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International Foundation for Education and Self-Help (IFESH)

SEMI-ANNUAL PROGRAM REPORT

July 1, 1999 through December 31, 1999

Under the

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Submitted to

**M/OP/A/AOT
USAID/Washington**

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SEMI-ANNUAL PROGRAM REPORT

1. Introduction

This Semi-annual Program Report is being submitted to the United States Agency for International Development by the International Foundation for Education and Self-Help (IFESH) in accordance with the requirements of USAID under Cooperative Agreement No. AOT-A-00-98-00110-00 dated June 23, 1998.

The report covers the period July 1, 1999 through December 31, 1999, and describes the activities, achievements and problems encountered in implementing the agreement. It covers activities of the Teachers for Africa Program, the International Fellows Program and the African Bankers Training Program.

2. Teachers for Africa Program – Overall

A total of 31 Teachers for Africa (TFAs), including 7 teachers funded directly by USAID/Ghana, were selected to participate in the 1999/2000 Teachers for Africa Program and placed in six countries for the 1999/2000 academic year. These teachers attended the Pre-Departure Orientation held in Phoenix in August 1999 and departed for their host countries of Malawi, Ghana, Benin, Ethiopia and a new program in Guinea. Teachers were also selected and oriented for a new program in Namibia, though the teachers did not actually begin in Namibia until January 2000. (Additionally, 3 teachers were placed in Nigeria, under a separate program funded by the private sector. The Nigeria program is not reviewed in this report.) Subsequent to completing in-country orientations in each of those countries, the teachers began their assignments.

The following program activities were planned for during this six-month period.

- Organize and implement the Pre-Departure Orientation in Phoenix. Incorporate involvement of USAID/Washington personnel in the orientation to assure that IFESH programs are working towards achievement of USAID Strategic Objectives to the maximum extent possible.
- Monitor and supervise the teachers and Country Representatives in the field. Work with Country Representatives to help assure programs are having maximum impact possible.
- Continue work on the Teachers for Africa database.
- Initiate recruitment efforts for the 2000/2001 academic year. Expand significantly the various types of media in which IFESH is recruiting, including aggressive use of the internet.
- Travel to field as necessary to improve program implementation and effectiveness, as necessary.
- Work to assure a smooth startup to the two new programs in Guinea and Namibia. Finalize recruitment of Country Representatives in both of those

countries. Work closely with USAID Missions in both countries to assure new programs are consistent with Missions' Strategic Objectives.

- Respond to teachers' correspondence from the field (generally, their quarterly reports).

The Teachers for Africa Program placed teachers in the five countries for 1999/2000, and recruited and oriented teachers for the sixth country, Namibia, per the countries' expressed needs and as agreed with both USAID Missions and the respective host country educational authorities.

3. Teachers for Africa Program – Specific Countries

The following is a brief summary of specific accomplishments in the different countries.

3.1 Ghana

Eight teachers were placed in Ghana, 7 with funding under USAID/Ghana's Primary School Teacher Training Project (PSTTP) and the one remaining teacher with funding from the Cooperative Agreement. The teachers were placed in a wide variety of institutions around the country, in a variety of academic areas. USAID/Ghana, pleased with the results of the Teachers for Africa Program, expanded the number of teachers funded under PSTTP from the five funded during the previous academic year.

Academic institutions in Ghana continue to strongly urge IFESH/Ghana to place Teachers for Africa (TFAs) in their institutions, as these TFAs not only teach classes that otherwise could not be taught for lack of teachers, but the TFAs are frequently involved in working on departmental academic issues at universities and colleges, mentoring other instructors and participating on various types of committees. Additionally, teachers are frequently involved in other community-based educational activities, supporting a variety of efforts to advance education in their communities.

3.2 Malawi

Three teachers were assigned to Malawi for 1999/2000, far fewer than the 8 TFAs assigned to Malawi the previous year. All three teachers were assigned to Montfort College, outside Blantyre, with a focus on special education, working with teachers of emotionally, physically and mentally handicapped children. Only 3 TFAs were assigned due to the considerable difficulties in recruiting special education teachers in the United States. Special education teachers are currently in very high demand in the United States, and there is a serious shortage in the United States of teachers in general, and especially special education teachers. (The shortage of teachers in the US has been compounded by the very strong job market in the US, as well as rising teacher salaries in many places in the US.)

The three TFAs in Malawi arrived in country for their assignments in late August 1999. Subsequent to a one-week orientation in Lilongwe, the teachers were ready to begin their work at Montfort College. Unfortunately, funding for Montfort College from the Government of Malawi was very late in arriving and formal classes at Montfort did not begin until January 2000. However, to the credit of the three TFAs, working in conjunction with Montfort College officials they initiated some programs to help identify handicapped children in the region, to work with their parents and to advise people on programs that could assist the children. The teachers put on several well-received workshops.

In September 1999 IFESH/Phoenix had to replace the IFESH/Malawi Country Representative due to performance problems. Mr. Momodou Mambouray, IFESH Project Officer from Phoenix, traveled to Malawi and assumed duties as Interim IFESH/Malawi Country Representative. Working closely with USAID/Malawi and the Malawi Ministry of Education, Mr. Mambouray advertised for a new Country Representative and received 130 applications for the position. A very qualified replacement, Ms. Selina Mposa, a Malawian national, was unanimously selected and began work as the new IFESH/Malawi Country Representative in mid-October.

While Mr. Mambouray was in Malawi, discussions were held with the USAID Mission and the Ministry of Education about expanding the breadth of the IFESH TFA Program in Malawi, that is, expanding it beyond the area of special education. Although there was general agreement that special education continued to be an important area for Malawi, with continuing serious needs, it was also agreed that due to difficulties in recruiting the number and caliber of teachers needed for a program focusing solely on special education, that the IFESH program in Malawi should be broadened to other areas besides just special education. The more diversified program will begin in the 2000/2001 academic year.

While Mr. Mambouray was in Malawi, IFESH was able to officially register IFESH as a Non-Governmental Organization in Malawi and to conclude a Memorandum of Understanding between IFESH and the Government of Malawi. A new IFESH vehicle was also cleared through Malawi Customs and registered.

3.3 Benin

The Teachers for Africa Program in Benin continued its high impact program, with the TFA Program complementing the highly successful Primary Education Teacher Training Project (PETTP) in Benin, a project funded by USAID/Benin and being implemented by IFESH/Benin. Four teachers were assigned to Benin for the 1999/2000 academic year, setting up library centers throughout the country, providing books and English classes and computer classes to children and teachers in rural Benin. The teachers also ran a mobile library to serve children in the most remote regions of the country. Special efforts were made to ensure the sustainability of the TFAs' efforts by continuing the training of their Beninese counterparts in modern techniques of education and child-centered learning.

It is a special testimony to the effectiveness and high morale of the TFA Program in Benin that all four of the TFAs there during this reporting period are TFAs who extended in Benin for a second year.

During this reporting period Ms. Moji Sodiende, who had been an excellent IFESH/Benin Country Representative for many years, decided to continue her graduate studies in the United States and resigned her position in Benin. After a broad search for a replacement to replace Ms. Sodiende, IFESH/Phoenix hired Mrs. Cynthia Taha, an extremely well qualified and experienced development professional. Mrs. Taha began in September 1999 and has worked closely with the USAID Mission to become fully oriented to IFESH's programs in Benin and to become familiar with USAID/Benin's educational Strategic Objectives in Benin.

3.4 Ethiopia

Nine TFAs were assigned to Ethiopia for the 1999/2000 academic year. Subsequent to an in-country orientation for the new cadre of TFAs, the teachers began their assignments in a variety of institutions around Ethiopia, teaching a variety of subjects such as mathematics, nursing and English as a Second Language.

TFAs in most instances are considered by their host institutions as senior staff. They continue to not only teach classes but to provide guidance and advice to their Ethiopian colleagues. TFAs are engaged in a variety of education-oriented activities, including establishing language laboratories, writing textbooks and brochures for their respective colleges and universities and doing research. Many are also contributing articles for local newspapers on educational issues.

3.5 Guinea

Guinea has a new Teachers for Africa Program. The new IFESH/Guinea Country Representative, Mr. Amadou Bah, a Guinean national, was hired in June 1999. IFESH/Phoenix Project Officer Momodou Mambouray traveled to Conakry, Guinea in July 1999 to work with Mr. Bah, USAID/Guinea and the Government of Guinea to assure that the new program started off well. The first cadre of three TFAs arrived in Guinea in September 1999. As contrasted with our other TFA country programs, the Government of Guinea requested that our TFAs work as advisors in Government offices, rather than working as teachers, with the belief that they could possibly achieve more impact from the program.

A *Convention d'Etblissement* between IFESH and the Government of the Republic of Guinea was signed by the Ministry of Decentralization officially recognizing IFESH as an NGO working in Guinea. Actions were taken during this six month period, with the assistance of IFESH/Phoenix Project Officer Mr. Mambouray, to set up an IFESH/Guinea Office, establish communications (fax, telephone and e-mail) and work with the three TFAs in settling into their positions as advisors.

3.6 Namibia

IFESH/Phoenix used this six-month period to establish an IFESH/Namibia office in Windhoek, in preparation for the first group of teachers arriving in January 2000. Ms. Ann Chang was hired as the IFESH/Namibia Country Representative. With her two years with IFESH as both a Teacher for Africa and an International Fellow, she is extremely well qualified as a Country Representative. Ms. Chang met extensively with the USAID/Namibia Mission to assure our new program would be appropriately supportive of the Mission's Strategic Objective in education, and met with numerous officials of the Ministry of Education and various educational institutions.

The new program in Namibia is focused on supporting teacher training. Originally, the Government wished for the four teachers being assigned to Namibia to be assigned to three colleges of education along the northern border of Namibia. However, due to security problems and concerns along the border, two of those three locations were canceled and the locations were changed to secure areas.

Four exceptionally qualified teachers were recruited for Namibia and attended the orientation in Phoenix in August and subsequently arrived in Namibia in January 2000.

4. Pre-Departure Orientation in Phoenix

A Pre-Departure Orientation was held in Phoenix for all of the Teachers for Africa prior to their departure for their overseas assignments. (International Fellows also attended this orientation as part of the International Fellows Program.) The Pre-Departure Orientation was held in Phoenix, Arizona during the period August 14-21, 1999. The orientation was held at the Holiday Inn Sunspree Resort which provides extremely low-cost off-season rates during the hot summer months. The orientation covered a wide range of topics including the background of IFESH and the Teachers for Africa Program, the relationship with USAID and with USAID's specific country programs. Sessions were held on many aspects of sub-Saharan Africa, including education, economic and development issues, health, cultural adjustment and living, adapting and working in developing countries, the role of NGOs in development, women in development and gender issues, effective technical assistance and cross-cultural communication. IFESH-specific topics such as participant agreements, travel and transportation, housing, insurance and security issues were also covered, as well as extensive orientation for each teacher on their specific countries of assignment. The critical importance of positive results and impact in the TFA Program was stressed throughout the orientation.

Training was provided by a variety of consultants, IFESH/Phoenix staff and IFESH Country Representatives. Former TFAs also volunteered their time to act as resource persons for the countries in which they had previously been assigned. Speakers included personnel from the Peace Corps, CDC in Atlanta, and USAID. Speakers from USAID included AA/AFR Ms. Vivian Derryck, AFR/SD Director Dr. Jerome Wolgin, and Global Bureau WID staffer Mr. John Hatch. The USAID speakers, a new addition to the

Pre-Departure Orientation, added tremendously to the quality and relevance of the orientation. They provided the teachers with an improved understanding of the relationships between IFESH and USAID, and how the IFESH Cooperative Agreement is designed to support and complement the achievement of USAID goals in those sub-Saharan African countries where the TFA Program is being implemented.

5. Recruitment of Teachers for the 2000/2001 Academic Year

Recruitment for TFAs has become more difficult as the demand for teachers in the United States has increased and teachers are in increasingly short supply in the US. Further, the extremely low rate of unemployment in the US, the lowest in 30 years, has provided strong competition for appropriately qualified and experienced teachers for the Teachers for Africa Program. Further, continuing negative news about Africa – wars, famine, violence, HIV/AIDS, etc. – have made recruiting even more difficult.

The result of the recruiting problems, combined with a number of Teachers for Africa taking alternative positions elsewhere late in the recruiting/selection process, was that IFESH did not assign as many teachers as funding under the Cooperative Agreement allowed. Desirably, we should have had six or seven more TFAs assigned to positions in sub-Saharan Africa. IFESH will place more TFAs in the field in the 2000/2001 academic year to offset the lower number of TFAs in 1999/2000.

IFESH has taken a number of steps that have effectively countered these recruiting problems. We have asked our IFESH Country Representatives to provide us a larger listing of potential positions, prioritized for each country, so that we have more flexibility in recruiting TFAs and a better opportunity of having strong matches between applicants and teaching positions. This approach of a larger listing of positions is working well. Further, IFESH has increased its advertising of the program. Particularly, IFESH is advertising much more extensively on the internet, which has provided a low cost and very effective means of reaching hundreds of potential applicants. To date, the response to internet recruiting has been outstanding. We are confident that with our expanded efforts we will continue to be able to recruit adequate numbers of well-qualified teachers.

During this reporting period IFESH also updated and revised application forms, handbooks and brochures for the Teachers for Africa Program.

6. Teachers for Africa Database

Work continues on development and data entry for the TFA database, using the Access software program. The database is current and up-to-date and enables IFESH to keep a better record of teachers selected and their specific teaching and academic skills. The program has proved to be a benefit in many ways.

The database allows us to extract selected information using a query to quickly, accurately and efficiently compile various lists and tables that are vital to our program. Also, we have been able to compile an alumni database and numerous recruitment databases for our different activities using the Access software program.

7. International Fellows Program

IFESH recruited six International Fellows under the USAID Cooperative Agreement with IFESH. After attending the Pre-Departure Orientation in Phoenix August 14-21, 1999, and attending orientations at the U.S. headquarters of either Africare in Washington, DC or Opportunities Industrialization Centers International (OICI) in Philadelphia, PA the Fellows departed for Benin, Ghana, Ethiopia and South Africa. These six Fellows will each spend approximately nine months working for Africare and OICI. One additional Fellow assigned to IFESH/South Africa was funded entirely by private sources. Further, both Africare and OICI have started providing funding to assist with the International Fellows Program.

The six Fellows funded under the Cooperative Agreement have been assigned to a variety of challenging positions, including:

- Community Development Worker on a Child Survival Project in Benin
- Technology Support Worker on Africare's Digital Village Project in South Africa
- Community Development Worker in Tamale, Ghana, on a food security program
- Grant Coordinator/Computer Support Specialist/Assistant Accountant working on a variety of Africare activities in Ethiopia
- Rural Development Worker on the Rural Enterprise and Agri-Business Project (REAP) in various provinces in South Africa
- Community Development Worker on the Alavanyo Wudidi Integrated Community Development Project in the Volta Region in Ghana.

8. African Bankers Training Program

The African Bankers Training Program, known as "The Best and Brightest," is a short-term course (approximately five weeks) for mid-career African bankers. The program is designed to strengthen the financial and management skills of professional banking staff and other financial-related professionals. The program is also developed to provide opportunities for the mid-level staff to accelerate their career advancement. During this six-month reporting period, 20 bankers from various banks in different countries in Africa (Ghana, Benin, Botswana, Namibia, South Africa, Malawi and Ethiopia) were selected to come to the United States to receive training in New York and Washington, D.C. Chase Manhattan Bank in New York has been contracted to conduct the training for the bankers. Different groups of bankers come to the U.S. under the Best and Brightest program semi-annually.

This report describes activities under the program, including accomplishments and problems, during the period July 1, 1999 through December 31, 1999.

During this period IFESH staff mailed out over 500 recruitment packages to bank managers, bankers alumni and financial institutions for the recruitment of bankers. Nominations of prospective candidates were also sought from USAID Missions, U.S. Embassies, banking associations, and former participants in the participating countries.

In order to incorporate some of the recommendations and suggestions coming from the participants in the Best and Brightest program, IFESH staff revised the application form and brochure and developed a new handbook for the program. The new handbook contains some new information including the goals and objectives of the program, responsibilities of IFESH, bankers and the trainees regarding the Best and Brightest program. The new handbook also contains information on the bankers pre-departure activities, health issues, medical insurance coverage, travel documents, financial information, and rules and regulations governing the participants in the program.

Over 300 applications were received for the class scheduled for November/December 1999. In June 1999, a 5-member selection committee met in New York for one day to screen applications and select bankers. The major criterion used in the selection process was the level of academic and professional achievement evidenced by the application materials (including college transcripts, application form, resume and three letters of recommendation from their banks). Other criteria include the close fit between the banker and the relevance of his/her experience and the banker's motivation for wanting to participate in the program. Twenty-nine candidates were recommended by the selection committee members to participate in the next class.

Having been selected by the selection committee, 20 of the bankers arrived in New York on November 13. Ms. Dee Edwards and Dr. Samuel Atteh of the IFESH/Phoenix staff received the bankers at JFK Airport and transported them to the Bedford Hotel in New York City. Seven Ghanaian bankers did not arrive on November 13 because of a flight delay in Ghana. They arrived the following day, for a total of 27 bankers from 7 countries who attended the Fall Class of the Best and Brightest African Bankers Training Program.

Orientation was conducted by IFESH in New York, during which IFESH explained the goals and objectives of the Best and Brightest program, IFESH and USAID. This orientation was presented in seminar format, with videos, books and ample opportunity for questions.

The classroom part of the training was conducted over three weeks at the Chase Manhattan Bank's training facility in mid-town New York. The key areas of concentration included credit and financial risk analysis, accounting, capital markets and corporate finance. An overview of the U.S. banking and financial system was presented, with a trip to the New York Stock Exchange. Case studies highlighted both U.S. and African banking issues.

The participants next traveled to Washington, D.C. and visited USAID, State Department, Treasury Department, the Export-Import Bank, the World Bank and OPIC. Presentations were made by the representatives of these organizations and agencies about what they do and how American foreign policies impact on the African banking system.

Through the end of 1999, 302 African bankers have been trained in the United States under the Best and Brightest program. The bankers have all been satisfied with the training program and their overall experiences in the United States. All 302 bankers have returned to their home countries.

9. Financial Report

Two financial tables for the USAID/IFESH Cooperative Agreement Number AOT-A-00-98-00110-00 for the period up to December 31, 1999, are attached as the next two pages.