



BIJU HARIDAS

SCHOLARSHIPS: Members of the Human Resources Development Fund with the three Bahrainis whose applications for support have been approved.

HRDF career development support for three Bahrainis

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Bahrain's Human Resources Development Fund (HRDF) yesterday celebrated the acceptance of three candidates for career development scholarships.

Aspiring Bahrainis in the financial and banking sector are being helped to advance their careers through HRDF which offers to pay for the latest training.

Dr Lulwa Al Mutlaq, HRDF vice-chair of the banking and financial sector, told the *Bahrain Tribune* that it was playing an increasingly crucial role in arming Bahrainis with the skills valued by the major banks and

financial institutions. "The fund was established to fill gaps in the banking and financial sector. What we have done since the inception is to hire consultants to study the gaps which exist in the area.

"They come to us with the main demands that exist in terms of skills and knowledge, and we have started to train people accordingly."

Originally set up by the Bahrain Monetary Agency two years ago, HRDF is now an independently managed organisation with a board of trustees comprising 11 directors.

The three successful candidates were in attendance at yesterday's announcement and all were clearly grateful to

HRDF for the opportunity to study in their nominated fields. Hala A Hameed Mufeez, of Bahrain Islamic Bank, and Ahmed Salama and Mohammed Al Hawaj, both of Shamil Bank, are the latest Bahrainis whose applications have been passed by the board.

Each submitted an application, supported by his or her employer, for consideration of scholarship funding for specific training and educational programmes. Salama said: "I heard about HRDF last year. One of the requirements is that you finish a year at your current job.

"So I did that before I applied, and now I have been accepted."

His colleague Al Hawaj said: "I was on another programme at the Bahrain Institute of Banking and Finance when I heard about HRDF. It feels really good to have been accepted."

Murad Ali Murad, HRDF chairman, announced: "Today's meeting is to celebrate giving letters of acceptance to three new candidates. "We want to deliver the competencies which are in short supply in the financial sector.

"We focus on areas most wanted by employers, the likes of Islamic banks, the BMA and so on. Wherever there is a shortage of competency we want to fund developments which will help people meet the requirements."