

Final Evaluation Report on the DISIAD and MUSIAD Businessmen's Action Plan Implementation

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Introduction

In early 2007, two groups of businessmen from Diyarbakir, Turkey came to the United States for a two week period under the sponsorship of HasNa, Inc. The first group involved 14 businessmen who were all members of DISIAD which is a businessmen's association in Diyarbakir. The DISIAD group visited the United States from January 26 to February 9, 2007. The second group involved 9 businessmen who were all members of MUSIAD which is another businessmen's association in Diyarbakir. The MUSIAD group visited the United States from March 17 to March 30, 2007.

The purpose of these two visits was to develop leadership skills and to learn useful business practices being used in American businesses. The training in leadership skills involved two courses—a course in conflict resolution and a course in the fundamental of business management. To learn about American business practices, the two groups visited several businesses in the Washington DC area and listened to presentations by business experts on topics pertinent to growing and managing a business. The groups also met with officials in U. S. and Turkish government agencies and with a Washington DC-based Turkish Businessmen's Association.

The conflict resolution training taught the groups how to deal with interpersonal conflict in the workplace, home, and community through the use of effective communication skills. The leadership training focused on how to manage a work process, supervise employees, and consider customer satisfaction, and how to plan to improve their business.

A requirement of the two week training program was for each businessman to identify an improvement he would like to bring about in his business and to prepare a written action plan with a goal, tasks, and due dates for implementing the change upon his return to Turkey. The leadership training included a session on how to prepare an action plan to manage business change.

Evaluation Questions And General Study Approach

To determine trainee reaction to their training experiences, a questionnaire was administered after the conflict resolution training, after the leadership training, and at the end of the two week visit. The questionnaire asked the trainees to report on what they liked about the training, what they did not like, and how training could be improved. This data was provided to HasNa staff and the instructors for review and is not reported here.

The evaluation question addressed in this report is as follows:

- To what extent did the participants apply their training experience in their businesses by implementing the action plans that they prepared during training?

To collect data to answer this question, the evaluator traveled to Diyarbakir Turkey and interviewed the businessmen in the last week of October 2007. The timing of this trip allowed a period of a little more than seven months for the businessmen to implement their business action plans. The evaluator met first with the DISIAD group and interviewed each businessman about his action plan. The evaluator then met with the MUSIAD group and likewise interviewed each businessman. All interviews were conducted on 23 October 2007 in the association offices of DISIAD and MUSIAD. Since the evaluator did not speak Turkish, a translator assisted in conducting the interviews.

Data Collection and Analysis Methods

There were 14 trainees in the DISIAD group. Of these 14, nine were interviewed. Of the five who were not interviewed, two were university students and were not involved in business, two were absent due to illness, and one had moved to another part of the country.

There were 9 trainees in the MUSIAD group. Of these nine, seven were interviewed. Of the two who were not interviewed, one was absent due to illness and one had a business that was temporarily not operating due to problems with the key supplier.

In each interview, with a copy of the trainee's action plan, the interviewer asked about actions taken on each of the tasks in the plan. For tasks that were listed in the action plan but not attempted, the interviewer asked for an explanation listening for whether factors within the trainee's control or beyond his control explained why the task not carried out.

Summary notes of each trainee's report on his efforts to implement his action plan were prepared at a later date and used to assign an overall score to each businessman that reflected the level of his action plan implementation. This overall score was based on the scale presented in the following table.

Action Plan Implementation Scale	
Rating	Explanation
1 = No Effort	No plan submitted or no effort to implement plan
2 = Minimal Effort	Plan is brief and general; described task performance in general terms
3 = Moderate Effort	Plan is detailed; some tasks performed; lacked clear reasons for tasks not performed
4 = Substantial Effort	Plan is detailed; all or most tasks performed; clear reasons given for tasks not performed
5 = Superior Effort	Plan is detailed; all tasks were completed; tasks were added that enhanced goal attainment

Results of the Data Analysis

The data from the two groups were combined for this analysis. Of the 23 trainees in the combined groups, a total 16 were interviewed. The remaining 7 trainees were not interviewed for various reasons—6 were absent (2 were sick, 1 had moved out of the region, 2 were students away at the university, 1 was absent with no explanation). The seventh trainee not interviewed was present at the meeting but not interviewed because his business was temporarily not operating due to the shut down of a key supplier.

Based on a review of the data from the 16 interviews, an “action plan implementation rating” was assigned to each trainee that indicated the level of effort that the trainee put into implementing his action plan. The table below presents the frequency distribution for these ratings.

Action Plan Implementation Ratings		
Rating	Frequency	Percent
1 = No Effort	2	12.50
2 = Minimal Effort	3	18.75
3 = Moderate Effort	1	6.25
4 = Substantial Effort	9	56.25
5 = Superior Effort	1	6.25
Total Interviewed	16	100.00
Not Interviewed	7	
Total Trainees	23	

To summarize the data in the above table, of the 16 trainees that were interviewed, 5 (31.25%) demonstrated minimal or no effort to implement their action plans, and 11 (68.75%) demonstrated moderate, substantial or superior effort to implement their action plans.

Conclusions and Suggestions

The overall conclusion in this evaluation study is that about two-thirds (11) of the interviewed trainees followed up on their U. S. training by doing a moderate, substantial, or superior job in carrying out their action plans to improve their businesses. The remaining one-third (5 or 31.25%) of the interviewed trainees made a minimal or no effort implement their action plans. This should be considered a positive result for the effectiveness of the U. S. training experience.

A closer look at the 5 interviewed trainees that did not make much of an effort with their action plans reveals an interesting observation. Of these 5 trainees, 1 did not prepare an action plan during the U. S. training, 1 prepared an action plan but became involved in pursuing political office, and the other 3 prepared relatively brief action plans that contained vague language about improving business. As a result, these 5 returned to their

businesses in Turkey seemingly without a commitment to take specific actions to improve their businesses. The lesson in this for HasNa is that if it want trainees to learn to develop business improvement plans and then implement them upon their return, it needs to ensure that all trainees have prepared well-formulated action plans and to assess their commitment to these plans before returning to their businesses.

In future training of other Turkish business leaders, it is recommended that HasNa put more time and effort in to making sure that all trainees develop detailed action plans for their return to the businesses in Turkey and that they make a commitment to implement these plans during their U. S. visit.

As a final note, the evaluator observed that the trainees were very cooperative during the interviews. Such cooperation can be taken as evidence of their support for HasNa's evaluation process and of the degree to which they value the U. S. training experience that HasNa provided.