Women in Technology

Cisco Networking Academy Scholarship Program

NEPAL SUMMARY REPORT
March 2006

This report provides highlights of the Women in Technology Program (WIT) in Nepal. The WIT program is a pilot project sponsored by the **United States Agency for International Development (USAID)**, and administered by the **Institute of International Education (IIE)**, through a grant from the **dot-GOV Program of Internews Network**. The program provided scholarship awards to women to attend the **Cisco Networking Academy Program (CNAP)**, a comprehensive global training program that teaches students to design, build, and maintain computer networks, preparing them for industry-standard certification as networking professionals.

*WIT Nepal graduates
display their Cisco certificates*

ABOUT THE ACADEMIES

The WIT program in Nepal trained women from July 2004 through July 2005 at three Cisco Networking Academies hosted at the following institutions:

- Kathmandu College of Management (KCM) in Lalitpur
- Institute of Engineering, Tribhuvan University (IOE) in Lalitpur
- Prime College in Kathmandu

ABOUT THE PARTICIPANTS

The WIT program was publicized extensively through the Academies as well as through other academic institutions, NGOs and government agencies in Nepal. IIE convened selection committee panels comprised of specialists and nationals with expertise in Nepal, women's empowerment and the IT field to review applications and select award recipients.

Applications received from Nepal: **352**
Scholarships awarded to Nepal: **150**

Demographics	
Average age:	23
Marital Status:	
Single:	92%
Married:	6%
Widowed:	2%

PARTICIPANT SURVEY HIGHLIGHTS

Participant survey responses confirm that the WIT program in Nepal succeeded in preparing women for a future career in IT. The following responses provide a highlight of the survey results from WIT Nepal.

How effective has the course been in meeting your professional training needs?
83% responded "Very Effective"

Have you learned skills that will be valuable to you in your future career?
92% responded "Yes"

Would you recommend this course to other women?
100% responded "Yes"

Are you willing to serve as a mentor or role model to girls and women interested in pursuing a career in Information Technology?
95% responded "Yes"

"The Women in Technology program was fully beneficial for our country. This training has increased the confidence of some of the women students working in electronics and computer engineering. Such a program will have a gradual effect on uplifting the role of women and fusing their role with those of men. Their chance of getting a job increases and their performance after they get a job also rises." – WIT Instructor, IOE Tribhuvan

Students conduct lab work

INSTRUCTOR FEEDBACK

Three instructors provided feedback on the WIT pilot program in Nepal. All three of the instructors stated their interest in participating in the program again and confirmed that more women are interested in participating.

They also stressed the importance of providing scholarships to the participants and the impact of the scholarships on the success of the program and of the goal of **encouraging more women to enter the IT field**.

The instructors indicated that further training or enrichment activities would best support the career development of the WIT students. They particularly emphasized that **internship/job placement assistance** is very important, as well as, additional computer and IT training programs, career skills training and attendance at conferences and meetings and membership in professional IT associations.

INCREASING OPPORTUNITIES FOR WOMEN

As further evidence of the program's success, several WIT Nepal graduates received scholarships to attend **Master's degree** programs at institutions such as the Asian Institute of Technology (AIT) in Thailand and at the University of Massachusetts, Dartmouth in the United States.

In looking to create a stronger, more effective program in the future, participant feedback affirms the need to target more women who lack basic computer skills or who work outside of the technology field as well as organize activities to bring awareness to women in remote parts of the country. One suggestion is **linking the use of technology to fields in which many women work**, such as agriculture.

In order to continue and build upon the positive impact of the WIT program in Nepal, IIE looks to expand the WIT program in Nepal in the following ways:

1. *Expand the scholarship program to more women and more academies*
2. *Include additional computer/IT training options*
3. *Incorporate professional development and community outreach components*
4. *Create an alumnae network and sustainable women's IT association*

CONCLUSION

The WIT pilot program in Nepal has been successful in providing its participants the skills and information necessary to pursue a career in the IT field. Participants attest to the value of the training and its role in increasing their opportunities in the IT industry and **raising their economic status and independence**. They strongly agree that the program should continue and expand to serve more women in Nepal.

By providing women with access to cutting-edge IT skills and practical training as well as professional development activities and the ability to organize a sustainable professional association, the WIT program is ideally positioned to empower women with the skills they need to become **pioneers for change** in their society.

IIE welcomes all inquiries and invites additional sponsors and partners for the expansion of the program.

CONTACT INFORMATION

For more information on the WIT program, please contact the Institute of International Education at wit@iie.org.

"I feel that I will be able to influence other women in field similar to mine, and hopefully guide other women in my community towards a better future with computer and technology by their side. I think that I will be a more confident and self-motivated person, and will be able to reassure, as well as encourage other women and men to newer heights of their own skills."
-- IOE Tribhuvan Student