



USAID | **EGYPT**
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE



LOTUS 
SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

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

Annual Progress Report FY2018

October 1, 2017 – September 30, 2018

Table of Contents

Executive Summary:	5
Progress against Planned Activities:	6
Cohort 1 and 2 Students/Graduates.....	6
Cohort 3 Students/Graduates.....	7
Updates on LOTUS Cohort 3 Alumni.....	7
Cohort 3 and 4 Community Service Activities and Academic Performance:.....	7
English Language Proficiency.....	8
ITP Test for Graduating Cohort 3 Students Academic Year 2017/2018	8
Intensive Summer English Program.....	8
Study in the U.S. Opportunities	9
Re-entry Workshops	9
Leadership in Action Enrichment Activities	10
The Seventh Annual LOTUS Student-led Leadership Workshop	11
Cohort 4 Individual Leadership in Action Sessions	11
Cohort 3 Retreat	12
Helwa Ya Baladi Trips.....	12
Cultural Events.....	12
Networking Iftar.....	12
Cohort 4 Retreat	13
LOTUS Diwan Session.....	13
Cohort 3 Final Retreat.....	13
Leadership in Action Program Assessment Tool	13
Career Component	15
Self-Assessments:	15
Career Counseling Sessions:	15
Mentoring:	15
Internships:	16
Employability Skills Pre and post program survey analysis:	16

Table of Tables

Table (1) Summary of the LOTUS Scholarship Program Results to-date.....	6
Table (3) Cohort 3 and 4 GPAs.....	7
Table (4) LIA Activities Summary Table	10

Executive Summary:

This Annual Progress Report covers the period of 10/1/2017 – 9/30/2018 as required in Attachment A/Section A.5/2.C. of Cooperative Agreement 263-A-00-10-00026-00 and consists of this summary document and the annexed M&E Matrix, as well as the four previously-submitted, detailed quarterly reports.

LOTUS Scholarship Program supports USAID/Egypt's new Development Objective (DO) 22 – Educated Workforce that Responds to Labor Market Needs. The activity contributes to IR.1 Tertiary and Workforce Development Programs able to produce graduates with relevant skills and also Sub IR 1.1 – Increased Access to Quality Tertiary Education. An extension to the LOTUS Program conforms to USAID Education Strategy Goal #2, which states "The 21st century knowledge-driven global economy underscores the need for higher levels of education and cognitive skills beyond a primary education. A daunting challenge facing developing countries in meeting competitiveness demands is how to improve equity and expand access to tertiary and workforce development programs."

IIE works in collaboration with six Egyptian private universities that are committed to providing quality education for the students who are enrolled in the Program: the British University in Egypt (BUE), October University for Modern Sciences and Art University (MSA), Future University in Egypt (FUE), Al-Ahram Canadian University (ACU), Pharos University in Alexandria (PUA) and Arab Academy for Sciences, Technology & Maritime Transport (AASTMT).

This Annual Report highlights the LOTUS Program's Year 8 (October 1, 2017 – September 30, 2018) accomplishments, challenges and action taken. IIE is pleased to report that progress to date has been excellent. The students have been fully engaged and extremely developing, and the Program partners have been proactive, enthusiastic, and fully committed. The LOTUS program team is focused, energetic, and persistent in their approach to achieving the desired results.

IIE is committed to achieving these goals by offering scholarship recipients solid academic programs, leadership enrichment activities, career development opportunities, and community-based service learning opportunities. LOTUS Scholarship students are supported by the members of the IIE LOTUS team throughout the period of their scholarships to enable their academic success and to ensure that they gain the necessary leadership skills and practical experience that will prepare them for life and careers after graduation.

Since the inception of the LOTUS Scholarship Program in 2010:

- 250 students have been successfully recruited, selected, and awarded scholarships from among over 3,300 applicants.
- Beginning of FY2018: there were a total of 99 students (50 cohort 3 and 49 cohort 4) enrolled in undergraduate programs and 4 graduates undertaking their dentistry residency year (3 cohort 1 and 1 cohort 2)
- End of FY2018: there are a total of 49 students continue to be enrolled in undergraduate programs as follows:
 - o Cohort 3: 1 student (1 female)
 - o Cohort 4: 48 students (27 females – 21 males)
- 191 students have graduated including two of whom will continue in the Program in FY2019 to complete their residency;
 - o Cohort 1 Graduates: 96 students (50 females – 46 males)
 - o Cohort 2 Graduates: 46 students (25 females – 21 males)
 - o Cohort 3 Graduates: 49 students (27 females – 22 males)
 - o Cohort 1 Residents: 2 students (2 males)
- 3 students left the Program for personal reasons (one female cohort 1 and two females cohort 2)

1.a., 1.b., 1.1.a.,
1.2.a.
of scholarships
awarded/students
enrolled - Cohort 1,
2,3 & 4
(Achieved)

6.a., 6.1.a, 6.,2.,b.
of graduates -
Cohort 1, 2 and 3
(Achieved)

- 5 students had their scholarships terminated for weak academic performance over the course of the four semesters that they were in the Program (cohort 1, one female and two males), (cohort 2, two females).
- Two cohort 4 students (female and male) for failing to abide by the scholarship terms and conditions.

The LOTUS Scholarship Program has a set of objectives under which all of its activities are organized. The nine objectives are separate yet inter-related and together contribute to the Program goals. During FY2018, IIE worked diligently on achieving the objectives. IIE collaborated with partner universities and service providers to achieve objectives of providing students with the tools and support needed to perform well in their studies along with building their leadership skills and capabilities.

Progress against Planned Activities:

The LOTUS program accomplished several activities during Year 8 of the project (FY2018). The activities completed include:

- 1) Ninety-nine Leadership in Action Enrichment Sessions were attended by a total of 581 students (313 females – 268 males). *Note: students attended multiple sessions.*
- 2) Three cultural trips and events were conducted for a total of 121 Cohort 3 & 4 students (72 females – 49 males)
- 3) Student-led Workshop was conducted and attended by a total of 100 students (55 females – 45 males)
- 4) A total of 373 Career Counselling sessions for 277 Cohort 3 students (154 females – 123 males) and 96 Cohort 4 students (54 females – 42 males). *Note: some students had more than one session.*
- 5) 712 students attended different career mentoring sessions (396 females – 316 males). *Note: students attended multiple sessions.*
- 6) Fourteen Cohort 3 students (6 females – 8 males) and 29 Cohort 4 students (17 females – 12 males) participated in Study in the U.S. Opportunities.
- 7) Twelve Cohort 4 nursing students (7 females – 5 males) participated in the Observational Study Tour at the University of Kentucky and Salve Regina University

Table (1) Summary of the LOTUS Scholarship Program Results to-date

Component	C1	C2	C3	C4	Total # of Students	F	M
Currently enrolled students			1	48	49	28	21
(65) Service Learning Projects	35	22	98	104	259*	134	125
All Graduates (including Residency Students)	96	46	49		191	102	89
Residency Students (FY2018)	3	1			4	0	4
**Employed Graduates	85	41			126	66	60
Study Abroad	45	20	28	41	134	71	63
Internships	105	59	90	26	280 ¹	140	140

*Many students participated in multiple service learning projects

** The number of employed graduates reflects the number of graduates who got employed within one to two years of graduation.

Cohort 1 and 2 Students/Graduates

As of this reporting period, all students from Cohort 1 & 2 have officially graduated and IIE has received the transcripts. Two cohort 1 graduates are still receiving benefits from the program while they conduct their residency as per below. It is important to note that one student was scheduled to finish his residency in October 2018, however, he has experienced a variety of family and other challenges that have resulted in him needing additional time to finish his twelve-month residency.

Cohort 3 Students/Graduates

This reporting quarter marks the final months for most of the Cohort 3 students with 49 students (27 females – 22 males) graduating. The remaining student should finish her final semester in January 2019. She suffers from severe diabetes, which has been which has been a significant challenge to her ability to attend some classes and exams. IIE has worked with the student to ensure that she stay on track academically and has encouraged her to see a doctor regularly to monitor her health.

Five cohort 3 students were appointed as Teachers Assistants in the IT & Computer Science at BUE

Updates on LOTUS Cohort 3 Alumni

This section of the report will provide quarterly updates on the employment status of the LOTUS Cohort 3 students. IIE maintains the connection alumni through regular emails, social media and surveys where they provide information on their current jobs and the job interviews they have undertaken. To date, 49 out of the 50 cohort 3 students graduated and the remaining student will stay for the fall semester. As per the M&E matrix, the target is calculated based on the information extracted from a survey to document their employment status. Targets assume that 10% of the graduates will be employed within one year of their graduation and an additional 25% will be employed within two years of graduation. These estimates take into consideration that most male graduates have compulsory military service after graduation and some chose to pursue graduate studies, which will delay their employment.

While cohort 3 students became alumni at the end of FY2018, Q4, we anticipate that we will experience similar challenges or limitations, as with cohort 1 and 2, with collecting the graduates' data after most of them have either returned to their home governorates and/or are engaged either in pursuing their career paths, military service or family commitments. IIE will exert every effort to encourage alumni to be more responsive and provides guidance whenever the need arises.

A survey was designed and sent to the 49 alumni and 40 students answered the survey and reported on their employability status. To-date, 13 out of the 49 LOTUS cohort 3 alumni are employed, 9 of whom are females and 4 are males. Sixteen students are planning to continue looking for opportunities to pursue graduate studies. Five students have been appointed as Teaching Assistants at BUE and six male graduates are doing their mandatory military service.

Cohort 3 and 4 Community Service Activities and Academic Performance:

Most LOTUS students are performing well academically and are engaged in and committed to their studies. While students are completely immersed in their academic courses, study abroad competitive opportunities and leadership enrichment programs, many are active in extracurricular activities, student unions, student clubs, sports and community service activities. During this reporting period, LOTUS Scholarship students volunteered a total of 5,282 hours of community service activities in charities and development projects of which 3,532 hours were performed by females and 1,750 by males. They assumed 58 leadership roles, 41 of which were assumed by females and 17 by males in faculty and university student councils, student clubs, and community organizations.

IIE received the fall 2017 and spring 2018 semester grades for both cohort 3 and 4 as detailed below;

Table (3) Cohort 3 and 4 GPAs

BUE Cohort 3 Spring Semester	BUE Cohort 3 Fall Semester
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 6 students earned GPAs of 3.50 - 3.99 • 6 students earned GPAs of 3.00 – 3.49 • 8 students earned GPAs of 2.50 – 2.99 • 8 students earned GPAs of 2.00 – 2.49 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 4 students earned GPAs of 3.50 – 4.00 - 4 students earned GPAs of 3.00 – 3.49 - 14 students earned GPAs of 2.50 – 2.99 - 4 students earned GPAs of 2.00 – 2.49
AASTMT Cohort 3 Spring Semester	AASTMT Cohort 3 Fall Semester
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 14 students earned GPAs of 3.50 - 3.99 • 6 students earned GPAs of 3.00 – 3.49 • 1 student earned GPAs of 2.50 – 2.99 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 16 students earned GPAs of 3.50 – 4.00 • 4 students earned GPAs of 3.00 – 3.49 • 1 student earned GPAs of 2.50 – 2.99
BUE Cohort 4 Spring Semester	BUE Cohort 4 Fall Semester

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4 students earned GPAs of 4 • 6 students earned GPAs of 3.50 - 3.99 • 6 students earned GPAs of 3.00 – 3.49 • 8 students earned GPAs of 2.50 – 2.99 • 8 students earned GPAs of 2.00 – 2.49 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 6 students earned GPAs of 4.00 • 8 students earned GPAs of 3.50 – 3.99 • 8 students earned GPAs of 3.00 – 3.49 • 1 student earned GPAs of 2.50 – 2.99
AASTMT Cohort 4 Spring Semester	AASTMT Cohort 4 Fall Semester
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 11 students earned GPAs of 3.50 - 3.99 • 5 students earned GPAs of 3.00 – 3.49 • 5 students earned GPAs of 2.50 – 2.99 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 2 students earned GPAs of 4.00 - 7 students earned GPAs of 3.50 – 3.99 - 4 students earned GPAs of 3.00 – 3.49 - 7 student earned GPAs of 2.50 – 2.99

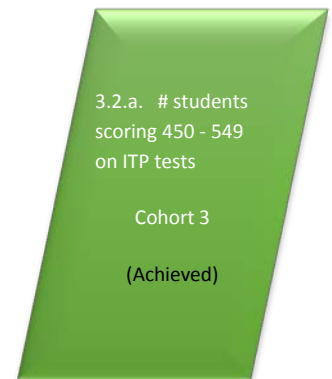
English Language Proficiency

During Academic year 2017/2018, Cohort 3 and 4 students were enrolled in the following English language opportunities:

ITP Test for Graduating Cohort 3 Students Academic Year 2017/2018

During this period, all cohort 3 students were required to sit for their final ITP examination prior to graduation. Two students were unable to sit for the exam. The breakdown of results for ITP exams for cohort 3 students by the time of graduation are as follows:

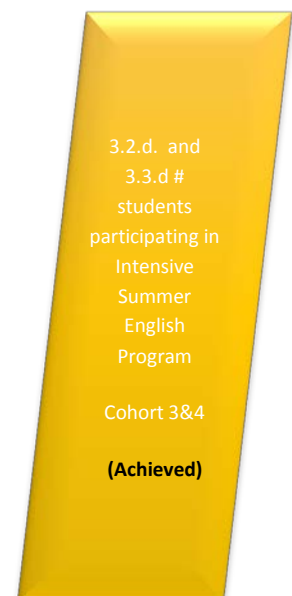
- Total number of students scoring in the range 550 or above on ITP tests:
 - o 5 students – (3 females – 2 males)
- Total number of students scoring in the range 500-550 on ITP tests:
 - o 19 students – (11 females – 8 males)
- Total number of students scoring in the range 450-549 on ITP tests:
 - o 37 students – (20 females – 17 males)



IIE recognizes that the target of 90% of graduating students achieving an ITP score of 550 or above was not met. English language proficiency is a major challenge in LOTUS as reported in previous reports. Given that students graduating from public schools tend to have weak English proficiency and English is not a criterion for selection in the LOTUS Program, this is to be expected. Another contributing factor is field of specialization and utilization of English language. STEM fields for example do not require students to do a lot of writing, which is key to improving proficiency. Science and technology students comprise a majority of Cohort 1 and 2 students and many are more proficient in technical terminology than general English. It is important to note that studying English during the regular academic year through supplemental English course offerings or independent study based on action plans is very challenging in light of the heavy course loads that students carry. Given the challenges of weak English language proficiency of public school graduates that several USAID scholarship programs are witnessing, IIE recommends that future programs explore and incorporate a greater variety of English language enhancing opportunities.

Intensive Summer English Program

Recognizing the on-going challenges with English language proficiency, IIE proposed and received approval to spend surplus funds on another two rounds of intensive English programming. During August and September, IIE conducted the Intensive Summer English Program for cohort 3 and 4 students. The objective of the Program, which was designed and implemented by the American

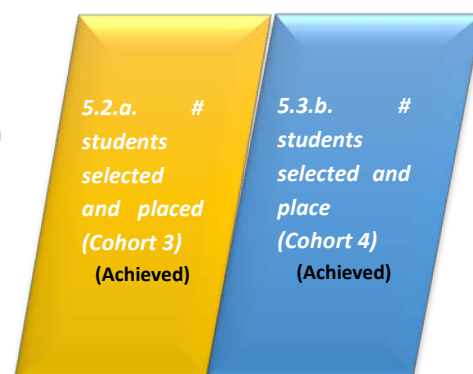


University in Cairo was to enhance overall English language proficiency, with an emphasis on employability and preparation for the job market.

Although the Intensive Summer English Program was optional and not mandatory and even though it was held in the summer after a busy year at university and internships, interest was very high. The final number of students who were accepted into the Program after meeting some internal criteria such as completion of at least one internship before the start of the program was 51 students (15 cohort 3 and 36 cohort 4).

Study in the U.S. Opportunities

The purpose of the LOTUS study abroad component is to provide LOTUS students with an opportunity to live and study in the United States for one semester. A major component of LOTUS Scholarship Program's mission is to develop international leaders who are able to think, work, and solve problems on a global, intercultural basis. During the semester abroad, LOTUS students are introduced to and gain an understanding of American people, culture and traditions, society, values, and ways of life. The international exchange opportunity shapes the development of the young LOTUS leaders so that they are tolerant, able to embrace diversity, open to new experiences, and aware of the world outside of their borders.



FY2018 was a busy year for study abroad with 11 students being placed and participating in semester or summer terms in the U.S. in addition to 12 nursing students who participated in the Observational Study Tour as broken down here and detailed in the charts below.

- 11 cohort 4 students (7 females and 4 males) were placed and spent the spring 2018 or summer 2018 term at six U.S. universities.
- 12 cohort 4 Nursing students (7 females and 5 males) participated in the Observational Study Tour at the University of Kentucky and Salve Regina University

This marks the end of the study abroad component for the LOTUS program. All targets related to the study abroad indicators have been achieved.

Re-entry Workshops

During this reporting period, two re-entry sessions were held on December 15 and 22, 2017 for the twenty-six LOTUS students who returned from the summer 2017 term and one student from the fall 2016 term, who couldn't attend the previous meeting. Another reentry a re-entry session was conducted on March 16, 2018 for the five cohort 4 LOTUS students who returned from the Fall 2017 term. Another re-entry session was conducted on September 22, 2018 for the 23 study abroad returnees. Five students could not join the session but are scheduled to join the re-entry session in January 2019 with the LSP students.

The sessions were conducted by IIE Consultant. IIE staff members attended the sessions and heard from students' impactful stories that happened during their term abroad, as well as situations that shocked them and how they felt about it. Students were urged to think about their lives back in Egypt and discussed action plans to leverage what they have gained from studying abroad and how to overcome the challenges that face them while re-acclimating into their culture after having experienced a term in U.S.

Through discussions and reflections, IIE consultant managed to make the students turn the U.S. study abroad experience into lifelong learning and leveraging experience. He stressed on the importance of moving from this point and building on it. The students were appreciative of this opportunity where they could share their reflections and thoughts on their experience which they

deemed as 'unique and beneficial' and impacted their life positively in different ways. The students eventually confirmed that they will work on applying what they have learned abroad and will spread the knowledge acquired among their peers and friends.

Leadership in Action Enrichment Activities

During FY2018, IIE engaged LOTUS students in the Leadership in Action Program through a series of leadership sessions, specialized sessions, and IIE led career sessions, which provided them experiential experience that entailed significant interaction with community leaders through special sessions, trips, and field visits to hands-on projects that serve the community. The following is a summary table of the LIA activities conducted during FY2018. *Note that students attend different types of activities more than once.*

Table (4) LIA Activities Summary Table

Activity	Total no. of students attending different sessions	No. of Sessions	Cohort	Female	Male
Annual Student-Led Workshop	100	1	C1	7	5
			C2	9	8
			C3	20	16
			C4	19	16
			Total	55	45
Career Counselling	373	373	C3	154	123
			C4	54	42
			Total	208	165
Career Mentoring	712	712	C3	329	255
			C4	67	61
			Total	396	316
Cultural Trips/Events	121	3	C3	33	22
			C4	39	27
			Total	72	49
Self-Assessment	390	390	C3	139	106
			C4	82	63
			Total	216	174
Specialized Sessions	195	6	C3	15	10
			C4	92	78
			Total	107	88
IIE LIA Sessions	581	99	C1	7	16
			C2	8	6
			C3	164	139
			C4	134	107
			Total	313	268

IIE team members provided students with mentoring, guidance, and the tools that they will need to get the most out of the LIA activities.

The Seventh Annual LOTUS Student-led Leadership Workshop

On November 11, 2017 LOTUS cohort 3 and 4 students organized the LOTUS Seventh Annual Student-led Workshop. The Workshop, entitled *Carpe Diem: Live in the Now*, took place at the Arab Academy for Science, Technology and Maritime Transport in Alexandria (AASTMT). The Student-led Workshop is an opportunity for LOTUS students to learn about topics of importance to Egypt's development and youth. LOTUS students are responsible for the conceptualization, planning, organization, and implementation of the workshops. Through participation in the workshops, they gain valuable experience in event preparation, planning, and implementation, as well as in time management, problem solving, and teamwork. The Workshop planning and implementation process helps foster an environment of teamwork in which students form networks with each other and with other workshop participants so that together they can be a force to change and impact Egypt positively. The Workshop hosted an audience of approximately 200 attendees who were LOTUS students and alumni, LSP students, and a number of external guests. Despite the challenges that the students faced during the planning phase, IIE believes that they were able to deliver a successful Workshop with one of the most unique formats and concepts to date.

Cohort 4 Individual Leadership in Action Sessions

During the first quarter in FY2018, IIE led 31 individualized sessions with Cohort 4 students at BUE and AASTMT. The remaining 18 students who were unable to arrange for sessions because of various scheduling challenges including nursing students' practicum and study abroad will have individualized sessions next quarter. The sessions, each of which lasted 45-60 minutes, had two main objectives; to provide a safe space for students to share their thoughts with IIE in an effort to enhance trust and relationships, and to provide students with customized support and guidance on skills and areas they would like to develop over the next semester.

Each session began with an introduction to the purpose of the session and asked students if they had any input for additional objectives. The session then moved onto the "check-in" phase during which students were given space to share their thoughts on how they see themselves within the LOTUS community and their university, provide their feedback on the Leadership in Action component, and anything else they felt they wanted to share. The second part of the session introduced students to the *Fixed versus Growth Mindsets* concept and focused on the assessment that they took in FY2017. Students were asked to review how they rated themselves to identify if there were any changes over the past year and if there are areas on which they feel they need to work.

During the final portion of the session, IIE shared a template for an action-plan and explained how to identify SMART goals so that students could then identify two to three skills or goals they would like to work on over the spring semester. Many of the students were ready and eager to share their thoughts openly with IIE including discussing various challenges they face in both their academic and personal lives which IIE took as an indication that the students seemed to favor the idea of the sessions.

During quarter 2, IIE led the first individual session with 17 Cohort 4 students who did not have their session during Q1. In addition, IIE implemented the second round of sessions for 28 Cohort 4 students. IIE provided the students with feedback on the goals and action plans they drafted after the first meeting, but some students needed to further refine their plans. As such, the second individual session included time for feedback on their goals and action plan and/or a discussion on the progress of their action plan including any challenges they might be facing.

During quarter 3, IIE implemented the second individual session with four BUE students from Cohort 4 who did not have their session in Q2 because of different circumstances such as demanding schedules and health issues. As with the sessions that took place in Q2, IIE provided the students with feedback on the goals and action plans they drafted after the first meeting and also discussed the progress of their action plans including any challenges they might be facing. In addition to the sessions with Cohort 4, IIE led sessions with eight Cohort 3 students who expressed interest in having a session during the Cohort 3 retreat. Given that the students were in their last year, the focus of the session was different than the ones with Cohort 4 and focused more on post-LOTUS goals and areas they felt that needed help with to prepare them for this transition.

Cohort 3 Retreat

In preparation for Cohort 3 students' graduation from university and completion of the LOTUS Program, IIE designed a retreat with sessions and activities to begin preparing them for this major life transition based on feedback received from alumni, requests by Cohort 3 students, and IIE's observations. The retreat took place over the weekend of April 27th at the Pyramisa Hotel and consisted of less rigorous agenda to give students time to manage their final submissions and exam preparation as the academic year was coming to an end.

The first day consisted of a session by IIE Consultant on mental health and stress. He provided the students with an overview of the different types of factors that could lead to stress and mental health issues. Students opened up to him with real-life examples of the various stressors they were facing at the time in addition to their fears about the future and post-LOTUS/university life. In turn, He shared with them coping tips and techniques such as meditation and breathing exercises. He also educated the students about the difference between a psychiatrist and psychologist and what to look for in both in order to determine if someone is credible and qualified. Overall the feedback from the session was positive and some students requested to see him again either as a group or individually.

On the second day of the retreat, LOTUS Director led a session on positivity and gratitude as a result of the positive feedback received from Cohort 4 after delivering the session to them. The session helped students understand that they have a choice in how they react to life and especially to any challenges that they might encounter. Many of the students were engaged and eager to share their input. Since the session was delivered to both cohorts, IIE often uses it as a reference point whenever providing students with developmental feedback or guidance. Overall, the students rated the retreat as 81%.

Helwa Ya Baladi Trips

During January 23-27, 2018, Dunes Tours implemented the Helwa Ya Baladi Trip to Luxor for Cohort 4 and members of Cohort 3 who were unable to attend with their cohort. The trip served as an opportunity to expose students to an important part of their history and culture as well as a chance to serve the local community. Activities included visits to the Luxor Museum, Valley of the Kings, Hatshepsut Temple, the sound and light show at Karnak Temple, and community service activities at Sunshine Association. Students enjoyed the trip and found it to be an enriching experience. We will be looking at the possibility of additional trips for cohort 4 during the next academic year as part of our plan to reprogram surplus funds.

Cultural Events

IIE arranged for two cultural events for students during this fiscal year. Opera Aida was the first event which took place on April 19 at the Cairo Opera House and was attended by students from Cohort 3 and Cohort 4. For many of the students, this was the first time for them to attend such an event. The second event took place during the Cohort 3 retreat on April 27. IIE took interested Cohort 3 students to a viewing of a French/Tunisian film that was part of the Cairo Cinema Days Film Festival.

Networking Iftar

IIE hosted a networking event to give current students and alumni an opportunity to exchange advice and experiences. IIE sent a call for volunteers out to alumni to see which topics they could lead discussions on. The event took place in the form of the "World Café" format where alumni were responsible for leading a discussion at their table for a designated amount of time. During the time slot there were 3-4 discussions taking place at the same time on separate tables and students had to choose which topic they wanted to participate in. At the end of the time slot, the alumni and topics changed so that students could participate in other discussions. The topics were as follows. The World Café was followed by iftar which gave a chance for students and alumni to continue their discussions and networking informally a meal together. The overall rating of the Networking Iftar was 83%

- Networking and Startups
- Computing field

- Supply Chain and FMCH industries
- Military service and how to make the best of it
- Freelancing and independent learning
- Personal finance
- Finance and business fields

Cohort 4 Retreat

During the first series of individual sessions with Cohort 4, many students shared their desire for refreshers on the various leadership and soft skills sessions that they have had, particularly on themes that they had early on in their scholarship. With this in mind, IIE designed a retreat that focused on some of these earlier themes and that were seen as necessary to help the students address certain issues and challenges they face as individuals and as a cohort. In addition, IIE introduced a new topic—positivity and gratitude—in response to the team’s experience in working with this cohort.

The retreat took place on the weekend of February 23, 2018 at the Pyramisa Hotel with 46 students in attendance. It is important to note that IIE noticed a visible positive shift in the attitude and participation of the Cohort as a whole and attributed this to the individual sessions. Several students confirmed this by sharing that the individual sessions made them feel heard especially that the retreat was designed on feedback they shared during their sessions.

The discussions were rich and students several students challenged themselves out of their comfort zones to speak in public and share their thoughts and personal experiences. There was a sense of nostalgia as the last time they were gathered in this venue was during their first team building retreat upon entering the Scholarship.

LOTUS Diwan Session

IIE took advantage of having most Cohort 4 students gathered in one place during the retreat to hold a LOTUS Diwan Session on gender. The session was the first on the topic for LOTUS students. The Regional Communications Consultant from UN Woman gave students a brief introduction on gender and then shared results of research done by UN Women in Egypt and the MENA region. It was apparent that the students need additional sessions on the topic and several shared this feedback with IIE. Some felt that the session did not go in depth enough into the topic while others felt that the session covered information they were already aware of and in turn needed more complex subject matter.

Cohort 3 Final Retreat

IIE received feedback from LOTUS Cohort 1 and 2 alumni regarding the need to prepare LOTUS students for life after LOTUS. As such, IIE designed a final team building retreat for Cohort 3 students based on the feedback received from alumni and input received from Cohort 3. The retreat took place over the weekend of July 20 at the Intercontinental Semiramis Hotel.

The retreat began with a panel discussion with LOTUS alumni moderated by IIE consultant. He asked the alumni a set of predetermined questions regarding their transition to post-LOTUS life and alumni, in turn, shared their experiences and advice with the soon-to-be graduates. The second day of the retreat consisted of session led by LOTUS alumni on what to expect in the business environment and a session on scholarship opportunities for graduate studies led by Mr. Amr Ramadan. On the third day of the retreat, the facilitator educated students on work legalities including employee rights and responsibilities and contracts. The final day consisted of a session on work-life balance.

Leadership in Action Program Assessment Tool

During FY2018, Q4, IIE disseminated the Leadership in Action Program Assessment Tool to Cohort 3 as a post-program assessment. IIE shared the findings for their first completed pre-assessment in the FY2017/Q2 report submitted to USAID.

The assessment consists of two sections: 1) a section for students to assess their leadership skills and attributes which are linked to leadership competencies that IIE has identified, and 2) for students to provide their input and feedback on the Leadership in Action Program's content, delivery, logistics, evaluation tools, and policies. In addition, the section asks student to assess whether they apply the skills gained to their real life (and if so how), the clarity of roles and responsibilities (i.e. do they know what each LIA team member was responsible for; do they understand what their responsibilities are towards the LIA Program), and communication between IIE and students.

2.a # of Students who self-report a change in their leadership skills as a result of the LIA activities Cohort 3

Pre- and post-test data were collected from the participants. Only participants with both pre and post tests were included in the analysis (N=45), while the remaining (5) who completed either a pre-test or a post-test were excluded. 80% of the students who took the survey (38 students, 19 females and 17 males) reported a change in one or more of the five leadership attributes included in the survey. A summary of the significant results is included below.

In reviewing and analyzing the responses for the nine Cohort 3 students who did not feel that there was a change in their leadership skills, IIE was not surprised to see that for about half of the students, there was a correlation between varying levels of participation and perceived questionable commitment to the program and their results. However, IIE is surprised by the results for the remaining students as they have demonstrated a sense of commitment, responsibility and participation in the Leadership in Action component of the Program. It is not possible to make assumptions on why this is the case without seeking clarity from these students. As such, IIE will lead focus groups with them to solicit their input as part of our efforts to continually assess and ensure that activities are as beneficial as possible to students. This goes in line with one of the recommendations of LOTUS Mid-term Evaluation "IIE will monitor the quality and utility of the sessions in terms of student skills and feedback on presentation. Develop a method or rubric to measure learning in the sessions and topics so as to reduce their total number" and IIE plan of action to Conduct a series of focus group discussions with alumni to solicit additional qualitative input and discuss needs and interests in greater depth.

Major Findings:

Part I: Self-Assessment

According to the students' responses, there was an overall improvement of 32.45% in all leadership attributes. The top three attributes with the most change were: *communicates effectively* (8.08% improvement), *the ability to relate to/motivate others* (6.89% improvement), and *the ability to think strategically* (6.44% improvement). In analyzing the results, IIE noticed that there was a decrease in students' participation in community service. IIE believes that this decrease is most likely due to their demanding schedules and increased responsibilities as senior students.

Part II: Leadership in Action Program Assessment

The following are highlights of the significant results for the Leadership in Action Program Assessment:

Content:

- Students identified the following as the top beneficial LIA activities: team building retreats, annual student-led workshops, Helwa ya Baladi trip to Aswan, Communication Styles session, CV Writing session, Job Hunt Tools session, and Interview Skills session.

Skills/Values gained through the LIA Program:

- Students identified the following as the top skills/values gained: self-awareness, teamwork, problem-solving, decision making, communication skills, and responsibility.

Application to real life:

- 97.9 indicated that they apply the skills/values gained through the LIA Program to their lives. Examples of the top applied skills/values are teamwork, problem-solving, self-awareness, and decision making.
- 100% of respondents indicated that the LIA Program makes them different than their peers.

Career Component

Partnership with AMIDEAST

AMIDEAST has been committed to conducting the following activities under the career component as per their proposal submitted to IIE:

Self-Assessments:

During FY2018, AMIDEAST administered the following self-assessment:

- Test of English for International Communication (TOEIC): The TOEIC assesses workplace English.
- WorkFORCE Assessment: WorkFORCE is a research-based assessment tool for Job Fit.
- Student Pre- and Post- Program Surveys: The surveys will be used to document a change in the students' perception of their knowledge, skills and abilities.

A total of 390 career self-assessments have been administered for 245 cohort 3 students (139 females – 106 males) and 145 cohort 4 (82 females – 63 males)

Career Counseling Sessions:

AMIDEAST led a total of 373 Career Counselling sessions for 277 Cohort 3 students (154 females – 123 males) and 96 Cohort 4 students (54 females – 42 males). *Note: some students had more than one session.* A one hour-long sessions along with group counseling sessions to support students during their internship experiences and career building endeavors.

- Assessment Results and Career Planning
- Internship Preparation
- Internship Feedback
- Network Mapping
- Career Planning

Mentoring:

During FY2018, AMIDEAST conducted individual and group mentoring sessions attended by 584² cohort 3 students (329 females – 255 males) and 128 cohort 4 students (67 females – 61 males) to expose students to working professionals and companies.

Mentoring will also enable students to develop their networks to assist in the job search. The activities were as follows:

- Group Mentoring based on field of study
- One-to-one mock interviews and feedback session
- Speed interview event

² Students attended multiple sessions

Internships:

Internships

During this reporting period, AMIDEAST and IIE secured documentation for the 116 internships as follows:

- **Cohort 3:** 90 Internships (44 Females, 46 Males)
- **Cohort 4:** 26 Internships (14 Females, 12 Males)

The internships were sourced by AMIDEAST, IIE and by the students. Internships took place at the following places:

- SEED Project
- Credit Agricole Bank
- Catholic Relief Services (CRS)
- SYSTEL Training Center
- Arab African International Bank
- Technical Petroleum Services
- Family Health Unit in Bani Gamil Village, Ballina, Sohag
- QNB Al Ahli
- Amakin Trips
- AMIDEAST

6.2.e # of
internships -
Cohort 3

(Achieved)

Employability Skills Pre and post program survey analysis:

AMIDEAST designed and distributed a pre and post program survey to cohort 3 and 4 students in order to assess their perception of their knowledge, skills, and abilities prior to beginning the career component's activities. Prior to cohort 3 students' graduation, AMIDEAST disseminated a post-program survey in order to document student growth in knowledge about the labor market, employer expectations, personal skills and interests, and the process for finding and applying for work. 49 Cohort 3 students took both the pre and program survey from both BUE and AASTMT of whom 59% were females and 44% were males. They are from the same age group. Only one student was unreachable and did not take the post program survey, therefore, her pre-program survey was excluded from the analysis (N=49).

This analysis has a two-fold purpose: 1) to describe the level of knowledge the students gained that would assist them join the job market and manage their expectations and 2) to evaluate the outcome of the career activities by looking at differences between pre- and post-test results.

The 12-item questionnaire includes a set of questions to identify their ability to:

1. Decide on the career options that best suit my qualifications.
2. Find internships in their fields of study and apply for them.
3. Obtain an internship to enhance their skills and experience, even if it's not located in their home governorate.
4. Establish connections with professionals that work in their field of interest/study.
5. Prepare a CV, find companies that are hiring in their fields and apply for open job opportunities.
6. Use professional social media platforms to find jobs of their interest.
7. Understand of the current labor market trends, expectations and changes.
8. Define themselves, how they want to be seen by employers and how to have a strong online presence.
9. Introduce themselves in an interview, give examples of what they did and act professionally.
10. Identify challenges and problems and develop approaches to solve or address the issues.

6.2.a # of students
who report a
change in their
employability
skills as a result of
career activities
Cohort 3

(Achieved)

11. Express level of confidence with regards to professional correspondence.
12. Believe that receiving guidance from professionals in their fields can help them sharpen my skills and have a better understanding about my future career.

Major Findings:

Forty-two cohort 3 students (23 females – 19 males) reported a change in their employability skills as per the attributes in question 10 and 13.

Even though there were some challenges with the contacting the students and getting them to do the survey, AMIDEAST was successful in reaching out to the students and enhance their employability skills. 43 students out of the 50 who took the survey agreed that that their skills have increased in the 12 items that the survey included with 86% improvement rate. 32% of the graduated students were able to obtain jobs in their fields. Only 5% of the students are working in in jobs not related to their field of study. The students were also able 65 internship opportunities that have turned into job offers at the end of the internship period (two cases fall under this category).