

Women in Technology

Cisco Networking Academy Scholarship Program

TUNISIA SUMMARY REPORT March 2006

This report provides highlights of the Women in Technology Program (WIT) in Tunisia. 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 Tunisia students work with server

ABOUT THE ACADEMY

The WIT program in Tunisia trained women from October 2004 through March 2006 at the Cisco Networking Academy hosted at:

- Ecole Supérieur des Communications de Tunis (Sup'Com) - Tunis

ABOUT THE PARTICIPANTS

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

Applications received from Tunisia: **98**
Scholarships awarded to Tunisia: **40**

Demographics	
Average age:	25
Age Range:	24 to 51
Marital Status:	
Single:	80%
Married:	20%

PARTICIPANT SURVEY HIGHLIGHTS

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

How do you find the level of difficulty of the training?

92% responded "Challenging but right for my level"

Have you learned skills that will be valuable to you in your future career?

100% responded "Yes"

Would you recommend this course to other women?

85% 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?

92% responded "Yes"

*This program has been extremely useful for me. It has helped my work and I now hope to look for a job in this field. I will also share my new knowledge with others in my community.
– Sup'Com WIT student*



WIT class at Sup'Com - Tunis

INSTRUCTOR FEEDBACK

Instructor feedback on the WIT pilot program in Tunisia highlights a need for additional computer skills training in order to reach those women who would benefit from a more basic level class. Additionally, instructor feedback indicates a strong desire for soft skills and professional development training for the WIT students to complement the IT training and to better prepare them for the job market. The instructor indicated that a basic IT policy training as well as help with internship placement would also be beneficial to the WIT program.

INCREASING OPPORTUNITIES FOR WOMEN

Participant survey results show that the WIT Tunisia pilot program was very beneficial for the program participants and well-received by instructors. In order to continue and build upon the positive impact of the WIT program in Tunisia, IIE looks to expand the WIT program in Tunisia in the following ways:

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

CONCLUSION

The WIT pilot program in Tunisia 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 Tunisia.

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.

Women are often undervalued in the field of Information Technology. It is important to give scholarships to women in developing countries to learn about new technologies in order to allow them to be competitive in the labor market and especially in the field of IT.

-- Sup'Com WIT student