

WIT Global Team Meeting focuses on expansion

WIT's impact in the Middle East and North Africa has grown by leaps and bounds since its inception in one country in 2005. Hundreds of WIT participants have obtained employment and internships in local companies, academic institutions and government ministries. WIT participants have formed Professional Development Networks, which organize events relevant to their members and women in their communities such as breast cancer awareness drives, talks by guest speakers, job fairs, etc. These networks regularly publish electronic newsletters covering topics ranging from job interview skills to book reviews. WIT participants are involved in civil society building initiatives and many have started mentoring other women and girls in their communities. Some partner organizations have used the Business Planning for Sustainability Training they received through WIT to expand their centers to new locations and more and more partner organizations are moving towards operating WIT training centers on a cost recovery model. WIT will reach more than 10,000 women and expand to include over 70 partner organizations by 2010.



WIT PMs enjoy a light moment at Google

With an extensive network of committed partners and engaged participants in place, and the continued support of Microsoft and MEPI, WIT is expanding now in several exciting new areas. WIT recently held its Global Team Meeting in San Francisco, during which WIT Program Managers from seven countries were hosted by the IIE West Coast Center. The WIT global team got together to kick-start its next phase with meetings and trainings focused on program monitoring and evaluation, and workshops focused on strengthening leadership and communication skills.

In WIT's next phase, participants will learn to create and use blogs, providing a platform for participants to tell their stories and reach out to the international blogosphere. To facilitate this, the WIT team undertook a Blogger training at Google's Headquarters in the Silicon Valley to enhance their understanding of the power of blogs. The Program Managers also participated in a panel on 'Empowering Women through Technology in the Middle East and North Africa' at Google, in which they spoke passionately about the situation of women in their countries and their initiatives to empower women using technology as a tool. The group also visited several San Francisco-based women's empowerment organizations involved in microfinance and development programs such as Kiva and the Women's Initiative for Self Employment (WISE). They also met with a representative from Business for Diplomatic Action, who provided advice on achieving success in private sector outreach.