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**مصر**

INSTITUTE OF  
INTERNATIONAL  
EDUCATION  
OPENING MINDS  
TO THE WORLD®

**LOTUS**  
SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

## Cooperative Agreement 263-A-00-10-00026-00

### Annual Progress Report FY 2010 – FY 2011

The Annual Progress Report for the period of 5/4/2010 – 9/30/2011 as required in Attachment A/Section A.5/2.C. of Cooperative Agreement 263-A-00-10-00026-00 consists of this summary document and the annexed M&E Matrix, as well as the four previously-submitted, detailed quarterly reports.

#### Cooperative Agreement and Modifications

IIE/MENA was awarded the New Scholarship Program (renamed LOTUS Scholarship Program) on May 4, 2010 with the primary scope of offering scholarships to 100 Egyptian public school graduates to attend one of five Egyptian private universities. The following modifications have been made to the original award:

Mod. #	Date	Purpose
01	6/28/20 10	1. Revise Program Description to include Branding Strategy and Marking Plan 2. Change of Key Personnel
02	5/24/20 11	1. Revise Reporting and Evaluation Section 2. Revise Program Description
03	5/24/20 11	1. Revise Agreement Budget to include funds for recruiting and selecting a potential Cohort 2 2. Revise program Description to include plan for recruiting and selecting a potential Cohort 2 3. Increase the total Estimated Amount of the Agreement by \$33,099 4. Increase the total Obligated Amount of the Agreement by \$33,099 5. Add Trafficking in Persons Provision
04	8/25/20 11	1. Add a Cohort 2 to the Agreement 2. Revise Agreement budget to include funds for Cohort 2 3. Revise the Program Description to include Cohort 2 4. Increase the total Estimated Amount by \$4,463,803 5. Increase the total Obligated Amount by \$1,000,000 6. Increase the total Cost-Sharing Amount by \$852,455

#### Program Start-up and Management

The award was made on May 4, 2010, which necessitated an immediate and fast-tracked start-up and mobilization followed by very intense outreach and recruitment, review and selection phases in order to get students placed in the partner universities in September 2010. During the period of May to June, IIE was able to accomplish the following:

- Devise a name and branding look for the scholarship - develop and get approved the BSMP
- Draft, design and print outreach materials and applications
- Design webpage on IIE website and upload outreach materials
- Train NGO partners
- Conduct outreach activities nationwide



IIE faced many challenges in recruiting and selecting students for Cohort 1, among which were the following:

- **Timing:** Due to the award timing, the outreach and recruitment phase took place after both school and university classes had finished and students were in exams. Universities would not let us post information about scholarships for private universities on campus. The deadline for applications was the week after secondary exams finished and in the middle of university exams, which was challenging for many students to meet. The timing of the award also made for a very condensed review and selection and placement processes. Other time-related challenges included the release of exam results, particularly for first year university students, and the ministerial declaration that all universities should start nearly two weeks earlier than scheduled.
- **Familiarity:** It was the LOTUS Scholarship Program's first recruitment cycle and the Program was unknown. While IIE has a very strong institutional capacity and is well known globally in higher education circles, IIE was not familiar to the target audience. Some of the newer partner universities are not well known to people outside of Greater Cairo. Many people in the governorates are familiar with the American University in Cairo, which features frequently in the press and media, and the LEAD Program, which had built a strong reputation over the years. IIE and the LOTUS NGO partners utilized their institutional capacities and strong networks to spread the word about LOTUS and worked diligently to familiarize the target audience with both the scholarship opportunity and the partner universities.
- **Gap Year:** Perhaps the biggest challenge was that the 2009/10 academic year was the gap year, which meant a secondary school graduating class that was approximately 10% of the usual size. Many of the third secondary students were repeating a year for a variety of reasons. The result was a very small pool of eligible graduates.

#### Accomplishments and challenges faced during the first academic year (Cohort 1, Cycle 1 students):

##### **Accomplishments:**

September 2010 through August 2011 was an exciting period for the 44 students of Cohort 1, Cycle 1. The students were on a very steep learning curve. For most of them, it was their first time to live away from their families for an extended period of time. They were living in new cities and were transitioning from school or public universities into new environments at private universities. Students had to acclimate themselves to living on their own and become more self-reliant very quickly. The majority of students integrated very well into the universities during their first semester and began to take advantage of the many opportunities that are offered. Some students took a little longer, however, by the end of the first year, all 44 students has acclimated to their new lifestyles and studies. A major indicator of successful selection and placements is that all 44 students completed the first year.

In terms of **academic performance**, the majority of the LOTUS students did exceptionally well in their first semester of university considering the many personal and academic challenges that they faced. The GPA breakdown for the 44 students for the fall 2010 semester was as follows:

- 23 students earned GPA of 3.5 and above\*\*
- 7 students earned a GPA between 3.0 and 3.49
- 6 students earned a GPA between 2.5 and 2.99
- 3 students earned a GPA between 2.0 and 2.49
- 2 students earned a GPA between 1.5 and 1.99 and are on academic probation
- 3 students do not have a GPA yet as they are in the foundation year English program at BUE

The spring semester was challenging for many of the students as a result of the revolution (see below), which caused a delayed start of the semester, university closures due to demonstrations and safety issues, changes in exam schedules, and in some cases, the cancellation of mid-term exams and/or shortening of semester. The spring semester was a time of unprecedented stress and fears for safety and the future experienced not just by LOTUS students, but by the nation as a whole. Spring semester grades were on the whole, lower than the fall 2010 semester. The GPA breakdown for the 44 students for the spring 2011 semester was as follows:

- 14 students earned GPA of 3.5 and above\*\*
- 10 students earned a GPA between 3.0 and 3.49
- 8 students earned a GPA between 2.5 and 2.99
- 3 students earned a GPA between 2.0 and 2.49
- 6 students earned a GPA between 1.25 and 1.99 and are on academic probation
- 3 students do not have a GPA yet as they are in the foundation year English program at BUE

IIE routinely monitored and provided support to the six students who were on academic probation. Each of the students was required to fill out a questionnaire to help identify the reasons behind why their GPA is below 2.0. The questionnaire also required them to come up with a plan of action to improve their grades. One student is taking a reduced course load in the fall 2012 semester so he can focus on improving his grades. Some of the students may require an additional semester or summer courses. We are in regular contact and coordination with the university coordinators to monitor the students' progress.

During the first year, IIE held the following **enrichment sessions** for Cohort 1, Cycle 1 students:

- Orientation sessions
- Academic skill sessions:
- Time Management
- Presentation Skills
- Academic Integrity, Research and Writing
- Community & Team Building sessions
- Rights & Responsibility sessions
- Intensive Summer English Program

### **Challenges:**

One of the most significant challenges for nearly all of the students is **English language proficiency**. The majority of the Cohort 1, Cycle 1 students have very basic English language proficiency. They are a product of the educational systems in which they studied with the Azhari graduates being the most challenged. In general, most LOTUS students have very weak English language proficiency compared to their university peers who are graduates of language or international schools. This is the first time that they students are studying all of their subjects in English rather than Arabic, the only exception being the three students who spent a year of high school on exchange programs in the United States. Some of the students have experienced great difficulty understanding their classes and assignments. Reading and writing assignments take much more time for them than for their private school graduate peers, which limits the amount of free time that they have to study English independently through reading or watching films or to attend supplemental English courses. Thirty of the Cohort 1, Cycle 1 students attended an intensive summer English program in July, the majority of them witnessing improvement in their proficiency (see attached report). As outlined in detail in QPR FY 2011, Quarter 2, IIE is working with the students and the universities to identify and provide supplemental English language opportunities when possible. IIE will conduct English language assessments and develop action plans in February and March 2012.

The **size of Cohort 1, Cycle 1** produced a variety of **scheduling and logistical challenges**. It was anticipated that all 100 students would be selected and enter the Program in September 2010 with an average of 20 students at each of the five partner universities. For reasons detailed above, the qualified applicant pool did not produce a full cohort. Accordingly, IIE had to group students from different universities together for the various enrichment sessions. The partner universities have different calendars, timetables and exam and break periods, which made scheduling very difficult. Another factor that contributed to scheduling difficulties was the revolution (see below). Holding sessions in groups also resulted in additional cost as students had to be bused to other campuses or to IIE for sessions.

As mentioned above, the **January 25 Revolution** had great impact on the country and on IIE, the students and the partner universities. Thankfully when the revolution began, the majority of the students had finished exams and had traveled to their home governorates. IIE was concerned about students not returning to university do to the





## Cohort 2:

	6th October (Giza)	Alexandria	Assiut	Aswan	Beheira	Beni Sueif	Cairo	Dakahlia	Damietta	Fayoum	Gharbia	Giza	Helwan (Cairo)	Ismailia	K. El Sheikh	Luxor	Matrouh	Menoufiya	Minya	New Valley	N. Sinai	Port Said	Qaliyobia	Qena	Red Sea	Sharkiya	Sohag	S. Sinai	Suez	Totals
Over 120 points: monthly income below LE 750. No or very minimal assets. Extreme financial need.					1	1			1							1				1					1				6	
100 - 119 points monthly income range LE 751 - 1000. Limited or no assets. Very strong financial need.	1		2		1		1	1		1					1		1					1			2	1			13	
86 - 99 points: monthly income range LE 1,001 - 2,500. Limited assets/savings. Strong financial need.		1		1			1				1			1					2					1				1	10	
70 - 85 points: monthly income range LE 2,501 - 5,000. Some assets/savings. Financial need.			1			1	1	2	1		1	1	1			1	1	1	1	1	1		1	1				2	19	
69 points and below - Monthly income greater than LE 5,001. Have assets/savings. Cannot afford private university tuition, but need is marginal in comparison to other applicants.																						1			1				2	
																													50	

IIE faced some challenges in recruiting and selecting students for Cohort 1, Cycle 2 and Cohort 2 among which were the following:

- **Staffing:** IIE witnessed a significant increase in applicants for Cohort 1, Cycle 2 and Cohort 2, which demanded the full time engagement of LOTUS staff and other IIE staff and volunteers.
- **Scheduling:**
  - Thanaweya Amma exam: the Revolution and subsequent delay of the start of the spring semester resulted in the Thanaweya Amma exams being held several weeks later than planned, which delayed grading and announcement of results. IIE had to conduct home visits and short-listing of candidates prior to receiving exam results.
  - Ramadan – Ramadan began on August 1, which posed several scheduling challenges including finishing the Interview Camps by late July and holding selection panels in Ramadan. Ramadan and the Eid El Fitr holiday presented some logistical challenges with bringing students and guardians to sign Terms and Conditions and university placements.
- **Applicant pool, field of study preference, exam scores and placements:**
  - Applicant pool - The increase in applicant numbers resulted in a very qualified applicant pool. Selecting the best of the best was very challenging.
  - Field of study preference – An overwhelming majority of applicants - 924 out of 1,281 - listed the traditional, five-year fields of Dentistry, Engineering or Pharmacy as their first choice field of study preference on their applications. Early on USAID and IIE concurred that LOTUS should encourage students to study non-traditional fields of study that are important to Egypt’s development. It is important to note that the LOTUS budgets cannot accommodate more than 50% of the students in five-year programs. While the evaluation rubric gave extra points to students choosing non-traditional fields of study, applicants in the traditional science fields were more competitive. 243 out of the 331 students who attended the interview camps preferred Dentistry, Engineering or Pharmacy as their first choice. At the interview camps, IIE led discussions about non-traditional fields of study and emphasized that the number of slots in traditional fields are limited. Many students changed their second and third choices to non-traditional fields such as Biotechnology, Physical Therapy, and Computer Science among others however few changed their first choice preference. When it came down to placements of primary candidates, the number of candidates wanting the three traditional fields of study far outnumbered the slots available, which made selections and placement very competitive and challenging. Upwards of 30 candidates from governorates that were represented in Cohort 1, Cycle 1 or were ranked second or third in their governorates were cut because all three field of study preferences were five year traditional programs.
  - Exam scores – In general, Thanaweya Amma scores were very high this year, which presented IIE with many challenges. Four top ranked applicants turned down the scholarship as their scores got them the highly

desired field of Medicine in the MOHE university placement process (tanseeq). Nine students who were offered their second and third choice fields of study such as Biotechnology, Physical Therapy, and Computer Science declined the scholarship as their scores got them into Pharmacy, Dentistry, and Engineering in the public university system.

- University placements – The high Thanaweya Amma scores and higher percentages required for choice faculties in the public university system resulted in a rush on the private universities. IIE faced some challenges getting students placed in Dentistry and Physical Therapy at two of the partner universities.

### Comprehensive LOTUS Scholarship Student Statistics:

**Cohort 1, Cycles 1 & 2** consists of 100 students representing all 27 governorates and two former governorates.

COHORT 1, CYCLES 1 & 2 Students	6th October	Alexandria	Assuit	Aswan	Behira	Beni Sueif	Cairo	Dakahilia	Damietta	Fayoum	Gharbia	Giza	Helwan	Ismailia	K. El Sheikh	Luxor	Matrouh	Menoufiya	Minya	New Valley	N. Sinai	Port Said	Qaliyoubia	Qena	Red Sea	Sharkiya	Sohag	South Sinai	Suez	Recruited
Female representation	2	3	1	2	2	4	2	1	2	1	1	4			3	1	2	2	4	1	1	2	1	1	1	2	3	2	1	52
Male representation	1	2	1	2	1	2	4	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	2	2	1	4	2	1	2	2	1	3	1	1	2	2	48
																														100

Overall, the 150 LOTUS students of **Cohort 1, Cycles 1 & 2 and Cohort 2** represent all of Egypt's 27 governorates and two former governorates.

Cohort 1, Cycles 1 & 2 and Cycle 2 Students	6th October	Alexandria	Assuit	Aswan	Behira	Beni Sueif	Cairo	Dakahilia	Damietta	Fayoum	Gharbia	Giza	Helwan	Ismailia	K. El Sheikh	Luxor	Matrouh	Menoufiya	Minya	New Valley	N. Sinai	Port Said	Qaliyoubia	Qena	Red Sea	Sharkiya	Sohag	S. Sinai	Suez	Totals
Female representation	3	4	2	3	2	6	5	4	2	2	2	5	0	0	3	3	3	2	6	2	1	2	3	2	3	3	3	3	2	81
Male representation	1	2	3	2	2	2	5	1	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	3	3	2	5	3	2	3	2	2	4	2	1	3	2	69
																														150

**University placements** for the 150 LOTUS students are as follows:

University	# Students
Ahram Canadian University	30
British University in Egypt	27
Future University in Egypt	27
Modern Sciences & Arts University	39
Pharos University in Alexandria	25

**Fields of specialization** of the 150 LOTUS students are as follows:

Field of Specialization	# Students
Accounting & Finance	4
Art & Design	3
Biotechnology	11
Business Administration	4

Dentistry	15
Engineering	38
Human Resource Management	4
International Trade/Business	1
Informatics / IT & Computer Science	18
Languages & Translation	3
Legal Studies and International Relations	3
Marketing	1
Mass Communications	9
Pharmacy	27
Physical Therapy	4
Political Science	4

### University Capacity Building Program

The **University Capacity Building Program** was launched in this reporting period. Branded as the **LOTUS Strategic Leadership Seminars**, the program offers staff of the five partner universities the opportunity to participate in a series of strategic seminars on themes related to leadership development and covering topics of particular importance to each university. The first seminar, which focuses on strategic leadership principles, serves as an opportunity for IIE to introduce participants to the fundamentals of leadership and to help identify topics of strategic importance for future seminars that could include but are not limited to leadership, management, scholarship administration, internationalization and partnerships, and accreditation.

The first Seminar (Strategic Leadership) was held at MSA, BUE, and PUA during this reporting year. A total of 72 administrators and faculty members took part in the Seminar. This first seminar provided each participant with various tools to look at their individual leadership and to discuss aspects of strategic leadership on the institutional level. Particular focus was given to identifying the overriding vision, mission, and values that support the decision making process. The seminar also explored other leadership frameworks to provide each participant with different ways of understanding and reflecting on their leadership effectiveness. Also discussed was the role of authority and influence and the distinction between transformational vs. transactional approaches. As IIE believes that leadership is a shared and group process, this first seminar included a number of experiential team building and communications activities, which served to bring each university group together, and to help identify topics and areas of development for future seminars.

### Conclusion:

In conclusion, the LOTUS Scholarship Program witnessed many significant successes and accomplishments in the first annual reporting period. Two cohorts of geographically and gender diverse students were recruited, selected, and placed in the five partner universities. The 2010 intake (Cohort 1, Cycle 1) students adjusted to their new universities with relative ease and the majority performed quite well despite the many challenges that they faced as individual students and as Egyptians during the year of the January 25 Revolution. The 2011 intake (Cohort 1, Cycle 2 and Cohort 2) students entered university in September and appear to be quite promising and enthusiastic. The two intakes are getting to know each other and are building a sense of community within each university. Future activities will focus on developing strong linkages between cohorts and universities.

IIE looks forward to a productive and successful Year 2 that will build on the accomplishments of and benefit from the lessons learned in Year 1.