



WIT CONNECTIONS

~ Fall 2008 Newsletter ~

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Thank you for your enthusiastic response to the first issue of *WIT CONNECTIONS*. In this edition, we will share with you news about the launch of WIT in three countries, an "Outstanding Partner" Award to WIT from Microsoft, the inaugural meeting of a women's Professional Development Network in Saudi Arabia, our collaboration with the Western Region Development Council in UAE and a report on our recent Global Team Meeting held in San Francisco to kick-start the next phase of WIT. Don't miss the *Empowered Woman* of the Quarter section, featuring the inspiring story of Huda Yahya, a physically-disabled participant from Yemen who is now helping others like herself to achieve their dreams.

We would like to express our gratitude to the Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI) of the U.S. Department of State and Microsoft Corporation, for their generous support of WIT since 2005. MEPI recently supplemented WIT's funding to include new training opportunities for women in the MENA region in entrepreneurship and blogging!

Best wishes,

Heather Ramsey, Program Director
Women in Technology, IIE
San Francisco

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WIT recognized as 'Outstanding Partner' by Microsoft

At Microsoft's recently concluded Legal and Corporate Affairs Summit, Microsoft awarded Women in Technology (WIT) an Outstanding Partner Award in the Middle East and Africa. "WIT" won the Award for its innovative partnership approach to empower women and expand their participation in the workforce by providing a number of local partner organizations, and the women they serve, with Microsoft Unlimited Potential, business planning, and professional development skills training in partnership with Microsoft Community Affairs and Middle East Partnership Initiative of the US Department of State," Microsoft Gulf's e-newsletter said.



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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. The 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

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WIT Launched in Lebanon

WIT continued its expansion with the launch of the WIT Lebanon program earlier this year. With five partner organizations from different areas of the country, WIT Lebanon has been thriving. In April, the Technology and Education Exhibition which was held in the Chamber of Commerce and Industry in Tripoli proved to be the perfect opportunity to showcase the new WIT Lebanon program.



Press conference announcing launch of WIT in Lebanon

Local WIT partner organization IT-Lebanon and lead partner Women in Information Technology came together and collaborated with Microsoft to debut the WIT program and celebrate the official start of classes in Tripoli. To date WIT Lebanon has already trained over 120 women in four partner organizations.

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Saudi Arabia Launches a Professional Development Network

In April, WIT Saudi Arabia launched its first Professional Development Network (PDN) at the Learning and Technology Symposium held at Effat College in Jeddah. The Learning and Technology Symposium was inaugurated by Her Royal Highness Queen Rania of Jordan, Prince Khaled Al Faisal, Governor of Makkah Region, Princess Loulough Al-Faisal, the Vice Chair of the Board of Trustees and General Supervisor of Effat College, and Karin Eisele, the Executive Director of IIE West Coast Center. Almost 100 women, including Unlimited Potential and Professional Development administrators, trainers and WIT students past and present, attended the launch event, which took place at the Hilton Hotel in Jeddah.

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WIT kick-starts Activities in Morocco



Minister Nouzka Skalli speaks at the launch ceremony of WIT Morocco

WIT Morocco was officially launched in Rabat on July 9, 2008. The event was marked by a launch ceremony organized in partnership with the Ministry of Social Development, Family and Solidarity, which was represented by the Minister, Ms. Nouzka Skalli, herself. Several members of the media and journalists as well as representatives of international organizations, Moroccan NGO's and associations attended the launch event. WIT Morocco will be implemented in collaboration with five local partners in the North, Central and Southern regions of Morocco (Oujda, Azrou, Rabat and Marrakech). Partners were strategically chosen to reach both urban and rural populations of women in these areas. WIT Morocco will train more than 500 women by July 2009.

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UAE's Western Region Development Council Partners with WIT to expand the program in the Abu Dhabi Emirate

The Western Region Development Council (WRDC) recently announced its plans to fund four new, permanent WIT training centers in Madinat Zayed, Al Marfa, Ghayathi and Al Selaa.

The decision to fund these new training centers, specifically devoted to the WIT program, came as a direct result of the project's success in the region. Since the second phase of classes began in February 2008 at just two sites (Madinat Zayed and Al Marfa), the program has trained 225 women.



Abeer Abu Khadra, PM for WIT UAE helps participants at a Professional Development Training

Based on this initial success the WRDC expanded WIT to two more sites in April 2008 - Al Ghayathi and Al Selaa.

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WIT off to a Strong Start in Jordan

Following remarkable success over the last three years in other countries in the MENA region, WIT kicked-off its activities at a launch ceremony and press conference in Jordan on July 27, 2008. WIT Jordan launch with caption: Introducing the organization at the event, WIT Jordan's Program Manager, Eman Al Tarawneh said, "WIT will work with and support Jordanian organizations to empower women to take on a greater role in the economy. Along with our partners, we hope to help women develop IT and business skills across the Kingdom."



The Launch Ceremony of WIT Jordan

Through the assistance of Microsoft and lead partner, Shabakat Al Ordon (NetCorps Jordan), WIT Jordan hopes to train 400 women across the country by the end of the year.

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Please feel free to contact us for more information. We look forward to hearing your opinions and suggestions.

WOMEN IN TECHNOLOGY

Ms. Heather Ramsey, Program Director
Institute of International Education
San Francisco, USA
Tel: +1 415-362-6520
Fax: +1 415-392-4667
Email: witmena@iie.org
Web: www.witmena.org
www.iie.org * www.iiesf.org

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