



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

SEMI—ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORT

(October 2015 – March, 2016)



INSTITUTE OF
INTERNATIONAL
EDUCATION

Opening Minds to the World®

SCHOLARSHIPS & TRAINING FOR EGYPTIAN PROFESSIONALS (STEP)

Contract # AID-OAA-I-12-00009

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I. Executive Summary

This progress report covers the period from October 1, 2015 to March 31, 2016. During this reporting period, fifty MBA scholars continued to participate in a six-month University Preparation Program (UPP) that started on September 6, 2015, at the American University in Cairo (AUC). On October 4, 2015, eight of the approved 27 HEI undergraduate scholars in STEM fields started their eight-month UPP at AUC. HEI MBA Cohort 2 scholars completed their UPP on February 29, 2016, while HEI STEM undergraduates will complete their eight-month program on May 31, 2016. To make up for the cancellation of HEI STEM undergraduate Cohort 3, IIE obtained USAID's approval and the Ministry of Education's consent to add a group of undergraduate candidates to Cohort 2. Under a challenging and strict timeline, IIE and its partner, AFS-Egypt, succeeded in recruiting a Cohort 2A consisting of 17 scholars (thirteen core and four alternates) to replace STEM Cohort 3 which was originally scheduled to begin studies at U.S. universities in Fall 2017.

→ (Please see Section III-D and VIII-A-a below for further details).

IIE teams in Cairo, New York, and Washington, DC, worked together to manage the testing requirements and preliminary placement plans for Cohorts 2 of the HEI MBA and STEM undergraduate scholarships in various universities across the United States. IIE's in-country and U.S.-based teams continue to follow up regularly with HEI Cohort 1 scholars, (fifty three MBA and twenty one STEM undergraduates) currently attending their first year of studies at U.S. universities through regular Skype calls, campus visits and webinars.

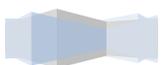
The IIE Cairo team continues to work closely with project partners, AFS-Egypt (AFS), Nahdet El Mahrousa (NM) and the American University in Cairo (AUC), throughout the preparation program of Cohorts 2 of the HEI MBA and STEM scholarships. IIE introduced several additions to the UPP, including one-on-one coaching sessions, a continuous 360-degree evaluation process, additional leadership and communication interventions, and intercultural awareness workshops. Building upon lessons learned from Cohorts 1, the additional activities provide scholars with the best possible preparation to integrate and succeed in a new environment and culture.

In an effort to provide HEI STEM Cohorts 2 and 2A scholars who are not participating in the UPP an opportunity to develop their academic skills prior to their departure to the United States, IIE collaborated with AUC to conduct a tailored six-week intensive Academic Life Skills Program (ALSP); 16 scholars are currently benefiting from this opportunity.

In addition to the ongoing academic programs, STEP and its partner, Keys to Effective Learning (Keys), continue to implement nationwide training for Ministry of Education (MOE) professionals in Early Grade Learning (EGL), focusing on Early Grade Reading (EGR) and mathematics (EGM) in support of USAID/Egypt's Development Objectives.



ALSP scholars at the AUC attending their Academic Life Skills program.



II. Program Highlights

A. Country Development Cooperation Strategy (CDCS) Meetings:

USAID/Egypt is designing its new Country Development Cooperation Strategy, covering the period of 2016-2020. As part of the strategy development process, USAID seeks input from its partners, including the Government of Egypt (GOE), donors, NGOs, beneficiaries and others. To provide feedback and assistance, IIE coordinated two meetings between USAID and HEI scholars, as follows:

- On December 22, 2015, at USAID: HEI MBA and STEM Cohort 2 scholars – Nada El Sayed and Esraa Attia, participated in the meeting.
- On December 28, 2015, at IIE's office: HEI MBA Cohort 1 scholars, Basma Mohamed (University of Bridgeport) and Amira Khalil (Stony Brook University), met with the COR. Both scholars were visiting Egypt during their winter break.

The purpose of the meetings was to receive scholar feedback and recommendations on what to incorporate in the strategy as well as what, if anything, should be done differently in future scholarship programs. The scholars gave positive feedback on the effectiveness of the UPP, specifically noting that they fully appreciated the value of the skills acquired during the UPP once they began their studies in the United States. They also reported (1) positive experiences in integrating in their communities in the United State.; (2) appreciation for the universities in which they were placed; (3) valuable support from the IIE team, university administration and faculty. They reported some challenges with securing appropriate housing upon arrival and recommended that additional support be provided to MBA Cohort 2 in identifying housing availability. This recommendation will be incorporated into the pre-departure support that STEP staff provides to Cohort 2 scholars.

B. USAID Knowledge Sharing Visit – Integrating into US Culture and Universities:

In collaboration with its partner, AFS-Egypt, IIE held Intercultural Awareness Sessions (ICL) for HEI STEM undergraduate scholars as part of ongoing efforts to prepare scholars for integration into U.S. society. On March 26, 2016, the following USAID Education and Training Office representatives attended a two-hour session with 37 HEI STEM Cohort 2 and 2A scholars as well as ten HEI MBA Cohort 2 scholars:

Name	Title
Samah Eid	USAID STEP COR.
Tara Simpson	USAID Education Officer for Scholarships, Science and Technology
C.J Remmo	USAID Education Office Program Support and Public Outreach Specialist

The USAID team shared feedback and answered questions on various topics including the following:



- General social, political and cultural climate in the U.S, as well as public perception in light of the election.
- USAID team’s personal academic and social experiences.
- University norms, structure of academic programs, unpaid and/or “for-credit” internships.
- Volunteer work and community involvement activities.
- Varsity and intramural sports activities.
- Social clubs, student housing and on-campus assistance for scholars.

USAID Education and Training Office representatives’ visit with HEI STEM Cohort 2 and 2A participants & HEI MBA Cohort 2 scholars.

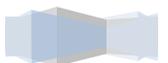


As a result of the scholars’ positive feedback and request for an additional session before they depart to the U.S., IIE is coordinating with the USAID Education Office representatives to arrange for a follow-up session with HEI MBA and STEM Cohorts 2, during the Pre-Departure Orientation (PDO) workshop scheduled for July 17-21, 2016.

→ (Please see Annex 1 for Pictures of the USAID knowledge sharing visit).



USAID sharing visit to HEI STEM Cohort 2 and 2A participants & HEI MBA Cohort 2 scholars



C. USAID Delegation Visit to Qena:

In support of STEP's capacity building program for the Early Grade Learning (EGL) Unit at the Ministry of Education, USAID Mission Director, Sherry Carlin, USAID Director of the Education and Training Office, Katie Donohoe, and Education Office Activity Manager, Hala El Serafy, visited two primary schools, Al-Halla and Shohadaa El Thawra in Qena, accompanied by STEP's Implementing Partner, Keys to Effective Learning (Keys), and Ministry of Education (MOE) representatives on October 22, 2015. The USAID delegates visited four classrooms of different grade levels in each school to observe the implementation of early grade reading methodology inside the classroom.



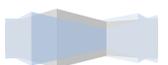
→ (Please see Section V-A below for further details).

D. USAID Data Quality Assessment (DQA)

On November 4, 2015, USAID's COR, Samah Eid, and USAID's Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Specialist, Marie Soussie, conducted a Data Quality Assessment (DQA) on STEP's Early Grade Learning (EGL) program. STEP's M&E Specialist and Senior Training Officer participated in answering questions related to data collection, documentation and implementation of the program. The USAID team conducted random checks of files and, at the request of USAID's M&E Specialist, STEP submitted digital files.

E. USAID Program Update Meetings

Throughout this reporting period, the STEP team continued to meet regularly with COR, Samah Eid, and ACOR, Tara Simpson, to review program updates, receive guidance on issues arising from program implementation, request approvals related to program activities and make decisions on special case scenarios. In addition to the face to face meetings, STEP's COP and DCOP coordinate almost daily, either by phone or via email, with the COR/ACOR on various issues. The continuous guidance received from both USAID's Education and Contracts offices has proven invaluable in the effective implementation of project activities.



III. Progress: HEI Academic Programs

IIE implemented the following academic program activities during the period of October 1, 2015 – March 31, 2016, related to the HEI STEM undergraduate and MBA scholarships.

A. Cohorts I: 53 HEI MBA and 21 HEI STEM undergraduate scholars at US Universities:

As previously reported, Cohorts 1 of the HEI MBA and STEM undergraduate scholars began their studies at US universities in Fall 2015. Upon arrival to the U.S. the IIE Washington, DC team assigned each group of scholars to a US-based IIE Program Officer who is responsible for monitoring their performance, providing guidance and feedback, communicating with their universities, and facilitating issues and challenges. In addition to regular correspondence via phone and email, IIE Program Officers conduct Skype calls with scholars, campus visits, and webinars.

→ (Please see Annex 2 for HEI STEM and MBA Cohorts 1 student progress summaries).

a. HEI STEM Cohort I - Summer 2016 internships: Egypt

In collaboration with its Partner, NM, IIE is working on securing summer internships for HEI STEM Cohort 1 scholars in Egypt during summer 2016. Each scholar completed a bio data which is serving as a basis for NM in their identification of relevant host organizations.

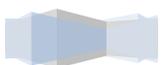
b. HEI STEM Cohort I - Off campus housing

Thirteen HEI STEM Cohort 1 scholars expressed interest in living off campus starting their second year of university in the U.S. IIE communicated with scholars' parents to obtain their written consent. To date, IIE received consent from parents of seven scholars; six are still pending.

c. HEI MBA Cohort I – Summer 2016 internships: U.S.

Due to restrictions stipulated by the U.S. labor law, IIE is unauthorized to directly place scholars in internships; scholars must apply on their own. To assist HEI MBA scholars in securing internships, the IIE Washington, DC team provided guidance to scholars throughout this process; scholars are ultimately responsible to work, on their own, with universities to secure internships. In February 2016, IIE Program Officers conducted internship webinars to the HEI MBA scholars to walk them through the internship application process, including the value of internships, realistic expectations, how to get the most out of an internship, and how to use university resources to apply for and secure an internship.

Scholars are excused from participating in a summer internship only if valid reasons prevail. If a scholar is required to take summer classes, is physically impaired, or is participating in an internship during a different period of time, her case is reviewed by the IIE team and the university academic advisor. If it is decided that summer courses are necessary to fulfill the



academic degree requirements, then the scholar is excused from participating in an internship. IIE created the attached internship guidelines document, including an information sheet and application plan, for use by the HEI scholarship recipients.

→ *(Please see Annex 3 for HEI MBA Cohort 1 summer 2016 internships).*

d. HEI Cohorts I STEM and MBA - International travel requests

By the closing of this reporting period, three HEI STEM and 15 MBA scholars had been approved to travel to Egypt to visit their families during time off from their academic programs. When travel requests are submitted by scholars, the IIE Washington, DC team works closely with the academic advisors at each university to ensure that scholars are in good academic standing. Once confirmed, IIE submits, on behalf of each scholar, approval requests to USAID. Upon USAID's approval, the IIE U.S. team obtains E3's endorsement on the DS-2019 forms to proceed with travel arrangements. To fulfill their program requirements, IIE requested traveling HEI MBA scholars first to secure internships in the U.S. before receiving approval to travel during summer 2016 break.

On December 20, 2015, USAID granted approval for emergency international travel for HEI MBA Cohort 1 scholar, Sara Afifi, to travel to Egypt to visit her father who was hospitalized in critical condition. IIE worked closely with USAID to process the request quickly and secure the necessary paperwork.

e. Academic Progress: HEI STEM and MBA Cohorts I

The following is a summary of the HEI MBA and STEM scholars' academic standing after completion of the first semester of year one:

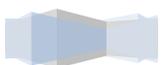
MBA scholars:

- 12 scholars earned a GPA of 4.0.
- 26 scholars earned a GPA between 3.5-3.9.
- 12 scholars earned a GPA between 3.0-3.4.
- 3 of 53 MBA scholars are on academic probation with GPAs below 3.0.

STEM scholars:

- 7 scholars earned a GPA of 4.0.
- 8 scholars earned a GPA between 3.5-3.9.
- 5 scholars earned a GPA between 3.0-3.4.
- One of 21 scholars is on academic probation with a 2.6 GPA.

→ *(Please see Annex 4 for HEI Cohort 1 Fall GPA tracker and academic probation plans).*



f. Campus Visits: HEI STEM and MBA Cohorts I

During this reporting period, IIE Program Officers in Washington, DC, conducted campus visits to 53 HEI scholars at 18 universities in the United States. On each campus visit, the Program Officer met with the HEI scholars, their academic advisors, and the international student office in order to check in on their academic progress and personal well-being. Campus visit reports were timely sent to USAID detailing each visit. The universities visited include Arizona State University, Rutgers University, Western Michigan University, Rochester Institute of Technology, Clark University, University of Toledo, University at Buffalo, Lehigh University, Brandeis University, Fairleigh Dickinson University, Willamette University, Wayne State University, California State University East Bay, Golden Gate University, University of Akron, University of Bridgeport, Webster University, and Baldwin Wallace University.

B. Cohort 2: HEI MBA Scholarship– 47 Scholars:

a. AUC University Preparation Program (UPP)–Part 2 (January 3 – February 29, 2016).

As outlined in the previous progress report, IIE enrolled 50 HEI MBA scholarship scholars, representing 17 governorates, in part 1 of the UPP at the School of Continuing Education, American University in Cairo, Falaki Center, downtown campus. On September 14, 2015, USAID Egypt Mission Director, Ms. Sherry F. Carlin, issued personalized congratulatory acceptance letters to each HEI MBA Cohort 2 participant.

→ *(Please see Annex 5 for Sample HEI MBA congratulatory letter).*

On October 1, 2015, USAID approved the HEI MBA Cohort 2 Training Implementation Plan (TIP) for the UPP. The TIP outlines program details including instruction methodology, objective, number of scholars and the budget allocated.

→ *(Please see Annex 6 for MBA UPP TIP).*

On January 3, 2016, one of the scholars, Yasmine Kholief, dropped out of the program for personal reasons, bringing the number of UPP-enrolled MBA 2 scholars to 49. Despite several warnings, IIE dismissed two HEI MBA Cohort 2 scholars: Reham George and Rasha Rizk on January 27 and February 25, 2016, respectively due to lack of commitment and behavioral issues. As a result, the final number of HEI MBA Cohort 2 scholars dropped to 47. In addition, one of the HEI MBA-1 scholars, Esraa Atteya, who was unable to receive acceptable admission at a U.S. university in 2015 will be considered for admission with her MBA-2 colleagues. IIE's objective is to place 47 scholars in U.S. universities as of Fall 2016.

Starting January 3, 2016, UPP part 2 focused on the following:

- Effective Research Writing Skills (120 hrs).
- Research Tools and Techniques (120 hrs).
- Academic Reading and Critical Thinking (100 hrs).



The six-month UPP was successfully completed on February 29, 2016.

b. Embark Application Orientation:

To prepare the scholars for the U.S. university application process, on November 13, 2015, the IIE Cairo Academic Programs team held a comprehensive orientation session on the IIE Embark application.

The purpose of the orientation was to cover key specifics of the application process and provide guidance on writing effective personal statements and study objective essays. In addition, the IIE team briefed scholars on the requirements of the GMAT and TOEFL IBT tests required for placement in U.S. universities which represent the best academic fit for each of them. By December 1, 2015, all scholars had submitted their online applications to the IIE NY placement team for review.

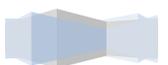


Embark Application orientation for HEI MBA Cohort 2 Scholars.

c. HEI MBA Cohort 2 Testing requirements (GMAT and TOEFL IBT)

During the period of September 29–October 7, 2015, the IIE Cairo team completed GMAT registration for all 50 HEI MBA-2scholars followed by TOEFL IBT registration between October 13–21, 2015. All 50 HEI MBA-2 scholars attended GMAT and TOEFL IBT testing during the periods of December 19-27, 2015, and January 9-29, 2016.

After the release of the unofficial GMAT scores in early February 2016, the IIE New York placement team recommended that scholars who scored below 500 in the GMAT and 80 in the TOEFL IBT should retake the tests to improve their chances and choices for admission at U.S. universities. As a result, 16 scholars retook the TOEFL IBT between January 29-March 5, 2016, and seven scholars between March 5 -19, 2016. As for GMAT, 40 retook the test between February 20–27, 2016; 13 scholars decided to improve their scores by retaking GMAT for the third time, between March 12-29, 2016, at their own expense.



d. Leadership and career path guidance workshop:

In collaboration with its partner, NM, IIE conducted, on October 3, 2015, a one-day workshop on leadership and career path guidance to all 50 HEI MBA Cohort 2 scholars. The workshop helped scholars write effective study objectives essays and identify areas of focus in MBA degrees. The main goals of the workshop were as follows:



Leadership and Career path guidance workshop to HEI MBA Cohort 2 Scholars.



Leadership and Career path guidance workshop to HEI MBA Cohort 2 Scholars.

↳ Introductory leadership skills for professionals.

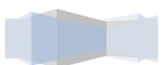
↳ Alignment of MBA studies with career path goals to assist scholars in choosing the appropriate MBA study focus to reach their career objectives.

→ (Please see Annex 7 for introductory leadership and MBA guidance workshop).

At the closing, scholars volunteered very positive feedback and asked for additional similar workshops. The trainer, Dr. George Marquis, received positive comments as well. Following are excerpts from comments he received from HEI MBA Cohort 2 scholar, Shima Badawy:

"I would like to thank you for the great session we had on Saturday. You are really an example. I wish one day I will have a great and attractive character like yours".

Leadership and Career path guidance workshop to HEI MBA Cohort 2 Scholars.



C. Cohort 2: HEI STEM Undergraduate Scholarships - 26 Scholars:

a. AUC University Preparation Program (UPP) – (October 4, 2015-May 31, 2016).

Following a rigorous recruitment and selection process outlined in detail in the previous progress report, IIE enrolled eight STEM-2 undergraduate scholars in an eight-month UPP at AUC, starting October 4, 2015. The eight scholars are housed in Faculty housing close to AUC-New Cairo campus for the duration of the program. AUC provides the scholars with a daily shuttle bus that transports them to/from training site at the Falaki Center, downtown Cairo. IIE has secured medical insurance coverage to the scholars and pays them a stipend for each day spent on-campus.

The HEI STEM undergraduate UPP prepares scholars for studies at U.S. universities by easing the transition for them and their families to living away from home. Studies include preparation for English language testing - SAT and TOEFL IBT, as well as pre-academic training including critical thinking, research and writing skills.

While twenty seven scholars were selected to enroll in cohort 2 of the HEI STEM undergraduate scholarship program, one candidate, Rana Tarek El Bahy, not enrolled in the UPP, declined to meet her commitments toward the program and was dismissed on October 13, 2015. The remaining 26 candidates represent 12 governorates and are distributed as follows:

- 10 graduates from the USAID supported STEM boarding school for girls in Maadi.
- 6 graduates from Experimental Language schools.
- 7 graduates from regular governmental schools.
- 3 enrolled in their freshman year at local public universities.

All applicants were requested to submit a valid TOEFL ITP score. Eight finalists had scored between 450-524 and are currently enrolled in the UPP. The remaining 18 finalists had scored 525 or above and are not enrolled in the UPP as a result of demonstrating sufficient language proficiency. All candidates, whether participating in the UPP or not, are subject to other program requirements necessary for acceptance at a U.S. universities including: pre-admission tests (SAT or ACT and TOEFL IBT), cultural awareness, leadership and communications workshops, and Pre-Departure Orientation program.

→ *(Please see Annex 8 for HEI STEM Cohort 2 finalists).*

On October 4, 2015, the USAID/Egypt Mission Director Sherry F. Carlin issued a congratulatory letter to each candidate accepted in the program.

→ *(Please see Annex 9 for Sample of USAID congratulatory letters).*



On October 15, 2016, the IIE Cairo team held an orientation session for STEM Cohort 2 scholars to share overall program rules and guidelines, the program time line, as well as UPP commitment letters and financial commitment letters (signed by parents) stipulating responsibilities of the scholarship recipients.

→(Please see Annex 10 for HEI STEM financial and program commitment letters).

On October 21, 2015, IIE updated MOE of the STEM Cohort 2 finalists.

→ (Please see Annex 11 for MOE update on STEM finalists).

Part I of the HEI STEM UPP (October 4–December 31, 2015) focused on the following:

- SAT preparation (130 hrs).
- TOEFL preparation (120 hrs).
- Study skills and critical thinking (50 hrs).

Courses are delivered five days a week, five hours each day, for a total of 300 instruction hours.

Part 2 of the HEI STEM UPP (January 1–May 31, 2016) focuses on English for academic purposes as follows:

- Presentation and communication skills (90 hrs.)
- English for academic purposes (70 training hrs.)
- Academic reading skills (100 hrs.)
- Academic writing and research skills (240 hrs.)

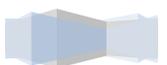
Courses are delivered five days a week, five hours each day, for a total of 500 instruction hours.

On November 12, 2015, IIE Cairo received USAID approval for the HEI STEM-2 Training Implementation Plan (TIP). The TIP outlines program details including the instruction methodology, objectives, number of scholars and budget allocated.

→(Please see Annex 12 for HEI STEM UPP TIP).

b. Common Applications:

The IIE team prepared scholars for the university application process by conducting orientation sessions on how to complete the U.S. University Common Application. The orientation covered key specifics of the application process and provided guidance on writing effective personal statements and study objective essays. The Common Application is an online, web-based tool that follows the same format as the IIE Embark Application used for the HEI MBA scholars. The IIE New York placement team uses the Common Application to apply to U.S. universities on behalf of scholars. During the orientation, applicants were also briefed on the testing requirements (TOEFL IBT, SAT, ACT) required for placement in U.S. universities that represent the best academic fit for each candidate.



c. HEI STEM undergraduate testing requirements (SAT/ACT and TOEFL IBT):

During the period of November 1-15, 2015, the IIE team completed SAT registration for 24 out of 26 HEI STEM Cohort 2 scholars. Two scholars were not registered: (1) Nada Mohamed Fawzy already had a valid SAT score, and (2) Weam Moghazy had already registered to take the test at her own expense. Scores were received during the third week of January 2016 and shared with the IIE New York placement team. Based on the results, the IIE placement team recommended that seven scholars re-take the SAT to improve their scores and consequently their chances/choices for admission to U.S. universities. Since the SAT test was not offered during this time frame, IIE/Cairo registered the seven scholars for the ACT test scheduled for April 9, 2016.

On January 9, 2016, all 26 STEM-2 finalists took the TOEFL IBT test. Four scholars scored below 75 and four other scholars were asked to retake as a result of an administrative error, therefore all eight scholars registered to retake the test at their own expense between February 20–March 19, 2016.

d. Career Self-Assessment (TAMHEED):

In an effort to assist the scholars to identify fields of study directly related to their interests, career goals and areas of strength, IIE implementing partner, NM, provided Career Self-Assessment sessions (Tamheed) during the second half of October 2015 to all 26 HEI STEM Cohort 2 undergraduate scholars. Tamheed is a psychometric assessment which aims to scientifically evaluate an individual's abilities, personality traits and interests. The tool utilized by NM is administered online with a user friendly interface. The assessment tool is contextualized into Arabic and French, and adapted for the region.

During the week of October 20-26, 2015, NM administered an orientation session and held one-on-one sessions for the eight HEI STEM undergraduate scholars attending the UPP at AUC. Between October 27-November 2, 2015, NM held similar sessions for all non-AUC scholars, to prepare them for the self-assessment test. The test uses two distinct types of assessments to measure different aspects of each scholar's abilities as follows:

1. Cognitive:

- Alphabet assessment: measures basic literacy skills. It assesses the speed of perceiving letters and selecting them into alphabetical order. These are the foundation skills that allow individuals to read and write fluently and use language proficiently.
- Number Fluency: measures basic numeracy skills. It assesses an individual's understanding, reasoning and ability when performing numerical tasks including addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division.

2. Personality:

- SIED: This is a personality assessment that measures individual differences in motivation and preferences. There is no right or wrong answer when completing this assessment.
- JOIN: is the Jobs and Occupations Inventory which measures individual interests and motivations.



Following the assessment, NM organized one-on-one career counseling/coaching sessions with a certified advisor to review individual results. During the sessions held on October 26-27, 2015, the advisor discussed career related issues with each scholar. Each session was typically 20-30 minutes long, with a focused discussion on the assessment results and how they can help identify study and career goals.

→ *(Please see Annex 13 for HEI STEM Cohort 2 – Tamheed career counselling).*

The counseling session followed a three-part process as follows:

- Part I: The advisor creates a personal connection with the scholar and gets to know her by establishing trust and a friendly environment for dialogue.
- Part II: Tamheed is analyzed and the results of the assessment are explained to the scholar.
- Part III: Advisor provides career-related advice tailored to each scholar and feedback on potential study and career objectives/options.

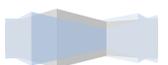
D. HEI STEM Cohort 2A Undergraduate Scholarship: Recruitment, Selection and Implementation:

On October 18th and 21st, 2015, STEP's COP and DCOP met with USAID CO-Robert Claussen, COR-Samah Eid, and Education Officer-Tara Simpson to review USAID's decision to cancel Cohort 3 of the HEI STEM Scholarship. USAID/Egypt explored available options to extend STEP through the graduation of all the HEI scholars from U.S. universities. Cohort 3 of the HEI STEM undergraduate scholarships would have graduated in Spring 2021. Based on discussions held between STEP's CO and the FORECAST-II CO in Washington, DC, USAID/Egypt realized that the latest STEP could be extended is three years beyond the closing date of the FORECAST II contract, i.e., 2020. As a result, USAID/Egypt took the decision to cancel Cohort 3.

USAID/Egypt advised STEP that it prefers extending the STEP Task Order rather than issuing a new solicitation to transfer the management to another organization of scholars at U.S. universities between January 2019 and the graduation of the last group of scholars.

To overcome these challenges and benefit from the scholarship opportunities, IIE suggested to the USAID team to add a group of undergraduate candidates in STEM to the already identified Cohort 2. The additional group would have to be recruited and approved within a period of one month. IIE proposed to recruit the group from students at USAID's ECASE project, STEM School for Girls in Maadi. Students from the STEM school usually possess the required English skills, as well as critical thinking and pre-academic skills, and would not need to enroll in the AUC's UPP. USAID approved IIE's proposal on condition that IIE obtained endorsement by the Ministry of Education.

Pursuant to a meeting held by STEP's COP and DCOP with Mr. Lamloum Moussa, Manager of Secondary Education, and Mr. Mohamed Saad, Head of the Central Directorate for Secondary Education, the Minister of Education recommended that recruitment be open to all high school students or graduates, although IIE would not have time to conduct any outreach efforts.



The Minister approved that the outreach activities be limited to an advertisement in Al-Ahram daily newspaper. IIE agreed to take up the challenge and received USAID’s support for its recruitment plan of an additional group of scholars, called Cohort 2A, to join their colleagues in Cohort 2.

Since Cohort 2A scholars will not enroll in a UPP component due to a tight time frame, IIE included in the selection criteria proof of English language proficiency evidenced by a minimum required TOEFL score of ITP (550), IBT (79), or an IELTS (6.5). Aside from the elevated requirements related to English, all other selection criteria for Cohort 2A remained the same as Cohort 2.

HEI STEM Cohort 2A Undergraduate Scholarship Selection Criteria

- Egyptian citizenship.
- Thanweya Amma certificate from public (governmental), official languages (experimental), Azhari, or charity schools (graduates from private schools, private languages, international, or national academies are not eligible).
- Thanaweya Amma diploma to be obtained in 2015 or 2016 with a total average of no less than 90% overall, or Egyptian Secondary Diploma in Science and Technology with a grade of no less than 85% in each of the science and mathematics subjects.
- Active participation in community and volunteer activities.
- Evidence of applicant’s financial need.
- Acceptable English language level, evidenced by the submission of a valid score in TOEFL-ITP test of no less than 550 (79 in TOEFL-IBT or 6.5 in IELTS). Test score must have been obtained no earlier than March 2013.
- Desire to study in a STEM-related field.

HEI STEM Cohort 2A recruitment and selection process consisted of the following phases:

Phase 1:	+ Approved application and brochure posted online. + Al Ahram newspaper advertisement published. + Announcements made by IIE and USAID on Facebook.	Oct. 29, 2015
Phase 2:	Applications due date.	Nov. 5, 2015
Phase 3:	Applications screened.	Nov. 8, 2015
Phase 4:	Individual Interviews Conducted.	Nov. 14, 2015
Phase 5:	Home visits completed.	Nov. 22, 2015
Phase 6:	Submission of valid TOEFL scores.	Nov. 22, 2015
Phase 7:	Final Selection Camp.	Nov. 27-28, 2015
Phase 8:	USAID approval of finalists.	Dec. 1, 2015



In collaboration with its partner, AFS-Egypt, IIE completed application reviews of 127 nationwide applicants, one-on-one interviews for 90 short-listed applicants, and home visits for a shortlist of 62 applicants. Upon completion of the home visits and validation of an acceptable TOEFL score, a final selection camp was held as the last phase of the selection process.

On November 30, 2015, IIE submitted a list of 17 finalists to USAID for approval. On December 2, 2016, IIE received USAID's approval and proceeded with finalizing the recruitment process.

Cohort 2A consisted of 13 participants plus four alternates representing eight governorates.

→ *(Please see Annex 14 for HEI STEM Cohort 2A finalist).*

The alternates replace Cohort 2 and Cohort 2A participants who drop out, fail to meet program requirements, or fail to receive admission at a U.S. university. On January 26, 2016, Noha Shokry Abdelaziz Aboqara, an alternate participant currently completing the third secondary grade at the STEM school for girls, dropped out, bringing the total to 16. The composition of the 16 candidates is as follows:

- Two university freshmen.
- Two Thanweya Amma students at GOE public schools.
- Twelve students at the STEM School for Girls.

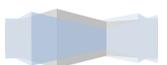
On December 5, 2015, IIE conducted an orientation session for HEI STEM Cohort 2A undergraduates to share with them the overall program framework and objectives, as well as program guidelines and regulations stipulated in the commitment letters they later signed. The candidates were also briefed on the pre-academic tests (TOEFL IBT, SAT/ACT) required for placement in U.S. universities that represent the best academic fit for each candidate.

a. Common Application Orientation Session:

On December 8, 2015, IIE held an orientation session for HEI STEM Cohort 2A candidates to provide guidance on the Common Application for U.S. Universities. Common applications for all STEM Cohort 2A were completed by December 15, 2015, as requested by the IIE New York placement team in order to meet the deadline for applications to U.S. Universities. The purpose of the orientation was to cover key specifics of the application process and provide guidance on writing effective personal statements and study objective essays.

b. HEI STEM Cohort 2A undergraduate testing (SAT and TOEFL IBT):

All but seven Cohort 2A participants had valid TOEFL scores. As a result, on December 15 and 16, 2015, IIE registered seven candidates to take TOEFL IBT tests scheduled for January 9 and February 6, 2016. Unofficial scores were shared with the IIE New York placement office; no retakes were requested.



Six of the 16 Cohort 2A candidates did not have a valid SAT or ACT score. Because there was no SAT testing session available in Egypt during this interim period, IIE registered, on December 17, 2015, these candidates for an ACT test scheduled for April 9, 2016.

E. HEI STEM Cohorts 2 and 2A Academic and Life Skills Program (ALSP):

Because of adequate English language proficiency, 18 Cohort 2 and 16 Cohort 2A candidates are not participating in AUC's UPP. In an effort to further prepare these participants for study at U.S. universities, AUC in collaboration with IIE, tailored an intensive six-week Academic Life Skills Program (ALSP) for Cohorts 2 and 2A candidates who can commit to participate in the full-time program. Sixteen participants from Cohorts 2 and 2A are currently enrolled in ALSP which started on March 6 and ends on April 14, 2016. The program includes topics such as critical thinking, academic writing, IT, as well as presentation, communication and scientific research skills. The ALSP participants are housed at the AUC New Cairo Campus dorm facilities and are commuting to the Falaki Center in downtown Cairo using an AUC-dedicated shuttle bus. All participants receive M&IE for each day spent on campus as well as medical insurance coverage.

The six-week training program focuses on the following topics:

- Critical Thinking (130 hrs.)
- Communication and Presentation Skills (30 hrs.)
- Scientific Research skills (120 hrs.)

Courses are delivered five days a week, six hours each day for a total of 180 instruction hours.

Similar to the UPP scholars, ALSP participants signed financial commitment letters outlining the rules and regulations for program participation during the overall program orientation session held on March 5, 2016.

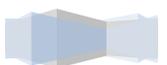
→ *(Please see Annex 15 for ALSP sample financial and commitment letters).*

F. Cross Cutting Initiatives: HEI MBA and STEM Cohorts 2 and 2A:

a. Misriyati Cultural Awareness Workshops – HEI MBA and STEM Cohorts 2 and 2A:

In partnership with NM, IIE held three two-day cultural awareness workshops for the HEI MBA Cohort 2 scholars every weekend starting January 29- 30, 2016 and ending the weekend of February 26- 27, 2016. In order to prepare scholars for living and studying in the U.S., the cultural awareness workshop provided training on tolerance for cultural diversity, effective communication, conflict resolution, and identity.

→ *(Please see Annex 16 for HEI Cohort 2 Misriyati report).*



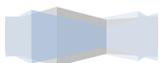
The workshop topics were:

- Tolerance for cultural differences and the ability to deal with the “other”.
- Ability to establish one’s own identity and comfortably coexist with others.
- Effective communication; having the ability to express oneself and one’s opinion in a clear and appropriate manner. This also includes the ability to listen and understand others’ opinions.
- Conflict resolution and how to reach a win-win situation, not a zero sum game.



Similarly, NM held, on February 19-20 and February 26-27, 2016, two two-day cultural awareness workshops, for 42 HEI STEM Cohort 2 and 2A undergraduates. The Misriyati cultural awareness workshops address tolerance for cultural diversity, effective communication, conflict resolution and identity.

→(Please see Annex 16 for HEI Cohort 2 Misriyati report).



b. Intercultural Learning (ICL) Workshop – HEI STEM Cohorts 2 and 2A:

On March 26, 2016, IIE's partner, AFS-Egypt, held a one-day workshop on intercultural communication for 42 HEI STEM Cohort 2 and 2A participants. The workshop helped prepare participants for lifestyle changes that accompany living and studying in the United States, including separation from family and self-dependency, as well as adapting to a new environment, climate, and social life. The workshop also assisted participants in identifying intercultural awareness skills necessary to transition to life in the United States.

ICL Workshop for HEI STEM Cohort 2 and 2A participants



c. Cultural awareness session: Sensible strategies for global awareness (HEI MBA and STEM Cohort 2):

In collaboration with IIE, AUC conducted a one-day session entitled Sensible Strategies to Broaden Your Global Awareness, as follows:

- November 15, 2015: attended by 30 HEI MBA-2 scholars and eight HEI STEM undergraduates.
- November 22, 2015: attended by 22 HEI MBA-2 scholars and 19 HEI STEM undergraduates.

AUC Coach Reham El Hawary delivered both workshops and received positive feedback from the participants. The main objective of the workshops was to help participants gain insight into the culture, characteristics and values in the United States, providing answers to difficult questions such as:

- How to communicate effectively.
- How to achieve your goal without allowing cultural differences to be an obstacle.
- How to leave a positive impression of yourself and your country.
- How to deal with culture shock and overcome home sickness.



d. Team building and communications workshop for HEI STEM Cohorts 2 and 2A:

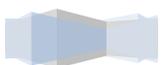
On January 15, 2016, AUC Coach, Reham El Hawary, delivered a workshop on team building and communication skills; 42 participants from STEM Cohorts 2 and 2A participated in the training program. The workshop helped the participants in the following areas:

- Appreciate the diverse needs and preferences of each DISC style.
- Understand their own conflict style and impact on others.
- Recognize inappropriate or unproductive communication.
- Develop skills to adapt to diverse communication styles and group communication techniques.
- Practice conflict resolution.
- Recognize the value of team work.
- Develop team norms, ground rules and trust.



Participants read and completed activities in a nine-page pre-course work booklet in preparation for the workshop.

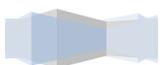
TEAM BUILDING & COMMUNICATIONS WORKSHOP for HEI STEM Cohorts 2 and 2A.



e. Cultural Awareness Activity–STEM Cohort 2 and 2A:

“A3ref Baladak” (Know your country) Trip: On February 1-4, 2016, 42 HEI STEM Cohort 2 and 2A candidates participated in a cultural discovery and awareness trip to Aswan governorate. Implemented by IIE’s partner, NM, the trip familiarized participants with Egypt’s diverse natural and cultural identities through interaction with the local culture and environment. The program included an introduction to Nubian culture, biomimicry, understanding the water flow in Egypt including Nile River water properties and riparian geopolitics, as well as the engineering of the high dam and its impact on local cultures and ecosystems. The trip also included team building activities, site visits to the Nubian museum, interviews with local village residents and sharing of thoughts in reflection discussions focusing on cultural diversity, effective communication and identity. By increasing awareness and interaction with aspects of their own culture, participants will better represent that culture when studying abroad.

→ (Please see Annex 17 for HEI STEM Cohort 2 A3raf Baladak Trip report).



f. Action Planning – HEI Cohort I MBA and STEM scholars:

Starting January 2016, IIE Washington, DC Program Officers held action planning workshops via webinars with all HEI scholars at U.S. universities to help define their short and long term objectives. Each webinar included no more than ten scholars in order to create an atmosphere where scholars could easily discuss their goals and objectives with their colleagues. The webinar covered the importance of action planning as an exercise to develop and track SMART objectives for professional, academic, and personal goals. The first action plans were submitted with the fall End of Term documents in February 2016, along with the transcripts and Academic Enrollment and Term (AETR) Reports. Scholars will update the progress of their action plan goals and objectives each term.

IV. Technical Assistance Initiatives:

The following is a summary of the technical assistance activities covered during this period:

A. Youth and Adult Literacy (Y&AL) Assessment:

During the previous period, STEP reported on the submission of the final Youth and Adult Literacy (Y&AL) assessment report to USAID on August 20, 2015. USAID provided feedback on October 1, 2015, requesting additional information and edits. On October 27, 2015, STEP and implementing partner, Career Development and Consultancy Academy (CDC), submitted a revised version of the final report. USAID instructed STEP not to translate the report into Arabic or to distribute it to other stakeholders.

→ *(Please see Annex 18 for Youth and Adult Literacy report).*

B. Mid-term Evaluation of University Career Development Centers (CDC):

- a. On October 26, 2015, STEP received a signed Performance Solution Request (PSR) for the CDC evaluation program.
- b. On October 15, 2015, STEP submitted the final report for the mid-term evaluation of the Career Development Centers (CDCs) supported by USAID funded projects, Linking Education and Employment Project (LEEP) and Employability and Career Development Centers (ECDC). The mid-term evaluation provided actionable recommendations of any mid-course corrections, analyzed the effectiveness of the CDCs, and included recommendations of the best geographic regions in Egypt for future CDCs. USAID was pleased with this assessment and, on November 30, 2015, approved the final report. On Dec 2, 2015, STEP submitted to USAID five copies of the Arabic translation of the Executive Summary followed, on January 10, 2016, by a full Arabic version of the report.

→ *(Please see Annex 19 for CDC Mid Term Evaluation Report).*



C. Request for Proposal (RFP) - Local Consultant:

Based on guidance received from USAID and on observations of CDC Academy's performance during the Y&AL assessment activity, STEP decided to solicit the assistance of an alternate partner for technical assistance and monitoring and evaluation activities. On October 29, 2015, STEP released an RFP to identify a local partner. Four organizations submitted proposals. By December 17, 2015, STEP completed the internal financial and technical evaluations. The evaluation committees selected one organization to conduct assessment and program evaluation activities and another organization for monitoring and evaluation tasks. On January 13, 2016, STEP submitted to USAID a request for consent to subcontract with the short-listed organizations. As of the end of this reporting period, USAID and STEP continue to exchange inquiries regarding this request. Approval remains pending a conclusion of the discussions.

V. Professional Development/Training Initiatives:

A. Early Grade Learning (EGL) Teacher Training Program:

The EGL activity continues to provide assistance to the MOE in nationwide training on Early Grade Reading (EGR) and Early Grade Mathematics (EGM).

→ *(Please see Annex 20 for Early Grade Learning Report "EGL").*

Due to the unique implementation structure of the EGL activity and the involvement of multiple partners in the coordination, logistics, planning and implementation, meetings are frequent between USAID, MOE and the implementing partners, USAID's Primary Learning Program (PLP) and STEP/ Keys. The stakeholders held several coordination and planning meetings during this reporting period; for the purposes of this report, only meetings resulting in major decisions or milestones are reported.

a. Mentoring and Leadership Training:

Between October 14-17, 2015, Keys and PLP jointly held a Mentoring and Leadership training in Cairo. 121 EGL representatives from 27 governorates participated in the training (91 males and 30 females); 14 additional senior representatives from the Ministry of Education attended the workshop.

Following are the objectives of the four-day training:

- Build the capacity of 60 EGR and 60 EGM cadres by improving their skills and knowledge
- Train trainers (TOT) in the respective governorates on how to train School Mentors in each school
- Provide guidance to EGR and EGM teachers as they implement strategies developed to improve students' reading and Math skills in elementary schools.



a. Early Grade Learning Meeting Updates:

STEP/Keys held frequent meetings with USAID to share program updates and receive guidance on optional activities. The following is a recap of key meetings or visits held during this reporting period:

- **PSR-T Revision 2:**

On October 26, 2015, STEP received a signed copy of PSR-T Revision 2.

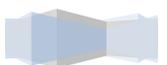
- **USAID delegation visit to classrooms:**

On October 22, 2015, USAID Mission Director Sherry Carlin, USAID Director of Education & Training Office, Katie Donohoe, and USAID Education Office Activity Manager, Hala El Serafy, visited two primary schools, Al-Halla and Shohadaa El Thawra in Qena, accompanied by STEP's implementing partner, Keys to Effective Learning (Keys), and Ministry of Education (MOE) representatives. The USAID delegates visited four classrooms of different grade levels in each school to observe the implementation of early grade reading and math teaching methodology inside the classroom. Classroom teachers demonstrated solid knowledge in applying new EGR and EGM teaching strategies as well as the use of resources to explain new concepts. Teachers also used collaborative learning and active learning strategies, allowing students to work in groups as well as to share and learn from each other. After the school visits, the USAID delegation met with members of the Board of Trustees (BOT) and MOE Muderiya representatives. The BOT members praised their experience working with USAID on various assistance projects and noted their commitment to the Early Grade Learning initiative. This support was also confirmed by the First Undersecretary and the Idara Heads who promised to relieve coordinators of their teaching duties so that they can work on promoting and developing the Early Grade Reading and Math program, and facilitate work in all district schools. The USAID Mission Director stated that some countries, like Morocco and Pakistan, inquired about the successful implementation of the EGL program in Egypt and that the MOE should be proud other countries are interested to learn from its success.



USAID delegation visit to Qena governorate—meeting with BOT and MOE Muderiya representatives.

→(Please see Annex 21 for EGL USAID visit to Qena).



- **Meeting with MOE:**

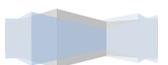
On December 10, 2015 and January 13, 2016, USAID representatives, accompanied by STEP-Keys staff members, met with MOE officials, Dr. Reda Hegazy, Head of General Education Sector, Dr. Randa Shaheen, Head of Basic Education and Dr. Hanaa Kassem, Head of the Early Grade Reading Unit to review the following:

- Dr. Wafaa Abdel Kader's introduction as Keys' newly appointed EGL Program Manager, replacing Mrs. Randa Gaber.
- Results from the second planning meeting held on January 4-7, 2016.
- Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Workshop scheduled for February 7-9, 2016.
- In mid-December 2015, USAID and MOE urged the Professional Academy for Teachers (PAT) to upload the PLP-developed EGL training materials on the PAT website in order to create easy access to these materials to EGL teachers nationwide. On December 17, 2015, MOE complemented the verbal request with an official written letter. To-date, PAT had not posted the materials on its website. Dr. Hegazy recommended that the EGR Unit follows up on the request with PAT.
- School visits conducted in cooperation with MOE-EGR unit representatives during the period of December 15-30, 2015, in the following regions: Beheira, Marsa Matrouh, Hurghada, Marsa Alam, Halaib and Shalateen.
- Based on international best practices, subjects in grades one through three are usually taught by one teacher. Dr. Hegazy brought up this trend and recommended it be implemented in Egypt. USAID, MOE and STEP/Keys team agreed that this is the most appropriate scenario and is in the best interest of the students to provide stability and guidance at such an early age in the development process. MOE is expected to implement this plan as of the fall 2016 academic year.
- To better streamline duties and responsibilities, Dr. Hegazy suggested that the EGR unit should only provide technical assistance by training the cadre and school teachers, while supervisors at the Muderiya and Idara level should be responsible for the monitoring and evaluation of teachers.

- **Website Posting of Training Materials:**

On February 3, 2016, STEP/Keys and the Head of the EGR Unit at MOE held a follow-up meeting with PAT to revisit the request to post the training materials on their website. At their recommendation, MOE sent to PAT, on February 7, 2016, a second official request signed by Dr. Hegazy. When, several days later, PAT failed to post the materials, Dr. Hegazy agreed to place the materials on the MOE website. STEP/Keys provided the MOE-EGR Unit with a CD that contained all of the accredited materials which were immediately uploaded on the MOE Technology Development Center (TDC) webpage.

Posting the materials on the MOE's website saved STEP/Keys from printing 17,000 CDs to be distributed to EGR schools nationwide. With USAID's consent, STEP/Keys used the



saved funds to increase the number of MOE Supervisors to be trained from 90 to 150 participants. The additional number of Supervisors was determined based on the total number of supervisors in each governorate.

b. Second Planning Workshop:

From January 28-30, 2016, the STEP/Keys team facilitated the second Planning meeting in collaboration with the MOE. 169 members of the planning teams from 27 governorates participated (127 males and 32 females), in addition to central MOE representatives including Dr. Hanaa Kassem, EGR Unit Head, and Mr. Abdel Ghafaar, MOE Math Department Consultant.

The objective of the three-day Planning meeting was to build the capacity of team members at the governorate level to improve their planning skills and support EGL program activities. During the workshop, teams presented achievements in their governorates based on previously developed training plans, shared experiences, best practices, success stories as well as challenges and obstacles. Facilitators asked teams to develop plans to cascade the Monitoring and Assessment training to both Arabic and Math Supervisors in their governorates. In addition, the planning teams drafted roles and responsibilities of the EGR and EGM Coordinators, as well as Subject Matter Supervisors to enhance teachers' teaching skills. Facilitators introduced the participants to the EGR and EGM Classroom Observation Tools. By the end of the workshop, each team had drafted a monitoring and follow-up plan to implement at the governorate level.



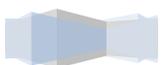
Second Planning Workshop (Jan 28-30).

Second Planning Workshop (Jan 28-30).



c. Accreditation of the Monitoring and Assessment training materials:

In collaboration with USAID, STEP/Keys facilitated PAT's accreditation of the Monitoring and Assessment training material. The accreditation process consisted of a workshop attended by six experts who reviewed and accredited the training materials. STEP covered all costs associated with the accreditation process.



d. Monitoring and Assessment Workshop:

On February 9-11, 2016, STEP/Keys held a Monitoring and Assessment Training Workshop for 150 EGR and EGM supervisors from 27 governorates. The participants consisted of 97 EGR supervisors (67 males and 30 females) in addition to eight central MOE representatives. On the first day of training, Mr. Abdel Ghafar, MOE Senior Math Consultant, requested the 53 invited EGM supervisors not to participate in the training workshop as a result of disagreements with the MOE-EGR Unit. His action resulted in limiting the participation in the STEP/Keys-conducted training programs to the EGR teachers, coordinators and supervisors.



Monitoring and Assessment Workshop for EGR teams and EGM Supervisors, Feb 9-11.

→(Please refer to Section VIII below for further details on this challenge).

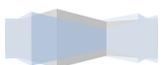
The objective of the three-day training was to build the capacity of the EGR and EGM training cadre by improving their skills and knowledge to train MOE supervisors at the Idara level. The program also included training on classroom observation using the classroom observation form.

On March 30, 2016, STEP submitted to USAID a report of all the monitoring activities conducted as of August 24, 2015. In collaboration with MOE-EGL Muderiya Coordinators, STEP/Keys had completed 471 training observations nationwide.

→(Please see Annex 22 for EGL Training Monitoring and Assessment).



Monitoring and Assessment Workshop for EGR teams and EGM Supervisors, Feb 9-11.



e. PSR-T Revision 3:

Based on modifications made since Revision 2 of the PSR-T, including the replacement of 17,000 CDs with training of additional supervisors, STEP sent, on February 8, 2016, a revised PSR-T, Revision 3, to USAID for review and signature. As of the closing of this reporting period, STEP had not received a signed copy.

→ *(Please see Annex 23 for EGL Revised PSR- T).*

B. Collaboration with WISE:

With the consent of the CORs of both projects, STEP COP and DCOP met, on March 20, 2016, with Dr. Jeffrey Tines, COP of USAID's WISE project and Ms. Yasmine Khaled, Technical Advisor. The meeting follows the official launch of the WISE project on March 10, 2016, when USAID, its implementing partner, MTC, and representatives from Egypt Ministry of Technical Education & Training presented the project scope and objectives. The meeting resulted in areas of potential cooperation between the two projects. WISE's COP committed to discuss areas of cooperation with the staff and report back to STEP once such areas are defined. Coordination between the two projects is on-going. As of the closing of this reporting period, no specific areas of cooperation have been identified.

VI. Deliverables:

During the reporting period, STEP submitted the following deliverables:

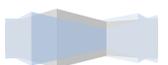
1. Annual Financial Report on October 29, 2015.
2. Annual Property Report on November 1, 2015.
3. Semi-Annual Progress Report on November 1, 2015.
4. Semi-Annual Financial Report on November 1, 2015.
5. Accruals reports with pipeline analysis on December 13, 2015, and March 14, 2016.
6. Youth and Adult Literacy Report, final version, on October 27, 2015.
7. Mid-term evaluation of the Career Development Centers (CDCs) final report on October 15, 2015.

VII. Administrative:

1. In February 2016, STEP received a commendable Contractor Performance Assessment Report (CPAR) issued by USAID.

→ *(please see Annex 24 for a copy of the Contractor Performance Assessment report).*

2. During this reporting period, STEP received the following Contract Modifications:



- Mod 3 issued on December 1, 2015.
 - Mod 4 issued on March 7, 2016.
3. On March 3, 2016, STEP received USAID approval for staff merit increases effective January 1, 2016.
 4. At the request of USAID, IIE Regional Director and STEP's COP participated in a meeting on January 13, 2016, with the Mission Director and the Director of Procurement. COPs of all USAID's implementing partners attended the meeting which addressed newly adopted Danger Pay and FAR52.225-19.
 5. At the request of USAID's Contracts Office, STEP submitted, on March 22, 2016, budgets and budget notes for a potential extension of the STEP contract through the graduation of the last cohort of HEI scholars.
 6. STEP Outreach and Recruitment Specialist Sarah El Nashar joined STEP on November 1, 2015, and has been on personal unpaid leave since November 20, 2015 for personal family reasons. In early April 2016, Sarah is expected to inform STEP whether she will be able to return to her job.
 7. On March 7, 2016, USAID approved the promotion of STEP's Training Assistant, Dina Tawfik, to Training officer, effective March 1, 2016.
 8. STEP Communications Specialist, Rania Botros, joined STEP on March 16, 2016.

VIII. Challenges Encountered, Actions Taken and/or Resolution:

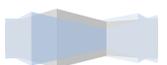
a. HEI Scholarships:

1. Cancellation of HEI STEM Cohort 3

As noted previously in section III-D above, USAID canceled HEI STEM Cohort 3. USAID recommended that IIE admit all Cohort 2 candidates who were not selected due to the low ratings they had received on their performance in the final selection camp. STEP's COP was not in favor of this proposal, suggesting it would be unfair to candidates previously rejected in Cohort 1, as well as unfair to the selection process. USAID gave STEP the option of either using this mechanism to increase Cohort 2 participants or limiting the number of scholarship recipients; the COP chose limiting the number of beneficiaries.

As an alternative solution, the COP proposed recruiting a new group, Cohort 2A, from the ECASE STEM School for Girls in Maadi. This group would have to be recruited within a period of thirty days. USAID provided its consent pending MOE's approval.

Unfavorable to limiting the scholarships opportunity to only STEM students from the ECASE STEM School for Girls, the Minister of Education requested opening it up to all government school students by announcing the opportunity in a newspaper advertisement. STEP received the Minister's decision on October 25, 2015. To meet university application deadlines, the final selection of Cohort 2A had to be approved by December 1, 2015.



Response/Action: this was an administrative challenge for the project given the amount of work and the short time frame. IIE and its partner, AFS-Egypt, succeeded in completing the recruitment efforts on time. These efforts secured the provision of approximately 60 HEI undergraduate scholarships to qualified participants.

2. HEI MBA Cohort 1 participant – Car accident

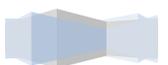
On February 6, 2016, HEI MBA Cohort 1 scholar, Heba Saleh, suffered substantial injuries resulting in hospitalization due to a car accident. Heba suffered a badly broken pelvis and internal bleeding which required immediate surgery. She also suffered additional injuries to her neck, knee and ankle.

Response/Action: The IIE Cairo team communicated daily with Heba's family to answer questions, address their concerns and guide them through the travel process for her mother under the Cultural Insurance Services International (CISI) participant insurance family reunification benefit.

The IIE DC team worked with CISI insurance to secure documentation of Heba's medical condition for use in her mother's U.S. visa application. Heba received quality support from Willamette University staff and faculty, her colleagues, IIE Cairo and U.S. teams as well as USAID Education team and Contracts office. Given the severity of Heba's condition, the assistance provided by the USAID COR and Education team in facilitating her mother's U.S. visa was instrumental in making sure Heba received the family support necessary for her recovery. Heba's mother arrived in the United States on February 19 and was met by the IIE US Program Officer overseeing Heba's condition in Oregon. Heba's mother continues to be an important factor in her daughter's recovery; she plans to return to Cairo on May 27, 2016.

Heba was admitted at Oregon Health and Science University Hospital (OHSU) during the period of February 6-20, 2016. She then moved to Providence Benedictine Nursing Center in Mt. Angel, Oregon, where she received physical therapy until she was discharged on March 16, 2016. She currently resides in a wheelchair-accessible room at the FIMBAS House – student housing (Friends of International MBA Students) at Willamette University. The house is located about ten minutes from the university campus. Originally, Heba had planned to stay at the FIMBAS House until the end of April. She recently decided to move in with a friend in early April. She will have outpatient physical therapy (timeline pending on her progress) in Salem, in addition to follow-up appointments at OHSU in Portland at regular intervals: six weeks, three months, and six months.

During Spring break, Heba met with her professors to discuss the extended timeline for the three classes she is taking this semester: Finance, Business Dynamics, and Global Human Resources. Willamette University approved her internship with the Human Resources department in the City Government and her tentative start date is June 1, 2016. The possibility of Heba completing the internship this summer will largely depend on her progress in outpatient physical therapy. Additionally, she will need to take two summer courses to be able to graduate in May 2017. If this proves difficult, USAID is supportive of extending Heba for an additional semester to complete her course work.



By the closing of this reporting period, IIE had not received any update on the police crash report; the results of the investigation have yet to be released. A father of Heba's friend, a lawyer, volunteered to represent her and is in touch with the Salem Police Department. IIE continues to monitor Heba's case closely.

3. Yara Hazem – HEI STEM Cohort 1

On February 1, 2016, Yara Hazem, an HEI STEM scholar at Western Michigan University, was admitted to the hospital for a kidney stone. The hospital recommended a non-invasive procedure using shockwaves. After consulting with her parents, Yara agreed to the procedure scheduled for February 9, 2016. The procedure was successful and Yara was discharged from the hospital and continued to take antibiotics and pain medication as advised by her doctor.

Response/Action: Yara worked with her professors to make up for missed course work and, at the recommendation of her Advisor as well as IIE Program Officer, decided to opt for an incomplete in one of her classes which she received permission to complete during Summer 2016.

4. HEI MBA Cohort 2 Scholars - Spouse scholarships at US universities

MBA 2 scholars, Doaa Mohamed Abdallah and Hadeer Saleh are both married. Their spouses are currently pursuing their studies at U.S. universities. Doaa's two children were recently issued a visa to the U.S. as her husband's visa does not restrict travel of dependents.

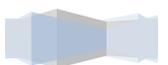
Response/Action: After consultation with USAID, IIE requested both scholars to sign a letter stipulating the terms of the J1 visa and clearly explaining that, as HEI MBA scholars, they are not permitted to have dependents join them while in the U.S. If scholars violate the terms of the J1 visa or the conditions of sponsorship stipulated by USAID, they will be required to return to Egypt and reimburse all program fees paid on their behalf. (Please see Annex X for a copy of the letters issued). Doaa signed the letter on March 21, 2016 and Hadeer, on March 25, 2016.

b. Professional Development and Training:

1. MOE Security Clearance Requirements for EGL Activity

On October 4, 2015, Keys Coordinators, working in the field nationwide, reported they were no longer permitted to visit EGR classrooms as a result of new MOE regulations which require all non- MOE staff that visit schools to obtain security clearance in advance.

Response/Action: As a result of the close collaboration between USAID, MOE-EGR Unit and STEP/Keys in the implementation of the EGL activity, USAID submitted to MOE, on October 8, 2015, a list of staff scheduled to visit schools. The list consisted of the staff names and identification numbers, a brief description of the STEP/Keys partnership, a brief on the Keys to Effective Learning organization, as well as the scope and purpose of the visits. MOE's Security Department issued the security clearance on February 17, 2016.



Dr. Hanaa Kassem, Head of MOE-EGR Unit subsequently sent a copy of the security clearance form to each governorate Muderiya.

2. MOE EGR and EGM Cooperation

Despite several coordination meetings held by the Keys team with the MOE Head of Primary Education/Head of General Education, General Supervisor for Arabic, and EGR Coordinator at the Muderiya level to finalize the Governorate Monitoring Plan, Keys found difficulty in monitoring and observing EGM trainings and providing support to EGM coordinators, nationwide. The Keys team reported that Math Consultant at the central MOE level, Mr. Abdel Ghafar, did not allow the EGM Coordinators and Supervisors to attend the coordination meetings to finalize their Governorate Monitoring Plans for Classroom Practice completed during the second planning meeting. He also asked the Math Coordinators not to authorize any classroom visits during math teaching.

Mr. Abdel Ghafar later banned EGM Coordinators from participating in the Monitoring and Assessment workshop that took place on February 9–11, 2016, although he had personally participated in all EGL workshops.

Response/Action: STEP solicited USAID assistance in resolving this issue. As of the end of this reporting period, communication is ongoing between USAID Education Office Activity Manager, Ms. Hala El Serafy, and MOE counterparts, regarding this dilemma.

3. Ministry of Social Solidarity (MOSS) Border Governorate Restrictions

On January 6, 2016, IIE received a letter from the Ministry of Social Solidarity (MOSS) requesting that any activity implemented in border governorates must be approved in advance by MOSS security. STEP immediately informed USAID of this new restriction and followed the procedure outlined by MOSS. On February 17, 2016, IIE submitted a request for approval to MOSS outlining visits by STEP/Keys team to border governorates as planned in coordination with the EGR Unit at MOE. On February 21, 2016, MOSS acknowledged receipt of IIE's request and reiterated its instructions not to proceed with visits to border governorates until MOSS approval is received.

Response/Action: IIE continued to follow up on the request and was continuously advised that it is still under consideration. As per guidance from the COR, IIE submitted a follow-up request on March 8, 2016, emphasizing that the project is unable to fulfill its commitment to MOE which had already granted security clearance for STEP/Keys to conduct the visits. To date, MOSS's response remains pending. The EGL Training of Teachers activity is planned to close on May 31, 2016.



IX. Success Stories:

A. LINK (Learn, Inspire, Network, know) IIE Monthly Newsletters

The IIE Washington DC team publishes a monthly newsletter that combines tips on cultural adjustment and academic readiness for all of the USAID participant training programs administered by IIE. HEI Scholars are featured in the newsletter on a regular basis. Subjects covered in the newsletter include diversity, making friends, preparing for exams, managing a personal budget, and managing stress.

→(Please see Annex 25 & 26 for IIE LINK Newsletter sample edition).

B. HEI MBA Cohort 1 Scholars

- a. Yasmine Abdullah, an HEI scholar pursuing her MBA degree at the University of Toledo, Ohio, writes and reports for the University newspaper. Below are links to samples of her articles.

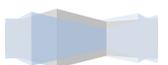
<http://independentcollegian.com/2015/11/11/news/lecturer-tackles-business-ethics-as-part-of-honors-series/>

<http://independentcollegian.com/2015/10/28/news/richard-russo-spoke-about-academic-novels-at-the-university-of-toledo-oct-22/>

- b. Dalia Hassan, at California State University, was proactive in finding ways to volunteer in environmental initiatives. She reached out to the Director of Sustainability at the university and became a member of the volunteer team. She is currently involved in a “zero-waste” initiative to promote recycling. Dalia is featured in the IIE newsletter, Issue # 4, April 1, 2016.

→ (Please see annex 27 for IIE Newsletter).

- c. Rehab Nada and Mary Abdelnour, at Golden Gate University, started the first and only Mediterranean Club on campus. The club introduces different cultures through activities and events.
- d. Maha Hanno, at Golden Gate University, has been providing blankets and food to homeless people in the area. She feels that each person should do his/her part to serve the community. She also plans to establish an awareness group that volunteers to help the homeless.
- e. Amira Mohamed, Basma Mosalam and Mary Androus, at the University of Bridgeport volunteered for the New York Business Expo & Conference in New York City assisting with registration of conference participants.



- f. Basma Mohamed, at the University of Bridgeport, was accepted as a Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program where she provides free basic tax return preparation for international students at the university.
- g. Mary Androus at University of Bridgeport joined the on-campus Business Club, took an active role in planning the club's upcoming trip to Washington, D.C., and plans to run for a leadership position as soon as the opportunity arises. In addition, Ms. Androus teaches Sunday school to 4-5 year old children at a Coptic Church in Stamford, Connecticut.

C. HEI STEM Cohort 1 Scholars

- a. Yasmine Ahmed, a Biomedical Engineering major at the Illinois Institute of Technology (IIT) in Chicago, Illinois, is exploring her love for singing and the performing arts by joining the University Acapella band. Yasmine is the only first year student to perform solo.

→ *(Please see annex 28 for HEI STEM Cohort 1 student – Acapella performance pictures).*

- b. Nermeen Saadoun and Yara Anis, Architectural Engineering majors, were both nominated to join the National Society of Collegiate Scholars (NSCS) at University of Wyoming for their excellent academic performance in the Fall 2015 semester.

→ *(Please see Annex 29 & 30 for HEI Cohort 1 scholar commendations).*

- c. Mona Abdelgaid, a Chemical Engineering major at the University of Montana, received full marks on her chemistry midterm exam – the first student in over two years to make this achievement. Mona's Professor Dr. Jeffrey Heys, University of Montana Chemical and Biological Engineering Department Head, issued an unsolicited letter of commendation to Mona on her achievements to date and contribution to her classes.

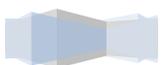
→ *(Please see Annex 29 & 30 for HEI Cohort 1 scholar commendations).*

D. Early Grade Learning (EGL) Successes.

On March 8-9, 2015, STEP facilitated a field visit for the Head of the MOE EGR unit and representatives from the MOE at the Muderiya and Idara level. The MOE representatives visited three schools in the Ezbet El Bourg, Ras El Bar and El Rawda Idaras in Damietta governorate. The objective was to visit EGR urban and rural classrooms and attend an EGR resources display by school staff and students in the presence of MOE First Undersecretary for Damietta governorate.

In one of the schools in Damietta, teachers are conducting a monthly training session on EGR strategies and methodology to mothers so they can help their children develop their reading and writing skills. Some of the mothers were illiterate and the training not only helps them provide support to their children, but, in the process, it taught them how to read.

→ *(Please see Annex 31 for a full visit report and pictures).*



X. Testimonials

HEI MBA Scholars:

Upon completion of their UPP at AUC on February 29, 2016, HEI MBA Cohort 2 scholars emailed the following comments to IIE:

- a. On behalf of her colleagues, Alyaa Abodeeb shared insights on their experience during the UPP, specifically noting the knowledge gained and her journey of self-discovery.

→ (Please see Annex 32 for HEI MBA Cohort 2 flyer).

- b. Dina Dawood wrote to her IIE-Cairo Program Officer:

“...Really I would like to thank you for your support and your time. I do appreciate the hard work you do for each single one of us. From my personal experience with you, I feel that I am lucky to have you to be our program managers as you were there for me in many hard situations as a program manager and as a good friend as well. Also I know how much the load of work you perform to facilitate any and every step in our scholarship. So the one who should be sorry is me as I could not have the opportunity to thank you face to face. Once more, thank you for being friendly and professionally...” March 15, 2016

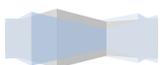
- c. Fatima Adam wrote on February 22, 2016: *“...I would like to express my special thanks for all your efforts. I thank you for your invaluable asset...”*
- d. Shimaa Badawy wrote on March 12, 2016: *“...I would like to thank you for your great effort and support during the last months ...”*

XI. Documentation of best practices that can be taken to scale.

A. AUC - UPP Evaluation Process.

Building on lessons learned from Cohort 1 of the HEI Scholarships, IIE designed and implemented, in collaboration with AUC, a new evaluation mechanism to improve the assessment of UPP scholars. IIE developed evaluation tools and identified behavioral dimensions on which candidates would be evaluated. IIE and AUC conducted the evaluation process on a monthly basis as follows:

- a. Peer evaluations (scholars evaluating colleagues anonymously) based on the following established behavioral dimensions:
 - Listening.
 - Interpersonal communication.



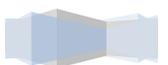
- Inquisitiveness.
 - Team orientation.
 - Initiative.
 - Dress/grooming.
 - Attitude, energy and enthusiasm.
 - Leadership Potential.
- b. Evaluation of scholars by instructors; instructors evaluate scholars' behavior and performance based on the following:
- Communicates openly.
 - Team orientation.
 - Initiative.
 - Thinks strategically.
 - Leadership Potential.
 - Attitude, energy and awareness.
 - Quality of independent work.
- c. Evaluation of instructors by scholars helped identify concerns related to instruction style or methodology.

The evaluation mechanism for Cohort 2 proved helpful for the IIE team to identify any behavioral problems pertaining to the scholars and address issues raised through one-on-one coaching sessions (discussed below).

B. One on One Coaching Sessions for Cohort 2 HEI MBA, STEM 2 and 2A Participants.

Throughout the duration of the UPP at AUC, the IIE Cairo Academic Programs team conducts biweekly visits to the HEI MBA and STEM scholars. Training Officers monitor scholar performance, address grievances and complaints, advise on issues that arise from instructor and peer evaluation feedback, and make recommendations for one-on-one coaching sessions for scholars facing difficulty. The one-one-one coaching sessions implemented in Cohorts 2 are a reflection of IIE's overall objective to provide scholars with guidance and support to better prepare them for studying abroad. At the request of IIE, AUC assigned a professional coach to provide private one-one-one sessions as needed to scholars facing challenges or difficulties. Sixteen HEI MBA 2 and five STEM 2 and 2A scholars received coaching sessions; thirteen scholars participated in more than one session. Feedback received from scholars and AUC Program Managers indicate that the sessions were effective; they also provided IIE with the opportunity to foresee potential future challenges. Since behavior is a major factor in the program, IIE wanted to ensure that all concerns raised are addressed to the best of our ability. IIE perceived this as a significant part of preparing scholars for studying abroad in a different environment.

→ *(Please see Annex 33 for HEI Cohorts 2 one coaching sessions).*



Annexes' List

Annex 1	Pictures of USAID knowledge sharing visit
Annex 2	HEI STEM and MBA Cohorts 1 student progress summaries
Annex 3	HEI MBA Cohort 1 summer 2016 internships
Annex 4	HEI Cohort 1 Fall GPA tracker and academic probation plans
Annex 5	Sample HEI MBA congratulatory letter
Annex 6	MBA UPP TIP
Annex 7	Introductory leadership and MBA guidance workshop
Annex 8	HEI STEM Cohort 2 finalists
Annex 9	Sample of USAID congratulatory letters
Annex 10	HEI STEM financial and program commitment letters
Annex 11	MOE update on STEM finalists
Annex 12	HEI STEM UPP TIP
Annex 13	HEI STEM Cohort 2 – Tamheed career counselling
Annex 14	HEI STEM Cohort 2A finalist
Annex 15	ALSP sample financial and commitment letters
Annex 16	HEI Cohort 2 Misriyati report
Annex 17	HEI STEM Cohort 2 A3raf Baladak Trip report
Annex 18	Youth and Adult Literacy report
Annex 19	CDC Mid Term Evaluation Report
Annex 20	Early Grade Learning Report (EGL)
Annex 21	EGL USAID visit to Qena
Annex 22	EGL Training Monitoring and Assessment
Annex 23	EGL Revised PSR- T
Annex 24	The Contractor Performance Assessment Report
Annex 25	IIE LINK Newsletter sample edition
Annex 26	IIE LINK Newsletter sample edition
Annex 27	IIE Newsletter
Annex 28	HEI STEM Cohort 1 student – Acapella performance pictures
Annex 29	HEI Cohort 1 scholar commendations
Annex 30	HEI Cohort 1 scholar commendations
Annex 31	EGL MOE visit to Damietta
Annex 32	HEI MBA Cohort 2 flyer
Annex 33	HEI Cohorts 2 one coaching sessions report

