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## SNAPSHOT Cross-Country Quest for Diverse Voices

Young NGOs are working to ensure that voices of youth across Libya are considered in the upcoming constitution drafting process.



USAID/Libya

A tour bus named DisTour travels to over 20 cities in the western part of the country to raise the political awareness of Libyan youth on upcoming political processes related to the constitution.

*"It was the best experience... to approach a person who didn't know much, then, after guiding them through the survey, seeing their smile. It was as if they realized someone cared enough."*

*-- Members of H2O, after completing their tour through Western Libya.*

### Telling Our Story

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**December 2012** – A group of young activists in Libya have taken to the road in order to help youth better navigate the roadmap of the country's transition from dictatorship to democracy. With support from USAID, the civil society group H2O is crisscrossing Libya's vast countryside in a grassroots campaign to raise awareness and promote public participation in drafting a new constitution. "We want to go national," said a member of H2O after completing the first leg of their trip in December.

After struggling through 42 years of repression and surviving a bloody revolution, Libya is undergoing its own journey. For the first time in a generation, Libyans will have an opportunity to shape their government through a new national constitution.

With H2O's bus leading the way, civil society is taking the driver's seat in ensuring that all people and perspectives are part of Libya's critical political process. "Our goal was to give every voice a chance," said a member of the H2O team. "We explained to people that we didn't care if they were pro-Qadhafi or a leader in the opposition, we just wanted to make sure they had a chance at expressing their concerns about the constitution."

H2O's DisTour bus – named to phonetically sound like the Arabic word for "constitution" – aims to cover Libya from border to border, reaching many remote areas that have been historically marginalized. Starting first with over 20 cities throughout western Libya, the DisTour team distributed booklets on the transitional roadmap while conducting local surveys to document what communities would like to see in the new constitution. H2O then covered eastern and southern Libya, where voices in desolate parts of the Libyan Desert and mountain ranges, as well as its populated coast, got their chance to speak and be heard. This data will be presented to the Constitutional Drafting Committee that is scheduled to be popularly elected in the near future.

H2O is targeting historically marginalized areas and tailoring their constitution outreach messages to each community. In the remote Nafusa Mountains, the group encountered high rates of illiteracy, and resorted to conducting the survey orally with each participating resident. "It was as if we were making people feel human again, by valuing their opinions."

Travelling sometimes between closed borders of conflicting cities, the group was permitted entrance after explaining what they were trying to do. "We were welcomed in people's homes, and at their dinner tables," said an H2O member.

Complementary support is also being provided by the U.S. State Department.

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