

# AMIDEAST امديست

## PALESTINIAN FACULTY DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM (PFDP)

First Quarter  
Performance Monitoring Report  
October 1 – December 30, 2007



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## Executive Summary

The natural cycle of events within the PFDP resulted in relatively few events or milestones during this period. In the two prior years this quarter was marked by considerable activity associated with university outreach and the recruitment of grantees. This first quarter period marks the beginning of the third year of the project and no recruitment of PhD Fellows was planned nor budgeted. In addition, recruitment of Short-term Fellows was logically postponed to the second quarter since grantees will not actually travel until January 2009. However, an on-going silent success story lies with the 34 PhD Fellows currently pursuing their studies at 16 different universities in the United States. As of this period all 13 Cohort II grantees joined the 21 existing Fellows and have begun their studies. Their excellent academic achievement and expanding contributions to academe are highlighted for the first time in this report.

Two other significant developments occurred this quarter. Prompted by a discussion with the USAID CTO, AMIDEAST launched a new component called the Faculty Development Series. This will involve organizing a series of events each year – workshops, seminars, lectures – or other activities that bring faculty together to discuss and debate trends in higher education. The purpose of these events will be to promote the aims of the PFDP, provide regular, local opportunities for faculty networking and take advantage of international scholars and/or local expertise. The first seminar was hosted by Birzeit University and the presenter was Ms. Sunanda Holmes, a visiting Fulbright Scholar who spoke about university partnerships and international programs. The second significant event involved the ninth Planning Meeting where key issues regarding program development were discussed. In terms of program development, AMIDEAST submitted all the documentation necessary for a significant modification to the Cooperative Agreement. AMIDEAST is now waiting for USAID to finalize the modification so that it may be signed by both parties.

## PFDP Program Activity

The natural cycle of program activity resulted in few events during this quarter. PFDP staff planned for the second half of the Seminar for Excellence in Teaching. The second 40-hour training is expected to be attended by all of those who attended the first half in July 2007. The event will be hosted at the Intercontinental Hotel in Jericho and Dr. Howlett will once again lead the training. She will be supported by Ms. Joanna Renc-Roe, a specialist also based at the Central European University's Special Projects Unit.

### Faculty Development Series

AMIDEAST organized the first Faculty Development Seminar associated with this new component. The seminar was titled "Palestinian – American University Partnerships – Opportunities and Challenges." It was led by Ms. Sunanda Holmes who was a visiting Fulbright Scholar in Palestine teaching at the law schools at Birzeit University and Al Quds University. Many Palestinian universities currently have partnerships or linkages with American universities. Similarly, there are many opportunities for forging new partnerships with US universities which can be mutually beneficial. Ms. Holmes discussed the common aims of such partnerships, the elements of successful linkages, and how to forge lasting relationships taking into account the internal and international strategic planning necessary to succeed.



Ms. Sunanda K. Holmes is an international business lawyer in the U.S. with almost 18 years of experience in the corporate, commercial litigation, labor and health care arenas. She formerly worked as a Professor of Law at Georgetown University Law Center teaching about the policy making process in the context of health care and international trade laws. She currently works at Johns Hopkins University overseeing the university's business activities in over 100 countries. Ms. Holmes holds a Juris Doctorate in law, a Masters of Law and a Masters in Business Administration.

A security alert prevented USAID personnel from attending the event, however the level of attendance from the academic community was excellent. Events of this nature are always a challenge to organize because of the restrictions on freedom of movement. 35 faculty attended, however, even more importantly, those 35 were mostly deans, senior faculty and a handful of vice presidents and there was nearly equal representation from the following universities: Al Quds, Hebron, Bethlehem, AAUJ and PPU. There was a clear energy and interest in the "how to" of starting and maintaining university linkages. Overall, this was a successful launch of the first workshop and a second one is planned in February 2008.

## Faculty Grants

To date the process remains frozen pending further guidance from USAID. USAID proposed an idea that the Ministry of Education be solicited for help in getting copies of the hawiyya of all relevant faculty and Board of Trustee members in order to move forward on the process of vetting. However, no movement has occurred this quarter regarding vetting of universities or a decision on the relevance of requiring the Anti-Terrorism Certificate.

## **PFDP Grantees Notable Achievements**

The PFDP currently has 34 grantees pursuing their PhDs in the US. Their ongoing efforts constitute a silent level of engagement that often goes unnoticed. This section of the quarterly report will endeavor to highlight notable achievements of Fellows each quarter.

### **PFDP Fellows' Notable Achievement**

- **Sadek Firwana, Boston College, Education (Cohort I)** was stuck in Gaza for half of the fall semester but managed to get out in time to return to his university and complete two summer courses and two fall courses in the period between early November and mid December. He received an 'A' in all four classes. This level of industriousness and seriousness of purpose was nothing short of amazing. Sadeq notes that in his research "almost all of the papers I have written I have been trying to make use of American experiences by adapting them to the Palestinian context. In this way I have been hitting two birds with one stone: learning about a new context but at the same time keeping an eye on my own, which differs greatly from the American one...". He also reports that he and the other PFDP grantees at Boston College, Hassan El-Nabih and Muhammad Zayyad, were able to convince one of their teachers to include pieces on international educational contexts, including the Palestinian context, into a course that previously only made use of materials referencing the American context. In this manner they are helping to internationalize the curriculum.
- **Wasim Al-Habil, Cleveland State University, Public Administration (Cohort I)** and **Akram Ijla, Cleveland State University, Urban Planning (Cohort I)** both presented papers at Cleveland State's International Symposium; "Crossing Over". Both of their presentations were accepted for publication. They have both had papers accepted for the 38<sup>th</sup> Annual Urban Affairs Association Annual Meeting that will be held in Baltimore, Maryland in April, 2008. Wasim's conference paper examines the roles that citizens play in neighborhood revitalization. Akram's papers focus on the ramifications of the "Chicago School's" theories for studying Palestinian refugee camps and the role that cultural tourism could play in developing the Palestinian economy. Both Akram and Wasim have participated in political and educational panels related to the peace process in Israel/Palestine. They have given speeches in Detroit, Cleveland, Columbus, and Washington.
- **Akram Ijla** has been listed as a co-author for a chapter published in the text book *Sports and Management-Business and Management*. Akram is poised to complete his doctoral dissertation in only two years.

- **Kefah Barham, University of Massachusetts at Amherst, Education** (Cohort II) In her first semester Kefah was elected chairperson of an executive committee at the Center for International Education.
- **Ziad Zaghrou, University of Washington in Seattle, Public Administration** (Cohort I) has maintained a 3.78 cumulative GPA while being one of the few students among his peers at UW without a formal public policy background. He is also the only international student in his PhD department. Ziad passed his PhD qualifying exams last summer.
- **Fida Yaseen-Araj, University of Illinois at Urbana Champaign, Urban Planning** (Cohort I) reports that, in addition to doing well in her classes, she recently had the chance to attend three meetings of the city of Urbana's Planning Commission. According to Fida, the meetings were a "good chance ... to see how planning works in the USA". Fida especially enjoyed the chance to gain a firsthand view of "the participation concept in planning, which does not exist yet in my country."
- **Abdulnaser Arafat, University of Florida at Gainesville, Urban Planning** (Cohort I) has attained a GPA of 4.0 during his first semester at the University of Florida. He has developed new tools for network analysis in transportation planning that have been used and greatly appreciated by his academic advisors.
- **Ahmed Al-Noubani, University of Washington in Seattle, Urban Planning** (Cohort I) has developed a strong paper he wrote on water issues in the West Bank for publication. Another paper that Ahmed wrote on land management approaches to desertification was the most highly rated seminar paper in his course.
- **Karam Adawi, Brandeis University, Public Administration** (Cohort I) had an article accepted for publication in the *World Journal of Gastroenterology*. She has been an active participant in a large number of academic and social panels on topics such as health policies and Middle Eastern politics at Brandeis.
- **Dr. Saed El Koni, Syracuse University, Public Policy, spring 2007** (Cohort I, first visit). Saed el Koni's first visit of his Short Term Fellowship resulted in developing a strong relationship with his mentor at Syracuse University. This led to a Memorandum of Understanding between Syracuse University and An Najah National University in Nablus to establish a framework of activities that will involve exchange of students and faculty, joint research and fundraising. Two MBA scholarships at Syracuse University have also been awarded to two students from An Najah University's Business Department. An Najah University expects this will be a regular scholarship opportunity for its student body.

## **Open Society Institute US-Based Activity**

### Ongoing Contact with Grantees and Host Universities

Throughout the quarter OSI staff:

- responded to grantee questions about programmatic issues;
- updated host universities regarding Gazan grantees from PhD Cohort 1 (3 grantees) and PhD Cohort 2 (1 grantee) as to the uncertainties regarding the departure of these grantees due to the ongoing closure of the Strip. (Please see further discussion below. All of these grantees are now in the US)
- answered questions from host universities about issues such as grantee health insurance coverage and grantee tuition / fees billing.

In addition, throughout the quarter OSI staff members were in contact with host university contacts to answer questions about the PhD and Short-Term Fellows programs' structure, timing, and requirements. Program Coordinator Patrick Hynes and Program Manager Joe Glicksberg were in close communication with host university contacts and grantee mentors to update them about grantee arrival times, initial arrival hotel information, and to arrange airport greeting plans. OSI relayed arrival information to grantees directly and through AMIDEAST and facilitated grantee-mentor contact by e-mail and phone. OSI also coordinated with the AMIDEAST staff members making grantee travel arrangements.

#### PhD Cohort II Host University Contracts

In September, OSI finalized its PhD Cohort II host university contract document. OSI sent contracts for fall 2007 PhD grantees to officials at host universities in October. OSI has received countersigned contracts from six of the seven universities. OSI is continuing its follow up with the one outstanding host, the University of Denver.

In December, OSI prepared host university contract documents for the three PhD Cohort II grantees that were not able to arrive in time to start fall 2007 classes. All of these grantees were able to arrive by late fall or will arrive in early January and will start their programs in January 2008. The grantees are: Hasan El-Nabih (Boston College, Education); Mohammad Awad (UT-Dallas; Public Policy); and Bilal Younis (Southern Illinois University-Carbondale, Education). OSI will send these contracts to these host universities in January 2008 and expects to have countersigned versions returned and on file by late February.

#### Late PhD Cohort II Grantee Arrival in the US

Cohort II PhD grantee, Hassan El-Nabih, was unable to exit Gaza to start his program in Education at Boston College in late August. However, Mr. El-Nabih successfully exited Gaza and arrived in Boston in early December. While Mr. El-Nabih was in Gaza, OSI was in regular contact with the department chair and departmental coordinator at Boston College's Lynch School of Education. The department welcomed Mr. El-Nabih upon his arrival and will work with him to plan his spring 2008 start.

#### Gazan "Summer Returnee" Cohort 1 PhD Grantees – Late Arrivals for Fall 2007

Three Cohort I PhD grantees who had returned to Gaza at the beginning of the summer 2007 to conduct research and independent study were unable to exit Gaza in late August to return and continue their programs. These grantees were: 1) Khitam Abu Hamad, Public Policy, Brandeis University; 2) Sadeq Firwana, Education, Boston College; and 3) Wael Dokhan, Political Science and International Relations, University of Denver. All of these grantees were able to successfully

exit Gaza and arrive in the US this fall. Ms. Abu Hamad and Mr. Firwana arrived in early November and Mr. Dokhan arrived in early December. OSI had remained in regular contact with faculty at their host universities to update them regarding the situation. In the case of Khitam Abu Hamad, arrangements were made with her professors that allowed her to enroll for classes and do coursework online, which she continued in person upon her arrival. Boston College made similar arrangements for Sadeq Firwana. Wael Dokhan will resume his studies in January 2008.

#### Cohort II Short-Term Fellow First-Visit Placements

In October OSI staff continued its earlier outreach to potential host universities by e-mail and phone regarding the placement of the two Cohort II Short-Term Fellows, Dr. Salem Thawaba (urban planning) and Dr. Bilal Shafei (education). In early October OSI mailed placement packets to departmental chairs, graduate studies deans, and selected faculty members at approximately 24 departments (12 per candidate) at 24 universities. The packets were discipline-specific and contained: a) a cover letter; b) the finalist file with interview comment summaries; c) a PFDP program and Short-Term Visiting Fellow component overview; and d) a host university application.

OSI continued follow up by phone and e-mail throughout October and early November. By early November, OSI secured placements for Dr. Thawaba at the University of California at Berkeley, the University of Arkansas, and the University of Florida. Dr. Thawaba decided upon UC-Berkeley, but later declined the fellowship due to his home university's (Birzeit) refusal to allow him to attend for an appropriate period of time. By mid-November, OSI secured placements for Mr. Shafei at Syracuse University and Columbia University's Teachers College. Dr. Shafei accepted the placement at Columbia Teachers College and will begin his visit in January 2008.

In late December OSI staff revised the Short-Term Visiting Fellow Grant and Terms and Conditions letters. Dr. Shafei's original is now on file after countersignature. In mid-December OSI set up electronic files for Dr. Shafei in its grants database / monitoring software program, GrantSQL. In January OSI will circulate its standardized "Short-Term Visit Plans" form that Dr. Shafei's mentor will fill out in conjunction with him which will outline the specific activities he will take towards fulfilling the program's goals during his visit.

#### Cohort I Short-Term Fellow Second Visit Arrangements

Throughout the quarter OSI staff members were in close contact with Cohort I short-term grantees and their first-visit host institution mentors regarding second-visit preparations. As of late December, OSI has arranged or is currently in the process of arranging six returnee visits. The returnees will be visiting at their host institutions again in spring or summer 2008. The returnees include Mazen Hamada; Sahar Natsheh; Jamal Rabee; Abdulfattah Shamleh; Said Al-Koni; and Ata Darwish. Cohort I short-term fellow, Dr. Hisham Hidmi, did not apply for a second visit but may apply next year.

#### Grantee Monitoring

Throughout the quarter OSI staff continued:

- communicating with grantees to answer questions about PFDP terms and conditions.
- answering questions from host universities about PFDP terms and conditions.

- providing grantees and host universities with official letters requested for purposes such as the securing of grantee social security numbers.
- fielding questions from host universities about matters concerning grantee tuition/fees.
- processing invoices from host universities for tuition/fees.
- processing grantee living stipends and requests for professional development funds.
- facilitating discussions between grantees and host university mentors regarding questions about the appropriateness of certain placements. For example, one grantee, Abdrabu Abu Alyan, was concerned that his placement in the doctoral program at University of Massachusetts at Amherst's Center for International Education was not suitable for a student with his interests, despite discussions he had with faculty there before he accepted the placement. OSI staff spoke with and e-mailed Abdrabu on several occasions and encouraged him to talk to his mentor about ways in which his interests could be accommodated in the program. Abdrabu did so, and has reported that he has worked out an arrangement with the university that will allow him to take a number of courses at the University of Massachusetts at Boston that will fulfill his requirements and provide flexibility by allowing him to take more courses in linguistics education than he would otherwise have been able to. At present it seems that Abdrabu is satisfied with his placement.

The most intensive grantee monitoring issue that arose during the quarter concerned Nasser and Mysoon Abuelnoor, who are grantees in the University of Akron's Department of Public Administration and Urban Studies. Throughout the quarter, OSI's PFDP Program Manager Joe Glicksberg and PFDP Program Coordinator Patrick Hynes were in close contact with the Abuelnoors, AMIDEAST-Ramallah, and the Abuelnoors' academic adviser at the U. of Akron, Dr. Sonia Alemagno. The main issues of concern were reports of domestic trouble and domestic violence and a charge of plagiarism made against Mr. Abuelnoor. The University of Akron dealt with the domestic violence reports according to the standard operating procedures it has in place for such cases among its students, although it kept OSI updated.

In November Mr. Abuelnoor was accused of plagiarism by one of his professors. Mr. Abuelnoor was cleared of the plagiarism charge, but accepted the university's request that he retake the course and attend a training course on proper citation procedures. Upon learning of the charge, Mr. Abuelnoor's academic advisor Dr. Sonia Alemagno immediately contacted OSI. OSI then arranged a teleconference with AMIDEAST, USAID, and the University of Akron on November 14; 2007. During the conference call, the group decided that Mr. Bassam Kort would call Mr. Abuelnoor to reinforce the seriousness with which the PFDP program is monitoring his actions. Mr. Kort spoke with Mr. Abuelnoor on November 20 and updated OSI and AMIDEAST. The University of Akron reports that Mr. Abuelnoor is in good standing and no further incidents – personal or academic – have arisen. OSI remains in close contact with the Abuelnoors and their academic adviser at the University of Akron and is continually monitoring the situation.

#### PFDP Grantee Conference Planning

In November OSI confirmed arrangements with Portland State University to host the second annual PFDP Grantee Fellows' Conference. The conference will be held in at the Hatfield School of Government at Portland State University in Portland, Oregon from March 21-23, 2008.

In December, OSI confirmed several speakers for the conference. One confirmed speaker is Mr. Ray Wagner of Rice University's path breaking "Connexions" Project. Mr. Wagner will conduct interactive workshops for grantees about new technology-based tools for curriculum development. A second confirmed speaker is former Associate Dean Barbara Safriet of Yale Law School, who will speak about public health issues and public policy in the US. Social outings to the Columbia River Gorge and downtown Portland are also being planned.

In December, OSI invited Dr. Howard Sumka to be the conference's keynote speaker. Although Dr. Sumka relayed that he would not be able to attend, he also relayed that he has forwarded the invitation to other appropriate potential speakers at USAID in Washington, DC. OSI remains hopeful that a high-level USAID official will be able to act as the conference's keynote speaker and reinforce the support of the US government for the PFDP. Conference planning remains ongoing.

### **Administration and Reporting**

Planning Meeting: The 9<sup>th</sup> Planning Meeting since the start of the PFDP was held involving AMIDEAST, OSI and USAID representatives on December 17, 2007. The meeting focused on discussion regarding the short-term component and making it more attractive to applicants, planning of the US Grantee Conference in Portland in March as well as the Academic Colloquia in summer 2008, and an update on grantees in the US.

Financial: AMIDEAST submitted its fourth quarter financial pipeline report on December 15, 2007. The total cumulative expenditures reported in the pipeline report were \$401,564. Total actual expenditures were estimated to be \$257,092 as reported in the SF269 submitted on January 30, 2008. The discrepancy stems from OSI incurred USAID expenses (living stipends and tax withholding) during the period which had been reimbursed by AMIDEAST to OSI. Future reporting will endeavor to accurately predict financial outflows to OSI within the pipeline report.

Actual Federal expenditures this quarter were \$665,485. To date, total Federal outlays combined with OSI cost share resulted in \$3,791,323 in expenditures.

USAID Audit: Price Waterhouse Coopers is the firm assigned by USAID to audit the PFDP project. On June 24 AMIDEAST received a formal letter outlining the material and non material findings. AMIDEAST submitted a detailed management response to each item on July 20, 2007. A formal Audit Exit Meeting took place on December 18 involving the two lead auditors, USAID representatives Abeer Odeh and Bassam Kort attended, as well as Nevine Zakariya attended by phone. Also in attendance was Hani Bakri, the AMIDEAST Accountant, the COP and Director of Contracts at AMIDEAST in Washington DC, Ms. Jackie Haralson, via digital video conferencing. The discussion focused on the continued disagreements between AMIDEAST and the auditors regarding questioned costs listed in two material findings. These issues remain unresolved and AMIDEAST is now waiting on the conclusions from RIG Cairo.

#### Modification:

AMIDEAST submitted all the documentation to USAID Contracts in early December for a major budget realignment which includes some significant programmatic changes as well. Annex A includes the rationale for these changes. The modification is expected to be approved and signed in January 2008.

ANNEX A



Palestinian Faculty  
Development Program (PFDP)  
USAID Cooperative Agreement No. 294-A-00-05-00234-00  
Summary Justification for the Modification

AMIDEAST respectfully request a modification to the existing cooperative agreement with USAID to better reflect the needs of the Palestinian academic community, as well as changing realities associated with grant implementation. The modifications requested are both programmatic and budgetary but total grant funds remain the same. Small changes in both direct and indirect costs will be made to the existing budget to better reflect actual expenditures. These will be explained in the budget notes. This document will explain the most significant programmatic changes and justify the budget realignment request.

1. Program/Budget Revisions Based on Needs Assessment:

AMIDEAST finds it necessary to make a number of changes to the current cooperative agreement. Some are minor budget revisions, and others pertain to program design. However, all the objectives are directly in line with the existing aims of PFDP.

In February 2007 a comprehensive needs assessment was conducted by AMIDEAST with 10 Palestinian universities. Four types of faculty development opportunities were highlighted: a) collaborative projects to support teaching; b) short-term training – which includes short term training for university administrators; c) research fellowships; and, d) visiting international scholars.

- a) The survey results indicated a need to implement the concept of Collaborative Projects in Teaching (CPT). CPT will establish a framework for the long-term collaborative development of scholarly teaching in areas important to Palestine's undergraduate humanities and social sciences curricula. The near-term objectives of CPT projects include the following:
- Developing scholarly and innovative undergraduate teaching;
  - Critical rethinking on a subject, drawing on the best international scholarship;
  - A collaborative structure fostering peer exchange and learning among local and international faculty.

AMIDEAST proposes launching 3 pilot Collaborative Projects in Teachings. This new component will complement other existing components and further achieve USAID's goals in developing the higher education community in West Bank and Gaza. AMIDEAST estimates this can be accomplished at a cost of \$260,000.

- b) The survey results indicated a need for short term training of university administrators. AMIDEAST anticipates establishing a partnership with the Central European University (CEU) in order to offer Palestinian faculty working in senior administrative roles short term – three to five days – professional development opportunities. The CEU is a United States registered and accredited institution located in Hungary. The CEU will provide the seminars in Budapest. AMIDEAST will manage the recruitment and selection, as well as visa and travel costs for the individual beneficiaries. AMIDEAST anticipates three cohorts of 15 faculty members over three years to attend seminars at the CEU. Therefore, \$71,610 will cover the cost for 45 new beneficiaries.

## 2. Other Budget Changes

- a. AMIDEAST finds it necessary to provide PhD Fellows a “Research Fund” in order to complete their dissertations. As per ADS 253 and the USAID Detailed Guide for Training Results, research funds are appropriate for graduate students in order to better ensure timely and necessary degree completion. USAID's EGAD/ED office in Washington DC has endorsed this type and amount of allowance for PFDP PhD grantees. It is estimated that the cost of providing the participants with research funds will cost \$175,000.
- b. Change to OSI's cost share:
- AMIDEAST requests the cost share of the project be reduced from \$8,720,913 to \$7,515,223. This reduction primarily represents the portion of cost share associated with the ten PhD grantees not sent to the US. Importantly, the cost share ratio between OSI and USAID remains roughly the same with USAID covering 54% of all costs and OSI and US host universities covering 46%. The previous ratio was 51% vs. 49%.
  - OSI will fund two new benefits: a) a salary replacement fund for short-term grantees budgeted at \$166,000 and, b) a family assistance allowance of \$200 a month for PhD grantees. This is new type of cost share is budgeted at \$207,000. This amount is included in the \$7,515,223.
- c. Faculty Grants: AMIDEAST requests authorization to increase the amount allotted for faculty grants. AMIDEAST conducted the first solicitation of faculty grant applications in May and received applications valued at over one million dollars. The volume of response and the unique ideas presented in the applications reflect a need to increase the total amount available for this component to \$478,000.

AMIDEAST needs a local part-time contractor who specializes in small grant management to provide assistance in managing these grants given the complicated regulatory environment associated with USAID compliance issues. Therefore,

\$31,200 is budgeted over four years for a local consultant with USAID grants management experience to monitor and evaluate the Faculty Grants, as well as the new Collaborative Projects in Teaching component (both will use the Fixed Obligated Grant mechanism). In addition, the M&E consultant will train the two existing PFDP program officers in the key elements of M&E, and set up any systems (templates, schedules, procedures) for sustainable grants management.

- d. In consultation with the universities and upon the recommendation of the PFDP CTO, AMIDEAST piloted a Teaching Excellence Award in July 2007. The award is a small but is an important activity that complements the other main components of the PFDP. The awards are designed to spotlight the importance of teaching in higher education, inspire teachers within the academic community and recognize success. Individual awards of \$2,000 will be given to faculty for their outstanding achievement in teaching. Faculty who can demonstrate an uncommon commitment to teaching, who use especially effective teaching strategies and who have enabled notable achievements by former students will be given an award during the annual Academic Colloquia. AMIDEAST anticipates distributing a total of 22 awards during the life of the grant for a total cost of \$44,400.
- e. **Faculty Development Series:** In consultation with the PFDP CTO, AMIDEAST will organize a series of events each year – workshops, seminars, lectures – or other activities that bring faculty together to discuss and debate trends in higher education. The purpose of these events will be to promote the aims of the PFDP, provide regular, local opportunities for faculty networking and take advantage of international scholars and/or local expertise. \$60,000 have been budgeted for these local events, which may number as many as 5 per year.

No increase in the grant is needed to fund any of the changes listed above, as AMIDEAST anticipates a savings to USAID of approximately \$845,351 from sending only 14 of 24 budgeted PhD grantees. The reasons for not being able to place 24 participants are fully explained in the Quarterly Performance Monitoring reports for FY 2007. The primary reasons include a reduction in the pool of qualified applicants who met the academic standards, field limitations and language proficiency, as well as fewer eligible universities in which to recruit candidates.

An additional \$115,000 is highlighted as savings after a careful review of average annual increases in the benchmark living stipend of the PhD Fellows. The USG rates come from the International Institute of Education and average increases of the last five years have been 2.9% annually, as opposed to the 5% currently budgeted within the PFDP. AMIDEAST is suggesting to revise the annual increase to 3.5% and thus save \$115,000.