Origins, Journeys and Returns

SOCIAL JUSTICE IN INTERNATIONAL HIGHER EDUCATION

Edited by Toby Alice Volkman
with Joan Dassin and Mary Zurbuchen

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To all IFP Fellows and their struggle for social justice

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For information about the global program, see www.fordifp.org.

Acknowledgments

Envisioned as a way of nurturing social justice leadership, the Ford Foundation International Fellowships Program (IFP) was designed to support postgraduate study for thousands of talented, socially engaged individuals from groups that historically lacked equal access to higher education.

This book is an attempt to answer a number of questions about this ambitious effort. It began with a single case study in 2005 in response to a frequently posed question about how a global program could operate without a global definition of disadvantage. Realizing that the process of defining disadvantage was central to the program, Mary Zurbuchen wrote a preliminary study of how the IFP vision was translated into action in Vietnam. This essay became the seed for a set of comparative case studies set in different countries and for a broader "reading" of the program's significance.

Origins, Journeys and Returns is not an evaluation, but rather a qualitative reflection on the conceptualization and inception of the program ("origins"), its path ("journeys"), and its impact ("returns"). Each of these terms also refers to the trajectory of program Fellows: who are the individuals, what is the nature of their experience as Fellows, and what do they do when they have completed the fellowship? What can a close examination of a program such as this reveal about the complicated issues of defining disadvantage or the challenges of creating and implementing programs that are simultaneously local and global? In an era when the discourse of higher education is saturated with "internationalism," can IFP help us to refine our understandings of that term? Finally, how can a program that

targets individuals claim to further social justice, both within the educational system and beyond, in the many fields in which IFP Fellows work?

To address these questions in a manner consonant with the philosophical underpinning and structure of the program—consisting of a global Secretariat in New York City and more than twenty partner organizations in Asia, Russia, Africa, the Middle East, and Latin America—we asked a diverse group of authors to contribute to the volume. We believe the resulting multiplicity of perspectives provides a richer, more nuanced sense of the program. Each author has had close involvement with the program, and hence an in-depth understanding of some of its dimensions, yet each writes from a different position and location.

The first and tenth chapters, which frame the argument, are by Joan Dassin, the program's Executive Director and Program Director for Latin America. Mary Zurbuchen, Program Director for Asia and Russia, wrote a chapter on the origins of the program itself and of the Fellows as well as the Vietnam case study. The remaining case studies are by former IFP Fellows from Nigeria (Wilson Akpan and Akinyinka Akinyoade), International Partner directors in Guatemala and Mexico (David Navarrete and Anabella Acevedo), and selection committee members in South Africa, Brazil, and India (Shireen Hassim, Valter Silvério, and Ganesh Devy). My own position has elements of outsider, as a consultant working to produce this book, and partial insider, as a former Ford Foundation program officer who was intrigued by the idea of documenting IFP from its inception. My chapter on "journeys" deals with the international dimensions of the Fellows' experiences and the program as a whole.

All the authors played a valuable role, not just in providing their own sections, but in shaping the volume as a whole. In spite of individual authorship of chapters and case studies, the book was truly a collective project, facilitated by a meeting of the authors in New York to discuss chapter drafts and by an enormous amount of enthusiasm, insightfulness, and collegiality on the part of everyone who participated, shared ideas, and patiently revised their sections so that the volume would be cogent and coherent without losing, as author Ganesh Devy urged, the distinctive texture of individual voices and local differences. My co-editors, Joan Dassin and Mary Zurbuchen, deserve special thanks for their many editorial and substantive contributions, as well as their encouragement and good humor throughout the process.

Thanks also go to many other individuals and organizations. Chinua Achebe, distinguished Nigerian writer, educator, and public intellectual, honored us with a preface to this volume. IFP International Partners (IPs) throughout the world shared photographs and stories of their Fellows and alumni, and most fundamentally, have translated the IFP vision into practice in diverse settings. In countries that are the focus of case studies, IPs provided extensive material and shared their experiences with case study authors. Data and analysis gathered for the ongoing formative evaluation of IFP were generously provided by Jurgen Enders and his colleagues at the Center for Higher Education Policy Studies. Daniella Gandolfo served as an admirable research assistant in the early stages of this project. We also thank New York IFP staff, including Damtew Teferra, Adriana Thoen, Audrey Neddermann, Robert Oppegard, Barbara Wanasek and Casey Koppelson, for their generous help in organizing the authors' meeting and follow-up consultations, compiling and checking program data, and assisting with the editorial process. At the Social Science Research Council, Paul Price was an exacting and patient editor.

We are grateful for the continuing institutional support of the Institute of International Education and the ongoing guidance of the Board of the International Fellowships Fund, so ably chaired by Ambassador Donald McHenry. We would also like to thank the Ford Foundation and its staff, in New York and in field offices, who have supported these efforts in myriad ways.

Our profound appreciation goes to Susan Berresford, Ford Foundation President from 1996 through 2007. From the inception, Susan lent her support not only to the Foundation's unprecedented financial commitment to the program but also to its experimental methodology. Above all, Susan's belief in the Fellows as social justice leaders ready to transform their societies continues to inspire our daily work.

Toby Alice Volkman
June 2008

Note

In North America, "graduate" education refers to studying for a degree or other qualifications for which a bachelor's degree is required; in Asia, Africa, Latin America, and Russia, and most of the rest of the world, the term "postgraduate" is used. Given the geographic scope of the Ford Foundation International Fellowships Program (IFP), we follow the latter usage in this volume.

Although IFP is alive, well, and changing as we write, we used the end of 2007 as a cutoff date for data in this volume. Late 2007 also constitutes a kind of "ethnographic present" for the discussion and analysis presented here.

Throughout the text, Fellows and alumni who are quoted are referred to by name if consent was granted at the time of interviews or other communications. We are grateful to these individuals for their willingness to contribute to this volume and to those Fellows and alumni who appear unnamed, including respondents to anonymous surveys conducted by the Center for Higher Education Policy Studies in the Netherlands.

Preface

In November 2000 the Ford Foundation launched the International Fellowships Program (IFP) by pledging $280 million over ten years to help support the emergence of leaders with a strong commitment to social change in their home communities. Through the International Fellowships Program, Ford had made the largest commitment in its history to providing access to higher education around the world. But IFP also represented new thinking about the way in which international aid could be used to help vulnerable groups reach their educational and leadership goals while giving back to their societies. In charting a new direction in educational assistance, the framers of IFP took into account both the constraints and the possibilities of globalization and chose to provide disadvantaged individuals of exceptional academic and leadership promise with an opportunity to study in any part of the world—not just in the advanced West—wherever they identified a suitable course of instruction.

This truly global approach in providing equitable access in every region of the world is a unique contribution and corrects the trend in international student flows, from poor countries to the so-called advanced economies, that has skewed educational aid since the 1950s. IFP embodies other features which are just as innovative and important. The selection criteria of the new Fellows require that candidates provide a broad array of skills in leadership and social work in addition to excellence in academic achievement. This has enabled IFP to concentrate on training leaders with a strong dedication to social improvements in their communities around the world.

Working with International Partners in participating countries, IFP has developed a creative approach to selecting new Fellows: the requirement that candidates be drawn from the world's most disadvantaged and vulnerable groups. The IFP approach to understanding disadvantage itself has moved away from grouping potential candidates from poor countries as equally vulnerable in relation to candidates in rich countries. IFP has instead sought to understand gradations of advantage and vulnerability within those countries most in need of international educational assistance. The result is a system that more accurately identifies deserving individuals and does not privilege political and economic elites in the developing world.

IFP has now passed its midpoint, having provided graduate fellowships to more than two-thirds of over 4,000 individuals envisaged in the program. As IFP looks to the next phase of its span and seeks to reach candidates in twenty-two countries and territories around the world, it is encouraging to note that the Ford Foundation, through this program, has already helped train socially responsive leaders in countries as diverse as Brazil, China, Russia, and South Africa.

Chinua Achebe
March 2008

Part I: Origins — Framing the Argument

CHAPTER 1

Higher Education as a Vehicle for Social Justice: Possibilities and Constraints

Joan Dassin

This volume is much more than the history of a scholarship program, even as ambitious an effort as the Ford Foundation International Fellowships Program (IFP). Instead, it attempts to lay out the rationale, design, and implementation strategies used to achieve IFP's ultimate goal of furthering social justice in some of the world's poorest, most populous, and most unequal countries. The program itself promotes social justice by extending opportunities for advanced education to members of marginalized and excluded communities. As individuals, successful candidates need to demonstrate academic achievement and potential, leadership capacity, and a tested commitment to bringing about positive change in their countries and communities. As successful alumni with advanced degrees, former IFP Fellows are already starting to "make a difference" in the lives of others. In this chapter, we discuss the analytical framework that underpins IFP's goals and strategies as well as the structure of the volume that follows.

Higher Education and Development

It is now commonplace to contend that higher education is central to economic growth and development. The argument has gained traction as the "knowledge economy," the new world system in which knowledge and information have begun to supplant physical capital as the major sources of wealth, has increasingly dominated the global economic system. Indeed, it is frequently argued that higher education is a "central underpinning for the knowledge economy of the 21st century" (Altbach 2007, xxi). Without viable higher education institutions, countries cannot enable their young people to learn the specialized skills necessary for

technological and scientific innovation. Nor will those future leaders have access to the kind of general education that can also contribute to their countries' capacities to adapt to rapid economic and social change (Task Force on Higher Education and Society 2000).

When applied to poor countries, this position represents a remarkable paradigm shift. For decades, expanding access to primary education was accorded the highest priority as a development goal. By 1995, 70 percent of adults in developing countries were literate compared to less than half in 1965, and as increasing numbers of students progress through primary and secondary education, the demand for tertiary education has grown. Another factor in the expansion of demand for tertiary education is the growth in many developing countries of the population aged twenty to twenty-four years old. In the two decades after 1975, worldwide enrollment in postsecondary education increased from 40 to 80 million. China alone has more than 17 million postsecondary students; India, 10 million, with plans to add another 10 million by 2015 (Altbach 2007, xiii).

Despite this expansion, for decades the World Bank and other development agencies contended that public investment in higher education worsened income inequality and produced only marginal returns when compared to investments in basic education. For decades lending policies were based on this position, causing a significant decline in secondary and higher education capacity. In 2000 the World Bank and UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) published an influential report reestablishing higher education as a top development priority (*Higher Education in Developing Countries: Peril and Promise*). This laid the groundwork for other reassessments, such as *The Commission for Africa Report*, which observed that neglect of higher education "deprived [these] countries of the doctors, teachers, and other skilled workers that are vital for progress" (Clancy et al. 2007, 42). Even more important, in recent years governments of countries with rapidly expanding economies have devoted significant resources to national systems of higher education. China and India, for example, have invested heavily in advanced research and training in science and technology. Investments in higher education institutions specialized in these fields have helped transform these countries' vast economies by expanding their skilled labor pools. The investments are attracting expatriates to senior positions in country and are providing incentives for young graduates earning foreign degrees to return and work at home.

Private donors and universities have been sponsoring programs to build higher education institutions in developing countries. International cooperation is a vital element in these efforts. A recent example is the Partnership for Higher Education in Africa, a $350 million initiative sponsored by seven of the largest American foundations to improve higher education in seven African countries. In another example, Washington University in St. Louis recently established a program of scholarly exchanges, training and researching with fifteen leading research universities in Asia (Dassin 2006b).

For-profit international higher education services are also thriving in the global education marketplace. According to Philip Altbach, a leading higher education scholar, the developing world accounts for more than half of the world's post-secondary students—a proportion that will grow in coming decades (Altbach 2004). Since local institutions do not currently have the capacity to meet this demand, international education providers have begun to tap lucrative new markets through offshore campuses, franchised replicas of academic programs, and "virtual" universities. Despite widespread concern about the lack of uniform academic standards and quality control mechanisms, the for-profit higher education sector is growing rapidly as providers continue to cross national borders in search of aspiring university students (Altbach and Knight 2006).

Whether provided through public or private, local or international institutions, higher education is widely seen as having the potential to promote income growth and increased competitiveness, not only for individuals, but for whole societies. In this view, higher education is an important, if not exclusive, locus of new knowledge production and innovative technology. Individuals seeking advanced training in higher education institutions do so to attain the skills, flexibility, and confidence they need to meet new employment challenges. Higher education opens new career paths, boosts individual earning power, and promotes social mobility. At the societal level, investment in higher education institutions allows countries to compete more efficiently for the "economic, social, and political benefits generated by the growth of knowledge-based economies" (Nicolelis 2008, 1–6). Although this argument is still largely untested, especially for the world's smaller, poorer countries, the combination of vastly increased demand for higher education and successive transformations of the global economy has thrust higher education to the forefront of development thinking.

Beyond these essentially economic arguments, the more traditional functions of higher education retain their relevance in the search for equitable and sustainable development that goes beyond increasing a country's gross national product and its citizens' incomes. In his landmark work *Development as Freedom*, Nobel laureate Amartya Sen defines development "as a process of expanding the real freedoms that people enjoy." Sen accords a central role to the "free agency of people" and posits a connection between individual freedom and the achievement of social development. "What people can positively achieve," he concludes, "is influenced by economic opportunities, political liberties, social powers, and the enabling conditions of good health, basic education, and the encouragement and cultivation of initiatives" (Sen 1999, 3–5).

In this context, higher education institutions can play a critical role. In healthy societies, the sector as a whole fulfills its historical mission of preserving past knowledge and generating new visions for the future. Through teaching, research, and communication, higher education opens avenues for vigorous political, social, and cultural debate. Reflection about barriers to social advancement and policies to remove them is part and parcel of such debates, which can have a formative impact on individuals who pursue higher education, especially if they are attuned to the challenges of social development. Although severely compromised by the reality of underfunded, poor-quality institutions in many parts of the developing world, higher education is poised once again to figure centrally in the struggle for individual and societal advancement

Access and Equity

Despite its enormous potential, higher education also faces serious constraints in this role of "development engine." One such constraint stems from the key analytical distinction between increasing participation and thereby broadening access, on the one hand, and ensuring equity, whereby all students enjoy equal educational opportunities, on the other. By any measure, efforts over the last century to increase the number of people attending institutions of higher education have been hugely successful. By the turn of the twenty-first century, approximately 100 million students were enrolled in higher education worldwide, compared to about 500,000 students a century earlier. In some countries, about two-thirds of the traditional university-age cohort currently achieve admission (Clancy et al. 2007, 35).

But while in most countries higher education has become "much less of a preserve of a largely male upper-social-class sector of society" (Altbach 2007, xix), some analysts argue that expansion does not automatically lead to increased access to high quality education for previously underrepresented social groups. Rather, the institutional differentiation driven by massive enrollment perpetuates inequalities as lower-income, non-traditional students tend to cluster in poor-quality higher education institutions. While other analysts contend that even lower-status higher education institutions have an "upgrading function" (Clancy et al. 2007, 37), in practice students from academically, socially, and financially disadvantaged groups are unlikely to benefit from the same sorts of educational opportunities enjoyed by their more privileged peers.

Access and equity outcomes vary significantly among countries, depending on national policies and overall levels of social inequalities. Comparative data are scarce; in fact, comparative measures to monitor expansion, access, and equity are still being developed. Moreover, most analyses focus on the point of entry to higher education but do not take account of retention and graduation rates. Nonetheless, because of significant inclusionary pressures in countries around the world, the themes of "access and equity" have risen to a prominent position on the higher education agenda at the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and UNESCO. International agencies and national governments have shown a "heightened interest" in promoting participation in higher education and in "benchmarking" their achievements against the best-performing countries (Clancy et al. 2007, 43, 50).

Lacking comprehensive comparative data, it is nonetheless possible to demonstrate that the economic and social benefits of higher education are for now unequally distributed, both among nations and among individuals. Despite the remarkable growth in higher education enrollments worldwide, the educational gap between developing countries and high-income countries has continued to grow. In 1980, the tertiary enrollment rate in developing countries was 5 percent, as opposed to 55 percent in the United States. By 1995, those averages were 9 percent and 81 percent, respectively (Bols 2003, 1). In sub-Saharan Africa, tertiary enrollment rates continue to hover at 4–5 percent, as opposed to about 50 percent on average in OECD countries (Ramphele 2003, 4). These rates cover all types of tertiary institutions, including vocational and technical schools, indicating that university enrollment rates are even lower.

Moreover, disadvantaged groups within developing countries still find it difficult to compete for places in higher education. Although in many countries increasing enrollments have led to greater access for women and members of previously excluded social classes and ethnicities (Altbach 2007, xix), students from underrepresented groups—defined by caste, ethnicity, language, regional origin, gender, or physical disability, or a combination of these and other factors—may have poor educational preparation, making it difficult for them to gain admission to high-quality higher education institutions. Few individuals from these groups have attained graduate degrees, so they are underrepresented as faculty and senior administrators. Coupled with multiple forms of overt and covert discrimination, this exclusion leads to a self-reinforcing perception that higher education is unwelcoming to disadvantaged groups (Task Force on Higher Education and Society 2000, 41).

Although limited, available data on the socio-economic origin of students show that "tertiary education, especially the university sector, generally remains elitist." For example, gender-based enrollment disparities are especially stark in the Arab world and in South Asia. In India in 1998, total gross tertiary enrollment rates were 8 percent, with 10 percent for males and 6 percent for females (Bols 2003, 1–2). Even in high-income countries, imbalances in university enrollments persist. In the United States, 37 percent of Asian Americans and 22 percent of white adults have earned at least a bachelor's degree as compared to 11 percent for African Americans and 9 percent each for Native Americans and Hispanics (King 2004, 1). Data on international student circulation do not focus on whether underrepresented groups participate in cross-border study. However, the prevalence of self-funding among international students and the high bar set by the advanced level of academic and language competencies required for international admissions indicate that the vast majority of international students have their origins in elite or otherwise privileged groups.

These "opportunity gaps" persist despite decades of policies and strategies to improve higher education opportunities for underrepresented groups. Recent research has identified three main types of interventions: multiple types of financial incentives for low-income students; structural interventions such as modification of degree requirements to fill specific needs in the labor market; and "aspirational" policies designed to raise the level of educational achievement among low socio-economic groups, especially those without a family history of higher education (Clancy et al. 2007, 48–49). More broadly, the idea of a universal right to

education and fair treatment is embedded in the legislation, policy frameworks, and decision-making procedures of many countries. Similar ideas are enshrined in United Nations conventions based on the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, including those on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, and Against Discrimination in Education (Skilbeck and Connell 2000, 4).

As the struggle against racial inequality in the United States demonstrates, however, policy interventions to promote greater inclusiveness in higher education often provoke stiff resistance, either on formalistic legal grounds or because the promotion of equity is seen to conflict with long-established traditions of excellence and merit. In developing countries, even progressive legislation is often inadequately implemented, leading to further struggles or provoking a backlash. Worldwide, low-income, ethnic, and racial-minority and disabled people, among other excluded groups, continue to be seriously underrepresented in higher education. And even when certain groups, such as women, achieve greater access, they often face significant barriers to educational success and advancement.

Brain Drain

A second constraint that affects the potential for higher education to contribute to broad-based development is the phenomenon commonly called "brain drain." The term was first coined by the British Royal Society in the early 1960s to describe the migration of scientists and technology experts from Britain to the United States and Canada in the 1950s and early 1960s (Cervantes and Guellec 2002). Brain drain came to be associated with a "one-way, definitive, and permanent migration of skilled people from developing to industrial countries" and in the 1960s and 1970s, the impacts of brain drain were widely debated. In the 1980s, it began to seem inevitable that educated people would flee from deteriorating economic and social conditions, repressive regimes, and numerous violent conflicts that had erupted in poor countries. Under such conditions, educated people often had little choice except to resettle elsewhere. Yet by the 1990s, with the advent of the knowledge-based global economy that made highly educated people a key factor in economic growth, brain drain once again emerged as a central issue in higher education and development debates (Meyer 2003).

In the past several years, some analysts have argued that a paradigm shift has occurred from brain drain to "brain circulation" (Teferra 2005). Globalization,

with its convergent economic, political, and societal forces leading to greater internationalization and interdependence, has mitigated the effects of brain drain. The obstacles of distance have been reduced through information technology and more affordable transportation. Skilled professionals can work abroad but maintain frequent contact with their home-country colleagues to share research, build business partnerships, or initiate philanthropic projects.

Recognizing the potential of these connections, many governments and international agencies now have programs to harness the talents and financial resources of expatriates in diaspora. For example, a recent development framework for Africa, known as NEPAD (New Partnership for Africa's Development), seeks to promote collaboration between Africans abroad and those at home. The United Nations Development Program (UNDP) recently created a Transfer of Knowledge through Expatriate Nationals program to increase the number of African experts directly involved in development projects on the continent. In 2002, 130 heads of technology firms, nonprofit organizations, and UN agencies launched the Digital Diaspora Network—Africa (Tettey 2003). One report indicates that for Africa there are more than 110 similar initiatives worldwide (Meyer 2003).

Despite increased mobility for skilled professionals, what has been called "reverse brain drain" (skilled professionals returning to their home countries) is still incipient (Choi 2000). The choice to remain abroad often begins after postgraduate study, when successful graduates, especially those in technical fields, decide to stay in their host countries. A 2003 study of 6,000 foreign students who earned doctoral degrees in the United States, funded by the Mellon Foundation, indicated that only 40 percent of the degree recipients were working outside the United States at the time of their first jobs. Exit rates were lowest for those who earned doctorates in computer science and electrical engineering, with only around 25 percent leaving the United States for their first jobs.

The students' home region was also an important factor. While almost two-thirds of Africans, Australians, Canadians, and Latin Americans returned home for their first jobs, less than 10 percent of the South Asians did so (Gupta, Nerad, and Cerny 2003). Economic changes in home countries are not a reliable predictor of return either. Despite record economic growth and the rise of advanced technology industries in India, in 2000 only 1,500 highly educated Indians returned home from the United States—a minute fraction of those who left that year (Dassin 2005). It

will take massive investment in India to significantly reverse the decades-long outflow of the country's highly skilled workers.

A 2006 World Bank report, *International Migration, Remittances, and the Brain Drain*, indicates that brain drain is increasing. Between 1990 and 2000, the stock of educated immigrants in OECD countries rose by about 800,000 a year, representing more than half of total immigration to those countries. The impact of these outflows varies, however. The loss of skilled professionals has the most severe effects on the world's smallest, poorest countries. For example, almost 60 percent of Gambian university graduates live outside their home country. In the 1980s, Zambia had 1,600 doctors; there are now 400. An estimated 20,000 professionals have left Africa each year since 1990; more African scientists and engineers work in the United States than on their home continent. In some cases—for example, Ghana, Mozambique, and El Salvador—anywhere from a quarter to almost half of college-educated citizens now live in high-income nations belonging to the OECD. Four out of every five doctors trained in Jamaica practice elsewhere, an 80 percent brain drain (Dassin 2006b).

The World Bank report argues that brain drain confers benefits on the sending countries. Positive results include increased trade, remittances, knowledge, and foreign direct investment, often generated by migrants themselves. For some researchers, brain drain actually produces a net "brain gain" because the migrants' success stimulates increased investment in education in their home countries (Ozden and Shiff 2006). On balance, however, the negative impacts outweigh the positive outcomes. When educated people leave their home countries, they often take their skills and experience with them. The migration of doctors leaves their untended former neighbors subject to disease. The loss of trained civil servants weakens public services, and governments forfeit tax revenues when their richest and best-educated citizens emigrate. Harder to measure, the sending countries lose engaged citizens who otherwise might play key roles in building functioning democracies (Dassin 2006b).

Typically, these two important issues (access and equity in higher education and brain drain) are not connected in a single policy framework, yet both are crucial if higher education is to be a viable path toward development. If only elites enjoy opportunities for advanced education, excluded groups by definition will be barred from participating in the global "knowledge economy." As individuals, they will

sacrifice chances for economic and personal advancement. Their countries, moreover, will lose out on a vast array of potential scientific, technological, economic, and social contributions. However, even if members of disadvantaged groups enter and succeed in higher education, both at home and abroad, will they be able to help transform their home countries if they migrate elsewhere? Will their contributions as educated expatriates offset the losses incurred by their countries if educational "pioneers" do not stay connected to their home communities?

Origins, Journeys, and Returns: An Innovative Approach

The Ford Foundation International Fellowships Program is based on the premise that an innovative approach to the first problem—increasing access and equity in higher education—will also produce a solution to the second—brain drain. It asks the following questions: Can a fellowship program for developing countries, designed to increase the participation of socially committed, talented individuals from groups that have lacked systematic access to higher education, also help to reverse, or at least mitigate, brain drain? Can progress on both fronts help to bridge the "knowledge gap" that separates developing countries from high-income nations? Can a new generation of leaders be identified, trained, and encouraged to apply their newfound knowledge to improving conditions and promoting social justice in their home countries? Alternatively, can such work be done not just from vantage points within home countries, but also from bases in home regions or farther abroad?

In this volume, we draw on the experiences of IFP, now just past its approximate chronological midpoint, to analyze and illuminate how a particular approach to fellowships and capacity-building may affect key policy issues. We feel these issues are integral to efforts to enhance access and equity and to foster commitment to engaged social justice leadership in diverse communities. We have organized the book to reflect the trajectory of IFP and its participants; hence our title and our narrative structure: Parts I and II focus on origins (of the program and its Fellows, described in six illustrative case studies involving seven countries); Parts III and IV on journeys and photographs (of Fellows: geographic, intellectual, personal); and Part V on returns (both of the Fellows and in the sense of "returns" on IFP investment, both to the Fellows' broader communities and to the international fellowships and higher education field). What follows is a brief preview of this trajectory and the issues that are addressed in this volume.

Origins: Defining "Disadvantage"

We continue Part I with Chapter 2's examination of the institutional origins of the program, starting with the Ford Foundation's longstanding commitment to "advancing human achievement" and the Foundation's unique financial commitment to IFP—the largest single program in its seventy-year history. This chapter also delves into the policies and structures of the program and the ways its decentralized structure has shaped a unique approach to the complex question of "defining disadvantage." Just as IFP does not impose a unitary operational design for all twenty-two participating countries,[1] so too it does not employ a universal definition of "exclusion" or "disadvantage" for determining IFP target groups. At the global level, the program is focused on its core mandate of extending advanced study opportunities for communities that are underrepresented in higher education, yet the criteria for determining eligibility in each IFP country are locally determined.

The selection criteria and the institutional process through which they are established are central to IFP's inclusionary vision and mandate. When IFP was designed, we observed that most competitive scholarship programs, especially those that finance international study, are reserved for the "best and the brightest." The criterion of excellence is narrowly defined in strictly academic terms and scholarships are often awarded without regard for economic need or other distributive criteria. On the contrary, insofar as prior awards are often seen as indicators of academic success and merit, recipients tend to accumulate awards, leading to an even greater concentration of privilege (Dassin 2002).

In contrast, IFP set out to broaden access to higher education by targeting individuals from "groups lacking systematic access to higher education." We consciously formulated this objective in neutral terms, recognizing that expressions such as "affirmative action" have different connotations in specific societal contexts. Fundamental to the design was the development of a broad-based consultative process in which each IFP country would identify restricted access to higher education as a major public policy issue. In most countries, similar inhibiting factors were present, among them poverty, geographical isolation, and discrimination based on gender, race and ethnicity, and physical disability. Each International Partner[2] and the IFP stakeholders then prioritized and combined the most important "exclusion" factors in their societies, leading to the specific criteria they would use to identify the IFP target groups.

As important, final selection of successful candidates throughout the IFP system is based on individual qualifications that *differentiate* the candidates from one another, rather than on the socio-economic factors that are *common* to all eligible candidates. IFP candidates are compared along three interrelated dimensions: academic achievement and potential in the context of personal education history; demonstrated social commitment; and leadership qualities and potential. IFP takes a holistic view of candidates and considers not only their present levels of attainment, but also their past trajectory and the likelihood that candidates will reach their future goals. Indeed, the coherence of the application as it reflects the candidate's consistency of purpose is usually weighted as an important selection factor.

Different configurations of IFP selection criteria are detailed in Part II, a series of case studies from different world regions. Although heterogeneous, the process of shaping selection criteria that fit the global parameters of the program as well as local conditions has produced Fellows and alumni from across the world who reflect the central goals of the program. Fellowships have been channeled to talented students from developing countries, but not to typical elites. Ongoing research[3] reveals significant convergences in Fellows' gender, region of origin, educational background, and family financial resources. Selection results for each of these indicators demonstrate that IFP has successfully reached beyond typical recruiting channels, which conventionally favor urban-based, usually male elites who come from educated, affluent families. In contrast, 70 percent of IFP Fellows selected since 2003, nearly half of whom are women, were born or raised in rural areas and small towns. Over 80 percent of IFP Fellows are first-generation university students, more than half with mothers and nearly half with fathers who only completed primary school or had no educational degree at all. And almost all IFP Fellows report that a lack of family income and limited personal financial resources were the major barriers they faced in pursuing higher education (Enders, Kottmann, and Deen 2006, 21–25). Also in keeping with the goals of the program, these individuals have strong ties to their home communities through professional activities and volunteer service. Successful candidates already see themselves as social justice leaders and bring significant leadership skills and experience into the program.

Against the backdrop of these broad commonalities, the work of defining "disadvantage" played out in different ways in each IFP country. The issues entailed in defining the most appropriate target groups are revealed in the different

configurations of recruitment strategies and selection criteria described in the case studies presented here. A full study could have been written about each of the twenty-two IFP countries and their surrounding regions. However, for inclusion in this volume, we selected illustrative cases that represent a cross section of the challenges faced in implementing the program's selection goals while conveying its varied realities and encompassing its global scope.

Taken together, the studies illuminate how different approaches to the core questions of marginality and access to higher education have been developed, contested, and negotiated over time. Equally important, they advance current understanding of the educational choices and dilemmas facing a broad range of cultural and social groups that have been excluded from higher education in these countries. Through the analysis of IFP experiences in specific sites in Africa, Asia, and Latin America, we seek to stimulate a more nuanced discussion of policies actively promoting access and equity as a desirable goal for the higher education sector, both in developing countries and within international education.

Journeys: Rethinking Mobility

In supporting students from twenty-two countries to conduct postgraduate study at an institution of the student's choosing, IFP departs from more traditional programs that require study in a particular country and that, for the most part, assume that universities in high-income countries are the desired and the best options for students in the developing world. In practice, about one-third of Fellows have chosen to study in their home country or region. Another third have chosen the United States or Canada, and another third study in Europe and the United Kingdom. Yet there are striking patterns of difference among IFP countries and regions, and thus it is important to review the reasons for Fellows' choices, their own understanding of the international dimension of the program, and the perceived opportunities and constraints of international mobility as Fellows make choices about their study destination.

In asserting that students should be encouraged to pursue their academic interests wherever they find an appropriate study opportunity, IFP represents an experiment in mobility that offers new vantage points on the nature of what constitutes an "international" experience. In Part III, we examine how the experiences of IFP Fellows illuminate what is significant or transformative about the international

experience and ask what the Fellows say and value about the different kinds of international experience the program offers. We also seek to understand some of the challenges of the international experience and the adjustments and transitions it entails at various stages, including the crucial "re-insertion" process in the post-fellowship phase.

Although overseas study is typically assumed to be positive and beneficial, there is very little analysis in the higher education literature of the nature and impact of these experiences. Most of this literature measures the flow of students from one country to another and trends over time. These trends are indeed dramatic. Over the next two decades, for example, great increases are predicted in the number of students studying in countries other than their own, from 1.8 million in 2000 to 7.2 million in 2025 (Knight 2005). A growing literature on the "internationalization" of higher education (cf. Knight) deals with new modalities of education (new types of providers, forms of delivery, models of collaboration) or the impetus behind this growth (funding, market strategies, etc.).

However, little attention is given to what the international aspect of the educational experience means—for students, faculty, institutions, or society—other than the pervasive assumption that it must contribute to enhancing "cross-cultural understanding," promoting world peace, or increasing competitiveness in the global economy. Nor is there much discussion, especially at the postgraduate level, of the institutional arrangements that facilitate effective international study experiences, and it is safe to say that there is no discussion at all of how academic institutions can meet the particular needs of students from disadvantaged backgrounds. One of the key institutional innovations of IFP has been to create links with "University Partners" where significant clusters of Fellows are enrolled. In Chapter 9, we examine the ways in which such partnerships have facilitated academic admission and success. We argue that such institutional innovations, and their flexibility, are vital elements in building effective programs for disadvantaged students.

Returns: Outcomes

In Part V, we examine the outcomes of the program thus far, asking first whether Fellows—as expected—return home after completing their studies. Do the IFP selection model and other program activities in fact counter the persistent brain drain that has undercut the intentions of many other development-oriented international

fellowship programs? How is our understanding of this issue shaped by IFP's particular features, such as its flexibility in allowing Fellows to study anywhere in the world, including in their home country or region? What results have we been able to track to this point in time, and how do other factors, such as the type of degree and study location, affect the "return" issue? Beyond these considerations, we also delve into the experiences and decision-making of individual IFP alumni to gain a better sense of the factors that affect their personal and professional goals—including the decision to return or remain at home—in the post-fellowship transition. And we look at evolving strategies to assist alumni with re-entry issues and build sustainable networks of alumni in their countries and regions as well as other interventions to strengthen the Fellows' roles and capacities as social justice leaders.

In the concluding chapter, we consider the question of impact. In what sense may we think about IFP, or any program that supports individuals, as contributing to social justice? We argue that the program itself has mobilized broad support for the powerful idea that postgraduate fellowships can be used to redress exclusion and marginalization. At the same time, the academic success of the Fellows is a powerful antidote to the assumption that students from disadvantaged backgrounds or marginalized groups cannot compete in academically excellent institutions. Turning to the alumni, we show that individual alumni contributions to social justice in their home environments are amplified, as returning Fellows are building alumni associations and networks. Beyond this, we explore the "returns" that IFP as a program can offer to the field of international education more broadly. Other fellowship programs have begun to adopt features of IFP and have embraced its goals, and educational institutions have been influenced by its model and experience. All these examples suggest that sustained and multifaceted efforts by many actors are critical if we are to come closer to our dual aspirations: achieving access and equity in international higher education and strengthening local leadership for social justice.

Notes

1 The twenty-two participating IFP countries are Brazil, Chile, China, Egypt, Ghana, Guatemala, India, Indonesia, Kenya, Mexico, Mozambique, Nigeria, Palestinian Territories, Peru, Philippines, Russia, Senegal, South Africa, Tanzania, Thailand, Uganda, and Vietnam.

2 IFP works with twenty such International Partners, or IPs (see Appendix).

3 Since 2003, the Center for Higher Education Policy Studies (CHEPS), a higher education policy and research institute based at the University of Twente in the Netherlands, has conducted a formative evaluation of IFP. By the end of 2007, CHEPS had collected data from questionnaires circulated among more than 2,267 finalists selected between 2003 and 2007 (response rate 100 percent), 1,432 Fellows placed in universities between 2003 and 2007 (response rate 79 percent), and 613 alumni surveyed in 2007 (response rate 53 percent), as well as from sixty-three alumni interviews conducted in 2006 and 2007.

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CHAPTER 2

The Question of "Disadvantage"

Mary Zurbuchen

Introduction

At the turn of the new millennium, an ambitious and far-reaching endeavor was launched to provide opportunities for advanced education to exceptional individuals who will use this education to become leaders in their respective fields, furthering development in their own countries and greater economic and social justice worldwide. Since 2001, the Ford Foundation International Fellowships Program (IFP) has been actively seeking candidates from communities and social groups that lack systematic access to higher education. IFP will eventually provide fellowships in twenty-two countries and territories around the world to some 4300 individuals who have demonstrated academic promise, social commitment, and leadership potential.

At the global level, the story of IFP's emergence is linked to the Ford Foundation's commitment to developing leadership for social change worldwide. Through experience over decades of international grantmaking, the Foundation became convinced that persistent problems would require new solutions coming from talented people with fresh vision, expert knowledge, and—crucially—deep engagement with local communities. As the twentieth century drew to a close, Foundation senior officers and trustees sought new ways of building future cohorts of leaders.

Societies around the world face challenges of globalization, technological advances, conflict and security, and the widening gap between rich and poor. Still, in many societies the demand for people with the advanced education and skills to address these challenges far exceeds available supply. In a step that linked this vision to the growth of its philanthropic resources in the late 1990s, the Ford

Foundation announced on November 29, 2000, that it would make the largest grant in its history ($280 million) for a decade-long commitment to expand access and opportunity in higher education around the world (Ford Foundation International Fellowships Program 2000).

In this chapter, we will review the establishment of IFP, including the institutional context of the Ford Foundation's funding commitment. Next, through outlining some of the unique features that define this fellowship opportunity, we offer a view of how IFP is situated within the larger field of international educational exchange. We also examine the policies and structure of IFP and the ways in which global and local perspectives have combined to address issues at the heart of the fellowship selection process. That process and the ways in which IFP defines and identifies its target group of potential recipients frame the major substance of the following section, which consists of six detailed case studies of how IFP has emerged in very different national contexts in Africa, Asia, and Latin America.

The Ford Foundation and Fellowships

The Ford Foundation has long placed "advancing human achievement" among its core priorities,[1] and its investments in higher education institutions and individual fellowships, both in the United States and internationally, are well known. From the 1950s through the 1990s, Ford granted an estimated $365 million to enable some 30,000 individuals from more than 70 countries to pursue postgraduate education, primarily in the United States. Efforts to build institutions in developing countries following World War II led to decades of Foundation support in those countries for training leading researchers and establishing university faculties in such critical fields as public health, economics, and social sciences. Over the decades, respected leaders in many walks of life—universities, the arts, the public sector, civil society—embodied successful outcomes from a succession of Foundation programs focused on providing support for building institutions and nurturing individual talent. Its worldwide network of field offices and an international staff enabled Ford to invest in institution-building and educational initiatives grounded by local realities and perspectives; its field offices in Africa, Asia, and Latin America provided Ford with an arguably much deeper engagement than other private international funders.

In the closing years of the last century, the Foundation found itself with growing endowment assets in an environment of globally generated wealth. Discussions

among the Foundation's Board of Trustees and senior officers revealed considerable interest in a major commitment that would channel significant Foundation resources into a "signature program" outside of the United States directed at developing societies where the Foundation has long worked. While a number of subject areas were considered, the trustees favored the notion of a new kind of fellowship program geared toward identifying grass-roots leaders and social innovators. In response to the Board's request, senior staff began in 2000 to elaborate the concept that resulted in the establishment of the International Fellowships Program in 2001.[2]

Early on, it was determined that IFP would speak to the Foundation's broad institutional mission to address issues of social justice, community development, and access to opportunity. Rather than shaping higher education institutions or building a professoriate, the fellowships would be directed toward talented people working in fields linked to the Foundation's broad goals, individuals who would utilize opportunities for advanced study to bring about social change. The Foundation emphasized that IFP would seek out candidates who would likely be overlooked by conventional scholarship programs and whose commitment to community service would counteract "brain drain" patterns by which developing countries lose trained human resources to wealthier societies. As the Board of Trustees and Foundation officers shaped the IFP mandate, it was also clear that the program would utilize a one-time infusion of resources for a targeted number of people and would be a "cash out and spend down" operation rather than an endowed scholarship program with an open horizon.

With the establishment of IFP, the Foundation highlighted its conviction that leaders for the new century must be grounded in their local contexts *and* have access to the best critical thinking and knowledge in their fields. The Foundation was creating a new channel for support to individuals: a way to target talented men and women with strong commitment to improving their own communities and countries who would stand a better chance of realizing their full potential through advanced academic study. IFP was to build on the Foundation's long experience in identifying and supporting emerging leaders.[3] In a departure from earlier Foundation-supported fellowship programs, it also included significant and innovative new features.

First, IFP's new direction was signaled by its global reach. IFP Fellows would come from all the major countries where the Foundation had grantmaking programs, except the United States. In addition, recipients would be able to take their

fellowships to any region of the world, including the United States, where they found appropriate academic opportunity. This "portability" of the award was exceptional in the field of international fellowships.

Second, the Foundation mandated that IFP include innovative selection criteria that would emphasize not only academic achievement and potential, but also social commitment and leadership qualities. In this way, the program would create a model for expanding the definition of "excellence" to reach beyond standard academic measures in the search for new leaders.

Third, IFP was explicitly instructed to broaden the pool of future leadership talent by making special efforts to recruit exceptional individuals who would otherwise lack opportunity. The Foundation had long led the philanthropic community within the United States in supporting scholarships for minorities,[4] but IFP represented a new commitment to expand access to postgraduate opportunity globally for communities and social groups experiencing marginalization and exclusion.

As it developed, IFP was both defined and shaped by all three features described above. Each feature led to specific programmatic outcomes and design choices, and each has attained a deeper resonance over the years of program implementation since the Foundation's announcement of its $280 million grant in November 2000.[5]

Distinctive Program Features

As of September 2007, IFP passed the midpoint of its projected span,[6] having awarded more than 2,800 fellowships. Of this number, more than 1,300 people had completed their fellowships, while another 1,100 active Fellows were studying under IFP sponsorship in universities in some forty countries. The remainder were recent awardees still in the process of applying and preparing for admissions to postgraduate degree programs.

Based on a formative evaluation process that began shortly after the initial selection rounds, the program has compiled data on all individuals selected as Ford Foundation International Fellows. Data analysis indicates that the program has effectively reached its target population and has facilitated admissions to appropriate postgraduate programs where Fellows have successful academic experiences. The data also shows that more than 80 percent of IFP alumni were in their home countries during the post-fellowship period (Enders et al. 2006).[7] Beyond the aggregate outcomes, however, the story of IFP highlights key program design components

that distinguish this fellowship from other international scholarship programs. What follows is an overview of organizational features, policies, innovations, and successful practices that together define the IFP model.

One of the major innovations of IFP is a decentralized operational structure linking implementing organizations in the twenty-two IFP participating countries with the IFP Secretariat in New York City. The implementing organizations, or International Partners (IPs), hold primary responsibility for managing recruitment and selection processes in their country and for facilitating post-selection orientation, skill assessment, dossier preparation, and pre-departure language and other training, as well as visa and travel arrangements, before the Fellows begin formal degree study in their host institutions. The IPs remain the primary contact point for Fellows while they are studying and at various points their staff serve as coaches, mentors, informal advisors, and program administrators for Fellows under their purview.

The program's International Partners receive grants from the International Fellowships Fund[8] for implementing the selection process in each country and play complex roles beyond the typical dimensions of an international exchange program. As a development program, IFP promotes partnerships and multiple perspectives rather than depending solely on a central apex body for making decisions. There is a complementary dynamic linking IFP's International Partners (responsible for managing local systems for Fellow recruitment and selection, academic advising and preparation, placement guidance, and fellowship monitoring) with the Secretariat's mandate to manage program resources, oversee global operations, and maintain global consistency of policy and implementation.

The IPs represent a wide range of organizations, from research institutes to development nonprofits to educational resource bodies. When IFP began, its policies and procedures existed only in nascent form; experiences from the initial "pilot" selections fed directly into the way subsequent rounds were shaped and modified. The IPs provided models, experiences, and insights to bring IFP to life in their local settings, building and negotiating the program's ultimate contours within the overall global framework of goals and policy. Equally important, the IPs bear the responsibility for building and sustaining the credibility of IFP as an independent and transparent program in which neither Ford Foundation staff nor the International Partners themselves make selection decisions.

Certainly an important element of the decentralized nature of IFP is its emphasis on local selection processes, with final authority vested in national selection bodies.[9] This model of delegating authority stems from the realization that a blueprint approach to selecting Fellows would not be replicable or effective across the diverse human geographies, cultures, educational systems, and socio-economic settings of IFP countries. From the outset the Secretariat worked with IPs to pilot-test, refine, and evaluate approaches for defining, reaching, and selecting the IFP target group. The resulting system is a fine-tuned interplay of local and global features, policy parameters, and implementation strategies.

A second broad area of innovation is represented by IFP's commitment to flexibility and inclusiveness in program design. IFP Fellows study in a wide range of disciplines and are not limited to a predetermined list of priority fields.[10] The program recognizes that human knowledge comes in many forms and that leadership for social change does not wear a disciplinary label. In this, IFP stands in contrast to many sponsored international scholarships where a hierarchy of "priority" fields is determined by government or donors.[11]

Further, IFP is unusual in that applicants are not required to have prior university admission in order to qualify for an award.[12] After they are selected, Fellows work with mentors and academic centers to determine study fields, and the program cooperates with local and international placement partners in particular regions to identify optimal degree programs and facilitate the admissions process.[13]

In another departure from general fellowship practice, IFP has no upper age limit for its applicants. Recognizing that individual life trajectories are highly varied, the program assesses candidates not only according to their academic record but also for their work experience. Many apply to the program after substantial career engagement, with the result that 39 percent of IFP Fellows are age thirty-five or older. In addition, from the outset the program realized that women in many societies are often constrained from pursuing advanced study during their childbearing years; removing the "age bar" enables IFP to be relevant to a large potential constituency of these women.

The program also promotes flexibility in offering Fellows wide discretion in identifying the country and institution where they will study. Many government-sponsored international scholarships are part of bilateral agreements through which sponsored students travel from the aid-receiving country to the donor country.

Others, such as the United States' Fulbright or the United Kingdom's Commonwealth scholarships, bring students from many sending countries to the host country. Some prominent private programs, such as the Rhodes and Gates Cambridge awards, support awardees to study at a specific university. IFP stands out among both public and private large-scale, international sponsored programs in providing fellowships for people in multiple countries to study in any region of the world.

Providing Fellows with options means they are able to access education in a wider range of settings, including within their own or a neighboring country. Not all Fellows study in the so-called "northern" countries, as high-quality postgraduate degree programs are increasingly available around the world. An indigenous Peruvian entering postgraduate study at the Catholic University of Chile or a Russian from the Altai region studying at the Moscow School of Social and Economic Sciences have each typically crossed significant social and cultural boundaries in reaching those prestigious institutions. Nonetheless, the program also tries to ensure that Fellows studying in their own countries have options for international experience and exposure, such as through special "sandwich" study at an international destination or presentation of their work in international conferences.[14]

Providing multiple options for their study destination enables participants in the program to balance many factors, including personal trajectory and academic aims. Even more importantly, IFP's flexible policy partially removes the "language bar" currently preventing many talented men and women all over the world from securing advanced study opportunities. Applicants without mastery of a foreign language can qualify for an IFP fellowship, and successful applicants who need to improve basic language skills to gain admission abroad are provided with language training opportunities in home and host country settings.[15] The manner in which the IFP fellowship is realized for each Fellow, therefore, reflects many choices and variables, introducing substantial diversity to the underlying concept of "international" study and opportunity.

The third feature distinguishing IFP from other fellowship programs is its focus on the notion of social justice leadership. Social commitment is one of the central criteria in the program's selection process. Candidates must have records of professional or community service experience in addition to academic qualifications and must be able to articulate how the pursuit of advanced knowledge will enable them to reach future goals reflecting their social justice concerns. Newly selected Fellows

receive an orientation to the program that encourages sharing of social change goals and visions. The program brings Fellows together for meetings and workshops linking their fellowship experience to projected outcomes once they have completed their studies and returned home. Finally, and most fundamentally, IFP places a high priority on the return of Fellows to home countries and communities, looking for individuals whose ties and commitments to those communities, and whose visions for their own futures, are most likely to bring them back after the fellowship.

Who Are IFP Fellows?

It is hard to overstress the significance of IFP's mandate to seek candidates within underserved populations or the ambitious character of a global program attempting to respond directly to some of the most entrenched and systemic challenges affecting access to advanced learning. How have these goals been translated into action on the ground in a variety of socio-cultural and political settings? Does IFP's experience show promise of contributing to broader understanding of how access and equity concerns could be addressed in the rapidly expanding, dynamic arena of international student mobility? Finally, can IFP contribute to development policy debates by illustrating how global program objectives are operationalized and embodied through locally defined roles, institutions, cultures, and histories?

As IFP was launched and began selections in 2000–2001, the field of international higher education was experiencing important shifts. While the United States has long attracted the largest numbers of international students at both tertiary and postgraduate levels, its percentage share of all internationally mobile students has declined since 1997.[16] The global pool of international students has expanded rapidly, with UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) estimating that 2.5 million sought education outside their home country in 2006 and some observers estimating there could be as many as 7 million international students by 2025.[17] And the directions of international student flows are fluctuating as new destinations emerge, with movement from developing countries to high-income Anglophone countries becoming less the dominant pattern.

At the same time, researchers note that the demand for higher education worldwide is increasing at unprecedented rates as secondary education spreads in developing countries and as local universities produce growing numbers of degree holders. Many countries around the world, such as China, Saudi Arabia, Malaysia, and

Singapore, are pushing to expand domestic training capacity and enter the competition for international students at the same time. Governments are promoting their own universities as international destinations and establishing incentives for their highly trained nationals to return home and rejoin the corporate and training sectors. Finally, the logic of globalization and transnational information flows is enhancing the salience of tertiary degrees as local citizens are increasingly drawn into global exchanges of specialized knowledge.

What has not changed in higher education, for the most part, is the tendency for international student flows to be populated by economic and social elites of sending countries.[18] As discussed in the previous chapter, it is self-evident that families with the most resources are most likely to be able to send their children abroad, and studies show that participation in tertiary education in developing countries is heavily dominated by privileged groups. Less obviously, sponsored scholarships and aid-supported training programs often draw from the same national elites. These groups are more likely to be educated in capital cities and urban centers, in private academies or the most prestigious public schools in their home countries, and are thus more competitive in terms of the academic measures emphasized in scholarship competitions. In most international scholarship programs, foreign language test scores are heavily weighted in assessing merit. Where foreign languages (especially English) are not accessible in local schools, children of elites are the only people likely to obtain these valuable keys for unlocking the door to overseas study.

IFP, with its goal of identifying and nurturing social change leadership, defined its strategy as expansion of access to the realm of international higher education. It thus aimed to counter deeply rooted patterns by actively seeking talented candidates from underrepresented social groups whose lack of access is systemic and demonstrable and by measuring merit along both academic and non-academic dimensions. Alongside that core principle sits a paired corollary: since so many underserved communities start with educational and cultural deficits, IFP needed to design a fellowship model that would support deserving candidates to achieve academic success. The components and policies of the IFP program described above resulted from the application of these core principles.

At the same time, the program recognized that "disadvantage" is determined by multiple and interacting criteria and would likely be manifested by different features from one setting to another. In the United States, racial minorities have long

suffered discrimination and are thus a primary target group for affirmative action programs; in other places, religious identity or coming from a rural district may function as major determinants of disadvantage. IFP consciously chose not to apply a global definition of what counts as "marginalized," instead charging each participating country to study, assess, and define priority target groups in the context of local educational systems, cultures, and histories.

As the program began operations in 2001, IFP's local partners worked with education networks, advisory panels, focus groups, and Ford Foundation staff to craft a working plan for outreach, recruitment, and selection that would be applied in the opening selection rounds and subsequently modified to incorporate new information and program learning. At the global level, IFP identified general parameters for establishing target group criteria that were widely discussed and shared. Advisors and selection committees in IFP countries began by looking at a range of socioeconomic and demographic criteria including income and poverty parameters, place of birth, current residence, parents' education, family structure, and occupation. Experience of marginalization based on group identity (race, ethnicity, caste, religion) was analyzed, along with gender-based discrimination or factors related to sexual orientation and physical disability. Political discrimination was considered in a range of manifestations, since people who come from or live in politically unstable regions experience disadvantage, as do groups suffering from armed conflict or forced migration.

In each IFP site, decisions were made about which factors would function as major indicators of marginalization in that setting and about the relative weight to be assigned to target group criteria in the applicant screening process. An applicant's ranking along the dimension of "disadvantage" would, as screening and selection proceeded, be placed alongside scores in three other major selection areas: academic achievement, social commitment, and leadership potential.

Despite the highly particular social and cultural contexts in IFP countries, the picture of the "target group" that emerges across twenty-two locations demonstrates overarching consistency alongside considerable variation. For example, numbers of women and men selected by the program are nearly balanced at the global level, with 51 percent male and 49 percent female Fellows. This does not mean, however, that the gender factor operates in the same way everywhere. In Russia, for example, two-thirds of IFP Fellows are female. An important overall indicator is that most

Fellows (78 percent) grew up in districts outside capitals and urban centers. At the same time, Fellows in some countries must move to metropolitan centers to pursue university education, and thus their residence at time of application is weighted differently in different places.

In tackling target group definitions, IFP also faced an internal contradiction: in many countries IFP applicants come from the small minority of the population with college degrees and have already had access to higher education. The program addressed this challenge of reaching the "educated disadvantaged" by carefully balancing analysis of characteristics of disadvantaged groups, on the one hand, with a selection process designed to assess unique individuals, on the other.

One of the ways IFP's partners dealt with the contradiction embodied in targeting the "educated disadvantaged" was to emphasize two dimensions for measuring an applicant's proximity to the target group. One dimension involves weighted criteria such as ethnicity, gender, religion, place of origin, and other factors. The other dimension is that of "personal trajectory," the route and distance an individual has traveled as reflected in their personal background.[19] A person's trajectory includes a record of accomplishments in the face of a variety of challenges and constraints and can be used to help assess the likelihood an individual will make good use of the IFP fellowship opportunity.

The ways in which target group criteria were defined and utilized help to answer the question of who the Fellows are and why their origins are such an essential part of the IFP story. The commitment to locally defined and managed selections in Brazil produced Fellows such as Israel Fontes Dutra, a leader of the regional Council of Indigenous Teachers in Amazonas state, who sees education as the essential tool for indigenous communities to manage encounters with the forces of modernization. Reaching beyond typical measures of excellence enabled China's selection committee to recognize Cui Yaqing, a radio personality in Xinjiang Province in far western China, who has used her voice to promote local philanthropy and mobilize public welfare activities among the disabled. And placing emphasis on social commitment and leadership potential led to identification of Neo Ramoupi, a historian at South Africa's Robben Island Heritage Foundation, whose PhD award will bolster his commitment to documenting the long struggle of anti-apartheid activists.

Techniques applied in searching for and selecting these and more than 2,800 other IFP Fellows (at time of writing) also include application materials in local

languages, extensive outreach travel, informational meetings organized by IP networks, and review by screening and selection committees representing a range of social sectors, academic backgrounds, and professional experiences. Utilizing all the approaches cited here, the IFP model demonstrates not only that deserving candidates from the target groups exist in large numbers,[20] but also that Fellows from "non-traditional" backgrounds can make successful transitions and obtain postgraduate degrees in leading universities around the world. It is no exaggeration to state that IFP's results thus far provide convincing and important lessons for other fellowship programs operating on a global platform with a focus on equity issues.

Perspectives on IFP Countries and Case Studies

The geography of IFP embraces a diversity of settings across its twenty-two sites in Africa and the Middle East, Asia, Latin America, and Russia. At the outset, IFP countries were defined as the major countries in which the Ford Foundation's field offices were engaged in active grantmaking in the year 2000. With Foundation offices in Mexico City, Rio de Janeiro, and Santiago, the geography of IFP in Latin America includes Brazil, Chile, Peru, Guatemala, and Mexico. In Africa and the Middle East, Foundation offices are located in Cairo, Johannesburg, Lagos, and Nairobi, and the corresponding IFP countries are Egypt and the Palestinian Territories; Ghana, Nigeria, and Senegal; Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda; and Mozambique and South Africa. The Foundation's office in Moscow covers the Russian Federation, also an IFP site. In Asia, with offices in Beijing, Hanoi, Jakarta, and New Delhi, the IFP countries are China, India, Indonesia, the Philippines, Thailand, and Vietnam.

Across the profound diversity of this geography, IFP is charged with identifying individuals who fulfill the program's dual mandate of promoting excellence and equity. The challenges entailed in defining the most appropriate target groups from which the best individual candidates can be chosen are revealed by the different configurations of recruitment and selection strategies found in the twenty-two IFP sites. In order to convey a deeper understanding of who the successful applicants are, we need to understand more about how IFP came to be shaped in various contexts and how local patterns of cultural identity and social opportunity play out against the institutional background of higher education. Since the program posed no global definition, the work of formulating criteria for assessing "disadvantage"

took place in specific settings. We have chosen to focus on a selection of IFP sites to illustrate how this process worked and to explore whether unifying questions and common concerns could be teased out from the proliferation of on-the-ground experiences.

In opting for the "case study" format for presenting this material, we relied on two core principles: first, that IFP has been shaped by local stakeholders interacting with a global policy framework, and second, that flexibility and iterative learning have been key to operationalizing the program. Since the startup of IFP was staged over two years, with three groups of sites beginning selections at different points, initial outcomes and lessons about effective practice could more easily be shared across the system. Framing a series of case studies to present and reflect on the "origins" of the Fellows—who they are and how they were identified—could also allow us to know more about the origins of the program model itself.

Any one of the IFP countries presents a compelling story and issues with broad significance. For this reason, it was challenging to make final choices about which countries to foreground here. For instance, Egypt's apparent stability masks considerable tension around religion, authoritarianism, and stagnant institutions. Ghana represents a striking example of how Africa's pattern of "brain drain" draws highly educated people away from home. Indonesia's extreme ethnolinguistic diversity and uneven concentration of poverty defy convenient generalizations about exclusion or what constitutes a "minority," while China's rapid growth and social turbulence make it difficult to arrive at a firm definition of "lack of access." Across Latin America, persistent economic inequality and histories of repression have led to entrenched patterns of exclusion. In Russia, economic and political upheavals in the post-Soviet transition have weakened social value systems and educational institutions alike.

In assessing which case studies to develop, we felt that it would be important to examine large countries playing key roles within their regions as well as nations with especially complex ethnic and social structures. We wanted to look closely at societies undergoing important systemic change or implementing significant social policy revision. We looked for dimensions of contrast in how key issues determining marginalization were defined and applied in implementing the program. In the end, we chose to focus on seven of the IFP sites: Brazil, India, Nigeria, South Africa, Vietnam, and a combined study of Mexico and Guatemala.

In the cases presented here, we see how decisions on how to implement IFP were made in light of varied historical, political, and social factors. In Nigeria, for example, the program had to construct an operational definition of marginality in a country where, in the words of one official, "almost everyone needs help." In South Africa, where at first impression the question of disadvantage seems clearly linked to a system of racial hierarchies, the approach was complicated by intersections of race with class and gender inequalities. Mexico and Guatemala appear to share a similar configuration of clearly disadvantaged groups, each with significant indigenous populations, yet the partner organizations in these two countries developed distinct approaches: in Mexico the focus is entirely on indigenous groups, while in Guatemala the program targets "the multiple faces of marginality," including people living in poverty and severely affected by political turmoil. In both Brazil and India, the IFP program was launched amid lively national debate about affirmative action and implementation efforts, sometimes controversial, supported by the government. Our study of Vietnam reveals the delicate politics of defining disadvantage in a society undergoing socialist transition.

Common to the case studies is a focus on the process of defining disadvantage and the contextual factors, debates, and challenges dealt with in order to establish and revise the IFP outreach and selection process in the particular local setting. Case study authors were asked to address a series of questions about how exclusion or marginality is defined by IFP in their setting, what process led to that formulation, and which issues proved most controversial or difficult along the way. Authors were expected to reflect on changes in methods and approaches and illustrate how new learning was uncovered about factors determining lack of access. They were also asked to identify significant program successes as well as continuing challenges. The emphasis of all the case studies is the range of policies and practices under the rubric of "target group definition, outreach, and selection." For this reason, other program aspects of the fellowship program—including university placement and academic experiences, program outcomes and completion rates, and operational and financial dimensions entailed in management of a large global system—are not central to these studies.

While the case study authors' disciplinary perspectives, backgrounds, and analytic approaches vary, all treat a set of common themes. These include key aspects of national history and culture, economic or political development, and

social dynamics relevant for understanding IFP's evolution in that country. Also considered in the studies is the institutional background of tertiary educational development: access to higher education, government's role in the education sector, and the education policy environment. In addition to treating the key demographic, social, cultural, and other factors limiting access, authors consider the context of educational opportunity and resources, including scholarships for study abroad. Finally, the authors reflect on the roles of International Partner organizations and stakeholders and other links and affiliation arrangements that enabled IFP to build credibility and emerge as a legitimate international program.

Although no single country study can represent all of IFP's realities, together these six case study chapters can, we hope, be emblematic of the range of issues and experiences the program has encountered around the world. As discursively varied as the backgrounds and professional orientations of their authors, the chapters nonetheless reveal common threads in a complex weave. In listening to the echoes of contrast or commonality between them, we can perceive some ways in which these separate studies "speak to each other" in addressing IFP's core questions.

Dimensions of contrast and commonality between IFP sites stretch across three conceptual realms: the range of settings in which the program operates; the relevant institutional, policy, and educational systems that are found in each country; and the roles of International Partner organizations in mobilizing strategies and stakeholders to realize program objectives.

IFP in Local Settings

In reviewing the contextual features described in these chapters, we find several countries engaged with historic national transitions. In South Africa, for instance, the 1990s' dramatic break from a legacy of racial dominance continues to drive key policy change, including educational reform. In Vietnam, the persistence of socialism in the political sphere overlays a process of "renovation" that has profoundly altered economic, social, and cultural realities for many citizens and which is galvanizing an expanding higher education sector aiming to train thousands of new postgraduate degree holders over the next decade.

It is apparent from the studies on Brazil and South Africa that IFP inserted itself in some places just when debates and discourses of tolerance and diversity had been intensifying. As Valter Silvério shows, Brazil's social policy community challenged

prevailing patterns of discrimination in higher education that were reinforcing disparities between regions and ethnic groups. In South Africa, Shireen Hassim describes a significant reform debate that centers around the "relation between education and equality." Both studies suggest that IFP positions education as an issue of social justice, rather than as an instrument to increase national economic competitiveness. The program moves discussion of the role of education in development—so dominant in professional education research—to challenge the assumption that higher education is inevitably an instrument of social mobility. Without significant expansion of opportunity among underrepresented groups, higher education may only recreate existing disparities. Development-driven emphasis on expanding science and technology education in Brazil, Silvério argues, served to reinforce existing structures of dominance.

The chapters on Brazil and India both point to stark contrasts between constitutionally mandated policies of inclusion in those countries and the skewed realities of participation in education at all levels. In their chapters, Silvério and Ganesh Devy point to the ways that "discursive constructions" of tolerance and diversity may exist for decades alongside persistent marginalization in educational systems that resist genuine reform. In both India and Brazil, the terms of the affirmative action debate are strongly contested as rule-based quota systems contend with more complex models of redressing discrimination.

In other IFP countries, specific constitutional and legal changes have the potential to alter the playing field to support new social agendas. For Mexico, the Zapatista movement of the mid 1990s brought the historic exclusion of indigenous minorities to the fore in a way that is now influencing politics and policy in many fields. In Guatemala, the signing of the Peace Accords following decades of brutal civil war highlighted urgent issues of national unity. These two linked cases are interesting in another way: although Mexico and Guatemala share a cultural and ethnolinguistic heritage, current dynamics within each society led IFP to design their programs differently. Despite many similar background features in this contiguous cultural region, IFP's decentralized structure allowed differentiation of program design in Mexico and Guatemala based on contrastive local logics of social transformation.

Engaging Policy and Practice

One of the important characteristics of IFP's profile in every site has been its positioning vis-à-vis local educational policy and institutional practice. In Nigeria, IFP represented just one of a number of scholarship programs purporting to promote equity and access. In a setting where official "preferential admissions" policy generally lacks credibility, however, such claims may not be taken at face value. Vietnam, much like Nigeria, seems to be "awash with scholarships," most of them under the authority of the national education ministry. In both countries, complaints are heard about inefficient and non-transparent systems of distributing opportunity. In both countries, then, extraordinary care was required in establishing program legitimacy and independence from special interests. In Vietnam, utilizing an international selection committee during the initial stage was one tool to ensure an independent selection process; in Nigeria, the regional composition of the short-listing panel (with members from Ghana and Senegal) continues to maintain a process free from potentially divisive localized pressures.

In the case of South Africa, establishment of IFP was in line with the government's well-regarded reform agenda as represented in its White Paper on Higher Education, which "locates higher education as a component of enhancing equity and social justice" (Council on Higher Education 2004). While IFP did not need to establish its identity through countering or augmenting the policies advocated by government, the program has nonetheless opened up ways in which a race-based understanding of discrimination can be deepened through including perspectives on gender and class differences. Employing the "human capabilities" framework developed by Amartya Sen and others, case study author Shireen Hassim argues that this more complex analysis of the roots of disadvantage is required to enable all South Africans to build capabilities as critical thinkers and citizens.

In India, too, it is evident that IFP has moved the definition of disadvantage beyond a monolithic paradigm that locates exclusion in a single dimension such as caste (corresponding to race in South Africa as a "monofactorial indicator"). Ganesh Devy's evocative case study analysis of "layered" disadvantage in India engages us in consideration of the deep historical and civilizational ruptures underlying widespread exclusion, even after half a century of legally mandated affirmative action quotas in public higher education and civil service. While both Indian and Mexican selection processes utilize documentary verification of certain kinds of

"group identity" in screening IFP applicants, both sites are producing more complex learning about just who the program's target groups are and where they are situated on contemporary grids of occupational and social mobility as well as the hybridity of modern identity construction.

Several of the cases represented here raise questions of how class-related factors enter into decision-making on the part of local committees. In Nigeria, South Africa, and Vietnam, interview techniques that elicit applicants' "life stories" enable committees to obtain important qualitative information on relative degrees of advantage and other intangible indicators of access to opportunity. IFP's own survey data on selected finalists' self-perception indicates that poverty is the most common feature defining disadvantage for these award recipients. Interestingly, however, all the case studies here illustrate models of exclusion that move well beyond poverty into analysis of other deeply contextual factors—such as parental education—relevant to assessing socio-economic status. It turns out that quality of secondary schools (Brazil), geographic isolation (Vietnam), differentiation within ethnic or racial categories (Mexico, South Africa), lack of access to information (Guatemala), and being born or living in regions characterized by chronic disadvantage (India, Nigeria) are also important indicators in screening IFP applicants operating alongside categories of gender, poverty, and race or ethnicity.

The task assigned to IFP's local partner organizations to "define the target group" is therefore less straightforward than available discourses of affirmative action situated in, say, poverty or race would suggest. Each site has passed through stages of establishing a set of variables and testing their relative weight in establishing criteria of merit. Each country's selection process is founded on local understanding of what constitutes lack of access or marginalization.

Roles and Partnerships

As the IPs have worked within local dynamics and conditions, a decentralized program structure has enabled flexibility for adjusting program design to incorporate ongoing learning. In India, initial definitions of IFP's target group were applied to a more limited geographic area after the first two selection rounds in order to allow a deeper penetration into areas of concentrated deprivation. In Mexico and Guatemala, the initial joint selection process was de-linked to better reflect the differential "social universes" IFP was targeting in each setting. Vietnam added an

interactive group session to its final selection interviews in order to better understand social commitment and leadership dimensions of the finalist pool. In all sites, annual assessment of selection results contributes to refocusing and refreshing the processes used for the next round. The flexible and consultative nature of IFP's global program design has enabled deeper and more informed targeting and selection formats to emerge in local settings.

Still, it is apparent from our case studies that there is considerable convergence around the broad outlines of the selection process. In the most general terms, selections begin with establishment of a strong applicant pool based on the characteristics of the locally defined target group. In the second phase, the pool is assessed on the basis of two kinds of merit criteria: academic merit, or the candidate's potential as a postgraduate student, and "social merit," or the demonstrated commitment to social change as well as leadership qualities revealed through the candidate's life story, professional record, or community service.

Shaping an applicant pool involves its own set of challenges, for IFP's target groups often lie outside mainstream channels through which opportunity is distributed in their own societies. Reaching out to the target population(s) involves extensive travel, networking, and interpersonal contact. In India and Vietnam, mobilization of resource persons in remote areas has been important. Excluded groups may need to be convinced that IFP is actually intended to benefit "people like us," a significant challenge in Nigeria, where many seemingly "open" competitions are in fact rife with favoritism. Local partners in Mexico and Guatemala have moved beyond advertising in newspapers or through universities to meeting with local leaders, cultural associations, and NGOs (non-governmental organizations) with linkages in rural communities. In all sites, shaping consistent messages about program selection policy and guaranteeing transparency have proved essential to garnering a strong and competitive pool.

Once applications are screened for eligibility, assessment of merit commences. If IFP's situated formulations of "exclusion" or "disadvantage" reach beyond poverty, its processes for determining and evaluating "merit" reach beyond conventional assessment of academic achievement. The case studies of Guatemala and Vietnam suggest how, in two very different societies, assessing academic talent cannot rely on standard measures of excellence. In these and other countries, many applicants completed their undergraduate study early in their careers and have

long been outside of the university environment. Gaps in candidates' disciplinary backgrounds or attendance at non-top-tier universities must be factored into decisions about which applicants show capacity to be viable as postgraduate students. Thus while academic talent is a core selection criterion everywhere, each locale has developed its own nuances in identifying evidence of that talent. In many sites, such as Mexico and Brazil, IFP represents the first affirmative action effort at the postgraduate level, meaning that academic results will be scrutinized and have potential to influence future programs.

Foreign language skill is another area where IFP has moved carefully in establishing selection criteria. Where most international fellowship programs require skill levels in English (or another target language) for admission to universities overseas, IFP strives to ensure that candidates with low language skill levels can still compete for fellowships. The program offers post-selection language training and provides options for studying at home or in neighboring countries where language is not a bar. For example, Guatemalan Fellows, often lacking postgraduate programs in their fields at home, can study in Mexico. Vietnam's selection process involves multi-stage assessment of language-learning potential and commitment to intensive post-selection training. The case studies on India, Vietnam, and South Africa all stress the key enabling functions of such pre-academic training programs in the post-selection period.

In the area of "social merit," the selection process becomes even more complex, as screening and selection panels evaluate a range of factors related to a candidate's social commitment—often, though not exclusively, demonstrated through work experience or voluntary service. Reviewers are asked to assess candidates' records or potential in leadership roles and to rank each based on how convincingly their advanced study aims relate to their future professional plans and aspirations. Our case studies reflect comparable ways selection committees make such nuanced judgments. In South Africa, interviewers explore personal capacity in overcoming life challenges and look for the "forms of agency" a candidate has demonstrated along the way. In Nigeria, judging social justice and leadership qualities may involve deciding which candidates "would go beyond simply redressing their own marginality," as Wilson Akpan and Akinyinka Akinyoade suggest. The Vietnamese selection panel identifies candidates whose career path is clearly linked to a future of service to their community, and in Brazil, the committee looks for individuals who

can benefit from an opportunity for "professional development for skilled action" in their home communities.

The language and range of indicators used to select Fellows and the format of selection processes employed vary from country to country, as these studies suggest. Yet the collective result of IFP's targeting and selection processes is, as discussed elsewhere in this volume, a community with remarkable coherence related to characteristics of disadvantage, academic talent, social commitment, and leadership. How did IFP produce this cumulative outcome of a global program expressed in local terms rather than a disparate set of unlinked processes?

Clearly, the role of the IPs in shaping and guiding recruitment and selection processes has been key in program development and results. Putting the global program goals into a local context, IPs build networks of actors embedded in local education systems and social change debates. These advisors, communications specialists, reviewers, screening panels, contact persons, selection committees, academic advisors, and others reinforce overall program goals while further helping to situate IFP in the immediate "social universe."

Each IFP site works with sufficient autonomy to feel confident in assessing local outcomes and reviewing results in partnership with regional and global partners. The IPs have both the flexibility to modify criteria and procedures as greater understanding is acquired and the responsibility to ensure that program results and profile maintain the highest level of quality and credibility. In the end, the decentralized design of the program has enabled site-specific norms, constraints, challenges, and insights to shape varied responses to the question of "who are IFP Fellows?" As the profiles of the countries featured here illustrate, a powerful model for engagement with issues of equity and social change in international education has emerged.

Notes

1 The Foundation's Mission Statement also includes commitments to strengthen democratic values, reduce poverty and injustice, and promote international cooperation. See Berresford (2006).

2 Discussion on how IFP began draws on interviews with former Foundation President Susan V. Berresford (September 16, 2008) and Vice President Alison Bernstein (September 2, 2008).

3 See Berresford (2006).

4 Over four decades, Ford Foundation grantmaking supported African American doctoral fellowships, minority faculty development, and institutional strengthening in private, historically black colleges and universities; the Foundation still supports the Ford Foundation Diversity Fellowships.

5 In April 2006, the Foundation announced that an additional $75 million would be provided for IFP, expanding the estimated total fellowships from about 3500 to 4300.

6 Data are for August 2007; the program is projected to conduct its final round of selections in 2011 and to administer fellowships through 2015.

7 See Part II for more detailed discussion of program outcomes.

8 The International Fellowships Fund (IFF) is an independently operated supporting organization of the Institute of International Education, established in 2001 as the Ford Foundation's grantee, with responsibility for implementing the IFP program.

9 Once selection committees have made their decisions, lists of "Fellows-designate" are reviewed by the IFP Secretariat to ensure overall consistency without overriding the national committee process.

10 IFF Board of Directors policy holds that applicants should be working on a subject linked to one of the Ford Foundation's global priorities, which in 2001 included the following broad grantmaking areas: Development Finance and Economic Security; Community Development; Environment and Development; Workforce Development; Children, Youth and Families; Sexuality and Reproductive Health; Governance; Civil Society; Human Rights; International Cooperation; Educational Reform; Higher Education and Scholarship; Religion, Society and Culture; Media; and Arts and Culture.

11 The Fulbright Science and Technology scholarships are an example of prioritizing fields.

12 Many international programs require admission as a precondition; see the Gates Cambridge Scholarships, for example, where applicants must be accepted by Cambridge University through normal admission processes before they are considered for the award.

13 Prominent examples are the British Council, which serves as IFP's placement partner for the United Kingdom; the Netherlands Organization for International Exchange (Nuffic), the placement partner for continental Europe; and the Institute of International Education, placement partner for North America.

14 See Chapter Nine for extensive discussion of the international dimension of the program.

15 IFP supports preparatory courses (PAT, or pre-academic training) in language, information technology, research methods, and other subjects during the post-selection period of about one year when Fellows determine final application choices and await admission abroad. Among Fellows selected between 2001 and 2006, about 86 percent (over 2,000 individuals) had some form of PAT in their home countries. Training periods vary from a few weeks to much longer; Fellows from countries where local options are few, and thus English language competency is vital for admission abroad, may study up to nine months in intensive residential programs under IFP sponsorship. In addition, about 34 percent of Fellows selected between 2001 and 2006 have undertaken PAT at host universities.

16 In 2006, the United States hosted 30 percent of the international students among the top eight destination countries and 22 percent of the global pool of mobile students (see Koh and Bhandari 2006, 24). After the United States, the highest numbers of international students are found in Australia, China, France, Germany, Japan, and the United Kingdom. (See also UNESCO 2006.)

17 See Bhandari and Blumenthal (2007) for discussion of key ongoing trends in student mobility noted here.

18 While research on this question is scarce, some economic data provide indicators; among all international students studying in the United States in 2006, for instance, more than 63 percent stated they relied on personal and family resources (Koh Chin and Bhandari 2006, 15).

19 See Stanley Heginbotham's discussion of trajectory (2004, 98) as a key element in contextualizing fellowship selection processes; "[t]he incorporation of trajectory in assessing creativity, accomplishments, and potential, then, provides a strategy for getting at merit that relies in only a limited way on academic record and standardized tests."

20 The program's selection ratio is approximately 5 percent, based on the total numbers of applications for the 2,842 Fellows selected between 2001 and 2007.

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Part II: Origins — Case Studies

CHAPTER 3

South Africa: Justice and Disadvantage in a New Democracy

Shireen Hassim

Introduction

At first impression, the question of disadvantage in the South African context seems clear-cut. Apartheid was a system of racial hierarchies in which education played a central role in ensuring that different "population groups" were systematically shepherded into different and unequal roles in society, political life, and the economy. In the (in)famous words of apartheid's architect, Prime Minister Hendrik Verwoerd, blacks were never destined to be more than "hewers of wood and drawers of water," and therefore only minimal levels of educational investment needed to be directed toward them. Indians and Coloureds were only slightly better off in terms of state support for education. Most public resources were directed toward white schools, where children were to be trained for managerial positions in the economy and, of course, for political rule. Against this background, it is unsurprising that redressing racial disparities in access to and investment in education is a primary focus of the democratic state.

Yet, it is also true that apartheid institutionalized racial hierarchies in ways that intersected with and reinforced class and gender inequalities. This complicates the question of defining disadvantage, as redress of racial inequalities cannot be a sufficient strategy for achieving an equitable society. In light of the ways the economic and racial structures of apartheid intertwined, it is at times difficult to disentangle the specific content of racial disadvantage from class disadvantage. Gender inequalities, which cut across both race and class, can perhaps more easily be apprehended and measured.

In this study, I begin by proposing a definition of "disadvantage" that is squarely located in the human capabilities framework, with an emphasis on the notion of social justice. This framework, I suggest, allows us to conceptualize complexities of inequality and to go beyond monofactorial indicators of progress in overturning inherited inequalities. I then lay out the broad contours of higher education in South Africa, examining both the legacies of apartheid and the effects of government policies to redress inequalities. One of the key tools to achieve equity in higher education is affirmative action through the strategic use of state subsidies and bursary schemes, both of which focus on race and gender disparities but tend to neglect class. Although the state plays a central role in equalizing educational opportunities in South Africa, its programs of redress are constrained, and interventions like IFP have an important role to play as well. Finally, I examine IFP Southern Africa's approach to disadvantage and some of the challenges that the selection committee experienced in operationalizing the idea of "disadvantage."

Overcoming Disadvantage: A Social Justice Approach

My rationale for understanding education as an issue of justice in the first instance (rather than purely or primarily as a mechanism for increasing the economic competitiveness of developing countries) is to draw attention to the importance of education in the consolidation and sustainability of democracy itself. I understand democratization to be a project of decreasing inequality and increasing human capabilities. Social justice entails more than access to institutions and resources and opportunities; it also entails equalizing opportunities (Barry 2005). It involves the redress of inequalities of all kinds, including those of gender, race, and class, in many instances through the use of directed programs. In particular, social justice entails examining and redressing variations in human need with some of these variations having their basis in economic structure, others in traditional hierarchies, and yet others in physical disabilities.

In global education debates, it is now accepted that primary education, and to some extent secondary education, is vital for economic progress. Tertiary education, by contrast, tends to be relegated to a Cinderella role. Furthermore, the notion of education as valuable in ways that are more profound than the goal of economic progress is barely acknowledged. This is glaringly apparent in the way in which the education of girls is treated as an economic driver rather than as an entitlement or as

an ethical claim. Global education programs are currently driven by the resourcist paradigm of education, where the emphasis is on opportunities and outcomes and the mechanism is the provision of more places in schools, more teachers, and testing (Unterhalter 2005, 78). Resourcist theories of education tend to be utilitarian, and tend to use efficiency as a criterion of measurement. As Elaine Unterhalter and Harry Brighouse (2003, 2) have argued, arguments about access to education that emphasize its role in building social capital "say virtually nothing about the orientation of social development, links to women's autonomy, and issues of distribution, leaving questions of the content of education . . . outside the frame of analysis."

An alternative model of education focuses on the relationship between education and equality and is located in the human capabilities framework, linked to the work of Amartya Sen and Martha Nussbaum. This framework, I suggest, could guide an analysis of how IFP addresses disadvantage.

Nobel Prize winner Amartya Sen suggests that justice requires institutional schemes to channel additional social resources to those worse endowed with internal resources, insofar as this is necessary for achieving what he regards as a just distribution of capabilities. Sen defines human capabilities as being "the substantive freedom of people to lead the lives they have reason to value and enhance the real choices they have" (Sen 1999, 293). The capabilities approach holds that formal equality is not enough if the conditions and resources to enjoy those rights do not exist, and it seeks to define what the necessary conditions and resources may be. Human beings, Sen argues, vary in their abilities to convert resources into functionings. Functionings, in Sen's theory, are those abilities without which a fully human life cannot be pursued. What can public policies do to create the necessary conditions for the full enjoyment of human rights, that is, for all to develop their capabilities to the fullest degree? In Sen's view, public policy, and more broadly development policy, must be driven by the principle of justice. We cannot conceive of the development of human capital, in this framework, without attention to social justice.

Both Sen and Nussbaum hold that for purposes of assessing alternative institutional schemes on the basis of how each treats its individual participants, "the appropriate 'space' is neither that of utilities (as claimed by welfarists), nor that of primary goods (as demanded by the key resourcist philosopher John Rawls), but that of the substantive freedoms—the capabilities—to choose a life one has reason to value" (Sen 1999, 71). Sen lists key determinants of quality of life that he

claims are ignored by the simpler resourcist criteria of social justice, which focus on income. Developing this idea, Nussbaum has identified a list of central human capabilities: life; bodily health; bodily integrity; senses; imagination and thought; emotions; practical reason; affiliation; concern for and in relation to other species; play; and control over one's environment (Nussbaum 2001, 60–62). Nussbaum argues that each of these components is distinctly separate and equally important. It is not possible to trade off one of these elements for another; they are the minimal conditions for a just society.

Looking at education, the capabilities approach emphasizes that educational programs should not only address the human resource (or social capital) needs of a society, but should also address "the development needs and aspirations of the individuals, their ability to think and reason, build up self-respect, as well as respect for others, think ahead and plan their future" (Radja, Hoffman, and Bakhshi 2004, 2). In this framework, agency is a central capability. An agent is someone who "acts and brings about change, and whose achievements can be judged in terms of her/his own values and objectives, whether or not we assess them in terms of some external criteria as well" (Sen 1999, 19).

It is worth remembering that issues of access to and quality of education have been linked with struggles for democracy in South Africa. The challenge to the Verwoerdian apartheid vision encompassed the alternative notion that democracy required a critical and socially engaged citizenry: citizens were more than workers and were actively engaged in defining the shape of their society. Tertiary education in particular is vital in advancing the ability of postcolonial societies to develop intellectual autonomy, in defining and advancing feasible developmental paths, and in shaping debates on national identities and the meanings of democracy in different contexts. Resourcist and instrumental approaches to education tend to focus on questions of economic functionality and social stability rather than on an enhanced set of capabilities. More expanded programs of intervention, such as IFP, are crucial in charting a different course.

As Bernstein and Cock (1998) have pointed out, challenging disadvantage means challenging the concept of equal rights. Dealing with disadvantage involves affirmative action, a concept that in South Africa is seen as key to the achievement of what is known as "substantive equality," that is, a situation in which material inequalities are minimal. The South African Constitution, for example, envisages substantive

equality and affirmative action as non-antagonistic aims. Similarly, the White Paper on Higher Education locates higher education as a component of enhancing equity and social justice "by creating opportunities for social advancement on the basis of acquired knowledge, skills and competencies." Higher education is important in the "defense and enhancement of democracy" and in promoting good citizenship (Council on Higher Education 2004, 16).

Assessing disadvantage in South Africa from the perspective of the capabilities approach demands that we go beyond numerical head counts, however important these indicators may be in terms of measuring some form of policy effectiveness. Access to educational opportunities is not enough to advance social justice. We also have to take into account people's abilities to make good use of these opportunities. Addressing disadvantage must, then, have two important and interrelated aspects. First, it must indeed increase the numbers of black people and women who enter and graduate from the university, that is, it must have a quantitative face. Broad affirmative action programs aim precisely at achieving this aim. Addressing disadvantage must also have a second, qualitative face: ensuring that a critical mass among the disadvantaged group achieves excellence in order to demonstrate symbolically the effectiveness of affirmative action. In assessing candidates worthy of support, affirmative action programs must take account of "a wider range of qualities, such as courage and energy and perseverance and commitment to one's notion of 'truth'" (Bernstein and Cock 1998, 35). As I will outline below, in South Africa the IFP selection committee has put considerable emphasis on life narratives in order to grasp what are to some extent intangible qualities that we might define as "advantages," or forms of agency in the capabilities approach.

This requires a different type of affirmative action program, one that is opened by IFP, although we may not yet have fully grasped the ways in which to strengthen this deeper form of affirmative action. To achieve this, assessments of merit must be broad, and supportive strategies are needed to ensure that beneficiaries of fellowships are afforded a range of resources that will enable them to excel and not merely to succeed.

Transforming South African Higher Education

The South African state is committed to reform of higher education. This context is important since the formal commitment of the government to access and quality

issues might lead analysts to conclude that a program such as IFP is not needed in South Africa. As I will argue though, there are significant resource limitations on the ability of the government to meet the overall policy goals that it has set. Furthermore, poor students are so disadvantaged that even when they gain access to higher education institutions, they often struggle to complete their degrees or to perform at a level necessary for admission into postgraduate programs.

One of the central challenges for the new government in 1994 was to transform a higher education system in which institutions were designated exclusively for the use of students from particular racial groups, and where those institutions designated for white students received disproportionately high levels of state funding. The Education White Paper 3 of 1997 outlines the strategy for the transformation of higher education in South Africa. It lays out the following conditions for transformation:

- Increased and broadened participation (to accommodate a larger and more diverse student population)
- Responsiveness to societal needs and interests
- Cooperation and partnerships in governance

Of these conditions, the first is the most pertinent for this study. The White Paper envisions the creation of an expanded higher education system in which past legacies of fragmentation and inequality are eroded, and past patterns of participation in higher education as a whole, as well as in specific programs within higher education, are altered. Cloete and Bunting (2000) usefully summarize the key goals and performance measures identified in the White Paper: increases in student enrollment, demographic representation, higher rates of participation among previously excluded groups, and an increasing focus on career-oriented programs.

The goals were set at a time when there was considerable confidence that there would be a rapid growth in the demand for higher education during the first decade of democracy. The National Commission on Higher Education anticipated a relatively swift "massification" of the higher education system to 30 percent by 2005. This projection was based on a number of assumptions, including a steady increase in the number of high school graduates with university entrance grades and the expansion of universities and technikons (as technical universities are known in South Africa). Cloete and Bunting (2000) show, however, that these expectations

have not been borne out. Rather, enrollments leveled off between 1996 and 1998 and declined in 1999 (compared to 1998).

More recent estimates by the Department of Education anticipate a fall in enrollments. Indeed, as early as 1997, the Department of Education did not accept the idea of rapid massification, opting instead for "planned expansion of higher education, with efficiencies achieved in the context of fiscal constraints and using designated policy instruments" (Council on Higher Education 2004, 26). Government targets, laid out in the National Plan of 2001, projected a medium-term increase in the participation rate from 15 percent to 20 percent. A central debate in relation to the new "planned expansion" was whether this set up a tension between the goals of efficiency and equity as concerns about equity, access, and redress might fall away in favor of efficiency. Equally important, concerns were expressed about whether the impact of HIV/AIDS was sufficiently taken into account in participation rate projections.

Higher education policy documents outlined the importance of two types of redress: institutional and social. Institutional redress aimed at dealing with the inherited inequalities in infrastructure and resources between different apartheid-era universities and technikons. Social redress was concerned with enhancing the position of individual students from disadvantaged backgrounds. The key mechanism for social redress, the National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS), was formally established by legislation in 1999.

The White Paper defines disadvantage clearly as existing inequalities that "are the product of policies, structure and practices based on racial, gender, disability and other forms of discrimination or disadvantage" (Department of Education 1997, 1.18). The inherited legacy is one in which higher education institutions were designed to channel students of different "race groups" into specific institutions. Some universities, notably the white, English-speaking liberal universities, sought to circumvent these constraints on enrollment, exploiting legal loopholes to admit a small number of students of other races. The effect was significant: by 1990, 28 percent of the student enrollment of white, English-medium universities was black, and by 1993, this had risen to 38 percent (Council on Higher Education 2004, 61). The most significant shifts in enrollment patterns took place between 1990 and 1994, when official policy slackened and all higher education institutions began to admit students outside their designated racial groups.

Overall, the participation rate in 1994 was 17 percent—lower than might be expected for a medium-income country. When disaggregated by race, participation rates were particularly low for disadvantaged students: 9 percent for Africans and 13 percent for Coloureds as opposed to 40 percent for Indians and 70 percent for whites (Council on Higher Education 2004, 62). The distribution of students helps deepen our understanding of disadvantage: in 1994, 49 percent of African students were enrolled in historically black institutions, 13 percent in historically white institutions, and 38 percent in distance education institutions (primarily UNISA [the University of South Africa]).

Gender patterns in enrollment have been less troubling in South Africa. In 1994, 43 percent of students were female and 57 percent male. By 1999, female students were in the majority, and by 2002, they constituted 54 percent of higher education enrollments. Female graduates, however, predictably congregate at the lower qualification levels as shown in Table 3.2.

The aggregate picture of postgraduate enrollment shows considerable improvement. Overall, university postgraduate enrollments rose from 70,373 in 1995 to 103,659 in 2002 (an increase from 19 percent to 23 percent of total enrollments). The biggest expansion has been in enrollments in master's programs, which rose from 21,880 to 36,282 over this period, a rise largely attributable to increasing enrollments at this level in formerly black universities. The rise in doctoral enrollments is much smaller, from 1 percent to 2 percent of total postgraduate enrollments. The number of African postgraduate students still remains troublingly small. By 2002, white postgraduates still constituted almost double the number of African postgraduates at the master's level and almost treble at the doctoral level, with modest increases in the number of Indian and Coloured postgraduates (Council on Higher Education 2004).

Massive imbalances in resource allocations by government to different institutions intensified disadvantage historically as well as into the contemporary era. Under apartheid, white, Afrikaans-medium universities and technikons received by far the most significant transfers from the education budget, while black rural institutions were most disadvantaged. A central thrust of government policy since 1994 has been to reorganize the institutional landscape of higher education through strategic mergers as well as through developing new governance and quality assurance structures. These mergers have had the effect of breaking racial patterns of

"Race"	1995	1998	2001	2002
African	39%	50%	54%	53%
Coloured	5%	5%	5%	5%
Indian	7%	5%	6%	7%
White	50%	40%	34%	35%
TOTAL	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**

Table 3.1 Higher education graduates by "Race," 1995–2002, as proportion of total post-graduate enrollments [Source: Council on Higher Education 2004, 74]

Qualification Level	Men	%	Women	%
Undergraduate	17,511	37	30,433	63
PG below Master's	8,529	42	11,562	58
Master's	3,700	55	2,967	45
Doctorate	588	61	375	39
TOTAL	**30,328**	**40**	**45,337**	**60**

Table 3.2 University graduates by gender and qualification level, 2002 [Source: Adapted from Council on Higher Education 2004, 76]

enrollment as they have brought together once racially homogeneous institutions into a single institution with a diverse student body.

Changing the institutional landscape may bring a more egalitarian aspect to higher education, but in the short to medium term, differences in institutional cultures of learning continue to have an impact on students. Students who have had opportunities to study in the better-resourced universities are not only better equipped to cope with postgraduate studies abroad from an educational perspective, but they have also to some extent acquired the cultural capital to negotiate the maze of social life in foreign institutions.

The ANC (African National Congress) government has attempted to redress institutional and social disadvantages, although within a relatively limited budget for higher education. Although the overall allocation to higher education rose in nominal terms between 1995 and 2004, as a percentage of gross domestic product (GDP), expenditure on higher education has declined since the 1999–2000 budget.

	1995 1996	1996 1997	1997 1998	1998 1999	1999 2000	2000 2001	2001 2002	2002 2003	2003 2004	2004 2005	2005 2006
Total education allocation	22.4	24.1	23.2	22.5	21.8	21.7	20.9	21.2	20.6	20.4	19.9
Higher education allocation	2.69	2.97	2.86	2.98	3.05	2.98	2.86	2.72	2.58	2.7	2.6
Percentage of education allocation	12.1	12.4	12.3	13.4	14.1	13.9	13.7	12.8	12.6	13	13
Percentage of GDP	0.72	0.82	0.78	0.8	0.81	0.77	0.75	0.72	0.72	N/A	N/A

Table 3.3 Government expenditure on education as percentage of total expenditure [Source: Adapted from Council on Higher Education 2004, 195]

Rather than fund all places in higher education by abolishing tuition fees, which is the European model, the government has opted to provide student aid through loans. The student aid scheme, about 5–6 percent of the total higher education

allocation, provides disadvantaged students with some access to universities. The NSFAS works as a means-tested loan and bursary scheme under which students repay only after they are employed and earning above a certain minimum income. Students are initially awarded a 100 percent loan (currently repayable at an interest rate of 7 percent). Depending on a student's academic performance, a portion of the loan (up to 40 percent) may be converted to a bursary (that is, exempt from repayment). The key problem with this scheme is that the value of loans is low relative to the cost of higher education. Students may apply for a minimum loan of R2 000 and a maximum loan of R25 000. By way of comparison, annual university fees alone at the University of the Witwatersrand are R10 000–R20 000 for a master's in the humanities faculty and much higher for the sciences. The government allocation to NSFAS is supplemented by universities and technikons themselves as well as by foreign donors and by the local private sector, with total government allocation amounting to approximately 69 percent of NSFAS income. While the amount of the loan is small, the number of awards made is significant, rising from 7,240 in 1991 to 99,873 in 2002. The majority of the awards (49 percent) were in the region of R3 000–R8 000, and the vast majority of loan recipients are African students.

Relatively unaffordable tuition fees remain a major area of concern for poor students. The existing financing model for higher education is a mix of government subsidy, tuition income, and "third stream" income raised directly by institutions (Stumpf 2005, 2). University subsidies from government have declined over the past ten years. There is, on the other hand, considerable political pressure from student organizations to limit increases in tuition fees. They argue, correctly, that even at current levels, fees are a major barrier to access for poor students. Enrolling more students in order to increase fees by volume would have negative effects on efficiency. Indeed, the government is currently considering the introduction of a cap on enrollments. The Ministry of Education argues that these controls are necessary for a sustainable higher education system in which quality and efficiency improve (as the discussion below on completion rates shows, efficiency is a major problem). A 2005 Department of Education discussion document argued that access equity must entail more than putting more disadvantaged students into higher education systems; it must also ensure that they succeed.

Although this is an important consideration, it cannot be dislodged from a broader discussion of financing and the value of higher education as a whole.

Education analyst Peter Maasen argues that in Europe "it is now assumed that for students (and consequently for society as a whole) a limited time spent in higher education is better than no time spent in higher education" (Bunting, Maasen, and Cloete 2005, 3). Complementing this view from the South African perspective, Nico Cloete draws attention to labor market issues, pointing out that unemployment rates would be even higher if large numbers of graduates no longer had access to higher education (Bunting, Maasen, and Cloete 2005, 4). The debate remains inconclusive and is currently a major area of contestation between government and student organizations.

IFP in South Africa

In the context of these weaknesses and gaps in national policy, donor-supported bursary schemes have come to play a central role in the funding of postgraduate students. Very few of these schemes provide full funding, and almost none provide any form of backup program that deals with the deeper cultural manifestations of disadvantage. IFP thus entered the landscape of higher education in South Africa in a unique way, not just because of the high-level funding, but also in the range of choice and the support provided to successful applicants. Initiated late in 2001 and launched in March 2002, the program is run by an NGO, the Africa-America Institute, which manages the process from recruitment onwards. From its inception, IFP has depended on local experts to define criteria for selection and to shape the nature of the program.

The Africa-America Institute was able to draw on a long history of involvement in tertiary education and support for human capacity building and leadership programs. Formed in 1953, the Africa-America Institute has over 22,000 African alumni from fifty-two countries that have studied in the Unites States, Africa, and other countries in the world. As an NGO with substantial standing in the sector, the Africa-America Institute's experience was a significant factor in shaping the vision for IFP in South Africa.

At its first meeting, the selection committee and program directors identified the following criteria to assess disadvantage: geographical location, race, gender, and disability. Although the criteria are debated each year by the selection committee, they are invariably retained. It is noteworthy that even though the composition of the committee has changed, there is consensus on the criteria. The multifactorial

notion of disadvantage does, however, provoke considerable discussion each year on the relative weighting of the criteria for every shortlisted candidate. Although rural location, for example, is a crucial determinant of poverty, the selection committee nevertheless has selected candidates from poor urban backgrounds, at times over those from rural backgrounds. There is thus an attempt to assess each candidate in the context of her/his environment rather than to apply a static formula. In this sense, the committee operates with the idea of intersectionality of disadvantages.

The selection committee considers location to be one of the crucial markers of disadvantage. Rural areas are among the poorest in South Africa, and students from these areas are frequently less fluent in English (the predominant language of higher education in South Africa) and less likely to have access to financial resources to fund their education. Universities designated under apartheid for different "ethnic groups" and located in the former Bantustans were generally undergraduate universities and did not have the resources to offer significant postgraduate programs. As a result, special effort is made to place advertisements in targeted poor provinces using a range of media including community radio. Staff from the Africa-America Institute undertake visits to these provinces to raise awareness about the program. The shortlisting and selection committees also pay particular attention to candidates from these regions.

Over the years, it has become apparent that this geographical criterion cannot be rigidly applied (for example through the use of quotas for targeted provinces). One of the main reasons is student mobility. Students with drive and initiative frequently migrate to urban areas in order to pursue their first degree. In part, then, one of the central qualities that the selection committee is looking for—initiative—works against the disadvantage of geographical location. Unsurprisingly, the majority of applications are received from the two provinces with the most higher education institutions, Gauteng and the Western Cape.

A core feature of disadvantage in South Africa, race as a criterion requires little justification beyond the statistics. The importance of redressing race disadvantage is underscored in the South African Constitution as well as in various government education and employment policies. As the data above shows, some progress has been made in creating access to places in higher education institutions for students from disadvantaged social groups. However, educational analyst Jonathan Jansen points out that universities have been "much more successful at meeting

the demand for racial desegregation than achieving the ideal of social integration." Jansen argues that in the domain of institutional cultures, "education institutions fail to include, accommodate, and affirm racial diversity and difference, and community and commonality. It is in this domain where the assault on the cultural senses of incoming black students conveys powerful messages of who the institution is for" (Jansen 2004). Afrikaner universities, for example, have relatively hierarchical traditions of interaction among students and between students and university administrations. These are reproduced through a range of mechanisms, including highly differentiated university residences, each with a firm set of traditions such as initiation rites, privileges for senior students, residence songs, and so on. Simply desegregating such institutions and allowing black students to live in residences may over time produce shifts in institutional culture, but in the short term black students feel incredibly alienated and are sometimes even targeted for abuse. Understanding the cultural aspects of higher education institutions is vital for IFP, as it is evident that one of the central values in offering fellowships for students to study where they choose is the possibility it opens for challenges to institutional culture. I will develop this point below, as it is a factor that applies to both race and gender exclusions.

IFP gives preference to women in cases where there are two applications of equal merit. The selection committee seeks to be sensitive to the particular ways in which gender stereotypes and gendered divisions of labor within families can limit the potential of female students.

The data on increased access of women to higher education in South Africa is somewhat deceptive. As Ramya Subramanian (2005) has shown, numerical increases in access do not necessarily translate into equity gain, that is, the meaningful redistribution of resources and opportunities and the transformation of the conditions under which women make choices. First, there is a significant slide-away in the numbers of women who go on to take master's and doctoral level qualification, as Table 3.2 shows. Second, women's access to labor markets remains lower than that of men, even with higher degree qualifications. To take just one relevant indicator, women are seriously underrepresented in jobs in academia. Only 35 percent of all academic staff in universities is female (by contrast, women occupy approximately 75 percent of administrative positions in higher education). Minister of Education Naledi Pandor identifies a number of contributing factors, including sexual violence,

the glass ceiling, and the "hidden curriculum," referring to "the covert process of subtle repression" of girls and women in the family and society more generally (Pandor 2004). These factors perpetuate the gender gap in postgraduate enrollments and in the labor market.

A significant number of women who apply to IFP are mothers (many are single). This creates a number of dilemmas for the program. First, the preference of such candidates is to study locally, very often in the city in which they are currently living. From the perspective of the enormous and unique opportunities that IFP offers to take time out of regular schedules to devote attention for perhaps the first time to the pursuit of an excellent education, this is not an optimal position. Yet many candidates who are mothers indicate that they are unable or unwilling to study abroad, even if this would be in their best personal interests.

Some candidates request support for part-time studies. In 2006, two candidates withdrew after selection as a consequence of their maternal responsibilities. As Africa-America Institute Director Louise Africa pointed out in an interview, it would seem that while "men can put the rest of their lives on hold (in order to take up the scholarship), women cannot." Other forms of family constraints may emerge after selection, including numerous examples of women candidates taking up positions in PhD programs in foreign institutions with the initial support of their partners, only to find themselves "replaced" in their absence. Applications from disabled students are encouraged, but there have not been a large number of applicants (according to Louise Africa, about 2.5 percent with each recruitment phase). Most disabled applicants have polio-related or violence-related disabilities. This is clearly an area in which more work can be done to recruit applicants.

In addition to these disadvantages, three further criteria, or "advantages," are used in the selection process. The first of these relates to the individual's character, especially the qualities of initiative, persistence, and tenacity. The committee assesses the ways in which candidates have dealt with disadvantage in the past and their creativity in overcoming barriers to education in the social system as a whole and, if relevant, within their families. The second "advantage" is the extent to which candidates demonstrate leadership potential. With regard to this criterion, the committee looks for involvement in community-level projects, NGOs, and development programs and for participation in student bodies. In particular, the committee is interested in the extent to which candidates have been part of processes of

change and democratization. The third "advantage" is academic merit. Applying the human capabilities framework, this is a core functioning. As this is a postgraduate fellowship program, students must have already demonstrated the ability to succeed in higher education. There is room for elasticity in how this ability is evaluated, however. As IFP is not primarily a merit-based scholarship, the selection committee is not looking for the very best academic minds. Instead, the committee looks for candidates who will succeed in completing master's and doctoral programs in both top-ranking and second-ranking higher education institutions. Second-ranking institutions may have more flexible criteria for admission and may have better support programs to ensure student success.

Character and leadership potential—central capabilities—are of course difficult to measure. In interviewing students, the committee spends considerable time attempting to gain a picture of the conditions under which the candidate grew up and the kinds of strategies used to address various obstacles. The committee has been anxious to avoid the emergence of a "victim culture," in which candidates are encouraged to present themselves as the most disadvantaged and helpless, and to recognize each candidate's agency and potential capabilities. In considering life histories, then, the aim is not to measure character and ability against a universal yardstick, but rather to assess the person in terms of a starting point in his/her own life. A wide definition of leadership is used that encompasses the kinds of roles played by candidates in church and community-related activities as well as NGO and civic organization activism that might have a more political cast. In the first years of IFP, there was some degree of bias favoring students who had been active in anti-apartheid activities, and this was seen as a marker of social commitment. Over time this criterion has widened to include social activism and voluntarism in both individual and collective forms.

One challenge in this respect has been to evaluate whether activism in the service of church groups has the same kind of overall impact of transforming and democratizing society as, for instance, social activism in an NGO. Another more muted area of debate has been whether to privilege "community" over individual. What kind of evaluation is made of candidates who succeed against the values of particular families or communities (for example, applicants whose sexual orientation has pitted them against their communities)? Social justice theorist Martha Nussbaum warns that promoting the good of family or community can leave gross

asymmetries of capability intact (Nussbaum 2001). There has been vigorous debate in the committee in making these different kinds of assessments and although there are, as yet, no clear guidelines, the committee has not been seriously divided about support for particular candidates. In debate, despite differences of religion, culture, and ideology among selection committee members, remarkable consensus emerges about the worthiness of individual candidates.

Class

At this point in South African higher education policy, "race" is used as a proxy for socio-economic disadvantage. According to the Council for Higher Education, information on the socio-economic status of students is still too unreliable to offer a basis for distinguishing advantaged and disadvantaged students within race groups. Within IFP, however, the committee has endeavored to address class inequities in nuanced fashion, by carefully interviewing and probing the life histories of applicants. There is by no means an automatic fit between race and class, and there have been instances where, for example, applicants from very poor Indian families have been offered fellowships ahead of African applicants from comparatively better economic backgrounds. Thus, although not explicitly stated as a criterion of disadvantage, this is a factor that the committee does in practice address seriously.

One complicating factor with regard to the association between race and class is that democratization has shifted the alignment. Seekings and Nattrass show that although most African people remain at the bottom of the income scale and most white people at the top of the scale, overall inequality has changed to a small extent—intraracial inequality has grown. African people are rapidly entering the top deciles of the income scale (Seekings and Nattrass 2006, 200–201). There is no evidence as yet of the impact of tertiary education on these trends.

Dealing with Disadvantage

Disadvantage manifests itself in IFP from application for support right through to graduation, and at each phase the Africa-America Institute has had to develop appropriate support mechanisms. In the call for applications, for example, the Africa-America Institute cannot be content with conventional advertising, as newspapers may not reach many rural areas. Although IFP advertisements are placed in local and national newspapers, over time relationships have been built with

tertiary institutions, generally at the highest level of vice-chancellor and deputy vice-chancellor. This helps to disseminate information about the program to target communities and to assist at later stages with placement of students. Together with advertising on community radio, direct liaison with institutions has had a significant impact on applications. Information about the program is also communicated to NGOs through e-mail networking. Increasingly, alumni as well as previously unsuccessful applicants are spreading the word about IFP. Although applicants are better informed about the program, there has been no significant increase in their numbers.

The Africa-America Institute makes all the arrangements for shortlisted candidates to travel to Johannesburg for interviews. Its staff ensures that candidates are informed and relaxed about the interview process. This is a vital part of dealing with disadvantage. It may be the first time some candidates have flown on an airplane, spent a night in a hotel, or even been formally interviewed. For most, English is a second language. The combination of these factors can make the process mystifying and intimidating. There is therefore an attempt to reduce the level of nervousness and build confidence in candidates so that they feel less vulnerable. In my own experience of participating in the selection committee, there are visible benefits to the work done by the Africa-America Institute in this regard. It makes the selection process easier, as there is little time to put candidates at ease in the actual interview, and the committee is more able to focus on the key criteria for selection.

One important question that is raised in terms of selection is whether the program is reaching its targeted groups. Data shows that the race and gender criteria are working well. However, important sub-groups within the target groups are inevitably filtered out of the process. The pressure on graduates to find jobs and support extended families is enormous; there is not an automatic transition from undergraduate to postgraduate study. Most young graduates complete their first degree and enter the labor market, contemplating further degrees only after some years of work and possibly marriage and parenthood. Relatively few can give up these responsibilities for full-time study, but part-time support is outside the IFP framework.

Most successful candidates continue to require high levels of support after selection. A significant part of this support relates to the paperwork involved in applying

	Men	Women	Total
2002	148	134	282
2003	148	149	297
2004	78	95	173
2005	171	116	287
2006	139	149	288
2007	102	93	195

Table 3.4 IFP Applications received, South Africa, 2002–2007 [Source: Adapted from Africa-America Institute, Narrative Reports, various years]

	Master's		Doctoral		Total
	Men	Women	Men	Women	
2002	4	9	3	4	20
2003	10	13	5	2	30
2004	15	9	2	6	32
2005	6	17	4	6	33
2006	9	11	6	2	28
2007	15	13	2	3	33

Table 3.5 Selection of IFP Fellows, South Africa, 2002–2007 [Source: Adapted from Africa-America Institute, Narrative Reports, various years]

for places in institutions and for the necessary permission for foreign study. Disadvantaged students are generally unfamiliar with the processes of application for postgraduate programs, having had little or no guidance in this respect from their previous schools. As a result, this is an area of enormous need.

However, there are other, more academic needs. One of the areas of greatest weakness (or underpreparedness) of South African students for higher education appears to be writing skills. To deal with this, the Africa-America Institute has contracted the Writing Centre at the University of the Witwatersrand to conduct a needs assessment with every cohort of students to identify writing and research skill levels. This assessment is followed by pre-academic training, also provided through the Writing Centre, during which students are taken through a structured set of exercises to improve their skills. The relationship with the Writing Centre continues beyond the initial workshops. Students are encouraged to submit their research proposals to the Centre, by e-mail, for further assistance. The Writing Centre also provides assistance with preparation for the standardized tests that students applying to foreign universities will need to take (the GRE, TOEFL, and IELT tests).

One of the most noteworthy aspects of IFP is the support given to candidates to ensure successful completion. Unlike other scholarship programs, IFP recognizes that social disadvantage has deep consequences for academic success. The sandwich programs are an invaluable mechanism for helping disadvantaged students compensate for gaps in past education. They also provide international experience for students who otherwise study at home. This is a unique feature of IFP that enhances the overall confidence and capacities of students. IFP's professional enhancement fund serves a similar purpose; it gives students opportunities to acquire forms of cultural capital that are a hidden part of academic success by exposing them to conferences and international networks.

More than half of the selected candidates choose to study in South Africa. This has advantages as well as disadvantages. The first advantage is that students who are generally older (in their mid thirties) and have already acquired responsibilities are able to consider pursuing a higher education with relatively low levels of disruption. The second is that South Africa has a thriving and well-regarded higher education sector that is strengthening its postgraduate offerings. Prestigious fellowships that support local study are scarce; most are offered for study abroad. The greater

	Local	Abroad	Total
2003	12	18	30
2004	13	17	30
2005	16	17	33
2006	14	14	28
2007	14	19	33

Table 3.6 Placement of Fellows, South Africa, 2003–2007 [Source: Adapted from Africa-America Institute, Narrative Reports, various years]

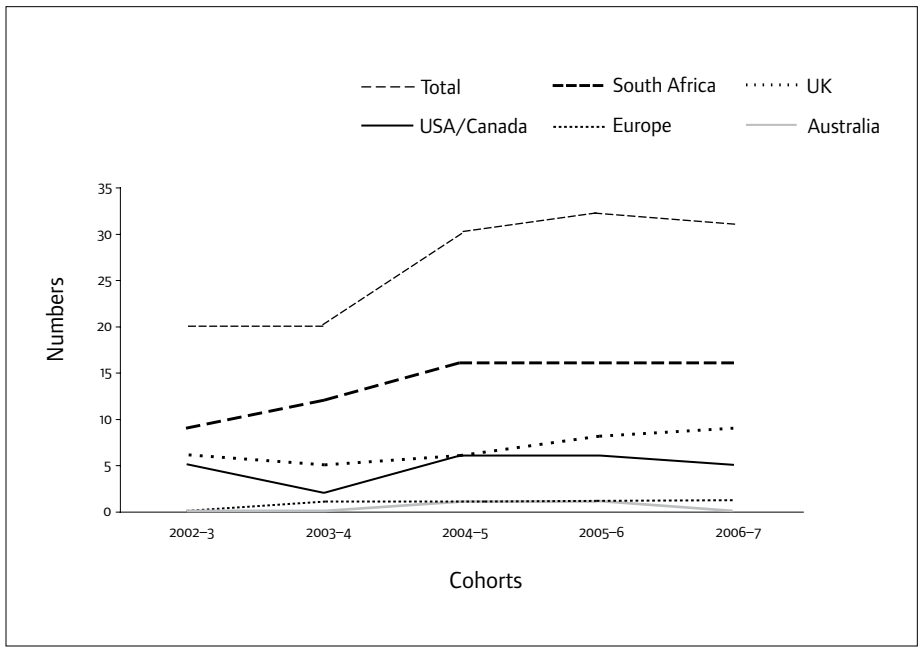

Figure 3.1 South Africa cohort placement by region, 2002–2007 [Source: Africa-America Institute]

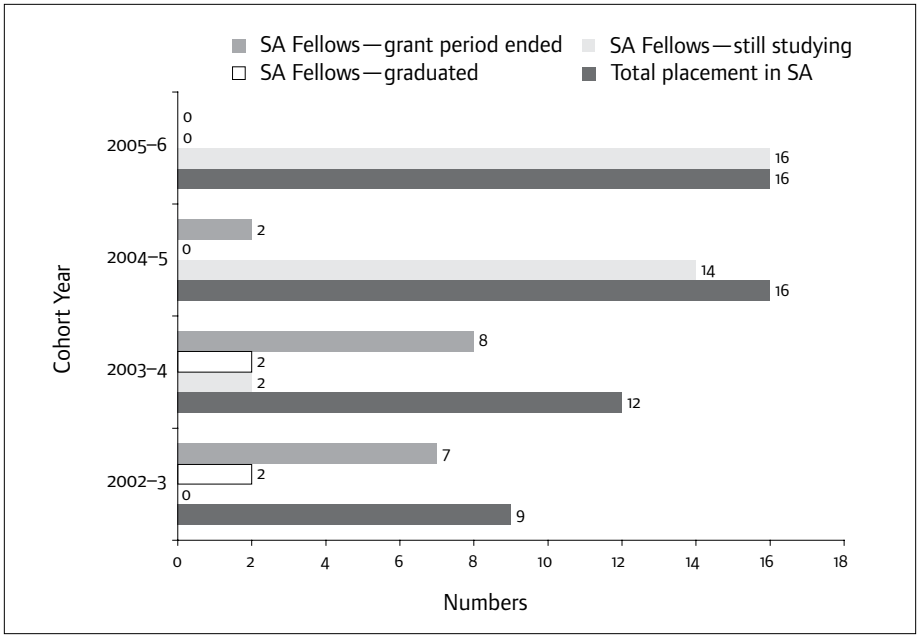

Figure 3.2 South Africa cohort placement study record, 2002–2006 [Source: Africa-America Institute]

"Race"	1995	1998	2001	2002
African	15%	17%	16%	15%
Coloured	19%	16%	15%	14%
Indian	16%	12%	14%	15%
White	22%	19%	20%	20%
TOTAL	**18%**	**17%**	**17%**	**16%**

Table 3.7 University graduation rates within optimal period of study, by "race," 1995–2002 [Source: Adapted from Council on Higher Education 2004, 77]

the number of good students that enter South African universities, the larger the impact on the consolidation of higher education. It is important for postcolonial states to break the mantra of "foreign is better." Finally, given the nature of IFP, many students are keen to acquire skills that enable them to work in a local environment, and they believe, often with some justification, that the best place to acquire these skills is in a local institution.

Yet there are some significant disadvantages. Most troubling of these is the low completion rate (that is, within the time that the program supports the Fellow) at South African universities. Fellows studying locally take significantly longer to complete their degrees than those studying abroad. Two factors affect this. First, candidates studying locally retain various obligations that may distract them from complete attention to their education. Second, local systems seem poorly geared to ensure rapid completion rates. The term used in South African higher education policy is "throughput rate," and Council of Higher Education calculations show a fluctuating throughput rate between 1995 and 2002 (the most recent figures available). The existing data does not disaggregate undergraduate and postgraduate students, but the graduation rates are illuminating.

There are some noteworthy features in Table 3.7, which measures the percentage of students that graduate within the optimal period of study. There is a relatively insignificant difference between highly advantaged and well-prepared white students and the highly disadvantaged and underprepared African students. Indian students, among the disadvantaged groups with significantly increased access to higher education, do not fare remarkably better once they are in the system. This data highlights that low completion rates of IFP Fellows who study locally are entirely consistent with the trend among the general population of their peers. Unlike most of their peers, however, they are fully funded and supported by programs to enhance their success, such as the sandwich program and the computer and book budgets.

Failure to complete within the period of IFP support has other consequences that threaten the overall aims of the program. Once the fellowship ends, students invariably have to seek paid work and convert (either formally or informally) to part-time study. This acts as a further brake on completion.

It is somewhat early to assess the impact of the Fellows, as not many have graduated at this point. What seems apparent from the ongoing monitoring and

engagement with Fellows (even after the end of the grant period) is that many are fulfilling their own ambitions of contributing to South Africa's economic development and to democratization. One Fellow, for example, is now the first woman CEO of the South African National Parks Board (and has almost completed her PhD on women and land redistribution). Several have found positions in government and NGOs, and one has just taken up an appointment as economic advisor in the presidency.

The launch of the Alumni Association in 2006 was an important development, as it provides the space for ongoing networking and engagement among Fellows. We have no tools to evaluate the extent to which private or individual successes have emerged, that is, as of yet we have no way of measuring the extent to which Fellows' human capabilities have been enhanced by this program.

Conclusion

IFP is a model example of a capabilities-driven fellowship program, although it may not have been conceived in this framework. The program draws on an expansive notion of the role of education, and it understands fellowship beneficiaries as holistic agents. Support for students to catch up with the more privileged members among their cohort through the acquisition of skills and by the provision of support for enhanced effectiveness (such as writing instruction, the provision of a laptop computer, and so on) contributes to students' self-worth and dignity in ways that are not often acknowledged in fellowship programs.

In the South African context, IFP offers candidates selected on the basis of disadvantage the kinds of privileges and support that are normally reserved for a very small elite group of students selected on the basis of demonstrated academic merit. This has radical effects, as it helps to break the cycle of disadvantage. This works in a multiplicity of ways. It is uncommon for disadvantaged students to have high levels of choice about the institution they may select; it is rather more common for such students to be channeled into universities and even study programs that their sponsors deem appropriate. Offering such choices enables students to imagine new worlds of possibility in which their horizons are determined not by the circumstances into which they were born, but by the limits of their ambition. For this reason alone, IFP may well be one of the most ambitious and dramatic scholarship programs in the world.

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CHAPTER 4

Nigeria: Higher Education and the Challenge of Access

Wilson Akpan and Akinyinka Akinyoade

> *No matter how you design a scholarship, the challenges will come; what matters is how you address them. Personally, I'm always praying and hoping some people will pick up after IFP has ended, because in this region, almost everyone needs help. Unfortunately, most of the other scholarships focus on academic excellence. Could they inadvertently be helping to widen rather than close the gap between privilege and disadvantage?*
> —A West African IFP official (2006 interview)

Access to higher education remains a major development challenge in Africa. The quotation above provides a hint of this and of the promises and antinomies of some of the interventions aimed at addressing the challenge of access, such as fellowships. Nigeria presents an interesting case, not only of how specific social and cultural factors have impeded access to tertiary education, but also of the limited successes and false steps that have characterized interventions over the years.

A comparatively recent, and perhaps the most radical, initiative toward promoting access to higher education in Nigeria is the Ford Foundation International Fellowships Program (IFP). IFP selected its first round of Fellows in 2001, and from its inception, the program confronted challenges. In this chapter, we examine these challenges, asking how IFP is distinctive both in its goals and in its approaches to some of the same obstacles that other programs with similar goals have confronted in the past. Specifically, we explore how IFP partner organizations, the Association of African Universities (AAU)[1] and Pathfinder International,[2] have worked to

achieve their goals. How have they established their role and credibility in a country that is, as we suggest below, "awash with scholarships," and with programs that are widely known as less than transparent? How have they defined "social disadvantage" in a country where "almost everyone needs help"? And how have they operationalized the implementation of IFP while grappling with uncertainties and difficulties in defining as well as reaching their target groups?

Although the Nigerian university system has experienced tremendous growth in the last few decades, the profile of the university student population continues to reveal entrenched class, gender, and other disparities. Furthermore, both federal and state targeted admission policies, and scholarship programs seem to have been pursued or applied haphazardly and have thus far fared poorly in reversing the equity and access challenges that continue to bedevil the university system.

Data on the role of scholarships in broadening educational access in Nigeria are scanty and, where they exist, are unreliable. The Federal Ministry of Education (FME) claims on its website that its "massive" Federal Government Scholarship award program for postgraduate and undergraduate students aims, among other things, to "equalize or balance educational opportunities" and to make education more accessible to "indigent," "handicapped," and other "less privileged" students (FME 2005). Many of the federating states have similar schemes. There is no doubt that government scholarships were a principal means of attaining university education in the first two decades of Nigeria's independence; however, it is doubtful if the levels of efficiency and transparency of the 1960s and 1970s have been sustained to this day. Government scholarship programs, like other public programs in Nigeria, are rife with deeply inefficient implementation standards. Poor (and possibly nonexistent) standards potentially rob the programs of the necessary transparency and integrity. Local implementers of IFP in Nigeria are acutely conscious of this problem.

There is a further sense in which it can be said that Nigeria, a country where "everyone needs help," is awash with scholarships and claims of scholarships. There are some international fellowship opportunities, such as those offered by the Commonwealth, for postgraduate education. Others are offered by foreign universities. Petroleum companies, businesses in the financial services sector, many village and town associations, and even certain rich individuals all have scholarship programs. The transnational oil companies target some of their scholarships at

indigenes of their host communities as part of their corporate social responsibility initiatives. Many young people have gained access to university education through one or a combination of these. Assuming there have been systematic evaluations of the transparency, public perceptions, and beneficiary experiences of these various scholarship programs, data from such evaluations are not readily accessible.

Against this background, we pose the question, how, in seeking to translate the social justice philosophy of IFP into practice in Nigeria, have the local partners addressed what we call "implementational integrity" issues? How has the program sought to institutionalize the norms of transparency, accountability, and thoroughness in defining and reaching its targets? To this question we turn in more detail below.

Our premise is that a close examination of IFP philosophy, implementation strategies, and the ways in which local partner organizations have tackled Nigerian challenges—especially those pertaining to program transparency and administrative integrity—could reveal important lessons not only for the Nigerian government, but also for educators and private higher education funders who seek to reverse the impact of educational inequality in Nigeria.

The Social Landscape of Higher Education in Nigeria

The advent of tertiary education in Nigeria may be dated from 1932, when the British colonial authorities established the Yaba Higher College. In 1948, the University of Ibadan, then a College of the University of London, was established. By 1962, there were five universities.[3] Since then the country has seen robust growth: in 2001, Nigeria had 51 state and federal universities; by 2005, the number had risen to 80 (including private universities). This rapid growth, in student enrollments and graduates as well as institutions, masks an array of problems of access, quality of instruction (Mahtani 2005), and the end use of the education acquired. Here, we focus on the problem of access. Simply put, who gets university education (Brennan, King, and LeBeau 2004, 17)? In fact, only 4 percent of high school graduates (the 20–24 age cohort) gain admission into Nigerian universities (Saint, Hartnett, and Strassner 2005). The proportion of South African high school graduates enrolled in universities, by comparison, is much higher (17 percent in 1994; see Hassim, this volume). The enrollment figures for Nigeria are even smaller when we focus on postgraduate education.

In spite of Nigeria's rich endowment in both natural and human resources, the country remains poor, with a per capita annual income of $1,400. This persistent poverty is sometimes attributed to decades of "political instability, corruption, inadequate infrastructure, and poor macroeconomic management" (Central Intelligence Agency 2007), or, in another line of analysis, to externally imposed, neoliberal models of development (Dibua 2006).

Nigeria attaches great importance to university education, and there is a large pool of high school graduates from which the universities can meet their student enrollment requirements. Tuition fees are comparatively low, especially at the state-funded universities, and a national policy emphasizes the extension of educational opportunities to indigenes of geopolitical regions officially designated as "educationally disadvantaged." Disparities in access to university education persist, however, especially along geo-ethnic, gender, and socio-economic lines. One of the most striking disparities is between the North and South. Although 54 percent of the country's population lives in the North, university students from northern zones constituted 15 percent of enrollments in 2001 and 18 percent in 2005, while students from the South represented the remaining 85 percent in 2001 and 82 percent two years later.

How did the North come to lag so significantly behind the South educationally? Some of the answer lies in colonial history. When Western education was introduced into Nigeria during the mid nineteenth century by British Christian missionaries, Britain had no clear policy of promoting education, other than to establish a few schools and give grants to support a school system that was essentially part of missionary expansion. This educational system only benefited the South, where missionary activities were concentrated. In the North, Islamic education had taken root, and Western education was widely disdained as a tool of Christian evangelism.

Some contemporary analysts of the North-South educational divide have blamed the "misguided colonial educational policy in Northern Nigeria" for underdevelopment (Mustapha 2005, 6). Others have suggested (Aluede 2006, 188) that entrenched Islamic values and practices have bolstered cultural practices in which northern women are excluded from both the higher education system and a broad spectrum of socio-economic and political roles (Uduigwomen 2003, 2–5).

Certain policy steps taken at regional levels in the country's immediate pre-independence history and after independence also help to explain the gap in

educational development between the North and the South. For example, universal primary education programs were implemented in western and eastern Nigeria, but not in the North, in the 1950s. Between 1979 and 1983, during a short spell of democratic rule in which different political parties controlled different states and implemented policies in their areas, free primary education was introduced in western and midwestern Nigeria, then controlled by the Unity Party of Nigeria, and in the Igbo-speaking eastern states controlled by the Nigerian Peoples Party. The northern governments did not take any steps to adopt or implement educational policies similar to those that have led to increases in enrollment in all tiers of education in the South.

Resulting from these historical and political factors, and partly bolstering them, is poverty (Mustapha 2005). Since the 1990s, there has been an increase in the depth and severity of poverty in the North, especially in the rural areas, at a time when the South witnessed improvements in these indices (Aigbokhan 2000, 2). The web of disadvantage in the North reveals other attributes (*ThisDay* 2005), all of which have directly or indirectly affected tertiary educational attainment in the North relative to the South, especially at a time when free education has been abolished at all levels of the Nigerian educational system.

The problem of low educational attainment has been further compounded by integrity and transparency problems that have marred the implementation of interventions such as affirmative action university admission policies (targeted at the "educationally disadvantaged" states of the North and elsewhere) and higher education scholarships (targeted at people of "underprivileged" backgrounds). We return to this problem below.

Gender and Other Barriers to University Education

Across Nigeria, not only in the North, women are excluded from higher education and universities exhibit gender-biased profiles. A sample of eleven universities in all six geopolitical zones reveals gendered disparities in student enrollment. Nationally, 35 percent of new enrollments in the 2000–2001 academic year were women; in 2005, the proportion was 36 percent. The proportion of female graduates (out of the total pool of graduates at various levels of the university system) stood at 34 percent and 36 percent in the 2000–2001 and 2004–2005 academic sessions (National Bureau of Statistics 2005).

University	Total enrollment	Male	Female	Percent female
Northwest Zone				
Bayero University, Kano	7,493	1,853	5,640	75
Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria*	29,633	27,244	2,389	8
Northeast Zone				
Abubakar Tafawa Balewa University	7,069	5,825	1,244	18
Northcentral Zone				
Federal University of Technology, Minna	15,095	9,854	5,241	35
Southwest Zone				
University of Ibadan*	18,957	12,070	6,887	36
University of Lagos*	27,532	15,199	12,333	45
Obafemi Awolowo University*	25,156	17,144	8,012	32
University of Ado-Ekiti	9,766	6,114	3,652	37
Southeast Zone				
Abia State University	16,913	8,455	8,458	50
Southsouth Zone				
University of Nigeria, Nsukka*	36,188	16,593	19,595	54
University of Port Harcourt	16,506	10,460	6,046	37

*First-generation universities—see endnote 3

Table 4.1 Gender disparity in student enrollment in Nigerian universities, 2004–2005 [Source: Constructed with data from the National Universities Commission]

For the 2004–2005 academic year (Table 4.1), there were more new male students in all but three of the universities, namely University of Nigeria (54 percent female), Bayero University (75 percent female), and Abia State University (50 percent female). At Ahmadu Bello University, a "first-generation" university, women comprised only 8 percent of total new enrollment. These figures suggest that sociocultural attitudes in Nigeria do not yet fully support the education of women. With regard to the North, it has been argued that religion underlies their educational exclusion (Uduigwomen 2003; Aluede 2006). Throughout Nigeria, however, "the patriarchal nature of the institutions and the male culture" (Odejide, Akanji, and Odelkunle 2006, 555) in which women find themselves remains the key issue of gender-based educational inclusion/exclusion.

Class is also a crucial factor in the structuring of the social landscape of higher education, and parental educational attainment is an important measure of who is "advantaged" or "disadvantaged." "Parents' higher education attainment, especially mothers' education and experiences of other siblings and members of the extended family who had graduated from universities, appears to be a catalyst" for [especially] female education (Odejide, Akanji, and Odekunle 2006, 556). Odejide et al. reveal that young Nigerians from homes where parents and/or siblings are university graduates tend to regard education as a "right" and university education as a "norm" and that female academics in Nigeria are mostly from "western educated, middle class backgrounds." Against this background, IFP application screening and final selection panels are asked to focus especially on talented applicants whose parents are not university graduates.

The Nigerian university education system also reveals low levels of participation by people with physical disabilities, widely regarded as a "curse from God who repays everyone according to his or her deeds . . . [M]ost parents of handicapped children do not send them to school" (Abang 1988, 72–73). Parents of physically disabled children are not keen to "publicize" their association with such a "curse." According to one IFP Fellow with a physical disability interviewed by these authors, there may be a more practical explanation for the underrepresentation of people with disabilities. Nigerian universities lack a "user-friendly" teaching and learning environment for people with special needs (Abang 1988, 77).

Although the rapid expansion of higher education in Nigeria since independence in 1960 has been widely recognized as "a pillar of the developmental ideology"

(Brennan, King, and Lebeau 2004, 12), the foregoing discussion suggests that the expansion has not adequately translated to broad-based access. Barriers to university education persist along lines of geo-ethnic origin/location, gender, social class, and physical ability.

Broadening Access: Institutional Expansion, Admissions Policy, and Scholarships

The most visible steps the Nigerian government has taken toward broadening access to university education since independence have been to increase the number of universities and to ensure that federal universities charge very low tuition fees. However, investment in research and educational infrastructure has been vastly inadequate (Saint, Hartnett, and Strassner 2005; Akpan 1990). Efforts have also been made to ensure a fairly even spread of universities across the country and, since the early 1980s, to recognize the rights of the federating states to establish and run universities, although the consequences of such expansion have not always been positive (Anyanwu 2006, 300-01). Private universities emerged on the higher education landscape in the mid to late 1990s, targeting mainly children of the political and economic elite, who command the financial resources to escape the unpredictable academic calendars, decaying infrastructure, and low staff morale at government-owned universities.

Affirmative action admissions policies have also helped to extend opportunities to many students who would otherwise have had to seek university placement based strictly on academic merit, measured by their performance on the University Matriculation Examination (UME).[4] For example, a federal university located in Cross River State is required by law to preferentially admit students (who might not meet the national UME cut-score) from (a) its immediate "locality," (b) a specified number of other states of the federation, for purposes of fostering national unity, and (c) states designated by the federal government as "educationally disadvantaged" (see Table 4.2). This designation applies to all of Nigeria's northern states and three of the states in the South geopolitical zone. States in the Southeast and Southwest are all "educationally advantaged."

The preferential admissions policy, which stipulates quotas for "advantaged" and "disadvantaged" states, has not enjoyed unanimous support in Nigeria. While some view it as crucial for broadening educational access, as it creates special

opportunities for high school graduates from states where rates of higher educational attainment have historically been low, others have criticized the policy as rewarding mediocrity and punishing excellence. There is an explicitly politicized variant of this criticism: the quota policy was used as a "ploy" by the "northern-controlled" military authorities during Nigeria's thirty-odd years of military rule[5] to slow down the pace of educational achievement in the South while "rewarding" the North for its unwillingness to embrace the importance of Western education (cf. Uduigwomen 2003; Aluede 2006). This criticism highlights not only the difficulty of redressing regional imbalances in higher educational participation in the Nigerian context, but also the imperative of maintaining the utmost level of transparency in implementing interventions.

No federal university in the country has fully complied with the admission quotas, partly because the quotas have not coincided with student preferences. Arguably, most students find it convenient to apply to universities in their immediate geopolitical and cultural neighborhoods, and as a result, some universities have exceeded the quota for "locality" by as much as 70 percent (Akpan 1990). More fundamentally, however, the profile of the university student population continues to be characterized by disparities, a further indication that even state-imposed admission quotas have not redressed the problem of exclusion (see Table 4.3).

Institution	**Admission Criterion (Weighted)**			
	Merit	Immediate locality	Educationally disadvantaged states	Institutional discretion
Federal universities	30–40	30	20–30	10
Federal universities of technology	—	20	—	80

Table 4.2 Admission criteria and quotas in Nigerian federal universities [Source: Akpan 1990, 299]

Geopolitical Zone of Origin	2004–5 Academic Session				2000–1 Academic Session			
	Male	Female	Total	Geopolitical zone as % of national enrollment	Male	Female	Total	Geopolitical zone as % of national enrollment
Northwest	3,158	1,253	4,411	3.6	1,110	440	1,550	3.3
Northeast	3,027	1,259	4,286	3.5	649	359	1,008	2.2
Northcentral	8,824	4,437	13,261	10.9	2,927	1,673	4,600	10.1
Total—North	15,009	6,949	21,958	18.0	4,686	2,472	7,158	15.6
Southwest	13,898	9,003	22,901	18.8	8,359	4,480	12,839	28.1
Southeast	20,141	20,885	41,026	33.7	6,780	6,614	13,394	29.3
Southsouth	20,052	15,736	35,788	29.4	7,246	5,089	12,335	27.0
Total—South	54,091	45,624	99,715	81.9	22,385	16,183	38,568	84.55
TOTAL	69,100	52,573	121,673	100	27,071	18,655	45,726	100

Table 4.3 Geopolitical origin of new university students enrolled in 2000–1 and 2004–5 [Source: Adapted from the Joint Admissions and Matriculations Board (JAMB) (www.jambng.com)]

Redress through Integrity: IFP Intervention in Nigeria

IFP was launched to provide exceptional individuals in a specified number of developing countries with the opportunity of acquiring post-baccalaureate education, in the hope that they will use such education to "become leaders in their respective fields, furthering development in their own countries and greater economic and social justice worldwide."[6] What distinguishes IFP from, say, the Fulbright or Rhodes fellowships, is that it seeks out these "exceptional individuals" primarily in social groups that are systematically excluded from advanced education for any number of reasons: "caste, ethnicity, gender, geographic isolation, language, physical disability, political instability, race, religion or socio-economic status" (IFP 2004).

Nigeria, Ghana, and Senegal (all in West Africa) were the only African countries included in the "pilot" phase of the program, for reasons that were both institutional and geopolitical. As Joan Dassin, Executive Director of IFP, explained:

> We had already identified a grantee organization, the Association of African Universities (AAU), that we felt had the capacity to carry out the program for the sub-region. We included Nigeria (in addition to Ghana and Senegal) as part of the West Africa group because (a) the Ford Foundation office is located in Lagos and would be able to provide us with support on the ground to help launch the program, and (b) Nigeria, as the most populous country in Africa and certainly one of the most dominant and important, would be a critical testing ground for IFP (because of its size, diversity, history of regional conflict, etc.).[7]

The earliest group of Nigerian Fellows was selected in 2001 from a pool of approximately 2,000 applicants (see Table 4.4). By 2005, over 100 Fellows had been selected.

Between 2001 and 2002, the management of the fellowship in Nigeria, Ghana, and Senegal rested solely with the Association of African Universities, the "apex organization and forum for consultation, exchange of information and cooperation among institutions of higher learning in Africa" (AAU 2009). In 2002, the need to reach candidates beyond the major cities and principal universities in the three countries led to decentralization of the program to the sub-regional level. In Nigeria, Pathfinder International was appointed as the "country partner" to work with the AAU; the Association of African Women for Research and Development (AAWORD) became the partner in Senegal.

Administratively, there is a high degree of information sharing among the three project offices. Pathfinder (in Abuja) handles the day-to-day management of the fellowship in Nigeria. This includes determining where in the country (or toward which social groups) to focus outreach activities in a given year and managing the distribution of application forms and outreach materials. The printing of application forms and outreach materials is the responsibility of the AAU.

For virtually every implementation activity at both the AAU and Pathfinder Nigeria, there have been efforts to establish an unparalleled profile of transparency, accountability, and rigor, with the goal of taking the fellowship along a trajectory

	Male	Female	Total
2001	10	17	27
2002	5	5	10
2003	12	12	24
2004	8	12	20
2005	13	9	22
2007	12	4	16
TOTAL	**60**	**59**	**119**

Note: Interviews not conducted/Selections not made in 2006

Table 4.4 Gender distribution of Nigerian fellows, 2001–2007 [Source: Constructed with data from Pathfinder Nigeria]

that might make its implementation approach an example for other educational and social justice interventions in Nigeria. We examine some of the challenges of implementation below.

"Constructing" and "Deconstructing" Social Disadvantage

Perhaps the greatest challenge confronted by both the AAU and Pathfinder Nigeria is the process of selecting awardees.[8] In this process, the partners must systematically transform IFP's philosophy into reality. As Joan Dassin, the program's Executive Director, notes, there is "no 'one standard' about what it means to be from an excluded or marginalized community" (CHEPS 2004, 4); this is where the partners not only encounter the "reality" of social disadvantage, but also must construct it. From the time the completed application forms are received, every selection activity is about finding the point where at least four different sets of constructions of social disadvantage intersect. These constructions are those of the AAU and Pathfinder, the Fellowship applicants, the tri-national panel (of Ghanaian,

Nigerian, and Senegalese experts) that creates the initial short list of applicants, and the final selection interview panel. Adjudicating among differing understandings of social disadvantage in the Nigerian context can entail complex conundrums and questions about the proper targets of the fellowship that do not always have clear-cut resolutions.

Once the application forms and outreach materials have been designed, printed, and distributed, the direct role of IFP's staff in the selection process is limited to the screening of applications, which entails ensuring that only applications accompanied by the required supporting documents make it through to the short-listing stage. The screening takes place in Ghana. The screened applications are subsequently passed to a sub-regional short-listing panel consisting of Ghanaian, Nigerian, and Senegalese experts (panelists from Senegal and Nigeria must be resident in Ghana). The committee receives prior briefing about IFP and its philosophy. As part of their responsibilities, the panelists are expected to help authenticate (or deconstruct) the stories of marginalization that appear in the applications. In 2004, for example, this panel brought to the project officers' attention the fact that a disproportionately large number of Nigerian applicants presented themselves as orphans, an indication that IFP's philosophy of seeking to help the socially disadvantaged to acquire advanced education could have appeared to applicants as a package to assist orphans. One IFP officer recalled:

> We did not find it funny at all that every applicant had lost his or her dad or mom! Every applicant was orphaned at an early age! People seemed to have come to know the "secret" of IFP: all they simply had to do was tailor their stories to beat the selection process. So we had to ask ourselves, "Is being orphaned all that marginalization is about?"

What the apparently exaggerated or fictitious stories of marginalization revealed to the implementing organizations were: (a) the weaknesses of the application form as a screening tool, (b) the need to refine the questions in the form, and (c) the limitations of a short-listing committee, whose decisions are based principally on applicants' pen-and-paper responses to the qualitative instruments. In response, the organizations worked to develop an interview process that would include scrutiny of stories told by applicants in their applications, or what IFP project officers refer to as "creative interviewing."

The three- to four-day short-listing exercise in Accra concludes with a meeting between the panelists and the project officers, who then return to their countries with their short lists. With input from Pathfinder Nigeria, AAU writes letters inviting the short-listed applicants to face-to-face interviews. The letters are conveyed to the applicants by Pathfinder Nigeria, who also handles the local organizing of the interviews.

The selection interview panelists are constituted by Pathfinder Nigeria in consultation with the AAU and with input from the Ford Foundation office in Lagos. Usually, out of ten possible panelists, the AAU recommends five based on their biographical data (highlighting ethnicity, residence, and academic background). While the regional process of constituting this panel is meant to emphasize transparency, it can also help to shield the country partners from elements who might want to interfere with the transparency of the process (a well-known problem in Nigeria) or from untoward accusations by unsuccessful candidates. Pathfinder Nigeria can thus assure its local constituency that although the selection interviews are held locally, the selection process is done sub-regionally.

The selection criteria reveal how the implementing organizations attempt to answer the question, "What forms of social disadvantage have direct implications for educational inclusion/exclusion in the Nigerian context?" The criteria include: economic status of candidate's family, candidate's religious background, geographic location of schools attended by candidate, personal family history (such as being orphaned at an early age), position in family, gender, membership in an educationally "advantaged" or "disadvantaged" ethnic group, and political status (such as being a refugee). The use of these yardsticks can be traced to the beginning of the program in West Africa, when, after initial discussions between IFP New York and the AAU on the philosophy and objectives of the fellowship, the AAU consulted with local stakeholders (mainly academics, civil society practitioners, and other experts) on how these could best be operationalized in Ghana, Nigeria, and Senegal. At least one expert at that initial meeting was still involved with the AAU as of December 2006.

Academic excellence is not downplayed as an eligibility criterion. Indeed, our inquiry revealed that the AAU and Pathfinder Nigeria would not select a candidate who showed little promise of succeeding or excelling at a postgraduate level. However, because pre-tertiary school location is viewed as a factor in social disadvantage,[9] and people who experienced deprivations at the pre-tertiary level

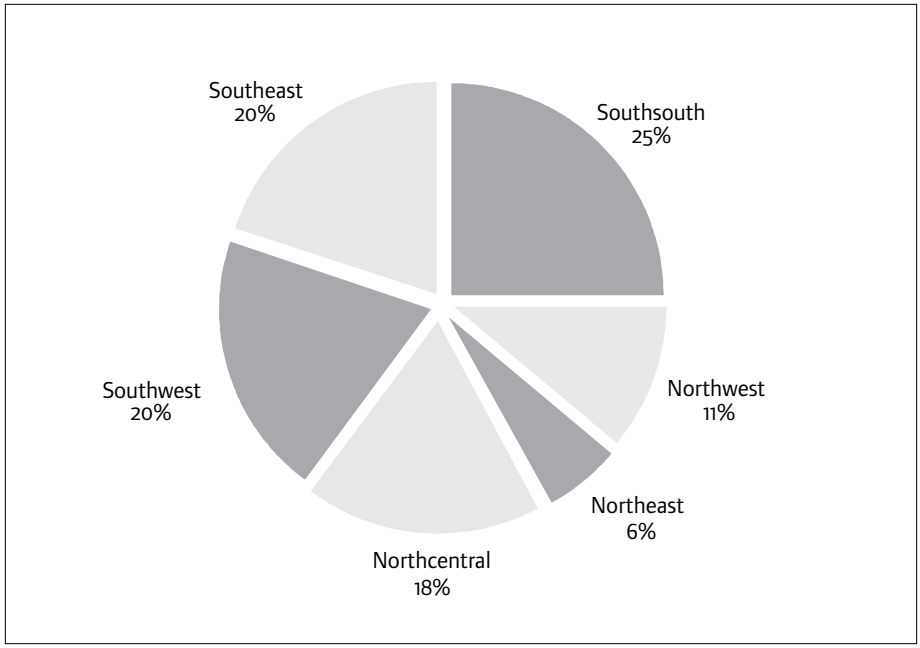

Figure 4.1 Geopolitical distribution of Nigerian Fellows [Source: Constructed with data from Pathfinder Nigeria]

almost always performed relatively poorly in their first and second years at university, the implementing organizations often urged the selection panel to give greater consideration to a candidate's performance during his or her last two years of undergraduate studies rather than focusing on the candidate's overall undergraduate performance.

The selection criterion of ethnic origin (as a basis of disadvantage) echoes the Nigerian government's policy of seeking to redress regional educational inequality by categorizing states as educationally "advantaged" or "disadvantaged." This categorization remains, as elaborated earlier, a contested issue in the sense that it may imply a ploy to "hold back" advancement in the educationally "more privileged" states of the country (which at present are mainly those in the Yoruba-speaking Southwest and the Igbo-speaking Southeast geopolitical zones). In practice, however, 35 percent of IFP fellowships have been awarded since 2001 to applicants originating from the three ("disadvantaged") northern zones and 40 percent to applicants from the relatively "advantaged" Southwest and Southeast (see Figure 4.1).

The AAU and Pathfinder have an explanation for this contradiction: there was no deliberate attempt in the early selection cycles (notably 2001) to achieve ethnic balance in the selection outcomes, because no one knew how Nigerians would actually respond to the new fellowship program.

Ethnic origin began to be consciously emphasized when it became clear that certain states and regions were overrepresented. This emphasis is now an official policy at Pathfinder, as described in an interview with a Pathfinder official:

> We have insisted for current Fellow recruitment purposes that more attention be paid to getting more Fellows from other states where we have not had Fellows before. In other words, there is a bias now for getting more applications and favoring candidates from these "newer" states. Not that we neglect those states where we traditionally have more applicants; rather, when it comes to final selection and two candidates from different zones perform equally, the likelihood now is that we would choose from a state where we have had only one (or no) Fellow in the past.

Similarly, although seeking to actualize IFP's preferences regarding gender in their day-to-day activities in Nigeria, the implementing organizations only recently began to approach gender as a distinct "advantage/disadvantage" indicator requiring conscious monitoring. According to one Pathfinder official:

> There was no deliberate attempt at promoting gender equality in the initial [selection cycles]. At the beginning, it appeared that more females than males were willing to apply, and so more women than men went through to the interview stages, and more females got the grant.

Significantly, the local implementers attribute the male/female disparity to the fact that many Nigerians (particularly men) have little confidence in public programs that operate on the "many are called, few are chosen" principle. One Pathfinder official observed that few Nigerians believed that IFP, or any other similar program, could be implemented in a completely transparent manner:

> One applicant in 2001 who was interviewed telephonically thought the interviewees would be all foreigners, which is why he agreed to be interviewed in the first place. His trust level changed when he was awarded the scholarship.

> I believe this issue of trust affected many males and possibly made them not apply. Later, as people began to perceive that the "Nigerian factor," nepotism and similar transparency issues, for example, was not in operation in the IFP award scheme, the number of male applicants increased.

Thus when gender equality first began to be emphasized, it was to ensure that women did not outnumber men, as was the case in respect of the South. Later, it became a problem of making sure that men did not outnumber women, especially in the Northeast and Northwest geopolitical zones of the country, where "culturally induced" marginalization of women is more entrenched. Even so, the fifth cohort of Fellows had more males than females overall.

As things stand today, the AAU and Pathfinder Nigeria regard gender as a critical criterion of advantage and disadvantage, especially because, as one IFP officer put it, "most of the existing postgraduate scholarships peg the age limit at thirty-five. Clearly this puts many women at a disadvantage. Our experience in West Africa is that women return to school after forty—after they have had children."

The inconsistencies and contradictions highlighted above have been of concern not only to the program's implementers, but also to members of the interview panels. According to one panelist, the question of "fairness" is key:

> If you do a mapping of Nigeria based on the selection of Fellows for the past three years, check if it is a true reflection of the need in various geopolitical settings. It is not! There are areas where Fellows have not been selected from, especially from the northern parts of the country. No part of this country should be disenfranchised; let there be a fair representation of the various zones. Apart from this, emphasis should be on the potential contributions of Fellows, not on the socio-economic status of families. [Interview panelists] use family background and history; it has too much weight. It must be given a minor weight.

The implementing organizations place a considerable premium on the work of the interview panel, which is made up of knowledgeable people from different fields. The suggestions of this panel have played an important role in shaping AAU and Pathfinder's definitions of advantage/disadvantage. This is reflected in the shifts that have occurred over the years in the way the eligibility criteria have been applied. During the first two selection cycles, the criteria were not weighted, and

interview panelists used their individual discretion to allocate points. By 2003, the scoring system had changed to assign specified weight to different criteria, but the broad eligibility criteria continued to be defined in terms of "basic eligibility," "educational background," "leadership qualities," and "career and professional goals."

In 2005, the approach was adjusted to allow the selection panel to use more flexible scoring for each of the four criteria clusters. "Educational background" and "leadership qualities/community service" were given equal weight, but greater weight than "career and professional goals." "Basic eligibility" received fewer points. And a new criterion specific to the interview was added, known as "general presentation."

One implication of these shifts is that being "disadvantaged," always one of several criteria, was increasingly contextualized as other criteria became more nuanced and elaborated through the panelists' and partners' experience. At the same time, questions about how much to emphasize the program's leadership focus and how "change agents" should best be identified and supported emerged as a contested area. We see this in the following statement by an IFP officer:

> At the interview stage, "total marginalization" no longer counts—since the short-listing process has somehow ensured that everyone that gets to this stage has experienced some form of marginalization. What we expect at the interview stage is something like leadership qualities; after all, the program is about going forward (marginalized or not) to effect change in society. That is why at the interview stage, the score for leadership qualities or educational background could be as high as 30, while marginalization [basic eligibility] has a maximum score of only 13. The question is: is this candidate a possible change agent or are we looking for marginalized people who merely want a higher degree for their own individual betterment?

While most Fellows, especially since 2003, have been selected on the basis of a combination of criteria, this comment reveals the kinds of tensions that almost inevitably emerge in the course of the selection process. How should committee members evaluate an outstanding candidate who excels in both academic achievement and commitment to working with marginalized groups and whose own socioeconomic background is relatively privileged? How should such a candidate be compared with a more profoundly disadvantaged applicant who simply does not

convince the panelists that he or she has the qualities of social leadership or commitment? No ready answers are available, but open, ongoing discussion of such issues is required of a program that is to remain transparent.

As indicated earlier, the implementation of a philosophy of international higher education based on social justice involved the intersection of the experiences of the AAU and Pathfinder officials, the interpretations and recommendations of their consultants and panelists, and the voices of fellowship applicants themselves. Interestingly, when the AAU reviewed its criteria for "social disadvantage" in 2005 for the three West African countries, the result was that the term had broadly the same definition as when the program was first introduced. Marginalization still largely coincided with coming from a poor family, being orphaned early in life, being the eldest of many siblings, being a single parent, being disabled, being a refugee, coming from an educationally "disadvantaged" ethnic group, or being female. The tasks of the selection committee have evolved, however, and now include the authentication of personal stories of marginality as well as the selection of Fellows who, in panelists' judgment, would go beyond simply redressing their own marginality. The latter consideration has led to the extension of the fellowship to a small number of people from relatively advantaged socio-economic backgrounds who have what might be termed a "heart for the community."

Outreach

As a new intervention, IFP entered a landscape, as we noted above, filled with long-standing programs such as the Commonwealth Scholarships and faced the challenge of how to communicate its rather radical intent. In the first two selection cycles especially, the philosophy of IFP, the promise it held for Nigerian society, and its implementation ethos were not well known. Some members of the first two cohorts of Fellows revealed to these authors that they had provided details in their applications about their experiences of disadvantage somewhat warily, not fully realizing that the fellowship was actually designed to support people in their circumstances. A number of the contradictions elaborated earlier arose from the fact that, in the early phase of the program, the main distribution centers for the application forms were universities, where men are numerically and socially dominant.

Because IFP offered opportunities for Fellows to study abroad, the AAU also faced an important challenge in that it did not want to contribute to the already

acute problem of "brain drain" from West Africa. Initially hesitant to invite excessive media attention, the program subsequently began to address this challenge more assertively. As an IFP officer indicated to these authors:

> One of our shortfalls had been working in the quiet. We were not as known as we would have preferred. I remember being asked [by one prominent person], "Your program has such radical and unique objectives; why are you not making any noise about it?" But things are changing: we now have outreach activities that effectively double as media events. It is even easier now that we have a sizeable number of Fellows who have completed their studies and returned home.

As the program has developed, steps have been taken to address the challenge of broadening outreach. Some simple practical changes have been made, including updating IFP databases in Abuja and Accra. Application forms can now be obtained in many local government offices—local government being the third layer of government in Nigeria (after federal and state), and the layer closest to the populace. This new channel complemented the conventional channels of accessing the forms (the Internet, universities, and Pathfinder offices in Lagos and Abuja). There were renewed efforts to ensure that information on eligibility became widely accessible and that application forms reached remote rural areas as well as local governments and states that in the past had relatively few applicants. The offices of some NGOs (non-governmental organizations), especially those with rural networks, were tapped into as IFP outreach centers. Applicants can now submit their completed forms to designated NGOs and government offices in their localities, knowing that the forms will reach Pathfinder's office in Abuja within the stipulated deadlines. These efforts suggest that the local partners are increasingly attentive to the role of public awareness in sustaining the image of IFP as the program attaches greater importance to transparency and integrity.

Even without a major media campaign to promote the fellowship in Nigeria, the AAU and Pathfinder increasingly undertake grass-roots forms of outreach. But perhaps the greatest contributions to enhanced awareness of the promise and significance of IFP will be the individual and collective activities of current and former holders of the fellowship. There has been a strong momentum of communication, for example, within the Nigerian IFP alumni community since early 2007. Barring

funding constraints and problems of coordination, exclusionary definitions of membership criteria and/or activity areas, and poor networking between home- and foreign-based alumni, the Nigerian IFP alumni community seems well placed to enhance the program's profile and visibility. As at other program sites, the incorporation of alumni in the process of recruitment and selection promises to strengthen both their role and the effectiveness of the program.

Conclusion

The implementation of IFP in West Africa has been based on a sub-regional and a country-specific focus. Since the appointment of Pathfinder Nigeria (and AAWORD Senegal) as the AAU's country partners, there has been significant collaboration among the three IFP offices and a fairly uniform set of understandings and strategies pertaining to outreach, eligibility, short-listing, and final selection—in short, a movement beyond the contradictions and inconsistencies of the early days of the program. Such collaboration has produced cohorts of Ghanaian, Nigerian, and Senegalese Fellows who carry with them country-specific and sub-regional identities simultaneously, dual identities that the emerging IFP alumni communities in the sub-region also profess.

To ensure that the IFP philosophy becomes a reality in Nigeria, the implementing organizations have drawn on the best of their knowledge and experience and the expertise available in their neighborhoods to deliver a program that has, in spite of the teething challenges discussed in this chapter, so far remained credible in the public eye. While the program strives to overcome the obstacles and practical problems that may have contributed to the selection of fewer Fellows from more "disadvantaged" regions than targeted, the general view among current and former holders of the fellowship, family members of alumni, and interview panelists is that the standards of implementation were commendably high. The combined use of sub-regional and country-specific administrative structures may contribute to the level of transparency in the implementation of IFP in Nigeria and play a role in the positive public image the program currently has in the country.

Despite the "massification" of university education in Nigeria, the system, as we have seen, is still characterized by problems that go beyond falling standards. Access and equity remain challenges, as geo-ethnic origin, location, social class, gender, and physical ability continue to be the basis of exclusion and

inclusion. These problems have persisted despite specific national interventions aimed at broadening access, partly due to the haphazard implementation of those interventions.

IFP emerged with a new, somewhat radical emphasis on redress and, since 2001, has enabled over 100 Nigerians to obtain postgraduate education. It has provided a unique form of cohort building and leadership-for-social-justice training that theoretically puts alumni in a position to pursue their post-fellowship careers with a "heart for the community." Conscious of the key challenges of program implementation in Nigeria, the administration of IFP has emphasized integrity. Although administrative challenges remain to be overcome, the local implementers have sought to actualize the program's goals through high levels of transparency and rigor in both the definition of social disadvantage and the screening and selection processes.

Most of the program's stakeholders have applauded the achievements so far, with current and former holders of the fellowship imagining their career goals in a broader, community-oriented way. Over half of the Fellows who have completed their studies have returned to Nigeria, and most are involved in a burgeoning alumni movement. A small proportion of alumni have stayed behind to seek employment in their host countries or elsewhere. A number of others who have completed their fellowships are forging ahead with their studies. IFP in West Africa has entered a new developmental trajectory in which the assessment of success will be based on what the implementing organizations do and on the activities of the alumni collective and the career trajectories of individual alumni.

Notes

1 Established in November 1967 in Rabat, Morocco, AAU seeks to be the "apex organization and forum for consultation, exchange of information and co-operation among institutions of higher learning in Africa" (http://www.aau.org/about/index.htm). From an initial membership base of thirty-four universities, the Association had 199 member universities (from 45 African countries) in 2007. Among its missions, as stated on its website, is to "raise the quality of higher education in Africa and strengthen its contribution to African development by fostering collaboration among its member institutions." The Association is headquartered in Accra, Ghana. AAU serves as IFP's umbrella partner organization in West Africa, including Ghana, Nigeria, and Senegal. The authors conducted an interview at the Association's IFP program office on November 24, 2006.

2 Pathfinder International, the U.S.-based non-governmental organization, has a country office in Abuja, Nigeria, where its work involves advocacy and action around reproductive and public health issues. One of its projects, the Community Participation for Action in the Social Sector project (COMPASS), is regarded as "one of the largest integrated health and education projects in Africa." (http://www.pathfind.org/site/PageServer?pagename=Programs_Nigeria_Projects_COMPASS.)

3 Nigeria's "first-generation" universities are: University of Ibadan (1948); University of Nigeria, Nsukka (1960); and Obafemi Awolowo University (formerly University of Ife), University of Lagos, and Ahmadu Bello University—all established in 1962. The "second-generation" (1970s) universities include: Universities of Calabar, Port Harcourt, Ilorin, Maiduguri, and Jos; Bayero University, Kano; and The Usmanu Danfodiyo University, Sokoto (formerly University of Sokoto). A cluster of institutions established in the 1980s and 1990s make up the "third-generation" federal universities.

4 UME is the nationally administered test through which high school graduates are admitted into universities.

5 Through coups and counter-coups, Nigeria was ruled by the military for a total of about thirty years after independence in 1960 (that is, 1966–1979 and 1983–1999). Most of the military rulers were of northern Nigerian origin.

6 http://www.fordifp.net/index.aspx?c=1—accessed March 3, 2007.

7 An e-mail interview was conducted on October 31, 2006.

8 The analysis in this section is based mainly on documentary data obtained from the AAU and Pathfinder Nigeria as well as on in-depth interviews conducted by the authors at IFP program offices of the two organizations (i.e., in Abuja and Accra) in December 2006. Other

sources of primary data were members of the selection committee in Nigeria as well as current and former Fellows.

9 In Nigeria, geographic isolation of a school is not always correlated with poor resources: some of the better resourced schools in the country are located in rural communities while many of the country's dilapidated schools are in urban slums. Thus, the location of pretertiary schooling is not always indicative of the quality of education received.

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CHAPTER 5

Mexico and Guatemala: Multiple Faces of Marginalization

David Navarrete and Anabella Acevedo

The situation of Guatemala and Mexico at the beginning of the new millennium is a good starting point to understand the evolution of IFP in both countries between 2001 and 2006. When IFP was launched in the region, Guatemala and Mexico were undergoing processes of profound political and social reorganization with interesting elements in common. Guatemala was celebrating the fourth anniversary of the signing of the Peace Agreements, which ended thirty-six years of civil war. Through this instrument, the state recognized the multiethnic, multicultural, and multilingual character of the country. The debates leading to the Agreements continued afterwards and emphasized the importance of social phenomena such as marginalization and exclusion. The urgent need to implement immediate and effective action to bring aid to the most disadvantaged groups was underscored, and their progress was acknowledged as a condition for the development of the nation. At the same time, though far from consolidated, the transition to democracy initiated in the mid 1980s created an atmosphere favorable to the emergence and visibility of new types of leadership from underprivileged social groups.

In Mexico, the Zapatista movement had come onto the scene in 1994, just as the country was entering the select developed countries club of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). Doubts were cast on Mexico's supposed national unity, recalling the country's multicultural character and spotlighting the extensive cultural, economic, legal, and political inequalities that still affect the indigenous peoples and hence the entire country. In 2000, the official media, together with broad sectors of Mexican society, were sensitized to the urgent need to take effective action to reverse the increasing trend towards marginalization of

the indigenous population. When Mexico's first opposition government in seventy years took power, also in 2000, official programs were launched to promote equity in higher education.

When the first steps towards the implementation of IFP in Guatemala and Mexico were taken, therefore, the political and social climate in both countries favored the launching of a program with the objectives and sphere of action of IFP. The Ford Foundation Office for Mexico and Latin America coordinated discussions and consultations with experts in poverty and marginalization in order to tailor the program to the Guatemalan and Mexican contexts within the global guidelines originally set out for IFP.

The selection of institutions to implement the program was not difficult. In Guatemala, the invitation was extended to the Center for Regional Research on Mesoamerica (CIRMA), a nonprofit foundation established in 1978 in La Antigua, Guatemala. CIRMA's mission is the reconstruction and revitalization of intellectual life in Guatemala and Central America as well as the formation of new generations of social leaders and the creation of mechanisms to foster education and interethnic dialogue. In Mexico, the Center for Research and Higher Education in Social Anthropology (CIESAS) was asked to become the partner organization. A public agency founded in 1973 to promote understanding of social and cultural phenomena in Mexico, CIESAS carries out basic and applied research; it also works on the development of human resources in anthropology and other disciplines focused on analysis of past and present problems in Mexican society.

The choices of CIRMA and CIESAS fit with the objective of providing the program with a local identity and solid institutional grounds. Both partners are well-established and nationally known. Their objectives and strategic action plans focus on marginalized groups, including indigenous peoples. The IFP Secretariat believed that the academic credibility of both agencies would also play a key role in helping IFP to avoid the clientelist and politicized character that had been a problem for many aid programs aimed at marginalized populations in both countries.

A significant design difference between the two countries emerged immediately. In Mexico, the identification of the group historically excluded from higher education led unequivocally to the indigenous population. In Guatemala, as a consequence of widespread exclusion from higher education, the aftermath of an internal armed conflict that came to an end only in 1986, and the problems faced while the nation

reconstructed its multicultural identity, the spectrum was widened to include non-indigenous marginalized groups. We return to these decisions below.

The task of getting the IFP program underway was carried out under the initial direction of the program Secretariat in New York, the Mexico Representative of the Ford Foundation, CIESAS, CIRMA, and the Mexico Office of the Institute of International Education (which developed the selection methodology used for the program in both countries and oversees placement of Mexican Fellows). Working independently, through non-governmental channels, IFP gave impetus to a long-term institutional effort in both countries to reverse structurally supported marginalization in the area of education. What is distinctive about IFP's endeavor is that it is the first program to be directed at the world of postgraduate studies. This has meant facing new challenges and gradually finding new answers.

During the first two competition rounds, held in 2001 and 2002, the dissemination of program information and the candidate recruitment process were carried out separately in Mexico and Guatemala. Both steps, however, were based on the same schedule and used similar materials. Fellow selection was divided into two phases: a national phase, managed autonomously by each partner, and a regional phase in which finalists from both countries were evaluated by a regional committee composed of an equal number of Mexican and Guatemalan representatives.

The results of the dissemination, recruitment, and selection strategy at the national level in both countries were positive. The final selection of Fellows, however, revealed incompatible differences, mostly arising from the differences between the target populations defined in Mexico and Guatemala. Although the conditions and indicators of marginalization were similar for finalists from both countries, the wider social universe covered by the program in Guatemala required separate evaluation elements. Keeping a regional selection process would have meant the redefinition of the social universe covered either in Mexico or Guatemala. As the next section of this chapter will argue, such a measure would have been counterproductive. After a careful evaluation of these issues, all partners in the region—the IFP Secretariat, the regional office of the Ford Foundation, CIESAS, CIRMA, and the Mexico office of the Institute of International Education—agreed that independent selection processes should be carried out in Mexico and Guatemala.

The Guatemalan Experience

In 2005, Guatemala ranked 117 out of a total of 177 countries in the United Nations Development Program's Human Development Index (HDI).[1] This means that the economic and social conditions of the majority of the population are severely precarious. It also means that government corruption, social inequity, poverty, and insecurity intensify such conditions and that every change in social, economic, and political structures, however small, demands enormous effort, and the results do not always have great impact.

A prolonged history of colonialism and oligarchy that denied most of the population access to basic services underlies the country's present gloomy situation. More recently, the earthquake of 1976 produced massive migration from rural to urban areas, and shantytowns emerged as *campesinos* abandoned their fields for the cities. The internal war that lasted for thirty-six years and ended in 1996 resulted in the death or disappearance of 200,000 people, or about 2 percent of the population. It also led to an ongoing process of social polarization. Among the conflict's severe and least considered consequences was the scattering and weakening of intellectual and academic life in Guatemala. For decades, it was risky to protest or to suggest changes to the government. The National University and other academic institutions lost their most brilliant scholars and became dangerous places. The Guatemalan government invested little in education; indeed, to some extent, it actively weakened the cultural and educational structures of the country.

In this context, new categories of marginalization emerged in addition to historically marginalized groups such as rural indigenous peoples of Mayan ancestry and the rural poor. Indigenous people settled in cities, and while many preserved their identity and sense of community, they frequently lost distinctive traits such as language and dress. Other migrants to urban areas were non-indigenous *campesinos* lacking formal education, and most were only able to find survival jobs.

An additional problematic factor is what might be termed the "identity crises" and conflicts among the different groups that make up the Guatemalan population. Guatemalans have traditionally been divided into two groups: indigenous and *ladinos*.[2] This binary division, however, fails to capture the complex ethnic composition of the nation. According to a recent Population and Housing Census (INEGI 2001), indigenous peoples account for 40 percent of the population,[3] *garífuna* are .4 percent, and *xinca* are .7 percent. The term *garífuna* refers to the population of

African descent that lives on the Atlantic coast of Central America; *xinca* refers to indigenous people of non-Mayan ancestry. It should be noted that the 40 percent figure includes twenty-two ethnic groups of Mayan ancestry,[4] each with its own native language and many with distinctive social structures. Four of these groups represent half of the indigenous population: K'iche', Q'eqchi', Kaqchikel, and Mam. Virtually 60 percent of the people do not consider themselves indigenous, *garífuna,* or *xinca*; they would be *mestizo* or *criollo*, foreigners living in Guatemala and, quite often, indigenous persons who no longer identify themselves as such or are unaware of their ethnic roots, either because their parents chose to adopt Western culture or because adversity forced them to do so. Migrants from the countryside, especially from the region in Guatemala where most of the indigenous people live, should also be added to these figures. Although they are not numerous, their economic contribution is tangible and their influence in cultural and social transitions undeniable. This brief demographic overview reveals that many statistics used in analysis of Guatemalan society may overlook these identities, mostly developed in recent decades, and their attendant social problems.

In the past, most discussions of marginalized groups in Guatemala referred to indigenous people. Although indigenous peoples have experienced the worst poverty, discrimination, and exclusion, the fact is that poverty indexes include many different social groups. According to the *Human Development Report 2002,* for example, the infant mortality rate in that year was 44 percent. Of that percentage, indigenous groups accounted for 49 percent. On the other hand, of the 56 percent of the population living in poverty, 82 percent are in rural areas, and only 39 percent are from indigenous groups. Poverty in Guatemala, as we see, is more closely correlated to rural location than to ethnicity.

Thus, CIRMA decided to widen the target group to include the non-indigenous poor population, people who are traditionally considered to be among the privileged groups. Certainly, discrimination against indigenous peoples has made their exclusion more evident and constant; it has clearly created enormous gaps and conflicts. Nevertheless, CIRMA argued that a thorough analysis of marginalization and exclusion revealed groups that might not be as numerous but are equally important to the development of the country as a whole.

Access to Education from Marginalized Communities

The information provided above is crucial in the study of access to education in a multilingual and multicultural nation where poverty turns education into a secondary consideration and places basic needs at the forefront. In Guatemala, education access indexes reveal 30 percent illiteracy, the highest in Central America. In 2002, the population aged 15–24 spent an average of 5.4 years in school. Compared to other Central American countries, Guatemala has the greatest number of working children and adolescents—20.3 percent—who do not go to school at all (ENEI 2000). In the same year, one in every ten adolescents enrolled had dropped out of school, and only two in every ten children managed to complete basic education programs (ASIES 2006).

In addition to illiteracy, rural areas suffer from lack of educational facilities and services. The Ministry of Education carried out a study of education in 2005, concluding that "coverage per area reveals that more attention is given in urban and metropolitan areas. 78.3 percent of the population with access to education lives in urban areas, mainly the capital city, departmental and municipal administrations, and 21.2 percent in rural areas. This means that four in every five students enrolled in basic education live in an urban area and one in a rural area" (Programa Nacional de Desarrollo Humano 2006, 161). Recent studies indicate that an investment of $15 billion is necessary for all Guatemalans to attend school.

The situation for university education is no better. One study shows that only 7 percent of the people in urban areas and .5 percent in rural areas have successfully completed an undergraduate program (Fabián 2004).

When we examine the number of years of schooling that employed Guatemalans have according to gender and ethnicity (Table 5.1),[5] we see a reflection of scarce access to education.

In addition to the difference between access to education in indigenous and non-indigenous groups, and the significant percentage without any formal education at all, these figures show that participation decreases at higher levels of the educational system, so that very few Guatemalans, whether men or women, indigenous or non-indigenous, have access to higher education. On the other hand, contrary to general assumptions, the access of women to education has increased in recent decades, despite the fact that women have been historically one of the most marginalized groups.

IFP Reaches the Marginalized Groups

CIRMA was conducting a study on ethnicity in Guatemala in 2001,[6] at the time IFP was launched in the country. One of the objectives of the study was to go beyond the binary character of the debate around ethnicity and exclusion and beyond the indigenous/non-indigenous dichotomy. CIRMA's research highlighted the exclusion also suffered by non-indigenous poor people—44 percent of the total population—many of whom live in rural areas with scarce basic public services, while others live in marginal urban areas. Ethnicity continues to be a key factor, the research indicated, but poverty and living in a rural location also affect the extent to which Guatemalan individuals are marginalized.

The IFP target population identified was thus consistent with CIRMA's mission to develop new generations of social and intellectual actors representing the diverse identities and realities of Guatemala, a diversity that encompasses ethnicity as well as gender and social class. The target group was wide, and the first selection process included all the groups IFP sought to reach as well as unanticipated groups of marginalized people. Among these were Guatemalans whose limited access to education was closely linked to the internal war period. Some had left the university because of their political commitment to take care of the population affected by the war; when the war was over, they were too old to qualify for postgraduate program grants. Others had unstable or interrupted access to education because they came from areas devastated by the armed conflict, belonged to families separated by the war, or had participated in the conflict. Another, often overlooked, factor that emerged was age. Not uncommonly, people have a troubled and intermittent school history and enter undergraduate programs when they are older.

Challenges and Lessons Learned

A quick look at the results of IFP's selection processes carried out in Guatemala since 2001 shows the representation of groups traditionally excluded from education (Table 5.2).

Although CIRMA was quite aware that indigenous people were the "most excluded," in the first selection cycle the number of fellowships awarded to indigenous candidates was just over 60 percent. In response, some indigenous leaders criticized CIRMA and claimed that the program should exclusively aim at indigenous students. CIRMA, however, was committed to including the large share of

Education level	Indigenous		Non-indigenous		Total	
	Men %	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %	Women %
None	34	47.2	17.1	14.9	23.9	26.8
Primary	54.3	42.2	50.4	46.3	52	44.9
Secondary	10.6	9.3	26.6	30.8	20.1	22.9
Higher Education	1	1.1	6	8	4	5.5

Table 5.1 Years of schooling by gender and ethnicity, Guatemala, 2001 [Source: IFP Guatemala Program]

	Applications	Fellowships Awarded[7]	Indigenous Fellows	African-Ladino Fellows	Non-indigenous Fellows	Women	Men
2001	190	8	5	0	3	3	5
2002	64	11	6	0	5	7	4
2003	115	16	8	0	8	10	6
2004	104	17	7	0	10	8	9
2005	120	20	12	0	8	11	9
2006	123	12	8	2	2	8	2
TOTAL	716	84	46	2	36	47	35

Note: No selection in 2007

Table 5.2 Profile of Fellows, Guatemala, 2001–2007 [Source: IFP Guatemala Program]

the Guatemalan population that has had difficult and limited access to education, including the newly poor: "specific middle class groups (public servants, white-collar workers and semi-qualified blue-collar workers, younger people with some schooling in non-qualified jobs, [who] joined the ranks of the 'structural poor' after the 1980s recession, civil wars, structural adjustment and stabilization policies, and the collapse of the welfare State" (Camus 2005, 20). Non-indigenous Guatemalans living in marginalized urban areas and working single mothers were also added to this group.

One of the main challenges faced from the beginning of IFP in Guatemala was reaching all the target groups identified by CIRMA and receiving a significant number of applications. There is widespread mistrust of fellowship-awarding institutions due to the fact that support has often been kept from the people who need it the most or has gone to individuals with connections in the field. Furthermore, local institutions do not always distribute outreach materials. The strategy that has proved most successful is the organization of informational meetings for university authorities, leaders, activists, and potential candidates. Both Fellows and former Fellows have participated in the organization and implementation of such meetings with great success. Sometimes initial visits for purely introductory purposes have been followed by second visits to offer additional information to potential candidates.

The data in Table 5.2 might suggest that the number of applications received every year is relatively low. It should be noted, however, that very few Guatemalans are in a position to apply for a postgraduate program fellowship, and of these a much smaller number come from underprivileged sectors. Compounding this, qualified applicants have to balance a life marked by exclusion with the requirement of having a background of social commitment and engagement in the development of the country.

It is clear that some groups are still underrepresented. So far, only nine out of twenty-two indigenous groups of Mayan ancestry are represented in the application pool. These, of course, include groups that are larger and have better access to formal education. Although the program cannot insist on applicants from specific ethnic groups, it must make sure that information reaches them. The *garífuna* group faces a similar situation: only in 2006, after five years of dissemination activities, were two *garífuna* candidates, both women, granted a fellowship.

Early in the fellowship promotion stage, it was observed that many solid candidates were activists with a rich background in social commitment who met all application requirements. Their commitment and leadership roles prevented some potential candidates from applying for a scholarship. Professionals who cannot leave their jobs or family obligations to start a postgraduate program face similar difficulties: even if they received a full fellowship, they would probably lose their jobs or their families would not be able to survive without a regular income.

Besides using promotional strategies to reach the target groups, a mechanism to ensure the fairness and transparency of a selection process that complied with global IFP policies and CIRMA's institutional mission had to be devised. Such a mechanism would also help legitimize the program in different national spheres. This explains why the composition of the selection committee was carefully and strategically planned from the first year of program implementation to include scholars and activists who were not only renowned and representative of different backgrounds, but also truly representative of the program's target groups. Committee members reflected diversity in terms of academic disciplines, careers, ethnic background, and gender, and from the beginning, at least one indigenous expert was a member. Since 2005 the Committee has also included at least one IFP alumnus.

In addition to these challenges, the program provides support to people who are clearly disadvantaged in comparison with professionals who have the tools to be accepted in academically excellent universities and to complete postgraduate programs successfully. These tools include full command of a second language, research and analytical skills, academic essay-writing skills,[8] and sophisticated computer skills. The only feasible option in the country for many Guatemalans is to attend weekend programs in order to complete their undergraduate studies[9] at regional universities that lack basic facilities, such as computer laboratories and well-supplied libraries, and where training in research and development of critical thought is far from ideal. It was thus necessary for IFP to add pre-academic training programs to the preparatory stage for Fellows to successfully pursue postgraduate degrees. These programs meant a new challenge: Fellows' available time is scarce, as most have to deal with work-related commitments and live in far-off areas where educational facilities are not abundant. The solution devised by IFP combines group workshops with individual training programs tailored to each Fellow's needs.

The Mexican Experience

Mexico is internationally famous for its natural resources and historic and cultural heritage. The benefits derived from these resources have, however, been quite unequally distributed. Ever since the country's founding, Mexican society has been characterized by inequality. While there have been some advances in human development, there are still major disparities between different segments of society. Estimates of the extent of poverty at the beginning of the twenty-first century indicate that more than half of Mexicans live in poverty, and one in five in extreme poverty (Banco Mundial México 2004).[10]

The Indigenous Population and Expressions of Marginalization

As with the distribution of wealth, the incidence of poverty in Mexico varies perceptibly in social and geographic terms. The richest tenth of the population, concentrated in urban areas, earns more than 40 percent of the country's total income (GDP), while the poorest tenth, mainly rural, receives only 1.1 percent. The social groups and regions most affected by inequality and which experience the lowest levels of well-being by every measure—health, food, housing, education—have historically been the groups collectively known as the indigenous peoples. They are, in other words, the poorest of the poor. To live in an indigenous region or to be a member of an indigenous ethnic group implies a profound difference in one's prospects.

Recent calculations show that the indigenous population of Mexico is more than 10 million, or 10 percent of the country's total population.[11] Some 60 percent of indigenous households do not have indoor plumbing, 33.5 percent lack access to drinking water, and 79 percent live in one-room homes (Banco Mundial México 2004). Regarding health, indigenous mortality is higher than in the rest of the population, and children's heights are lower, reflecting nutritional deficiency. Formal health insurance coverage among the indigenous population is very low, to a large extent a result of the high proportion of households supported by informal employment. In geographic terms, the poorest municipalities in Mexico are indigenous ones (Banco Mundial México 2004).

The disadvantaged position of indigenous groups in society and their unequal access to the opportunities afforded by development at the start of the new millennium can be appreciated more clearly when those groups are compared with

the non-indigenous population. The gap in the Human Development Index (HDI) between the indigenous and non-indigenous Mexican populations is almost 15 percent, at .7057 and .8304 respectively. Each of the three main components of the HDI shows sizeable differences. The health index is .7380 for the indigenous population and .8491 for the non-indigenous population, a difference of 13.1 percent. The values of the income index are .6571 and .7579 respectively, a difference of 14.6 percent.[12]

From Marginalization to Discrimination

"Indians" have been the systematic target of discrimination, stemming from a history of domination and subjugation that dates back to the sixteenth century Spanish Conquest. The original peoples living in the territory that is now Mexico were subjected and relegated by both law and society to a position subordinate to descendents of Europeans and to *mestizos*, the group that resulted from the racial mixing of Spaniards and "Indians" and that eventually came to constitute the dominant part of Mexican society. Mexican independence at the start of the twentieth century, and the prevailing liberal ideology that has guided the design of the nation since then almost to the present day—upheld by the dream of building a politically, culturally, and legally homogeneous society—meant a systematic attack on the ethnic identity and cultural diversity of the indigenous peoples. To become a modern nation, the ideologues and leaders of the country claimed, Mexico had to leave behind the customs and practices that chained it to the past. Indigenous peoples, regarded as the personification of that past, were the target of an intense integration policy intended to shape them into the mold of modern Western society. Concomitant interactions among the different sectors of Mexican society clearly reflected these ideological paradigms, reinforcing the unequal and often hostile treatment of indigenous individuals that emerged in the colonial era and has endured to the present day.

A recent nationwide survey on discrimination showed that indigenous people are among the most affected by discrimination, together with women, the disabled, homosexuals, the elderly, and religious minorities (Primera encuesta nacional sobre discriminación en México 2005). The survey showed that 40 percent of Mexicans would be willing to organize to prevent an ethnic group from moving in near their homes, and 20 percent would not be willing to share their home with an indigenous person. It also showed that three out of four people felt that to climb out of poverty,

indigenous people should not act indigenous; their social marginalization, in other words, was attributed to their ethnicity. Nine out of 10 indigenous persons stated that they were discriminated against because of their ethnicity, and three out of four believed that their educational and employment opportunities were poorer than those of the rest of the population for the same reason. The study also provided evidence for another widespread practice in Mexican society: discrimination linked to lack of money. Indigenous people suffer discrimination doubly: on account of being "Indians" and being poor.

The Education Environment: A Bleak Picture

The marginalization, inequality, and discrimination that have accompanied the indigenous population of Mexico into the new millennium are also manifested in education. Illiteracy rates among indigenous peoples are over 15 percent, markedly higher than the 6 percent recorded for the rest of the population. Between 1990 and 2000, the rate of indigenous participation in the public education system dropped while both the overall rate of school attendance and the proportion of the population aged over fifteen with more than a ninth grade education increased. At the same time, enrollment of indigenous students in levels beyond elementary school decreased drastically. The net registration rate in secondary (middle school) is only 35 percent among indigenous populations, compared with 60 percent overall in Mexico. The main reason for dropping out is lack of money. Of indigenous young people twelve years and older, 68.4 percent are working (Banco Mundial México 2004). In terms of the three main components of the HDI—health, education, and income—education shows the greatest gap, with a value of .7319 among the indigenous population and .8841 among the non-indigenous population, a difference of 17.2 percent.[13]

Indigenous participation in higher education is extremely low. It should be noted that data and analysis on university education are scarce, unlike those on education at lower levels. Fortunately, this is rapidly changing, in part as a result of the need for information generated since 2001 by externally financed social and education programs, in particular the two Ford Foundation initiatives (IFP and PATHWAYS), and programs undertaken by the Mexican government as part of the *Programa Nacional de Educación 2001–2006* [National Education Program 2001–2006].[14]

Research currently underway indicates that only two of every hundred indigenous persons have studied at a university, compared to 8.3 non-indigenous persons

(INEGI 2001b). The number of indigenous people who have earned postgraduate degrees is unknown, but it is not difficult to guess that they are a very small minority. This unfavorable situation is due to several factors, cultural barriers in particular, as well as lack of funds and institutional support for studies at the undergraduate, and even more, at the postgraduate level. In spite of the consensus among experts and officials that opportunities need to be broadened for indigenous people to gain access to higher education, until recently there were no specific programs with this goal. Indigenous students had to compete for scholarships and grants against non-indigenous students with stronger backgrounds. This was not because of differences in capacity but differences in financial and social circumstances throughout their studies.

From Recruitment to Academic Strengthening: Challenges and Results

As in Guatemala, the implementation of IFP in Mexico, starting in 2001, has entailed several design, planning, and operational challenges. One of the largest challenges has been the recruitment of fellowship candidates. While there was reliable information available when the program started on the size of the indigenous population and its geographic distribution, there was none on the location of indigenous students and professionals qualified to enter postgraduate studies. This information vacuum and the goal of making IFP a Mexico-wide program led to the design and implementation of a nationwide dissemination strategy as well as methods and mechanisms adapted to different regions.

It is important to note that the term "Indian peoples," coined at the time of the Spanish Conquest to refer to the entire native population of what is now Mexico, encompasses sixty-two different ethnic groups with different languages and cultures. Moreover, while 90 percent live in central and southern Mexico, they are distributed throughout the country; only 30 of Mexico's 2443 municipalities have no recorded indigenous population.[15]

Knowing the overall geographic distribution of the indigenous population was useful, but not enough. Promoting IFP in regions traditionally populated by indigenous people (mostly rural) and regions where they constitute the majority could have resulted, for example, in successfully reaching professionals who had returned to their communities after completing their studies. But limiting information and recruitment to those areas would have meant the exclusion of an equally important

sector: those who have been migrating for generations to the large cities where institutions of higher education and employment opportunities are concentrated.

In order to shape a broad-based outreach process, IFP information and orientation campaigns directed at the general public and potential applicants were conducted with support from CIESAS regional units located in states with high indigenous populations (Oaxaca, Chiapas, Yucatán, Veracruz, and to a lesser extent, Jalisco). These campaigns included talks, advertisements in print media, radio spots, and printed material (posters and brochures) tailored to each state and its regions. In addition, many departments and individuals at public universities and other higher education organizations and public and private agencies in practically every state of Mexico gave generously of their time and facilities to support the work of identifying and recruiting candidates.

As a result of these joint efforts, a total of 816 applications were received from twenty-five of thirty Mexican states between 2001 and 2006.[16] A significant achievement resulting from the dissemination and recruitment strategy is that the greatest number of applications came from the two states with the lowest HDI and lowest schooling levels in Mexico: Chiapas and Oaxaca (Programa Nacional de Desarrollo Humano 2006).

It should also be noted that while the number of fellowships offered has remained stable (an average of twenty-three are granted annually), applications have increased significantly. While there were seventy-six applicants in 2001, in 2006 there were 167. This speaks not only to the fact that the program has become better known, but also to the growing demand for and insufficient supply of grants for postgraduate students directed specifically at the indigenous population.

Another key aspect in developing the program has been the selection of Fellows, a task carried out by selection committees composed of six specialists from different disciplines who have all worked closely with indigenous and other marginalized groups. Through carefully balanced joint evaluations of each candidate, the committees have helped lend the program the transparency and credibility that have been indispensable for its success.

In order to strengthen core aspects of the selection processes, half of the selection committee positions are now held by indigenous persons. Furthermore, alumni from the program have also been included since 2004, a measure that has substantially enriched the selection committees' discussions and decisions.

Making sure that Fellows actually belong to an indigenous group has been a constant challenge throughout the implementation of the program. The long and complex process of biological and cultural miscegenation that characterizes the Mexican population, including indigenous peoples, has produced a labyrinthine social structure where an individual's belonging to a specific native group is based on different factors. The prototypical image of an indigenous person—namely certain physical features, traditional clothing, and mother tongue—was long ago discarded as a useful criterion for any serious project aimed at this sector of the population. There are, indeed, individuals and groups close to such stereotypes; an important percentage of indigenous individuals, however, currently embrace aspects of *mestizo* culture, by no means necessarily implying the loss of their original ethnic identity.

This fact, combined with the possibility of having candidates falsely claim an indigenous status in order to obtain the extraordinary support of an IFP fellowship, encouraged the Regional Office of the Ford Foundation and CIESAS to devise and implement a selection process exclusively aimed at the desired target population. The application form was designed not only to gather the information required to evaluate the eligibility criteria set up by IFP, including academic background, social commitment, and leadership potential, but to cover the ascribed ethnic status of applicants. Thanks to advice provided by experts in indigenous identity and the Mexico Office of the Institute of International Education—with its extensive experience with fellowship programs in the country—four basic criteria were included in the application form: self-ascribed ethnic status, place of origin, command of the candidate's or his/her parents' mother tongue, and statement of belonging submitted by representatives of his/her ethnic group of origin.[17] These criteria are carefully evaluated and cross-checked during the pre-selection stage, during the interviews held with semifinalists, and during the final discussion to select future Fellows. The space provided on the application form for the candidates to report additional information on their personal and professional background, the meticulous individual and collective analysis of applications by selection committee members, and the experience and lessons learned by the IFP Mexico staff at CIESAS through six selection periods have produced extremely positive results in this critical implementation stage of the program. The uncertainty of the early years has been replaced by confidence in the selection method. An additional series of

marginalization indicators is being developed to provide selection committees with more information and data in years to come.

Efforts to ensure the geographic and ethnic representative character of the program have proved fruitful: eighteen states and twenty-six ethnic groups are represented in the group of 135 Fellows-elect to date. Oaxaca stands out as the state of origin of most Fellows (38 percent), followed by Chiapas (21 percent), Puebla, Veracruz, and Yucatán (9 percent, respectively). Regarding ethnicity, Zapotec (21 percent), Mixtecan (8.7 percent), Tsotsil (8.7 percent), and Nahua and Mayan (8 percent each) are the major groups represented. It should be noted that although geography and belonging to an indigenous group are relevant indicators, they do not, per se, constitute a sufficient criteria for selection but are assessed together with other factors (i.e., social commitment, leadership skills, and academic trajectory) when evaluating each candidate's profile and background.

Of the twenty-two countries where IFP is implemented, Mexico has one of the smallest percentages of female Fellows. The historically disadvantaged position of women within Mexico's indigenous communities has a negative and evident

	Applications			Fellowships Awarded		
	Total	**Women**	**Men**	**Total**	**Women**	**Men**
2001	76	15	61	20	7	13
2002	113	33	80	17	8	9
2003	118	30	88	25	9	16
2004	196	55	141	27	10	17
2005	146	47	99	26	10	16
2006	167	53	114	20	8	12
TOTAL	816	233	583	135	52	83

Note: No selection in 2007

Table 5.3 Applications and fellowships by gender, Mexico, 2001–2007 [Source: IFP Mexico Program]

impact on their access to basic education. Aware of this condition and of the importance of fostering the educational and professional development of indigenous women, CIESAS has orchestrated specific measures to increase their participation as Fellows.[18] Therefore, while women accounted for 29 percent of all applications received during 2001–2007, they represent 38.5 percent of the selected Fellows.

Increasing the absolute and relative participation of women is one of the challenges the program will face in the coming years. In addition, CIESAS plans to place greater emphasis on recruiting candidates from ethnic groups showing the lowest indexes of university enrollment, e.g., Mazatecans, Tojolabal, and Huastecans.

As in Guatemala, the implementation of IFP in Mexico faces the challenge of enhancing the skills and knowledge of Fellows before their enrollment in postgraduate programs. The academic experiences of IFP's pilot group (Chile, Peru, Vietnam, Russia, Senegal, Nigeria, and Ghana) and of the first cohort of Mexican Fellows at the very beginning of their classes in Mexican or overseas universities clarified the need to support subsequent cohorts in strategic areas: English reading comprehension, basic computer skills (word processing, databases, and Internet), drafting of academic projects and papers in Spanish, and research methodologies. Dealing with these needs implied a heavier workload for IFP staff and Fellows and also added pressure in terms of logistical and financial resources. The receptiveness of the IFP Secretariat and the provision of pre-academic training funds enabled the formulation and implementation of relevant programs. In Mexico, an idea originally aimed at implementing a centrally coordinated training course with a homogeneous curriculum gradually resulted in a flexible training program supervised by the IFP coordinating office based in CIESAS that, like its Guatemalan counterpart, caters to the specific needs of Fellows, taking into consideration their skills, knowledge of courses offered, work and family engagements, and location.

Conclusions

Despite important differences in size, demography, politics, economy, and society, in both Mexico and Guatemala, numerous groups lack easy access to formal education. Two reasons can be immediately identified and statistically proven: poverty and social exclusion. In Mexico, IFP's partner organization defined the target group as indigenous peoples; in Guatemala, the partner organization decided to extend

the target group to include other excluded individuals. Although the target groups were defined differently, in both countries, IFP's partners strongly believe that the long-term impact of the program will resound in wider social areas and well beyond the target groups that were selected.

Even though more similarities than differences can be found in the actual implementation of IFP in Mexico and Guatemala, the unique aspects of target group definition resulted in separate selection processes from the third year of the program. This division has had no negative effect on the spirit of mutual support or on regional cooperation efforts. In addition to the integration of Mexican members in the Guatemalan selection committee and vice versa, the two organizations have constantly exchanged information to better perform their tasks in both countries. CIESAS and CIRMA expect to carry out joint projects during the post-fellowship stage to further strengthen regional cooperation activities.

The difficulties faced by members of IFP target groups when pursuing postgraduate programs raised the doubts of some people in academia regarding the Fellows' potential in academically competitive programs. IFP's selection process and pre-academic training model, however, have proved that marginalization and social exclusion need not be determining factors for academic success or failure. After six years of IFP implementation in both countries, 200 Fellows are working towards completion or have already completed their postgraduate programs, and there has been only one dropout due to academic reasons.

IFP has created opportunities for academic and social leaders from traditionally marginalized groups to continue their education and prepare to make a greater contribution to the implementation of the structural changes so sorely needed in Mexico and Guatemala. Undoubtedly, the number of professionals benefiting from these fellowships is rather low compared to the needs of both countries. We believe, however, that a multiplier effect will help bridge the gap in social disparities. Likewise, the lessons learned from IFP have been crucial to a deeper analysis of concepts such as marginalization and social exclusion in countries with enormous identity paradoxes given the constant emergence of new social groups. As we observed above, even though the target group in Mexico was supposed to be homogenous, questions about "indigenous belonging" sparked reflections on the meaning of ascribed status. In Guatemala, the wider definition of the target group has contributed to new and unexpected nuances in the concept of marginalization.

The systematic creation of opportunities for the most disadvantaged individuals is not only necessary but quite productive for both the recipients of support measures and society as a whole. Going forward, it will be important to make sure that more women and men from traditionally excluded groups have access to training so that they may become active participants in current projects as well as pioneers in new development-oriented projects in their countries of origin.

Our six-year experience, as summarized in this study, provides fertile ground for analysis and careful consideration. An important product of the IFP experience in Mexico and Guatemala is the gathering of rich qualitative and quantitative information. Geographic origin of applicants and Fellows, university background, destination for postgraduate study, preferred fields of study, obstacles to higher education, and specifics of gender, age, and ethnic background are some of the data that, respecting the privacy of individuals, should feed serious and careful analysis to enhance our knowledge and understanding of the status of higher education in target populations both in Mexico and Guatemala. Such studies should, in turn, facilitate the formulation of action plans and programs consistent with the circumstances and education needs of these social sectors and the rethinking of public policies behind the awarding of postgraduate program fellowships and associated logistic and financial aid programs. On a wider scale, the lessons learned may have an unanticipated impact on the decision-making process around higher education public policies in Mexico and Guatemala.

Endeavors such as that of IFP contribute to strengthening the academic profile of Mexico and Guatemala and build critical thinking that reflects the diversity and multicultural character of both nations.

Notes

1 Unless otherwise indicated, all statistical data in this section were taken from the Human Development Reports 2002 and 2005 (*Programa nacional de desarollo humano* 2002, 2005).

2 The term *ladino* can be interpreted as non-indigenous. However, many *criollos*, i.e., direct descendants of Spanish or Guatemalan people of a different origin, do not necessarily identify with the term and prefer the use of words like *mestizo, guatemalteco, blanco,* etc. On the other hand, when talking about indigenous individuals, the term now includes *garífunas* and *xincas,* although many believe that the term only refers to ethnic groups of Mayan ancestry.

3 It should be noted that percentages differ in some sources. We used the data provided by the *Informe de Desarrollo Humano 2005* [Human Development Report 2005] (Programa nacional de desarollo humano 2005), based on the information from the most recent population census, carried out in 2002.

4 These groups are: Achi', Akateko, Awakagteco, Chórti´, Chuj, Itzá, Ixil, Jakalteco, Kaqchikel, K'iche´, Mam, Mopan, Poqomam, Poqomchi', Q'anjob'al, Q'eqchi', Sakapulteko, Sipakapense, Tekiteko, Tz'utujil, Chalchiteko, and Uspanteko.

5 Figures are percentages.

6 As of 1998, CIRMA had developed different research projects on ethnic relations and racism and had put forward the task of identifying nations and status in Central America, particularly Guatemala, where the multicultural character of society is taken into consideration. The first project was titled *¿Por qué estamos cómo estamos?* [Why are we in the situation we are in?] and was conducted by a multidisciplinary team of thirty researchers with different ethnic backgrounds and nationalities. The study analyzes how Guatemalans developed an unequal citizenship system and how inter-ethnic relations evolved in Guatemala between 1944 and 2000. Two of the books published in this collection are Arriola et al. (2002) and Adams and Bastos (2003).

7 Five of all eighty-four fellowships awarded were not fully used. In one case, the Fellow died, and personal reasons prevented the other four Fellows from using their grants.

8 It should be noted that Spanish is the second language of most Guatemalan Fellows.

9 Weekend programs require intensive, full-day classes on Friday and Saturday.

10 Unofficial estimates put the incidence of extreme poverty at over 25 percent. While differing significantly from country to country, poverty is a phenomenon that affects not only Mexico, but all Latin America. In the 1990s, called by some analysts Latin America's "lost

decade," unemployment doubled, GDP-per-person plummeted from 1.4 percent to .1 percent, and poverty rose from 34.7 percent to 41 percent (Banco Mundial 2005).

11 Mexico has the second-largest indigenous population in the Americas after Peru. Estimates for Mexico vary according to the criteria and methodology used to define the indigenous population. The figure cited above, one of the most widely accepted, is from the CDI (2006) and is based on the numbers of speakers of indigenous languages reported in the 2000 general population census added to the numbers of those living in households where at least one parent speaks an indigenous language. Also based on the 2000 census, the National Institute for Statistics, Geography and Informatics (INEGI) calculated the Mexican indigenous population to be slightly over 8 million (INEGI 2001a). Other experts put the figure as high as 12.7 million (Serrano et al. 2003).

12 These data are based on a CDI-UNDP report (2006), which gives the results of the adaptation and application of the United Nations Development Program's (UNDP) Human Development Index (HDI) in the Mexican indigenous context. This report resulted from collaboration among a team of experts from the National Commission for the Development of the Indigenous Peoples (CDI) and UNDP.

13 Recall that the difference is 13.1 percent for health and 14.6 percent for income.

14 The National Education Program 2001–2006 laid the foundation for Mexican government education policy during the previous administration. One of its strategic goals was to increase equity of coverage by designing policies and actions to benefit the indigenous population. The program proposed to substantially increase access to higher education among the indigenous population. In 2001 the Office of Bilingual Intercultural Education (CGEIB) was created to implement intercultural education policy. One of its programs was the creation of intercultural higher education institutions, also known as "indigenous universities." Among their objectives, they aimed to serve indigenous minority groups by incorporating culturally relevant content and using innovative educational methods.

15 Information provided by Enrique Serrano, CDI Subdirector of Research, based on CDI-UNDP (2000).

16 Mexico is divided into thirty states and one federal district, which is the capital of the country.

17 Applicants should provide letters of reference from credited people of their group of origin, such as local authorities (whether municipal or communal), members of the Indian self-governing body (when available), and local indigenous NGOs.

18 Besides the design and content of the promotional materials (posters, brochures, and radio spots) that emphasize the program's interest in recruiting women, during the selection process the evaluation of female candidates takes into consideration their particular difficulties in gaining access to higher education. Selection committees also grant an additional point to female finalists when evaluated against their male counterparts.

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CHAPTER 6

Brazil: Excluded Groups in Higher Education

Valter Silvério

Higher Education and the Reproduction of Inequalities

The International Fellowships Program (IFP) was implemented in Brazil at a time of lively national debate about the role of higher education in economic development and growth and about questions of equity.[1] Such discussions intensified in preparation for Brazil's participation in the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia, and Related Intolerance held in Durban, South Africa, in September 2001. Following the Durban conference, the Brazilian government embraced a new approach, acknowledging racism and establishing a program of affirmative action. To understand the impact of IFP, also launched in 2001, we examine the historical development of Brazil's educational system, especially at the postgraduate level, where IFP represents a pioneering effort to address access and equity.

Although debates about affirmative action are recent, the educational struggles of black organizations can be traced to the 1945 National Convention of Brazilian Blacks in São Paulo, one month after the fall of the Vargas dictatorship. The Convention's efforts centered on achieving two goals in the Constitutional Assembly that was to be established the following year: the first goal was to guarantee that racial bias and discrimination were declared criminal offenses, and the second was the creation of a special program of federal scholarships for black students in secondary education, universities, and technical schools (Andrews 1998, 247).

In fact, neither goal was incorporated into the Constitution, and investments in Brazilian education over the past fifty years have not reduced inequality. Instead, they have left the social distance between whites and non-whites unchanged, as the wealthiest social groups have continued to benefit from public higher education.

In the 1970s, postgraduate education expanded in conjunction with a political movement to universalize education. Primary education was universalized, but without regard to quality. In postgraduate education, on the other hand, Brazil achieved a prominent position in technological and scientific production in Latin America. The profound reform of higher education imposed by the military government in 1968 resulted in the adoption of a model in which knowledge serves development, with an emphasis on scientific production. Investments in science and technology originated from a tactical consensus between scientific leaders and the nationalist segment of the armed forces; they agreed to concentrate resources on a limited number of large projects capable of developing and sustaining a "critical mass" of researchers. To this end, the Brazilian government originally launched an ambitious program of training researchers abroad, offering fellowships for postgraduate school outside the country. This program greatly increased opportunities for study abroad that, until the middle of the 1970s, were almost entirely limited to scholarships offered by foreign governments and foundations such as the Ford Foundation and the Rockefeller Foundation, among others (Balbachevsky 2005, 289).

Postgraduate education grew rapidly, from thirty-eight programs in 1965 to more than 2,000 programs in 2002. In 2002, 32 percent of master's students and 41 percent of doctoral students were enrolled in programs in biological sciences, engineering, hard sciences, and environmental sciences. The humanities, literature, and applied social sciences enrolled 42 percent of master's students and 33 percent of doctoral students. Remaining enrollments were in health and agricultural science (Brock and Schwartzman 2005).

This impressive system, however, accomplished little in terms of balanced regional distribution, and it reproduced other hierarchies based on gender, race, and ethnicity. Middle-class and wealthy Brazilians occupy most of the openings in higher education; the best postgraduate programs are concentrated in southeastern and southern Brazil; white men predominate in careers with the highest salary levels; and the percentage of non-whites within the system is statistically insignificant. Blacks and indigenous people are now practically absent from the principal institutions of higher learning, and, although they are the "object" of countless studies, few are themselves researchers.

The system is funded by the entire society, but it benefits only a small segment of the population. While scientific development generates and reinforces resources

and riches in regions where the "centers of excellence" are located (south and southeast), it simultaneously contributes to distortion and stagnation in regions where the research and training agenda offers little attention to ethnic, racial, or economic diversity. Awareness of these issues is very recent, and criticism is rare. In southeastern Brazil, where the principal programs of postgraduate education are concentrated, there is little space for internal differentiation that would take into account regional necessities.

Stratification within the system is clear when one reviews the data. In 2000, 83.6 percent of students enrolled for the master's degree and 92.4 percent of students enrolled for the doctorate were concentrated in the southern and southeastern regions. The remaining 16.4 percent of master's students and 7.6 percent of doctoral students were in the northern, northeastern, and west-central regions combined. For every ten thousand inhabitants, there were 8.5 postgraduate students in the southeast, 5.6 in the south, 2.7 in the west-central region, .7 in the north, and .2 in the northeast (Balbachevsky 2005, 294–296).

Education Policy Since the Constitution of 1988

Understood as the principal public policy capable of expanding the economy at a more rapid pace, redistributing wealth, and redressing the negative effects of inequalities and discrimination, Brazil's Constitution of 1988 recognized both Afro-Brazilian and indigenous culture as intangible national resources.[2] In doing so, it provided a framework for these groups' struggles for recognition and for integration of their members in every sphere of social life through an educational system that reflects Brazil's cultural diversity.

Since 1995, two contrasting positions have contributed to the design of Brazilian public education policies. During the administration of President Fernando Henrique Cardoso (1995–2002), universalizing basic education was considered the priority. But the consequences for the overall system of education were quite negative. Higher education was scarce and elitist, in terms of the number and social composition of admitted students as well as format, based on a singular model of organization for universities. It did not endow youths, especially those from poor socio-economic backgrounds, with skills necessary to compete for access to higher education.

The Cardoso administration policies resulted in the abandonment of investment in public federal universities, while the number of private institutions of higher

education increased. Higher education, it appeared, was a commodity like any other that could be bought in the marketplace, and the crisis in the public university system could only be reduced at a high cost. Proposed solutions included the rationalization of expenses and strict observation of cost-benefit relations (and the diversification of higher education). This meant the coexistence of multifunctional institutions (those which combine basic research, teaching, and extension) and other institutions, for example, those exclusively dedicated to teaching.

In 2001, Brazil's participation in the World Conference against Racism in Durban, South Africa, crystallized many of these issues and may have contributed to the new policies of the Lula administration, described below. At the conference, Brazil, like other Latin American and Caribbean countries, insisted on the reparation of cultural and political losses resulting from slavery and other forms of servitude of which Africans and their descendants were victims. This position emerged from the political action of Brazilian social movements and from changes in the political culture that had begun with the process of re-democratization in the mid 1970s.

Before the conference began, one of the principal Brazilian newspapers, *Folha de São Paulo*, wrote, "Look carefully at proposals on racism that may not work" (da Escóssia 2001). Following the conference, the newspaper opined that the proposals presented by the official Brazilian committee could not be implemented.[3]

In this context, government authorities needed to recognize accumulated racial inequalities that had been discursively denied. The press, influenced by the myth of racial democracy, counted on the fact that it would be impossible for the government to implement a progressive agenda (or it would be unwilling to do so). The black movement, for the most part, was convinced that the Durban Conference offered a point of departure in the fight for economic integration and recognition of the cultural specificity of the Afro-Brazilian population.

This position represented, on the one hand, a continuation of the historic fight for social inclusion and mobility through education and, on the other hand, a new approach to social conflict that demanded public recognition of the paradox that persistent, everyday discrimination against blacks and indigenous peoples coexisted with the discursive construction of racial tolerance as a distinctive national characteristic. How could Brazil explain to the rest of the world that the ideology of racial democracy in fact coexisted with the practice of racial discrimination and racism?

This situation led to academic debate and divided public opinion about the need for policies to promote racial equality based on race, about whether persistent and profound inequality among Brazilians could be attributed to race or class, and about the impact of being black (or non-white) and/or poor on occupation, education, and housing.

During President Lula's first administration (2003–2006), a comprehensive, systematic vision of education that focused on communication between different levels of schooling was put forward. Higher education and, therefore, public universities came to occupy a central place in strategies to guarantee interdependence and harmony between the different levels/grades of instruction. These strategies focused less on expenditures and more on the need to recover the functions of a university in times of change and in the progressive process of democratization. The university was seen as a place to articulate the distinct and varied demands of diverse social classes with regard to the production of different types of socially relevant knowledge instead of simply following an agenda to keep up-to-date in science and technology.

The principal change was inclusion of guidelines from important social movements such as the landless movement, the black movement, the indigenous movement, and the women's movement. Demands from social groups became an area for attention from governmental authorities in terms of expanding access to education and, in some instances, providing financing for new lines of research oriented toward these groups.

Policies of affirmative action highlighted the disparities in access to quality higher education among whites and non-whites. While setting off a national debate about the right of access to higher education, these policies drew new attention to the persistence of racist doctrines in contemporary Brazil. Why, for example, is there a remarkable similarity between the profile of students in private high schools and in public higher education? One study reveals a transfer rate of approximately 90 percent from private high school to college; in private higher education, 70 percent of students belong to the richest 20 percent of society (IPEA 2006, 153). By the beginning of the twenty-first century, though, education debates were infused with demands from organized groups for inclusion with fairness and social justice.

In the eyes of the government, the simple recognition of the socially disadvantageous conditions to which blacks and Indians are subjected demonstrated that the process of democratization had begun to change the nation. There was, however,

a difference between recognizing inequalities and the effective implementation of public policies to correct them. Difficulties in implementing policies emerged in the play of social forces in disputes over resources, as different discourses confronted one another, fighting over the terms that would express most precisely the anxieties of the population.

Such struggles brought together various black entities from around the country. After the Durban conference, commitments to "social inclusion policies" were adopted by the Brazilian government to combat racism and create conditions whereby blacks and native peoples could receive special attention. The acknowledgement by national authorities of discriminatory and racist practices was followed by a series of corrective measures to provide Afro-Brazilians and native peoples special access to education, health, and employment. It was argued that corrective policies should take into consideration the negative effects of discriminatory practices, particularly in relation to education.

The twenty-first century has given new life to expectations for significant changes in higher education for Afro-Brazilians and, more recently, for indigenous peoples. A new civil law code became applicable in January 2003, reflecting the extensive mobilization undertaken by native peoples during the last two decades of the twentieth century. Historically associated with significant areas of research in postgraduate-level programs, especially in areas of human sciences, as informants or as research subjects, indigenous people are currently seeking access to undergraduate and postgraduate programs as students.

Since 2003, the Higher Education Department within the Ministry of Education has been responsible for defining and overseeing government policies for university education for indigenous students. The principal innovation has been abandonment of an acculturation paradigm and newfound respect for the native population's diversity. According to the Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística, there were 4,197 indigenous students in postgraduate-level higher education in the year 2000, representing less than .6 percent of the country's entire native population, in contrast to white students, who exceeded 10 percent.

Affirmative Action in Brazil

In Brazil, the implementation of affirmative action is marked by profound pessimism among some academic elites who still cling to the myth of racial democracy.

Others fear that race-based affirmative action programs will cause Brazil's uniquely fluid racial categories to harden into U.S.-style divisions between black and white, exacerbating rather than remedying racial inequalities. Yet despite all the alarmist predictions, well-planned positive discrimination may bring more social benefits than costs. In the past few years, Brazil has had a growing number of affirmative action programs. These programs have enlivened the debate about how to combat racial discrimination and institutional racism.

Sectors of the administration headed by Brazil's current president, Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva (Lula) are favorable to affirmative action that establishes quotas for blacks, natives, and the poor in public universities, along with certain state governments that, since 2002, have promoted social inclusion programs based on socioeconomic origin and racial-ethnic affiliations. Organized action by entities that uphold the interests of particular groups has been fundamental as a form of social pressure and also as a way of monitoring the implementation of programs. By defining a relationship with social movements and by opening institutional space for listening to their demands, Lula's government has introduced a new moment for the Brazilian government, when demands from historically excluded groups can at least be expressed in a legitimate form.

The impact on the educational system has included quotas for blacks in public universities, often the point where disagreements occur over who should obtain access, what the mode of entry should be, and what constitutes the proper relationship between higher education and development. Although the government has not yet managed to launch its university reform project, which incorporates quotas for blacks and indigenous students, one consequence of the activities of the black social movement and of black and white intellectuals who support quotas has been an increase in the number of public universities (these numbered fifty-one in 2008).

Brazilian institutions of higher education have developed a variety of forms of affirmative action. The State University of Bahia, for example, established a quota of 40 percent for admitting black students; the University of Brasília set up a 20 percent quota for blacks. The State University of Rio de Janeiro and the State University of North Fluminense established quotas of 20 percent for students from public schools, 20 percent for blacks, and 5 percent for students with handicaps and members of ethnic minorities. A different approach was adopted by the State University of Campinas, which adds thirty points for all candidates who complete public high

school, with an additional ten points for students who are black, mulatto, or indigenous. A hybrid form of reserved spaces has been adopted by the Federal University of Bahia: 45 percent of openings in the university entrance exam are for students from public secondary schools; of these, 85 percent are designated for mulattos and blacks and 2 percent for descendants of Indians living in settlements (Silvério 2006).

These experiments forced the Brazilian state to turn its attention to racial inclusion in higher education. Two initiatives were developed: the project of university reform, Proposed Law 3627/2004, currently in the National Congress awaiting a vote, and the University for All Program (ProUni). In the former, the principal proposed reform is the reservation of at least 50 percent of openings in federal institutions of higher education for students who have completed their entire high school education in public schools. The openings must be filled by a minimum percentage of self-declared blacks and indigenous students, equal to the percentage of blacks, mulattos, and indigenous persons in the population of the area of the Brazilian Federation where the institution is located, according to the most recent census of the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics.

Thus, for a federal university located in a state where 60 percent of the population is classified as black (black and mulatto) and 1000 openings are available, 500 must be reserved for students from public high schools, and of these, 300 should be filled by blacks.

The University for All Program, institutionalized by law in January 2005, assists private higher education students through scholarships from the federal government and takes into consideration the socio-economic situation of candidates as well as their ethnic/racial identity.

These experiments at the undergraduate level have prompted researchers to turn their attention to the postgraduate school system, which is considered to be much more elitist and restricted. Carvalho (2005), for example, argues for an expansion of a proposed Statute for Racial Equality along with other proposals for a preferential system of postgraduate school openings for black students.

IFP in Brazil

The International Fellowships Program was inaugurated in Brazil in 2001, the year of the Durban conference. An exemplary experiment in the inclusion of excluded groups in the highest levels of education, IFP has opened up real possibilities of

access for these groups. It has also opened up opportunities for reflection on the role of postgraduate education in the construction of knowledge that is responsive to the needs of the nation's impoverished and marginalized classes.

The program provides opportunities for postgraduate study to groups with limited access to higher education. In Brazil, the target groups have included blacks and indigenous persons and others who were born in the less socially and economically developed regions of the north, northeast, or central-west. Many in these groups have parents with low levels of education and originate from the society's lowest income strata. In 2002, for example, we know that 10 to 12 percent of young whites, 2 percent of blacks, and only .6 percent of indigenous youth were pursuing higher education. IFP Fellows from target groups are chosen on the basis of leadership potential in their fields, academic potential, and commitment to work for development and social justice within their communities.

The selection process is the responsibility of one of Brazil's most renowned institutions in this field, the Fundação Carlos Chagas (FCC), and of independent selection panels that include professors representing different regions and institutions within the country, according to criteria of race, ethnicity, gender, academic qualifications, and social commitment.

The Fundação Carlos Chagas is a private, nonprofit institution that is recognized as representing public interests in relation to selection processes and educational research. Established in 1964 to conduct selection processes within the biomedical area, the organization began after 1968 to provide specialized technical services to public institutions and private companies. With more than 33 million applicants throughout the nation, the FCC has developed extensive expertise in a range of selection processes as well as educational evaluation projects. The foundation relies upon a team of experienced and highly qualified professionals within the field of planning and execution, on behalf of public or private institutions, at a national, regional, or local level, and it operates within the most diverse sectors of activity.

One of the important contributions of IFP was the introduction of affirmative action into postgraduate education at a time when undergraduate programs aimed at students with a similar profile began to be implemented in an increasing number of universities. Affirmative action is one of the most visibly debated topics in the current agenda of Brazilian educational policy. This context has influenced IFP, just as the existence of the program has influenced the Brazilian debate over affirmative action.

IFP has also influenced the Brazilian educational context by motivating individuals from excluded groups, who are for the first time able to envision the possibility of completing highly selective postgraduate-level programs through a competitive process. (On average, there are thirty to forty applicants per award.) The program offers a pre-academic period of preparation for entry into the country's best programs as well as economic support, without adverse effects upon the full-time dedication that postgraduate education requires.[4] For black and indigenous undergraduates now in affirmative action programs, the existence of a program such as IFP is an additional stimulus for entering postgraduate education.

Exemplifying this new reality is the first indigenous Brazilian with a doctoral degree, who earned her degree at the age of forty-two with the support of a fellowship from IFP. Maria das Dores Pankararu defended her thesis on April 19, 2006, the date the Day of the Indian is commemorated. The topic was Ofayé, a language that is threatened with extinction and is presently spoken by only eleven persons who live in the Mato Grosso do Sul. Maria das Dores' own people, the Pankararu, who live in the inland region of Pernambuco, had already lost their original language, which caused her to be particularly sensitive to this issue.

Like all affirmative action programs, recruitment of applicants is proactive, "aimed at reaching target groups through different strategies: visual resources, decentralized initiatives, reports in the specialized media, [and] partnerships with social and academic institutions" (Rosemberg 2008). In establishing the criteria for selecting candidates from underrepresented socio-economic, regional, ethnic, and racial groups, IFP developed exemplary practices with regard to the intersection of the three principal elements of Brazilian social inequality: ethnicity/race, class, and region.

The first phase of selection relies on a form of regression analysis, known as the "probit," through which the selection committee determines the relative weight of each variable taken into consideration (ethnicity/race, gender, social origins, and geographic region of origin), in order to identity applicants with "the lowest likelihood of completing higher education" (Rosemberg 2008). The presumption is that no one has more of a natural gift for education than any other person and that differences in educational achievement should be attributed to the more or less hostile environments in which individuals develop. In spite of originating from poor families with low levels of educational attainment, the candidates have

nonetheless managed to complete higher education while participating actively in some type of social movement.

Once a pool of approximately 200 candidates has been selected, the second phase, or selection by "merit," begins. From this pool, about forty individuals are selected according to IFP's three core criteria: academic potential/talent, leadership, and social commitment. The selection is carried out with the support of ad hoc evaluators who evaluate the applicant's pre-project (an initial version of the research plan that the applicant may subsequently redesign) and a selection committee of researchers who review the documentation and conduct interviews of each candidate. The success of this type of process has been tested not only by the candidates themselves, but also by entities representative of civil society and the social movements that support the program. Nearly all the applicants originate from entities within social movements or NGOs (non-governmental organizations), from groups and organizations within the black movement, and from the leadership of the indigenous movement. They have placed their trust in the reliability of the process and have given it enormous credibility.

Since 2002, IFP in Brazil has completed five selection processes, with nearly 6,772 applicants (see Table 6.1). Of 250 Fellows, eighty-seven have completed their fellowships to date. After nine months of pre-academic preparation, which may include acquisition of another language or adaptation of a research plan as well as computer courses and pre-academic orientation, Fellows enter their academic programs, often in the country's best universities. A small number of Fellows also study in Portugal or in other international destinations. These students' academic performance has been equal to that of other good "traditional" (white, middle-class) students. It is striking that the average time taken by IFP recipients to complete a master's degree (approximately twenty-four months) is actually less than that of other students in Brazil. As these realities become known, the program will also contribute to countering deep-seated misconceptions in Brazilian educational culture about the capacity of Indians and blacks, or students who have grown up in impoverished conditions, to succeed and excel in postgraduate school.

One might argue that IFP also represents a needed intervention in fields of study, especially in areas where the research agenda of universities may be incompatible with the needs of local communities. This is a problem particularly in the northern, northeastern, and central-western regions. Accordingly, the areas of knowledge

Selection Total	2002 n = 42 %	2003 n = 42 %	2004–5 n = 46 %	2005–6 n = 40 %	2006 n = 40 %	2007 n = 40 %
Gender						
Female	54.7	52.4	50	47.5	52.5	47.5
Male	45.3	47.6	50	52.5	47.5	52.5
Level						
Doctoral	26.2	23.8	26.1	25	25	25
Master's	73.8	76.2	73.1	75	75	75
Color/race						
White	9.5	7.1	0	0	0	7.5
Black/indigenous	90.5	92.9	100	100	100	92.5
Area of residence						
N / NE / CW	57.2	61.9	69.5	60	55	60
S / SE	42.8	38.1	30.5	40	45	40

Table 6.1 Profile of Fellows, Brazil, 2002–2007 [Source: IFP Brazil Program]

privileged by IFP resonate with the interests of candidates who have been involved in social questions that are relevant to their communities and who seek professional development for skilled action in their fields. New issues or, at least, new ways of approaching old issues are being introduced in postgraduate level programs, and, at the same time, these are themes of considerable social interest, associated with concrete needs of communities.

Research projects related to sustainable development include a new concern about the quality of life and the maintenance of traditional communities. In studies about education for blacks and indigenous people, their respective cultural traditions are especially relevant to understand the problems caused by Brazil's Eurocentric educational policies. There are also various research projects in the human rights field in which the concerns extend from core conflicts to the struggle for the promotion of ethno-racial equality. In this way, IFP works to broaden the nation's research agenda to include such underrecognized areas as personal and community development, peace, and social justice, knowledge, creativity, and freedom.

The success and the credibility of IFP in Brazil have been enhanced through its partnership with the Carlos Chagas Foundation, which has made the best of its staff

available in the formation of the team to attend the program in Brazil. And a new student profile is being introduced in postgraduate programs, challenging countless prejudices and forms of discrimination and acknowledging the importance of leadership potential and social commitment as well as academic standing. These criteria presuppose returns in terms of knowledge and development for applicants' communities of origin. Lastly, the issues and problems that are being considered are innovative, and, in many instances, they are far removed from programs' traditional research orientations (or have led to new approaches in research).

Since its inception, IFP has motivated thousands of individuals from social groups that suffer the negative consequences of Brazilian development to seek tertiary education. Individuals who are black or indigenous and who, for the most part, live in the poorer and educationally neglected north, northeast, and central-west regions have found a path to the realization of these hopes. IFP will have met its objectives when it provides opportunities for professional development to persons who would not otherwise have access to postgraduate school programs, and when the IFP's demonstrated success in placing selected candidates in the best universities in the nation opens new possibilities for the adoption of such criteria into the regular selection process of Brazilian higher education.

Representing a unique opportunity within the country, IFP has nurtured new hopes of continuing postgraduate studies among students from underrepresented groups who are now entering universities through affirmative action programs. This is an aspect of IFP's presence in Brazil that cannot be measured.

Notes

1 Parts of this chapter appeared originally in "O IFP E A Ação Afirmativa Na Pós-Graduação Brasileira," in Feres Júnior, João and Jonas Zoninsein, orgs., *Ação Afrimativa No Ensino Superior Brasileiro* (Rio de Janeiro: IUPERJ and Belo Horizonte: Editora UFMG, 2008), pp. 215-241.

2 Until the end of the 1980s, the 1916 civil law code regarded native identity as transitory, a phase prior to becoming civilized and fully exercising civil rights.

3 In relation to blacks, the following measures were proposed: (a) quotas in public universities; (b) implementation of measures for elimination of racial discrimination in employment and education; (c) creation of a social compensation fund; and (d) deciding competitive bidding proceedings in favor of companies which provide services for the government according to numbers of black employees, homosexuals, and women included among these companies' operating personnel. In relation to difficulties in implementing proposals, the *Jornal* reported the following: (a) quotas did not receive support from the Ministry of Education; (b) international treaties pertaining to forms of discrimination were adopted more than thirty years ago in our country; (c) with respect to funding, the federal budget was affected by reductions for social areas; and (d) competitive bidding rarely involves stalemates, and companies may not possess data concerning employees' race or sexual orientation.In relation to the indigenous population, the following proposals emerged: (a) approving the new statute concerning Indians; and (b) educational policies for ensuring that Indians remain in universities. The following difficulties were cited: (a) the statute has been under consideration by the nation's Congress since 1991; and (b) there were no proposals concerning Indians' access to universities.

4 In contrast to other IFP countries, almost all Brazilian Fellows study in-country for reasons including the attractiveness of many strong graduate programs in Brazil and limited overseas options for Portuguese speakers.

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CHAPTER 7

Vietnam: Creating Favorable Conditions

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As one of IFP's "pilot" sites, Vietnam was among the first places to test the program's assumptions and operational model.[1, 2] Experiences there provided valuable learning as IFP added countries in subsequent years. The case of Vietnam also provides a vantage point on critical broader issues. The experience of launching the program in the context of strong state control illuminates the critical impact of strategic relationships among a range of actors and stakeholders. For actors in the international development arena, even those with deep roots and demonstrated effectiveness, reaching and working with disadvantaged populations entails refining organizational approaches and increased understanding of sensitive issues. The story of establishing IFP in Vietnam also suggests that organizations working globally may benefit from a decentralized structure, where intermediaries on the ground have flexibility in using outcomes and evaluative perspectives to strengthen program planning and operations.

IFP began to recruit and select Fellows in Vietnam in 2001, working with the Center for Educational Exchange with Vietnam (CEEVN)[3] as its International Partner organization. CEEVN was selected on the basis of its role as one of the first international organizations to work in Vietnam as the country began normalization of international relations under the reform policies applied from the late 1980s. Since national reunification in 1975, very few international NGO/PVO (non-governmental organization/private voluntary organization) groups had been permitted to operate directly in Vietnam. CEEVN was invited to begin independent exchange activities in 1989, and it began to cooperate with the Ford Foundation in 1993. By 2005, some 650 Vietnamese had taken part in study programs and study missions abroad under

CEEVN auspices, using Foundation funds. CEEVN played a key role in advancing the normalization of the Vietnam-U.S. relationship, among other channels, through managing the recruitment and selections of the first 224 Fulbright Scholars from Vietnam between 1992 and 2000.

Once the decision had been made to partner with CEEVN, the organization's staff began to seek official acknowledgment. Only after IFP had been recognized by Vietnam's Ministry of Education and Training (MOET), which holds responsibility for all foreign support for Vietnamese scholarships, could the program be launched. In order to communicate program goals effectively, CEEVN needed to seek agreement from MOET on the IFP target groups. Once underway, IFP proved to be on a rapid learning curve, as results from early recruitment and selection rounds were evaluated and adjusted. Each of these stages—establishing program legitimacy, creating a selection system, defining the target group, and the ongoing integration of program learning—forms an integral part of the frame around the picture of IFP in Vietnam.

Country Context

In understanding how IFP took shape in Vietnam, it is important to recognize the profound changes launched under the legal, economic, and foreign relations reform movement of 1989 known as *đổi mới*, or "renovation." These policies marked a decisive turn away from programs of the post-American War period, during which Vietnam had experienced growing international isolation, collapse of forced collectivization, deepening rural poverty, dominance of an entrenched and unrepresentative Party elite, two devastating wars (with Cambodia and China), and the loss of its ideological and economic patron, the former Soviet Union.

Over the twelve years of renovation before IFP began, Vietnam achieved normalized relations with the United States and China and reached out to the international economy as a source of trade and investment. The nation began to position itself as part of the Southeast Asian cultural world and developed diplomatic ties as well as important market links with Southeast Asian countries, eventually joining the regional association ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations). One of the important legacies of the period of close Soviet ties was in the realm of higher education: over half of the cadres of the Vietnamese Communist Party had received tertiary degrees in the Soviet bloc countries before 1989.[4] The national leadership

realized that many more Vietnamese would need to study in colleges and universities both abroad and in Vietnam to create the managers, policy specialists, and technical experts needed in the competitive global economy. Yet the higher education sector in Vietnam is notably weak, with limited government investment and the heavy hand of state control slowing meaningful change.[5]

Thirst for educational opportunity in Vietnam is palpable, especially for study abroad.[6] With few resources for improving education at home and an overall literacy rate of 94 percent, Vietnamese have become impatient with schools that emphasize rote learning and passing state exams. The state welcomes foreign assistance for international scholarships, but information about scholarships is difficult to obtain, and competition for them is frequently less than transparent, as powerful elites tend to hoard these opportunities. It is an open secret that education may be corrupt, as parents try to please teachers in order to "improve" children's grades in elementary classrooms or lobby officials for seats in elite high schools. Those who can afford to do so send their children to study in Singapore and Australia, and desperate parents have sold their houses and become indebted to gain study abroad opportunities for their sons and daughters.

At the turn of the twenty-first century, Vietnam was on an upward trajectory in terms of its economy and foreign investment, but the distribution of resources and influence looked increasingly out of balance to citizens whose nationalism was shaped by socialist ideals. Privatization of government services made it harder for people to gain access to education and health care, persistent poverty characterized the uplands regions as well as pockets of the Mekong Delta, and the lands and livelihoods of ethnic minorities were eroding under government policies encouraging majority (Kinh) migration into minority areas. Education lagged in minority regions,[7] and 70 percent of school dropouts at all levels were female. Vietnam's women, who had been strongly represented in People's Committees and other roles during wartime, found that, following reunification, professional opportunities and official posts were increasingly dominated by men.

In this context, then, CEEVN sought to implement the IFP vision. From the start, CEEVN recognized two huge challenges: (1) clearly and uncompromisingly identifying the target groups for IFP and (2) applying a consistent set of principles and guidelines to ensure the participation of members of the targeted population. Without a clear national consensus on what would count as "disadvantaged," the

program might not be perceived as transparent and balanced; without operations focused directly on barriers faced by disadvantaged groups, even the generous fellowship offer represented by IFP might not benefit members of the target population. CEEVN realized that its success in implementing IFP would be anchored in how well it managed to create the favorable conditions under which target group members could emerge through the outreach and selection processes and use the fellowship opportunity to build on their demonstrated talents. In the following sections of this chapter, we examine how CEEVN imagined and strategized its concepts of favorable conditions and how these were negotiated, operationalized, and modified through each of four important stages of program evolution.

Phase One: Legitimation and Program Start-up

Vietnamese children and adults alike are often instructed to think of their socialist democracy in the following terms: "The Vietnamese Communist Party is the leader of the country; the Vietnamese government is the manager of the country; the Vietnamese people are the owners of the country." The spirit of this formulation is a reminder to both the Party and officialdom that rules and policies should be shaped for the benefit of the "owners" of Vietnam. Under the kind of "democratic centralism" currently practiced, diverse and dissenting views should be freely expressed at all levels of the Party hierarchy. The Party should take various opinions into account in making decisions, and in turn, all members are to unquestioningly follow Party decisions.

In laying the groundwork for IFP in Vietnam, CEEVN decided to begin by approaching Party figures influential in the realm of ideology. The Party had long proclaimed its goal to reach all citizens through education.[8] From an official point of view, an outside group (especially one from America) taking upon itself the task of providing access for "less privileged" Vietnamese might look condescending or arrogant. Thus, CEEVN quietly began conversations to explain that IFP's principles should be viewed as in line with the Party's own goals.[9]

Next, in late 2000 CEEVN and Ford Foundation's field office staff began to approach key individuals with an invitation to serve on a "roundtable" on access to fellowships in higher education, to be convened in partnership with the director of the Vietnamese Museum of Ethnology. Through individual briefings of figures from different regional and professional backgrounds, the roundtable participants began

to build a "national consensus" on parameters defining the population that lacks access to higher education opportunities.[10] CEEVN had already been implementing a Ford Foundation training program, the Diversity Enhancement Fund (DEF), which aimed to provide opportunities for women and minorities, among others. Through this experience, the organization had garnered official and local support for employing target group criteria deemed sensitive by the government. Such sensitive categories included "people who would face obstacles when competing in formal scholarship programs"; "potential future leaders"; and "historically underrepresented groups." In the Vietnamese language, each of these designations could be problematic for official eyes.

CEEVN had thus already accumulated invaluable experience defining criteria of exclusion as IFP was poised to begin, through conscious expansion of the circles of Vietnamese who shared the goals of the DEF. By the time the roundtable discussions took place in January 2001,[11] CEEVN was confident that it had lined up considerable support from the important people invited to participate. The consensus on IFP's target group that emerged from those discussions focused on criteria of geography, ethnicity, and gender. The experts at the roundtable felt that many Vietnamese are marginalized by virtue of their geographic isolation, which means that they have less access to quality education and fewer sources of information. Minority ethnic groups, as a rule, are excluded from many of the networks leading to opportunity. And gender plays a role in limiting access to higher education, particularly for women from remote regions and minority communities. (Figures 7.1, 7.2, and 7.3 illustrate the outcomes of IFP Vietnam selections in terms of these key indicators.)

The roundtable consensus was extremely important in designing a road map for the selection process, but the journey toward program launch was not entirely smooth. CEEVN showed a draft of its planned announcement to the Ministry of Education and Training in February 2001, just as a major uprising of ethnic minority communities in the central highlands region was occurring. In that sensitive domestic political environment, MOET requested that the Vietnamese term for the target group used in the competition announcement be "people in difficult areas" (often used in government terminology) rather than "ethnic minorities."[12] CEEVN faced a dilemma, recognizing that unless IFP had approval from MOET, people in the target group would hesitate to come forward to apply. If only "official" terms were used, however, minorities would implicitly understand that candidates from the majority

Kinh population would be preferred. CEEVN politely refused the MOET request and asked that MOET put in writing that it did not wish the term "ethnic minorities" to be used in the IFP brochure and announcement.[13] CEEVN's anxiety grew, and for some time it was doubtful that IFP could announce its first round of applications.[14]

When MOET delivered its formal letter outlining the government's conditions on April 13, CEEVN replied that it would not be able to implement IFP in Vietnam under those conditions. IFP, CEEVN explained in its letter of April 14, is a global program with policies and announcements that are determined according to global principles. Vietnam had been chosen as one of four pilot countries in which to launch the first selections; perhaps the government felt that Vietnam did not want the program or was "not ready" for IFP.

When Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA) staff learned that IFP approval had been held up, they also became concerned. MoFA was an early supporter of the project: a Vietnamese embassy representative had attended the launch of IFP with Ford Foundation President Susan Berresford and United States Senator Richard Lugar in Washington, DC, in November 2000, and MoFA had already listed IFP as one of its "completed tasks" in its ministerial report to the government. MoFA decided to apply internal pressure to change MOET's position. Shortly thereafter, MOET contacted CEEVN with final negotiations over the selection process and agreed to issue a letter approving IFP's operations. The program was launched without major concessions on the key principles as defined by CEEVN and IFP. The wording of the introductory IFP brochure, translated from Vietnamese, reads as follows:

> IFP aims to support individuals from disadvantaged groups or communities that lack access to higher education. Examples of disadvantaged groups include people of all ethnic groups residing and working in difficult areas, [people in] rural areas, and women. Both state officials and people outside the state sector are welcome to apply.[15]

In working through the protracted and complex process of seeking approval for IFP, CEEVN realized that whereas MOET at one point had seemed to be an obstacle, its eventual backing and official letter transformed the ministry into a facilitator of IFP's opening and access to the populations it aimed to reach. Even while seeking the government's imprimatur, however, CEEVN insisted that appropriate terminology, especially the term "ethnic groups," was essential in reaching the target

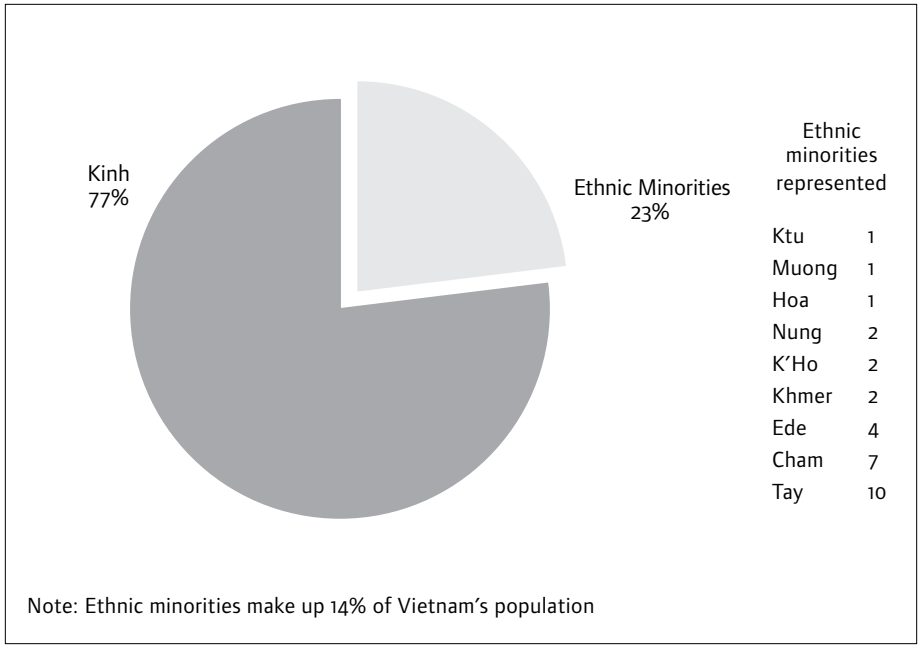

Figure 7.1 Ethnicity of Vietnam Fellows, 2001–2006 [Source: IFP Vietnam Program]

communities and signaling the inclusive goals of IFP. The first lessons in creating favorable conditions for launching the program had been learned.

Phase Two: Recruitment and Selection

In contemporary Vietnam, people who lack information, who have not had access to quality education and foreign language learning centers, or who work in environments less conducive to academic excellence are often excluded from "merit-based" competitive programs. CEEVN therefore determined that IFP's recruitment strategy would be driven by the absolute commitment to seek and encourage candidates from disadvantaged groups to take part in the IFP competition. Building on lessons from the approval process, CEEVN made sure that local authorities were engaged as IFP hit the ground. This meant that before setting up recruitment visits to target regions, CEEVN staff contacted provincial officials using the endorsement letter from MOET.[16] To address the challenge of target group definition, an advisory committee for IFP Vietnam was established with people who could provide insight into "disadvantage" from the Vietnamese point of view. The committee included some

who represented national views on education and others who could represent government perspectives and serve as "protectors" for the program.[17] Vietnamese with broad experience in international education, community service, and civil society were also invited onto the committee.

In disseminating information on the program in 2000–2001, CEEVN applied its database of more than 300 regional and local institutions and universities throughout Vietnam. In addition, a team of ten "nominators" living in different parts of the country was extensively briefed on IFP, and each nominator was asked to identify ten individuals from disadvantaged groups in his or her area for the competition. CEEVN made extraordinary efforts to work with People's Committees in each province and locality as the Committees could provide venues to bring officials from all government sectors to IFP's informational meetings. CEEVN outreach teams were shaped with diversity criteria in mind: in minority areas, there was a minority team member, while in visits to the South, CEEVN staff always traveled with someone from a southern province. CEEVN decided to be proactive in ensuring that target communities would obtain information about the new fellowships and feel comfortable and confident to have community members become IFP applicants or Fellows.

In implementing the first IFP selections, CEEVN was mindful that the government's endorsement would send a message to applicants that it was "safe" to apply to a private program funded by a foreign donor. In addition, minority applicants working in the state sector, who often must work harder than others to secure their jobs, would need support from local supervisors to take leave from their positions, to obtain passports and exit permits, and to regain their jobs upon return. For their part, public sector supervisors would be reassured in allowing their employees to apply to IFP, knowing that the program had been endorsed by the government.

The first two rounds of selection, both held in 2001, produced nearly 2000 inquiries, 600 applications, seventy-eight short-listed and interviewed candidates, and thirty-six selected Fellows (eighteen in each cohort). During these opening rounds, it became apparent that both psychological and procedural barriers existed among the target population. Some potential applicants were hesitant to apply to an American organization because of concern about possible local backlash. Candidates worried about having to resign their posts in order to take up postgraduate study. CEEVN learned that people from disadvantaged backgrounds are keenly aware of

the risk that one's hard-won position could be given to another, and he or she would have to start all over again on return from overseas study.

In the initial rounds, it proved challenging to find persons in the target groups with the academic qualifications to apply to IFP. Qualified applicants might play key roles in their institutions, and their supervisors, even in international NGOs, might be reluctant to let them leave for two or three years. Expressing the desire to apply to IFP might expose candidates to missing promotions if their supervisors suspected they might request extended leave or resign from their positions. An IFP Fellow in 2001, from the Ede ethnic group in Dac Lac province, was a leading lecturer in agricultural economics at her university and a role model for minority students in her region. She faced the risk of not being able to return to her original position if she requested leave in order to pursue her PhD abroad and chose to study in Vietnam. She returned to her faculty, was promoted, and now occupies a key instructional planning position.

CEEVN initially encountered reluctance among officials in some remote areas to communicate information about the program or to encourage people from their region to apply. This issue became less important in later years as IFP became recognized and CEEVN demonstrated that alumni were returning to their home communities. The application process itself turned out to involve a high degree of individual counseling of applicants. The application looked daunting to people who had never handled such a form before, and individuals required lengthy explanations and encouragement to "bring out the best in themselves," CEEVN found. An applicant from Ho Chi Minh City, for example, working in a shelter for sexually abused women and children, doubted that she would be eligible for an IFP fellowship as she did not have formal counseling credentials. She learned from CEEVN staff that her "self-made" skills and undergraduate Women's Studies degree were considered strong qualifications, and she was in fact awarded a fellowship.

During the opening rounds of competition, applicant screening was handled by CEEVN,[18] and the selection process was carried out by a five-person selection panel with three Vietnamese and two international members. The latter were included, in part, to forestall any moves by the government to control selection. The presence of international members reflected the global nature of IFP and would also help block any lobbying pressures from being applied to the Vietnamese members by well-connected persons.

The cumulative early experiences establishing the IFP outreach, recruitment, and selection procedures resulted in a much deeper awareness among program stakeholders of what it would take to achieve program success in Vietnam. When successful IFP Fellows-elect from remote provinces encountered difficulties in obtaining required permission to take leave and obtain travel authorization, CEEVN realized that local authorities were important not only for recruitment visits in the provinces, but also for ensuring that selected Fellows would be able to actually use the fellowship offer. "Doing things in an official way creates the favorable conditions for our Fellows to get permission," one CEEVN staff member observed.

In response to hesitancy among disadvantaged groups, CEEVN began to use photographs and written profiles of successful candidates in informational meetings to convince potential applicants that the program was indeed targeted toward people like themselves.[19] CEEVN refined the application form, used electronic communications to answer questions, and found ways to make it easier for people in remote areas to assemble required documents. Creating favorable conditions involved adaptation in many dimensions, both before and after Fellows had been selected. If the selection process generated the "right people," staff realized, CEEVN would need to work even harder to provide the advice, support, and training needed to help newly selected Fellows become successful postgraduate students.

Phase Three: (Re)defining the Target Group

IFP's initial target group definitions in Vietnam had grown out of the Ford Foundation-sponsored roundtable consultations, advisory committee recommendations, and lengthy negotiations with the government over the wording of the program's launch brochure. Before IFP started, CEEVN had already been implementing the Ford Foundation's DEF program to expand access for ethnic minorities, women, and "people who are marginalized." DEF and IFP were both based on the recognition of the huge income gap between urban and rural dwellers in Vietnam,[20] and the fact that 14 percent of the national population belongs to some fifty-three minority ethnic groups living in remote, inaccessible, and poorly served regions. And among people in remote and rural areas as well as within ethnic minority communities, women tend to be more disadvantaged than men.[21]

As a result of its uncompromising stance on target group definition, CEEVN was pleased that among the initial eighteen Fellows selected in the first selection round,

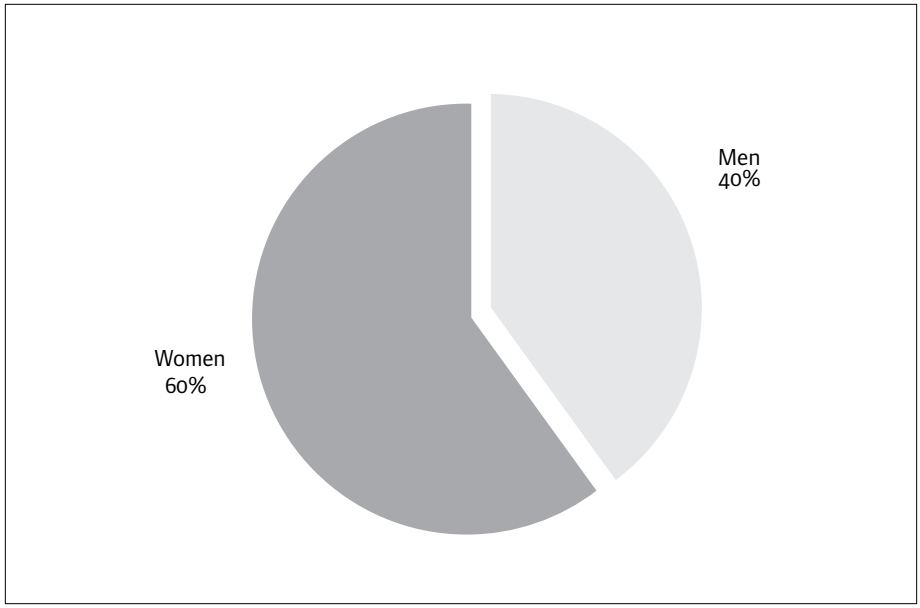

Figure 7.2 Gender distribution of 129 Vietnam Fellows, 2001–2006 [Source: IFP Vietnam Program]

three belonged to all three target categories (ethnic minority, female, rural), eight belonged to two of the target categories, and seven came from one target category. An example of the second group was a doctor in Lam Dong province who worked in family planning. As an ethnic K'ho, he had worked in farming to support his studies, and his family had sold their buffalo to help buy his medical textbooks. He wanted to expand his expertise in sexuality and reproductive health and to dedicate himself to the social aspects of health.

A fallacy in the program's initial formulation of "disadvantage," however, soon appeared. CEEVN and the selection panel had assumed that the ultimate goal of IFP was to find the "most disadvantaged" individuals, which could best be accomplished by selecting people who fit into at least one of the target group categories, with people who fit all three categories defined as the "most disadvantaged." Yet after two selection rounds, it became clear that choosing the "most disadvantaged" individuals was resulting in selection of people who would be very unlikely to gain admission to universities abroad. Even allowing for IFP's generous policy providing for up to one year of pre-academic training, many potential Fellows (unlike

the doctor from Lam Dong) did not have sufficient English language capacity and academic readiness to clear the international admissions hurdle.

In some IFP countries (such as Brazil or Russia), in-country study options in relevant disciplines in high-quality universities are plentiful. This is not the case for Vietnam, where postgraduate social science subjects and interdisciplinary approaches are virtually absent from advanced degree programs.[22] In order to achieve the kind of transformative higher education experience that would truly benefit talented Vietnamese, IFP Fellows would need to be able to study overseas and in English. The IFP global program, meanwhile, affirmed that academic viability is a fundamental criterion for selection. CEEVN found it was necessary to reformulate the operational framework for "defining disadvantage" in order to accommodate this basic reality.

There were other factors that appeared to further complicate the initial target group framework adopted for the first selection rounds. Committee members noted that not all applicants from the "target groups" had lacked access to higher education. Among ethnic minorities, not all groups were equally disadvantaged in terms of access to information and opportunity. CEEVN was concerned that many deserving candidates from urban areas, especially women, might not be eligible because they do not live in remote regions; in addition, there were ethnic minority women who were deemed "less disadvantaged" than some non-minority applicants. Finally, CEEVN learned that the interview process was absolutely essential in assessing whether candidates truly represented the IFP profile because application forms might fail to provide a realistic portrait or to capture an individual's most outstanding characteristics.

Accordingly, a more nuanced process was designed involving revised screening and interview methods that aimed to identify candidates who (1) possessed leadership potential, (2) had selected careers to be of service to society, and (3) had a plan for using the knowledge gained from overseas study to better their communities. The formulation adopted by CEEVN and the international selection panel involved assessing each interviewed semifinalist for evidence of the "three Cs:" overcoming Challenges in life to pursue higher education; demonstrating social Commitment; and being able to connect one's studies with the Community to which the fellow will return. The "three Cs" approach drew the selectors into discussion of a candidate's qualities, strengths, and vision; the focus shifted to encompass an individual's assets, in other words, instead of stressing only disadvantages or deficiencies.

The revised selection process was based on the conviction that no simple index of disadvantage, such as "the more rural, the better," would suffice in evaluating IFP applicants. CEEVN and selection panel members needed to debate whether "disadvantage" is best applied to groups or to individuals, each of whom has a unique life story. Selectors needed to think not only about backgrounds and identities, but also about how to judge the capacity of an individual to make a future contribution to society. Under this formulation, a candidate such as an agro-forestry specialist working in a Western Highlands area among poor minority groups, who is not himself from an ethnic minority, could still emerge as a successful candidate on the basis of his sustained commitment and future potential. "In the beginning we looked for target categories, but now we also search for the people who will have great impact," commented one Vietnamese member of the panel.

Over successive selection rounds, additional dimensions of the "target group" became apparent. Candidates from the urban sector or government administrators could be good choices: "At the beginning, we wanted to provide opportunity only at the grass-roots level," one Panel member said, "but that is not enough. IFP wants to produce a new generation of people with long-term commitment at various levels of society." Although IFP made it a priority to recruit from the non-state sector, CEEVN learned that staff of international NGOs, for example, are not necessarily more socially committed than teachers or government health workers in remote regions. People working for NGOs tend to focus on their projects, observed one selection panelist; when the project is finished, they may leave the community and look for another opportunity. By contrast, some 80–90 percent of local officials and government teachers who get training opportunities have returned to their communities. In addition, government workers must gain permission from their supervisors and provincial leaders and have much more to lose if they do not come back.

As the third selection round took place in 2002, the interview panel decided to question finalists more closely to determine whether a candidate had already "done something to address the issues he/she cares about." This principle became important in the interview process, along with questions aiming to assess the potential impact a candidate might be able to have upon his/her return. Crafting questions more directly focused on impact helped the committee make decisions about which finalists could best serve the larger community once their fellowship was over.

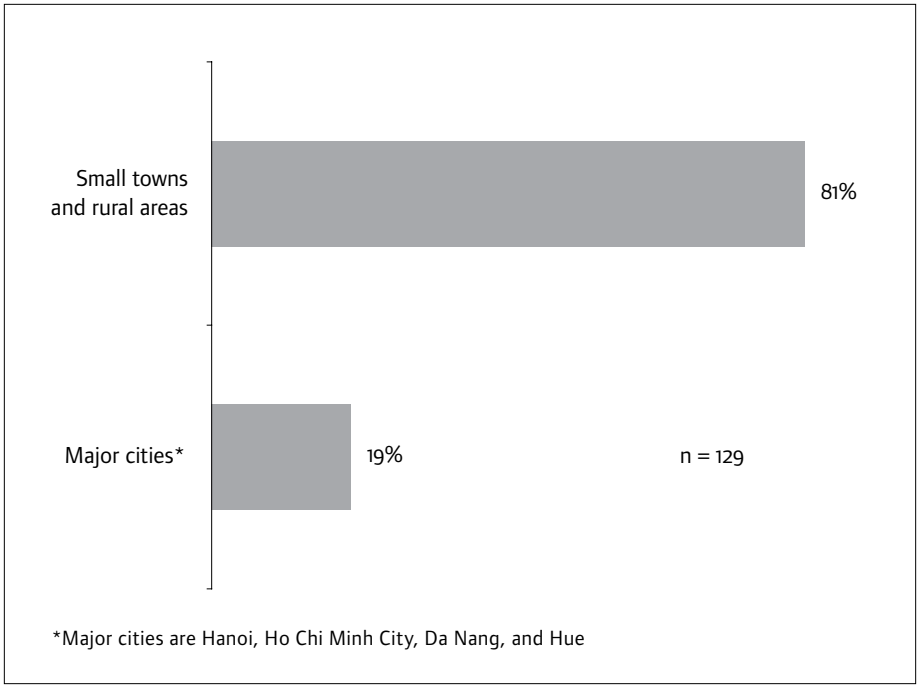

Figure 7.3 Place of residence of Vietnam Fellows, 2001–2006 [Source: IFP Vietnam Program]

With its rich stock of experience managing international exchange, CEEVN has been able to feed knowledge about the academic placement process back into the selection methodology and to expand dialogue with the selection panel regarding factors that determine academic readiness. For example, admission to postgraduate programs requires that Fellows have basic knowledge of the field in which they want to study, and thus interviewers would be encouraged to devise questions to probe knowledge of a discipline. Initial assessment of English language capacity now takes place alongside the interview process; in the final selection debate, the panel may look at language scores as a measure of academic viability in order to choose among candidates who have equal strengths in terms of social commitment, leadership, and disadvantage.

In its focus on exploring and refining initial definitions of disadvantage, IFP has convinced an expanding circle of people that it is making a powerful and unique contribution to human capital development in Vietnam. With disparities growing across the country, social justice is a paramount issue. "What IFP does is to find

people who care about social justice and assist them to reach farther and become helpful people," said one committee member emphatically. For many, the goals of IFP converge with their own aspirations for society as a whole. As one selection panel member wrote:

> The highest goal that the Vietnamese government has set for the whole nation is to build a strong Vietnam with rich people and an equitable, democratic, and advanced society. Put in this context, the IFP objectives are not different from the common goals, because IFP also positively contributes to Vietnam's sustainable development, especially when it directly helps to reduce the social inequality between and among communities and groups within Vietnam, thus contributing to harmony and stability in Vietnam.

Phase Four: The Learning Process

Through all the stages described above, the IFP program in Vietnam conducted systematic reflections and evaluations. CEEVN typically asks itself the following questions in reviewing its own work:

- What bridges are we building to help Vietnamese expand their knowledge and worldviews and in turn to understand and look at themselves critically?
- How can we enable people who want to be agents of social change to pursue their dreams and become national assets?
- Are we practicing a code of conduct in our work that demonstrates the respect every person deserves?

With this institutional self-awareness and employing a multi-stakeholder process of review and assessment, IFP Vietnam has continually made adjustments in order to be consistent with the program's global mandate and to realize CEEVN's own mission in Vietnam. In order to promote IFP's innovations as a fellowship program, CEEVN tried to reinforce its own culture to be flexible, reflective, and open to discovery. In one example of absorbing organizational learning, by the time of the 2004 selection round, it was clear that IFP had established its credibility and that foreign selection panel members were no longer needed to "buffer" the program; in addition, the translation of application materials and interviews required by foreign participants was taking a great deal of staff time and effort. Starting in 2004, therefore,

the selection panel has been composed only of Vietnamese members, as CEEVN has realized that bringing together a group of talented Vietnamese from various fields who all share the IFP vision would in and of itself, through selection of the best applicants, reinforce "favorable conditions" for program success.

Other kinds of adaptive learning have also affected the way the program seeks and identifies ideal candidates. Maintaining clear roles and boundaries for different stakeholders means that the program can recognize and draw upon the different perspectives and knowledge bases of each stakeholder group. CEEVN tries to ensure that regional resource persons, CEEVN staff, IFP alumni assistants, the advisory network, and the selection panel all have clearly delineated responsibilities for action. In order to maintain consistency and quality as members circulate on and off, selection panels need clear terms of reference and sufficient time to discuss program parameters and build consensus. CEEVN employs individual briefings, memos, group orientations, and in-depth dialogue around initially unfamiliar themes (e.g., "community development") to build a productive environment for the panel.

One of the most fundamental factors shaping IFP's efforts to create "favorable conditions" was the realization that candidates from ethnic minority groups "often take a big risk" when they decide to apply to IFP. In acknowledging the personal and professional costs that may accompany the fellowship opportunity, the program was prompted to design support mechanisms and interventions to ensure that the target group members could in fact be successful. Reaching target groups often entails helping talented candidates with critical gaps in academic readiness. To address this issue, IFP Vietnam designed a six- to nine-month intensive residential English language training program involving native speaker instructors, multi-media resources, and cross-cultural preparation. This Pre-Academic Training (PAT) has been essential in supporting Vietnam's Fellows in their transition to postgraduate study abroad and involves the program in a high degree of analysis, problem solving, and support during these individual transitions. (See Figure 7.4 for a distribution of host country areas for Vietnamese Fellows.)

Early in program implementation, CEEVN realized that IFP needed to create the right environment for successful candidates to emerge; unlike other fellowship programs where interviews can be organized in upscale hotel rooms in major cities, there needed to be careful preparation of the physical setting to enable IFP candidates to have the confidence to appear at their best. At the same time, IFP learned

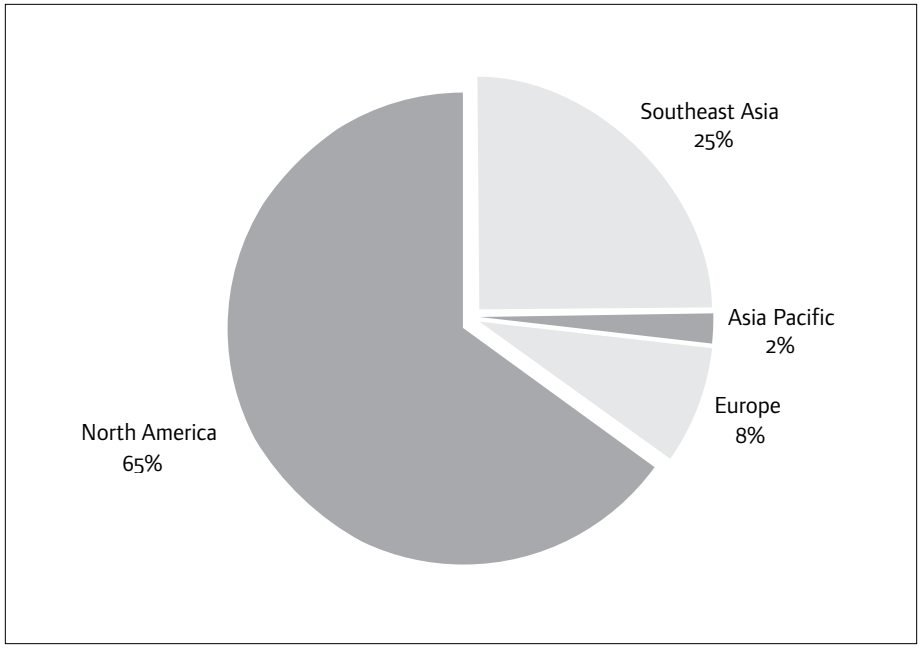

Figure 7.4 Study destinations for Vietnam Fellows, 2001–2006 [Source: IFP Vietnam Program]

that not all persons in target groups have lacked access and opportunity. The selection panel was compelled to seek a nuanced formulation of IFP criteria balancing social commitment, leadership, future goals, and personal background.

One of the most difficult areas to evaluate, panel members often reported, is "leadership," which in Vietnam can be a sensitive term referring to political power and the national liberation struggle. The panel struggled over what criteria they should examine in determining a candidate's "leadership skills and potential." A breakthrough came when IFP stakeholders decided that assessing leadership involves not just listening to what people say, but also observing how they interact in groups. CEEVN began developing an interactive exercise that, beginning in 2005, has become a regular part of the finalist evaluation. In this model, finalists participate in group exercises designed to examine their capacities to reflect, persuade, adapt, and present their own as well as group ideas. With assistance from IFP alumni facilitators, the candidates begin by listing their own and others' base of skills, knowledge, passions, and future vision, thus clarifying their strengths and assets. Exercises are conducted that highlight finalists' outlook, communication and

listening skills, strategic thinking, and team-building potential, among other qualities. Two members of the selection panel observe the group exercises and score each finalist, and outcomes are combined with scores from individual interviews to help determine final selection choices.

Each of the lessons described above has shaped the way in which IFP operates in Vietnam, and together they have given the program its distinctive profile. While the people who have been involved with IFP have different backgrounds and come from different regions of Vietnam, they have found common ground in the IFP mandate. One key early advisor and selection panel member, herself a pioneer in developing Vietnam's urban social work profession, sees IFP as part of the creation of new space for civil society action. She recalled arguing with other panel members that academic marks should not be the most important criterion for selecting IFP Fellows: "I usually favor[ed] applicants whose work deals directly with disadvantaged people," she recalled. Another panelist, a party member and senior official in MOET, sees IFP as complementing the government's work and compared IFP favorably to other scholarship offerings: "IFP is the only program to create favorable conditions for the people who lack access." Another panel member, a rural development specialist, noted, "I have been working in human resources development for forty years, but never has there been a program like IFP."

CEEVN staff often comment that the selection panel seeks those who are self-confident in their vision but not self-promoting. According to a panel member, "[IFP] provides [Fellows] a chance to pursue higher education when they have demonstrated that they are outstanding in their service to their communities and are willing to use the knowledge they will have learnt for the promotion of socio-economic development in their communities." The establishment of a clear target group definition in Vietnam, with an emphasis on the "three Cs" of overcoming challenge, demonstrating commitment, and dedication to community, means that selections are a search for the individuals who see their future in terms of service in Vietnam. "Return" means not just coming back to Vietnam but also giving back, said one panelist; it's not just a physical, but a moral issue, said another.

Conclusion

The Vietnam in which IFP now operates is in many ways different from the divided, war-torn, isolated, and impoverished country many westerners associate with

the end of the American War period. The country is in a state of flux, with rapid change and growing competition among different actors and elements of society, and there is a burgeoning awareness of new opportunities. The reforms of *đổi mới* have meant that the government has stepped back from economic control, with "Market-Leninism" and opening to global currents increasingly the norm. Vietnam is engaged with the world through trade, tourism, and consumer culture. As centralized government control lessens, private citizens seek to negotiate new arenas of association and social action, and a younger generation is producing new expressions of Vietnamese identity through its lifestyles, engagement with new media, and patterns of consumption.

Yet in many ways, Vietnam is just beginning to address deeply rooted issues that were masked by the habits of socialist uniformity and central control. Growing economic gaps, social problems such as HIV/AIDS, inequality between urban and rural sectors, poverty, corruption, and dramatic changes in both cultural and environmental realms have led to questions about the country's vision and concepts of social justice. To analyze and address its significant problems, Vietnam will need voices of knowledge and insight whose social leadership is rooted in appreciation of inequality and lack of access to opportunity. The IFP program has located itself precisely in the space where this critical need for social capital can be addressed through advanced learning. Through its key partnership with CEEVN, the program is building a community of social actors whose individual visions have been deeply transformed through the fellowship experience. In its own way, then, the IFP network of stakeholders, Fellows, and alumni is helping to shape the favorable conditions for a new Vietnam to emerge.

Notes

1 This case study was written by Mary Zurbuchen with major contributions from Minh Kauffman. Materials for the case study comprised a range of available records of five selection rounds in Vietnam between 2001 and 2005. These included recruitment announcements, application materials, selection score sheets, notes on selection committee briefings, and minutes of selection meetings. CEEVN's responses to the August 2001 IFP survey on target group definition, the Lack of Systematic Access to Higher Education Questionnaire, provided a starting point, along with presentation materials from IFP's annual Asia/Russia regional meetings. Interviews were conducted with Ford Foundation officers, CEEVN staff, and selection panel members in Hanoi beginning in 2004. 2005 and 2006 interviews included several newly returned IFP alumni.

2 The program began with four pilot sites in 2001: Russia, Vietnam, West Africa (including Ghana, Nigeria, Senegal), and Chile/Peru.

3 CEEVN was established in Bangkok in 1990 under the auspices of the Mennonite Central Committee for the purpose of facilitating contacts between Vietnam and countries in the region and beyond the socialist bloc. As the scope of its activities broadened, CEEVN sought to become a legal subsidiary of the American Council of Learned Societies (ACLS), with operations in Hanoi and Philadelphia. In 1994, the ACLS Board of Trustees approved the incorporation of CEEVN into ACLS and thereby assumed full administrative, legal, and fiscal responsibility for its programs. In Vietnam, CEEVN is registered as an ACLS Project Office with the Committee for International NGO Affairs, with CEEVN's official counterpart being the Vietnam Academy of Social Sciences (VASS).

4 Between 1951 and 1989, tens of thousands of Vietnamese studied in the former socialist countries, and Vietnam's tertiary education system closely emulated the Soviet pattern of "a multiplicity of small mono-disciplinary institutions with limited linkage between teaching and research" (Institute of International Education 2004a, 5).

5 Recent years have brought both institutional reform, with designation of fourteen "key universities" intended to lead the sector and a steep rise in tertiary enrollments from 162,000 in 1992 to 1,045,382 in 2003 (Hayden and Thiep 2006). With 65 percent of its population of 83 million under age thirty, the need for younger ranks entering the aging professoriate is acute (see Wasley 2007).

6 One source shows 2722 Vietnamese students studying in the United States in 2002–2003, up from only about 500 ten years earlier. About 68 percent were studying at the undergraduate level, and 67 percent were self-funded (Institute of International Education 2004b).

7 In some minority regions, literacy has been reported as low as 49 percent, and while ethnic minorities constitute around 13–14 percent of the overall population, they account for only 4 percent of the student population (Kelly 2000).

8 The Constitution of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam repeatedly states the importance of actively including minorities in the state's programs of social betterment.

9 CEEVN's social capital in Vietnam—more than 800 participants in the various international exchange programs it had managed since the early 1990s—is found throughout the country in a wide range of professional and official roles. This network of "CEEVN alumni" has been important in generating the political support and substantive inputs for IFP at every stage.

10 At the start of the vetting process in October 2000, CEEVN felt that "there were two pieces missing" for the successful start-up of the program, namely, "We needed a widely acceptable Vietnamese definition of 'disadvantage,' as well as official sanction if IFP were to become a reality in Vietnam."

11 The roundtable called "Parameters for Diversity in Scholarship Programs" was convened during the visit of Foundation Vice President Melvin Oliver to Vietnam and included twenty Vietnamese specialists.

12 *"vùng khó khăn"*

13 MOET also asked to put representatives on the selection panel, to receive copies of IFP applications, and to exclude "peace studies" and "political science" as IFP fields of study. CEEVN declined these conditions.

14 Through careful exploration of the stalemate through its own channels, CEEVN learned that when the Prime Minister's office had asked MOET, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA), and the Party Commission on Ideology and Education to present views on IFP, the Party Commission had indeed raised objections.

15 "All ethnic groups" includes Kinh as well as the fifty-three ethnic minorities; "difficult areas" denotes uplands and mountain areas in government documents; and without the final sentence, only persons already holding a government job would be able to apply.

16 CEEVN's initial grant proposal for program implementation stated, "IFP will need the local authorit[ies'] support to reach the underrepresented population and for applicants from this group to feel confident applying to a U.S.-based program."

17 Examples include a senior officer from the Post-Graduate Department at MOET and a Vice Chairman of the Party External Relations Commission who had spent five years in New York with Vietnam's first Mission to the United Nations.

18 CEEVN subsequently reduced its role to checking applicant eligibility, and screening and short-listing of applicants were taken over by an enlarged selection panel.

19 As soon as the first IFP alumni returned to Vietnam in 2003, they were invited onto outreach teams, telling their stories to the public and becoming effective communicators and "role models" for potential applicants.

20 Per capita income in Ho Chi Minh City was around $1400/year in 2001, while in the Mekong Delta region as a whole it was $300/year.

21 The original consultations also emphasized "poverty" as a target group criterion. As a relative concept and hard to document, this became a generalized factor in helping assess comparative degrees of disadvantage at different stages of the selection process.

22 State funding for higher education amounts to $300–600 per student per annum, according to specialist Thomas J. Vallely (Vallely and Wilkinson 2005). It is often noted that Vietnam is an exception among its neighbors in East and Southeast Asia in lacking universities of internationally recognized quality, and Vietnam does not appear on such lists as *Asia Week*'s 2000 survey of "Asia's Best Universities" or the "Top 100 Asia Pacific Universities" study by Shanghai Jiao Tong University.

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CHAPTER 8

India: Layered Inequalities

Ganesh Devy

> Master of Arts and Doctorate in Economics, Columbia University; Master of Science and Doctor of Science in Economics, London School of Economics and Political Science; Barrister-at-law, Grey's Inn, London. For anyone to attain so many degrees is impressive, but for an untouchable, born in a small rural town in a colonial country at the end of the nineteenth century, it is even more so. This superior education helped propel Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar to the leadership of a growing movement of India's downtrodden . . .

This is how a recent biography of B. R. Ambedkar opens (Omvedt 2005). Ambedkar, popularly known as the "maker of India's Constitution," was a passionate advocate of education for the marginalized; and the story of his own life has been a phenomenal case of struggle for getting higher education and putting it to use for a radical social transformation. Had he been alive to read the 2001 announcement for the Ford Foundation International Fellowships Program (IFP), promising support to "candidates from social groups that have been marginalized and lack systematic access to higher education," B. R. Ambedkar would have entirely approved of the initiative. Despite achievements of half a century of affirmative action in higher education that Ambedkar had enshrined in the Indian Constitution—a considerable length of time and, one would have imagined, enough to bring the policy of reconciliation to its fruition—legacies of discrimination, marginalization, and denial are so enmeshed in Indian social history that no simple policy formulation has addressed them adequately. It is not surprising then, that IFP had to pass through the process of discovering for itself the challenges in defining denial and capturing nuances of

marginalization. These nuances often go unnoticed when a simple matrix of class and caste is employed to describe Indian society fragmented in over two thousand castes, six hundred tribes, and more than a thousand mother tongues.

Equality as a fundamental right is guaranteed in India's Constitution. Accordingly, successive governments have tried to cope with educational and social inequalities. All of the approximately 400 state-funded universities and 16,000 colleges have been trying to provide higher education at a relatively low cost not entirely unaffordable to students from the poorer classes. In several states, education for all female students is made almost cost-free. Yet, it cannot be said that the state has as yet succeeded in providing wider access in higher education to the marginalized in India. The scale of the problem is huge, and the states' resources inadequate. The reasons for the denial of access to quality education, however, cannot be ascribed merely to the enormous size of India's population or lack of adequate resources. The deprivation caused by these factors is compounded by the long history of caste hatred and the socially divisive legacy of colonialism.

In any discussion of affirmative action or social equality, two important factors distinguish India from most other countries. The first of these is the caste system, which has a radically different dynamic from agents of marginalization and inequality in other societies. The second is the enormous backlog resulting from at least 2,000 years of social discrimination. For twenty centuries women in India were not allowed to cast their eyes on sacred books or manuscripts, and nearly 60 percent of India's population—men as well as women—were not allowed to go in the proximity of Brahmins, or those engaged in generation of knowledge.

The marginalized, by the very logic of the term, are presumably smaller in number than the more dominant social groups. In India, however, the marginalized far outnumber the dominant sectors of the society. The "mainstream" in Indian society is an aggregate of its margins rather than being a well-defined "other" and adversary of those margins. Typically, among every 100 Indians, six belong to "denotified" or criminalized communities, eight are tribals, twenty-one can be classified as religious minority, twenty-two form the *dalit* oppressed groups, and thirty-eight persons represent the aggregate of linguistic minorities. A simple addition of these figures, however, leads to the absurd conclusion that only 5 percent of Indians constitute the dominant "mainstream." The intertwining of the patterns of domination and victimization of various marginal groups by other marginal groups is typical

of Indian society. Layering, not segmentation, is the principle that explains these complexities more adequately. Age-old tensions between one caste and another, between castes and tribes, between one tribe and other tribes, as well as frequent migrations of linguistic, racial, and religious groups, create social sedimentations of these "marginal layers." Thus, a dominant social group in one part of India can easily count for marginal in another part, or a group empowered at one time can easily slide back to the status of marginality soon afterwards.

During the early 1970s, an exodus of "refugees" from the erstwhile East Pakistan, which had at that juncture formed the new Bangladesh, started moving into the eastern Indian states of Assam and Bengal. As their numbers grew, they were increasingly subject to violent attacks by local working class communities, leading to a further destabilization. In Punjab, a separatist Sikh movement developed in the early 1980s, inviting unprecedented police repression. As a reaction to Prime Minister Indira Gandhi's assassination in 1984, several thousand Sikhs were massacred, and Sikhs living in Delhi and Uttar Pradesh had to flee to safer places. In Kashmir, throughout the last two decades several hundred thousand Hindus have been destabilized due to the cross-border violence. Other massive displacements have been caused by development projects, such as construction of dams and creation of mining and industrial units. Several million persons have been displaced or internally exiled during the last fifty years.

India's varied geography and natural disasters such as cyclones, earthquakes, tsunami, floods, droughts, and landslides have also affected the population differentially, resulting in some areas of loss of livelihood and a sudden snapping of access to education. Given the federal structure of the Indian state, the state response to natural disasters has been haphazard. Of these calamities, recurrent droughts and floods have most adversely affected people's access to public goods.

Approximately 40 percent of the population is directly dependent on agriculture as the main source of livelihood. Of the land under cultivation, a substantial proportion is not protected by controlled irrigation; agricultural production on such land is entirely rain-fed. Young persons whose families depend on agriculture often are deprived of opportunities and access due to these uncertainties. Thus, internal displacement due to man-made disasters, displacement caused by economic changes, habitat uprooting caused by natural disasters, and inconsistencies in patterns of livelihood and food security all render the map of disadvantage in India infinitely

complex. Feudal attitudes and repressive moral codes that result in gender discrimination cut across urban and rural areas, as well as across linguistic, religious, caste, and tribal boundaries. Organizing a clearly defined hierarchy of disadvantage, or creating a code for measuring lack of access, is thus a daunting task in a country saddled with legacies of fractured histories, a divided society, incomparable linguistic, religious, ethnic and regional diversity, and an ever-bursting population that has crossed the mark of a billion.

Layered Inequalities

In its essential form, caste is less a system, with written laws or precise codes, than a set of social practices. Visitors to India often are perplexed at the continuation of caste discrimination since caste prejudice has been a punishable offence under the law. The practice of caste-based discrimination in access to education originates in ancient India. Despite attempts by social reformers in different epochs to minimize caste-based social discrimination, caste continued to be the paradigm for all diversification of labor, capital, or skill. During the twentieth century, a major social reform movement was launched for the empowerment of communities branded as lower or "untouchable" castes, variously described as "outcaste," *dalits*, or *harijans*. It was a widespread movement, but more articulate in the southern parts of India. In the early days of the freedom struggle, the Congress party, driven by idealism, made abolition of caste discrimination one of its articles of faith. Not satisfied with the results of the Congress politics, Dr. Ambedkar organized the *dalits* as a powerful social force. He exhorted them "to destroy the sacredness and divinity with which caste has become invested" (Ambedkar 1936, 291). As a result of various movements towards removing caste-based discrimination, a special list of discriminated communities was included in the Constitution, as the Schedule of Castes, for providing protective and affirmative action.

The generic term used by common consensus for those not belonging to castes is "tribe," or *adivasi*. Approximately 87 million Indians have come to be lumped together under this label, despite an amazing diversity in their community histories, languages, production practices, and relationships with the non-tribal world. The *adivasis* repeatedly rebelled against the British in the Northeast, Bengal, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Gujarat, and Andhra Pradesh. While they continued to fight in hills and forests, the rest of India was being educated and "civilized."

When Independence came, the caste communities, the urban classes, and the governing elite started thinking of the *adivasis* as "primitives" as if they had forever been out of step with history. Since then the *adivasis* have remained trapped in the debris of colonial history, first marked as the most rebellious and then as the most primitive communities.

The current trends in rural migration and development-induced migration show that when the lower castes are economically empowered, *adivasis* are expected to fill the gap and take the lowest position in the caste hierarchy. The process of economic osmosis has been attracting the *adivasi* workforce, educationally ill-equipped as it is, to the industrial areas. Those *adivasis* who have accepted facelessness as the only option for survival and have migrated to cities have yet to find a place even in the city slums. The slums too have their caste structure, into which *adivasis* do not easily fit. Their children remain without any education and add to the already swollen ranks of child laborers.

Another 60 million Indians fall into a different social category, generally known as the Denotified and Nomadic tribes. Some of these groups are included in the list of Scheduled Castes (SC), some in the Schedule of Tribes (ST), and a few in the list of Other Backward Classes (OBC).[1] But many of these communities find place in none of the above. What is common to all the Denotified and Nomadic Tribes (DNTs) is the fate of being branded as criminals. The British rulers had difficulty in understanding the communities that were non-sedentary, and all nomadic peoples became suspect. Many of the wandering minstrels, fakirs, petty traders, rustic transporters, and disbanded soldiers were included by the British in their list of "criminal groups." In 1871, the Criminal Tribes Act made provisions for establishing settlements for nearly 200 nomadic communities, where they were confined and required to perform low-paid work. Although the notification identifying these communities as "criminal" was annulled soon after Independence, following which they came to be known as the "denotified communities," their stereotyping, and therefore the stigma attached to them, persisted. Their literacy rate is lower than among the scheduled castes or scheduled tribes, malnutrition is more frequent, and provisions for education and health care are negligible since most of the DNTs continue to be nomadic. Mob-lynched, hounded from village to village, starved of all civic amenities, deprived of the means of livelihood, and gripped by the fear of police persecution, the DNTs of India are on the run. Access is a term they have still not known.

In purely numerical terms, Christians, Sikhs, Jains, Buddhists, Lingayats, and several other traditions of church and faith should fall within the category of "religious minority," but this term has come to be applied in India more specifically, and euphemistically, to Muslim communities. The social status of Muslims in India prior to Independence was markedly different. Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, and Christians had all participated in the freedom struggle as equals. But, when the British left India in 1947, the country was split into India and Pakistan. Muslims who opted for staying in India on the eve of the Partition have struggled to define their identity as secular Muslims and nationalist Indians. Whenever they felt threatened and approached the Indian judiciary or state administration for protection, their legitimate demands came to be seen as seeking political favors. This provided the context for the emergence of a Hindu fundamentalist political party during the last two decades. The spread of Hindu fundamentalism directed against Muslims has resulted in driving the Muslims into ghettoes and placing them in frequent situations of human rights violations. According to the 2001 census, Muslims constitute 16.4 percent of the population, or a total of 174 million, but their representation in various professions is dismal. In 2001, in public sector industries and public institutions there were only 4.9 percent Muslims; in Central Administrative Services, 3.2 percent; and in the teaching profession, only 6.5 percent. These statistics belie the claim of a democratic state that provides equal access to social goods and services.

Yet another area of inequality is a result of what we might call "the language divide," which has resulted in large groups that are denied access and opportunity. On the eve of Independence, a serious debate arose regarding the place of the English language in Indian administration. It was decided to continue to use English for a period of ten years until, it was hoped, it would be replaced by Hindi. An official "Schedule of Languages" was included in the Constitution, listing fourteen languages (in descending order of the number of speakers): Hindi, Telugu, Bengali, Marathi, Tamil, Urdu, Gujarati, Kannada, Malayalam, Oriya, Punjabi, Kashmiri, Assamese, and Sanskrit. There have been three amendments to this schedule during the last fifty-five years, resulting in the addition of Sindhi, Konkani, Manipuri, Nepali/Gorkhali, Maithili, Santali, Bodo, and Dogri.

English, nonetheless, continued to be not just the language of the judiciary and administration but also the main medium of higher education. At present, it is moving into secondary and primary education, replacing Indian languages. Beyond

this, English has also been a passport to lucrative careers. Students whose mother tongues are marginalized must battle with the language disadvantage while competing with "linguistically affluent" students.

The issue of inequality arising out of location of a person within a regional or national language in the Indian context is not quite analogous to the language tension in bilingual or multilingual countries such as Canada or Spain. The remoteness from formal higher education, and therefore from economic opportunities, is acute in the innumerable linguistic hinterlands in India. To convey the magnitude of this issue, consider the fact that apart from the main languages included in the schedule, there are nearly eighty languages with more than 10,000 speakers and nearly 360 other languages with fewer than 10,000 speakers. Whatever the precise number of major and minor languages that have not been included in the Constitution, it is beyond doubt that the speakers of these languages have first to learn another dominant language, as well as Hindi and English, if they desire to pursue a college-level course.

Cutting across lines of caste, tribe, religion, or gender, a person born in an Indian village is likely to be deprived of any reasonably decent education. This includes nearly 60 percent of India's population living in 650,000 villages. The modern Indian education system has its roots in colonial history and in colonial production systems in which Indian villages were low-priority economic entities. Leaving aside some agricultural universities, fewer than ten of India's approximately 300 universities are in rural locations. Even the seat of the largest distance education university in the country is in New Delhi and operates mainly through the medium of English. The dramatically adverse ratio between India's rural population and the institutions of higher education relegates the entire rural population to the category of educationally disadvantaged.

India gained independence in August 1947. The Constitution for the new nation was composed by November 1949, and the Republic was declared in January 1950. The Constitution placed upon the state the responsibility of bringing social justice to the disadvantaged and creating appropriate structural mechanisms for ensuring that all forms of discrimination would be brought to an end. The Schedule of Castes, perceived as being the most deprived and vulnerable, and a Schedule of Tribes, including some communities that were marked as "primitive," were created as legal instruments of the Constitution. One more schedule was created in order to vest special powers and authority in the office of state governors to ensure that

the Scheduled Tribes would not be denied their constitutional rights. During the last fifty-seven years, the Constitution was amended a number of times in order to improve people's access to the means of empowerment. These amendments have resulted in the creation of powerful statutory bodies with semi-judicial and supervisory authority such as the National Women's Commission, National Scheduled Castes Commission, National Scheduled Tribes Commission, National Human Rights Commission, and National Minorities Commission.

In democracies all over the world, electoral politics inevitably envelopes public institutions, and the social or ethical imperative quickly gets subsumed within the political dynamics. The policy of reservations for marginalized sections in institutions of higher education in India has faced this hazard far too often in the recent past. If, on one hand, electoral expediency has prompted various state governments as well as the national governments to extend the "benefit" of the reservation quota as a populist measure, a harsh stereotyping of the classes that genuinely require social protection, on the other hand, has repeatedly taken the form of violent protests. During the 1980s, Prime Minister V. P. Singh decided to implement the recommendations of an advisory report, the Mandal Commission Report, which had recommended redrawing the map of denial in India and substantially expanding the scope of the reservation policy. The opposition to this move was so intense that a nationwide wave of violence erupted, and the V. P. Singh government had to resign as a result.

This situation has repeated itself in various states at different times. Even if there has been no civil war in India on the question of the quota system in education and employment, the intensity of the popular sentiment on both sides of the social divide continues to keep Indian society in a perpetual war-like mood on this issue. The number of seats in the quota system in institutions of medicine and engineering continues to be at the heart of the acrimonious debate. There have been numerous instances of statewide or national strikes by the entire medical fraternity just to oppose increase in the quota by even one or two seats at the super-specialization level in medical education. As against this, there have also been instances of misuse of the constitutional guarantee by political parties by raising the protection given to the marginalized classes to an unrealistic level, as it was raised to cover more than 70 percent of the population in Karnataka at one time. More recently, ministers in charge of higher education have used the constitutional guarantee as a weapon to take over elite business schools. The Indian society continues to be deeply divided

over the question of affirmative action in education; and it is virtually impossible to arrive at definitions of denial that will satisfy all social classes in India.

Educating India

The first three Indian universities, drawn upon the model of the British universities, were established in Bombay (now Mumbai), Calcutta (now Kolkata), and Madras (now Chennai) in 1857. Throughout the second half of the nineteenth century, a number of princely states had set up colleges, for instance at Allahabad, Baroda, Lucknow, and Mysore, and a number of nationalist groups had started setting up schools and colleges. But most of these were liberal arts colleges. For any other study, such as law, engineering, or medicine, students had to go to England to take their degrees. That is how Mahatma Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru, Mohammed Ali Jinha, and Dr. Ambedkar—the four most important leaders of India during the early twentieth century—received their college education abroad.

During the first half of the twentieth century, the infrastructure of higher education grew slowly. When India became a republic, the government began to build universities, colleges, national research laboratories, and other research institutions. The second half of the twentieth century saw unprecedented growth in technical and higher education, from three central universities in 1951 to eighteen in 2005 and from twenty-four to 205 state-run universities. Other institutions were also established during this period, including ninety-five degree-granting accredited institutions, eighteen officially designated "Institutes of National Importance," and seven privately funded universities, bringing the number of universities from twenty-seven in 1951 to 343 in 2005. Over the last five decades, then, on average six new universities were commissioned every year, and growth has been sharper in recent years according to data from the Indian government's Department of Secondary and Higher Education, Human Resource Development Ministry. During just two funding years, 2003–2004 and 2004–2005, the number of degree-granting colleges rose from 15,343 to 17,625.

The University Grants Commission was created as a single authority to coordinate and promote non-technical higher education in the country. Similarly, several other research councils were created for promoting research in various disciplines such as medicine, engineering, sciences, and social science. Higher education institutions increased their absorption capacity between 1986 (5,982,709 students) and 2004 (10,009,137 students) to accommodate nearly five million more students. During

the same period, the number of institutions offering technical diploma, degree, and postgraduate courses moved from 962 to 38,800, a remarkably steep increase. The budgetary allocations for higher education are made primarily by the Higher Education Department of the Human Resource Development Ministry. In addition there are special-purpose allocations in the nature of affirmative action from the budgets of various other ministries, such as the Ministry of Tribal Affairs and the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment. Additional funds are made available by various state governments since education is included in the "joint list" of constitutional obligations.

Do these provisions enable every aspiring young woman or man to seek degree-level or postgraduate education in India? More pertinently, are these infrastructure and funding provisions adequate to meet the huge backlog of social justice needs? The answers to these questions are not heartening. For example, the disparity between educated females and educated males has been increasing at an alarming rate. The statistics for 2001–2002 show that nearly five million fewer young women received higher education than young men in the same age bracket. The gap in some states is substantial, as is evident from the examples of Karnataka (11 females : 48 males) and Orissa (11 females : 74 males). This is generally the story, though there are a few states in which the number of females receiving education is substantially higher than the number of males: in Pondicherry, for example, the ratio of females to males is thirteen to ten, and in Chandigarh, forty to twenty-seven. The enrollment of students of both genders has increased by five million over the last fifty years, but the percentage of females to males has moved up from one-tenth to merely two-tenths of this newly educated class. In other words, there are nearly 1,160,000 fewer young women than there should have been in college enrollment, for a variety of cultural, social, and economic reasons.

A similar disparity exists between students from rural areas who can avail themselves of higher education and those in the urban areas. The picture of higher education varies from state to state, with economically poorer states having a lower percentage of students enrolled in higher education. Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, and Uttar Pradesh, the four major states in the Hindi-speaking heartland of India, often referred to as the *bimaru* ("unwell") states, have not done as well in the area of higher education as some other smaller states or the Union Territories such as Chandigarh and Goa. The more recently created tribal states of Chattisgarh

and Jharkhand show a far bleaker picture. The percentage of students who manage to attain bachelor's degrees in relation to the overall population of the same age group has remained confined to a single digit. The proportion of students from disadvantaged social classes enrolling for postgraduate study programs is, predictably, much smaller, and the proportion of such students to students from other classes does not conform to the ideas of affirmative action conceptualized in India's Constitution and educational policy.

Denial Revisited

Students who complete undergraduate degrees in India have, in principle, opportunities to attend overseas universities for further studies, either to pursue a postgraduate degree or a research degree. The wide disparity between the purchase value of the rupee and the dollar makes it almost impractical for Indian students to seek bank loans for a course of study in a Western country. Such loans are relatively easy to obtain, but only those who desire to seek employment outside India seem to avail themselves of these loans. Fellowship awards are available to some extent, but their number is much smaller than the need for them, and most are for study in the United Kingdom (e.g., The Inlaks Scholarships, Nehru Cambridge Fellowships, and the Commonwealth Fellowships). There are other awards in a centralized pool of fellowships processed through the Ministry of Human Resource Development and a larger number of fellowship awards for postdoctoral studies processed through the University Grants Commission, mainly for those who have already found academic employment in India. A student with a master's degree seeking admission and funding support for additional postgraduate or research study at universities in Western countries has come to be treated, within India and in the country of choice, as a potential emigrant. If the student is female, the suspicion is stronger, and she is seen as seeking a marriage alliance outside India. This is so even for students from relatively affluent economic sectors.

Beginning in the 1960s, students of Indian origin often preferred to remain in the countries to which they had moved for their university education. Most graduates from Indian Institutes of Technology, which had been created to enhance technological contribution to the country's social and industrial development, aspired to jobs in Western countries. "Brain drain" became a widely known word in the popular media. This trend has shifted during the last decade as India has emerged

as a major information technology hub, and now the same popular media has started discussing "brain gain." Nonetheless, it is necessary to think of ways to attract a far greater contribution to development from Indians who have immigrated to other countries after studying abroad.

Fellowship programs available to Indian students through various private and public organizations, whether national or international, have always looked for candidates who have excelled academically, without considering relative social or economic disadvantage as a criterion. The Ford Foundation International Fellowships Program, launched in India in 2001, changed the accent of the prevailing discourse concerning access to higher education. It accomplished this by combining a process of measuring a candidate's relative "disadvantage" with criteria assessing academic potential, demonstrated social awareness, and leadership qualities. In doing so, the program attempted to integrate considerations of academic merit along with those of social disadvantage.

The 2001 IFP advertisement in India seeking applicants stated that while the program "provides thirty fellowships for Indian nationals to pursue formal postgraduate or doctoral study at any university in the world," its intention was not to select just the academic toppers, but rather those "exceptional individuals who will become leaders in their field, furthering development and greater economic and social justice." The announcement stated that IFP intended to recruit candidates "from social groups that have been marginalized and lack systematic access to higher education." Lack of access was defined in terms of categories such as "women, Scheduled Caste, Scheduled Tribe, Other Backward Classes, physically disabled, and others with socio-economic deprivation." IFP sought the assistance of leading social analysts in devising a comprehensive matrix to be used in the initial screening to measure various degrees of disadvantage, academic background, and demonstrated social engagement.

In 2002, the announcement stated that the subject fields for the fellowships would be "principally social sciences and humanities." Thus, compared with the first round of selections in 2001, the selections in 2002 attempted to signal to potential applicants in science, technology, management, and other such fields (the subject-fields that mainly contribute to India's brain drain) that IFP was seeking individuals engaged in social change debates and not just those who had suffered denial of access. The emphasis aimed to counterbalance the overrepresentation in

the initial application pool of finalists who already held doctorates, who had studied internationally, and who represented fields tending to contribute to the "brain drain" problem.

The announcement in 2003 went significantly further to shape the potential pool of applicants. In the first two rounds, the fellowship awards had been open to Indians residing throughout the country, and while the selection results had reflected both geographic and social diversity, recipients from metropolitan areas (including those originally from smaller towns or villages) tended to dominate in the finalist pool. In addition, the national selection process was administratively daunting and did not promote "deep" penetration into India's regional concentrations of disadvantaged communities. The IFP staff was learning that considerable ground-level engagement was required in order to make judgments about "lack of access" amidst India's complex socio-political landscape of economic and educational opportunity. IFP's 2003 announcement, therefore, limited the competition to only five states (out of twenty-eight states and seven union territories: Bihar, Jharkhand, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, and Uttaranchal). These more populous states, home to 350 million people (but still a smaller number than the original one billion), comprise the heartland zone of the *bimaru*, the "unwell" states (a designation that also includes Madhya Pradesh and the newly formed state of Chhattisgarh). The *bimaru* designation signals the concentrated poverty, illiteracy, and political instability found in the region as well as important sites of contestation between more privileged and deprived social strata defined by caste, linguistic, religious, or other criteria.

Thus, by its third year, the fellowship program had arrived at a far more penetrating definition of how it understood "denial" and "commitment." Moreover, in evidence of a candidate's commitment, it was expected that she or he would have approximately three years of social sector work experience in the target states. A new stipulation was introduced, specifying that, while considering the applicant's domicile, current residence rather than place of birth would be treated as the criterion, thereby acknowledging important mobility factors within India, while maintaining focus on an applicant's work experience as an indicator of social justice awareness.

IFP's message was further highlighted in 2005 with the prominent foregrounding of the caption "learning, leadership, commitment for social change" in the

application announcement. In this round the geographical area from which applications were sought was slightly altered with the addition of states with significant tribal populations, including Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, and Orissa. The state of Gujarat was added as well, in recognition of serious social issues related to the communal violence that had emerged there in 2002. Because of the severe underemployment issues in the target states, the criterion of three years of work experience was reduced to one year.

IFP was now working closely with state-based point persons who coordinated the dissemination of program information and recruitment activities and assisted with application screening. The IFP staff was also employing regional panels comprised of figures from academia, the public sector, and civil society, who interviewed short-listed candidates in five regional locales. These panels could provide a more nuanced interpretation of applicants' life trajectories grounded in their knowledge of prevailing socio-economic conditions within their states.

The selection process was also strengthened through addition of a second round of interviews at the national level. Thus, each selected IFP finalist was interviewed by a state-based panel as well as the National Selection Committee (NSC). This modification reflected the program's concern that the role of the NSC in the initial rounds was limited to reviewing cumulative scores tabulated following regional interviews. The NSC did not itself conduct interviews or have the opportunity to assess the finalists' competitiveness in more qualitative terms.

In 2006, the geographic field was widened again by including the state of Jammu & Kashmir. Clearly, the inclusion of Gujarat and Jammu & Kashmir indicates the program's awareness that internal displacement caused by religious fundamentalism and prejudice against religious minorities has come to be a major cause of denial of access in India. With the addition of Jammu & Kashmir, too, the applicant pool brought into focus the interests of Buddhist and non-Muslim minority religious communities in India. More generally, the program's understanding of the professional and social backgrounds of applicants resulted in further fine-tuning of selection criteria to be more inclusive and give more potential Fellows an adequate chance to enter competition.

These changes indicate the degree of reflection that has gone into determining the target group of the fellowships and analyzing the complexities in the social composition of a total seven years of applicant pools. In response to a journalist

	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Male	16	17	21	14	23	26	23
Female	14	13	15	16	19	19	19
Scheduled Castes	7	10	2	1	3	2	7
Scheduled Tribes	3	4	6	3	3	8	4
Other Backward Classes	8	9	10	6	15	7	11
Physically Disabled	3	3	1	0	0	2	2
Religious Minorities	5	6	14	9	11	22	12

Table 8.1 Profile of selected Fellows, India, 2001–2007 [Source: IFP India Program]

querying in 2005 why Orissa, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, and Chhattisgarh had been added to the list of states, IFP staff clarified that while the program had been launched on an all-India scale like many other programs, gradual reflection pointed toward shaping a more carefully defined constituency. Employing focused outreach approaches in a country as large as India would make penetration more effective.

From 2001 to 2007, 255 candidates were selected in the final rounds of selections. Of these, 115 were female and 140 were male. The program's gender ratio has been much more balanced than is typically the case in other fellowship programs in India. Considering how severe and pervasive the disadvantage faced by girls and women has been, IFP has established a new benchmark in its targeting and selection of qualified women.

Among other significant results, candidates belonging to religious minorities did particularly well in selections held in 2003, 2004, 2005, and 2006. In 2006, against all other categories of disadvantaged candidates, who together had a share of nineteen fellowship awards, the candidates from religious minority groups had twenty-two fellowships (see Table 8.1). Similarly, in earlier years, the distribution between all other categories and candidates from religious minorities was, respectively, 19 : 14 (2003), 10 : 9 (2004), and 21 : 11 (2005). These figures indicate IFP's response to the emergence of fundamentalist politics and the vulnerability of religious minorities

and a refinement of the program's earlier premises that were oriented toward caste-based discrimination. This shift and the focus on states having significant tribal populations and rural economies have clearly led to a more sensitive matrix for understanding difference and denial.

An analysis of the degree programs for which fellowships were awarded indicates an increasing preference for supporting a master's degree over a doctorate, in part in order to reduce inducement to long-term migration. Fellows given support for doctoral study were twenty in 2001 but only six in 2006, while those supported for the master's degree were ten in 2001 and thirty-nine in 2006. Over the course of the program, increasing emphasis has been placed on the links between candidates' study plans and the social change roles they aspire to play once they return from postgraduate study.

IFP's India team has realized that preliminary scrutiny of applications and selection of candidates are not the conclusion of the process but rather its beginning. The team has developed enormous skills in counseling and mentoring the selected candidates. The academic culture and formalities related to admissions, conduct of courses, and examinations in Indian universities are strikingly different from the campus norms and expectations in university destinations chosen by the IFP Fellows. The program team in India has thus developed ways of preparing selected candidates, called Fellows-elect, to appreciate the systemic and cultural differences they would face. The program supports them in developing their expressive abilities in English so that they are able to cope with international postgraduate academic courses. And IFP does not regard this pre-departure preparation as the end of its responsibility. The IFP office maintains very active communication with the Fellows even after they leave for their destinations and join their study programs. One does not know of any other fellowship program in India that looks at this many stages; IFP considers every aspect, from scrutiny of applications to the final return of the Fellow to India after completion of the study course, as a single and continuous process. The IFP India team has managed this daunting task and demonstrated its understanding of the social complexities involved with an amazing sensitivity. In the history of affirmative action in India since Independence, IFP clearly stands out as a unique intervention that may also come to be seen as an important benchmark in higher education.

The Struggle for Justice in the New World

Dr. Bhukya Bhangya is a historian with special interest in the British Colonial period. The topic of his research was the Lambada tribal community, a denotified "criminal tribe." He belongs to the Lambada tribal community himself and had to face severe poverty during childhood and his student days. Bhangya taught history at Nizam College, Hyderabad, before he moved to Warwick University in the United Kingdom as an IFP Fellow. He is currently engaged in research on indigenous communities and actively involved in the People's Union for Civil Liberties (PUCL), a citizen's movement for human rights. Mamta Kashyap, born in a small town in Bihar, had great difficulties in completing her school and college education. In fact, she was the first woman in her entire community, and in her own family, to have obtained a bachelor's degree. She then decided to work in the area of gender justice and women's education and conducted a study of rape victims. On her selection as an IFP Fellow, Kashyap decided to do a master's in NGO management at the London School of Economics and Political Science. On completing her studies, she returned to India to fulfill her dream of bringing greater economic and social justice to women in India.

In 2006, a conference of the Indian Fellows who had completed their studies and returned home was convened in Delhi. Some of the Fellows had expressed interest in seeking further funding support for setting up community work projects or in support of activities with which they are currently associated. The IFP India team decided to hold the conference to discuss with the Fellows their future plans and also the possibility of establishing an IFP India Network. I was one of the main speakers at the conference. This gave me an opportunity to meet practically all of those fifty or so young persons, including Bhukya and Mamta, and to exchange ideas with them on their future plans.

What impressed me the most about them was the range of social issues that they had started addressing, from environmental degradation and global warming to conservation of intangible heritage, from food security to women's rights, from child abuse to spread of literacy, from governance to tribal land rights. My interaction with them convinced me that these women and men were quite determined to effect a social transformation. I spoke to them about the Denotified Tribes of India, and they were genuinely interested in knowing more about the issue.

I noticed that they were keen on forming a network, not just a good-will network but a serious activism network, and to take up the entire responsibility of keeping it in place.

The most striking feature of the gathering was the remarkable awareness of the struggle for justice in various other parts of the world. In conversation with me, the Fellows were able to present arguments and facts relating to marginalized communities in South Africa or Sri Lanka, Brazil or Britain. The opportunity to study in another country had given them a chance to internalize the agony of the people striving towards equitable societies in other parts of the world. I work with civil society organizations in India and often get the sense that those who are working in India do not display sufficient sensitivity to similar struggles elsewhere. I felt, therefore, that it was through IFP Fellows that Indian civil society organizations were becoming networked with the civil society concerns outside India. In a rapidly globalizing world, when national boundaries no longer seem as significant as they did just a quarter century ago, a new kind of synergy of social movements has become necessary for fighting the inequalities generated by the processes of globalization, particularly the increasing inability of the nation-states to provide social justice to the marginalized. I felt that IFP Fellows, and others similarly exposed to the international dimensions of the question of inequality and denial, hold a ray of hope for the new world.

It was reassuring to see that some fifty IFP alumni were getting ready to bring the wider world and their own communities closer in the fight against injustice and in their desire to create a more humane society. I think that selection of 255 of the most capable and, thanks to the IFP fellowship, now well-educated young women and men, chosen over the last seven years out of some 16,500 Indians applying from the communities of Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, Denotified Tribes, religious minorities, linguistic minorities, geographically remote, physically disabled, and oppressed women has already and unquestionably demonstrated fulfillment of the vision inscribed in the Ford Foundation International Fellowships Program.

Notes

1 In the intricate web of regulations that enforce the Constitution of India's provisions on addressing systemic discrimination, "OBC" designates Other Backward Classes. A community is classified as "backward" based on a complex set of social, economic, and educational criteria, as specified by the government of India's National Commission on Backward Classes. The OBC list is dynamic; castes and communities can be added or removed. The government is enjoined to ensure social and educational development of OBC groups alongside the other groups (Scheduled Castes, or SC, and Scheduled Tribes, ST) that benefit from quotas ("reservations") provided within education and the public sector. Currently, OBCs are entitled to 27 percent reservations in public sector employment and in higher education. The OBC category covers potentially about 52 percent of India's population and comprises mostly lower castes, a few upper caste communities, and some religious minorities. In absolute size, the OBC category outnumbers SC as well as ST populations.

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Part III: Journeys

CHAPTER 9

Journeys: The International Experience

Toby Alice Volkman

An Experiment in Mobility

IFP enables Fellows from twenty-two countries to pursue postgraduate study at an institution of higher education anywhere in the world.[1] In providing this opportunity, it works toward creating an alternative paradigm in international study. In contrast to more traditional programs that require study in a particular country and that, for the most part, assume that universities in the West are the desired and best options for less privileged students from the developing world, IFP asserts that students should be encouraged to pursue their academic interests in whatever country or region they find an appropriate institution and program. While it does not privilege the West, it maintains that students with unconventional backgrounds can flourish and indeed excel in a range of institutions, including those that are prestigious and competitive, throughout the world.

The idea that students may derive equal or greater benefit from academic placements in many world regions parallels and reflects recent rethinking of global relationships in many domains. We see these changes, for example, in scholarship about world regions. In the aftermath of World War II, when the field of area studies developed in the United States, it was premised on the assumption that the most valuable knowledge production about the "rest" of the world took place within the North American or European academies. In the last few decades, many practitioners of area studies have embraced a far more cosmopolitan view, holding that the academy must nurture conditions for the circulation of knowledge that is generated and shared throughout the globe.[2]

IFP's experiment in mobility allows us to ask questions about the nature of the "international" experience of higher education. The discourse of "internationalizing" the university now pervades campuses, large and small, in the United States and elsewhere. This term encompasses many elements, including curriculum, research, faculty, institutional partnerships and collaborations, and, almost always, the movement of students across borders. It is on the latter two elements that we focus here.[3]

Over the next two decades, great increases are predicted in the number of international students worldwide. Students studying in countries other than their own numbered 2.5 million in 2006, a number predicted to reach 7 million by 2025 (Bhandari and Blumenthal 2007). What are the implications of this trend? It is widely assumed that international study supports broad and desirable goals: increasing cross-cultural understanding, promoting world peace through mutual understanding, and enhancing competitiveness in the global economy. This language is found in the earliest descriptions of study abroad programs, such as the Fulbright program (cf. National Humanities Center 1997). We seek here to provide a more nuanced understanding of the nature of these international academic experiences, based on the IFP Fellows' experiences of living and studying abroad.

IFP includes a range of models. A Fellow may study in his or her country, in the region, in another country that shares a common language, or in another part of the world. What is significant or transformative about the "international" dimension of higher education? A review of IFP by the Center for Higher Education Policy Studies (CHEPS) reports that Fellows "highly value the international environment" (Enders, Kottman, and Leisyte 2007). What do Fellows actually say and value? And what are the international dimensions of IFP experience? Are there multiple ways to gain access to that experience and to enhance the cosmopolitanism that the program seeks to nurture?

In an era of heightened mobility and communications technology, internationalism need not always entail extended residence abroad. Although some might argue that a truly cosmopolitan understanding emerges only from prolonged shared experiences, or "sharing a human life" (Appiah 2006), programs such as IFP also provide forms of international experience that are more abbreviated or less linked to territory: pre-academic training programs, networking, leadership institutes, "sandwich" programs of short-term study abroad, cohort relationships developed through strategic university partnerships, professional development activities and travel during

the course of a fellowship, Web-based interactions, and, eventually, alumni activities. All these are ways of building community and a sense of shared and wider purpose across borders and beyond the immediate purview of a local Fellow who studies at home.

Even the idea of "home" may be questioned. To what extent does one's nation define or circumscribe an individual's sense of "home," or cultural citizenship? Is the Siberian Fellow studying in Moscow at home or abroad? How do we describe the location of a Quechua student from a remote area in Peru, now studying in Lima, or a Fellow from the northeast of Brazil who is based in Rio? The answers to these questions may vary, in relationship both to the individuals and the contexts in which they find themselves. In research on minority students studying in Beijing, for example, one scholar found that students in certain fields were clustered by administrators with others who shared language and culture, while students in other fields were placed in highly diverse cohorts where they became the sole "representative" of their ethnic group. These different placements affected how the students experienced their sense of identity and shaped their goals (Clothey 2005). As we see below, Fellows sometimes use their international experiences—whether their academic placements or their research travels—as portals for exploring more complex aspects of their identities and their connections to "nation" or "home."

The international experience, furthermore, is not without difficult adjustments and transitions. We seek here to understand some of these challenges. Some are part of the political context. In some instances, foreign students may encounter racism, prejudice, and even violence. Living abroad may provoke more self-conscious reflections on one's own identity. An Indonesian Fellow studying in the Netherlands in 2006 observed that this was a very difficult moment to be a Muslim in that country. Nonetheless, she said, it was only when she got to the Netherlands that she decided to wear the head scarf, making a visible statement, far from her country, about her own (Islamic) identity. A South African Fellow of Indian descent doing research in India found herself simultaneously confused and moved by her experience of living in the country she had long thought of as her "homeland." Later in this chapter we return to her reflections.

Often, culturally specific academic and social expectations prove challenging. This is the case with many Fellows from China and Southeast Asia, for example, who have been educated in systems that maintain that the best student is respectfully

silent in the presence of a teacher. Once in the United States or Europe, such students are confronted with a very different set of expectations and demands from professors and other students who expect them to be vocal, critical, and even outspoken in class. One Indonesian Fellow described how surprised he was by the way students spoke to lecturers in the United Kingdom: "They speak on the principle of free speech . . . they can be so offensive . . . it made me feel guilty and uncomfortable since it looked disrespectful in my eyes. But I was wrong. It is their culture, and there is nothing wrong in it, though it is not common in my own culture."

Beyond the academic adjustments, there may be other unanticipated challenges. For some, especially those who were recognized professionals or accomplished community leaders before they became Fellows, the down-shift to the role of student may be troubling. There may also be personal tensions around separation from family, especially since many IFP Fellows are older and have spouses and children at home. One Palestinian Fellow reportedly did not communicate with his wife and five children for a year and could not be reached because he failed to tell them that he was living in a restaurant in London to save money from his fellowship so that he would have the ability to support them better when he returned.

A host of "return" issues may further complicate the benefits of an international experience, including cognitive dissonance, a sort of reverse culture shock, as well as some very practical problems: unemployment or, following reintegration into the work environment, unrealistic career expectations; resistance from colleagues, supervisors, or even friends; adjusting to low wages; and changes in family and personal dynamics. Think of the IFP Fellow, for example, who is a wife who returns home with a PhD and international connections, qualified unlike her husband, in a society where women are not expected to achieve this sort of distinction or maintain such networks.

Fellows may be acutely aware of these complex challenges as they contemplate the next phase of their lives. At a Fellows' conference at Brandeis University, many Fellows discussed their anxieties about return. A Ugandan student said: "I look into the future with both courage and fear. I'm empowered, but I fear that the expectations for me—from family, from the community—will be too much. I have new confidence and stamina, but, for instance, I don't have a job." Another, from the Philippines, imagined returning to his rural home: "I am an expert; I've been to America. The people in my village think that I'm plucking dollars from a tree."

Actually, he pointed out, "I've learned about both native Americans and corporate America. I will bring knowledge of both back to my country."

Beyond these individual issues, and regardless of where they study, all Fellows must deal with returning to a society in which structures of exclusion and inequality, and practices of discrimination, are still in place. Take, for example, the Vietnamese Fellow who studied "mobility" at Pennsylvania State University. Blind since early childhood, he returned to Vietnam eager to teach other teachers of the blind, only to find that Vietnam does not yet allow the blind to teach. For this alumnus, as in many other instances, advocacy and struggle are integral, ongoing aspects of return and re-insertion. "We are still in the journey," a Ugandan Fellow at Brandeis reflected and asked her peers: "How can we use the skills, resources, and opportunities we have to challenge what's going on, without using violence, or perpetuating inequalities?"

To Study at Home or Abroad?

IFP Fellows make choices about where to study, choices that are conditioned by a number of factors. Fellows have chosen to study in their home country or region (one third), in the United States or Canada (another third), and in Europe and the United Kingdom (the remaining third). There are some strikingly consistent patterns that have persisted over the life of the program. Two-thirds of the Latin American Fellows, for example, choose to study in their home region. Such choices are influenced by language issues (preferences for study in Spanish or Portuguese) and by the availability of high-quality institutions and appropriate programs in the region. Similarly, about 60 percent of Middle Eastern and Russian Fellows study in their home country. In contrast, virtually all Fellows from China, India, Vietnam, and East and West Africa choose to go abroad, as do 85 percent of Indonesian Fellows. In South Africa, about half stay in country, and half go abroad. In explaining these patterns, we must understand how Fellows themselves assess their options: What role is played by language, by prestige factors, by the quality and availability of appropriate institutions and specific programs, by perceived relevance or official accreditation of foreign degrees, by knowledge about those options, by chance, or by the recommendations of the local partner organization staff? To what extent are decisions shaped by anticipation of impact on future relationships with communities and by personal factors such as family responsibilities?

And, once choices have been made, what are the consequences? What difference does it make, for example, for Peruvian students to study in Peru, in Chile, or in Spain (or elsewhere), or for South Africans who choose to go abroad, desiring exposure to something more international, in contrast to their compatriots who choose to stay in South Africa in order to take advantage of excellent local institutions, to remain connected to local issues, or minimize family disruptions? Most Fellows from China prefer to study overseas, even as China is investing substantially in building new universities and attracting faculty and students. A number of factors, including a powerful sense of the United States as the place of the most prestigious quality education and also as a place where political discourse is more open, contribute to these decisions. For some, exposure to other cultures and experiences is critical. One Chinese student in the United Kingdom expressed her frustration with the fact that so many other students in her English language courses were also Chinese. In India, both the United Kingdom and the United States are seen as desirable placements. These are not minor concerns since future employment is tied to the perceived value of the degree.

Not surprisingly, Fellows give a variety of reasons for their choice to study outside their home country. Fellows with whom I spoke in Hawaii, Barcelona, and Birmingham, England, say that although they applied for the fellowship, they were surprised, even amazed, to have been selected. Many had never imagined that they could ever study abroad. Often they applied at a friend's or mentor's urging and then got on with their life and work, not giving their applications many second thoughts. Most had never before left their country; some had never lived away from their home town or region. One Fellow from a remote area in the Philippines decided to study in Hawaii in response to the encouragement of the local partner organization staff. Language looms large as a deciding factor. Fellows from countries where English is not widely taught or spoken, especially in Asia, almost invariably mention the opportunity to study English as the most compelling reason to study in the United States or the United Kingdom. Conversely, a sense that English will be too daunting may lead a Fellow to select a comparable program in his or her region. In Latin America, the possibility of studying in Spanish or Portuguese at strong graduate institutions encourages many Fellows to stay in the region. But for many who do choose to study abroad, the prospect of exposure to other cultures and other international students is compelling, assuming that appropriate academic programs are available.

For some, studying abroad had long been a goal: a Chinese Fellow from Tibet said that she had dreamed of coming to America for twenty years, a dream fulfilled when she was accepted as a Fellow at the East-West Center in Hawaii. An Indonesian Fellow recounted the story of his own persistence as for five years he attempted to pursue postgraduate study abroad: he applied to universities in the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, Australia, Singapore, Japan, the United States, and Hungary; he tried unsuccessfully to raise funds for travel (even writing to the president of Indonesia, who responded that she would be happy to help, but Indonesia's financial condition was not so good at the time); and he began to feel "desperate and discouraged" when he failed the English exam for a prestigious British Council fellowship. In 2003, he finally found IFP. He was so happy to see that English proficiency was not a requirement, and that English training would be provided, that he decided it almost didn't matter if he went abroad: "I was worried to have a dream too high anymore." This Fellow received a master's in global ethics from the University of Birmingham and subsequently received other, non-IFP funding to study at universities in Sweden and the Netherlands.

Supporting and Enhancing International Education: Institutional Innovations

As a kind of counterpoint to the open-ended possibilities implied in the Fellows' choices, IFP has developed "strategic university partnerships" with a number of institutions that have made special provisions to facilitate the incorporation and positive experiences of Fellows. These partnerships are premised on the idea that the Fellows come with unusual backgrounds and may benefit from additional training as well as from being part of a larger cohort. Pre-academic language training is a key element in these programs, although usually other academic skills (for example, academic writing) are taught as well.

Here we examine two of these partnerships: the East-West Center (EWC) in Hawaii and the University of Birmingham in the United Kingdom.[4] In both cases, a number of Fellows from various countries are enrolled in degree programs as a result of close collaboration between IFP and these institutions, which provide significant pre-academic training, have devised flexible admissions processes, and provide support of various kinds throughout the student's program. In focusing on these partnerships, we describe the kinds of institutional arrangements that

have facilitated the Fellows' admission and their academic success. How do these arrangements work to accommodate and embrace students with varying degrees of linguistic, academic, and cultural preparation? Might these suggest models for new kinds of exchanges in the world of international higher education? We also explore what the international experience entails for Fellows who are studying abroad but not alone; they are part of a cohort of students from diverse countries. At the same time, we suggest that the presence of these Fellows has an impact on their non-IFP counterparts, both other students and faculty members.

The East-West Center has collaborated with IFP to create a strategic university partnership that provides pre-academic training for IFP Fellows, especially in English language classes, as well as various kinds of support, monitoring, and intervention that facilitates their admission to appropriate programs at the University of Hawaii.[5] At the East-West Center there were sixty-seven Fellows in 2006, from eight countries, with 300 anticipated eventually. This partnership developed as a result of EWC administrators' embrace of the idea that IFP Fellows constitute a distinct group that needed a redesigned program in which all actors must be stakeholders.

In 2005, IFP also inaugurated a partnership with the University of Birmingham, which received nine IFP Fellows in that year and eighteen in 2006. Like the EWC, Birmingham anticipates growing numbers in future years. The university provides a twenty-week English training course, flexible entry requirements, and tuition fee discounts. Although the university's typical master's program is one year, in 2006 the International Development Department launched a new two-year master's degree, a program that should meet many IFP Fellows' need for a more extended period in which to strengthen their English, research, and other academic skills.

These strategic partnerships, not initially in the design of IFP, have become an important intervention that enables selection committees to select the kinds of Fellows that truly meet the program's criteria. This includes, especially in the Hawaii case, many talented Fellows who simply have not had sufficient English training to achieve the standard TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language) score for admission to postgraduate programs in the United States. To date there are fifty strategic partnerships, ranging from Brandeis University in Massachusetts to KwaZulu Natal in Durban, South Africa.[6] The partnerships include unusual institutions such as the Asian Institute of Technology (AIT) in Bangkok. AIT enrolls about 2,000 full-time students from over fifty countries, the majority of whom are from Asia. English is

the medium of instruction and written work, and several pre-academic language support programs are offered for students who are weak in English or from disadvantaged academic backgrounds. For many IFP Fellows from Asian countries, this is an attractive option, offering English-medium instruction, international faculty, a learning community of diverse students who share the fact that English is not their native language, and an environment that has the familiarity of Asia. As one Chinese alumnus commented, the lifestyle and culture in Thailand are quite similar to China, so on a social, cultural, and personal level, she did not experience many difficult challenges. Fellows who seek an international experience beyond the region may supplement their studies in Thailand with a sandwich program. This alumnus, for example, participated in a sandwich program in Leeds, which she found valuable, she explained, because she was exposed in the United Kingdom to many books about women and gender in China.

A different kind of fruitful partnership is with the Spring International Language Center at the University of Arkansas in Fayetteville, which provides intensive English training for IFP Fellows who are studying in non-English-speaking countries. Through this nine-week program, IFP Fellows who do not formally "need" English for their academic programs are exposed to an extraordinary range of students from many countries. More than simply a language course, the center provides a kind of cultural immersion in a particular place in the southern United States as well as intensive interaction with students from dozens of other countries. After two months in Fayetteville, Toan Vo Nhu, a Vietnamese Fellow, wrote an essay about his experience, including the difficulties: the strange and different systems such as transportation, banking, and shopping; the problem of missing home and family; and adjusting to strange foods, especially when one's roommates are from Brazil and Indonesia, and each has different tastes and food prohibitions. Nonetheless, he reflected, "I've learned much more about the culture of many countries. I've made deeper connections with the people I've met. And even if we don't always share fluency in a common language, we learn to communicate creatively, and somehow that makes the connection all the more valuable."

These experiences may be especially valuable for students from countries such as Brazil, where almost all IFP Fellows study in-country. One Brazilian Fellow described his time in Arkansas as "an ongoing experience of being surprised." He added, "This is a process that is always twofold. Insofar as I am unaccustomed to

others, I learn about them and myself . . . Social communication with people whose origins were extremely different and with the Americans, too, became an excellent opportunity for dialogue and for expanding horizons as challenges arose. For those of us who struggle every day to defend the right to be different, how do we resist the temptation to 'exoticize' other people?" (Guedes do Nascimento 2006). Another Brazilian wrote that being outside Brazil was "the first step in rethinking my country . . . our Latin roots . . . our forms of political, economic, and social organization . . . rethinking our forms of separation, exclusion, and racism, combined with our creative ways of reinventing the world. This 'experience from the outside' offered me a new type of thought in relation to the series of problems that we face in our daily lives in Brazil" (Sebastião 2006).

The East-West Center Partnership

The East-West Center was established by the U.S. Congress in 1960 to strengthen understanding between the United States and countries in the Asia Pacific region. The center runs programs of cooperative study, training, and research, bringing together students and professionals from throughout the United States, Asia, and the Pacific. Since 2003, the center has been engaged as a partner in placement and support for IFP Fellows, combining the assets of degree study at the University of Hawaii (UH) with a living and learning community of scholars at the East-West Center. The partnership is designed to integrate the particular administrative and selection processes that underlie IFP; the aspirations, limitations, and needs of Fellows; and the capacities, regulations, and academic cultures of the host universities.

The EWC works very closely with the academic departments at the University of Hawaii to secure provisional placements. It then provides a pre-academic program consisting primarily of English language and some preparatory coursework, helping to solve the problem of Fellows who do not yet meet language proficiency requirements even for Fellows. This is a key component of the arrangement, as it enables talented Fellows with TOEFL scores below 500 to enter through the Hawaii English Language Program, or HELP. Once such students do achieve a score of 500, or a recognized equivalent, they may be registered as unclassified post-baccalaureate students at UH and may begin to take courses in their major fields prior to admission to a department and the graduate school, while continuing to improve their English in additional courses offered by the university's Second Language Studies

program. Once Fellows meet departmental minimums for language competency, the EWC helps to place them in appropriate departments at the university, working with them to complete and submit their applications, to be sure that within the department Fellows have advocates and committed faculty advisors. Coursework completed as unclassified students is accepted retroactively and applied toward degree program requirements. Throughout the process, EWC staff provides guidance and support: from the moment of arrival at the Honolulu airport, throughout the process of achieving required levels of English language proficiency, and continuing to supplement departmental advising throughout the postgraduate degree program.

The processes described above are highly labor-intensive and depend on a full-time IFP program coordinator who facilitates all aspects of the Fellows' integration into the EWC community and navigates the institutional frameworks of the universities and their diverse degree programs. Terance Bigalke, the EWC Director of Education, has observed that success "requires constant trading on the good will of staff throughout the university (and EWC) systems and a willingness to push the boundaries of institutional policies and practices." In particular, the EWC worked closely with graduate schools and departments to create a new path to de facto admission for students without the requisite language proficiency, experimenting with informal assurances based on recommendations from the EWC and information available in student applications.

The surprise, according to Bigalke, has been "how willing and supportive faculty within the university departments have been of our efforts to place IFP students. There has been a shared sense of mission and appreciation that they are helping a carefully selected, very worthy set of students who have overcome considerable obstacles in their lives and are committed to a higher social purpose." Bigalke also points out that there are no institutional financial incentives as the University of Hawaii is charging EWC degree students its resident tuition rate. The rewards, however, are great: "the addition of a vibrant group with a different socio-economic profile. "Furthermore, Bigalke notes, Fellows enrich ethnic and geographical diversity, even when they come from countries such as China that already have a substantial student population in Hawaii. Hawaii's Chinese students, for example, traditionally come from the country's urbanized east. "The result for all students, including Chinese, is a much richer understanding of issues and challenges. This is

true for Vietnamese [IFP Fellows] as well, many of whom are ethnic minorities not typically applying for or selected in other scholarship programs."

At the EWC, the sense of community among the Fellows, when I visited in 2006, was striking. They live in a common residence, cook together in large collective kitchens with views of surrounding mountains, and participate in social and academic activities together. Many of these Fellows take the HELP intensive English course together, and often they share struggles over language and other adjustment issues. Some choose to room with another Fellow (often from another country, to practice English). And, although every student has his or her own rice cooker, some set up cooking partnerships where they alternate nights and get to sample cuisines from other countries. Often they will shop together in Chinatown, browsing Asian grocery stories for special ingredients. Throughout their stay, there is a weekly seminar in the residence hall that most try to attend on a regular basis. Fellows consistently remark that this is one of the really nice aspects of their experience in Hawaii; they feel supported and at the same time stimulated by the opportunity to interact with other students from so many different countries and cultures—their own, but many others too.

In a comment that resonates with many others, Selinaswati, a Fellow from Indonesia put it this way: "I am so impressed with the brotherhood of the EWC. We are all in the same building and sometimes we just say hello, but on weekends we gather, sometimes for pot luck parties, and not just the Indonesians. At the time of the Aceh tsunami, all people—students and Hawaiian people—came here to donate." This Fellow, a journalist studying sociology, observed that American volunteerism is very interesting in contrast to Indonesian *gotong royong*, a common form of shared labor that operates only within the known community. "I have much to learn," she added. This sort of reflection is part of the daily lives of many Fellows. At the same time, students feel comfortable with their differences. One of only a few IFP students who wear a head scarf, Selinaswati noted that once a week during Ramadan about fifteen students gather to pray together and to discuss Islam and other students' feelings about their fasting. Many students and even professors asked her almost daily, for her first three months, why she wore the head scarf, and she had to explain repeatedly that it is her private choice. Still, she said, she feels comfortable discussing these things at the EWC, a bit more than "with white people outside" (who tend to think she is a nun).

Herman Kelen, a Fellow from Indonesia who is studying community development and protected areas, pointed out that the chance to be with Fellows from other countries enables the sharing not only of food and culture and stories, but also insights about the political situation in other countries and issues of concern. "We learn from one another," Kelen and many other Fellows affirmed. Ricardo Trimillos, a faculty member in Asian Studies, made this point as well: at a seminar on nationalism in Southeast Asia, he realized that some of the very good discussions reflected the fact that Fellows often talked together about their experiences as minorities in their countries.

Like Trimillos, many faculty members with whom I spoke were impressed with what the Fellows contribute. "Every student is a teacher," said Barbara Andaya, who advises several Indonesian Fellows. "I learn something from them all, and I'm never bored." Andaya added: "They add to class if you're a sympathetic teacher who can draw them out. I work with them to prepare them for their other classes too, each week, because otherwise by the time they formulate what they want to say in English, the moment is gone." As this comment reveals, there may be a significant amount of time that faculty devote to these students, but this does not diminish faculty enthusiasm. "It's been wonderful to have students from the periphery," said Gay Reed, chair of the Educational Foundations program, which has a strong comparative international education component. "We've always had a large international population, but these students don't represent the dominant culture perspective. They have enormous things to teach us."

Among their contributions are their experiences. "They are terrific," said sociologist Patricia Steinhoff, speaking of the Indonesian students in her postgraduate seminar on social movements. "They have been through a revolution." And they may bring unanticipated insights: "So much of what we read is written from an American perspective," Andaya observed. When studying environmental protection, for example, these students "remind us about other, local issues, like hierarchy, or ethnicity, or paying off local officials." Fellows have been thrilled when faculty members have asked them to make presentations in class or give guest lectures; these activities provide ways of sharing knowledge and experience with other students and faculty, while greatly enhancing the confidence of the Fellows.

It is worth noting that institutional impact goes beyond students, faculty, and university departments. In Bigalke's view, the "process of more intensive interaction

with faculty, departments, and the graduate school has built even deeper and more satisfying ties" between the EWC and the university. "It has placed a wider range of demands on staff administering the program, who need to work closely and effectively with students while managing relationships with university constituencies. I believe this has made their jobs more challenging and satisfying and made them even more valuable education professionals."

University of Birmingham

At the University of Birmingham, as at other partner universities, there are fewer Fellows, and there is no equivalent to the residence hall at the EWC, so the experience of being part of a "cohort" is more diffuse. Students make their own living arrangements, usually off campus. Typically, these are with other international students, not necessarily IFP Fellows. Nonetheless, when I visited in the fall of 2006, they all seemed to know each other. Many had gone through some "pre-sessional" English classes together, and a number had formed close friendships. While the Hawaii Fellows are almost all from Asia (there was one Egyptian in 2006), in Birmingham the mix includes a number of African (Nigeria, South Africa, Tanzania, and Uganda) as well as Asian (China, India, Indonesia, and Vietnam) countries. Interactions among the Fellows are facilitated by the fact that most of the Birmingham Fellows are in the same department, International Development, which has a diverse group of students from many countries. They often take the same classes, mostly in the same campus building, and share common interests in themes such as poverty reduction. Like the Fellows, most students in the department already have substantial work experience in NGOs or government, and most are interested in linking their academic work to policy and social change. Although some of the other international students come from highly privileged backgrounds in their countries, the emphasis in this department on learning from practical experience and case studies seems to provide a level ground on which differences such as caste or class recede.

Indeed, the university as a whole has a large proportion of international students (4,500 of 25,000 students were from 150 countries in 2006), the fourth highest number of international students among higher education institutions in the United Kingdom. Nearly a quarter of the academic staff are overseas nationals, and the city itself is quite multicultural, with large Chinese and South Asian populations. The

university has a well-established, impressively staffed international studies office that works to integrate all international students. Students are welcomed at the start by the International Student Advisory Service, and an orientation, or "induction," includes a dissertation workshop and instruction in writing and examination techniques. Staff work on integration issues and adaptation to the British system, including such matters as how to reference work without plagiarizing, how to discuss work openly without concern for endangering grades, or the informality of a campus where jeans prevail and faculty prefer to be called by first names. Also addressed are issues such as perceived loss of status for older students. Although Birmingham IFP Fellows do not get the same level of individual attention from the administration as their counterparts in Honolulu, they are readily incorporated into an academic system and a culture that accommodates diversity and a wide range of backgrounds. Fellows in both Birmingham and Honolulu spoke positively about the diversity of the wider community.

Finding the World: Reflections on Living and Studying Abroad

The larger setting, and the fact of living in another country and another culture, informs Fellows' lives in various ways. In Birmingham, South African Fellow Abdoesalaam Isaacs spoke about how the presence of so many South Asians adds another dimension to his awareness of race. "The English aren't English!" he exclaimed. Similarly, in Hawaii, the diversity of peoples and cultures is eye-opening for many. Hawaii students marveled at the fact that although they were in the United States, white people were in the minority. This is not how they had imagined the United States. Ric Trimillos said, "In Hawaii, people of color know what it is to be a minority, and here white is an ethnicity, too. We have skills of working as minorities that are helpful for the students." Although some Fellows feel a bit isolated and curious about life on the mainland, they also feel comfortable and accepted in Hawaii. One Indonesian who visited New York was accused of shoplifting in a Manhattan store, a victim, apparently, of doubly misguided anti-Mexican racism. This sort of thing would be unimaginable in Hawaii, explained his faculty advisor, recalling her profound shame that this had occurred.

In Honolulu, Fellows have been resourceful about tapping into local communities of all kinds. Some have joined churches. A former seminarian from Indonesia, for example, has been welcomed into a Filipino church, where he enjoys practicing

his English. Nimabuchi, a Tibetan Fellow, smiled when I asked her if she had met other Tibetans. Yes, she said, she and two other Tibetan students go every Sunday to the Tibetan Buddhist temple. "We pray and get to speak English with the other worshippers, who are all Americans, except for two Tibetan monks. So I know all the Tibetans—all five of us—in Hawaii."

Some Fellows engage with local communities in unanticipated ways. Daoden Laopha, who comes from Northeast Thailand and arrived in Hawaii with very limited English, came quickly up to speed in his language skills. By chance, he met the president of the Thai Association of Hawaii and worked with him to create a Floating Lantern Festival in the summer of 2006. The festival involved not just Thais but also people from Laos, Cambodia, and Myanmar. Laopha performed traditional Thai dances and songs, and the festival raised 1,500 dollars through the sale of lanterns and food to local people and tourists. The association gave Laopha these funds to bring back to a remote one-room school in the mountains near his home village. The money was used to renovate the school cafeteria, Laopha explained, noting that the small size of the school meant that it could not get government funding. He proudly showed me images on his laptop computer of the beautiful new tile floor and a beaming group of students, staff, and his parents. For Laopha (who plans to return to his village as a math teacher to teach ninth graders about AIDS through statistics), this undertaking was simply a part of his larger project to contribute to his community's well-being as well as "a good memory for a summer vacation."

In Birmingham, the academic program for most Fellows is just one year, so there is less time for local engagement. Still, many of them seem to find connections through local churches and to participate in various activities organized by the university's international office: dinners with local families, lots of sightseeing, and even a program that allows students to spend a weekend with a rural family and learn how to milk an English cow. (I was not able to learn if any Fellows had taken advantage of this opportunity, which I suspect may be somewhat less exciting for them than for more typical urban, elite postgraduate students.)

More relevant for the Fellows may be the chances to engage with local development projects that are closely tied to their degree programs. One faculty member, for example, has connected students with projects in Sandwall, a relatively deprived neighborhood of Birmingham with a progressive director of public health who has helped to forge unusual projects: an organic market garden that provides free

vegetables for one hundred families and is run as a community business; an organization providing help for South Asian women; a project on patient-practitioner training; and a movement against nuclear power that also works toward fear reduction. Several of the IFP Fellows have become involved in Sandwall on an ad hoc basis, including Rajeev Prasad, a doctor and health policy planner from a remote part of northern India, and Xiou Lu, a Chinese accountant studying for an MBA in public service. These are the kinds of efforts that are also appreciated by Fellows in Hawaii. Those studying curriculum development, for example, are eager to volunteer in local schools and to learn about Hawaiian language immersion programs.

In Barcelona, where I spoke with Fellows from several Latin American countries, it was the local political and cultural context that was most compelling.[7] Just as Hawaii Fellows commented that Hawaii surprised them and didn't feel like the America they had imagined, so too Barcelona Fellows said they had not been prepared for the distinctiveness of Barcelona within Spain. The salience of Catalán, as a language, a cultural identity, and a political reality, seemed remarkable to many of these Fellows, who were themselves from indigenous groups and of whom a number were focusing in their academic programs on the teaching and revitalization of indigenous languages.

Initially, the popularity of Catalán as a spoken language was a bit of an obstacle since these Fellows had come to Spain assuming that they already had the language skills they needed. Soon, however, they found the vitality of the language within the broader political and cultural context intriguing, even inspiring. One explained: "When I arrived I was amazed and very happy to find out that in Catalonia, culture and language were so important in everyday life. The political discourse of Catalán culture is so present in radio, television, and newspapers. This is what should happen in my own country, I thought. Immediately I sent e-mails to my friends telling them what it was like, and this is material they used for further discussions. Here indigenous culture has status; it's not in decline." A Fellow from Mexico asked his teacher how they were able to make Catalán such a living language. A third, studying for a degree in psychology, who identified herself as from an indigenous group in Mexico known as Zoque, commented that, although as a result of cultural discrimination she cannot speak her own language, she has recently started studying Catalán. This will not end, she said, when the IFP scholarship is finished: "It's about lifelong learning."

For some Fellows, the gains in knowledge or expertise in their fields of study are the key benefits that they believe they will take home. Fang Yang, a Chinese Fellow studying in Hawaii, told me she had worked for eight years as a wildlife conservation officer in Yunnan. Aware of the conflict between local economic development and natural resource management, she felt confused about how to analyze or approach these issues. In Hawaii, she believes that she has learned analytical approaches and research tools that will be helpful when she returns: "If I do my best, even if I fail, I just want to bring and try new methodology. In the future, maybe in ten years, it will have an impact."

Others cite a change in their way of thinking. In Birmingham, Rajeev Prasad drew appreciative laughter from the other Fellows when he spoke of the constant emphasis on the "critical." "The one word here is always 'critical.' In India, we are very 'flexible' in planning. In the last six months, in my goals and with every class and every professor, I learned the word and appreciate it. It's good to become critical, especially in developing countries. We have to see ourselves and our mistakes." Prasad wants to bring home the "critical" sensibility as, for example, he develops a new course where traditional and modern medicine are joined in a holistic approach to public health in his mountainous state of Uttarranchal. Wilson Lalengke, a Birmingham alumnus from Indonesia, was struck by how often teachers encouraged students with the sentence, "No problem, you will be fine!" Lalengke wrote: "It was so powerful in encouraging and motivating me to study. I found this cheerful sentence helpful here also [in Sweden] as I use it to encourage my Bangladeshi and Ghanaian friends when they come to tell me their problems. The first thing I say is 'No problem, everything will be fine,' and it works."

Indonesian Fellow Herman Kelen believes that his studies in Hawaii have fortified him with a stronger vision and potential networks: "It's changed me a lot. In terms of English, of course, but also my vision. I am encouraged to work in a local community with humanitarian issues: it gives me more inspiration, more fuel, experience. I met a lot of people here, and I see how they live simply, dedicating themselves to the development of people. I also met researchers here I have never met before, people with the same interests. Maybe we can do a collaborative project, all over Indonesia, when we return."

A Chilean Fellow reflected on her overall experience in Barcelona. Gladys Astete Cereceda, a teacher who was unable to continue her studies during the Pinochet

dictatorship, said simply: "I have found the world here—global issues, like water and migration. Chile is a country behind big mountains and rather isolated. From now on, I will read international newspapers for the rest of my life." Adding that she might like to continue to study for her PhD, she noted, in a comment that I heard in various forms from other Fellows from many countries, "I also gained self-confidence. I know that I am capable and able. Coming from an underdeveloped country, we always think that we won't survive, but we realize that we can, and we do well. It's something we all feel." Cereceda's sense of confidence is echoed by many other Fellows. So too is the idea of finding a wider world.

Dominggus Elcid Li, a Birmingham Fellow from eastern Indonesia, told me he had been attracted to travel from his youth. Like a number of other Fellows, his life has a kind of fairy tale quality: his grandfather was a Chinese immigrant, his father was half Timorese, and his mother came from a small Moluccan island. Li spent his early years in West Timor and went to Java when he was in middle school. Having read an English novel about dormitory life, he chose a school in central Java with a dormitory. There he met a teacher who befriended him and taught him about Islam (Li is Christian) and many other things. Li became involved in the anti-Suharto student movement and became a journalist, traveling with a backpack throughout the archipelago and eventually doing research on violence toward the Muslim community in West Timor. Worried about publishing his work on this controversial topic in Indonesia and feeling that he needed to better understand the relationships among different religious groups, he used his IFP fellowship to enter the sociology program in Birmingham. Reflecting on what the international experience has given him, he said: "The world is not so small. I feel more free." He is already using the Internet to organize a group of about 160 Indonesians outside of Indonesia (some working for NGOs, some studying) to share what he is learning. "I try to write every day. Journalists will make sense of social change." Eventually Li plans to write a book in English about nationalism as seen through the eyes of women and children in the Timorese refugee camps. "In Indonesia, we journalists cannot really write what we think is right," Li said. "I want to write some books."

A different perspective on finding the world was expressed by Dekyi Dopta, the Fellow who had dreamed for more than twenty years of coming to America. For many years Dopta worked as a radio broadcaster in Tibet, hosting programs in Tibetan and Chinese, including a Tibetan folk music program with audience

participation. Deeply committed to Tibetan language and culture, she enrolled in the sociology department at the University of Hawaii and took two courses on globalization. "Before I came here, I didn't know there was such a thing called 'globalization.' I talked to students from Vietnam and Indonesia and other countries with many different minority groups. How do you think about culture and language loss? All the students had the same problem, that there is no way to avoid it." Dopta recalled her distress, her worries that all her studies would be useless, and her shift in thinking. "Gradually, I thought, there are also many professors saying everything has two sides. Okay, we can use the positive side to be stronger. There are some ways to solve many issues in the world. That's why I attend many presentations. They are inspiring."

Samuel Ishaya, a Fellow from Nigeria who has worked for many years with agricultural development organizations and is now studying in Birmingham, echoes several of these themes in his reflections: empowerment, inspiration, and writing. Speaking to the group of Birmingham Fellows, he said:

> The task is overwhelming, and where do we start when we go back home? I think wherever we are coming from, we don't have to really think big. To start small, we can initiate something. The West is where it is today. It has not taken just fifty years; it has been many years. For us, from developing countries, we have so much to do, we have to start. For most of us, we do not have this culture of writing. If I look at the books we read here, some of the writers have never gone to Africa or the developing countries, and yet they write. So if I go back, I can document my experiences in my work and relate it to what I've learned here. Sometimes we think we have nothing to offer, but we have so much to offer. Whatever information you put on paper and send out, a lot of people have access to it and make meaning. For me it's a challenge. I need to contribute to the pool of knowledge in any way I can, especially by sitting down to document and write. I would implore us to reflect on that.

Several Birmingham students, especially those from Africa, voiced unease with their position as African students in a British university studying a kind of "mainstream" discourse and not being asked to challenge paradigms more critically. "We shouldn't just accept that Africa is the basket case of corruption and underdevelopment," Abdoesalaam Isaacs declared. "We are not looking at other countries.

It can engender a stereotyping that is not okay. First, we can internalize it. Second, for other people, it creates in others' minds that you are less worthy. Next time I will be better prepared to challenge these things head on," Isaacs added, noting that for the moment his thoughts are more with the fast pace of academic culture, with the "angst" of "you haven't read enough" or "are you good enough, are you going to make the grade? You come from a supposedly third world country; you judge yourself versus the normal rest of the university and think, are we somehow different?" Annet Koote, a lawyer from Uganda, agreed that "many African students feel stereotyped, all the bad examples about Africans in class. So what lessons do we learn?" She answered her own question: "We should start telling the world. It is a challenge for us as Africans to write our own stories, to go back and write. I will try to do this, and I challenge my other colleagues to do this too."

In spite of these concerns, many Fellows voiced appreciation for an academic culture in which students are asked and expected to contribute to the class—unlike Nigeria, as one Fellow noted, where "every lecturer is the alpha and omega, and if you challenge, you will be victimized." Sangita Lucy Bala Ekka, an Indian Fellow, agreed, adding, "The big challenge is how to implement what we've learned here. Can we challenge our teacher in our own country, or give our students the chance? We have to take the initiative to change the environment."

Transformations

Fellows who choose to study in their home countries often also incorporate significant travel and international experiences into their fellowship period, in some instances documenting those experiences through journals. For some, finding "the world" means exploring their own complex identities and questioning the idea of "home." Anu Pillay, for example, a South African of Indian descent, is studying for a PhD in political science, focusing on women's participation in peace in post-conflict societies. She chose to study at the University of Witwatersrand in Johannesburg for several reasons: she was very clear about her academic goals; she had already worked with her advisor in the political science department; she did not want to lose time adjusting to a new environment; and she had many personal reasons (including young grandchildren) to stay close to home. Still, her research involved considerable travel and time abroad; first to a five-day workshop in Romania, where she became part of an international peace network; then to Northern Ireland to meet with peace

activists; and then, using the sandwich program, to India, where she spent seven months researching the Hindu-Muslim conflict.

Pillay's India journal tracks her evolving relationship both to India and South Africa. Soon after her arrival in Hyderabad, she wrote: "I wonder what to tell them about myself. I was raised as a Hindu in South Africa, but what does that mean here? I know little about the practices and rituals of Hinduism, and all that I know comes from books that I have read and a little of what I learned from my mother. I decide to call myself a South African Hindu." Not long afterwards, she led a devotional service, reading a poem about children in the Congo and ending with South Africa's national anthem. "It makes me think about issues of identity," Pillay wrote, "and I realize that I am a South African first, Indian by origin only . . . The big difference is that I look like an Indian so people expect me to know things and start rattling away in foreign languages until I say, 'Sorry I don't understand, I am an African who looks like an Indian.'"

Later in her stay, Pillay traveled in India and connected on several levels: "Immediately out of Guwahati, the scenery changes, and I feel like I am in Swaziland. The hills are green and serene, and we pass a beautiful man-made lake, waterfalls, and fields of bamboo, banana, ginger, and other cultivations. The air gets cooler and cooler, and at last we are glad of the woolen shawls we brought with us." Pillay describes lively discussions with her travel companion about South Africa and a meeting with a nun who started a women's project in Shillong. "I am so moved by her stories of struggle that I whip out the last one hundred dollar bill that I have and press it into her hand. She in turn gives me beautiful handmade bags from different hill tribes and explains why they are called the 'Scotland' of India with each tribe weaving different patterns of cloth. I leave in tears at the warmth and hospitality of these people and resolve to stop shopping."

Toward the end of her stay, as she contemplates going home to South Africa, Pillay returns to her confusion about her identity: "I bought a set of CDs on how to listen to Indian music and realized that I had been raised on this music . . . On Friday the office manager stopped me and asked if I would continue to wear the clothes that I had bought in India when I returned home. 'I don't wear any other type of clothes,' I told him, whipping out my little photo album. . . . I grew up being conscious of belonging in some way to some distant, mysterious land called India. And here I am, and I can make little sense of it all." Finally, Pillay's confusion turns

to sadness at her little farewell party: "I speak of what my time in India has meant to me. I tell of the lifelong yearning to go back to the motherland; of being born in a country where I was always reminded that I had roots somewhere else; of the longing to find out where that somewhere else was; of the rich experience of being an insider/outsider, participant observer, familiar yet strange."

Mefi Hermanawati, an Indonesian Fellow who is studying political science at the University of Hawaii, also kept a journal (in the form of a blog) of her research travel experience. Hermanawati had come to UH to study political organizations, an interest that arose directly from her experiences working with an Indonesian NGO. When she arrived in Honolulu, she recalled, "I knew nothing about political Islam. When I came here I was surprised by lots of people talking about Islam. I took a course on political religion and began to think about comparing Egypt and Indonesia." This shift represented not just an intellectual broadening but also a personal exploration of identity. Raised as a Christian in predominantly Muslim East Java, Hermanawati is the daughter of a Sino-Indonesian (Christian) mother and an Egyptian (Islamic) father. Still working to master English in Hawaii, she decided to study Arabic and traveled to Egypt in the summer of 2006. Her blog is filled with impressions of people, sites, local politics, libraries, professors, and interviews, and, eventually, describes finding her father's family in Alexandria. Like Anu Pillay in India, she is acutely aware that appearance, kinship, and nation do not map simply onto one another: "I must have confused and frustrated my family when they saw somebody who looked so physically different from them. My language, my accent, and my appearance made for an awkward first meeting. . . . I had a hard time explaining my reasons for studying in America, so I just tried to convince them that I study in Hawaii to help Muslims and non-Muslims of the East and West understand their different views and customs."

Many Fellows return to their countries with a strengthened capacity to continue the work they had been doing. Others stress what a Russian alumnus calls "the new view of the world." "It is really important to see foreign people, to exchange ideas, to meet cultures. To be more concrete: we have no black people in my country. There are terrible things that happen to them here. Even I had some prejudice. But when I went abroad, I absolutely changed my mind. And I told my family and other people when I came back. . . . I changed my opinion about many things, including gender relations." A teacher before her fellowship in Edinburgh, this Fellow returned to her

Ural community to work as a journalist, with plans to form a political party focused on changing attitudes toward women and disabled children. "I am a different person," she said (Enders, Kottman, and Deen 2006).

In a similar vein, Indonesia alumnus Wilson Lalengke reflected on his intellectual transformations. One insight he gained was a different understanding of "individualism," a word he previously took to mean that people don't care about others or like to engage in a community. In the United Kingdom, he came to understand that it refers to a kind of economic independence, but not an absence of social relationships. The most transformative insight, however, emerged from Lalengke's study of Western ethics and philosophy. Contrasting his current thinking with what he had studied in Indonesia, Lalengke observed that his "thoughts are now more secular, universal, and free from a particular teaching, such as a certain religion, culture, etc." One of his aspirations upon his return is to persuade the local government to develop an educational system "that would lead students to the principle of being universalists but act[ing] locally."

Networking, Leadership, and Global Flows

In a world in which global flows of ideas, people, and goods are ever more rapid and multidirectional, the international experience must be understood to be more than the fact of living in a country other than one's own. Even when Fellows have chosen not to take a degree abroad, IFP fosters other kinds of international experiences, as we have seen above, both during the fellowship period and into the future. From 2002 to 2006, one important means of doing this was through Leadership for Social Justice (LSJ) institutes, the first of which was held on the campus of the School for International Training in Brattleboro, Vermont. By late 2006, nearly 1,000 Fellows from all IFP countries had participated in fourteen LSJs. In early 2008, a smaller regional forum drawing on alumni and Fellows from six Asian countries was held in Thailand. Alumni in all regions have been invited to develop ideas for other regional social justice workshops.

One of the goals of these institutes and workshops is to foster networks that engage in "conscious strategic efforts by groups of people to fashion shared understandings of the world and themselves that legitimate and motivate collective action" (Keck and Sikkink 1998). Some of these networks focus on countries or regions and may continue to develop through alumni activities. Others cut across

geographic lines and bring together Fellows working on common themes. More modestly, and in a somewhat ad hoc manner, these activities allow Fellows and alumni to find like-minded colleagues concerned with similar issues in other parts of the world, from media and human rights, to disability activism, to such specific matters as how to support sustainable butterfly-raising for low-income farmers. At the 2006 LSJ that I attended in Washington, DC, nearly 160 Fellows from nineteen countries appeared to find many such connections. One of the highlights of the institute was the poster session, in which each fellow was available to discuss his or her project with other interested LSJ participants. As the week progressed, all Fellows formed affinity groups, or "peer support groups," to develop an "action plan." At the subsequent LSJ, in Birmingham, a smaller group of Fellows (sixty-five) was asked to choose to build a social justice campaign (and develop media skills around it) or to participate in a writers' workshop. Here too, the organizers encouraged post-LSJ peer groups to form.

Do the intense interactions of the LSJ and their regional successors translate into longer-term connections? Anecdotally, we know that at least some Fellows continue to build on the relationships formed at the institutes. A Russian alumnus, for example, sent her personal reflections on LSJ to a colleague in Chile, who translated the essay and published it in Spanish in the Latin American IFP newsletter. An Indonesian Fellow explained that she chose to study at a university in Germany, rather than Cornell University, because she was confident there would be other chances to go the United States, and she wanted to see the world and to learn a new language. Actually, she is learning Spanish along with German since in her program it turns out that most of her friends speak Spanish. She was excited by encounters at LSJ. When I met her, she had just spoken with an LSJ participant from Africa whose husband worked in her field, and she was planning to follow up on the invitation that conversation had generated to visit Africa. A Mexican alumnus and a facilitator at LSJ 2006, an anthropologist working on indigenous issues, says he is still in touch with people he met at his first LSJ, several years earlier, from all over the world.

"Networking is like wine: it matures," observes Ashok Gurung, a former IFP Program Officer who helped to develop the LSJ. Gurung notes that most Fellows have limited networks at home and that one of IFP's major contributions is to give them access to much wider, international networks. "The shared LSJ experience gives an extra advantage over time," Gurung believes. But even beyond the

networks, he argues, what is most palpable at an LSJ, and most lasting, is the confidence it builds in Fellows and the sense they acquire of being part of a project larger than themselves and their own community.

Each of the structural elements described above is intended to add something to the Fellows' experiences and paths. When IFP was still in its formative years, advisor Ken Prewitt observed that the program needed to be mindful of the fact that when Fellows are selected they are already on the way to somewhere. How can IFP, a three-year interlude in the Fellows' journeys, really make a difference? Do infusions of international experiences of many kinds, at different points and in different ways, enable them to enrich and perhaps to alter those already extraordinary trajectories? In order to answer these questions, we turn, in the following chapter, to the experiences of the program's alumni.

Notes

1 Fellows have included refugees from additional countries who are resident in one of the twenty-two program countries.

2 For an excellent set of essays on specific area studies fields and their transformations, see Szanton 2004.

3 Data on the flow of students from one country to another and trends over time are documented in a growing literature on the "internationalization" of higher education (see Knight 2004; 2005; also Knight and de Wit 1999). Much of this literature addresses new modalities of education (new types of providers, forms of delivery, models of collaboration) or the impetus behind this growth (funding, market strategies, etc.).

4 I am indebted to Terance Bigalke and Kim Small at the East-West Center and to Catherine Pouncett at the University of Birmingham for coordinating my site visits to their respective campuses, visits that included opportunities to talk with many Fellows. I am, of course, especially grateful to the Fellows in Barcelona, Birmingham, Honolulu, and elsewhere who generously shared their experiences and ideas.

5 Recently, on a smaller scale, the East-West Center has also begun to work with Hawaii Pacific University, where two students were enrolled in 2006.

6 There are also close to fifty "cluster schools" that have hosted, cumulatively, ten or more Fellows.

7 Alicia Betts was a gracious guide and a skilled translator for a group interview with Fellows studying at several universities in Barcelona.

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Part IV: Photographs

Through the following photographs, we seek to convey the diversity and vitality of IFP Fellows and alumni in their communities. The images are meant to be suggestive rather than comprehensive: it would not be possible to portray here the full range of more than 3,000 Fellows' interests and activities, or to represent all of the twenty-two countries from which Fellows come. What we see in this portfolio are individuals from many parts of the world, engaged in work as varied as community activism, the performing and visual arts, public health, disability advocacy, women's rights, agricultural development, and education. All are essential components of IFP's broader goal to advance social justice.

SUPPORTING WEAVERS AND CHILDREN (INDIA)

Born in the Uttar Pradesh region of India, Dipti's desire to study and work in the field of community development was constrained by financial and societal barriers. As an IFP Fellow she completed her Master's in Social Development and Health at the Queen Margaret University College in the UK, and now serves as the national coordinator for two organizations: Varanasi Weavers and Voice of Children. PHOTOS BY VIDURA JANG BAHADUR

REMEMBERING VICTIMS OF VIOLENCE (PERU)

Mayu Mohanna's film and photography work for the Commission of Truth and Reconciliation aims to preserve the memory of her country's dictatorial past. Her work features testimonies and photographs from victims of Peru's internal violent conflicts. She received her Master's degree in Photography and Video from the School of Visual Arts, New York.

PHOTOS BY SANTIAGO BUSTAMANTE

OTHELLO (SOUTH AFRICA)

Vaneshran Arumugam starred in a production of *Othello* at the Baxter Theatre in Cape Town. A professional actor, Arumugam has lent his voice and skills to many development projects in South Africa, including the creation of a community performance venue in Cape Town and efforts to stop violence against women. He used his fellowship to complete a Master's degree in Theater and Performance at the University of Cape Town, with a semester at Columbia University in New York. PHOTO BY GIOVANNI STERRELLI

ALUMNI WORK AGAINST VIOLENCE (WEST AFRICA)

A meeting of alumni from Senegal, Ghana and Nigeria in Akosombo, Ghana. The workgroup met in February of 2008 to discuss strategies for preventing violence against women. PHOTO COURTESY OF MARIE ROSALIE SAGNA

ALUMNI DISCUSS COMMUNITY SCHOOL (CHINA)

Fellows, alumni and other volunteers exchange ideas about school curricula and program implementation for a community school in Jinan city, Shandong province. The school's mission is "to support disadvantaged peasants in building their position and identity as active subjects." PHOTO BY GAO SONG

MICRO-ENTERPRISE AND INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE (INDIA)

Richa Ghansiyal works in her home state of Uttarakhand, coordinating programs that build on indigenous knowledge of natural resources and promote rural micro-enterprise, including fiber grass basketry, hemp fabric production, and handmade copper work. Richa received her Master's degree in Rural Development from the University of Sussex in the UK. PHOTO BY VIDURA JANG BAHADUR

CAMPAIGNING FOR WOMEN'S HEALTH (KENYA)

Dennitah Ghati has been in the forefront in the campaign against female genital mutilation (FGM). Above, she talks to newly initiated girls who have undergone the procedure; below, she addresses other girls who fled their homes for fear of FGM, and underwent an alternative rite of passage. Dennitah earned a Master's degree in Social Work and International Affairs from Columbia University, and currently works for the African Network for Health Knowledge Management and Communication in Nairobi.

PHOTOS BY STELLAH MATINDE

TRAINING FARMERS (UGANDA)

Emmy Wassajja trains Ugandan farmers who will in turn train other farmers in techniques to improve cassava yields (above), and in pollination methods for vanilla plants (below). Emmy completed a Master's degree in Sustainable International Development at Brandeis University, and is now an inspector with Uganda's National Environment Management Authority.

PHOTOS BY DERRICK MUKASA

INOCULATING CATTLE (TANZANIA)

An animal epidemiologist, Deusdedith Kajojo Tinuga inoculates cattle against trypanosomiasis, a disease caused by tsetse flies in the savannah grasslands of Africa. He completed a Master's of Science in Veterinary Epidemiology and Economics at Utrecht University, the Netherlands, and is now director of Epidemiology and Veterinary Services and Planning at the Ministry of Livestock in Dar es Salaam.

AN ENVIRONMENTAL COORDINATOR IN THE CLASSROOM (INDONESIA)

Januarius Yawa Bala teaches a class about global warming in East Nusa Tenggara, Indonesia. Januarius is the general coordinator for a volunteer group for the environment called NTT — Green Volunteer Movement. He used his IFP scholarship to earn a Master's degree in International Education at Sussex University, Brighton, UK. PHOTO BY AGUS MOLAN TOKAN

AN ECOLOGY LECTURER IN THE FIELD (INDONESIA)

Rachmat Budiwijaya Suba is a university lecturer in Samarinda, Indonesia. He focuses on biological diversity conservation and ecological restoration, and is involved in research on coal and gold mine reclamation in East Kalimantan. Rachmat earned his Master's degree in Sustainability and Biodiversity at the University of Leiden, the Netherlands. PHOTO BY IRMAN

TEACHING AFRICAN IMMIGRANTS (SPAIN)

While studying at the Universitat de Barcelona in Spain, Orlando Rí os Méndez held Spanish language workshops for immigrants from Burkina Faso, Nigeria, Mauritania, Ethiopia, Gambia, and Guinea Bissau. Originally from Mexico, Orlando received his Master's in Immigration and Intercultural Education. He is currently the research coordinator for the Indigenous Education Center for the Study and Development of the Indigenous Languages of Oaxaca, Mexico.

SUSTAINABLE ORGANIC AGRICULTURE (THAILAND)

IFP alumni are exploring alternative approaches to development. Here, they take part in a group activity after returning to their home region in the Yasothon province. The rice harvest was organized by IFP Fellow Pannee Samerpak, director of the Earth Net Foundation's Organic Agriculture Centre. Pannee earned a Master's degree in Development Management at the Asian Institute of Management in Manila. PHOTO BY PRADIT KRAIWONG

TRAINING AIDS WORKERS (CHINA)

Dilibaier Yasen, a Uyghur from Xinjiang, trains workers in using HIV/AIDS prevention materials with minority ethnic groups. Dilibaier Yasen designed the Uyghur-language booklet in her hand. She received her Master's degree in Public Health from the University of Melbourne. PHOTO BY FAN XUEMEI

RIGHTS FOR THE DISABLED (RUSSIA)

Erzhena Budaeva, head of an NGO for the disabled, gives an interview at the G8 Summit in St. Petersburg in July 2006. A member of an ethnic minority group from Russia's Ulan Ude region, Erzhena has used a wheelchair since 1982. She earned a Master's in Public Policy at Syracuse University.

CREATING A VISUAL RECORD (GUATEMALA)

Photographer Sandra Sebastián documents traditions and daily life among the Maya, Garífuna (African descent), and Xinca cultures of Guatemala. Above, Achi residents during the celebration of dance in "Rabinal Achi," Rabinal, Baja Verapaz. Below, a Kaqchikel woman working the land. Sandra is studying Visual Anthropology at the Universitat de Barcelona.

PHOTOS BY SANDRA SEBASTIÁN

Part V: Returns

CHAPTER 10

"Return" and "Returns": Brain Drain and the Path Back Home

Joan Dassin

More than any other question, IFP is asked whether Fellows return home after completing their studies. As a matter of principle, IFP expects to counter "brain drain," the migration of skilled people from poor to rich countries. The program's selection strategy serves this purpose by recruiting candidates whose dedication to social justice in their home countries is fundamental to their identity. IFP Fellows include women who overcome long-standing barriers to female equality, members of minority ethnic groups who advance despite deep-rooted prejudice and discrimination, disabled people who triumph over stigmatization, and individuals who refuse to allow poverty and lack of opportunity to prevent them from pursuing higher education. They see their personal trajectories as part of a broader struggle for social justice at home and therefore use their fellowships—in the words of one Kenyan alumnus—"to expand their knowledge, nurture their leadership skills, and make a difference in their communities" (Ford Foundation International Fellowships Program 2006b, 53).

Nonetheless, IFP has not adopted a compulsory, "one size fits all" policy that requires Fellows to return home after completing their fellowships. Such a policy would be impractical and unenforceable for several reasons. First, about 34 percent of Fellows earn their degrees in universities located in their home countries or regions. For most of them, the dilemmas of "return" hinge on the challenges of re-insertion into their home communities and countries after a period of prolonged study, not on the question of whether they will remain in a developed Western country. Second, unlike some governments, IFP, as a privately funded program, has no mandate to enforce a mandatory return policy. Moreover, that approach could

not be applied fairly to all Fellows since some pursue further studies with other sources of funding, which may require them to remain abroad beyond the end of the IFP fellowship.

For their part, selection committee members and International Partners have a range of views on the "return" issue. For some, Fellows have a profound moral responsibility to return to their home communities and countries after completing their studies. At least in part, the Fellows' selection hinged on this commitment and therefore must be honored. For these IFP stakeholders, physical presence is paramount for, and tantamount to, a successful outcome. For others, establishing residency in the Fellow's home region, but not necessarily in his or her home country, is also a positive result. Yet beyond the question of physical location, most members of the IFP community recognize that a small minority of alumni will make important contributions to their home communities, countries, and regions from other parts of the globe—working, for example, in multilateral agencies, foreign universities, or other international organizations.

These divergent views mirror the evolving thinking about "brain drain." As discussed in Chapter 1, globalization has changed the classical debate about "brain drain" for both sending and receiving countries. Some analysts now propose "brain circulation" as a more apt description for the accelerated movement of scientists, engineers, information technology experts, and other skilled workers around the world (Teferra 2005, 229). Reverse migration and increased global mobility and interconnectedness are producing new benefits for sending countries. High-growth economies in Asia, for example, are investing heavily in universities and research facilities and offering substantial incentives for their foreign-trained nationals to return home. For those who do not repatriate, Internet-based communications and more affordable transportation can mitigate the negative effects of permanent out-migration, allowing highly skilled migrants to "help their countries even when remaining abroad, by maintaining links with industry and research at home" (Guellec 2007, 4).

Despite these trends, increasing numbers of skilled professionals are still leaving developing countries. The outflows are fueled by labor market dynamics. In the United States, 900,000 highly skilled professionals entered the American labor market between 1990 and 2000. Foreign students, especially those in science and technology, were actively recruited and—aided by generous immigration

policies—allowed to stay in the country after completing their studies. Fueled by the demands of the high-tech economy, the demand for talented foreign workers remains high, not only in the United States, but also in other wealthy countries such as Australia, Canada, the United Kingdom, and to a lesser extent Denmark, Finland, and Italy (Guellec 2007, 2). Although highly skilled workers create scientific innovation and wealth for the receiving countries that may filter to their home countries through remittances and other forms of wealth transfer, recent research shows that skilled labor migration has an especially detrimental effect on the world's smallest and poorest countries (Task Force on Higher Education and Society 2000).

It would be intrinsically counterproductive for IFP to encourage "brain drain" in any form. Yet the program recognizes that physical presence in one's home country, while critical for most alumni, is not necessarily required for everyone. To dissuade Fellows from remaining in Western host countries, particularly the United States, as a matter of policy IFP does not support requests for Advanced Training or other visa extensions. As a matter of philosophy, IFP places great importance on the post-fellowship choices that alumni make and whether they are able to transform the academic promise, social commitment, and leadership potential that they showed as successful IFP Fellows into meaningful action on behalf of their home societies.

For this reason, IFP stresses "return" in the physical sense but is also tracking "returns," the multiple paths that emerge after the fellowship experience. And "returns" refers as well to benefits that stem from the fellowship "investment," not only for the individual Fellow, but for his or her broader community of reference. The program recognizes that physical presence is only one factor in a broader equation involving mobility and professional and life choices over time. Indeed, IFP Fellows who return home after completing their studies may travel abroad again several years later, most often to pursue an additional postgraduate degree. The overarching consideration is how Fellows will contribute over the long term to development and social advancement in their home communities and countries.

The Global Picture

Three major factors shape the "return/returns" issue for IFP. First, IFP is a global program. In part to counter the English-language bias found in many international fellowship programs, IFP allows Fellows to pursue postgraduate studies in their home countries and regions as well as farther afield. Placement data confirm that

Fellows take advantage of the program's wide array of study options, with just under two-thirds of IFP Fellows studying outside of their home countries and regions. With the exceptions of South Africa and the Middle East, nearly all Africa Fellows study abroad, mostly in high-income countries. An average of about 18 percent of the Asia Fellows study in their home country or region, with a low of 4 percent of India Fellows who remain in country and a high of 30 percent of Vietnamese and Thai Fellows who study in country or region. The remaining Asia Fellows enroll in universities in the United States, the United Kingdom, continental Europe, and Australia or New Zealand, with the largest percentage in the United States. Nearly 70 percent of the Russia Fellows study in Russia and, in Latin America, roughly half of the Fellows from Chile, Peru, Mexico, and Guatemala study in their home countries or regions. Nearly 90 percent of the Brazil Fellows remain in Brazil, although nearly all travel to other parts of the country for their postgraduate programs. To account for these variations, IFP tracks "return" as well as "current residency"—where alumni are actually living at any given time.

Second, IFP is a young program. The first selections were held in 2001, and most Fellows selected in that year began their study programs in 2002, or later. While nearly all of the Fellows selected between 2001 and 2003 have completed their fellowships, as of December, 2007, 24 percent of those selected in 2004 were still studying under IFP fellowships. For later cohorts, the percentage of active Fellows is much higher, with 77 percent of the 2005 group and 96 percent of the 2006 group still studying. In effect, although IFP by the end of 2007 had produced more than 1,450 alumni, meaningful "return" or current residency data are now available only for the cohorts selected in the first four years of the program, between 2001 and 2004. Seen from another perspective, these 1450-plus alumni represent approximately one-third of the projected total of 4300 Fellows. Hence, while the alumni group is numerically large, it represents only a limited sample of the program's expected graduates.

Third, the type of degree, combined with the study location, affects the return and current residency rates. In 2001 and 2002, the first two years of selections, a high percentage of doctoral Fellows were selected in some countries. Overall, Africa and the Middle East have the highest percentage of doctoral contracts, with 25.6 percent, as opposed to Latin America with 20.5 percent and Asia/Russia with 12.1 percent. In some but not all countries, a high percentage of the doctoral Fellows chose to study abroad. In Africa, nearly 20 percent of all fellow contracts are for

doctoral Fellows studying outside their home country, as compared to just under 10 percent for Asia/Russia and for Latin America. Since almost all doctoral Fellows take longer than the three-year IFP fellowship to complete their degrees, this distribution contributed in early alumni surveys to a lower return and current residency rate in Africa than in the other two regions.[1] However, later data show that the regional gap may be narrowing as the early PhD Fellows begin to complete their degrees and the percentage of doctoral Fellows has become more standardized across the program.

Return and Current Residency Rates for IFP Alumni

At this stage in the program, what do the global and regional data show about return and home country residency rates? Seven surveys to track IFP alumni have been carried out since 2004. The trend over time is toward higher overall home country residency rates (including alumni who have returned from abroad and those who studied in their home countries or regions). A 2006 survey based on a sample of over 400 alumni showed that 74 percent of former Fellows were currently residing in their home countries. In early 2007, data provided by the IFP partner organizations for nearly 1,000 alumni showed a return or current residency rate of 77 percent.[2] By September 2007, that percentage increased to 82 percent of alumni currently living in their home country.[3]

The latest 2007 data show that regional differences, previously more pronounced because of a higher percentage of early cohort doctoral Fellows in Africa, have in fact narrowed. Thus, at the time they completed the survey, in mid 2007, 83 percent of the Asia/Russia Fellows, 82 percent of Latin American Fellows, and 80 percent of the Africa Fellows were residing in their home countries after finishing the fellowship. Of these, more than half have returned to their home communities, while roughly 30 percent are living elsewhere in their home countries. Contributing to this percentage is the high proportion of Fellows who study in country and who remain at home: among that group, 97 percent remained in country after concluding the fellowship, and only 3 percent went abroad. Among alumni who studied out of their home region, 75 percent had returned home. Among all former Fellows still living outside their home country, 79 percent were either pursuing advanced academic study or some combination of employment, advanced study, and professional training. Among Asian/Russian and African alumni, women were slightly more

likely to live in another country, while men were more likely to do so among the Latin American alumni. Employment seems to be a major incentive for alumni to return or remain at home, as by far the largest percentage of alumni living in their home country and community—80 percent overall—was employed, self-employed, or engaged in professional training (Enders, Kottmann, and Leisyte 2007, 39–41).

The "Return" Experience

What factors contribute to Fellows' choices to return to their home communities, countries, or regions? How are former Fellows coping with securing employment, professional frustrations, family expectations, or returning to a violent or poor environment? Are they able to overcome these pressures and exercise more authority and responsibility in their professional lives? Are they able to apply their new knowledge to professional and volunteer activities? Success in all these aspects of re-entry will reinforce Fellows' decisions not only to return to but to remain physically located in—or connected to—their home communities, countries, and regions, whether or not they studied abroad.

At first glance, IFP alumni would seem to have the international experience, broad array of skills, and increased level of professional and personal development to remain in, or emigrate to, high-income countries. According to evaluation data collected by the Center for Higher Education Policy Studies (CHEPS), 81 percent of IFP alumni respondents in a 2007 survey "agreed" or "strongly agreed" that the IFP fellowship built their intercultural competencies, and more than three-quarters credited the fellowship with enabling them to establish international contacts and networks and develop social networking and communication skills. On the academic front, 78 percent of alumni felt that the fellowship had enabled them to build their academic reputation, while 74 percent and 73 percent, respectively, reported that the fellowship had helped them to build competencies for scientific work and opened better job opportunities. Overall, about 88 percent of alumni found their study programs very useful for their professional and personal development. At the same time, the alumni gained experience and skills that are directly relevant to their work at home. In the 2007 alumni survey, 79 percent of respondents reported that the fellowships strengthened their commitment to social justice, while 78 percent said it contributed to their ability to improve their home countries and communities (Enders, Kottmann, and Leisyte 2007, 31-37).

From the Fellows' point of view, why have the majority of IFP alumni returned to (or remained in) their home countries and regions? Part of the answer lies in their profound sense of obligation to their home communities and countries. For these alumni, the pull of home is not a negative force, but a highly positive one. They see themselves as individual scholars and/or activists, but also as representatives of their communities. The decision to return home—even if broadly interpreted as encompassing one's home community, country, or region—is not a choice made on strictly personal grounds. Rather, IFP alumni are deeply responsive to their communities' faith in them and prize their ability to "give back." One China Fellow, for example, caught the attention of the Associated Press when she came to the College of St. Rose in upstate New York:

> He Mei's home in rural China had no electricity, and no roads. When she walked over the mountains to school at the beginning of every semester, her older sister escorted her before dawn with a torch. From this remote beginning, Mei has made it to a university in upstate New York. At the end of the year, *Mei will do what few visiting Asian students do* [my italics]. She'll take her new master's degree in educational leadership and go all the way home, not to the booming urban areas that are luring back graduates, but back to the mountains where she started (Anna 2008).

He Mei herself makes the central point: "Others say, 'You deserve not to go back' . . . I say, 'My village deserves me to go back.'" (Anna 2008, 1).

There are many examples of Fellows and alumni who are motivated to return to (or remain in) their home countries because they see themselves as representatives of their communities, entrusted with a special mission. Another reason that emerges is the prospect of immediately putting their studies to good use. Samuel Duo, a Liberian Fellow funded through IFP-Ghana, is a good example. Duo graduated from Pennsylvania State University with a master's degree in agriculture. In an e-mail message to his former school, his enthusiasm about working on major problems with a huge potential payoff is evident. As a program officer for the Social Enterprise Development (SEND) Foundation of West Africa-Liberia Program, Duo works with sixteen organizations. "We are promoting soya beans in Liberia," he says. "Soya bean is a nutritious crop. It is good for children and pregnant women. SEND Foundation will arrange for international market[s] where small-scale

farmers will be able to earn a foreign exchange. This development program will help refugees and internally displaced people affected by the civil war to quickly get established and be able to send their children to school and feed them" (Penn State 2005, 3).[4]

The Fellows' faith in their ability to have a major impact on their home societies comes through clearly in many alumni interviews. A Russian alumna who had completed a master's degree in the United Kingdom a year earlier told CHEPS, "I wanted to come back, to find a position. To be among people, to meet as many as possible, to come close to politics, to change something perhaps. I learned that the attitude to disabled people and to women is not just. So I wanted to participate in politics on a local level and perhaps, well, we will see." When the interviewer asked about her current situation, the alumna replied: "I am a different person. I work as a journalist now. I work with the local TV. I have my own small program. And I work at two local newspapers. I try to participate in politics. I plan to form a party, and we will participate in the elections" (Enders, Kottmann, and Deen 2006, "Interviews" No. 101151).

Many IFP Fellows see themselves as pioneers because they are the first from their countries to acquire expertise in a certain academic field. This is a strong incentive for them to return home, even after prolonged periods of study abroad. One Vietnamese alumna who studied audiology at the University of Iowa in the United States told the CHEPS interviewer that "in Vietnam so far we don't have any well-trained professionals who can [wear the] title of audiologist." As a teacher in Vietnam who did volunteer work with deaf children and their parents, the alumna resolved to study as hard as possible because she would be the "only person from Vietnam to go abroad and . . . study audiology." Once qualified in this field, the Fellow will be in a unique position to develop new research and technologies for hearing-impaired people. Moreover, she will be able to base her work on the Vietnamese language, which is "so different from the overall language that has been used in most of the hearing aid companies" (Enders, Kottman, and Deen 2006, "Interviews"). With such exciting prospects at home, this alumna is unlikely to head elsewhere in the long term.

Fellows who study in their own countries find similar reasons to remain committed to "reference groups" within their home countries. Fellows in this category can also have a strong impact because they achieve success *within* the very social

and educational systems that excluded them in the first place. An example is IFP Fellow Maria das Dores de Oliveira Pankararu, the first indigenous Brazilian to earn a doctoral degree. Maria's successful dissertation defense in linguistics at the Federal University of Alagoas made national headlines since Brazil's roughly 450,000 indigenous peoples barely accede to secondary education. According to the Brazilian Education Ministry, less than 3 percent of all students enrolled in indigenous schools reach the high school level, despite a progressive constitution that protects indigenous rights and a burgeoning indigenous social movement.

Against this backdrop, das Dores' research with the Ofaye Indians in north-central Brazil gains major significance. Her work to create an alphabet and a system to teach the Ofaye language, which has only eleven remaining speakers, will preserve the language as living culture. Moreover, the fact that das Dores herself has attained the pinnacle of Brazilian academic success is a powerful antidote to centuries of stigmatization directed against indigenous people. Das Dores has eagerly adopted this representational role, which goes beyond her own academic work. "The Pankarau are proud of me," she says. "For a lot of people who still have the idea that Indians are incapable, this is a way of showing society that if we are given the opportunity, we will go far" (McMahon 2006, 1).

Each Fellow's story is different, but a common thread emerges from the alumni data and interviews. Most alumni do not see going home (either from abroad or a university elsewhere in their home country or region) as a negative outcome requiring sacrifice of a better career or income to be had elsewhere. On the contrary, most alumni view their return as a positive opportunity to reciprocate the trust placed in them by their communities. Rather than devoting their energies solely to individual career advancement, they are excited as well by the prospect of applying their newly acquired knowledge to chronic problems in their home countries, communities, and regions. These qualities are also found in Fellows who *don't* have to decide whether to return home since they study in their home countries. The choice for these Fellows is whether to remain close to their own culture and not move further from it by virtue of their newfound knowledge and status.

Re-entry Pressures

Despite their best intentions, many alumni face re-integration pressures whether they study abroad or in their home countries or regions. Securing employment is

the paramount issue for many former Fellows. This may be due in part to the fact that nearly one-third of IFP alumni were employed in non-governmental organizations (NGOs) before accepting the fellowship. Typically, these organizations do not hold positions open for employees who leave for extended periods. In the 2007 IFP survey, 36 percent of alumni respondents reported that they returned to their former job or employer, 37 percent reported problems finding an adequate job, and 38 percent spent most of their time immediately after the fellowship searching for a job. For those with employment, most contracts were of relatively short duration, with 57 percent of contracts lasting for less than three years. Other re-entry problems cited frequently by alumni were the high expectations of family members and people around them (37 percent), realizing the plans made before or during the Fellowship (30 percent), applying or implementing the knowledge gained throughout the postgraduate study period (26 percent), becoming recognized as an expert or professional (26 percent), readjusting to life in the home country (26 percent), and reconnecting to old relationships (19 percent) (Enders, Kottman, and Leisyte 2007, 42, 55, 57).

Fortunately, these re-entry pressures fade as former Fellows successfully complete the re-insertion process. The vast majority of alumni find employment, with 87 percent securing positions related to their area of social justice engagement. Many alumni continue their studies, most often for doctoral degrees, while others volunteer in areas such as community development, human rights, the environment, and education. Often alumni combine these activities as they advance professionally in the years beyond the fellowship. For the majority of alumni now at home as well as those who remain abroad, very few are "lost" to the larger purpose of IFP, acquiring advanced education to promote social justice in their home countries and communities.

Evidence for this conclusion is found in data collected in 2007 that show that only 13 percent of alumni respondents spend the majority of their time on another major activity, such as searching for employment, military service, or family and child care. Once employed, IFP alumni are eventually successful in applying the knowledge gained during their academic programs to their paid professional work, with 81 percent indicating that was the case. IFP alumni who pursue additional advanced degrees seek to improve their knowledge in their chosen fields. Most alumni do not view further study as an end itself or a way to increase personal income, but as a

means to assume leadership positions in universities and increase their competencies to become social justice leaders. More than 60 percent of alumni, including two-thirds of those residing in their home countries and half of those living abroad, engage in volunteer work in addition to professional work and/or study. Overall, the profile of IFP alumni that emerges from the survey data is reassuringly similar to the profile of IFP candidates. IFP alumni continue to be extraordinarily active people who assume leadership positions, mobilize and assist others, and volunteer their time. They overwhelmingly acknowledge the importance of the fellowship in increasing their authority and responsibility and in providing them with new opportunities for education and self-knowledge. Most important, the program reinforces their commitment to social justice. In the words of one Peruvian alumnus: "I think that the program reinforces the importance of social work, leadership, and social justice. Before I felt a little insecure with these kinds of things. But the program showed that there are a lot of people who are thinking in the same way. So we are not a small crazy group here in Peru" (Enders, Kottman, and Leisyte 2007, 40–54).

Interviews with alumni provide additional insights into the varied realities behind these general observations. Several patterns emerge. First, as noted above, for many alumni paid employment is only a part of their activities. For them, a good job placement is one that allows them to work on issues similar to those they address through community work or further study. A Brazilian alumna, for example, told the CHEPS interviewer that after completing her master's degree with IFP, she found a new job in a private college. She also works with a community-based NGO on gender violence while pursuing her doctoral degree at her previous university. Holding all these activities together is a continuing preoccupation with the issues that motivated the fellow from the start, "gender, class, and race" (Enders, Kottman, and Deen 2006, "Interviews" No. 100949).

Second, even if they are employed, IFP alumni often feel that their aspirations cannot be fulfilled through an existing job. As a result, they tend to be entrepreneurial and are undaunted by the difficulties inherent in creating something new. Asked what his plans were, a graduate from northeastern India said that along with some of his friends, he planned to start an organization to improve livelihoods in remote areas of his home region. His motivation is the perception that existing organizations are inadequate: "After the flood there are a lot of displaced persons. I see a lot of NGOs, but they do not leave the people in their houses and do not

respect them. I want to change that" (Enders, Kottmann, and Deen 2006, "Interviews" No. 100483).

Many alumni return to their previous jobs and are able to gain rapid promotions because of new skills they acquire during their study programs. One veteran police officer who earned a master's in international criminal law at the University of Sussex in the United Kingdom had worked with the police department in Tanzania for twenty-three years before taking up the fellowship. His position as head of the organized crime section was given to someone else when he left for the United Kingdom, but upon return he became the chief of Interpol Tanzania, in charge of transnational crime and international police cooperation. The alumnus credits his postgraduate study with improving his confidence in areas critical for the new position. "Before I had some skills as a police officer, but I had not exposed myself to . . . transnational things. Now I am well-grounded in all aspects that have to do with international crime. I can easily debate with my colleagues on international crime matters such as genocide, war crimes, crimes against humanity" (Enders, Kottmann, and Deen 2006, "Interviews" No. 101184).

Some former Fellows use their newly acquired expertise to take on multiple roles as researchers, policy makers, and advocates, with impact beyond a single institution or organization. An example is a Chilean Fellow who earned a master's degree in public health at Harvard University. The program taught him "how to see things, how to think about research, how to analyze, and how to intervene." Upon returning to Chile, the alumnus used these skills in his previous university post and also became a health advisor to municipalities covering 700,000 people in the Santiago area. His future plans reflect his enhanced capacity to address public health issues from multiple perspectives: "I would like to develop more research and implement more programs in poor communities in Santiago. Actually my research . . . is related to that, to [help] policy makers to implement more programs on public health." (Enders, Kottmann, and Deen 2006, "Interviews" No. 101208).

Despite these individual successes, no discussion of alumni trajectories would be complete without some recognition that IFP alumni also face continuing pressures that go far beyond the scope of IFP to alleviate. For some, returning home means not just giving up regular income, but returning to poor and often violent conditions. One former Fellow from the Palestinian Territories, a blind woman, describes the environment to which she has returned: "The problem is moving around.

Of course you can't go out of the Gaza Strip; it's closed. And people are getting bombed. Especially people who live in the north of the Gaza Strip are . . . taken out of their houses nearly every day. There is something called the Karni crossing, which is a . . . border for goods. And when it's closed, sometimes there's no food coming in, no medicine coming in . . . People try to manage and go on, but you don't know what could happen the next minute" (Enders, Kottmann, and Deen 2006, "Interviews" No. 100512).

This is an extreme case, but most former Fellows are not exempted from the social injustices they faced before their advanced study: over one-third who returned home reported suffering from discrimination based on poverty, while nearly one-quarter reported negative experiences based on race, ethnicity, gender, living in remote or rural areas, or political discrimination (Enders, Kottmann, and Deen 2006, 54–56). The extent to which the "credentialing effect" of having received a prestigious international fellowship and an advanced degree helps former Fellows to address deeply entrenched patterns of discrimination and disadvantage remains to be seen—and is likely to vary enormously among individuals and their different societies.

IFP Policies and Alumni Activities

IFP is often asked what measures the program takes to guarantee that Fellows return to their home countries. As the preceding analysis makes clear, the IFP selection criteria are in themselves a strategic approach to the "brain drain" problem. In addition, although positions on this matter differ within the program, IFP recognizes that some Fellows, most likely a small minority, will contribute to their home societies from vantage points located outside their countries of origin. For the entire IFP community, the most important long-term result of the fellowship is how each alumnus will interact with his or her "community of reference" and whether this interaction will yield significant "returns." In the short- to medium-term, however, we are mindful of the "pull" factors that encourage former Fellows to remain abroad as well as the "push" factors that discourage their return. We are also increasingly aware of the re-insertion challenges faced by almost all new alumni, whether or not they study abroad.

The program has developed several strategic approaches to help ease the post-fellowship transition period and to provide incentives for alumni to return or remain

at home. First, IFP assists new alumni who are trying to reestablish themselves professionally in their home countries after a prolonged period of study either abroad or closer to home. The International Partners (IPs) and the New York-based IFP Secretariat furnish alumni with practical information about employment and other professional opportunities. Training in project evaluation, fundraising, and communication skills is made available to alumni, and several partners have organized seminars, conferences, and publications featuring alumni contributions. Aside from helping alumni to bridge the gap between their study experience and a new level of professional responsibility, these activities raise the visibility of the IFP alumni in their home countries. The Ford Foundation country offices have cosponsored several of these post-fellowship projects, assisting IFP alumni to expand their professional contacts among the Foundation's local grantee organizations. Finally, many alumni serve as recruiters and selection committee members, ensuring their ongoing contact with the program and enhancing their professional status in their home countries.

Second, the program supports emerging alumni networks and associations in nearly all IFP countries. Increasingly, alumni are designing collaborative activities that provide opportunities for social justice action. For example, the Vietnamese alumni have established an informal association—funded in part through their own contributions—to enable poverty-stricken students to pursue further education. The Mexican alumni have created an association of indigenous researchers to investigate and highlight the conditions for indigenous people in their home communities. Alumni from Kenya, Uganda, and Tanzania have met to form an East African alumni network and explore ways to launch social justice projects for the sub-region. As a start, they have created ingenious, camel-drawn mobile schools that serve poor children from the region's nomadic communities.

To link alumni networks within and among the three IFP "macro-regions" of Africa, Asia, and Latin America, IFP has developed a new program initiative called the Global Leadership for Social Justice Forum (GLSJF). The first event under this umbrella was held in Khon Kaen, Thailand, in January 2008. The meeting, jointly organized by IFP partners from Thailand and Vietnam who selected twenty male and twenty female alumni participants from China, India, Indonesia, the Philippines, Thailand, and Vietnam focused on a development framework known as an "asset-based and community-driven" (ABCD) approach. Working with an international

group of trainers from the Canada-based Coady Institute, which pioneered the ABCD approach, and Khon Kaen University in Thailand, participants shared their own stories of successful development work and visited communities in northeast Thailand while debating the merits of the ABCD model. While providing the alumni with conceptual and practical tools for their locally based development work, the meeting also strengthened their connections at the broader regional level.

Finally, it is important to stress that the organizational structure of IFP is explicitly designed to reinforce Fellows' ties with their home countries and communities of origin. The role played by IFP's International Partners is critical in this regard. Since the IPs are responsible for organizing all phases of the selection process, Fellows begin working with them at the candidate stage. Once Fellows are selected, they spend up to one year collaborating with their respective IPs to secure a university placement. The Fellows' contact with home-based IPs continues throughout the study period as the partner organization provides each fellow with continuous monitoring and support.

In the course of these activities, the home-country "contact person" becomes a sounding board, personal advisor, and "go-to" problem solver. As a result, Fellows remain strongly connected with their home countries, even during long periods abroad or elsewhere in their countries or regions. In addition, the program provides limited supplemental allowances that allow Fellows to stay in contact with their families, participate in professional activities, and conduct field research in their home countries. The IPs are required to approve these requests, giving the program another opportunity to reinforce IFP's "culture of commitment" as Fellows make critical decisions about their future careers and personal plans. Based on feedback so far, we know that IPs can play an important role in the post-fellowship phase by encouraging Fellows to plan earlier and more effectively for the post-fellowship transition.

Conclusion

The impact of IFP will be assessed in multiple ways, among them individual Fellows' academic achievements and their personal and collective contributions to their home communities and countries. We already have outstanding examples of former Fellows who are working in their home countries on many different aspects of development and social justice. There is Virgílio Ek Dzib, from Mexico, working

on food safety and sustainable agricultural initiatives in indigenous communities in Mexico. There is Augustina Naami, from Ghana, working in her country's poor Northern Region as a gender program officer for the NGO Action on Disability and Development and helping individuals who face the "triple disadvantage" of being poor, disabled, and female. And there is Le Dan Bach Viet, from Vietnam, who is teaching visually impaired people in Ho Chi Minh City to use sensory and cognitive information and travel devices to function safely and independently. This list could be extended to include over 1,450 alumni who have successfully concluded the IFP program—each with his or her own personal trajectory.

In five to ten years we will have a clearer idea of how IFP Fellows are able to influence the course of development in their home countries and regions. Undoubtedly, some of them will become players on a larger international stage, contributing to broader debates about the major issues of our time—and theirs. For now, however, we can already see that the vast majority of IFP Fellows who have completed the program so far are returning to or remaining in their home countries and communities. Once there, they are on the whole finding or creating jobs consistent with their professional skills and aspirations. A significant portion of former Fellows continue their studies, and a majority—whether at home or abroad—are engaged in volunteer activities. Despite some short-term problems and having to face deep-seated discrimination and other continuing social pressures, the IFP alumni are delivering on their promise of improving the lives and livelihoods of those around them. Although these results are still largely incipient, their communities—broadly defined as both communities of origin and communities of reference—are beginning to realize the "returns" of the IFP fellowship.

Notes

1 The higher percentage of doctoral Fellows in Africa and the Middle East reflects the distribution of degrees in selections held between 2001 and 2003, before IFP limited the percentage of three-year contracts on a site-by-site basis.

2 Response rates on alumni surveys carried out by the Center for Higher Education Policy Studies (CHEPS) and by the IFP Secretariat vary from 36 to 66 percent. These rates are equal to or in excess of typical tracer study response rates, which have been reported at 30 to 40 percent. In 2007, the IFP Secretariat instituted an "alumni census," which compiles alumni data provided directly by the International Partners and is therefore based on a head count rather than voluntary survey responses. Starting in 2007, a joint CHEPS-IFP alumni survey has been carried out annually.

3 These results are based on the 2007 joint CHEPS-IFP alumni survey of a sample of 613 alumni who finished their fellowship in the years 2003–2006 (response rate of 53 percent).

4 Samuel Duo's case represents the impact of academic success on Fellows' mobility patterns. In 2008, Duo was nominated for a prestigious University Fellowship at Pennsylvania State University, where he had completed his IFP-supported master's degree. If awarded, the University Fellowship would support Duo's doctoral studies at Penn State.

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CHAPTER 11

Beyond Measure: Fellowships and Social Justice

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The unique IFP selection model—described at length in the preceding case studies—has reached deeply into marginalized and excluded communities. Throughout Africa, Asia, Latin America, and Russia, IFP has broken new ground in selecting talented individuals whose academic achievement and potential may set them apart from many other members of their communities, but whose lives are intertwined with those social groups through their leadership capacity and social commitment. From the outset, the stated goal of the program has been to have a long-term impact on those communities as Fellows return home with new knowledge and skills and a renewed commitment to social justice.

Yet is an individual scholarship program an effective strategy if the desired result is social justice? Would funds be better spent on more direct interventions, providing credit in poor communities, for example, or supporting women's organizations to fight against domestic violence? Even in the educational field, would funds be better allocated to academic institutions rather than to individuals? These counter-factual questions are impossible to answer since the contrasting options are not comparable, and no "control" projects are in place to test a central hypothesis about which programs are most effective and by what measures.

Nonetheless, the history of IFP demonstrates that such programs can have substantial impact that transcends individual beneficiaries, even in a relatively short time. In 2001, IFP began to dedicate substantial resources so that disadvantaged groups would have access to postgraduate education. As we have seen, the process of providing access mobilized energies and gave hope to many people beyond those selected as Fellows. Within a few years, the academic success of these diverse

Fellows began to challenge the presumption that the disadvantaged cannot benefit from educational opportunities, including in prestigious international universities. As numbers of alumni have grown, their deepening dedication to their communities proves that there is collective return on the investment in individuals; and, as they have returned home, they have also challenged the prevailing pessimistic view of "brain drain." Finally, we are beginning to see how the success of IFP is helping to transform institutional practices in both universities and other fellowship programs.

In contrast to fellowship programs such as Fulbright or Rhodes, which have operated for many decades and have come to signify the highest academic quality, IFP is new in the international fellowship marketplace. Nonetheless, the program's substantial achievements suggest that IFP has successfully pioneered a new "social justice" model for international fellowship programs.

Academic Success

In making this claim, we assert that social justice is not merely a philosophical abstraction, but a dynamic process that produces tangible results. These results have flowed from the program itself, which has mobilized broad support for the powerful idea that postgraduate fellowships can be used to redress exclusion and marginalization. Commitments to social justice are reflected in the Fellows' fields of study, which tend to cluster in the broad areas of environment and health, human rights and law, education, the social sciences, development, and arts and humanities. Even Fellows working in more academic settings or in the arts are typically concerned with questions of identity, culture, and knowledge; as alumni, these individuals often combine academic or artistic work with activism on behalf of their communities.

Basic quantitative indicators such as the number of selections held, the number of candidates recruited, and the percentage of female Fellows attest to the viability of the selection model, the strong demand it has generated, and the capacity of the program to ensure gender equity. The program performs extremely well on these measures, both on its own terms and in relation to other international fellowship programs (Enders, Kottman, and Deen 2006, 67). An ambitious annual selection schedule involving up to twenty-one countries in Africa, Asia, Latin America, and Russia has been maintained from 2001 to 2008, producing approximately 500 new

Fellows per year for a total of nearly 3,000 Fellows to date. Over 55,000 completed applications and tens of thousands more inquires have been received worldwide, indicating that the program has generated a new demand among its non-traditional target groups. And despite variation at the country level, the program has maintained near gender parity at both the regional and global levels, with a total thus far of 49 percent women and 51 percent male Fellows.

These data demonstrate that news about the program has reached tens of thousands of people around the world. Each year thousands of potential candidates listen to radio announcements, read advertisements in local newspapers, and learn about the program on the Internet or through their colleagues, friends, and neighbors. Around the world, hundreds of professionals and advocates participate in outreach and recruitment and in selection panels, in the process building extensive networks of universities, public agencies, NGOs, and community organizations to promote and endorse the idea that post-graduate education need not be limited to national elites. The success of non-traditional candidates in IFP competitions reinforces this idea, creating a new kind of legitimacy for people from remote rural areas, for example, or from religious and ethnic minorities.

Individuals with physical disabilities—seen not as a medical issue but as a question of civil and human rights—are more marginalized than most. Yet members of these groups are not excluded or discouraged from applying for a prestigious international scholarship because such opportunities are "not for people like them." Approximately 4 percent of IFP Fellows live with physical disabilities, a direct result of IFP's proactive recruiting policies in this area. The virtually equal participation of women in the program, for its part, has had an empowering effect on female candidates, who see female Fellows as compelling role models. With each successive generation of candidates, awareness of the social justice issues IFP is designed to address—equity and access and inclusion and exclusion in higher education—spreads to many levels of society.

The academic success of Fellows is a vital part of the dynamic process of working toward social justice. By its very nature, the program addresses the shibboleth that members of marginalized and excluded groups are unable to meet the challenges of highly competitive postgraduate programs. In this specious formulation, increasing access to higher education inevitably results in lower academic standards; diversity, the argument goes, leads to a loss of quality. The decades-long experience

with affirmative action in the United States effectively dispels this myth, although it persists for political reasons. Variations on this theme have emerged in a variety of international contexts, seen, for example, in the justifications for strict entrance requirements to elite local institutions and in the narrowly defined, merit-based selection criteria for awarding prestigious national or international fellowships, both of which are seen as bulwarks against a decline in academic quality. In practice, these requirements are barriers to greater participation by members of groups lacking systematic access to high-quality primary and secondary education, which is a result of living in remote areas; gender, racial, ethnic, or religious discrimination; and other negative factors.

In most developing countries (and some would argue in the United States as well), the formal education system does not redress social inequality within the broader society. On the contrary, unless extraordinary measures are taken, educational systems typically reinforce preexisting social stratification. In this context, the articulation of the central goal of more equitable distribution of educational opportunity may be even more important than the actual numbers of Fellows. Even in countries where official policy promotes educational opportunity for disadvantaged or marginalized groups, such as Brazil, India, or South Africa, IFP stands out for its focus on promoting access to postgraduate education and for digging deeper to find talented candidates from marginalized or excluded communities. Despite skepticism about their academic qualifications, these Fellows are competitive with, and in some cases outperform, their more privileged peers. Their high academic performance definitively rebuts the often tacit argument that greater inclusiveness will cause a decline in academic quality at prestigious educational institutions.

Since IFP's inaugural competitions in 2001, nearly 3000 Fellows have been selected. Virtually all those selected report that poverty was the single most formidable obstacle to their pursuit of higher education; over two-thirds are from rural areas or small towns; and over three-quarters are first-generation university students. Among the 2007 Fellows, for example, 55 percent have mothers who did not advance beyond primary school or had no formal schooling at all (Enders, Kottman, and Leisyte 2007, 11). Nearly all IFP Fellows receive educational advising, academic orientation, and training as needed in foreign languages, academic writing, research, and computer skills. With this reinforcement, virtually one hundred percent of those who apply to postgraduate programs have been successfully placed

in over 500 high-quality universities in more than forty countries. Among Fellows with contracts, 98 percent complete their fellowships in good academic standing, and even the 2 percent who interrupt their studies say they plan to continue. Over 85 percent of alumni complete their degrees, the majority within the fellowship period (Enders, Kottman, and Leisyte 2007, 27). Fellows studying in their home countries tend to take longer to finish their degrees, and nearly 60 percent of the IFP doctoral Fellows complete their degrees after the end of the fellowship. Nonetheless, IFP's overall degree completion rate is comparable to that of other major international fellowship programs, which report degree attainment rates between 79 and 90 percent (Enders, Kottman, and Leisyte 2007, 67).

The Alumni

IFP Fellows are chosen in part on the basis of their engagement with social justice. While it is not possible to argue that their fellowships provided the decisive impetus for their continuing engagement with those issues, alumni themselves overwhelmingly report that their experiences as Fellows provided them with vital new skills, knowledge, networks, and confidence in their capacity to effect change. "Empowerment" is a word that alumni often use to describe what they have gained; although their aspirations may not have changed, they believe that they are in a stronger position to achieve their goals.

It is equally important to note that international study, in this case, is not contributing to "brain drain"; indeed, IFP's high return rates provide a striking counterargument to the widespread assumption that study abroad inevitably drains talent. On the contrary, as we have seen, 82 percent of 1,500 IFP alumni to date currently reside in their home countries and regions (Enders, Kottman, and Leisyte 2007, 38), an emphatic validation of selection criteria that assess candidates on the strength of their commitment to their respective "communities of reference." This commitment sustains the Fellows throughout their study experience, whether in their home countries or abroad, and guides their post-fellowship trajectories. Surveys and interviews show that some alumni face difficulties in securing employment commensurate with their training after completing their studies, and others who obtain new positions or return to former jobs may not be able to apply their recently acquired skills and knowledge to the extent they had envisioned. Nonetheless, over time most former Fellows not only achieve greater professional status but also deepen

their social justice engagement, both in paid positions and as volunteers. Most of the alumni who remain abroad for further study or professional training report continuing involvement in social justice issues (Enders, Kottman, and Leisyte 2007, 42). Often, this work enables former Fellows to provide services to immigrant and refugee communities from their home countries or regions.

Two newly initiated IFP research projects, one in Mexico and the other in China, investigate alumni trajectories in greater detail. Although still in their initial stages, the central hypothesis of both projects is that the fellowship helps alumni to realize their potential as "social justice" leaders, not in a unitary sense but from diverse vantage points as researchers, activists, and public officials, among many other social roles. Prior research on IFP alumni shows that they engage with, found, and lead organizations and institutions devoted to a range of social justice and development projects in areas such as community health, community economic development, protecting women's rights, and designing bilingual education curricula for public schools. The data confirm, for example, that 87 percent of alumni report that their employment is related to social justice concerns or community service (Enders, Kottman, and Leisyte 2007, 42).

Over time, as former Fellows find stable employment and advance in their individual careers, their contributions to social justice will develop. Yet another dimension of the alumni contribution is already evident. Alumni associations, networks, and group activities have the potential to increase the impact of individual former Fellows, especially when the groups focus on issues of great concern in their home country. The Vietnam alumni are a case in point. Until they are able to register as a formal association and raise funds publicly, the "Water Lilies" alumni group has relied on members' donations to create a fund that supports poor college students who would otherwise have to drop out of their programs. In addition, IFP alumni have made personal donations to a "charity fund" to provide ten kilos of rice per month to the most vulnerable group of HIV-AIDS patients in Vietnam's Bac Lieu province.[1]

In a different vein, IFP alumni in Mexico have formed the country's first Association of Indigenous Researchers. For the first time in Mexico—a country with a well-established social science and policy research community—an Association will enable highly trained indigenous researchers to develop collective policy responses to deeply entrenched social problems based on the researchers' personal knowledge

of indigenous communities rather than outsiders' views. And in another part of the world, a project developed by the Kenyan alumni to improve primary schools in nomadic communities is acquiring impact and visibility in the East African region as the Kenyan alumni exchange project ideas with their counterparts in Uganda and Tanzania.

Catalyzing Change: Universities and Fellowship Programs

Perhaps the greatest potential role of a program such as IFP is as a catalyst for institutional change, especially in universities and other fellowship programs. Given the intense competition in the world of international education, are the producers of knowledge meeting the needs of the market? If we define the "market" as a social as well as economic market, how can we ensure that some common practices are modified to respond to new demands and new student constituencies? Especially if universities are serious about embracing students from less privileged backgrounds, what kinds of support—such as pre-academic training programs—must they be willing to provide? Can universities be persuaded to reconsider those screens and barriers that perpetuate exclusion, such as "gold standard" forms of language competency testing that were developed at a time when questions of access were not on the table and when transnational flows of students were far less significant?

Although eschewing a fixed set of universities at the outset, IFP over time has developed "strategic partnerships" with some fifty universities around the world. The partnerships arose organically as IFP identified institutions with a similar mission to serve underrepresented students. To achieve that mission, the universities have had to be willing to make their admissions procedures more flexible to accommodate unconventional Fellows. They have had to recognize that the Fellows' educational gaps, in areas such as quantitative skills or English language, reflected their poor preparation, not a lack of aptitude. They have had to provide preparatory courses while "mainstreaming" Fellows into their postgraduate degree programs and not lengthening the time-to-degree beyond the fellowship period. They have had to provide personal and professional counseling that helped Fellows to bridge the enormous gulf between their home environments and the university setting and culture, even for Fellows studying in their own country or region. They have had to confront health issues that went far beyond conventional problems, reflecting the needs of a population that had lacked adequate medical care. And perhaps

most important, IFP's partner universities have had to recognize that Fellows bring unique experience and knowledge to their postgraduate programs. Handled well, these assets could be a tremendous benefit to other, more traditional students.

In the United States, both public and private universities have demonstrated their willingness to take on these challenges. An outstanding example is the East-West Center (EWC) located on the campus of the University of Hawaii, Manoa, and described in Chapter 9. By the end of 2007, the EWC had hosted more than one hundred IFP Fellows, more than half of whom had completed their fellowship. From the start, EWC understood that the center would have to represent IFP Fellows to graduate committees in specific University of Hawaii departments, to explain the Fellows' academic dossiers and to help the departments understand the highly selective nature of the IFP competition and its mix of academic and non-academic selection criteria. This contextualization has encouraged faculty and administrators to make conditional admissions, if necessary, and take risks in admitting Fellows with lower than required levels of English, for example. The combination of conditional admissions where needed, pre-enrollment training, and ongoing monitoring has led to outstanding academic results, further reinforcing the perception that admitting "non-traditional" IFP Fellows was well worth the risk.

A similar process has unfolded at Brandeis University in Massachusetts and at the University of Birmingham in the United Kingdom. Most of the fifty-six Fellows admitted to Brandeis have pursued or are pursuing master's degrees in the Sustainable International Development Program at the Heller School for Social Policy. As in Hawaii, the success of these Fellows is a result of their individual efforts, but also ongoing support from admissions personnel, faculty, and staff. At the University of Birmingham, sixty-six IFP Fellows have been admitted, and the International Development and Mobility Office has played a key role in channeling admissions and in helping to establish a range of academic and personal support services. In these cases as well as at other partner universities, IFP has leveraged significant cost sharing, from 20 to 50 percent or more of tuition costs and totaling $11 million to date. Clearly, IFP's partner universities are willing to invest their human and financial resources in these Fellows.

These experiences with a network of partner universities demonstrate that in all world regions, high-quality postgraduate programs and institutions can be found that are committed to teaching (and learning from) non-traditional students.

Whether public or private, in the global North or South, these universities are increasingly attuned to the challenges of inclusion. The key factor in addressing these challenges is the institutional will to introduce flexibility into the university's standard operations, based on its potential benefits. In the competitive higher education marketplace, diversification allows universities to identify and serve new constituencies. Eventually, outreach to new publics will result in more profound changes, such as new curricula and faculty that respond to a larger range of intellectual and societal issues. A case in point is the University of Chile, which has hosted thirty IFP Fellows from throughout the Latin American region. The indigenous Fellows from Chile's Mapuche communities, which had never before constituted a significant presence on the campus, have stimulated the university to include new offerings in indigenous languages and bilingual education. Overall, the IFP experience suggests that universities can and must play a central role in developing and implementing inclusionary policies, and when they do that effectively, the institutions realize substantial benefits.

To what extent is the IFP model replicable? Although it is impossible to predict longer-term outcomes, it is apparent that other international fellowship programs are beginning to draw on aspects of the model and to embrace its goals. A recently signed agreement between the Chilean Ministry of Planning (Mideplan) and the Fundación Equitas, the IFP partner for Chile and Peru, establishes the terms of cooperation between IFP in Chile and the Chilean Presidential Scholarship Program (Becas Presidente de la República), widely recognized as the country's most prestigious publicly funded international scholarship program. It stipulates that the Fundación Equitas will collaborate with the Ministry to strengthen postgraduate studies in foreign universities for Chilean Presidential Scholars and outreach and promotion activities for both programs.

The Mideplan-Equitas agreement is evidence that in Chile, at least, the national government recognizes the value and feasibility of IFP's approach and is prepared to replicate key elements of the program on a larger scale with public funds. Elsewhere, other forms of cooperation are emerging with international donors, at various scales. In Guatemala, for example, the Soros Foundation, with funds from the Swedish and Danish national development agencies, asked the IFP partner, the Center for Mesoamerican Studies (CIRMA), to design and implement a one-year scholarship program in agrarian and labor law. In Brazil and Mexico, U.S.

government-sponsored Fulbright programs have collaborated with IFP to increase their sponsorship of indigenous and Afro-descendant leaders, who constitute the majority of IFP Fellows from Latin America.

Other programs are preparing to launch. The Ford Foundation's China office is working with Beijing Normal University to support an in-country Master's program borrowing IFP's innovative selection model and its demonstration of "not only what to do to help people in need, but also how to do that properly." The program officer views IFP as a large-scale pilot program for China shedding light on how to "avoid mishaps" in designing the new China Fellows Program (He Jin 2008, 1). In India, private sector philanthropy has begun to express interest in utilizing lessons from IFP to extend access to excluded groups in international postgraduate education (Maksukhani 2008, 1). And in Cairo, the president of the American University in Cairo reports that an undergraduate scholarship program at the university was "inspired in part by IFP, in the sense that we were focused specifically on selecting students from less privileged backgrounds who had a strong commitment to Egypt's future social and economic development" (Arnold 2008, 1). These examples suggest that there is the potential to create different kinds of fellowship programs in which both the goals and the practices of IFP may serve, in different ways depending on the context, as models.

Conclusion

Since 2001, tens of thousands of hopeful candidates, dozens of selection committee members, and hundreds of university faculty and staff in countries throughout the world have mobilized on behalf of a powerful idea—that a scholarship program can contribute to social justice. Like other programs infused with a social mission, IFP has had its critics. In an article published in 2003, shortly after the selection and placement of the first groups of Fellows, the president of the Academic Cooperation Association in Brussels rejected the notion that scholarship programs will produce social change. "I don't think we're going to change the world using scholarship programs," he said. "That is up in the clouds. That would be overestimating not only scholarship programs but academia" (Rocca 2003, 2).

According to a recent study of international postgraduate programs for scholars from developing countries conducted for the Bureau and Secretariat for University Development Cooperation of the Flemish Interuniversity Council, nearly

all governments that fund scholarships have reasons that transcend the provision of academic training. The Netherlands Fellowship Programmes are funded from development cooperation funds and are meant to "help decrease trained manpower shortages" in developing countries. Norwegian government programs are intended to provide students from developing countries with "relevant education that would also benefit their home countries when they return after graduation." Scholarship programs funded with Danish development cooperation funds are meant to "facilitate capacity building in program cooperation countries," while in Germany, government programs are focused on "poverty reduction, socio-economic development, development of future leaders, individual capacity building and strengthening of international and academic scientific relations." A mix of similar objectives to build human capacity, foster leadership and development, and improve international relations is the intent of large-scale scholarship programs funded by the Australian Aid Agency, the Canadian International Development Agency, and the World Bank (Boeren et al. 2008, 6–9).

With differing emphases, all these scholarship programs are predicated on an underlying theory of social change. IFP, with its stated goal of reaching out to members of marginalized and excluded communities who demonstrate outstanding social commitment and leadership potential, has perhaps the most explicit focus on using the program itself as a vehicle for social justice. It is too soon to determine whether this is a viable theory of social change and whether the investment in individual Fellows and alumni as well as the IFP model will help redress social injustices or produce broader policy changes in international education. As the case studies in this volume demonstrate, calibrating effective strategies to reach those ambitious goals is a formidable challenge for which there is no uniform solution. On the contrary, each country and sub-region has a different starting point, or origin. Like the journeys of the Fellows, the roads to more inclusive higher education systems diverge, and the returns in some cases may be incomplete or ambiguous. Nonetheless, the story of IFP provides compelling reasons why the journey is worth making and why the returns, both anticipated and not, will be worthwhile.

Notes

1 In certain contexts current Fellows have also mobilized to provide aid: Kenyan students at Brandeis University, for example, raised more than $2,000 to help those affected by election-related violence in Kenya in 2008.

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APPENDIX

International Partner Organizations

Brazil
Carlos Chagas Foundation (CCF)

Chile
Fundación Equitas

China
Institute of International Education–China

Egypt
America-Mideast Educational and Training Services (AMIDEAST)

Ghana
Association of African Universities (AAU)

Guatemala
Center for Research on the Mesoamerica Region (CIRMA)

India
United States Educational Foundation in India (USEFI)

Indonesia
Institute of International Education (IIE)

Kenya
Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE)

Mexico
Institute of International Education (IIE)
Center for Research and Higher Education in Social Anthropology (CIESAS)

Mozambique
Africa-America Institute (AAI)

Nigeria
Pathfinder International

Palestinian Territories
America-Mideast Educational and Training Services (AMIDEAST)

Peru
Fundación Equitas, with the Institute of Peruvian Studies

Philippines
Philippines Social Science Council (PSSC)

Russia
Institute of International Education (IIE)

Senegal
West African Research Center (WARC)

South Africa
Africa-America Institute (AAI)

Tanzania
Economic Social Research Foundation (ESRF)

Thailand
Asian Scholarship Foundation (ASF)

Uganda
Association for the Advancement of Higher Education and Development (AHEAD)

Vietnam
American Council of Learned Societies (ACLS)
Center for Educational Exchange with Vietnam (CEEVN)

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