



Dr. Nabil Shalaby
Adviser, Entrepreneurship &
SMEs Development, EPCCI

Chamber's Entrepreneurship Development Program Clicks

According to a Chinese saying "Don't give me fish but teach me how to fish". I've modified the statement into "Don't give fish, but teach me how to start and operate a "fish farm". I believe in the age of competition, globalization and WTO, fishing some fishes is not enough. The young Arabs must learn

how to run a small business (fish farm) successfully. This is the philosophy of SMEDEC, a department of EPCCI, which has launched the 1st SMEs development center in the Kingdom (SMEDEC), which started its operations in March 2001. The SMEDEC endeavors to foster entrepreneurship in



Participants in the EDP Training Program

Saudi Arabia, extend consultation services and technical, technological, legal and information assistance to the Chamber's members. It also aims at training SMEs administrative and technical cadres to help enhance the competitiveness and capacity of this sector, which accounts for the bulk of the Chamber's members.

Mr. Fawwaz Abdul Majid Al Yahya, 27, has just launched his small enterprise called Zukhruf Furniture Company, which will specialize in making all kinds of furniture with Islamic motifs and styles.

He is one of the 23 young Saudis who graduated last April 5 from the six-week extensive training program jointly sponsored and organized by the Eastern Province Chamber of Commerce and Industry (EPCCI) and the National Commercial Bank (NCB).

The training program, called Entrepreneurship Development Program (EDP), started last February 25, 2006, to provide training to young Saudis who are willing to undertake training on small and medium enterprises (SMEs) management as part of the national Saudization thrust. The ultimate goal is to provide jobs to Saudis.

I hope that his example will encourage more young Saudis to enroll in the EDP, a program that provides plenty of opportunities for those interested in improving their lives through the establishment of their own small and medium enterprises.

Interest in SMEs among Saudis is growing. After the first batch of 23 graduates of EDP, to which Yahya belonged, 21 more young Saudis will be graduating soon.

Selection to enroll in the EDP is not

really easy, and the most important requirement is that candidates must have the determination and willingness to pursue his chosen enterprise after graduation. Enthusiasm is the most important condition. In addition to being Saudis, age must be between 18-45, and preferably with university degree. I emphasize determination and enthusiasm of the candidates because these are basic where the success of each participant lies. Candidates are interviewed thoroughly to establish their willingness to the end their selected business venture. Participants enrolled in the EDP will have to pay only SR 1,500 to cover the costs of the training for six weeks period. The training, provided by six experts, includes all the skills needed to run a small enterprise, such as sourcing of funds, marketing, management, feasibility preparation, legal rights, skill development, information technology, accounting and many others.

Candidates who completed the six-week training program will select the

business sectors they would like to engage in, which include engineering industries, petrochemical, services, information technology, and educational activities. The National Commercial Bank (NCB) is the only bank that is providing support to enable young Saudis prepare themselves to launch small business ventures. NCB has partnered with EPCCI, as part of its corporate social responsibility to the Saudi people. After graduation from EDP, graduates will be required to submit the feasibility study of their selected business enterprise to SMEDEC for evaluation.

The entrepreneurship training is also extended to women. For the program, women are selected by the EPCCI businesswomen Center. EPCCI has utilized the services of female professors from the King Faisal University (KFU) to give them same training syllabus as that of the male trainees. The first female graduates of the SMEs EPCCI-NCB training program, 20 of them, graduated last month (June).



EPCCI gives certificate of merit to the best employee every month. Picture at right shows Mr. Basel A. Al Mullah of the Information Center receiving the certificate for the Arabic month of Rabiul Thani from the Secretary General, Mr. Abdulaziz K. Al Ayaf. Mr. Mohammad Haroon, Supervisor, Operations & Maintenance (pic. at left) received the certificate for the previous month.

