

BIP NEWS

keeping alumnae connected

Summer 2005
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ABOUT BIP NEWS

BIP NEWS is a forum for the BIP alumnae community to express views, share experiences and stay connected. Published quarterly, BIP NEWS is sponsored by the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, U.S. Department of State and produced by AMIDEAST.



How to participate in BIP NEWS:

Submit your alumnae updates, professional achievements, community activities, points of view and recent photos to Doug Duncan at dduncan@AMIDEAST.ORG.

Submission guidelines:

Submissions may be edited for style and language. Not all essays/comments submitted will be printed. All submissions must include your name and contact information including email address.

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The Middle East Partnership Initiative Business Internship Program would like to announce and welcome aboard Laura Alami as the new Program Manager.

Dear BIP Alumnae:

I am Laura Alami, a Program Officer at the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, U.S. Department of State. I am pleased to announce that I will be succeeding Lucy Jilka in the management of the MEPI BIP program.

Lucy will be leaving the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs to take the position of Director of Recruitment at the Woodrow Wilson Center, part of the Smithsonian Institution that brings in broad-ranging scholars and leading thinkers whose work can illuminate the key public policy issues or identify overlooked or emerging issues. On behalf of the staff and participants of the MEPI BIP program, I would like to thank Lucy for all her hard work and wish her luck in her new position.

I am thrilled to take on this role and I am fortunate to join this team of staff at AMIDEAST and IREX, and my colleagues in the MEPI office at State. I have been assisting Lucy for the past few months and anticipate a smooth transition.

I look forward to hearing about all of the work you are doing and hope to meet you at an alumnae event in the near future.

Laura Alami
Program Officer
Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs
AlamiLT@state.gov

Nidhal Hadiji Kefi contacted us on the day the MEPI BIP program celebrated its first anniversary, thankful to have been a part of this life changing experience. As a result, Nidhal volunteered to write a piece describing her thoughts and memories as she began the program. We would like to send a special thanks to Nidhal for taking the time to share her reflections!!

BIP's First Anniversary

The 31st of July 2004 was the start of a new voyage for forty one ambitious and determined young Arab women, and the beginning of the BIP network. We all came with similar aspirations and dreams combined with our different backgrounds and ideas.

I remember the first day; most of us were suspicious as we didn't know each other. Groups were

formed from those who travelled together from the same country or same area. Personally, I was very tired but very excited at the same time. The first three days in Washington, DC I couldn't sleep, not only because of the jet lag but because I was already missing my husband! Also, I was in the USA for the first time surrounded by 40 women with who I would share a unique experience. I couldn't imagine how it would be and what

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About MEPI

The Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI) is a U.S. Presidential initiative founded to support economic, political, and educational reform efforts in the Middle East and champion opportunity for all people of the region, especially women and youth. The initiative strives to link Arab, U.S., and global private sector businesses, non-governmental organizations, civil society elements, and governments together to develop innovative policies and programs that support reform in the region.

About the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, U.S. Department of State

About the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, U.S. Department of State The Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA) fosters mutual understanding between the United States and other countries through international educational and training programs. The bureau does so by promoting personal, professional, and institutional ties between private citizens and organizations in the United States and abroad, as well as by presenting U.S. history, society, art and culture in all of its diversity to overseas audiences.

Letters from MEPI BIP institutional partners: IREX, Emory and Duke University

IREX

Greetings 2004 MEPI Alumnae! We hope that you are well and in good spirits. We would like to share with you some good news from IREX.

We are excited to announce the birth of Ingrid Al-Sattam's baby, Jasim, born on July 12, 2005. Congratulations to the Al-Sattam family on this joyous occasion. We wish them all the best in the years to come. Ingrid looks forward to returning to IREX after maternity leave to welcome the incoming 2005 MEPI BIP participants.



The 2004 MEPI team members, Sarah D'Amico and Lauren Parks, have moved on to new adventures. Sarah D'Amico began her MBA program at the Monterey Institute of International Studies. Lauren Parks is pursuing other career opportunities. It has been a pleasure to work with Sarah and Lauren on the MEPI program and we wish them both the best of luck as they move forward with their goals.

We would like to introduce two new members of the MEPI team: Lillie Paquette – Program Associate, and Yasmine El-Droubi – Program Officer. They are enthusiastically preparing for the arrival of the 2005 MEPI BIP participants and are excited to work with the MEPI team. Lillie and Yasmine look forward to making the 2005 program as much of a success and enriching experience as last year's program.

Lillie graduated from Northeastern University with a BA in Political Science and a concentration in International Affairs and Middle East Studies. She most recently interned at the Middle East Institute in Washington D.C. She has traveled to Egypt for academic research and Arabic study and speaks fluent Spanish and Russian.

Yasmine graduated from the College of Charleston with a BA in Communication Studies and obtained her MA in International Education from George Washington University. She most recently graduated from the Arabic Language Institute at The American University in Cairo, Egypt. Yasmine has made several trips to the Middle East and speaks fluent Arabic.

We would like to thank you for keeping us up to date on your professional goals and achievements. We have enjoyed corresponding with you, and love hearing about your accomplishments, which make us very proud. We wish you the very best as you continue in your career paths.

Please join us in extending a warm welcome to the 2005 participants! Again we look forward to another successful year ahead.

Kind Regards,
The IREX MEPI Team

"The future belongs to those who believe in the beauty of their dreams." - Eleanor Roosevelt.

AMIDEAST is pleased to include in this edition of BIP News letters from Mark Brown, Academic Program Director of the MEPI program from The Fuqua School of Business at Duke University and Kelly Bean, Director of Executive Education at Goizueta Business School at Emory University. The articles reflect very highly on the BIP participants, noting the educational growth and understanding that all the BIP alumnae experienced in addition to the knowledge you imparted across both campuses. You should be very proud of the mark you have left on these U.S. institutions!

Duke University

August 10, 2005

This time last year we had just met the twenty young women who were to have such an impact on our thinking. Twenty women had just arrived at Duke University from 16 countries in what we call the Middle East, and we were trying to revise our expectations about them based on new information. For example, they were obviously more sophisticated and knowledgeable about the United States than we had expected. They were professional women who had undergraduate degrees, and we knew that before they came. Yet somehow as we examined our preconceptions of the month long program we had planned for these women, we realized that we had not given them credit for what they knew. We had been focusing on what they could learn from the outstanding faculty members and business leaders we had included in the program, but we had not thought enough about what they could teach us and how much we could learn from them.

As we gradually learned more about their countries, their aspirations, and the challenges they had faced, we realized that many of them were used to being underestimated. Some told us bluntly that they felt they had been marginalized because they were women. They felt they had not been given permission to dream the dream of becoming an entrepreneur or of truly reaching their potential. As you might imagine, there was a range of opinions about almost everything, and as the program unfolded we heard them challenging each other's opinions and assumptions. This did not square with the demure, self-effacing attitudes we expected. It was as if they were finally giving themselves permission to be outspoken, brash, confrontational, and intelligent with each other. We soon learned that they were willing to challenge our opinions and assumptions as well. We found that the questions they asked us forced us to examine our ideas about their societies and about the role of the U.S. in the region and in the world.

Although we knew they were coming from a wide array of countries, we had fallen into the trap of thinking of them as a group. Our lack of knowledge about the specifics of their countries kept us from thinking of them as individuals. By the time the program ended and we were

Emory University

Dear MEPI BIP Alumnae,

What a difference a year makes! Nearly every month we receive updates on your promotions, new opportunities, and achievements. You are agents and leaders of change—within your companies, your communities, and through the relationships developed and networks created during the Middle East Partnership Initiative Business Internship Program. We at Emory University's Goizueta Business School are continually impressed, but never surprised, by your successes and are proud to be associated with such talented and ambitious women.

As an academic partner in the inaugural program, we are excited by your personal and professional growth during the past year. It is our sincere hope that the curriculum presented during your time at Emory and Duke provided a solid foundation of business acumen, as well as an increasing awareness of your leadership strengths. As you face new challenges, we encourage you to view them as development opportunities, and continue to build upon the knowledge and understanding gained during the program.

We are pleased to announce that Goizueta Business School will once again host the MEPI BIP on the Emory campus this fall. During the past year, Goizueta has experienced significant changes, including the completion of a new building and installation of a new Dean, Larry Benveniste. Dean Benveniste has selected MEPI BIP Faculty Director Maryam Alavi to serve as Vice Dean for the school. Our program staff now occupies a suite of offices in the new addition, and manages a dedicated floor of state of the art classrooms.

We plan to leverage these new developments to create an outstanding experience for the MEPI BIP participants this fall. Our faculty members are eager to participate in the upcoming program, and curriculum has been adjusted in response to your feedback. We have integrated business law topics into the general curriculum, and have designed a concurrent law component for a segment of participants. As university classes will be in session this fall, we anticipate more interaction with Goizueta MBA students, further expanding opportunities to network and

preparing them for departure to internships with businesses across the United States, we could no longer think of them as "the Middle Eastern women." Instead we were saying goodbye to Sana, Rabab and Arwa. We were much more knowledgeable about the geography, geopolitics, religion, and social institutions of their countries. When we think of Oman, or Lebanon, or Algiers, we see specific faces now, we hear specific voices now, and we have a deeper, more personal connection to the region now.

When these women left Duke to go to their internships we realized we had formed such strong bonds with them that they were like an extended family. They still needed us for support, we told ourselves, and we did everything we could to ease their transitions to their new locations. We had urged them to contact us with any questions they had about things during their internships. The questions they asked ranged from those about etiquette and propriety to those about religion, civil rights, and politics. Again we had underestimated them. They were even more inquisitive and challenging than they had been in the program – presenting us with specific scenarios that stretched our supposed expertise about American life to the limits. "What do Americans think about gay marriage?" "Why are there so few political parties in the U.S.?" "Why are there so many obese people in America?" "What do Christians believe about Islam?" "What does business casual mean?" "What's the difference between laws that cities make as opposed to states, counties, or the national government?" "When can I interrupt my boss at a meeting, especially if he said something that's incorrect?"

When we began to plan this year's version of our program, we were astounded at how much our assumptions and our level of knowledge had changed. The women of the Middle Eastern Partnership Initiative (MEPI) program truly had been partners, and they had taught us not only about their countries and their lives but also about our own society and our own assumptions. We are looking forward to a new group of women who are motivated, challenging, sophisticated, demanding, focused, professional, and intending to have as much of an impact on us as we have on them.

Mark Brown
Academic Program Director
MEPI Program
The Fuqua School of Business
Duke University

develop relationships.

As we prepare to welcome the MEPI BIP to Emory this fall, we recognize the commitment that you, as alumnae, have made to the future success of the program. Your feedback has already helped to refine and tailor the program. As the MEPI BIP network grows, your experience and support will be invaluable to incoming participants. Your efforts toward increasing awareness and building recognition of the MEPI BIP within the business communities in your home countries are vital.

Correspondingly, we at Emory remain committed to your continuing development and success, so please continue to utilize your relationship with Goizueta Business School if we can provide assistance or support.

Sincerely,

Kelly Bean
Director of Executive Education
Goizueta Business School at Emory University

Letter from AMIDEAST Program Coordinator Doug Duncan

Dear Business Internship Alumnae, greetings to you all.

On the occasion of the Spring 2005 edition of BIP NEWS I was able to announce that MEPI/ECA had decided to continue the Business Internship program for yet another year. Since that time, we have learned that AMIDEAST has been selected by ECA to conduct the recruitment and the Alumnae portion of the new program. We are very pleased indeed to be able to continue this association in basically the same role we enjoyed during the first program iteration. In July, AMIDEAST activated the program web site on our home page located at <http://www.amideast.org>. By clicking the green MEPI banner in the center of the page, the visitor can access detailed program and eligibility information and also complete an on line application for consideration. As of today (August 16, 2005), the participant recruitment is off to a good start with 406 variously completed applications resident in our on line recruiting pool and just a little less than a month before we reach the application deadline of September 10, 2005.

We earnestly solicit your assistance in this recruiting effort. This is a great opportunity and we hope you will help spread the word. Specifically we ask that you take some time to visit the web site and reacquaint yourself with the program goals and participant requirements. Then, we ask that you spread the news to all of your colleagues who might be interested and suitable for participation. This is your big chance to do some very positive networking. Help spread the message and help your Alumnae network grow. On a related note, I urge you to visit the AMIDEAST web site regularly to check for other program announcements as well.

I have been very gratified over the last couple of months to see a significant improvement in the quality of the Alumnae Website and also in the BIP NEWS. Both have increased in size and in quality since they were activated. Here at AMIDEAST headquarters, Hannah Hogensen has been spearheading improvement efforts with our information technology department. In particular however, a key part of the improvement stems from increasing interest and contributions from our alumnae. Many thanks for that indeed. We have received pictures and personal updates and a few articles as well. Additionally, we received some very high quality responses to a new feature, the "Question of the Quarter." We encourage you to continue supporting your newsletter and we look forward to the time when the participants who will be selected in October 2005 will be able to participate as newly returned alumnae as well with fresh perspectives to share.

We were just advised that our new MEPI program officer for the BIP program, Lucy Jilka, will be moving on to a new position to be replaced by Laura Alami. We enthusiastically welcome Laura in her new role and look forward to working with her on the project. Note that we have included a letter from Laura elsewhere in the newsletter announcing the change. We are very sorry to see Lucy depart. While only with the project for a brief time, she proved very insightful, energetic and helpful.

Warm regards to you all.

Sincerely,

Doug Duncan

Program Coordinator
AMIDEAST

"Question of the Quarter"

This volume of *BIP News* presents the opening "Question of the Quarter." This section poses a question asking all MEPI BIP alumnae to provide their own personal reflections in response. We hope in reading each other's responses to the "Question of the Quarter" MEPI BIP alumnae will gain new perspectives on the program.

This issue's "Question of the Quarter" is:

What idea or experience inspired you the most during the MEPI-BIP program and why? How have you implemented it into your life since your return home, if you have?

Sana Abdeljalil

What inspired me most during the program is the feeling of independence & self reliance: I was all by myself, in a country where I have no real ties (I mean family & close friends). I had to learn to adjust myself to a different rhythm & way of life. I had to somehow survive :-)

Once back home I decided to keep this independent style, so I found myself a job (Web Manager for the Arab Tunisian Bank) and started to pay my house rent and all my expenses without relying on my dad's financial assistance.

Nidhal Hadiji Kefi

How constructive diversity can be if we properly deal with it!

The whole BIP experience was very inspiring; it isn't very hard to choose

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MEPI BIP Alumnae Soumaya Al-Jassem was a guest speaker at a press conference in Kuwait where she had the opportunity to reflect and describe her experience under the MEPI BIP program.

Alumna Soumaya Al-Jassem featured in article US builds bridges of cultural knowledge through exchange programs--

By Eman Al-Awadhi (with photos) KUWAIT,
Aug 7 (KUNA)

By sponsoring exchange programs, the US Department of State aims to build bridges of education, experience and cultural knowledge between the US and the world, said the US Embassy's Press Attache Mark Stroh.

Speaking at a press conference on Sunday on the Middle East Partnership Initiative US Business Internship Program for Young Middle Eastern Women, Stroh said that the program works to help local individuals and groups develop their own potential in the fields of education, politics, women and economics.

The conference's guest speaker, Soumaya Al-Jassem, a former participant in the program, described her experience, saying that she spent one month of intensive academic studying at the Fuqua School of Business at Duke University and then three months of internship with a US company.

Al-Jassem said that the program allows Middle Eastern women "to interact professionally with the US corporate sector," adding that she is now



AMIDEAST, Country Director Maureen Aldakheel



Alumna Soumaya Al-Jassem

trying to implement US corporate principles she learned during her internship at the organization where she is currently employed.

She explained that she was part of a group of 40 Middle Eastern women, where they were "motivated by the fact that we (the students) all had the same goals and objectives for ourselves and our countries and we learned to work and think as a group." The former participant stressed the importance of teamwork and appraisal within organizations and institutions, saying that this was yet another thing she came to realize while on the program and was helpful when dealing with people of different personalities. Al-Jassem encouraged young women at the beginning of their careers to enroll in the program as it "gives a competitive edge to young businesswomen who return motivated

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something special to talk about: being with 40 wonderful and brilliant Arab women, the Emory experience, the workplace environment, that pre-thanksgiving meal organized by a fellowship I was invited for, the amazing museums I visited, the roundtables and conferences I attended and very diverse and extraordinary people I met there! All this was very special to me and what I implemented in my life is the result of so many wonderful details that sometimes look insignificant but has a very deep effect on you.

I think one of the main ideas that inspired me is how much being open minded and accepting of others' differences, learning from them without any prejudice can enrich you and make you a better person, confident and humble. Human beings are the same wherever you come from and whatever your religion is: we all have the same feelings: love, disgust, jealousy, happiness, anger... and are all able to have good or bad ideas and actions...

I always believed that difference is very enriching, and that [BIP] experience confirmed my belief. For example, today I consider that one of the main basis of the American success is the large diversity of people interacting amid their different beliefs, customs and origins and how the society and politics learned through the country's short but hectic history to integrate and allow their creativity all together without any segregation. That chemistry between all these individuals enabled them to create something inclusive and different from what is done in every country by its own. That is what I personally experienced in my hosting company where there were employees from 10 nationalities and even more.

But before the internship I experienced

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AMIDEAST, Country Director Maureen Aldakheel (left) and Alumna Soumaya Al-Jassem (right)

and with new ideas." Speaking on behalf of the program's local administrator, [AMIDEAST, Country Director Maureen Aldakheel] Soumaya said that recruitment for the second year of the program have commenced and that the program is "a good opportunity for young women to learn about US business and life styles." "One of the goals of the program is to help forge relationships with businesswomen and to commence to build a network," she added.

On application requirements, Aldakheel said that businesswomen must be between 22 and 32 years of age, have an undergraduate degree in business or law, or three years of business experience.

Applicants must also attain a minimum TOEFL score of 550, demonstrate flexibility and maturity,

commitment to developing the business sectors in their countries and have knowledge of information technology, she said.

The director explained that applicants are interviewed by a panel of local business figures, representatives of the US Embassy and a number of organizations in a fair and transparent process.

Aldakheel called upon those interested to visit the AMIDEAST website and apply for the program online, noting that the deadline is September 10, 2005.

This article is reprinted from the Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) website:
<http://www.kuna.net.kw/home/story.aspx?Language=en&DSNO=758594>

that [diversity] through the BIP group; even though we come from the same region we had many prejudices and some ignorance about other Arab countries. We really learned a lot from and about each other thanks to our openness to new ideas and our eagerness for information. I trust our group will be able to produce the best ideas and achievements thanks to its diversity and its liveliness.

Lina Al Khatib

During my rich professional experience in the MEPI-BIP program, I had the chance to participate in one of the most important conferences of the American clinical chemistry association; "Challenges of lab management" which took place in the fascinating city of San Francisco last November. After receiving four months of intensive and solid academic and professional learning at both the Goizuetta Business School and on the great campus of Dow Agrosiences in Indianapolis, they have put me on the track towards the vital combination of management and technical work in the very fine medical technology service.

While at Dow Agrosiences I participated in a genetic trait modification project in the molecular biology and biochemistry department. My role was isolation and purification of proteins and detecting mutation through mass spectrometry technology. I have also done some technical work for other projects and participated in the weekly meeting for my group in research and development.

Once I got home I concentrated all my effort to establish our own database of lab work references. With the help of my small team, we started a slow yet confident re-engineering process including our

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In San Diego, California, participants of the Middle East Entrepreneur Training in the US (MEETUS) had the opportunity to attend training seminars focusing on the development of "skills necessary to succeed in today's global business environment." While in San Diego MEET US participants were able to meet and socialize with local Californian entrepreneurs. This article was retrieved from Businessstodayegypt.com.

See World

MEET US, a United States Department of State initiative, offers successful business people from MENA the opportunity to see the world through new eyes, network and learn state-of-the-art finance, marketing and leadership methods in a wildly different environment – San Diego

MANY LOCAL BUSINESS leaders feel bogged down when struggling with local bureaucracy, rising competition and cautious consumers – but some realize their own day-in, day-out perspective traps them, too.

A few lucky managers and entrepreneurs have sought out Middle East Entrepreneur Training in the US (MEET US), a program sponsored by American cultural exchange and training center (AMIDEAST) and the US State Department that has given them the opportunity to learn how businesses think and act on the other side of the world - the West Coast of the United States. MEET US brought 95 participants from a range of industries to San Diego, California for the first time last year for an intensive series of seminars with academics and meetings with American professionals. The State Department chose the city for its diverse economic environment, which features both IT companies as well as business services.

Dina Abdel Hadi, general manager of operations and partner in Proact World, a marketing solutions company that deals primarily with direct marketing (a growing field in Egypt that targets individuals or businesses) found the experience useful and eye opening.

"[MEET US] was a comprehensive program, we got a bit of everything: marketing, finance, international business," says Abdel Hadi. "It didn't go in depth into any of the subjects, but I don't think that that was the objective. It touched base on a lot of subjects. The good

thing is that the people speaking were people who knew what they were talking about. For myself, it exceeded my expectations. Not in terms of learning [she has 15 years of work experience], and I don't think people with that experience should expect to learn new things. I think I was really inspired by the program – by the people teaching, but more by the companies we visited, businesspeople we met, and the group itself."

The MEET US program is funded by the Middle East Partnership Initiative created at the end of 2002 and benefits from the resources of several partners: the Beyster Institute at the Rady School of Management, University of California San Diego; America-Mideast Educational and Training Services (AMIDEAST); the Entrepreneurial Management Center at San Diego State University; and the US Departments of State and Commerce.

Participants attended training seminars to develop the skills necessary to succeed in today's global business environment. Topics included business ethics, strategic partnerships, leadership, finance and entrepreneurial marketing. Perhaps more importantly, they spent time with Californian entrepreneurs in their fields, swapping tales and ideas. The sessions were divided into two programs – 35 people were chosen for an executive seminar that ran for two weeks, and 20 each attended three industry-specific seminars that ran for three weeks each. Fluent English was not necessary since the activities of the program were simultaneously translated into Arabic and French.

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quality management procedures. Right now, with a lot of encouragement of my father (the manager of Al Khatib medical laboratory), I am preparing the business plan to launch our new molecular genetics service next year.

I believe that this great opportunity [MEPI BIP program] didn't only refine my leadership skills but also opened new horizons in my career.

Saba Al-Khudairy

Being an Iraqi who suffered 14 years from sanctions, sheltered from all new ideas about business, marketing and technology, I and all of my generation in Iraq never had the chance to interact with any foreign business or company. I always wondered what it looks like to study or work abroad.

The MEPI program has changed my whole life forever. I learned how to interact with different nationalities, gained new business perspectives and now understand what it looks like to work for a large successful company like United Airlines. After that whole experience I decided to continue working in the airlines industry, which I never thought of before. I am now working for Emirates-CAE Flight Training in Dubai which is a flight training school that trains pilots from all over the globe. Without my experience in MEPI I would have never been able to be successful in my career now.

I also learned a lot about US culture by visiting lots of wonderful places. I made lots of friends and contacts who I still am in touch with. I have also attended lots of conferences which I enjoyed a lot and found lots of benefit.

I am a Training Officer for Emirates-CAE, a Flight training school for professional

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Ahmed Hafez, general manager and co-founder of Almona CIS, a communications and information services company that specializes in supply chain automation solutions, appreciated the exchange of ideas, which he says helped develop his relatively new company.

"There were different types of programs. There was the business service, which targets marketing and business administration, and there was the IT [one]," says Hafez. "The last week, we had an internship with an American company that had similar activities to our own companies. We spent two weeks attending sessions, talking about business, about the American experience. During these two weeks, we visited other companies, some of them just starting up, others well established. It was a very good experience."

Shereen Allam, co-owner and vice president of Eco-Tek, is building a unique company in Egypt: a venture focusing on the recycling of print cartridges, both laser and ink. While recycling may not be on the minds of most Egyptians, Allam is doing her utmost to make people aware of both the benefits and necessity of recycling. She was particularly interested in the peer-to-peer exchange that the initiative offered her with other representatives from Arab countries.

"We didn't get to see a lot of San Diego," says Allam. "We were always inside the hall. We went to a lot lectures, and met a lot of interesting people. The most interesting part was meeting a lot of people from the Arab world. The impression that we have here is totally different from what we saw – they are very intellectual people, they are very advanced, they know what they are doing. We found things about ourselves that we didn't know existed. It was interesting to find that we were all in the same boat, but with different styles in running our companies."

In addition to the difficulties of registering a new company in most of MENA, securing capital presents a serious obstacle. Venture capitalists are abundant in the US; while they exist in

Egypt, most hopeful entrepreneurs have difficulty enticing them.

"[The US business environment] is highly competitive, and there is no excuse such as 'there is not an opportunity' – you can do anything," says Allam. "Here you have to struggle for everything, starting from setting up your company, to getting it to work, to getting the right people, to getting a product that you want. But there, they get the idea, they have the institutes, they go to venture capitalists for the money. They present the idea [to them] – if they like it, they have 100% financial backing, plus support for studies, information, everything they need to succeed. Which is completely different from here. We heard that there are some venture capitalists in Egypt, but the amazing thing is as business people we don't know about them."

Sharing experiences with other entrepreneurs provides much needed encouragement to other businesspeople looking beyond their immediate surroundings. "In our culture, we are against entrepreneurs," says Hafez. "We think [these days] that you should graduate and join a well-known company, but before it was government, military. Now it is big corporations. No one would think of their children starting their [own] business – it's not what we were raised on. I personally didn't have the chance to sit and speak with entrepreneurs, and to talk about our problems, our clients, our experiences."

"Entrepreneurship is very well organized in the United States, they have communities, societies, they have networks where they just meet and talk and exchange information. We don't have this here in Egypt."

The cultural exchange worked for both sides of the partnership.

"Some of the lecturers and some of the translators were inspired by us. They didn't know that in our part of the world there are people like us, they didn't know that there are women like us,"

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pilots who fly multiengine aircraft and who have airline transport licenses. I perform administration and coordination of the training department as well as scheduling. It is interesting but very tense as well because its a big responsibility to deal with flight training records and checking the regulations before accepting any trainees. We are inspected by many authorities and any plane crash means that they will come and check the pilot's records and if they find any mistake, it is a huge problem. I don't travel with the company; however it's nice meeting and chatting with pilots from all over the world.

Riham El-Mograby

The experience and idea I found most inspiring was the power of mentoring. Before participating in the MEPI-BIP program I didn't think that the idea of mentoring even existed in the form I know today! I knew people help and consult each other but being committed to a mentor didn't cross my mind! I have always thought of mentoring as something someone would inherit or get from a successful family friend or a pro-bono service; I was absolutely WRONG. In the US at Hewlett Packard (HP), my internship mentor introduced the concept to me and made me experience it to the maximum. He always guided me on both the business and personal sides, kept me involved, invited me to meetings to increase my exposure, introduced me to many key figures, consulted me on work related to my own business, taught me business etiquette and ways to react in real business situations and much more. Upon my return, I have started to treat many people I knew or got to know later on as my mentors based on their experiences in different sectors and willingness to help in addition of course to my magical mentor from the US. I wasn't shy anymore to

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says Abdel Hadi, a mother of two boys. "One of the people there approached us and said that she got so inspired that she wants to start her own business now."

At press time, the Middle East Partnership Institute was funding alumni programs to follow up on progress among this year's attendees, the

next of which will be held in Tunis in September. It was still studying turning MEET US into an annual program.

Business Today Egypt, @ 2004 IBA-media
Article found at
<http://www.businesstodayegypt.com/article.aspx?ArticleID=5353> July 2005

First ever Venture Capital Bank launched in Bahrain

Bahrain: Sunday, June 12, 2005

Long in the waiting, the Arab World will finally be on the threshold of increased market development and wealth creation as a result of the launch of the Persian Gulf and MENA regions first ever Venture Capital Bank.

Approved and licensed to operate by the Bahrain Monetary Agency on May 5, 2005 and carrying the name of Venture Capital Bank (VCBank) it will be the first venture capital bank that is compliant with Shariah principles.

As part of its management setup, VCBank has put in place a thorough process whereby it engages its Shariah Advisory Board before it commits itself to an investment opportunity through a rigorous compliance system that identifies the nature of the business of each target company and the manner through which financing will be structured around each deal, thus ensuring Shariah certification for each investment prior to any commitment.

Announcing the registration of the VCBank, Dr. Ghassan Ahmed Abdullah Al Sulaiman, Chairman of the Incorporating Committee, said; "Our region is undergoing tremendous change, and the liberalization of the economies coupled with the rise in oil prices is spurring increased economic activity. At this moment in time we believe that there is a unique investment

opportunity for venture capital investment banking in the GCC and MENA Regions."

"VCBank will invest in fundamentally strong undervalued, finance-seeking small to medium enterprises (SMEs) with market and revenue growth potential, in addition to a vast array of real estate investment opportunities given the increased demand and appetite for real estate investment products especially in the GCC."

VCBank brings together prominent business leaders from across the Arabian Gulf with Al Sulaiman Group from Saudi Arabia being the strategic partner. With an authorized capital of 500 hundred million dollars and a paid up capital commitment of 50 million dollars, 25 million of which has already been committed by the Founding Shareholders, VCBank will have a strong shareholder base that is geographically well spread and diversified in terms of business line, background, risk profile and investment preference. Moreover the shareholder base will have strong sourcing capacity and significant investment placement power throughout the GCC, with the aim of having an ownership structure of 40% from Saudi Arabia, 20% from Kuwait, 10% from the Kingdom of Bahrain and Qatar, 10% from the Sultanate of Oman and the UAE, 10% from VCBank's Strategic Technical Partners and 10% from GCC financial institutions.

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express my ignorance of any subject. Once I am with them, I ask them to help advise me and went even further in ASKING them directly to be my mentors. To my surprise, they were all very willing to mentor me and now, even if I am silent, I find them asking and following up on my progress and issues they have given me advice on before.

I am still in touch with the folks at Hewlett Packard. I am happy I got to know them; they were a very young and energetic team!

From his end Mr. Abdul Latif Mohamed Janahi, the Executive Director of VCBank's Incorporating Committee said that VCBank has linked up with a well established American venture capital firm, Global Emerging Markets Group (GEM Group), as a key strategic technical partner. GEM Group is one of North America's leading deal origination, advisory, merger, acquisition, corporate finance, and turn-around firms with a strong focus on emerging markets. Furthermore GEM is expected to play a focal role in the creation of a sustainable venture capital culture within VCBank.

VCBank is the first initiative of its kind that targets such a niche market in the region within an investment banking context. It will focus on achieving performance and return to end-investors through facilitating the expansion and growth of promising ventures that lack financial and expansion resources. It further aims to deliver high potential returns, fully managed risks, and significant co-investment opportunities.

What is Venture Capital?

Venture Capital is money or capital provided for new business ventures by investors other than the original proprietor. The term is sometimes

also used for capital provided to rescue or turn around a company. Venture capitalists can include individuals, investment banks, and institutions that specialize in providing such modes of financing. Venture capitalists survival in business depends on picking more successful investments than unsuccessful ones. When investing in new ventures, venture capitalists often own a share in the business; as part owners they can have more control over the investment and are in a better position to earn a higher return if the business succeeds than someone who lent money to the venture. Furthermore a proprietor will also have access to business and financial expertise that venture capitalists often provide.

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BIP's First Anniversary continued

kinds of challenges were coming. Moreover, I was impressed by all the women after reading their biographies. I thought it was so pleasant to be in such a group of elite, "la crème de la crème." I was also somehow intimidated.

What first comes in mind today when I remember the program is not really the first days, but the exciting moments we later shared; our team work and presentations at the university, our gatherings in the hotel to celebrate someone's birthday, our shopping trips, the number of similar pictures we could take with everyone's camera, and our songs in the bus, even though I was not often singing!

After all, I realize that BIP was not only successful regarding its elementary objectives as mentioned in the program announcement (professional development, integration of American business culture), it surpassed them and added something more precious to me; a network that was

woven through the four months and that no one of us expected to be as important and concrete as it is today. It [the network] was more obvious in Tunis during our first alumni conference when we all met again six months later. It was one of my happiest moments since I had left the US.

One year after our first meeting in Washington, DC I personally believe that this network is one of the best things life has offered me. I am really fond and proud of it and I am sure many of us think the same. I hope all of us will keep this network active even when each woman will have to care for her family, her career and/or her business. I wish us to always be as supportive and close as we are today.

So happy anniversary to the BIP group!

Nidhal Hadiji Kefi

Grant List

Council of International Programs USA provides a long list of grant funded programs across multiple arenas of development and training/education. For more information about the grants that Council of International Programs USA offers, refer to:

http://www.cipusa.org/grant_funded.asp

The Michigan State University Library database has a listing of dozens of grant opportunities and reference materials. The grant search can be narrowed down by minority, gender, field of study, etc. Funding is primarily intended for individuals pursuing advanced education, but some grant sponsors may be of broader interest. To view the grants provided on The Michigan State University Library website go to

<http://www.lib.msu.edu/harris23/grants/3areastu.htm>. The library homepage is <http://www.lib.msu.edu/>.

The Small Grants Program in Lebanon-2005 funded by The World Bank was created in 1983 to complement and facilitate the social development agenda of The World Bank by providing grants to civil society organizations (CSOs) through Country Offices with a focus on civic engagement. To learn more about the Small Grants Program and to research previous grants supported by The World Bank Group visit:

<http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/COUNTRIES/MENAEXT/LEBANONEXTN/0,,contentMDK:20329231~pagePK:141137~piPK:141127~theSitePK:294904,00.html>

The U.S Department of State has researched a list of small grants representing the four pillars that support the Middle East Partnership Initiative (<http://mepi.state.gov/mepi/>). These grants are available and encouraged to be sought out by women from the Middle East and North Africa (<http://mepi.state.gov/mepi/c14357.htm>).

Books

The Cultural Dimension of International Business by Gary P. Ferraro prepares future businesspeople to understand and cope with the cultural dimension of their professions. This book demonstrates how the theory and insights of cultural anthropology can positively influence the conduct of international business. It explores (1) general concepts about culture that can be applied to any cross-cultural situation; (2) the nature of communication, both linguistic and nonverbal; (3) contrasting value systems; and (4) a wide variety of sources for locating culture-specific information. A conceptual approach provides readers and individuals seeking to understand any cross cultural business encounter they have had in the past or might have in the future with the necessary framework for understanding the cultural dimension of the international business arena (www.amazon.com).

Cultural Intelligence: People Skills for Global Business by David C. Thomas is much more than simply a list of protocols; this book helps readers develop a mind-set that can be applied to any number of countries, cultures, and business situations. It is a systematic way to approach the tremendous variety of interactions and challenges that business people must face around the world – much easier and more realistic than documenting every trait of every culture and preparing to cater to each. This book presents a three-stage process for becoming culturally intelligent. These steps involve learning the fundamental principles of cross-cultural interactions, such as what cultures are, how they might vary, and how they affect behavior; practicing mindfulness and paying attention in a reflective and creative way to cues; and developing a repertoire of behavioral skills that can be adapted to different situations. It takes time and effort to develop high cultural intelligence, but this book helps readers with the right attitude begin this rewarding experience (www.amazon.com).

The First-time Manager by Belker and Topchik. In the working world, top performers are regularly rewarded with promotions to management—whether they are prepared for the advancement or not. *The First-Time Manager* has long offered clear advice on leadership, motivation, discipline, and other tricks of the trade that are required of anyone in a supervisory position (www.amazon.com).

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The book **HRD in the Age of Globalization** by Michael Marquardt, Berger, Loan, et al., argues that while the pro and anti-globalization forces may be logically at odds, there's little dispute on the inevitability of globalization's forward march. As the authors explain, the real issue is not stopping or promoting globalization, but rather how to minimize the negative effects of globalization and leverage its powerful, positive effects. Human Resource Development will play a key role in determining this transformation. At no time in history has HRD been more critical in solving urgent economic and social problems faced by a wide array of groups, communities, organizations, and nations. *HRD in the Age of Globalization* explores the best HRD programs in twelve geographic regions and their impact on culture, the global environment, and other geopolitical and demographic elements. This book not only answers all the questions that exist concerning this burgeoning field-it tells us what questions we should be asking (www.amazon.com).

Jack Welch & The 4Es of Leadership by Jeffrey A. Krames reveals how the 4e model (Energy, Energizers, Edge, and Execute) helped GE's best and brightest eliminate bureaucracy, hire and promote energetic people, find new ways to increase the organization's customer-centricity, and more. Beyond the nuts and bolts of the 4e model, however, it outlines a step-by-step blueprint anyone can follow to stock an organization with performance-ready leaders and leaders-in-training (www.asiabook.com).

Leadership: Enhancing The Lessons Of Experience by Hughes, Ginnett and Curphy was written for the general student to serve as a stand-alone introduction to the subject of leadership. The text consists of 13 chapters and a final section on Basic and Advanced Leadership Skills. The authors have drawn upon three different types of literature: empirical studies; interesting anecdotes, stories and findings; and leadership skills to create a text that is personally relevant, interesting and scholarly. The authors' unique quest for a careful balancing act of leadership materials will help students apply theory and research to their real-life experiences (www.amazon.com).

Moral Intelligence by Doug Lennick and Fred Kiel... "is excellent reading for new entrants to the business world as well as experienced managers. I found numerous examples that were right on point with actual events that I have experienced in over 40 years of managing. It was also helpful to have the topics presented in the context of current events that hold the readers' interest. This book should be on the reading list of every student regardless of their career choice."

—Larry Pinnt, Chairman, Cascade Natural Gas (www.amazon.com)

The Presentation of Skills Workshop by Sherron Bienvenu, PhD, supplies all the hands-on instruction and practical tools you need to design and deliver training sessions in the art of public speaking. This book/workbook walks you through both the preparation phases and the workshop delivery (www.amazon.com).

Webster's New World Grant Writing Handbook by Sara Deming Wason walks readers through every step of the grant writing process—from defining the project and getting and interpreting a foundation's guidelines to submitting and following up on the grant application. With clear, concise explanations, thorough coverage, illustrative examples, and expert advice, this helpful, complete resource gives grant writers all the information and guidance they need to succeed (www.amazon.com).

Additional Materials/References

Arabian Society For Human Resource Management (ASHRM) is a society dedicated to the management and development of human resources and the exchange of information and expertise in this area. In addition, ASHRM is committed to advancing the human resource profession in the Arab World and the capabilities of all human resource professionals to ensure that HR is an essential and effective partner in developing and executing organizational strategy. For more information visit ASHRM's website at: www.ashrm.com.

Center for Entrepreneurial Leadership Clearinghouse on Entrepreneurship Education (CELCEE) contains a large and useful database including abstracts of materials on entrepreneurial education at all levels. The database covers material from 1996 to the present and is updated

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weekly. CELCEE also publishes digests on entrepreneurial education and houses a collection of links to organizations dealing with entrepreneurship and entrepreneurial education. To gain access to the helpful material and information CELCEE has to offer, visit their website at <http://www.celcee.edu/>.

Center for International Private Enterprise—Building democratic institutions through market-oriented reform around the globe CIPE (<http://www.cipe.org/index.htm>) addresses many sectors within business and governance. In addition to the inclusion of a calendar of events and the ability to perform regional searches for a more concentrated collection of relevant references and news, 'Women in Business' is one of the key features listed on their website.

The Journal of Economic Cooperation Among Islamic Countries is a journal of applied research in development economics aimed at enhancing co-operation among the members of the Organization of the Islamic Conference. Although the material published in it derives mainly from the Center's research activities, the Journal welcomes original papers dealing with important economic and social issues of immediate concern to the OIC Member States. The Journal appears in English in January, April, July and October. An Arabic version of selected articles appears once a year. To view the SESRTCIC website, hosting the Journal of Economic Cooperation Among Islamic Countries, visit: <http://www.sesrtcic.org>.

e-Entrepreneur Column is an online forum supported by AME Info where students can submit articles discussing technology and e-business issues within the Gulf region. E-Entrepreneur is a forum that enables you to present your opinions, ideas and talents to other entrepreneurs, industry leaders, scholars and investors (AME Info estimates 1.3 million visitors come to their website every month). Get your thoughts out there! To find out more visit: <http://www.zu.ac.ae/ecolumn>.

Entrepreneur.com, Solutions for Growing Businesses has published articles providing helpful tips and tools for such things as starting and building a new business, working from home, running an online business, managing your finances, and much more (<http://www.entrepreneur.com/>).

GlobalCoaches.com is a team of professional, cross-cultural leadership coaches who assist with the building and understanding of cross-cultural management, leadership styles, and tips; "whatever we can offer you to maximize your leadership potential." Global Coaches provides tools and services to sustain the highest level performance in those who work across cultures. In addition, Global Coaches provides the executive the perfect venue for developing global leadership competencies and expanding beyond personal boundaries and limitations (www.globalcoaches.com).



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We would love to include your news in this space in "Alumnae News & Notes in the next issue! Please send any updates you'd like to share—job, education, family—to Doug Duncan at dduncan@amideast.org so we can include them. Photos are always very welcome too!