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World Education

**Participant's Report on the Course in Women in
Management at The University of Pittsburgh**

**Support for the Women's Associations of Yemen
SWAY**

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INTRODUCTION;

Preparations for my WIM(women in management) course were made jointly by our office in Boston and USAID Sana'a .Two proposals were presented one in Washington D.C and the other in Pittsburgh P.A.Eventually, the latter was chosen for it was found more convenient from the point of timing to SWAY's needs .

As I haven't taken my vacation for two years , our office kindly permitted me to add 13 days vacation on the usual course duration so that I can benefit from the same tickets in visiting my daughter in Germany on my way to the United States . On July 26th I arrived in Boston and was met by Vice president Jill Harmsworth and Sallie Cass . On July 27th I attended for the first time at our office in Boston for familiarization, briefings and introduction to the people dealing with our office in Taiz.

From July 28th to Aug. 9th I was on vacation. On the 9th I travelled to Pittsburgh and was met by someone from the University. It was a relief to find someone waiting for me. The internal flight to Pittsburgh was late and took me a whole day to get there .At 7.30 pm I finally relaxed in the flat prepared for me after quite a long wait at the airport for the other participants to arrive.

I would like first of all to express my deep appreciation and gratitude to USAID, World Education and SWAY Team Leader Magda M. Ali who gave me this significant chance to attend that invaluable course.I think it was just what I needed,first because it answered a lot of questions for which I had no answers before. Besides I spent a lot of time thinking of situations and problems trying to find suitable solutions (though I had no explanation of what was going on)because when you are too close to an issue it is difficult to keep things in proper focus.It seems that this course has assisted me to bring everything into focus by analyzing what was happening and why? so that I can develop a plan based on the answers to those queries and on the other skills we learned.

I learned not only through lectures and sessions but also from the other participants versatile experiences and from the well organized staff of the institute.Also, from the ordinary people I got in touch with throughout my stay abroad.It is indeed a wonderful experience worth all the sacrifices and troubles involved .

COURSE CONTENTS:

----- The university took care of everything. First they briefed the participant on everything they would need during their stay at Pittsburgh. The orientation session including topics in health, lodging, food, banks, safety, and how to communicate with people. Also answers were given to the participants individual questions regarding the various matters of concern and interest.

When we put down our expectations, they were almost identical to what the program actually contained. Extra topics were added to the program just to meet participants expectations.

The major and common points in those expectations were;-
-To know others from other parts of the world and how to communicate and make networks with them.
-How to gain confidence and assertiveness.
-How to be capable to negotiate with others.
-How to know people personalities so that you can deal with them.

There were some personal expectations expressed by individual participants which were duly noted by the university and will be taken into consideration.

Speakers were invited to speak on several topics such as;-

- how to succeed in your career?
- How to gain confidence?etc.

The main topics covered by the program were:-

1- How to identify yourself and the personalities of others so that you can properly deal with people accordingly;-
On this topic we focused on our own personalities to analyze what group and what kind ,also how to control ourselves so that we can deal with any other type of personality from any group and make them happy within some boundaries.

2- How to communicate and negotiate with others;-

On this topic, we learned how to set questions and how to listen to people ;show understanding to encourage information flow and clarify information;effective speaking by choosing the right words. How to put yours and others needs before negotiation, so that you can come out with a satisfactory deal to both sides.

3- How to solve problems.

That is how to find suitable resources for the organization and how to deal with misunderstandings with people and colleagues. Also how to face conflict with the boss, and whenever facing problems to remember what is important and set yourself for expected and unexpected behavior.

4- Computer skills.

We had the lotus program (the spread sheet)

5- Accounting skills.

The subject was important , the instructor was excellent ,but the time allocated was too short to get the full benefit,because we had to know the twelve steps in the accounting cycle.The journal entry to the ledger.Prepare normal balances,and a lot of account information.To know all of these information I have to go back to the book and handouts we were given during the account sessions.

6- Entrepreneurship.

On this topic we knew about businesses and how entrepreneurship primrly drive the economy, main principles as to know what you need before approaching others.To seek opportunities available and explore advantages,luckily most of the components had gone through before during our feasibility study workshop.

7- Management Information System.

On this topic we were taught the process and activities, and were shown how to put strategies for a successful business.

8-Presentation skills and mentoring;-

Objectives for this topic were;-

-To identify what makes an effective presentation .

-To practice and improve skills in planning and delivering speeches.

-Audience analysis.

-To practice and enhance competency in planning presentation.

-To learn and practice methods of group evaluation that enhance group process and trust.

The programs set were interesting , useful and met my expectation .Also they tried to satisfy all the individual needs of participants by adding some more topics such as proposal writing , monitoring and evaluation. Social activities were included (family visits,picnics, site visits). The program was well set. sometimes we had to stay till 6 pm and during lunch hours ,

SOCIAL ACTIVITIES;

As I mentioned above the university gave consideration to social activities and that was a sound decision, because it made the participants feel that they were at home with relatives and friends.

-On Labor Day the university arranged a picnic to Marian state park It was a wonderful place and the picnic was well organized. We spent a good time and resumed work with more vitality.

-During the last week end the university prepared a trip to Niagara Falls. It was a nice placito visit and a wonderful choice.

-A visit to an American family was made by each participant.

-Visits to business women (home based , united way, a company dealing with moving and shipping.)

-Needless to underline that these courses were very interesting, new and useful . They were worth all the time ,effort and money expended. It will surely be reflected more favorably in my career and present job, and will add more insight and depth to my thinking and dealings with others. Now I feel more confidence and have more knowledge, I have become more assertive and sure of my aim and steps. I Hope that my performance will be better, my solutions will be more effective and rational.

As mentioned above , positives are far more than negatives. But to give both aspects due coverage from my point of view, negatives were;-

1- The university administration did not provide more information and much choice in accommodation and lodging especially about whether or not the participant is willing and able to share the room with others .For me I went through an unpleasant situation: When I came from the airport sleepless and tired after spending the whole day travelling .I had a bath and went to sleep to get fresh and sound next morning. At 10.30 pm. I heard someone at the door trying to open it , I was scared to death , when I opened my eye and saw a man peeping inside the apartment, I tried to overcome my fright and jumped from the bed, my heart was beating hard and I was about to scream for help .All I could do was to ask who was it?When I got to the door, a tall black lady had already entered, I was puzzled and terrified to see an unknown women entering the flat. I was somewhat comforted to recognize the man who had brought me from the airport with her. He told me that the lady would share the room with me which was actually too small for a single person. At least they should have told me that someone was coming when I came.

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2- The residence was located far away from the university, so we had to spend an hour and a half daily to and from the university. A location nearer would have certainly saved a lot of wasted time in transportation daily.

3- The time given to some topics was very short compared with the importance and volume of information contained in these topics e.g. MIS. we only knew the meaning of the abbreviation "MIS" I feel more coverage was needed both in theory and practice by using the computer instead of verbal explanation.

4- Accounting was a very interesting subject and the trainer was highly qualified but the time allocated was too short to expound all topics and points covered adequately.

We were told that two years ago the time given to this course was two months, now they are trying to squeeze it into five weeks only.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

As I said most of the preparation and program went on smoothly except for some negatives. I would like to recommend as follows;-

1- To book tickets from Yemen. It is more convenient for quick amendments and much cheaper.

2- It is better to give all lodging allowance to the participants, so that they can manage their own affairs and chose their appropriate accommodations; also they can pay for the extra trips from the same amount. As all participants were given their lodging allowances they are asking each other how much money each was given. Some of them were given an additional amount for shipping books.

3- It is better for participants to be around one day before the course started so that they would have ample time to prepare themselves for the long stay .