

Eisenhower Fellowships – 2009 Multi-Nation Program
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Dr. Aysha Mubarak
Senator
Shura Council
Manama, BAHRAIN

As the youngest female Senator appointed by the King of Bahrain to the Shura Council, Dr. Mubarak focuses on political issues dealing with women, human rights, the environment, poverty, education, and information and communication technology (ICT). During her fellowship, she explored the American legislative process and exchanged ideas on enhancing women's global leadership, particularly with respect to the ICT field. To accomplish this, Dr. Mubarak met with academics, business executives, government officials, and nonprofit leaders to address issues relating to gender and politics as well as gender and ICT.

Dr. Mubarak met with women leaders from the business, academic, political, and nonprofit communities. She noted that "before I arrived...I had very little knowledge of women empowerment programs in the United States, but after visiting a considerable amount of...organizations...and learning about their tailored programs to empower women, I'm glad to say that I have gained a huge amount of information. I was fascinated by the various women's organizations' offerings such as Leadership Training and Mentoring Programs focusing on women's advancement, and the wide variety of outstanding events, business development training, and coaching and mentoring."

The highlights of her fellowship included a day of meetings with political figures in St. Louis, Missouri. As an opportunity to meet with elected officials at the state and local level, Dr. Mubarak discussed the American political system with the Mayor of St. Louis, the County Executive and several congressional staffers. She commented that the day's meetings not only provided insight into how laws and policy are shaped at the local level, but that she was deeply touched by the level of hospitality shown to her by all of those involved.

Dr. Mubarak also greatly enjoyed several days in Miami, Florida where she was escorted by Ines Calderon, Executive Director at Gateway Florida. During her time in Miami, she attended meetings with women leaders from all sectors. At a women's leadership luncheon hosted by Dr. Joyce Elam, Dean of the Business School at Florida International University, Dr. Mubarak had the occasion to engage with faculty, members of the Board of the Commonwealth Institute and women entrepreneurs from the community.

Of the fellowship experience, she wrote, "The design of this program allowed me to immerse myself in the American society, especially on issues related to women empowerment by sharing experiences, cultural and social viewpoints with American women leaders, parliamentarians and ICT scientists. Through this unique opportunity, I was able to develop long-lasting friendships at both the personal and professional levels."