

**Social Inclusion in International Higher Education
and Leadership for Social Justice:**

**The Approach and Achievements of the Ford Foundation International
Fellowships Program (IFP)**

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Introduction: IFP in Context

There is no question that international student mobility has transformed the international higher education landscape in recent decades. It has brought diverse benefits to students, institutions, communities and countries. At the student level, these include enhanced future employability, personal development, language acquisition and greater intercultural sensitivity—all seen as advantages in today’s globalized world. For the sending countries, the opportunity for the ‘best and the brightest’ to study at the world’s great universities holds the promise that they will return with greater expertise and knowledge of diverse languages, cultures and business methods, thus increasing their countries’ competitive edge in the interconnected world economy. For the host countries and universities, international students have become a fiercely contested source of ‘brain gain’ as well as income. Such expectations have also been fueled by the explosive growth of foreign students at the tertiary level. According to OECD and UNESCO data, the number of foreign tertiary students enrolled outside their country of citizenship more than quadrupled over the past three decades, increasing from 0.8 million in 1975 to 4.1 million in 2010 (OECD 2012).

Despite this trend, international higher education has by no means become broadly accessible. Even within Europe, where a period abroad during university study is now a centerpiece of European higher education policy, the quantitative goal of one in five students having studied abroad before graduation has not been met. In the United States, international education organizations have promoted study abroad programs for decades. While the absolute number of U.S. students who studied abroad has more than tripled over the past two decades, in 2010/2011 it totaled just 1.4 percent of the total U.S. higher education population (IIE 2012). At the global level, mobility is exercised by only 2 percent of students, ten times less than the

recommended European one-in-five benchmark (OECD 2012). Except for some major sending countries in Asia, access to international higher education remains limited for many parts of the global South.

Within the highly restricted universe of international higher education, access is further circumscribed not only by financial factors but also by students' socio-economic background. Foreign enrollment in Europe is socially selective, with the educational level of one's parents a key predictor of the next generation's access to international study. In the U.S., recent research indicates that race, ethnicity and socioeconomic factors inhibit participation in study abroad programs (Beerkens 2012). Students from developing countries face similar constraints but with the added obstacles posed by marked disparities in access to quality education at all levels and few opportunities for fully funded international study (Volkman et al. 2009).

If educational mobility is only for a selected few and global student flows are still marked by regional and socio-economic disparities, can more diverse socio-economic groups from the global South successfully participate in international higher education? How could a fellowship program support such participation, and what types of institutional and financial arrangements would it require?

The experience of IFP, discussed below, demonstrates that wider inclusion of excluded social groups in international higher education can be achieved with no loss of academic quality. Results based on selection, placement and academic attainment of IFP Fellows show that members of groups underrepresented in higher education can achieve success in a variety of educational systems. In addition, by targeting fellowships to candidates committed to development and social justice, IFP demonstrates that educational opportunity is an important path not only to individual advancement but broader social change.

The Founding Ideas and the Architecture of IFP

In November 2000, the Ford Foundation approved the creation of the Ford Foundation International Fellowships Program (IFP). Funded for ten years, IFP was intended to provide postgraduate fellowships for individuals from 22 countries including Russia and countries in

Asia, Africa and the Middle East, and Latin America where the Foundation had long-standing programs. The program was funded by a \$280 million grant, the single largest donation in the Foundation’s history. In 2006, the Ford Foundation pledged an additional \$75 million in supplementary funds, allowing IFP to award about 820 additional fellowships beyond the original projections. In selections held between 2001 and 2010, the program awarded a total of more than 4,300 fellowships for masters (82 percent of the Fellows) and doctoral degrees (18 percent of the Fellows). Fellows undertook studies in a variety of academic fields in the arts and humanities, the social and behavioral sciences, and in environment, health and applied sciences. As of October 2012, nearly 3,800 IFP Fellows had completed their fellowships at 550 universities in 45 host countries, while 521 Fellows were enrolled at 162 universities in 29 host countries.

Figure 1. Selected IFP Fellows by Country



The IFP design is based on a model that is strategically different from other international scholarships. Two key principles address critical areas in the cycle of access and equity in (international) education, socio-economic development and social justice in the global South. First, IPF assumes that students from marginalized groups can succeed academically in highly competitive international programs. This refutes the assumption that academic ability is restricted to those who have enjoyed prior access to high quality education. Second, by targeting fellowships to candidates committed to development and social justice, IFP aims to

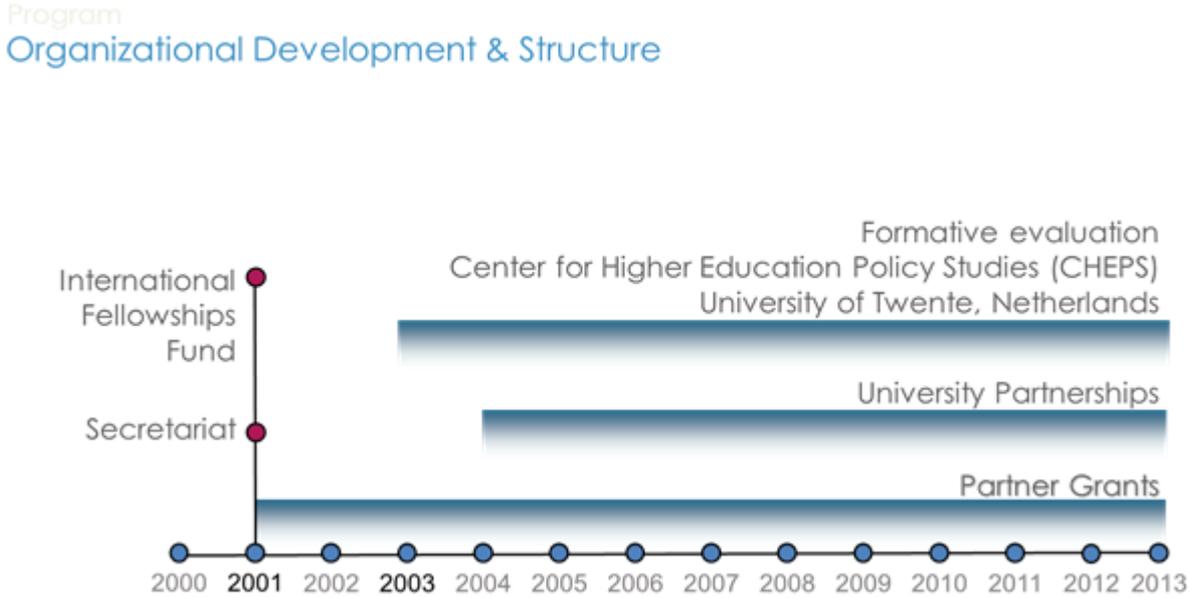
demonstrate that educational opportunity helps build leadership for social justice and thus contributes to broader social change.

From the beginning, IFP saw itself as much more than an international scholarship program. Rather, it was intended as a social justice program that would operate through higher education. This orientation is consistent with the overall goals of the Ford Foundation, IFP's sponsoring organization, but also with a philosophy that regards educational opportunity as a powerful way to reduce inequality and increase social cohesion in societies marked by high degrees of social inequality.

Achieving its ambitious goals required IFP to adopt an innovative approach to a myriad of design and implementation challenges. The program developed a multi-actor structure encompassing the local, national and regional/international level in order to address the multiple needs of IFP's target groups, Fellows, and Alumni. The program architecture included the International Fellowships Fund (IFF), a separate legal entity, which acted as the principal grantee for the program and made sub-grants from the Ford Foundation funds for IFP to various organizations. IFF hosted the IFP Secretariat, based in New York, which developed the program's global parameters and set policy guidelines for the program as a whole. International Partners (IPs)—a diverse set of local, regional and international organizations based in the participating countries—were another key element of the program's architecture. The IPs played a crucial role in the local program design, in the outreach, selection, pre-academic training and monitoring of Fellows during their study programs, and in Alumni-related activities. International placement organizations provided placement and monitoring services to Fellows based on their international study region.

Over time, IFP established special relationships with a number of universities around the globe hosting its Fellows. These partner universities provided tailored support in managing the application, admissions, visa and orientation process. They expanded their services for international students, and advocated new approaches to on-campus orientation, living arrangements, counseling services, tutoring and emergency support.

Figure 2. Organizational Development and Structure of IFP



Because the program design was so experimental, IFP also took the unusual step of incorporating a formal evaluation strategy from the outset. In 2002, the IFP contacted the Center for Higher Education Policy Studies (CHEPS) at the University of Twente, the Netherlands, to develop and undertake a formative evaluation of its program development and outcomes (Enders & de Boer 2003). Intended to accompany the program over a decade of operations, the long-term CHEPS study enabled IFP to make ongoing improvements. It also provided data and analyses that could be used for a subsequent summative evaluation.

The methodology for the CHEPS study was primarily based on asking the actors involved about their activities, experiences and backgrounds through questionnaire-based surveys. The evaluation team conducted interviews with Fellows and analyzed program documents. Participatory observation (e.g. in various types of meetings, international conferences, site visits, etc.) was also used to gain insight into the program. Between 2004 and 2012 CHEPS conducted eight surveys of selected Finalists, four surveys of active Fellows, three surveys of program partners, and six Alumni surveys. Response rates were between 53 percent and 100 percent. For the Alumni, we calculate that approximately 75 percent of more than 3,200 Alumni had responded to at least one survey by early 2012.

In the following sections, we will look at results from the most important stages in the IFP program in the light of selected findings of the CHEPS evaluation study. We address the following questions:

- (1) Was IFP able to define, reach and select its global target group(s) in the context of national/regional circumstances?
- (2) Did pre-academic training and placement lead to successful post-graduate experiences and outcomes?
- (3) Did the fellowship and post-graduate experience and outcomes lead IFP Alumni into successful professional careers?
- (4) Are IFP Alumni motivated and enabled to use their education and career to promote social justice?

Taken together, the findings from nearly a decade of continuous evaluation provide us with data-based evidence of how the program performed at the global level on each of its key dimensions. This evidence, in turn, allows us to reflect on the extent to which the program achieved its primary goals, demonstrated the validity of its underlying assumptions, and highlighted the relevance of its basic philosophy to broader issues of social change.

Defining ‘Disadvantage’ and ‘Leadership for Social Justice’:

Target Group Definition, Outreach and Selection of IFP Candidates

Attracting and selecting the most eligible candidates as variously defined by IFP partners around the world was the first major challenge. IFP aimed at excluded social groups in the participating countries but intentionally did not apply a universal standard set of criteria for defining the target group characteristics. Instead, the program employed an intensive, iterative process of consultation in each country or sub-region to discuss the nature of access to higher education and to identify target groups and communities that lack systematic access to higher education. Defining the target groups of IFP, therefore, was a complex and multi-level process that included ongoing reflection within countries as well as further refinement at regional and sub-regional meetings.

IFP partners developed a variety of methods to investigate the nature of access and exclusion from higher education in their specific social settings. These included secondary analysis of available statistics and research findings, consultation with national and international experts, round-tables with leaders from higher education and government, and dialogues with non-governmental organizations and social movements. In some countries reference could be made to generally accepted definitions of marginalization and legally enforced policies of anti-discrimination, while others had to produce new baseline data and policy analyses because issues of access and equity in higher education were not on the agenda of either researchers or policy makers.

Intense discussion led an Asian IP, for example, to determine that the most underrepresented people in higher education came from ethnic minorities living in mountainous regions and in remote and rural areas. Among these groups, women were more disadvantaged than men. Another IP, from Africa, developed guidelines for target group definition that included nomadic tribes characterized by perennial poverty and deep cultural biases against higher education for females. In Latin America, most IPs targeted groups that had very limited access to higher education because they were residents of remote areas, and came from indigenous or Afro-Latin American ethnic-racial groups that had suffered centuries of discrimination.

What can be said beyond the diversity of contexts and conditions is that poverty, coming from/living in a remote/rural area, and race or ethnicity and gender were important 'exclusion factors' that impeded candidates' access to higher education in nearly all cases. Overall, IFP targeted countries with very limited and socially biased access to higher education. Within these countries, moreover, the program focused on groups and communities that were more marginalized than the average population.

The International Partners undertook frequent outreach activities and used multiple mechanisms to reach their target groups, sometimes under difficult national and local circumstances. After the initial selection rounds, IPs invested considerable effort in reaching farther into remote or rural areas and toward marginalized groups. The integration of IFP Alumni into the outreach process was another element of pro-active program development. Outreach turned out to be very successful in regions ranging from the Anambra State in

Southeastern Nigeria, the Mixtec Indian community in Mexico and China's Guizhou Province. These efforts demonstrated that there was a significant demand for post-graduate education among these groups. With nearly 80,000 applications since its inception, IFP attracted many more applications than it could support. The program thus maintained high selectivity, with an overall selection rate of five percent.

Having recruited candidates from its locally defined target groups, the International Partners organized selections in accordance with IFP's global guidelines. Selection criteria were expected to reflect social exclusion as well as academic readiness and potential, social commitment indicated by diverse forms of community service, and leadership capability and qualities. This comprehensive approach was designed to lower the risk of 'brain drain'. Having completed their study programs, the Fellows were expected to resume their work as social justice leaders with a higher level of skills, knowledge, and 'social capital'.

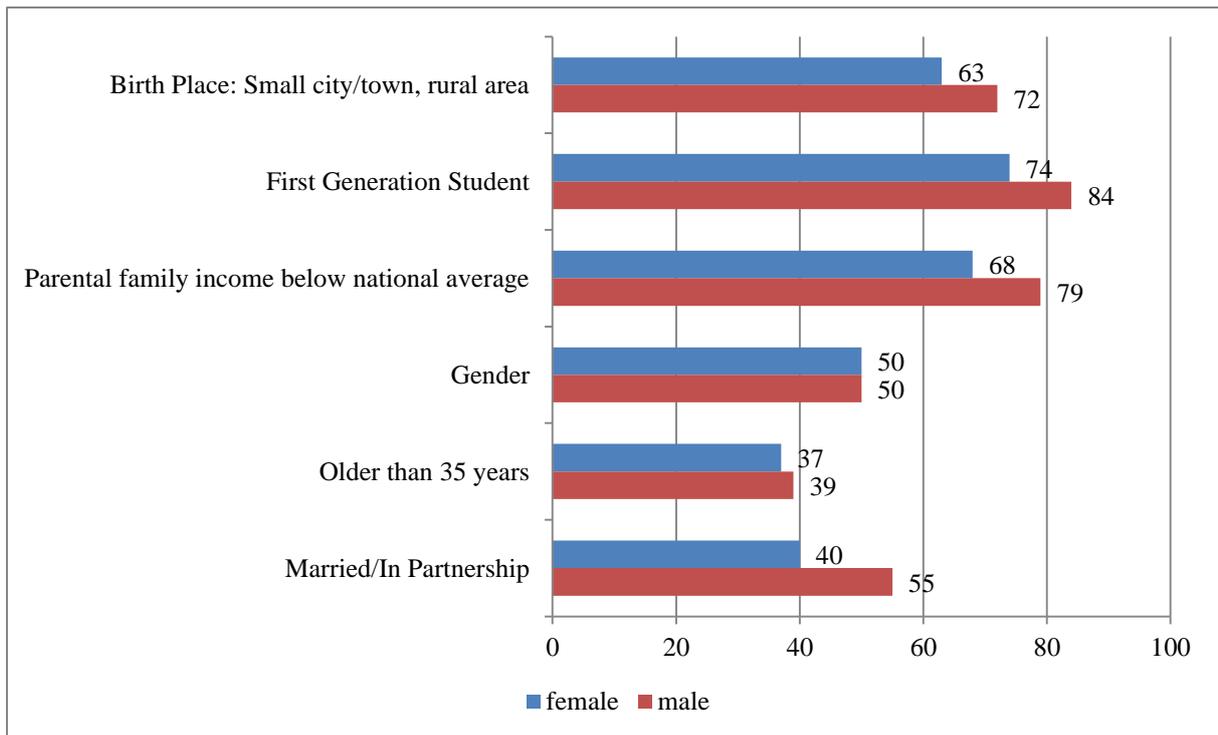
All applications went through a multi-level and multi-actor review process to select Fellows on the local or sub-regional level. The International Partners screened applications for completeness and to determine candidates' basic eligibility. They organized selection processes with discrete steps including specialized reviewers as well as personal interviews with semi-finalist or finalist candidates. Actual selection decisions were made by committees constituted by the IPs but comprised of independent academics, NGO leaders and local experts. In order to preserve transparency and credibility, neither the IPs nor Ford Foundation staff participated in the selection decisions. The final step in the selection process was 'endorsement' by the IFP Secretariat after an administrative review of all individual and cohort data. In the rare cases when the Secretariat did not endorse a particular candidate, the local selection committees were asked for further clarification or requested to submit an alternate candidate for final ratification.

Who Are the IFP Fellows? The Profile of IFP Selected Finalists

The profile of the IFP selected finalists¹ reveals that the program was successful in recruiting among people with a socio-demographic background and a socio-biographical profile that fit the program goals. At the global level, about 80 percent of the selected finalists are first generation university students. The vast majority comes from a socio-economic background characterized by poverty; they also had to overcome serious experiences of social injustice to complete their undergraduate studies. A significant percentage of the selected finalists reported poverty, coming from/living in a remote or rural area, and ethnicity as the major reasons for their experiences of social injustice. Gender, political discrimination, and race were also frequently mentioned factors. Two thirds of the selected finalists were living in small cities/towns or rural areas when they applied to IFP. Over time, IFP achieved a balanced gender representation among its Fellows, was open to promising applicants who were older than the typical age group of postgraduate students, and accepted candidates who had established families.

Figure 3. Socio-demographic and Socio-biographic Background of IFP Finalists
(Finalists 2003-2010, in %)

¹ The survey data cited here are based on questionnaires completed by all selected finalists. Technically, these finalists only became Fellows after they gained admission to a post-graduate program. 97% of all selected finalists became Fellows.

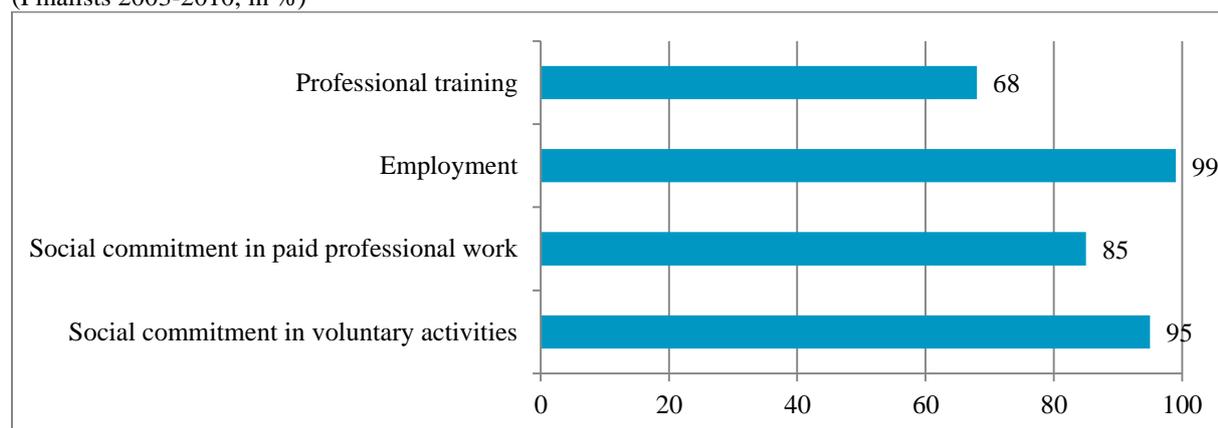


Source: Enders & Kottmann (2011).

With regard to the gender of the selected finalists, the data show a significant correlation between gender and educational background. A higher number of female selected finalists came from a family with a father and/or mother with a higher education degree. Indicators also show that a higher proportion of female selected finalists came from metropolitan or urban areas or grew up in families with an income around or above the national average. Although women outnumber men in higher education in some countries, IFP experienced a trade-off between gender equality in access to the program and the socio-economic profile of female selected finalists. These data suggest that because of gender-based discrimination, women may have to possess higher ‘socio-economic capital’ to secure access to undergraduate education.

Figure 4. Professional Background and Social Commitment of IFP Finalists

(Finalists 2003-2010, in %)



Source: Enders & Kottmann (2011).

Nearly all selected finalists—female as well as male—had acquired some employment experience before they applied to IFP. About two thirds of them had professional training in addition to their undergraduate degree. Professional work for many of the selected finalists involved socially-oriented activities or community service. In addition, nearly all selected finalists had also volunteered in these areas before applying to the IFP. Also, most of the selected finalists had already acquired some leadership experience in areas such as education, community development and children and youth and family.

Do IFP Fellows Succeed in their Studies? Placement, Outcomes and Experiences

The next major stage in the IFP process concerns the preparation of Fellows for their placement in a host institution, matching of Fellows with host institutions and, most importantly, a successful postgraduate experience. IFP's policy was to find good matches between Fellows' abilities and their interests with host universities around the world, primarily abroad but also in the Fellows' home countries or regions. The International Partners and the Placement Partners played central roles in this process. Prior to and during the placement process, the IPs worked with local academics and service providers to help the newly selected Fellows acquire foreign language competency, as well as the computer and research skills that they would need for successful study, regardless of their academic field. At the same time, the IPs and the Placement Partners worked together to assist Fellows in the

search for suitable postgraduate programs. For most international admissions, the Placement Partners submitted applications directly to the universities on behalf of the Fellows.

The CHEPS surveys examined the outcomes of this matching process in terms of the utility of the pre-academic training, the appropriateness of the selected universities, and the international mobility of Fellows and their related preferences. We asked Fellows whether they experienced problems related to moving to the host institution or beginning their studies. We also collected data about degree attainment, self-assessment of qualifications acquired during postgraduate studies, and the Fellows' overall satisfaction with their postgraduate experience.

The survey data show that the different partners in the IFP organization as well as the Fellows were very satisfied with how the program operated in terms of pre-academic training and placement. Over time, the International Partners developed their capacity to assess the educational needs of Fellows prior to placement, and were able to offer options for preparatory training in areas such as language, test-taking, computer, research and writing skills. In most cases, this meant contracting local universities and private organizations to develop and provide the needed training. Fellows report that the preparatory training corresponded to the needs that they had expressed themselves. Most of the Fellows highly valued their pre-academic training and found the courses offered useful. A majority regarded the training as contributing to the skills they would need for academic success.

This also holds true for pre-departure information about living conditions and support structures at the host institution. These were crucial issues for many Fellows. The majority of IFP Fellows used the opportunity to study abroad; for many of them IFP was their first international experience. Major destinations were English-speaking countries, particularly the United States and Canada (32 percent) as well as the United Kingdom (20 percent), and Continental Europe (12 percent). About one third of the Fellows studied in their home region (about one-fifth in their home country).

The IFP partner universities offered assistance and training for IFP Fellows within existing programs for international students or developed new and innovative means of addressing IFP Fellows' training needs. IFP supported approximately one third of its Fellows to undertake

further preparatory training at their host universities, most often in English language and academic writing. These so-called ‘bridging programs’ were often then used by other international students. In this way, IFP contributed to reflection and action in universities around the globe to create support structures that would enable more diverse groups of international students to matriculate and succeed in those institutions.

These positive outcomes, of course, do not alter the fact that some IFP Fellows studying abroad experienced problems during post-graduate study or in adapting to their host institutions. Starting their studies in a foreign country and adapting to a new culture and in some cases, a foreign language, was challenging for a substantial minority of Fellows, although most of them came to appreciate the international experience and environment. Living away from their families, supporting their families back home, and obtaining housing were rated as problematic by some Fellows. Data suggest, however, that IFP increased its capacity to address these problems, as well as to cluster Fellows in selected universities and place them in host institutions with other international students. Over time, Fellows’ evaluations of their host institution’s environment for international students became more positive.

A key assumption underlying IFP’s placement philosophy was that a successful match between the profile of a given Fellow and the profile of host institutions/study programs would lead to a successful post-graduate experience. Hence the program sought the ‘best fit’ study program for each Fellow, a choice that was not necessarily guided by the universities’ global rankings or national ratings. The success of this approach is confirmed by the finding that Fellows valued their study experience highly. Fellows functioned well in their host institutions and were satisfied with their course of study. Fellows also placed a high value on the international environment in their host institutions. Overall, the Fellows reported positively on many aspects of their post-graduate study, on issues ranging from curriculum and instruction to training in research methods and support from professors and advisors. In the eyes of the Fellows, programs and host institutions lived up to their reputations quite well. More than eight out of ten former Fellows said they would strongly recommend their host program, institution or country to other Fellows.

Table 1. Degree Attainment of IFP Fellows by Cohort and Gender, by Degree and Gender, by Study Location and Gender

(Alumni survey 2012, in %)

<i>Cohort</i>	Early Alumni*			Intermediate Alumni**			Recent Alumni***			Total		
	Female	Male	Total	Female	Male	Total	Female	Male	Total	Female	Male	Total
	98	96	97	95	91	93	84	85	85	92	90	91

<i>Degree</i>	Masters			PhD			Other degrees			Total		
	Female	Male	Total	Female	Male	Total	Female	Male	Total	Female	Male	Total
	95	94	95	75	73	74	86	77	83	92	90	91

<i>Study Location</i>	Out-of-region			In-region, but not in home country			In-country			Total		
	Female	Male	Total	Female	Male	Total	Female	Male	Total	Female	Male	Total
	94	94	94	92	93	93	84	73	79	92	90	91

Source: Enders & Kottmann (2012).

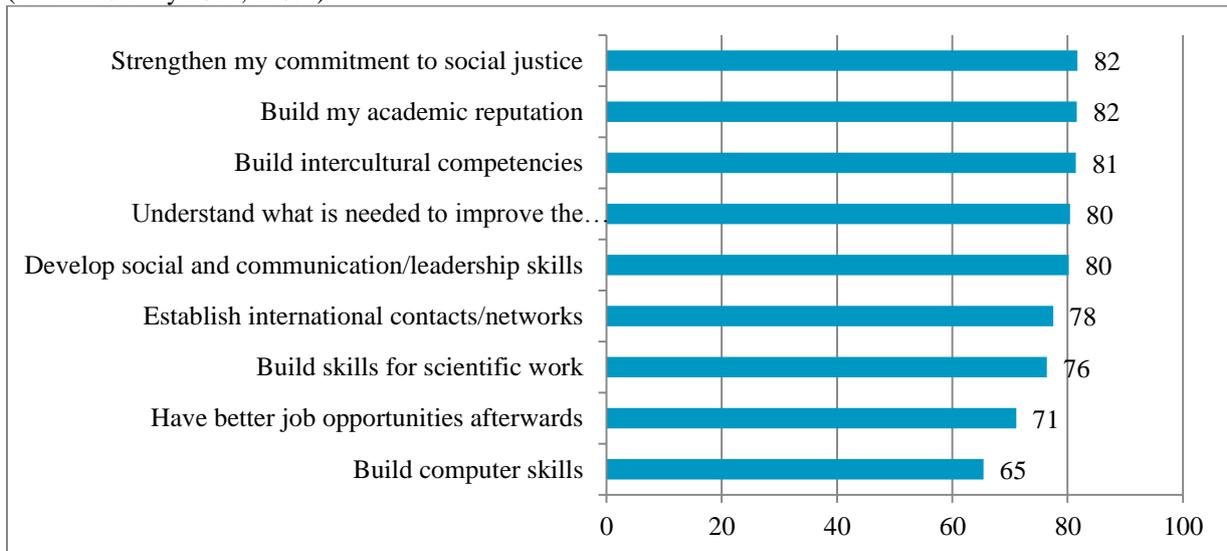
*Early Alumni – Fellowship ended by the end of 2006; **Intermediate Alumni – Fellowship ended by the end of 2009; ***Recent Alumni – Fellowship ended by the end of 2011.

The success of IFP Fellows is also confirmed by two key indicators: 98 percent of former Fellows completed their fellowships, while 91 percent earned their advanced degrees. Most obtained their degrees within the period covered by the fellowship, with PhD students more likely to require additional time. This is to be expected, since IFP provided only the first three years of support for doctoral Fellows. Nearly all IFP Alumni who did not complete their programs indicated that they will do so in the near future.

Equally important, Fellows reported that the study programs enhanced their competence and skills in areas central to the program’s goals. Thus they highlighted leadership ability, strengthened commitment to social justice, and increased capacity to contribute to social justice in their home countries/regions. Overall, Alumni interviews and survey data show that the fellowship experience significantly enhanced Fellows’ academic and personal self-confidence.

Figure 5. The Fellowship has helped me to.....

(Alumni Survey 2012, in %*)



Source: Enders & Kottmann (2012).

* answer categories 4 and 5 on a scale from 1 'Strongly disagree' to 5 'strongly agree'

Studying in the home region (which in most cases coincides with the home country) or out of the home region (mostly in high-income countries) had a significant impact on some Fellows' experiences. Fellows who studied outside their home regions considered that their study program had contributed more strongly to the development of skills and competencies than those who remained closer to home. Fellows who studied out of region were more satisfied with their host institutions and less likely to report experiences of social injustice during their fellowship. The rate of degree-attainment differs between the two groups as well. Fellows who studied outside of their home country were more likely to attain their degree during the fellowship period.² Overall, Fellows studying out of their home region report a more positive postgraduate experience.

What IFP Alumni Do: Returns, Professional Pathways and Social Commitment

The fellowship experience played an important role in the life of almost all IFP Alumni that we surveyed. They valued the opportunity to pursue further studies, to go abroad, and to improve their competencies and skills. Also, they point to the effects the fellowship had on

² Fellows who studied in their home regions but not in their home countries had degree attainment rates very close to those who studied out-of-region.

their world-view. Most Alumni reported that the fellowship broadened their outlook, familiarized them with new ideas and enabled them to learn skills that they could use to improve the situation in their home countries.

An important indication of the program's success is that most of the former Fellows studying abroad have returned to their home countries. Alumni who stay abroad mostly try to enhance their competencies and skills via further studies and/or professional work related to international social justice issues. Looking at the current country of residence of Alumni after the end of their fellowship, we found that 82 percent currently live in their home country. 77 percent of the Alumni who studied out of region have returned to their home country, while only 12 percent of this group indicated that they intended to stay abroad permanently. Most of the Alumni who remain abroad continue with advanced academic study, usually studying for a doctoral degree. Alumni engaged in further study often indicate that they pursued this option to further enhance their capacities for leadership and social justice activities.

However, the post-fellowship experience did present some problems, especially for Alumni returning back home after a period of study abroad. Job searching and finding employment were serious issues, especially for Alumni who had not maintained or made contact with employers in advance. Alumni report that they often found it difficult to live up to the expectations that other people back home may have. Others indicate that the lack of infrastructure in their home countries made it difficult to implement their ideas and knowledge. In some cases, colleagues were reluctant to adopt innovations proposed by Alumni. IFP assisted new Alumni by providing them with individual orientation and training in skills such as resume preparation and fundraising, as well as modest funding for professional activities and social action projects. The program also supported Alumni networks and organizations in nearly all IFP countries.

Table 2: Current Residence of IFP Alumni, Current Main Activity, Leadership Positions, Impact on Social Justice

(Alumni Survey 2012, in %)

<i>Current Residence by Home Region</i>	Latin America	Africa	Asia/Russia	Total
Living in my Home country or community	84	79	83	82
Living in another country	16	21	17	18
<i>Current Main Activity by Home Region</i>	Latin America	Africa	Asia/Russia	Total
Employment and/or Academic Study	92	91	94	92
Other Main Activity	9	9	7	8
<i>Leadership Positions by Alumni Cohort</i>	Early Alumni	Intermediate Alumni	Recent Alumni	Total
Senior Management or Leadership Position	69	70	57	66
Current Position Related to Social Commitment	85	89	90	88
<i>Applying Knowledge and Evaluation of Impact by Alumni Cohort</i>	Early Alumni	Intermediate Alumni	Recent Alumni	Total
Applying Knowledge in Professional Activities*	87	83	83	84
General Evaluation of Impact**	82	82	84	83

Source: Enders & Kottmann (2012).

*Answer categories 4 and 5 on a scale from 1 ‘strongly disagree/not at all’ to 5 ‘strongly agree/to a very high extent’

**Answer categories 4 and 5 on a scale from 1 ‘not at all strong’ to 5 ‘very strong’

Our surveys show that IFP Alumni are successful in obtaining employment, continuing professional training or academic study, or a combination of both; only 8 percent are engaged with other activities (e.g. family care). More than half are employed in the public sector (54%); 26 percent are working in the not-for-profit sector and 14 percent work in the private sector for a broad range of governmental and non-governmental organizations at the local, national and international level. Nearly two thirds of the Alumni hold senior management or leadership positions; as professionals, they remain committed to social justice causes in areas such as education, community development, environmental issues and children, youth and family.

Two thirds of the Alumni are also socially active in voluntary organizations and activities, and two thirds of them exercise some leadership responsibility in these activities. The vast majority of Alumni report that their professional and voluntary activities have a strong,

positive impact. They base this view on awards, prizes, promotions, publications and positive feedback from colleagues and community members.

Interpreting IFP Results: A Summative Reflection

We conclude by going back to the questions posed by the evaluation study. As we have shown, IFP was able to define, reach and select its target group(s). In terms of marginalization, the majority of selected finalists came from social groups and communities that had lacked systematic access to higher education for reasons specific to each society. Interestingly, those reasons tended to converge around social exclusion caused poverty and discrimination, even though the specific combination of factors varied from country to country. Also at the global level, female Fellows tended to be from less deprived backgrounds than their male counterparts, despite the prevalence of gender-based discrimination in societies around the world. Overall, IFP's flexible model allowed the IPs to design outreach and recruiting strategies most suited to their specific contexts. At the same time, each site observed the basic principles of independent, peer-based selection and utilized the program's globally-defined selection criteria of academic achievement, social commitment and leadership potential.

We also asked whether IFP's pre-academic training and placement led to successful post-graduate experiences and outcomes. We are mindful that the Fellows themselves tended to assess in-country and in-region study experiences somewhat more negatively than international study experiences. Those who studied in their home countries had lower degree attainment rates, a result that correlates to the Fellows' less positive assessments of in country/region vs. international study. These differences are most likely attributable to the interplay of various factors, including more distractions in one's home setting and university programs that are often less geared to full-time students, among other explanations.

Nonetheless, the Fellows' academic success in hundreds of universities throughout the world is a matter of record. This result, in turn, validates a key premise of the program, namely, that students from marginalized groups can succeed academically in highly competitive international programs. IFP decisively demonstrates that academic ability is not restricted to those who have enjoyed prior access to high quality education.

Our three final questions relate specifically to Alumni. We wondered whether the fellowship and post-graduate experience and outcomes would lead IFP Alumni into successful professional careers. An affirmative answer would have been sufficient for a conventional fellowship program. But as a social justice program, IFP also asked whether the IFP Alumni were motivated and enabled to use their education and career to promote social justice. The answers are still unfolding. Approximately 500 Fellows have not yet concluded their study programs. As described here, however, survey responses from thousands of ‘early,’ ‘intermediate’ and ‘recent’ Alumni who concluded their fellowships up to nine years ago are overwhelmingly positive in this regard. The vast majority of IFP Fellows have returned home; those who remain abroad go on for further study or work in international organizations. Although Alumni may take some time to find regular employment and advance within their organizations, they remain active and engaged with social justice issues. Increasingly, not only the Alumni but others in their communities and countries attest to their transformative roles.

Even at this early stage, IFP can confidently assert that its basic premise was correct. Educational opportunity is indeed a viable path not only to individual advancement but to more effective leadership for social justice and thus to broader social change.

A few final considerations are in order. In the course of both operating and evaluating IFP, we have identified three key factors that led to these successful results. First, the formative evaluation, along with continuous feedback provided by IPs and other partner organizations, contributed to IFP’s capacity to improve its performance in crucial areas. Over time, the program was able to fine-tune its outreach and selection procedures, so that the Fellows’ profile more closely reflected its overall selection criteria. The program also strengthened its capacity to assess Fellows’ training needs and provide effective preparatory training, as well as enable Fellows to obtain placements that were a ‘good fit’ for their interests and competencies. The entire post-selection process led to successful academic outcomes. Also over time, IFP established partnerships with universities that were instrumental in providing academic and personal support for IFP Fellows after entering their post-graduate programs. Later cohorts of Fellows completed their degrees during the fellowship period more often than earlier cohorts.

Second, financial resources played an important role, especially since IFP is quite possibly the largest ever privately funded post-graduate fellowship programs at the international level. From the outset, IFP counted on a substantial financial commitment from the Ford Foundation made via the establishment of the International Fellowships Fund. Yet even with a high level of funding, the program still needed to establish structures and processes on a global scale that could accommodate the enormous variations found among the participating countries. It needed the space and time to develop and refine its flexible design and develop the necessary support structures and services for the Fellows. This would most likely have been impossible without the Ford Foundation's substantial and long-term financial commitment.

Finally, the financial resources allowed the program to build local capacity to carry out the program in each of the participating countries. Over time, the resources allowed the program to collaborate with educational organizations that coordinated regional and international placements and other program services. This structure, in turn, permitted the program to implement a highly decentralized approach that also benefited from global networks and support structures. It is one thing to talk about 'demand-driven development'; it is another to run a large-scale, global program from the ground up while maintaining overall consistency and coherence.

In this respect, IFP not only realized achieved its own primary goals but also serves as an important model for demand-driven development projects. IFP's robust network of partner organizations allowed it to utilize the contacts and expertise of its many partners around the world. The central Secretariat in New York also played a key role in maintaining the program's global characteristics and in creating a 'learning system' that enabled partners to share innovations and experience across countries and regions. Continuous exchange about 'lessons learned' and incorporation of 'good practice' were essential elements of the IFP model.

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