promoting Inclusivity in Climate Change

To contribute to regional and inclusive dialogue on environment and climate change in the MENA region, the Dialogue Institute invited a group of ten climate experts, youth activists, peacebuilders, private sector representatives, and journalists to take part in the [2022 Stockholm Forum on Peace and Development](#) in late May. During the Forum the Institute hosted two round table discussions on the interlinkages between youth, gender, climate, and security.

Key take-aways included: a) There are clear and direct interlinkages between climate, security and inclusivity and the urgent convergent crises facing people and the planet require stepping out of our own silos and focusing on the various intersecting nexuses linking the human, environmental;

b) Participation of women and youth is vital, as is the need to increase regional and trans-regional collaboration, develop coalitions and actions plans, and create hubs to mobilise different climate initiatives and activists in the MENA region; and c) It's important to create and maintain safe spaces, in which different actors can speak out and be heard, and where they can network and connect.

In addition to participating in the Forum, the delegation participated in several other meetings and met with relevant stakeholders, including representatives from the Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs and Ministry of Environment, Sida, FBA, SIPRI, SIWI, civil society, and the private sector.

For more information see: [Promoting Inclusivity in Climate Change Discussions](#)



**Swedish Dialogue Institute**  
for the Middle East and North Africa

## **Promoting Inclusivity in Climate Change Discussions in the MENA region**

**STOCKHOLM FORUM**  
**on Peace and**  
**Development** **2022**

## **Pre-COP 27 Meeting Bringing Together Youth and Climate Advocates**

On October 26<sup>th</sup>, 2022, the Dialogue Institute hosted an interactive online roundtable discussion on 'Best practices ahead of COP27'. The discussion brought together around 40 people from across the MENA region and Europe. It aimed at strengthening connectivity and exchanges between youth and climate experts from the MENA region and Europe, many of whom were to attend COP27. Additionally, the meeting aimed to put together first-time visitors to the climate summit with more experienced delegates. The meeting facilitated a space where the first-time attenders could ask questions, highlight concerns and receive recommendations.

Key recommendations for future COP processes highlighted the importance of making representation fairer and more inclusive, both across sectors of society and on the state level. More details can be found in the [full report](#).

## **An informal regional water network**

Since spring 2021 the Dialogue Institute coordinates a regional water network, created to share information, experiences and ideas, and to develop relevant policy recommendations, and to strengthen connectivity amongst professionals and organisations across the region with like-minded agendas, contributing to effective advocacy, and ultimately supporting efforts to solve the complex and often interconnected challenges in the fields of **gender, water, and security**.

The theme for the network gathering in June 2022 was *"The Gender, Water, and Security Agenda: Stock-taking and Next Steps"*. The meeting discussed the gender outcomes and in particular gender, water, and security linkages/developments coming out of the various activities and conferences that have taken place since the last meeting in late November 2021 (Mediterranean Water Forum, World Water Forum, MENA Climate Week, Stockholm+50 (in early June), and other events).

For more information see: [Water Network Gathering, June 2022](#), and the full [report on gender and water meeting June 2022](#).

## INCLUSIVE PARTICIPATION



## GENDER EQUALITY

### **Women's Participation on Twitter in the MENA Region**

In August 2022, the Dialogue Institute, in collaboration with the [Stockholm International Peace Research Institute \(SIPRI\)](#) and Uppsala University, organised a roundtable discussion about women's participation on Twitter in the Middle East and North Africa, with experts, scholars, and civil society actors from the region.

The objective of the meeting was to better understand the barriers that women in the MENA region face when it comes to Twitter participation and their ways of navigating these barriers.

Women's low Twitter turnout in the MENA region was attributed to a variety of reasons. One reason was that social media, including Twitter, was seen as the extension of offline society. As one participant put it; *"Societies in the region are not hearing women's voices"*.

More details can be found in the [full report](#).



## Regional Forum on Equality in Education in the Southern Mediterranean

On October 11<sup>th</sup>, 2022, the Director of the Dialogue Institute participated in a panel at a Regional Forum on Equality in Education in the Southern Mediterranean. The meeting, which took place in Amman, was organised by the [Euromed Feminist Initiative](#). It gathered local and regional educational actors from ministries, teachers, civil society organisations and gender equality experts. The aim was to explore how the educational systems can be re-approached from a gender equality perspective and how education can be employed as a global tool bringing insights and raising awareness.



## YOUTH PARTICIPATION AND ENGAGEMENT

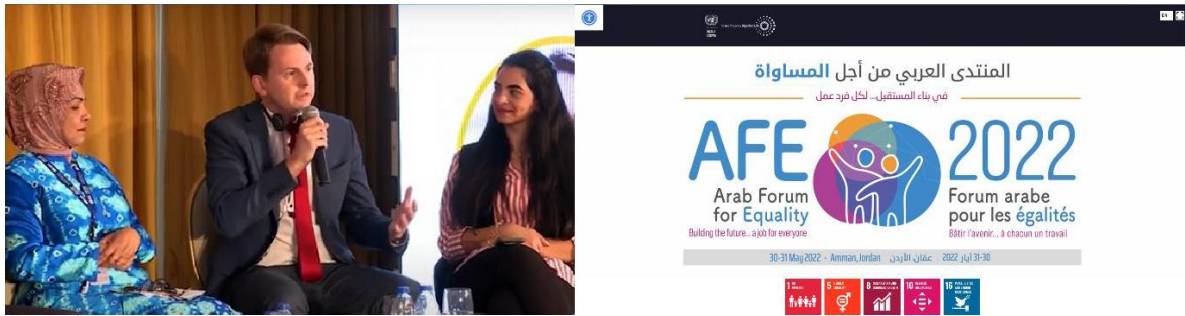
Following up on last year's activities<sup>3</sup> on youth participation and youth engagement, the Dialogue Institute has continued to engage with regional and local stakeholders in the MENA region and Europe.

In the MENA countries, young people are the fastest growing segment, with some 60% of the population under 25 years old. Yet, political leadership remains remarkably older. Empowerment of the region's young population is a strategic priority that can benefit all parts of society and contribute to inclusive participation, better governance, intergenerational transfer of knowledge and peaceful transfer of power.

To further this goal, the Institute has organized several round tables aimed at contributing to creating opportunities for improving youth engagement and intergenerational dialogue in the MENA region, particularly in the sphere of political parties and the political landscape. Participants have emphasized the importance of reducing barriers to entry to political life, by, for instance, engaging youth in wide-ranging, principled, and ideological discussions, which are relevant and interesting to youth, and involving the generation that already are in positions of influence and power so as to strengthen the intergenerational exchange.

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<sup>3</sup>See [Report from a roundtable discussion on meaningful youth participation](#).



## Youth economic participation

At the end of May the Dialogue Institute participated in the launch of the [#JosourInitiative](#) by [United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia \(ESCWA\)](#), at the first ever [Arab Forum for Equality](#). Mr. Johan Berggren, deputy director of the Dialogue Institute, spoke in a panel on youth unemployment and talked about the key role that a successful transition from school or university to work plays in reducing income inequality amongst young people, sharing good practices from Sweden, that facilitate this transition. Among other things the importance of early access to work, including internships and apprenticeships, was highlighted.

A video recording of the panel can be watched [here](#).

## EU–MENA RELATIONS



### Roundtable discussion on EU-MENA relations<sup>4</sup>

On April 27, the Dialogue Institute, in coordination with the Swedish Foreign Ministry and the Permanent Representation of Sweden to the EU, hosted an informal online roundtable dialogue, bringing together a group of eminent analysts and practitioners

<sup>4</sup>Earlier activities included in 2021 participation in a CEPS webinar on the EU's new agenda for the Mediterranean can be watched at [YouTube: The EU's new agenda for the Mediterranean: Will it make a difference?](#) and a webinar hosted by the Dialogue Institute on *EU and the MENA region – good neighbours?*- report to be found [here](#).

from the MENA region and Europe. The aim was to discuss challenges and opportunities in the relationship between the MENA region and Europe, one year after the adoption of [Council conclusions on a renewed Partnership with the Southern Neighbourhood - A new agenda for the Mediterranean](#) and in preparation for the Swedish Presidency of the European Union, beginning in January 2023.

In a candid and constructive exchange, the participants reflected on the state of EU-MENA relations today, viewed both from European and the MENA perspectives, the impact of the new geopolitical developments (in particular the Russian invasion of Ukraine), the economic headwinds, and opportunities for enhanced collaboration.

The full report can be found [here](#).

## INTERCULTURAL DIALOGUE

### **Roundtable Meeting on Culture and Dialogue**

In early November 2022, the Dialogue Institute hosted a roundtable discussion exploring interlinkages between culture and dialogue, peacebuilding and resilience. The event was centred around questions of how dialogue can benefit from a better integration of culture as a tool to foster empathy and understanding, and on the sharing of best practices in this field. The meeting was attended by a group of eminent people, working within both the cultural sector (music, theatre, film, and arts) and on dialogue and peacebuilding (international institutions, as well as think tanks and civil society).

A key message from the meeting was that culture has the power to foster empathy and understanding, and to help overcoming prejudices, divides and polarisation. Culture can play an essential role in breaking taboos and dealing with shortcomings in society, as well as being an effective tool in addressing trauma.

Find the full report [here](#).



*Roundtable meeting on culture and dialogue in Amman, December 2022.*



## Lecture on intercultural dialogue



On November 21<sup>st</sup>, the Institute's Director Charlotta Sparre was invited to give a lecture in Linköping Cathedral, in Sweden.

The lecture, that was attended by some 100 people, focused on the relations between Sweden and Europe on one hand, and the Middle East and North Africa region on the other. Charlotta Sparre highlighted the importance of dialogue to foster understanding and to contribute to addressing common challenges.

### **The Swedish Dialogue Institute for the Middle East and North Africa** *Building trust, promoting pluralism and peace through dialogue*

The Swedish Dialogue Institute for the Middle East and North Africa is a governmental agency that serves as a platform for contacts and dialogue between Sweden and the countries of Europe on the one hand, and the countries of the Middle East and North Africa on the other.

It was established by the Swedish Government in 1998 and is an integral part of the Swedish Foreign Service. The Institute is located in Amman, Jordan (previously located in Alexandria, Egypt, as the Swedish Institute Alexandria/SwedAlex).

In its activities, the Dialogue Institute addresses issues that are important for the political, economic and social development of the MENA region, or for relations between the countries, or that help increase mutual understanding in the areas of culture and religion. It also promotes the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership.

The Dialogue Institute operates through conferences, workshops and other activities and primarily focuses on the following areas: Peace and Security, Sustainable Development, and Inclusive Participation.