

First BRIDGE Regional Conference Evaluation ASK-ME Team Evaluation of Their Experience of the Event

An important aspect of the impact of the conference was the experience that the ASK-ME team being exposed to event and meeting delegates from all over the world. The conference organizing committee had the vision of making the event an educational experience for the team members where there were new knowledge, skills and attitudes learned. In order to evaluate this impact, an evaluation form was created to collect their feedback on the experience.

ASK-ME team Evaluation form

The form consisted of 4 open-ended questions as follows:

1. What were the new knowledge and skills that you acquired through your experience of participating in this event? Please mention in details.
2. What did you like most in the conference?
3. What did you like least in the conference?
4. What do you suggest/recommend so that What **suggestions** and **recommendations** do you have for future events as far as program structure, topics, location, hotel, schedule, transportation, IT facilities, etc. are concerned?

The questions were translated into Arabic, the native language of the team members, to allow them to express themselves freely.

Data Analysis

Six members of the team completed the forms and the data per question were coded and analyzed. Following are the findings per question.

Findings of Question 1.

Q1: What were the new knowledge and skills that you acquired through your experience of participating in this event? Please mention in details.

The following table shows the participants' responses and their frequencies.

Table 1. New Knowledge, Skills and Attitudes Acquired by the ASK-ME team members

Knowledge/Skills/Attitudes	Frequency
How to deal with different people from different nationalities	4
Cooperating with my colleagues to help people (collaborative work)	3
Making new friends	3
Improving my English	3
How to plan a good conference	3
Self-reliance	2
Keeping new contacts through the Internet	1
Respect time commitments	1
New information about other countries from the delegates	1
Projecting the best image of my country to the visitors	1
How to make guests comfortable and help them	1
Courage and not being afraid no matter what your abilities are	1
Being exposed to new activities that can be organized in a good way	1
Value knowledge about iEARN	1

The comments show that the team members have acquired valuable knowledge, skills and attitudes.

The most frequent issue was the skill of how to deal with different people from different nationalities; an experience the young people would not have experienced elsewhere easily. They had the chance to learn/practice collaboration as a team to assist delegates. It was also a good chance for them to make new friends and improve their English through authentic practice.

They learned about the skills needed to organize a conference/an activity, which is considered an asset for them in the future. A very important quality was self-reliance, respect of time/commitment and facing new situations with courage.

Findings of Question 2.

Q2. What did you like most in the conference?

Table 2 shows the team members' responses and their frequencies.

Table 2. Issues liked most by the ASK-ME team members

Issues Liked Most	Frequency
Organization of the conference	4
Cooperation with the team member (Team spirit)	2
Meeting participants from all over Egypt and the world	2
iEARN students' participation in the conference (from different schools)	2
Having fun with everybody	1
Sharing ideas	1
Responsibility	1
How we were warmly welcomed	1
Collecting feedback to improve the conference in the future	1
Commitment to the schedule (both teachers & Students)	1
Respecting rules	1
Number and variety of presentations which served iEARN's objectives	1
Nice hotel	1

The team member praised most the organization of the conference, the team spirit, the opportunity of meeting people from all over the world and having the iEARN students to participate in the conference. They individually praised many other issues such as the opportunity to share ideas, the sense of responsibility, the way they were welcomed, taking their opinion in conference evaluation, commitment to the schedule, respecting rules, the topics presented and the hotel.

Findings of Question 3.

Q3. What did you like least in the conference?

Table 3 shows the team members' responses and their frequencies.

Table 3. Issues liked least by the ASK-ME team members

Issues Liked Most	Frequency
Time and schedule needs more attention. There were always delays	2
The Alexandria Institute of Technology (AIT) was bad (no air-conditioning) Choose a better ventilated place	2
Having two different locations: one for accommodation and one for conference presentations	2
The internet connection was bad	1
Presentations were back to back without a time break in-between	1
No booklet is available for the presentations so that answers to questions about them can be prepared	1
Roles of the team were not clearly assigned nor organized	1
Some activities were disorganized	1

The ASK-ME team did not like the delays and the less commitment to time (2 members), and they complained about the AIT as a venue where there was no air-conditioning (2 members). They also disliked having two different locations one for accommodation and one for conference presentations (2 members). They individually complained about the internet connection, not having a break between sessions, the unavailability of conference program book for them to prepare for questions, the roles of the team members being not clearly organized or assigned and that some activities were disorganized.

Findings of Question 4.

Q4. What do you suggest/recommend so that What **suggestions** and **recommendations** do you have for future events as far as program structure, topics, location, hotel, schedule, transportation, IT facilities, etc. are concerned?

Table 4 shows the team members' responses and their frequencies.

Table 4. Suggestions and Recommendation Made By the ASK-ME Team and Their Frequencies

Suggestions/Frequencies	Frequency
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• More organization• Some participant names were missing and were not listed as delegates although they were invited to attend. This should be taken into consideration before the conference	2
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Venue was good but for more success, more attention should be given to cleanliness	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Enough time between sessions is needed so that we can have some rest	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• More commitment is needed regarding the scheduled times for events	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The venue for presentation must be better	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Organizing the ASK-ME team was bad as some were working and the others were just watching	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Transportation, meals and programs were in the best shape</i>	1

The ASK-ME team suggested more organization particularly in the area of reviewing the list of participants in the conference (2 members). There were individual suggestion regarding having enough break time between sessions, having a better venue next time, paying more attention to sticking to scheduled time and organization of the roles of the ASK-ME team.

Conclusion: Overall, the ASK-ME team have found the conference a very useful experience where they learned many skills such as improving their language, dealing with people from different nationalities, collaborative work, team spirit, self-reliance, sense of responsibility and what conference organization entails. Their likes, dislikes and suggestions agreed to a large extent with the participants which validated

the evaluation findings from the participants' evaluation of the conference.

Lessons Learned:

- ASK-ME team should consist of students from different schools to represent different areas for more interaction and satisfaction
- An orientation where roles are clearly identified and assigned is needed
- Conference organizer should make sure that all team members have a copy of the program book and familiarity with the locations in order to make the job easier
- Alternative breaks should be given through the day for the team members, maybe two at a time, so that they can have some rest
- The team members value taking their evaluation of the event and their responses proved to be as valid as the participants. They represent another perspective to looking at activities of the event.