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6th SWYAA Global Assembly

October 4 - October 8, 2012



6th SWYAA Global Assembly

Purpose of the SWYAA Global Assembly

- a) To provide an opportunity for the former participating youth of the SWY program (hereafter ex-PYs) from various countries and different participating years to meet, and by sharing thoughts, strengthen their international alumni network,
- b) To provide opportunities for the ex-PYs to learn about the culture and people of the visiting country,
- c) To provide opportunities to the ex-PYs to be engaged in volunteer activities so that they can contribute to the society,
- d) To share information about post-program activities that are taking place around the world, and
- e) To revitalize SWYAA by hosting or participating in the Global Assembly.

Outline

- Title of the event: The 6th SWYAA Global Assembly – 17th International Reunion
- Dates: October 4 to 8, 2012
- Hosting organization: International Youth Exchange Organization of Japan (IYEO), SWYAA Bahrain
- Supported by: General Organization for Youth & Sports (GOYS), Government of Bahrain
- Main event: Conference for Post-Program Activities
- Participation fee: US\$350 (Early registration: US\$300)
- Participants: 118 participants from 21 countries

The 6th SWYAA Global Assembly was held under the patronage of Supreme Council for Youth and Sports President H.H. Shaikh Nasser bin Hamad Al Khalifa. The SWYAA Bahrain and GOYS formed its Organizing Committee to prepare for the 6th Global Assembly (GA) of the Ship for World Youth Alumni Association (SWYAA) that was held in Bahrain. The official program was held from October 4 to 8, 2012. SWYAA Bahrain GA Organizing Committee prepared the detailed schedule including the selection and coordination of various activities. SWYAA Bahrain GA Organizing Committee members were divided into several work groups where each group performed its tasks according to the main function the Committee had identified. Following is the list of work groups that were formed under the GA Organizing Committee:

- Chairperson
- Deputy Chairperson
- Food and accommodation
- Program and registration
- Press
- Transportation
- Giveaways
- Treasurer
- Website
- Conference for Post- Program Activity Work Group

Activity Schedule

Date	Time	Activities
Official Program		
Oct. 3 (Wed.)	All day	Arrival of participants
Oct. 4 (Thu.)	06:00 - 08:30	Breakfast at hotel
	09:15 - 11:50	Morning Assembly & ice breaking session
	12:10 - 13:40	Bahrain National Museum
	14:10 - 15:15	Lunch
	15:30 - 16:45	Bahrain Fort
	19:30 - 22:40	Opening Ceremony
Oct. 5 (Fri.)	06:00 - 09:00	Breakfast at hotel
	10:30 - 11:10	Bahrain Oil Museum
	12:00 - 14:00	Lunch
	14:30 - 16:50	Bahrain International Circuit
	17:00 - 21:45	Traditional dinner at Royal Equestrian Stables
Oct. 6 (Sat.)	06:00 - 09:00	Breakfast at hotel
	09:45 - 10:50	Beit Al Qur'an (Qur'an House)
	11:00 - 12:30	Al Fateh Mosque
	12:45 - 15:20	Lunch
	16:50 - 20:50	Conference for Post-Program Activities
	21:40 - 23:20	Dinner
Oct. 7 (Sun.)	06:00 - 09:00	Breakfast at hotel
	10:30 - 12:00	Institutional / Social contribution visits Group A: Gulf Petrochemical Industries Corporation (GPIC) Group B: Bahrain University Group C: Supreme Council for Women Group D: Muharraq Elderly Centre
	13:30 - 14:30	Lunch
	16:30 - 19:00	Group 1: Tour of Old Muharraq Area & traditional sweet "Halwa" factory Group 2: Free time
	20:30 - 23:00	Dinner
	Oct. 8 (Mon.)	06:00 - 09:00
Oct. 8 (Mon.)	09:00 - 11:30	Group 1: Free time Group 2: Tour of Old Muharraq Area & traditional sweet "Halwa" factory
	13:00 - 14:00	Lunch
	15:00 - 18:00	Free time
	19:30 - 22:30	Farewell Party
	Oct. 9 (Tue.)	All day

Thursday, October 4

Most of the participants arrived a day prior to the opening of the 6th SWYAA Global Assembly in Bahrain (hereafter, GA). Participants enjoyed breakfast with their old friends to update their stories. After breakfast, a morning assembly was held as the first official program of the GA. Ms. Eman Al Banna, member of the GA committee delivered opening remarks and welcomed all the participants. Schedule and basic information were shared to participants followed by an introduction of the committee members. Two ice-breaking sessions were held during the morning assembly for all the participants to meet new ex-PYs from other batches. During the first session, participants formed two lines facing each other to introduce themselves. On the second session, participants worked together in a group to make small floatable ships using materials provided by the organizers. These two exercises helped participants to bond and create new friendships. After the morning assembly, participants visited the Bahrain National Museum wearing the official GA polo shirts. There, participants learned the history, culture, saw examples of the old market and traditional costumes of Bahrain guided by local ex-PYs.

After lunch, participants visited Qal'at al-Bahrain (Fort Bahrain), a UNESCO World Heritage Site. This fort was built by the Portuguese during the Age of Great Voyages (15th century), when they were looking for new marine routes and occupied the island. For this reason it is still called "Qal'at al Portugal." This fort acted as a trade base connecting India, Africa and Europe. Having big land and good view of the city made easier to govern its people and land.

The opening ceremony took place at Arad Fort, a venue exclusive for official government cultural events. The venue was specially decorated for this event, sponsored by H.M. Sheikh Nasser Bin Hamad Al Khalifa, President of Supreme Council for Youth and Sports (SCYS) and General Organization for Youth and Sports (GOYS). H.M. Sheikh Nasser Bin Hamad Al Khalifa opened the ceremony with remarks followed by a speech by H.E. Japanese Ambassador Shigeki Sumi. Toshio Kuzuma, Director for International Youth Exchange Affairs, Office of the Director General for Policies on Cohesive Society, Cabinet Office, Government of Japan read Minister for State for Youth Affairs, Ikko Nakatsuka's message. Then special film made for this GA about the history of Bahrain was screened on a wall of the fort. After official gift exchanges, participants and all the guests in total of approximately 320 people gathered for a commemorative photo. Through this ceremony, participants could see and learn how the

Government of Bahrain is focused on youth development programs. Knowing that the Bahraini Government is proud of Bahrain being a member of the SWY participating countries which is hosted by the Japanese Government, participants felt how valuable it was to be a participant of the SWY program.

Friday, October 5

Participants visited Oil Museum after breakfast. Local guides explained the history of oil industry in Bahrain and, Bahraini participants translated the explanations into English. Participants learned that pearls were the main industry until they found oil in 1932. Bahrain was the first of the gulf countries to discover oil. Since then, Bahrain has had great interaction with neighboring countries such as Iraq and Saudi Arabia over oil business. After learning these historical facts, participants visited the first oil well of Bahrain, located right next to the museum. Group photo was taken at the end of the visit in front of the museum and participants moved to the lunch venue, Al Areen Wildlife Park. After lunch, participants enjoyed seeing animals such as camels and eagles in the park. Then, participants visited the famous Formula One circuit course of the Bahrain International Circuit. Participants experienced go-carting in the actual circuit course drive and enjoyed its speed and thrills. After 2.5 hours of visit to the circuit, participants moved to Royal Equestrian Centre, the venue for dinner. Participants enjoyed dinner in Bahraini traditional tents and tables around it. Before the dinner, participants enjoyed watching the performance of royal family's horses and had an opportunity to ride them. This valuable experience and having Bahraini traditional dinner in a special venue made the night very special and memorable for all the participants.

Saturday, October 6

The first program of the 3rd day was the visit to Beit Al Quraan, a museum of the Koran. Many types of Koran are on display. The biggest one is 60cm/80cm book type, and the smallest one was written on sesame, rice, and chic bean. The museum has Korans from all over the world, for example, Pakistan, Morocco, India, Turkey, Qatar, Syria, all with different types of letters and designs, as well as one written on antique leather, and also the first printed Koran. The visit to the museum gave the participants the feeling that Islam has been a very popular religion in the world for a long time. Participants had their group photo taken in front of the museum, and then went to Al Fateh Mosque, the largest mosque in Bahrain. It is a beautiful mosque, full

of specially ordered items of different countries, such as carpets, lamps, stained glasses, and Italian marble. This mosque can fit up to 7,000 people during prayer times. In the entrance, Hijabs and Burkas are provided for free to travelers and non-Muslim visitors so they can go in freely, except on Fridays. Participants went in as groups and went through the Mosque with the guide. The most impressive thing was the “mihrab,” a niche in the wall of the mosque. Every prayer will face that way while praying because that is the direction of the Kaaba in Mecca. Also it is the world’s oldest speaker.

After, lunch at the restaurant, participants went back to the hotel and the biggest event of the GA, the Conference for Post-Program activities started.

Following are the excerpts of the Social Contribution activities implemented by different countries that were presented after the report of the Tokyo Conference for the Ex-Participating Youth of the Ship for World Youth Program that was held in March 2012.

Bahrain: House cleaning project for less privileged homes; organizing clothes for charity; visiting ill children in the hospital; contribution for Somalia Hunger, for Arakan Myanmar Refugee, Syrian war refugee, and Israel hospital (Syrian borders).

Australia: Because the country is big, the activities are mostly done by individuals. For example, forest planting and some members are implementing library project in Fiji by collecting books from ex-PYs.

Brazil: Pre-departure training for future PYs. Also joined Blood Donation Day in 2011. Action plan for the future are listed after; increase interaction with Japanese communities in various cities. Planning to implement project similar to Homestay+1 during FIFA World Cup that will be hosted in Brazil.

Canada: Donation for Great East Japan Earthquake and Tsunami victims. Due to the large dimensions of the country their projects are handled mostly by each individual. “E180” Internet platform has been launched to share personal knowledge.

Egypt: SWY 2nd, 4th and 6th participants are still active in SWYAA Egypt. Network between Japan and Egypt is strong, and in the Japan-Egypt Network (JEN) hosted by the Japanese Embassy, they have

introduced the SWY program. The Japanese Ambassador joined the whole JEN’s event.

Greece: Greek ex-PYs have been implementing many Homestay+1 projects. Upon completion of the projects, reports are uploaded to the website (www.swyworld.net). 24 hours SWYAA Radio will be launched soon with the aim of helping the communication between SWY members.

Japan: Project “One More Child Goes To School” is still operational by donating stationeries, books, black boards to Sri Lanka’s schools. Great East Japan Earthquake reconstruction in several prefectures: Iwate prefecture is organizing mental support programs. Organize traditional costumes trial event and “Engawa café,” so that people will not forget the earthquake and tsunami; Miyagi prefecture received donations of used computers with support of a company in which an ex-PY is working; Yamagata prefecture invited people in Fukushima prefecture who affected by the tragedy to visit hot springs; Kubo Kentaro (SWY22) collected messages with photos to the victims from ex-PYs all over the world and made a exhibition; Rina Komiya (SWY21) organized an event named “Action for UK Japan” with UK volunteer students.

Kenya: AA’s website was launched (<http://swyaakenya.org>) in 2011. “Tupendane” group is supporting a school managed by ex-PY David Jonathan Okwiri (SWY22), located in a slum. Ex-PYs are doing monthly clean up gathering, and are selling arts, crafts and accessory secure income for running the school.

Mexico: Two years ago, SWYAA Mexico got the full responsibility for choosing SWY participants and trying to strengthen the relationship with the Japanese Embassy. On the 25th anniversary of the SWY program, SWYAA Mexico is planning a Silver Jubilee event. Also, SWYAA Mexico is trying to find ex-PYs on Facebook to strengthen networking among PYs.

Oman: SWYAA Oman has been implementing Homestay +1. They have hosted children for two weeks from Fukushima prefecture, and area affected by the Great East Japan Earthquake. SWYAA Oman

has created “SWYAA Oman day.” On this day, ex-PYs commit themselves to spend one full day on social contribution activities during the month of Ramadan. One activity was to provide free meals to fasting foreign workers who did not afford proper meals after a long day of fasting. Another activity was to donate blood and provide gifts for hospitalized children who could not go out of the hospital. This event gives opportunity for the ex-PYs to further interact with SWYers from other batches. Detailed information can be found on the website www.swyworld.net. SWYAA Oman also celebrated the 14th anniversary of the relationship between Japan and Oman.

Sweden: Implemented a Nordic Reunion (Sweden, Finland, Norway) in 2011. 25 participants from 9 countries joined the reunion and it was held in Aland Island between Sweden and Finland. The reunion dates coincided with the Hiroshima Atomic Bomb Memorial Night, so participants danced to perform Soran dance in front of 400 people and taught other visitors how to fold paper cranes. SWYAA Sweden is also planning “stay tuned” project in 2013, it is to collect SWY videos and make SWY promotional videos and also to share memories.

Spain: SWYAA Spain is working to promote SWY and youth participation in some conferences and University festivals. The members are also organizing programs to spread Japanese culture. Language classes, cultural classes are provided at a private language center opened by Carme Feliu (SWY13). To keep the SWY spirit alive, SWYAA Spain organized a reunion to celebrate the 20th anniversary of SWY2. Also many individuals are involved in projects, such as international camps and creating NGOs.

Turkey: SWYAA Turkey organized a relief project for the earthquake victims in Van, Turkey. Preparation for SWY25 Cross-Cultural Understanding course members to visit Ankara in 2013 is taking place. Also, organized an international mini reunion in Izmir with many international and local ex-PYs.

UAE: Number of the members has increased from 15 to approximately 100 members now. A summer camp for local children was organized in Sharjah

to teach leadership and teamwork. The members organized an annual reunion during Ramadan.

Venezuela: SWYAA Venezuela is engaged in the youth development program “LLL (Learn Live Love)” project. This educational project aims at the eliminating poverty and to stop the increase of poverty and socially alienated people. SWYAA Venezuela took part in a volunteer reforestation volunteer activity, cultural exchange programs, cleaning projects, celebrating Japanese Emperor’s birthday, “Undokai” Japanese sports festival as part of the “GOEN” voluntary activities.

Yemen: SWYAA Yemen joined the worldwide grass roots movement aiming environmental protection called “350.org.” Also, ex-PYs appeared on TV show under the theme of “After participating SWY program.” Ex-PYs also joined Japanese Embassy’s cultural event and donated food, clothes to the less privileged people, and also donated blood. Also SWYAA members volunteered in street cleaning activities.

Peru: SWYAA Peru has conducted 4-week long training for SWY24 delegates. Also, Homestay+1 projects and charity concerts, as well as a SWY camp to motivate ex-PYs to remain active. SWYAA Peru is also engaged in the “LLL” project. It has been decided that the next GA will be held in Peru in late August 2013. The optional tour will take place in early September.

Upon completion of the presentations by each country, a brief explanation about the current situation of the SWY program took place. After that, a brief report was made on the proposal that was raised during the mini-reunion in Turkey. Once all countries had presented, it was way past dinnertime, so the following discussions were cutdown. Participants moved to the restaurant and there, Toshio Kuzuma, Director for International Youth Exchange Affairs of the Cabinet Office made a brief speech regarding the efforts being carried out by the Cabinet Office of Japan in order to assure that the SWY program will continue to exist.

Sunday, October 7

Participating youths were divided into four groups from A to D and each group visited a different facility.

Group A visited Gulf Petrochemical Industries Corporation (GPIC), which is the largest petrochemical enterprise in Bahrain. Firstly, Mr. Abdularahman A. Hussain Jawahery, President of GPIC made a speech welcoming the participants and emphasizing how meaningful the SWY program is, by sharing his personal experience of a misunderstanding he had in a business meeting with a Japanese company, caused by cultural differences. His words left great impression on the participants such as, “The offer of such a valuable opportunity for world youth is the best investment, and the Japanese Government is implementing a wonderful project.” After the speech, participants received basic information of the company through an explanatory presentation and visited a room with a miniature of the facility. GPIC produces ammonium and methanol made of natural gas, and urea made by ammonium and carbon dioxide. They also take a positive attitude toward reduction of the emission of greenhouse gases. Participants also visited the actual facility on a tour bus. They observed factories and a fish preserve which is run by GPIC in order to help fishing industry. Throughout the visit, many of the participating youth admired GPIC for giving examples of its charitable work and the close distance between its president and employees. After the tour, participants had lunch in GPIC Club, which is a recreational facility for GPIC employees. After having an official photo taken, participants returned to the hotel.

Group B visited University of Bahrain, which is the largest university in the country that has nine faculties, and the only university in which undergraduate and graduate degrees are both available. Firstly, the ex-PYs visited the Central Library, which was designed by Japanese architect Kenzo Tange. It is the biggest library among four libraries in the University of Bahrain. They then learnt the history of the University, established in 1986, and received explanations about its new system of electronic books. The visit to the library was followed by a campus tour by bus, during which participants observed facilities such as College of Information and Technology and College of Education. The most impressive experience was a tour of Zain E-learning Centre inside the College of Information and Technology. It is sponsored and financially supported by enterprises. Participants also visited a studio equipped with a state-of-the-art equipment in Media Centre and listened to a live performance of the piano, the flute and the guitar in the multipurpose hall performed by university musical group. After the tour, ex-PYs had a light meal called shawarma and were received warmly and hospitably by faculty and students. Throughout this visit, many

participants were surprised when admiring the beautiful scenery of the campus and its latest facilities.

Group C went to Supreme Council for Women (SCW) and had a lecture from the representative from Media affairs on how the council is set up, how the SCW is approaching, and how they works together with the youth. Participants learned that H.R.H. Princess Sabeeka bint Ibrahim Al Khalifa, serves as the president of SCW. Participants also learned that Bahrain sets up “women’s empowerment” as a national commitment and that they conduct practical programs, such as training for woman entrepreneurs, while giving meticulous services like counseling and legal support for women. Also they learnt that the SCW is active on cooperating with local organizations, neighboring countries and the UN, and are working to improve women’s position in society inside and outside of Bahrain. The most interesting fact to many participants was their cooperation with youth. SCW has an organization called Youth Committee, which also participates and organize events focused on promoting woman’s rights, and women’s empowerment. It was wonderful to realize that the youth, bearers of this country’s future, are very active in this Council.

Group D visited the Muharraq Elderly Society and were warmly welcomed by music played with drums and a leather instrument called Habban, and received a Mashmoom leaf shower and necklaces, Bahraini sweets, and Arabic coffee. About 15 elderly women were sitting around the room that had many shelves decorated in traditional Bahraini fashion. After the music performance, a brief summary about the activities the society carries and the objectives of the society was presented. Participants also had the opportunity to ask some questions to Ms. Latifa Al Burshaid, President of the local development project at the Ministry of Social Development, and engage in some discussions. Later on participants had a chance to see their handmade product, and, after that, we sit with them and tried a traditional breakfast, try to engage in easy Arabic conversations that they had learnt during the SWY program. The elderly women cheered when participants spoke Arabic, but the more difficult conversations took place with the assistance of the Bahraini ex-PYs. It was a great opportunity to interact with the local society, and elderly women with wonderful smiles. In the very end, participants showed their gratitude by improvising Spanish and Japanese songs.

After a short break at the hotel, half of the participating youths went to Muharraq Old Town Area, a UNESCO World Heritage site, while the other half enjoyed free time.

Group arrived at Muharraq Old Town Area at 4:30 pm and looked around its unique buildings. They observed many historical aspects of the area, such as a demonstration of hand-woven traditional clothing by four women, an exhibition of Bahraini traditional handcrafts and traditional style housing. It was especially remarkable that the outside area maintained the traditional aspect, while the inside of all its buildings was modernistic, and many of them were open for its inhabitants. Participants also visited a factory of halwa, a traditional Bahraini delicacy. Firstly, participants tried halwa in its specialty store, and after that visited the factory located within walking distance. The production process is overwhelming with enormous iron pots and gas burners.

After the visit to Muharraq Old Town Area, participants moved directly to the dinner venue, Majestic Hotel. There, they enjoyed its buffet style dinner and performed several dances such as Soran Dance and Latin Dance on the stage. Regardless of each participant's participating year, the dinner got into swing as if it was the farewell dinner of the final day, and official program of this day finished at 23:00 with an upsurge.

Monday, October 8

The group was divided in the same two groups as the previous day until noon. Half of the participants that visited Muharraq Old Town Area the day before had free time for the whole day except for lunch and dinner and the other group went to Muharraq Old Town Area during the morning time since they had free time the day before. Participants had lunch in a restaurant in Bahrain Mall, and those who wished to shop stayed in the mall until 17:00 before returning to the hotel.

Participants arrived at Elite Resort & Spa, the venue for the farewell dinner. In the beginning, Ms. Tomoko Okawara, President of IYEO summarized the whole GA program and expressed her gratitude to all the committee members. After Ms. Okawara's speech, committee members stated how they felt throughout the GA and participants watched the official summary video edited by committee members. Representatives of each country received completion certificates and distributed those to all the participating youth, and finally, the official photo session took place just before dinner. Participants enjoyed the buffet-style dinner and tried to chat and to say goodbye to everyone once they had finished eating. The great revelry continued until 22:40 and the official program of the 6th SWYAA Global Assembly came to a close.

Comment by the President of IYEO

Tomoko Okawara

SWYAA Global Assembly (hereafter: GA) took place from October 4th to 8th in Bahrain with 118 participants from 21 countries. Traditional dances and music at the opening ceremony, which took place at the fantastic Arad-Fort, made for a great atmosphere. Many local broadcasters broadcasted the ceremony and it was indeed a nationwide welcome from the kingdom.

During the opening ceremony, His Majesty Sheikh Nasser Bin Hamad Al Khalifa showed his gratitude to the government of Japan for implementing this program that benefits youth all over the world. He also evaluated that the GA is a great and unique opportunity for the youth to develop themselves, sharing the idea of mutual understanding, cross-cultural understanding, tolerance and the importance of cooperation. Because of all those reasons, he believed it was a great honor to host the GA in Bahrain.

It was my first time visiting a country in Middle East. Unfortunately, media always broadcasts dangerous image of the region, and because of that, I was worried

about visiting Bahrain for the first time. But what I saw in Bahrain was completely different from what the media portrays. They seemed to be living in a safe and gentle society. With the warm welcome from the Bahraini ex-PYs and their dedication, the image and view I had of the people and the nation in the Middle East have changed. "Seeing is believing." I strongly felt the danger for believing stereotypes and judging from them.

By visiting Bahrain National Museum and Al Fateh Mosque; and through the dinner at the royal horse show, participants could learn and experience the history and traditional culture of Bahrain. To see a modern side of Bahrain, participants visited some institutes and the international circuit and experienced the high-tech car race, in which the results are automatically shared on Facebook. During this GA, participants could learn from the ancient to the modern side of Bahrain from many perspectives.

During the Conference for Post-Program Activities, representatives from each of the participating countries presented the post-program activities of their countries.

Also, after my explanation of the situation of the program which Government of Japan has decided to discontinue the SWY program as a result of the budget screening process, participants discussed on how to support the program in order for it to be continued. Many opinions and thoughts were shared as follows: SWY program creates many fans of Japan all over the world, and continuously contributes on developing youth that can be future leaders. To have these essential people in the world could be very beneficial to Japan. It was very impressive for me to see that all the participants were very passionate and agreed to appeal

the importance of the SWY program to the Japanese government through contributing to the world using SWYAA's wide network, and try their best to restart the program. They have promised to cooperate for SWY's future and bid a farewell. All of us promised to see each other in Peru next year and returned home in various parts of the world.

At the end, I would like to thank the Government of Bahrain and SWYAA Bahrain for their dedication to make this GA a great success. Shukran

Comment by the SWYAA Bahrain President

Ahmed A. Seyadi

Oct 2012 was a special month for all the Bahraini SWYers and for SWYAA Bahrain. This is when Bahrain hosted the 6th SWYAA Global Assembly.

Those SWY friends who participated would agree with me that the SWYAA Global Assembly reflects a brilliant mix. Participants from many different age brackets, friends coming from many different corners of earth, participants that speak different languages (Arabic, English, Japanese, Spanish, French, Russian, Swedish and more), and people that never met before today, with different beliefs, different backgrounds and experiences, and many more contrasting attributes adding to the colorful mix. As I scanned through the list of participants, I subconsciously smiled with joy. The same group of people with all the above differences share as much in common re-enforced with passion. The participating group shared the same unique experience connecting them together. They all have the passion to open up to the world and to other cultures with respect, they are all looking forward to meeting new people from other countries, meeting others that speak other languages,

meeting others that differ in their beliefs and cultures, and of course learning from each other. It is a mix of people with such diversity forming a unified family with hopes for a better tomorrow. Zooming out just a little distance to see the composed picture, I can see that the spirit of the SWY program can last for years to come with the presence of the participants like the ones I met in SWYAA Global Assembly Bahrain 2012.

The 6th SWYAA Global Assembly 2012 (GA6) came to life as a direct result of the combined effort and dedication of the GA6 team of ex-PYs and volunteers that directly supported by the General Organization for Youth and Sport (GOYS), which sponsored the event and provided its logistics. The team worked with full commitment over months preparing to welcome our participants. The GA6 was a success with the help and support of our participating friends, without them, it would not have been as fruitful as it turned out. Special thank you goes to all those who made the time to attend and participate with us in the 6th SWYAA Global Assembly took place in Bahrain.

Comment by the GA Organizing Committee

Eman Al Banna

On behalf of the Ship for World Youth Alumni Association of Bahrain and the Global Assembly organizing committee we would like to thank the IYEO for giving Bahrain the privilege of hosting the 6th Global Assembly. We are honored to say that the Global Assembly in Bahrain turned in to a big success marked by the big smiles and gratitude that the participants were left with after the event. The preparations leading up to the event itself were extremely challenging to all of us as and took full time commitment and dedication over the course of

almost a year before the GA commencement date. This would have not been possible without the support of the General Organization for Youth and Sports and the efforts of each and every Bahraini ex-PYs and volunteers, who took an active role in the GA's organizing committee and sub-committees.

The main Steering Committee behind organizing this event was made up of a total of eight members; three from the General Organization of Youth and Sports and five from the Ship for World Youth Alumni Association of Bahrain.

The fact that we had tremendous support from GOYS is one of the main reasons behind our success. The working relationship between both parties were complimentary to each other since GOYS was the governmental support to hosting official events in Bahrain and ex-PYs were able to take an active role adding a great value with their experiences from attending previous Global Assemblies and from organizing previous unofficial reunions in Bahrain.

Under the Steering Committee came the sub-committees which were headed by one member from the steering committee. These sub-committees include: Program and Registration, Press, Treasury, Welcome and Farewell, Giveaways, Transportation, Food and Accommodation, and GA Administration Committee. A total of twenty ex-PYs and volunteers took an active role in these sub-committees.

The Global Assembly was attended by an impressive number of people from the SWY community – totaling 118 participants from 21 countries across the globe, who assembled in Bahrain representing different backgrounds, beliefs, ideas, but certainly bound together by the same SWY spirit.

The Opening Ceremony marked the start of our success story, as evidenced by widespread publicity and exposure that was awarded the SWY Program, as the His Majesty the King's son His Royal Highness Sheikh Nasser Bin Hamad Al Khalifa inaugurated the evening and delivered the keynote speech. The high-profile event boasted numerous VIP guests including the King's Younger son Sheikh Khalid Bin Hamad Al Khalifa, a number of Bahrain's Ministers, His Excellency the Japanese Ambassador to Bahrain, in addition to numerous other Ambassadors and other VIPs. The event took place in Arad Fort, one of the cultural and historical sites of importance to Bahrain.

During the five day program, we were able to take the participants on a journey dedicated to discovering Bahrain's history, culture, and modern life of Bahrain.

Historical site visits included visits to: Bahrain Fort, Bahrain National Museum, Tree of Life and Oil Museum. The Cultural learning experience was through visiting the following activities: Tour of Old Muharraq Area, visit to a Halwa (traditional Bahraini sweet) Factory, visit to Al Fateh Mosque, visit to Beit Al Quraan (House of Quraan), and the Bahraini Night experience in the Royal Equestrian Stables. Modern Life style was experienced through visiting Bahrain International Circuit where participants were given the opportunity to experience go-kart racing, and a visit to the Bahrain City Centre Mall, one of the most modern shopping malls in Bahrain.

Institutional visits featured four main themes: women empowerment, environmental protection, youth development, and social contribution through visiting the following institutes respectively: Supreme Council for Women, Gulf Petrochemical Industries Company, Bahrain University, and Elderly Homes. Moreover, during those five days participants were able to share experiences, exchange ideas, create new friendships and learn from each other.

Knowing that the SWY program stands at a crossroad today, the Conference for Post-Program Activities was a major platform in the Global Assembly's schedule where participants shared thoughts about their post-program activities in their respective countries and most importantly came up with ideas to continue the SWY program through studying possibilities of starting new projects and reviving existing ones.

The exposure the Global Assembly gained through Bahrain's press, TV, and radio was invaluable to the SWY program because it demonstrated that the program continues to make a difference, touch lives, and produces the leaders of today and tomorrow.

Unfortunately, happy moments pass as quick as a dream. However, we only part to meet again. Until then, keep on SWYing!