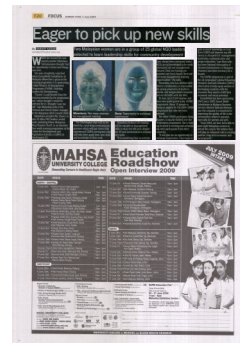


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Eager to pick up new skills

Two Malaysian women are in a group of 25 global NGO leaders selected to learn leadership skills for community development

HARIATI AZIZAN



Manohara: 'Not many chances for management training'

Rozy: 'Opportunity to exchange experiences'

WHEN she turned 50, community worker Manohara Subramaniam thought that her opportunity to learn new things was over.

She was completely surprised when ExxonMobil Subsidiaries in Malaysia offered her a place in the training programme it is sponsoring, Global Women in Management Programme (GWIM): Building Leaders for Development.

"I knew I could benefit from the training provided by the programme but I never thought I would be selected for it. I thought I was too old," says Manohara who is the Women and Youth Cluster manager in the Malaysian AIDS Council (MAC).

Manohara accepted the chance to join 25 other NGO leaders worldwide, including fellow Malaysian Rozy Hayatee Sharif, in an intensive four-week training programme at the Centre for Development and Population Activities (CEDPA) in Washington D.C.

The Washington stint will be followed by a year-long mentoring programme which will pair them with experienced CEDPA participants who will help them apply their new skills and knowledge in their work.

Manohara believes the training will be valuable as management skills is what she still lacks despite her 25-year involvement in community work.

"It is something that we activists

have always been concerned about – NGOs are acknowledged to be work-orientated and not management-focused. Even our training programmes are issue-based; there are not many management-training opportunities," she adds.

Manohara, who has worked with diverse communities, is responsible for raising awareness of mothers, youths, and marginalised communities on HIV/AIDS with the MAC.

To date, up to 5,200 women and men have participated in the GWIM programme. About 10 people in Malaysia applied for the 2009 GWIM programme but only two were selected.

The other GWIM participant, Rozy Hayatee, is equally thrilled over the Washington programme. She is looking forward to meeting and networking with participants from other countries.

"It will give me an opportunity to exchange experiences. I also hope to

gain as much knowledge as I can from CEDPA and improve my efficiency in all aspects of management, leadership, communication and project execution," says Rozy who has been National Association of Women Entrepreneurs of Malaysia (Nawem) executive secretary for a decade.

The GWIM programme is part of the oil corporation's global Educating Women's and Girls Initiative (EWGI), which aims to help equip women in developing countries with the resources they need to fulfil their economic and social potential.

ExxonMobil has been sponsoring EWGI since 2005. Exxon Mobil Subsidiaries in Malaysia Business Services director Fatimah Merican says the company is committed to improving the quality of life in the communities where it operates, especially for women and girls.

"Since 2005, we have been able to send eight Malaysian women to attend this course. We believe they will play an enhanced role in creating positive, long-term economic and social growth."