

International Foundation for Education and Self-Help (IFESH)

SEMI-ANNUAL PROGRAM REPORT

January 1, 2000 through June 30, 2000

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Submitted to

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

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SEMI-ANNUAL PROGRAM REPORT

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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 January 1, 2000 through June 30, 2000, and describes the activities, achievements and problems encountered in implementing the agreement. It covers activities of the Teachers for Africa (TFA) Program, the International Fellows Program and the African Bankers Training Program.

2. Teachers for Africa Program – Overall

A total of 24 Teachers for Africa (TFAs) were selected to participate in the 1999/2000 Teachers for Africa Program and placed in six countries for the 1999/2000 academic year. By early January 2000, all teachers were in place with the arrival of the 4 teachers for the program in Namibia, which operates on a later cycle than the other country programs. There were also 7 Teachers for Africa funded directly by USAID/Ghana under a Mission project. (Additionally, 3 Teachers for Africa were assigned to Nigeria under a separate program funded by the private sector. The Nigeria program is not reviewed in this report.)

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

- Organize and implement mid-cycle conferences for teachers in each of the country programs to address progress, problems, issues, and education techniques for promoting the most effective program. Where possible, incorporate officials from USAID Missions and Ministries of Education in the mid-cycle conferences to help ensure that programs are meeting the expectations of both host government officials as well as ensuring that programs are continuing to work 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.
- Continue recruitment efforts for the 2000/2001 academic year. Continue to expand the various types of media in which IFESH is recruiting, especially including aggressive use of the internet.

- Travel to field as necessary to improve program implementation and effectiveness.
- Continue work to assure a smooth startup of the two new programs in Guinea and Namibia. Continue training 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).
- Have Teachers for Africa Selection Committee in Phoenix in late March to select the teachers for the 2000/2001 academic year.
- Have International Fellows Selection Committee in April to select the Fellows for the August 2000-May 2001 Fellows program.
- Have Country Representatives continue to work closely and meet regularly with officials from USAID, relevant host government ministries and host country educational institutions to assure that programs are meeting the needs and expectations of all parties to the greatest degree possible.
- Begin planning for the August 2000 Pre-departure Orientation to be held in Phoenix.

3. Teachers for Africa Program – Specific Countries

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

3.1 Ghana

The 8 eight teachers 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, worked in a number of institutions around the country, in a variety of academic areas. The program in Ghana, well-established and with an extremely competent and experienced Country Representative, ran very smoothly during this period.

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

As noted in the previous Semi-annual Program Report, 3 teachers were assigned to Malawi for 1999/2000, far fewer than the 8 TFAs assigned to Malawi the previous year. All 3 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.)

Two of the 3 teachers assigned to Malawi did not perform effectively. Difficulties in adjusting to the new environment and cross-cultural problems appear to have been at the root of their difficulties. After working with the 2 teachers and trying to help their adjustment and improve their performance, IFESH/Phoenix, in consultation with Malawian educational officials and USAID officials, decided to terminate their participation agreements with IFESH and withdraw them from Malawi. Both teachers departed country in January 2000. The 1 remaining teacher continued to do an excellent job and is well-regarded by those with whom she works at Montfort College.

IFESH's relatively new Country Representative in Malawi, Ms. Selina Mposa, a Malawian national, began work as the new IFESH/Malawi Country Representative in mid-October and has been performing very well as Country Representative.

Discussions which were initiated in late 1999 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, continued. These discussions achieved agreement on a more academically diversified program. Teachers were recruited and selected for the 2000/2001 academic year. This more diversified program will begin in August 2000.

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. The four teachers assigned to Benin for the 1999/2000 academic year continued their work of setting up library centers throughout the country, providing books and teaching 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.

The newly hired Country Representative, Mrs. Cynthia Taha, an extremely well qualified and experienced development professional, has been an exceptional leader of IFESH's programs in Benin. She has worked closely with the USAID Mission and host government institutions to continue to develop IFESH's programs and more fully integrate them into Benin's and USAID/Benin's educational strategies.

3.4 Ethiopia

The 9 TFAs assigned to Ethiopia for the 1999/2000 academic year worked well teaching a variety of subjects such as mathematics, nursing and English as a Second Language. One of the TFAs, who had been performing her duties well, terminated her assignment early and returned to the U.S. Although she stated she had difficulties working with her supervisor, there may well have been other personal reasons that she desired to return to the U.S. The other eight TFAs successfully completed their assignments.

TFAs in most instances are considered by their host institutions as senior staff. They not only teach classes but 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.

3.5 Guinea

Guinea's new Teachers for Africa Program had a few start-up problems. The new (June 1999) IFESH/Guinea Country Representative, Mr. Amadou Bah, has been doing committed and effective work. However, IFESH/Guinea needs to obtain better defined and more accurate job descriptions for the TFAs. The Guinean officials did not adequately develop realistic job descriptions for some of our TFAs for this initial group of three teachers, with the result that some of the job assignments changed and not all teachers were doing the work that they had anticipated. Some frustration and disappointment resulted because of the issue with job descriptions. We believe we have adequately addressed this issue for the next group of teachers going to Guinea for the 2000/2001 academic year.

3.6 Namibia

The first group of teachers for the newly-established Teachers for Africa Program in Namibia arrived in January 2000. The new (August 1999) IFESH/Namibia Country Representative, Ms. Ann Chang, performed superbly. With her two years with IFESH as both a Teacher for Africa and an International Fellow, her understanding of the IFESH principles and operating procedures enabled her to establish the program quickly and have rapid impact. Ms. Chang has maintained close contact with the USAID/Namibia Mission to assure our new program is appropriately supportive of the Mission's Strategic Objective in education, and has continued to meet frequently with numerous officials of the Ministry of Education and various educational institutions.

The new TFAs have been involved in a wide range of activities. In addition to lecturing, advising and observing students during their practice teaching, and involving themselves in extra-curricular activities at the colleges, the three TFAs at the colleges of education have each started their own self-help projects. These include the establishment of a scholarship fund, assisting a primary school to electrify its premises, and student support activities. The teacher volunteer at the National Institute for Educational Development

(NIED) has also done excellent work, including organizing workshops, researching early child development programs and developing training materials and programs for primary school teachers.

IFESH/Phoenix understands from both USAID/Namibia and Namibian education officials that they are pleased with the way the program has operated so far. Namibian education officials requested a larger group of teachers for this coming academic year, but after discussions with USAID/Namibia, a decision was made to hold the number at four TFAs for the 2001 academic year.

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

As noted in the previous Semi-annual Program Report, 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.

This impacted the number of applicants IFESH had for the TFA Program for the 2000/2001 academic year. We received a total of 135 applications for the TFA Program, down from about 170 for the previous year. However, IFESH took a number of steps that effectively countered these recruiting problems. We 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 utilizing a larger listing of positions worked well, and during the March 2000 TFA Selection Committee meetings, IFESH was able to select the necessary numbers of qualified TFAs for the 2000/2001 academic cycle.

IFESH increased its advertising of the TFA 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.

5. 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.

6. International Fellows Program

The 6 Fellows in sub-Saharan Africa during this reporting period funded under the Cooperative Agreement have been working in 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.

IFESH has been pleased with the contributions of these 6 candidates and their successful performances in the field. These assignments as Fellows enabled them to support development efforts in various countries in Africa, working with different host organizations. The Fellows indicate their experiences have been a tremendous learning experience for them, and in some cases, a watershed event in their lives.

IFESH's recruiting efforts during this report period for the August 2000-May 2001 Fellows Program was highly successful. As contrasted to the tight market for qualified teachers in the U.S., there is an abundance of extremely qualified candidates for the International Fellows Program. This year there were 93 applicants for 7 Fellows positions, thus providing 13 applicants for every Fellows position. (Two of these 7 Fellows are to be funded by private sector funds, rather than through the Cooperative Agreement.) The result is that we have been able to again select very qualified candidates for the Fellows Program. These candidates, as with the 1999/2000 group of Fellows, will be able to contribute a great deal as well as benefit from the experience.

7. African Bankers Training Program ("The Best and Brightest")

7.1 African Bankers Training Program – Overall

The African Bankers Training Program, popularly known as the "The Best and Brightest," was designed to provide unique training opportunities for mid-level African bankers and other financial-related professionals to acquire the necessary skills and professional preparations to better serve their banks and the private sector in their

countries. The participants are trained by leading financial institutions in the United States for 5 weeks at no cost to the participants and their financial institutions. During this six-month reporting period, 28 mid-level bankers from various banks in 8 African countries (Ghana, Benin, Botswana, Namibia, South Africa, Malawi, Ethiopia, and Nigeria) were invited to the United States to attend the Best and Brightest Training Program in New York, Philadelphia, and Washington, D.C. Chase Manhattan Bank in New York has been contracted to conduct the classroom training for the bankers while Mellon Bank in Philadelphia provides the bankers with a one-week practical training program. This report describes activities under the program, including accomplishments and problems, during the period January 1, 2000 through June 30, 2000.

7.2 Recruitment and Selection Process

In order to recruit highly qualified candidates into the program, about 500 application forms were sent to the African banks' Managing Directors and IFESH country offices to be distributed to prospective candidates. In response to the 500 application forms which were distributed, 175 completed application forms were received from candidates in commercial banks, ministries of finance, central banks, and other financial institutions requesting to participate in the Spring Class of May 2000. The quality of the applications was very impressive, with more than one-third of the applicants being women. The 175 applications were collated by computer and used to prepare an Applicants Book for use by the Selection Committee.

The next step after processing the applications was to select the best candidates for the class. The selection committee, consisting of 4 representatives from Chase Manhattan and Mellon Banks, met on March 30 and 31, 2000 in Phoenix, Arizona to select 30 applicants from 8 African countries for the class scheduled to begin in May and continue into June 2000. For the first time since 1996, 5 Nigerian bankers were approved by the USAID Mission in Lagos to participate in the program.

After the selection process, IFESH notified all the successful candidates, their Managing Directors and the relevant USAID Missions of the selections. IFESH also notified USAID/ Washington.

Two candidates from Benin were unable to demonstrate sufficient English-language proficiency, as required by USAID, and were not permitted to attend the program. This continues to be a problem for applicants from Benin, who are otherwise well-qualified for the program on professional and educational grounds. However, a Nigerian applicant who was working in Benin as a banker was invited to participate in the program. Candidates from French-speaking countries are required to score at least 65 points on the Commutative English Proficiency Assessment (CEPA) test before they can participate in the program. This test is usually administered by the USAID Missions.

Two candidates from other countries withdrew voluntarily due to the press of professional commitments, and last-minute invitations were subsequently extended to some of the other well-qualified applicants.

7.3 Logistics and Preparations for the Arrival of Bankers in the U.S.

Upon acceptance in writing by the bankers, IFESH staff made travel arrangements for visas, hotels, field trips, per diem, and other logistics. Twenty-eight of the bankers arrived in New York on May 20, 2000. Dr. Samuel Atteh and Ms. Dee Edwards of the IFESH/Phoenix staff received the bankers at JFK International Airport and transported them to their hotel in New York City. All of the bankers arrived on the same day.

In order to reduce uncertainty and eliminate obstacles to learning in the United States, in-country orientation was conducted shortly after the bankers' arrival in New York, during which IFESH staff explained the goals and the objectives of the Best and Brightest program, IFESH and USAID. The bankers were provided with information about American culture and customs, traffic laws, contents of the training program, compliance with regulations and requirements regarding per diem, hotel, class attendance, health care issues, and – very importantly – the requirement to return home immediately upon completion of the program. The presentation was presented in seminar format, with videos, books and ample opportunity for questions. At the end of the orientation, the participants indicated that they understood and felt more confident and comfortable about their responsibilities and expectations from the program

7.4 Training Activities with Chase Manhattan and Mellon Banks

The classroom part of the training was conducted over 3 weeks at 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, and a trip was made to the New York Stock Exchange.

The bankers next attended a five-day practicum at Mellon Bank in Philadelphia. This phase of the program demonstrated the practical side of banking. Various aspects of credit extension and recovery as well as lock-box management, check processing and electronic banking were demonstrated at Mellon's headquarters building and at several branches.

The participants next visited the following organizations in Washington, DC: USAID, the State Department, the Treasury Department, the Export-Import Bank, the World Bank and the Overseas Private Investment Corporation. Presentations were made by various U.S.-based African businessmen who were conducting business between the U.S. and Africa. While in Washington, D.C., the bankers also had the opportunity to meet with their countries' Ambassadors to the United States during a luncheon organized by IFESH.

Also while in Washington, D.C., a workshop on HIV/AIDS awareness was organized for the bankers. A professor from Howard University was invited to conduct the workshop. The bankers were expected to impart the knowledge acquired from the workshop to their counterparts in their home countries.

7.5 Accomplishments and Problems

Through the end of this reporting period, 331 African bankers have been trained in the United States under the Best and Brightest program. According to our records, more than 100 bankers from Ghana alone have participated in the program. Almost 85 percent of Ghanaian bankers who have participated in the program have been promoted to senior positions in their banks.

Based on the evaluation forms completed at the end of the course, most of the bankers believed that the Best and Brightest Program was a very good program. They commended the efforts of Reverend Leon Sullivan and the United States Government for giving them this type of opportunity to come to the United States to enhance their professional skills. They made appreciative remarks on how satisfied they were with the training program and their overall experiences in the United States. All 28 bankers who participated in this class have returned to their home countries.

IFESH country offices have been very helpful in providing logistical support to the programs in the participating countries. They continue to assist Phoenix in organizing pre-departure orientation for the bankers, helping to process applications for visas and passports, and making necessary travel arrangements for the bankers.

The Best and Brightest Alumni Associations in some of the participating countries have had some impressive accomplishments. In Ghana, for example, the alumni association has been registered as a nonprofit organization and half of the Best and Brightest alumni are active members of the association. In spite of these accomplishments in Ghana, more work still needs to be done to encourage alumni in other participating countries to achieve the same level of accomplishment.

There were no significant problems during this reporting period.

8. Financial Report

Two financial tables and explanatory notes for the USAID/IFESH Cooperative Agreement Number AOT-A-00-98-00110-00 for the period up to June 30, 2000, are attached as the next three pages.