









Issue 1- June **2012**

"A journey from Delmun, Tylos, Arados, Awal to Bahrain"

"I think that it will be a challenge for the Discover Bahrain team to exceed the success of their very first event because I believe that they have reached the sky." Samar Salameh, Canada

"This was an incredible experience which I will never ever forget."
Mandy Kaempf, Germany

"I had an amazing week with many new friends and I learned more than I ever could have from reading books or newspapers."
Mira Green, USA



Introduction to **Discover Bahrain**

Discover Bahrain is a project initiated by the Good Word Society (GWS) which aims to invite the world to discover the heart and essence of Bahrain.

The discovery process takes place through the people of Bahrain, who freely relay Bahrain's rich history; diverse society; religious tolerance; hospitality; vibrant economy; advances in technology, education, health care and

architecture; and its peaceful and unique culture.

Discover Bahrain seeks to target specific audiences from around the world with the intention of arranging for visits from corporate and public sector organizations order to provide an introduction to Bahrain's history and society.

The aim of the program is to promote a balanced and

transparent view of the Kingdom of Bahrain by:

- 1- Inviting influential people from the global community to Bahrain.
- 2- Providing them with an authentic and transparent introduction to Bahrain.
- 3- Building ties and relationship with delegates so that they are excited and keen to promote their experience and views of Bahrain within their own community.









Welcoming the **delegates**

The welcoming ceremony was held in the House Boat restaurant located on Amwai Island.

The delegates enjoyed a unique dining experience featuring various Asian cuisines, a very warm and friendly atmosphere and delightful service.

The ceremony started with a welcoming speech by Ms. Marwa Mohammed, the Head of Media followed by the Project Manager, Mr. Ahmed Buhazza.

Ms. Marwa led two icebreaking activities between the delegates and the hosts. The first, asked guests to learn three facts about a new friend and to report those facts to the whole group.

In the second activity, delegates swapped facts about their home countries with Bahrainis and reported these to the whole group. These activities created a great deal of laughter and convivial conversation, facilitating friendships that were to grow over the coming days.





We love Bahrain. This was, and will remain, our inspiration to carry out this project. The Discover Bahrain team started with just three members, but we grew to more than 50 members who volunteered many hours to make this project a success. Our team members included Bahrainis and non-Bahrainis working together to showcase our beloved Bahrain and to bring about an informative, orderly and safe program.

The Discover Bahrain volunteers showed their love for this country through their tireless efforts. The spirit of love, peace and understanding generated through the Discover Bahrain program will live on in the hearts and minds of the volunteers and the visitors alike.

Ahmed BuhazzaProject Director

Gail Heck- Sweeny is originally from the United States but has been living and working for Agilent



Technologies in Beijing, China, for the last 8 years.

Although she has visited Other Middle Eastern Countries, this is her first visit to a GCC country. On the first day, she had her hand painted with henna which she thought was really fun and beautiful.

She has very much enjoyed meeting all of other delegates and the volunteers and looks forward to learning Imore about the history and culture of Bahrain.

Gail Heck-Sweeny USA

"Discover Bahrain project is a very unique project that allows the delegates and the volunteers to



discover Bahrain through a very practical plan. The plan breaks down the whole program into themes, making sure to cover all of the important social and historical aspects of the country. The plan also included Bahrainis families in the evening social events, an opportunity enjoyed by all. I'm looking forward to the growth of this very special program."

Marwa Mohd Head of Media

Delegate from Estonia said that she has visited other Middle Eastern counties such as Turkey and Egypt.



Before coming she did some online research so she had an overall idea about how Bahrain would be. However,

she said, she expected to see more greenery and trees around the island. Reet also commented on the Bahrian

National Museum and said it was very spacious, well organized and informative. Reet felt that the trip was quite nice and there is nothing that can be done to make it any better.

Reet Kõiv Estonia

Culture and Heritage Day

The second day started by visiting Bahrain National Museum. The tour guide gave the delegates a brief introduction about the history of the museum, and then she took them to visit several exhibitions. The delegates were impressed with the art exhibit in the museum. The visitors seemed very interested in learning more about the history of Bahrain and they tossed around guesses as to the mass deaths in the Delmon period. After the museum the group went to Sheik Ibrahim Center in Muharrag. The delegates enjoyed visiting the surrounding houses including the the Coffee House, the Bin Matter House and The Children's Library. The delegates were impressed by the work that went into refurbishing the traditional houses. Next, the group went "Qal'at al-Bahrain" also known as the Bahrain Fort and previously known as the Portugal Fort and they learned from tour guide, Nada, the history of the forts in Bahrain. Dinner that night took place at the Good



Word Society (GWS), located in Muharraq City. Some of the delegates wore traditional dresses such as Thobe and Qitra for the men and Thob El-Nashel for the women. Bahraini ladies from the GWS played and sang traditional songs, for the women delegates and, amid much laughter, taught the women delegates Bahraini women's dances. Suhair Showed the delegates typical Bahraini party dresses and explained how each were made and their significance. A grand time was enjoyed by all.

A Surprise **Birthday Party**

When the Discover Bahrain Team learned it was Dexter McKinney's birthday, they sprang into action to put together an impromptu celebration. Feted with silly string, air cannons and cake,

Dexter was first surprised and then touched by the good wishes of his hosts who said: With each golden ray of the sun may Allah decorate you with health, happiness and prosperity.















Margus Lepa is from Estonia where he works as a chairman of a media board. He visited the



He used to think that Saudi Arabia and Bahrain would be the same but now, after this trip to Bahrain, he knows that there are differences between these countries. Margus expects that Bahrain will gain even more influence in relation to other countries in the future. Margus particularly enjoyed the Sheik Ibrahim Center.

Margus Lepa Estonia





Alyaa Al Ezzi is an Iraqi citizen but she has lived and worked in Morocco for several years.

Although she visited some of the GCC countries before, this was her first visit to Bahrain.

Alyaa was particularly impressed by the high level of development in Bahrain and the education among the Bahrainis. She found Bahrainis very open-minded and welcoming toward foreigners. She also liked the atmosphere and the historical depth of Bahrain where people still cherish and maintain the old houses. She recommended that Bahrain should start hosting some youth programs in these old houses.

Alyaa Al Ezzi Morocco



Education & Business Women Day



The day began at the University of Bahrain, where delegates were briefed on the history and academic programs of the University, as well as on the generous financial aid available to all students, including foreign students. Delegates were treated to a tour of the campus, including the library and the media center, where they had the opportunity to act out a mock TV news show.

Later, the tour moved on to the Al Areen Wildlife Park, built to protect rare Arabian species including the oryx, adax, and reem gazelle, and hundreds of other animals and birds. In the afternoon, delegates met with representatives from the Ministry of Education, learning about Bahrain's primary and secondary schools. They learned that Bahrain has the oldest public education system in the region, teachers from around the world, and the highest literacy rate among the Gulf states.

The day ended with a visit to the Chamber of Commerce to meet with some of Bahrain's businesswomen. One of the entrprenurs, Mrs. Ahlam Janahi, was born in Kuwait, lived in Saudi Arabia, and now lives in Bahrain where she started her own business. She feels that Bahrain is very open with regards to women working in business, empowers women to succeed, and offers the supports necessary to advance as businesswomen in

the country. Mrs. Janahi feels that Bahrain is progressing, becoming more advanced in education, and coping with the development process along with other countries in the region. She encourages youth in the country to not wait for a job to come along, but rather to go out and create their own businesses. She emphasized that Bahraini youth are capable of great accomplishments with the full support of the government.













is an initiative to promote and enhance the image of Bahrain in the world. The initiative would not be possible without a dedicated team, excited to share their pride in Bahrain. From communicating with delegates from around the world, to organizing their visit, the Discover Bahrain team has excelled, despite geographical distances. Led by Mohd Abdeen, Discover Bahrain has been well-publicized outside Bahrain, and teamwork has been key to its success.

Mohd Abdeen General Coordinator

Nelta Edwards, a sociology professor from the state of Alaska in the USA, enjoyed the delegation's visit to the University of Bahrain. She was impressed by the modern, high-tech radio and TV studios, and by the professionals that contribute to the University's success. Nelta noted that Al Areen Wildlife Park offers spacious, wide spaces for the park's animals to live, and enjoyed learning about the different types of deer in the region. Sipping lemonade with mint for the first time was a treat for Nelta!

Nelta Edwards USA



Dexter McKinney, from the USA, visited Bahrain for the first time with Discover Bahrain. Before his visit, he did not know much about the country, but was eager to learn more. After only a few days in the country, he embraced and was embraced by the friendly people of Bahrain, and was especially interested in the religious traditions of Bahrain. Dexter was surpised with a birthday party during his visit, and felt privileged to be among new friends and honorary family in Bahrian. During his visit to the University of Bahrain, he

found out that Bahraini citizens pay a very small amount for tuition and fees, and he admired that. He expressed the



wish that his home University, the University of Syracuse, would invite professionals and students from the University of Bahrain to the US to participate in intercultural dialogue and an exchange program.

Dexter McKinney USA



A Surprise Birthday Party

Discover Bahrain members and the delegates celebrated the birthday of Mohammed Abdeen, the General Coordinator of D.B., at a surprise party in his honor on Sunday, January 22nd. The celebration took place at Bahrain City Centre at Rendezvous Restaurant. The birthday boy, who blew out his own



candles, was genuinely surprised. "On your birthday we wish you much pleasure

and joy:

We hope all of your wishes come

May each hour and minute be filled with delight,

And your birthday be perfect for you!"

Social and Religion Day



The day started with a visit to the Child Welfare Center where the delegates were introduced to the functions of the center. Representatives talked about the different centers throughout Bahrain and the way that the government helps divorced or unsupported women and orphans and how adoption and fostering practices differ from other areas in the world. The visitors were taken on a tour around the center to look at the facilities.



Next, the delegates visited The Supreme Council for Women (SCW). The council representatives presented a video that showed the journey of the SCW for the last 10 years and its ongoing progress.

The delegates and Discover Bahrain team had conversations with Sh. Deena Al-Khalifa and other workers of the SCW about the work of the council and its upcoming events and programs.

They then stopped at Shatha Sea Food Restaurant for Lunch.

As an Islamic country, the team of Discover Bahrain had to take the delegates to one of the most important places in Bahrain which is Al-Fateh Mosque. Delegates had a tour of the mosque by the Shaikh who gave them a brief introduction of Islam and its history through his spectacular storytelling.

Upon entering the mosque all the women had to wear Islamic dress, the abaya and a scarf. The men wore Thoubs. The delegates and the team sat together on the floor where the Shaikh told them the story of how Jews, Christians and Muslims all belonged to the same monotheistic tradition. The Shaikh guided the delegates to the second floor so they could view the evening prayer. It was a great opportunity for the Muslim participants to pray in the grand mosque all together, while the non-Muslims had the chance to observe.

Bahrain is a country which respects all religions and it has different types of churches, so the delegates were taken to one



of those churches. The pastor of the church invited leaders from other churches, Jewish people and Muslims to represent their own religion. Each of the representatives shared their experiences living and worshiping in Bahrain. Toward the end the delegates shared own their feelings and opinions about what they had learned so far in Bahrain.

The last stop was a Pizza Hut Restaurant for dinner.

10:10 PM "This day was one of the dearest days to my heart and made me thank Allah (God) that I live in this great kingdom, that even though small by size, it is definitely large by the heart of its people."

Shaikha Shwaiter, DB Media Team









Blake is an American citizen, who has visited some GCC countries



before but this was his first time in Bahrain. He found that the Bahraini people are very friendly, open-minded and have more personal freedom than in other GCC countries.

He admired the opportunities that are given to Bahraini women and how their rights are protected.

Moreover, he was happy with the visit to Al-Fatih Mosque which was very productive for him to learn more about Islam.

Blake Stilwell USA

Meredith Green, an MPA student from New York in the USA. came to Bahrain exited to have the opportunity to participate in intercultural and interfaith dialogue and learn more about the unique island country. She found Bahrain to be a progressive jewel in the Gulf region, and is deeply grateful to her gracious hosts who embraced her as an honorary family member during her visit. During the delegations visit to the Child Protection Center, Meredith noted the holistic approach to foster care in the country, attempting to keep children united with family to the greatest extent possible. She was especially moved by the opportunity to dance and sing with Bahraini women, celebrate the coexistence of different religions in the country, and learn about the country's education system. Meredith Green USA

"The only information that I knew about Bahrain before coming was that it is one of the



GCC countries and rich in oil," said Michael McLean. Michael is a Public Diplomacy student from the USA and this was his first time traveling to Bahrain.

His first impressions were that Bahrain was a clean, very progressive, and modern country with friendly and peaceful citizens. He was happy to learn that there are a lot of American citizens working and living in Bahrain.

He discovered more about human rights in Bahrain during the visit to the Child Welfare Center and the Supreme Council for Women. He admired openmindedness of the Bahraini people and the equal rights between men and women. "Al-Fatih Mosque was important to me, because it explained and cleared up some issues to us about Islam. I highly recommend that people from other countries visit the Gulf Countries, especially Bahrain," Michael said.

Mechael McLeanUSA

Politics and Regulations Day



The day started with a visit to the Council of Representatives of Bahrain. The representative, Dr. Fahad, provided a brief lecture of the parliamentary council's history and guided the delegates on tour inside the council building to show them its departments. Lastly, Dr. Fahad, took the delegates to the gallery of the Shura Council where they watched the proceedings. In the afternoon, the delegates visited Muharraq Souq, Qaisariya Soug and a traditional Coffee House. The coffee house owner that it was built by his grandfather in 1938. Um-Hassan's invited all of the delegates and volunteers to her house for lunch. The delegates found the food delicious and the hospitality outstanding. In the evening, the delegates visited a Coast Guard station. They



were divided into two groups of fifteen each. The Coast Guard representative gave one group a lecture about the Coast Guard in Bahrain, while the other group went on a boat tour of the Bahraini harbor.

In the evening, the delegates had dinner with representatives from the Economic Development Board at the Coral Beach restaurant.





Amjad Fazeli from the United Kingdom was amazed and pleased to see Bahraini



women participating in the Shura Council. He admires the Bahraini commitment to freedom of speech and their willingness to understand and accept the other parties' points of view. "In Muharraq Souq, I noticed the mixture of cultures and how the Bahraini citizens care about the visitors. Also, I found out that Bahraini citizens enjoy a sense of security and trust because I saw some of the sellers leaving their shops open and unattended," Amjad said.

Amjad Fazeli UK

> Hend Hussain, a journalist from Egypt, said, "I am an Egyptian and I love Bahrain." She felt comfortable and found nothing suspicious; she found a high level of safety and security. She



admired the way that they were greeted at Um-Hassan's House. It reflected the Bahraini citizens' modernity and hospitality. She highly recommends for people to discover Bahrain the way she and the other delegates did, from inside, not only through the media so that they get the correct impression of Bahrain.

Hend Hussain Egypt







The sixth day of the program started with a visit to the first and oldest hospital in Bahrain and the Middle East, the American Mission Hospital (AMH).

The CEO of the AMH gave the delegates a brief introduction about the hospital's medical services and capabilities. He then took them on a tour to the children's ward, passing through a bridge and a photo exhibition.



The next stop was the Arabian Gulf University (AGU). AGU is the College of Medicine and Medical Sciences, started to train medical students in the GCC countries. Delegates visited the university library, the anatomy pathology learning centre and the experimental greenhouse. Next, the delegates visited Al-Jawhara Centre for Molecular Medicine & Inherited Disorders.



After couple of hours rest, the tour continued. The delegates went to the Bank of Bahrain and Kuwait Health Centre in the Hidd Industrial Area.

Their last stop for the day was Al-Areesha Restaurant. The delegates had dinner with representatives of the Bahraini Journalists
Association, headed by Mr. Isa Al-Shayji, the Chief Executive Officer.







"It's impressive that only 20% of Bahrainis are insured for private care, which shows the

large responsibility carried by the government's health care system," said Samar. Samar Salameh, recently living in Egypt, of Palestinian origin and Canadian nationality, she was pleased to see the gratitude for the American mission hospital and thought the photo exhibition, showing the development of the AMH since 1919, was fabulous. She admired the holistic approach of health services and the great advancement potential of this sector.

Samar Salameh Canada Alaeddin Senguler is a Turkish businessman who has visited the Kingdom of Bahrain more than 20 times. He liked everything in the Discover Bahrain program. He found the program very useful for both countries (Bahrain and Turkey) as a cultural exchange.

"I like the relationship that grew between delegates in such a short period of time. The love of Bahrain that we witnessed from the program's representatives was contagious and we all fell for it and extended it to increase the relationship amongst us as delegates" he said. As a specialist in tourism, he is encouraging Discover Bahrain project to continue and help people to discover Bahrain in-depth. He admired the effort being done by the team and he considered them champions in volunteering and organizing. He concluded, "Thank you, Discover Bahrain, for accepting me in the program."



Alaeddin Senguler Turkey



Industry and **Economy Day**



26th. January 2012, the delegates completed 7 days in Bahrain and the time of their trip is close to ending, so Discover Bahrain Team decided to give them a very special and busy day. The day started with a visit to Khalifa Bin Salman Port and its adjacent Industrial Area which is located towards the North Eastern extremity of Bahrain. The delegates had the chance to see some passenger terminals, stocks, cars being driven off the ships and the speed movement of cranes loading some cargo containers. Then, the delegates

were taken to the National Institute for industries training in Salman Industrial Park. Since they were in Hidd area, it was only normal to take them in a to the Bahrain Business Incubator Center "BBIC" which was built to empower entrepreneurs and discover Innovative ways of growing their own businesses.

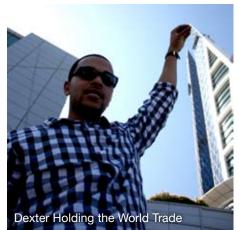
Next was the World Trade Center with its three turbines. They were given access to the top of the building, which public in general don't have access to - it's a big, unfinished concrete space - with a panoramic view of the whole city. They took lots of unique photos, the scenery was very tempting. Mr. Abdulaziz Buzaboon generously hosted the delegates and Discover Bahrain team at his house (Mailis) for lunch and coffee. There were three falcons that were sitting on perches in the living room. The delegates and the team took turns holding falcons and taking pictures of the displayed antiques After that, the delegates were taken to the most traditional place in Bahrain -Al-Sakheer. Since Bahrain was the first country in the Middle East in finding Oil, a visit to the Oil Wells was a must. Some photo shots were taken near to the Tree of Life and one of the mountains. Under the Patronage of Mr. Faisal Bin Rashid Al-Noaimi, the deputy governor of the Southern Governorate welcomed the delegates to the opening ceremony of the Southern Governorate Desert Bazar (Market). The master of the ceremony was Marwa Mohammed, the Head of Media of Discover Bahrain Project.

She started her speech by welcoming the deputy governor, Mr. Faisal Al-Noaimi. Then, the project











Director of Discover Bahrain, Mr. Ahmed Buhazaa had a speech to welcome the deputy governor and gave a brief description of the project and the delegates. After that the stage was open for the delegates who wished to speak about their own impression about their visit.

The delegates who had speeches were: Amjad Fazeli from UK,
Dexter McKinney from USA, Mandy Kaempf from Germany, Tino from Finland, Hend Hussain from Egypt and Samar Salameh from Canada.
At around 7:00pm, the delegates were moved to the Good Word Society Camp.

There was a joyful program planned for them. Face Painting, Henna tattoo, Some traditional food, Ladies traditional wedding celebration which called (Jelwa) and Men band of traditional songs and dances. "It was a very long and busy and fun day", as Mechael McLean said.

Morgan Roach works as a Research Associate in the Heritage Foundation from Washington.



She wished to have a walking tour in the port. When they visited "Busabon" majles she was really excited and impressed with all of the traditional stuff that was surrounding them.

Morgan Roach USA



Mandy Kaempf a Project Coordinator from Germany thought that the camping was like a fairy tale with the dancing, the tent and the food.

She had a great time meeting the hosts and organizers' families. "It was a trip of a life time." said Mandy.

Mandy Kaempf Germany



The Farewell...



Friday, 27th of January 2012 was the last day of the 2012 Discover Bahrain project. The project team and the members of the Good Word Society gave the delegates a free day to do whatever they liked.

Many delegates used the morning to go shopping at the gold soug or to walk around the

neighborhood while the project team attended the Jumaa (Friday) Prayer. The delegates joined later the Discover Bahrain team for lunch in the Marina Club. In the evening, the farewell ceremony was held at the headquarters of the Good Word Society. This event was completely organized by

the delegates who had a full program as a thank you to the organizers and the volunteers, including a slideshow about the 2012 Discover Bahrain Project, sketches about the hospitality and generosity of the Bahraini people and awards in recognition of the delegates and the team.











Since we established our Good Word Society in 2002, we have initiated many innovative



social charity programs. Discover Bahrain is our latest project that continues the success of our previous programs. This project started on January 20, 2012 for the very first time although the actual project preparations began many months ago.

Discover Bahrain invited high caliber people from different professions who came from ten countries to learn about Bahraini history, society and culture, economy, education, health and politics. They developed a greater awareness of Bahrain as a country and an appreciation of its people and culture. They also became members of our Good Word Society and volunteered their time to work on spreading the word about Bahrain in their home countries. This sentiment is expressed in the name they chose for themselves, "Pay it Forward, Bahrain Friends 2012."

Hassan Buhazza President of GWS











Discover Bahrain Team & Volunteers



Ahmed Buhazaa

"With the success of the Discover Bahrain Program we exceeded our own expectations. I believe our success is due to the fact that we devoted ourselves to one goal: demonstrating our love and pride in our country, Bahrain. I owe a special thanks to the many volunteers and to the participating organizations (Public, Private and NGOs), who were quite effective in presenting information about the Kingdom. Another thanks goes to our beloved guests

who helped us rediscover Bahrain, through their eyes we were could see how beautiful our life is in Bahrain is. We were reminded to appreciate and value all that we have, and to work to sustain it. I am grateful to my Discover Bahrain family, my people and my country"



Abdulaziz AlSindi

"Vice president of the GWS- Expressed his greatest gratitude to all who contributed to the success of this national project and special thanks to Discover Bahrain team for their remarkable work and commitment which led to the success of the program and achieved its main objectives, and also confirmed on the need for continuity of such projects that aim to introduce our precious kingdom to the whole world".



Abdulrahman Almahmood

"It was absolutely an amazing experience, and a great honor to be part of Discover Bahrain team. I learned a lot in the last week and I can't say how much because the people love and knowledge in life can't be measured. I wish to see similar programs executed every now and then in Bahrain and other regional countries and I surely would love to be part of if every time".



Mohammed Maher

"First of all, I would like to thank the Good Word Society for giving us the opportunity to work in this project and for their high confidence in us. Discover Bahrain Project was an awesome idea and it reached high level of success, in this occasion I would like to congratulate the society and Discover Bahrain Team. During the last seven days I built new relationships with the delegates and with the team such as family relations and friendship relations. I love you all, and I will miss you all".



Mohd Abdeen

"Discover Bahrain is a unique project, as it is the initiative of the people of Bahrain to explain to the world the secret behind the love between the man and the land.

The journey of Bahrain Discoverers have showed more than that, what made this journey so unique is the exploration of the deepness of the relationship between people, which has always distinguished Bahrain from other countries.

This has also made us realize that the human is always the most important treasure that can make dreams become reality.

Discover Bahrain was a journey not only to explore Bahrain, but also to explore and appreciate the elements of success".



Sanad Rashid

"Transportation and Hospitality Coordinator. From the moment of meeting each of our guests at the airport, I knew that the Discover Bahrain program was going to be something unique. Over the course of the week, it was gratifying to watch our guests learn about Bahrain and to see them understand why we love it so much. The positive experiences of our guests would not have been possible without the small army of volunteers and the generosity of visited organizations, societies and individuals".







Marwa Mohd

"Friendship is the only cement that will ever hold the world together» Woodrow Wilson About friendship I keep saying throughout my life That I'm lucky when it comes to friends and friendship. I have great friends enriching my life and here is another proof of my theory, in a week we broke the records to have very close friends from 10 different countries.

In one very special week of my life I've met very special people from 10 different countries and by the end of the week it turned to be the hardest ever to wave goodbye for 23 amazing

friends, knowing that Inshalla we'll meet again.

This difficulty has one reason and that is the true emotions we have shared toward each other.

All in all a week of many great discoveries has passed very quickly. So thanks God to have given us this opportunity to witness such amazing experience that added a lot to me and empowered my personality".



Wafa Al-Siddiqi

"Discover Bahrain Project is a unique project, where I got the chance to participate for the first time in my life in a comprehensive voluntary work. This program improved me socially and gave me the opportunity to meet different people from different nationalities as well as it contributed to enriching my knowledge in the field of voluntary work. Special thanks goes to

the Good Word Society president, Mr. Hassan Buhazza and to the Vice President of the society's Mr. Abdulaziz Al-Sindi and of course Mr. Ahmed Buhazza, the Executive Director of Discover Bahrain Project for giving me the opportunity to be part of it and to accepting me as a member in the Good Word Society".



Ayesha Al-amery

"It was such a great opportunity to be one of the organizers in (Discover Bahrain Project). I really enjoyed working with the team and also meeting nice and unforgettable people. This chance really helped me to communicate with people and build the confident in my personality".



Abdulla Faqihi Media Team

"I love my country so I like to work for it. Discover Bahrain is a new program that helps my country to show the real things about it. I volunteered as a photographer for the project. I was leaving my home from early morning and returning back at midnight. I did it because I was enjoying my time being with the delegates and the team. Actually they became a family to me.

I learned how to represent my country to others and have good relationships with them; I strongly believe in the say «If you like what you are doing, you will do your best to accomplish it successfully», so I tried my best to help in the success of the project. I would like to thank Good Word Society, Discover Bahrain Team and our beloved Delegates for everything".



Razan Al-Jassim

"Working as a volunteer with Discover Bahrain Project was a new experience in my life. I had so much fun and it was very nice and exciting. I really got use to be with our new friends from around the world, but the good times always fly with a blink of an eye. Now I miss them so much and I wish that I will be able to meet them again. I will be glad if I have got the chance to work for the same project in future. All the best Discover Bahrain!"



Buthayna Abdulateef Volunteer

Discover Bahrain program didn't help my country only to be discovered by a group of foreign people - as they were to me at the beginning - but it helped me in person. It showed me how I can handle responsibility of doing something as told, or how to start up a conversation

out of nothing with people whom I've never spoken with or knew before, people who almost know nothing about my country, my native language, my traditions or even my religion, how to explain many things without them misinterpreting my words, I learned how to market and advertise my country to show them the good and the bad in everything and to do so in a proper way. I cherished the work of a team, I am sure that anyone works among a team similar to the one I worked with then everything will turn out to be great, smooth, and easy as it was to me. The main value that I gained from being with Discover Bahrain in the last seven days was the learning of many new things thatit mightneed a year to learn in my general routine life. So from the bottom of my heart I thank each and every one that helped in getting me involve in this amazing work.



Shaikha Showaiter Media Team

Discover Bahrain was one of the best programs that I ever volunteered in. It felt very good to serve Bahrain and defended I against misleading media. I loved going to so many places that I>ve never been before, I have great memories of the group in many places, the muharrag

souq where we shopped for Bahraini delights, I look up to the trading center and I can remember what we saw together from the very top of the tower. But I have to say the best thing ever in this trip, is the people, our brothers and sisters from around the world. What I liked most about them was how curious about Bahrain and Islam they were. And I liked it when they enquired about question they had on mind. Questions were the best way to correct some wrong ideas or stereotyping they had, and show them that Bahrain is very fair and simple. It>s nice to think that if I ever go to the USA, UK, Estonia, Egypt, Morocco Germany, Turkey, China, Canada or even Finland, we will have a brother or a sister welcoming us there. I love and miss every one.



Amal Yousif Designer

Greetings!

In the beginning I did not know anything about Discover Bahrain Project; I just joined the team because I wanted to help my friend Marwa in her voluntary work. So I volunteerd for

the project and every day goes by I was realizing that I am working in a valuable and brilliant project for my beloved country. I worked with team members that I did not know before, but through the past few days they became like brothers and sisters to me. It was a pleasure to have worked with such a great and fabulous team. Working backstage deprived me from meeting the delegates but allowed me to observe from distance. I found them marvelous and wonderful people. A very special Thanks goes to Marwa for her full confident and faith in me. Thanks Ahmed Buhazza for the dazzling idea. Thank you Good Word Society for your full support to the project. The best team, the media team «Individually, we are one drop. Together, we are an ocean." Thank you guys! The delegates, our visitors, thanks for being with us. The project wouldn't be successful without all of you, thanks again and again.







Maryam Shams

Hello to all,

Maybe you'll find it somehow weird to know that I haven't met Discover Bahrain Team nor the delegate, I was working on the printing designs backstage all the time, but I feel like I've created something like a remote bound between me and the project team through watching

the photos and preparing the daily coverage for the tours. I personally thank the Good word Society and specially Ms. Marwa Mohd - Head of media for Discover Bahrain Project- for offering me this great opportunity to participate in, and I would like to exceed my great gratitude to our delegates whom I haven't had the chance to meet t and the Discover Bahrain team for the great effort. The project has finished now but we keep the great memories and those special moments in our life forever.

Many thanks once again.



Khalid Abdulmajeed

Discover Bahrain: All for one and one for all

The story began by an e-mail sent from a person all I know about is his name "Ahmed Buhazza" and he's an IT guy via e-mail group.

The e-mail described briefly the idea of the project "Discover Bahrain". He said "The discovery process is through the people of Bahrain themselves, who will independently expose Bahrain through its rich and diverse history; strong society and sense of community; different religions, persuasions and openness, welcoming society; advancement in education; strong economy; professional health care services; peaceful and unique culture, civilization and architecture" and ended by "If you think you can support me in this event, please email me or contact me directly to coordinate"

The journey started by a phone call, then several meetings with the toastmasters Marwa Mohamed and Mohamed Abdeen, Um Khalid, Husain Al-Mahmood and the Bahraini-Finnish Amina Leelo which lead at the end to choose candidates and start invitations and flights bookings for the guests.

On the 20th January, 2012 the dream became true at the La Goon in Amwaj. I can't describe my happiness that day when I met the guests with other volunteers, met them for the first time, Mohamed Maher, Bothaina, and Amal.

The team was really working hard, and in harmony night and day to accomplish the mission of the project for our beloved Bahrain. However, Discover Bahrain won't make it without the help of the guests whom were helpful, friendly and passionate to discover Bahrain.

Unfortunately, I couldn't accompany the guests for personal reasons for the whole 7 days which is the period of the project but I had several speeches with Margus Lopez, Reet, Nelta, Mandy, Samar, Morgan, Dexter and Alya. With Dexter I knew for the first time the concept of the "Fertility Friend" while I had the pleasure to speak in several subjects that were profound with Nelta and Morgan., I also had some conversations with the Egyptian guests.

I'm sure that the first "Discover Bahrain" succeeded because of the spirit of the team and the guests. However, Bahrain itself is the main purpose for the success of the project.

I discovered that Bahrain can give a huge love to whomever lands on it .

Bahrain by the kindness, openness, and the hospitality of its people is the great treasure people can lookfor. Discover Bahrain project taught me that all what I need is to invite the guests and Bahrain will do the rest!

We Love Bahrain

Guests Views...

بالصور .. (البلد) تتجول

داخل حضارة (الدلمون).. اقتصاد أكثر حرية

على مدار أسبوع كامل تجولت عدسة «صدى البلد» بمملكة البحرين لاكتشاف حضارة الدلمون التي أبهرت العالم الحديث بنموها الاقتصادي الأسرع في العالم المتربي، والذي اعتبرته لجنة الأمم المتحدة الاقتصادية والاجتماعية في يناير ٢٠٠٦، الاقتصاد الأكثر حرية في الشرق الأوسط.

وتعد جزيرة البحرين أكبر جزر الأرخبيل البحريني، وسميت بهذا الاسم نسبة لمسمى الجزيرة الكبرى، بسبب وجود ماء الينابيع العذبة وسط ماء البحر المالح، وجزيرة البحرين ترتبط بجسر مع جزيرة المحرق التي يقع فيها مطار البحرين الدولي وجسر آخر يربطها بجزيرة سترة والمنطقة الصناعية التي يوجد فيها خزانات ومصفاة تكرير النفط.

وفي سنة ٢٢٠٠ قبل الميلاد، مكنها موقعها الجغرافي من جعلها مركزا تجاريا بين حضارة ما بين النهرين العراق- وبين وادي السند، وكان بداية ازدهار هذه التجارة ونموها خلال حضارة «دلمون» التي ارتبطت بالحضارة السومرية في الألفية الثالثة قبل الميلاد.

وبعد أن مرت العديد من العصور والحضارات التي أعطت لهذه الجزيرة القوة لتبني دولتها، مما ساهم في إيمان شعبها بالحرية الاقتصادية، وبسبب حاجتها لتنويع الاقتصاد بعيدا عن تمديدات النفط، فقام سكانها بالتوسع في الصناعات الثقيلة والمصرفية والسياحة.

ولأن السياحة مورد هام للاقتصاد البحريني، فقد استطاع فريق عمل متطوع بتنظيم رحلات سياحية للمواطنين من داخل المملكة، بهدف الترويج والتسويق لأجمل مناطق العالم والتعرف على حضارات الدلمون والتايلوس، إلا أن حلم فريق،ديسكفر بحرين، لم يتوقف عند السياحة الداخلية فحسب، بل امتد ليشمل جميع أنحاء العالم.

وبدأ فريق اكتشاف البحرين التابع لجمعية الكامة الطيبة وبالتنسيق مع بعض المؤسسات الوطنية والحكومية، في جمع أكثر من ٥٠ متطوعا للترويج لفكرة استكشاف البحرين قديما وحديثا من خلال دعوة شخصيات عامة من مختلف دول العالم لتعريفهم بهذه الحضارة وترسيخ صورة البحرين الإيجابية في ظل الأحداث الراهنة التي تشهدها البلاد بين أهل السنة والشيعة، والتي يروج لها الاعلام الغربي بشكل سلبي مبالغ فيه.

يقول أحمد بوهزاع، المدير التنفيذي للمشروع، إن هذه الفكرة جاءت من البرنامج السياحي الداخلي الذي قامت به جمعية الكلمة الطيبة، والتي تعمل بمجال العمل التطوعي، وفكرة العمل العام لخدمة الوطن هي العامل الأساسي في ترويج السياحة خارجيا، فقد كان هناك إيمان صادق داخل جميع المتطوعين بالجمعية باستكمال هذا المشروع «ديسكفر البحرين» ودعوة وفود أجنبية بهدف التعرف على حضارة البحرين.

وأشار بوهزاع إلى أن فريق العمل أعد قائمة بالشخصيات الاعلامية والباحثين والناشطين الاجتماعيين والاقتصاديين من عشر دول مختلفة وهي مصر والمغرب وتركيا وكندا والولايات المتحدة الأمريكية وألمانيا وبريطانيا والصين وفنلندا وإستونيا، وتمت دعوتهم ومراسلتهم للتعرف على البحرين في برنامج للزيارة لمدة أسبوع، وتم اختيار هذا الوفد كتجربة أولى لعمل الفريق بشكل استكشافي لمواطنين خارج الملكة من ثقافات وحضارات مختلفة.

وأكد مدير المشروع أن الوفد رحب بالفكرة لرغبته في التعرف على المملكة وحضارتها وتنوع مجتمعها الفكري والثقافي، ومعرفة المجتمع البحريني وشعبه على أرض الواقع، وتم التنسيق لزيارة أول وفد للمشروع مع تطوع العديد من الشباب البحريني والذي ساهم بمجهوده المادي والأدبي في تحقيق النجاح للمشروع والتنسيق مع الهيئات الوطنية لعمل برامج زيارات للوفد لأهم الأماكن

وقال محمد عابدين، أحد المتطوعين والمنسق العام للمشروع، إن البرنامج كان متعدد الزيارات وتم إعداد هذه الفقرات لتتنوع ما بين زيارات أماكن تاريخية ومتاحف ومراكز ثقافية، وأيضا لقاءات مع كبار مسئولى الدولة.

وأكد عابدين أنه بالرغم من صعوبة التنسيق لبعض الزيارات، فإنها كانت مغامرة تستحق العناء، لأنك تشعر في النهاية بأداء دور هام لبلدك دون توجيه من أي شخص، إنما هو عمل تقوم به عن حب لخدمة المجتمع دون انتظار أي مقابل.

ومن ناحية أخرى، كان للمرأة البحرينية دور كبير في هذا المشروع بدءا من «أم حسن» كما يطلقون عليها، مرورا بالمتطوعة وفاء الصديقي حتى الشابة مروة محمد، المنسق الاعلامي للمشروع.



هند حسني

وعن تجربتها تحكي «أم حسن» وهى مواطنة بحرينية ووالدة المدير التنفيذي للمشروع، وأكدت أن حبها لبلدها جعلها تفكر في أن تكون أول من يقود الوفد في التعرف على التراث الشعبي البحريني، وتاريخ نضال المرأة البحرينية ودورها في المجتمع والتي نالت الكثير من المناصب تساويا مع الرجل وأثبتت نجاحاتها في العديد من المجالات.

ولم يقتصر دورها على ذلك فحسب، بل امتد إلى أن تفتح بيتها للوفد وترحب بضيافته ليذوق أفضل نكهات المائدة البحرينية من أشهر الأكلات، ولم يمر عليها رحيل الوفد السائح مرور الكرام دون أن تترك معه تذكارا خاصا يذكره دائما بها وبفريق العمل وبالبحرين، ليعود إليها مرة ثانية.

أما المتطوعة وفاء الصديقي، فقد أسندت إليها مهمة التنسيق مع الوزارات والهيئات ومتحف البحرين الوطني ومحمية العرين ومتحف النفط وجمعية سيدات الأعمال ولجنة تسامح الأديان، وغيرها من أماكن الزيارات المرفقة للوفد بالبرنامج، تقول إنها مهمة كانت صعبة وشاقة إلا أنها ممتعة في نفس الوقت فشعرت بأنها تؤدي دورا وطنيا من الدرجة الأولى لاستعراض التجربة البحرينية في العديد من المجالات ورؤية المملكة للعام ١٠٣٠، وكل ذلك في إطار روح المبادرة الوطنية التي يمتلكها شعب البحرين.

Source: March 20, 2012 http://goo.gl/QXRSY







Dexter McKinney

SU public diplomacy graduate student explores a new culture in Bahrain and learns no one country is like the next.

Historically, my favorite holiday has been Thanksgiving for all of the reasons most guys favor this sacred day. Aside from the festivities, football and family, it is a day that I typically indulge myself in an array of dishes from some of my favorite chefs-namely my mother. This year, however, I knew Valentine's Day would hold a special place in my heart as it would mark the one year anniversary of the uprising that took place in Bahrain.

Unable to escape the Arab Spring in the Middle East, in February of 2011 a revolt was ignited in Bahrain and continues to be an issue as the Shi'ite population claims unfair and unjust treatment by the government. Bahrain's Sunni monarch, the al Khalifa family, has governed the country since 1783 and has brought prosperity to the oil rich Persian Gulf monarchy. Yet, the Shi'ite majority argues that their opportunities are limited and the country's neighbor Iran whose population is majority Shi'ite, has been widely viewed as the aggressors that are fueling the protests in Bahrain.

You can't paint the Middle East

with one broad stroke

As a public diplomacy student in both Maxwell and Newhouse, I was able to visit Bahrain through a cultural exchange program. Although this 10-day excursion extended beyond my winter break, for such a great opportunity, I was hardly going to complain about missing a few classes. The trip was designed to teach us the intricacies of Bahraini culture, help us build relationships and provide some fun along the way.

The hospitality and generosity of everyone I encountered in Bahrain was incredible. They showered us with gift bags that included fancy USB drives and will literally give you the clothes off of their backs. As a custom in Bahrain, if you mention to someone that you like something he or she owns, they will offer it to you immediately or buy you the replica. After the first two days, I had to make a conscious effort not to compliment people because they were giving me all of their things.

The Good Word Society, an NGO in Bahrain, hosted 25 visitors from around the world on a journey to "Discover Bahrain." We learned a lot about the country, like how students at the University of Bahrain only pay 6 percent of their tuition while Bahrain>s King Hamad bin Isa al-Khalifa sponsors the rest. The main island of Manama (33 islands comprise the archipelago of Bahrain) is paradise and the country is far more liberal than I had imagined it would be. Many women are entrepreneurs that run successful businesses. Night clubs aren't hard to find and my hotel had two bars that served alcohol.

It's important to realize you can't paint the Middle East with one broad stroke. Bahrain is as unique in the Middle East as New York City is in the United States.

Furthermore, people have more commonalities than they have differences and ultimately aspire for the same things. I hope to see Bahrain settle their differences and find a peaceful middle ground for the protesters and the monarchy. I believe they have a great chance at doing so because from what I gathered, Bahrainis want to live well, enjoy their families and friends and have fun.

I visited Cairo, Egypt right Submitted by Tiffany J. Nesbit (not verified) on February 20, 2012 - 11:02am.

I visited Cairo, Egypt right before the uprisings that took place there and I can very much relate to this experience. As Americans we like to think of our country as the example of progress and acceptance. Despite the gross inaccuracy of this logic, we have to realize that putting people in boxes is unfair; and when we do come across a people or a nation that is trying to make progressive steps forward we need to do all we can to encourage and assist. It sounds like Dexter had an amazing trip and I thank him for sharing that with all of us sitting stateside.

Source:

February 16, 2012 http://goo.gl/gBsB2



Michael McLean

Being on a graduate school listserv is at times frustrating and annoying, but through the pleas for rides to New York City or DC and the incessant departmental emails about add drop dates and other administrative banalities great opportunities sometimes present themselves.

One night over winter break, an email popped into my inbox about an all expenses paid educational trip to Bahrain. A Bahraini MPA student studying at Maxwell was kind enough to distribute this call for applications from the Good Word Society, a Bahraini NGO that focuses on social development.

Lucky enough to be selected for this program, I traveled to Bahrain the first week of classes this spring semester with two other Public Diplomacy students and an MPA student. None of us knew what to expect, this

Bahrain:

Land of Pearls and Hospitality

trip was rather last minute and we had had little to no interaction with the organizers prior to arriving in Bahrain.

We were pleasantly surprised by the hospitality and openness of our hosts. Over the course of this ten day trip, we had the opportunity to not only get to know our amazing Bahraini hosts (all volunteers), but also the other participants- 25 men and women from all over the world. The trip, or "Discover Bahrain" as our organizers had labeled it, was designed to show Bahrain through the eyes of the Bahraini people. We were busy non-stop the entire ten days, and it seemed like we saw every inch of this tiny island in the Persian (Bahrainis prefer Arab) Gulf. We attended lectures and tours at many governmental and non-governmental organizations, from Parliament to the Arabian Gulf University.

I learned so much on this trip, but what surprised me most was the openness and liberalness of Bahraini Society. I had not been exposed to Arab culture before and had some preexisting ideas of what I thought "Arab culture" was, especially after what is now trendily being called the "Arab Spring".

These stereotypes were completely broken down for me. All Bahrainis and non-Bahrainis (Bahrain is about 40% non-Bahraini) have access to free education, healthcare, and housing, along with full religious freedom. Furthermore, women enjoy some of the most liberal policies in the region; the Queen even started the Supreme Women's Council which helps women start their own businesses, assists in domestic violence situations, and offers many other social and economic services.

My experience in Bahrain was a great addition to my graduate program and exposed me to experiences that I would have never been able to have in the classroom. To all of my colleagues that complain about their grad listservs and overflowing inboxes, don't be overzealous with your spam filters. Your next adventure could be just a click away.

Source:

February 2012, 16 http://goo.gl/6XD2Z

I started to prepare as many as possible radio broadcasts based on what I hear and saw and transfer all I experienced to Estonian people. I think that Estonians as quite reserved people should have much to learn from Bahrain.

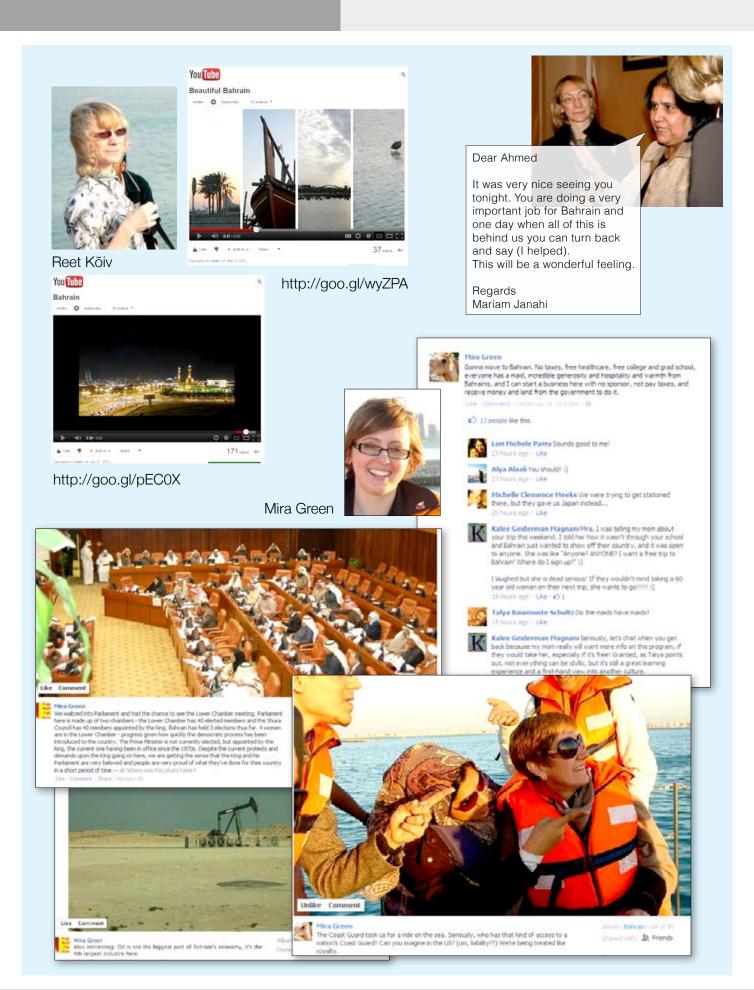
In these days I finish my article for local muslim's newspaper Iqra and we are planning a documentary film about Bahrain for one of Estonian TV channel. Reet has nice videos (the video you saw was Reet's and this music she wrote specially for this video; but these are only the first steps) and a friend of mine has a little film studio.

Thank You for your article. In Monday I'll put the link on my homepage www.nommeraadio.ee and say some words about it in my talk-show.











Robin Barratt presenting his book

The Presentation of the book My Beautiful Bahrain by British author Robin Barratt was one of the events used by the Discover Bahrain Project to inform the public about the content and results of the Discover Bahrain project. The audience learned from testimonies by the project management team, a video clip and international delegates who reported about their experiences via skype. These events have been successful in creating buy-in from supporters and sponsors to continue the Discover Bahrain project in the future.













Our appreciation and thanks to all organizations which generously and effectively contributed to the success of this program

- APM Terminal Company
- Al Hidd Health Center
- Al Nuwab Council
- Al Shura Council
- American Mission Hospital
- Bahrain International Circuit
- Bahrain Petrolum Company BAPCO
- Bait the Holy Qura'an
- Bu Zaboon House
- Business Women's Association
- Center for Child Protection
- Chamber of Industry and Commerce of Bahrain
- Commission on Tolerance of religions
- Dar Al Karama
- Dar Al Muharraq for the care of parents
- Dar Al-Aman
- Development Bank
- Discover Islam NGO
- Ebdaa Bank
- Economic Development Board
- E-Government Authority
- Environmental Protection Agency and Wildlife
 Protected Al Areen
- Fatih Mosque
- Gulf Petrochemical Industries
- Information Affairs Authority
- Journalists Association

- Ministry of Culture Arad Fort
- Ministry of Culture Bahrain Fort
- Ministry of Culture Sheikh Ibrahim bin Mohammed cultural Center
- Ministry of Education
- Ministry of Human Rights and Social Development
- Ministry of Interior Coast Guard
- Ministry of Interior General Directorate of Civil Defense - School of Civil Defense Training
- Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Urban Planning
- Ministry of Culture–Bahrain National Museum
- Moondance Event Management
- Municipal Council
- Picasso house
- Quality Assurance Authority for Education and Training
- Salman Industrial City
- Sami Sayar Media Publishing
- Supreme Council for Women
- Tamkeen
- Bahrain Incubators Center
- World Trade Center
- Arabian Gulf University
- University of Bahrain
- Yoko House for the care of parents
- You are not alone





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