The Arabian section of the Ninety-Nines Female Pilot Organization held its 4th annual meeting under the patronage of HRH Princess Basmah Hamza. In fact, Princess Basmah qualifies as a pioneer among the Arab female aviators. Her Royal Highness is the first female aerobatic pilot in the Arab world in addition to being the first female glider pilot in Jordan. It is with honor that the section counts Her Royal Highness among its distinguished members and welcomes her patronage of the event.

The Arabian section was established in KSA in 1989 by 12 members. Today the Arabian section is the fastest growing section worldwide and the biggest oversees section as the number of its members is approaching the 99 female pilots coming from different cultures, flying experiences and traditions, but with one thing in common: “the passion to fly” as stated by the governor of the Arabian section, Alia Twal. Between September 29th and October 2nd, over 50 licensed female pilots from over 23 countries flew into Jordan. To quench the members’ common passion of flying, five flying activities were organized. The members were able to partake in flying the smooth DA40 single engine aircraft, the piercing Sky Arrow ultralight aircraft, as well as enjoying the silent flying of the glider, and that of the hot air balloon. A highlight of the flying activities was seeing member Elisabeth Heilmeyer the founder of “Las Sillas Voladoras” (the translation of “Flying Chairs”), fly the glider and the Sky Arrow. Elisabeth is one inspiring member of the section who fought to make flying for disabled people in Spain possible. The members also enjoyed another type of flying (one that does not require any flying machine!) i.e.: the accelerated free fall skydiving. Skydiving was a first experience for most of the members and excitement filled their souls before, during, and after the adventure. After the flying activities the members, the section’s sponsors, and guests attended the opening ceremony where Prince Hamzah bin Al Hussein honored the attendees with his royal presence.

In addition, the ladies had the opportunity to enjoy the immense natural beauty of Jordan. They started with the Red Sea. Because of its distinctive geological history, and the slow water exchange around the Red Sea, the shelf break in this region is filled with over 5000 years old coral reefs that display a rare beauty. Exceptional water quality enabled the members to admire the coral beds at their leisure during SCUBA diving and snorkeling. The next day, a visit to Jordan would not have been complete without a visit to its symbol, the Rose City - Petra, that counts among the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World. And as the effect never misses, the members were dazzled at their exit from the narrow gorge that leads to the Treasure carved in rose-red rock. To rest from the meeting’s busy schedule, the members were lead to Wadi Rum where they spent the night stargazing and enjoying the exceptional air quality and incomparable silence of the desert. A highlight of the meeting was the ride on the 1916 Orient Express steam train, where a re-enactment of the great Arab revolution was staged. To give a little spice to the adventure, the enactment staging included the kidnapping of three members of the section who were hopefully returned after tedious negotiations between the military characters and the chief of the Bedouin tribe. The second evening of the meeting took place at the XXX palace, where the members enjoyed exquisite food, and delightful music in addition to participating in a raffle of prizes.

All these activities made up for a memorable meeting that will remain in the minds of the members for a long time. The section includes many successful ladies from the world's leading airlines, private pilots, air crash investigators, aerospace engineers, and women who flew solo in single engine aircraft around the world and so much more. The diversity of the members was a wonderful opportunity for them to learn from each other and to discover what other airlines and aviation industries provide women with. The meeting will cause them to encounter new opportunities that will broaden their discipline and strengthen their characters, which is invaluable to their future. Further, the personal experience was invaluable as expressed by the members after the meeting.

Loyal to the 99’s organization’s mission, the Arabian section provides support to the future and/or current female pilots. The section’s program developed to accomplish that goal is successful as reflected by the 10% discount secured for 3 future female pilots who are currently taking their ATPL course at Ayla Aviation Academy - the lifetime sponsor of the Arabian Section.

More importantly, the Arabian section continues its charitable work to help support the surrounding struggles. The first day was closed by the members’ visit to the SOS Children’s Village in Aqaba. Members spent time with the children of the village and offered them presents that were received with glowing faces. They also enjoyed listening to music played by talented kids at the village. The little performers were sometimes accompanied by the renowned local Jordanian singer Omar Al-Albdallat who embellished the moment with his beautiful voice. Further, the funds collected from the raffle organized on the second day of the meeting is set to be given to the Golden Age House to help the Iraqi refugees from Mosul. Another important high point of the contributions within the Arabian Section is the donation of Yvonne Trueman, the former governor of the Arabian section, dear to every member’s heart. Yvonne donated $15,000 toward a scholarship as a memory to her late son Captain Julian Pooley, helicopter pilot, who passed away in 1994. After Julian died, Yvonne discovered that he had been carrying charity work taking care of orphans in Belize. Yvonne later decided to continue his mission.

The fourth annual meeting is a true success. According to its current governor Alia Twal, “the section is taking in new nationalities, we just registered 5 Egyptian ladies in addition to our first Syrian lady. Our scholarship fund is increasing and we now have funding for the next 5 years. We hope to help more women this way. The Arabian Section’s next event is our participation in the Bahrain Airshow scheduled to take place in January 2016, so for those who are interested in becoming pilots, or for female pilots who are not Ninety-Niners, I invite you to be part of the Arabian section family. There is nothing better the feeling of belonging.”

The meeting’s success is attributed to the generous and continuous donations of our sponsors. They are Ayla Aviation Academy, Zain Jordan, DHL Aviation Middle East, Royal Jordanian Airlines, The Jordanian Truism board, The Jordanian Revival Heritage Company, Ayla Oasis, Gulf Air, Gulf Aviation Academy, Rum Balloon, and the Royal Jordanian Gliding Club.