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# Lincoln Scholarship Program Quarterly Report August 28 – December 31, 2019

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# I. LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AOR .....	Agreement Officer’s Representative
BLA .....	Burma Leadership Activity
COP.....	Chief of Party
CSO .....	Civil Society Organization
DCOP .....	Deputy Chief of Party
GOB .....	Government of Burma
IIE .....	Institute of International Education
LGBTQ .....	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Questioning
MEL .....	Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning
MYEO .....	Myanmar Youth Educational Opportunities
NGO .....	Non-Governmental Organization
S-CAR .....	George Mason University School of Conflict Analysis and Resolution
TEF .....	Thabyay Education Foundation
USAID .....	United States Agency for International Development

## 2. INTRODUCTION

USAID Burma awarded the Institute of International Education (IIE) a \$19 million, five-year cooperative agreement to administer the Lincoln Scholarship Program, which will provide scholarships to around 100 emerging leaders to study for graduate degrees in the U.S. USAID Burma's goal for the Lincoln Scholarship Program is to: *Improve the technical competencies and enhance the leadership potential of Myanmar's next generation of leaders to lead Myanmar along a path of inclusive socio-economic development, advance respect for ethnic and religious diversity in the country, and promote self-reliance and democratic governance.* In addition to receiving graduate degrees in various technical sectors, Lincoln Scholars will also receive training in the U.S. in conflict resolution and leadership.

Presently, Myanmar is at a critical juncture. While the Government of Burma (GOB) is undertaking reforms that could lead to inclusive economic growth and strengthened democracy, the current education system has left the country without experts in critical areas. In 2014, only 7.3 per cent of the population aged 25 and over had graduated from university or a higher level of education. While some progress has been made on this front with scholarship programs supported by the local and international community, much still remains to be done to address the deficit of young leaders. Today, academic institutions in Myanmar do not offer studies in subjects related to human and social sciences for example, and those they offer lack specialization and are not multidisciplinary. As a result, Burmese students lack exposure to many areas of knowledge and often pursue studies which do not support the jobs they eventually get with adequate, related technical expertise.

Myanmar not only needs more technical experts, it also needs a “new generation” of leaders who will represent the needs of all communities, including all groups qualified as disadvantaged. Those new leaders should be able to work with fellow leaders from diverse backgrounds with different points of view to promote both economic growth inclusive of all and a pluralistic society that does not sideline disadvantaged groups. Supporting a diverse cross-section of Burmese society to study at U.S. academic institutions is critical to addressing this need. Moreover, creating a core group of diverse and committed young leaders with skills to work toward common goals and resolve differences in a respectful and constructive manner will enable them to lead Burma toward a stable and prosperous future. This ultimate goal will drive all our scholarship activities prior, during and after scholars have conducted their graduate studies in the U.S.

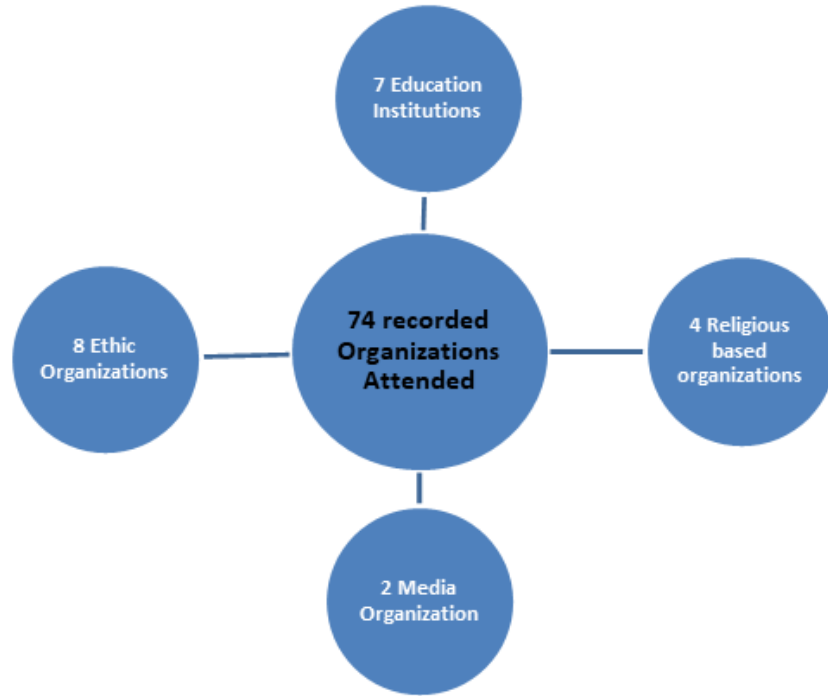
## 3. PROGRESS TO RESULTS

### 3.1 Cohort I

Considering Myanmar's need for technical experts and leaders who will represent the needs of all communities, one of the Lincoln Scholarship Program's objectives is to promote Myanmar's transition to a more inclusive and open economy. As such, IIE worked to reach out to and recruit qualified candidates from all regions and states across the country. IIE's outreach and recruitment activities resulted in reaching 663 people through information sessions across different states and regions. Those 663 people represented a total of 74 organizations including private sectors, civil society organizations, and public and private institutions. The diversity and names of organizations and sectors who participated in our

recruitment events are shown in the diagrams 1 and 2 below. By reaching a diversity of states, regions, ethnicities, and organizations, the selection committee can select scholars who represent a variety of marginalized populations (gender, religious, LGBTQ).

**Diagram 1: Breakdown of Organizations Participating in Information Sessions**



**Diagram 2: Breakdown of Organizations Participating in Information Sessions**

Education Institutions	Religious Institutions	Media	Ethnic Organizations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Mandalay University</li> <li>•Myitkyina University</li> <li>•Myanmar Institute of Theology</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•YMCA</li> <li>•Kachin Beptic Convention</li> <li>•Karen Beptic Theological Seminary</li> <li>•Samaritan's Purse</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Kachin Time</li> <li>•Kamarywut Media</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Kachin Research Center</li> <li>•KDN</li> <li>•Karen Youth Organization</li> <li>•EHO</li> <li>•Phlon Education Development Unit</li> <li>•KPSSDA</li> <li>•KSCSN/KBA-CSSDD</li> <li>•Mong Pan Youth Association</li> </ul>

## 3.2 Donor Coordination

IIE worked closely with USAID in the start-up and implementation of the Lincoln Scholarship Program. Coordination subjects included objectives, guidelines, procedures, and exchange of information pertinent to the Lincoln Scholarship Program.

USAID and IIE worked together to determine relevant fields of study, a permanent name, and eligible criteria for the program. USAID reviewed all materials produced by IIE and provided valuable comments and suggestions along the way. The Agreement Officer's Representative (AOR) and IIE worked closely on the planning of the Lincoln Scholarship Program launch. The planning of the launch event included creating an agenda, vetting of invitation list, sending out invitations, monitoring the RSVP list, and finding panelists for the discussion panel.

When IIE submitted the proposal for the Lincoln Scholarship Program it was envisioned that IIE would work with USAID to establish a role for the GOB in the program. Initial ideas for GOB involvement included participation in the outreach and recruitment process and advisory committee, as well as possible roles for the GOB as mentors and recruitment of GOB employees to apply for the scholarship. When IIE was awarded the Lincoln Scholarship Program, USAID provided guidance that the parameters around GOB inclusion in the program were not yet decided. Therefore, for cohort I IIE did not seek participation of the GOB in outreach and recruitment, mentorship, or advisory committee roles. The GOB did participate in the launch event. IIE is awaiting guidance from USAID pertaining to the eligibility of GOB employees to be awarded the scholarship if they are chosen as final candidates.

# 4. KEY ACTIVITIES AND PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

## 4.1 Administrative and Program Start-Up

Administrative and technical start-up activities began as soon as IIE was awarded the Lincoln Scholarship Program on August 28, 2019. A start-up team arrived in Yangon on October 18, 2019. The team included all three key personnel: Chief of Party (COP), Deputy Chief of Party (DCOP), and Senior Program Manager. Key activities for start-up are highlighted below.

- **Registration and Banking:** Starting in September 2019, IIE worked with local counsel in Yangon to go through the process of registering IIE in Myanmar and setting up a project bank account. Both processes were completed in October 2019.
- **Field Office Setup:** Once the start-up team arrived in Yangon, IIE began the search for an office space. After viewing several different options, an office space was identified at MICT Park and a lease was signed in November 2019. The team will move into the office space in early January 2020 following office renovations. While waiting for the office to be ready, IIE staff worked out of the office of IIE's local partner, the Thabyay Education Foundation (TEF).
- **New Project Name:** The name of the project in the original award was the Burma Leadership Activity (BLA). One of the first activities that was listed in the award was for IIE to suggest a new name for the project that is culturally relevant and reflects the goals of the scholarship. IIE gathered 10 suggested names from IIE staff and USAID and surveyed 44 students at TEF to gather their preferences. IIE then sent the top 5 names to 27 TEF partner organizations located throughout Myanmar. The top three names were submitted to USAID to make the final decision. The top three names included 1) Leadership Empowerment to Advance Development in Myanmar (LEAD Myanmar), 2) Myanmar Leadership and Education for Advancement of Diversity

Scholarship (Myanmar LEADS), and 3) Lincoln Scholarship Program. USAID provided approval to rename the project to the Lincoln Scholarship Program in November 2019.

- Subawards: IIE executed subawards with two of the three partner organizations that were listed in the award. The fully executed subaward with TEF was executed in October 2019 and the final subaward with the George Mason University School of Conflict Analysis and Resolution (S-CAR) was completed in December 2019. The award with S-CAR will be fully executed in January 2020. IIE is awaiting approval from USAID for a sole source award to CoreSkills, LLC. More information can be found in *Section 8: Sub-Recipient Achievements*.

## 4.2 Cohort I

### Outreach and Recruitment

Outreach and recruitment for the Lincoln Scholarship Program began on October 21, 2019 with the development of program content, program materials, scholarship application, PowerPoint presentation, and recruitment schedule following USAID branding and marking guidelines and approval. The outreach and recruitment team sent out Lincoln Scholarship Program information to all TEF partner organizations and networks in Mandalay Region, Sagaing Region, Kachin State, Karen State, and Chin State as soon as the program materials were approved by USAID on November 8, 2019.

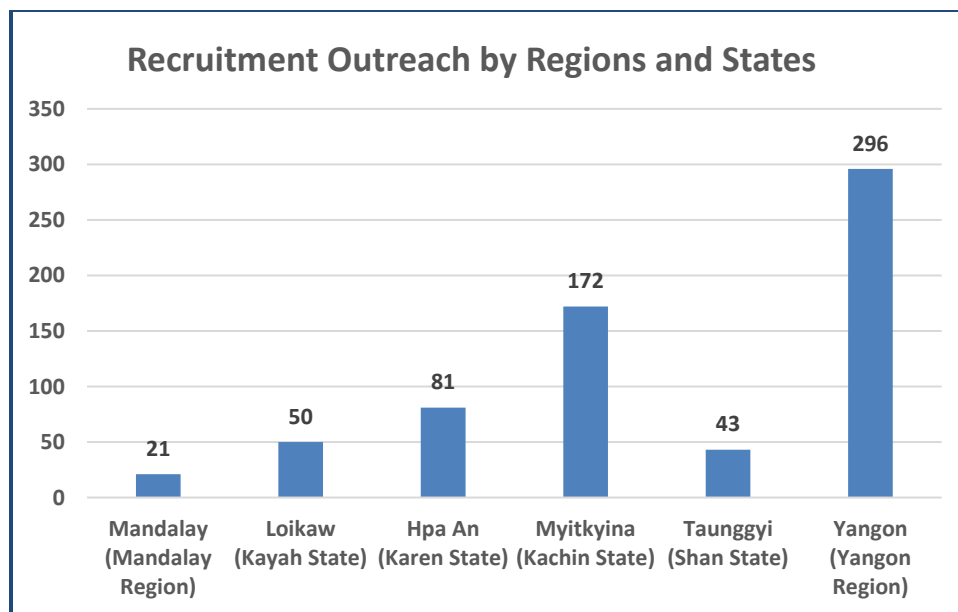
All the outreach events were planned strategically to reach the maximum number of people and locations taking into consideration the compressed timetable for recruitment of cohort 1. Myitkyina, Kachin State is a marginalized conflict zone where many individuals 35 and under reside, which is the target population for the Lincoln Scholarship Program. In order to disseminate the information to the marginalized population in Kachin state and China-Myanmar border, IIE organized an outreach activity in Myitkyina. One hundred and seventy-two people attended the event. IIE chose to hold an outreach event in Mandalay so that representatives of TEF's partner organizations from the middle Myanmar region could attend the event without IIE having to hold individual events in all the nearby regions. Community representatives from Chin State, Sagaing Region, and Northern Shan State were able to attend the event as well. In order to reach the lower Myanmar Regions (Mon State and Tanintharye State), an outreach event was held in Hpa-an, Karen State where community partners from lower Myanmar Regions were able to attend. Due to the unstable political situation, people in Kayah State and Southern Shan State have limited access to education. To reach the marginalized populations in those areas, IIE conducted an outreach event in both Loikaw, Kayah State and Taungyi, Southern Shan State. IIE also conducted additional outreach events in Yangon so that people from Rakhine, State, Ayeyarwaddy Region, and Bago Region could attend those events.

Along with the program information, the community and organization leaders were invited to attend respective outreach events where the details of the scholarship program were presented. In addition, the outreach and recruitment team contacted community and organization leaders through email and followed up with individual phone calls. From November 19, 2019 to December 8, 2019, the outreach and recruitment team conducted 10 outreach and recruitment events that covered 5 regions, 6 states, 2 territories, and 49 cities/ town/villages. A total of 663 potential scholarship applicants attended the events representing several ethnic groups.

**Table 1: Outreach and Recruitment Events by Date, Location, and Participant Numbers**

No.	Date	O&R Location	City, State/Region	# Participants
1	November 19, 2019	Jefferson Center	Mandalay, Mandalay	21
2	November 22, 2019	Kachinland College	Myitkyina, Kachin	172
3	November 22, 2019	Thabyay Education Foundation	Yangon, Yangon	32
4	November 25, 2019	Summit Park View Hotel	Yangon, Yangon	120
5	November 26, 2019	Taw-win Yadanar Hotel	Hpa-an, Karen	81
6	November 27, 2019	Sataman Hall	Loikaw, Kayah	50
7	November 29, 2019	Cherry Myay Academy	Taungyi, Shan	43
8	December 4, 2019	Parami Institute	Yangon, Yangon	37
9	December 6, 2019	Thabyay Education Foundation	Yangon, Yangon	58
10	December 8, 2019	Thabyay Education Foundation	Yangon, Yangon	49 (2 events)
<b>Total</b>				<b>663</b>

**Table 2: Total Participants Reached by Regions and States**



Each recruitment event was advertised on the following Facebook pages to reach as many people as possible.

- Thabyay Education Foundation
- U.S. Embassy
- Myanmar Youth Educational Opportunities (MYEO)
- Myanmar Education Directory
- International Scholarship for Myanmar Students



## Launch Event

The Lincoln Scholarship Program launch event took place on November 26, 2019 at the Novotel Hotel in Yangon. The DCOP for the Lincoln Scholarship Program presented the program overview and objectives and the Director of TEF presented on outreach and recruitment activities. Ninety-eight people attended the launch event including 16 from the press/media and 48 organizations including civil society organizations, universities, private sector, and U.S. and Myanmar government representatives. The Ambassador of the United States of America and the Deputy Governor of Yangon attended the launch as guest speakers.



Launch Event at Novotel Hotel, Yangon

**Table 3: List of Organizations Attending Launch Event**

Organization/Institution Represented at the Launch Event	
ALARM	Mori Hamada & Matsumoto Yangon
Alliance for Gender Inclusion in the Peace Process	Myanmar Institute of Theology
Another Development (AD)	Myanmar Intellectual Property Proprietors' Association
Australia Awardees Myanmar Alumni	Myanmar Mobile Education Project
British Council	Myanmar Survey Research Co.Ltd
Center for Development and Ethnic Studies	National Young Women's Christian Association
Central Base Productions	NLD
Community Partners International	Parami Institute of Liberal Arts and Sciences
DCA-NCA	Prospect Burma
Deboer Fellowship	Pyidaungsu Institute - Yangon
FOSTA (Myanmar)	Religions for Peace-Myanmar
Heal The World	Safety Net
Hope International	Sandhi Covernance Institute
Joint Ceasefire Monitoring Committee	Search For Common Ground Myanmar
K.B.T.S	Smile
Kalyana Mitra Development Foundation	Student
Karen Development Network	The Door Institute
Khine U Law Firm	University of Arizona
Kindness Women Fellowship Networking	USAID-PSDA
Legal Step Legal Consultry Limited	Women's League of Burma (WLB)
Metta Development Foundation	World Education
Michigan State University	Ye English Center
Minmahaw Higher Education Program	

## Applications

IIE worked with TEF and USAID to develop and finalize the Lincoln Scholarship Program application. The application includes sections on personal information, education background, and four essay questions that allow applicants to explain their academic success, professional and work experience, their future goals, and how they will utilize their education for the development of Myanmar. The Lincoln Scholarship Program also developed application eligibility, ineligibility, and selection criteria based on the goals and objectives of the project. The project used Facebook as the primary method of engaging potential applicants via social media and internet platforms. A list of social media platforms included but not limited to USAID Facebook page, US Embassy Facebook page, and TEF website and Facebook page.

Due to the time constraints associated with the launch, IIE housed the Lincoln Scholarship Program webpage and PDF application form on TEF's webpage for cohort 1. The webpage includes an overview of the program, guidelines for applying, and the downloadable application. The window for applications for cohort 1 is from December 2, 2019 – January 3, 2020. *For detailed demographic information about applications received, see Annex 10.4 below.* The Lincoln Scholarship Program webpage will be moved to IIE's website and an online application will be developed during the next reporting period.

## 5. DELIVERABLES COMPLETED

During this reporting period, the Lincoln Scholarship Program submitted the following deliverables.

- Annual Workplan – Submitted on October 28, 2019
- SF 425 – Submitted on October 30, 2019
- MEL Plan – Submitted on December 10, 2019
- Quarterly Report – IIE received USAID concurrence on October 28, 2019 to combine the first and second quarterly reports and have them due January 30, 2020. IIE submitted this request due to the project's recent launch and limited material for the quarterly report that was originally due October 30, 2019.

## 6. MANAGEMENT AND STAFFING CHANGES

The Lincoln Scholarship Program is managed by IIE offices in Myanmar and the United States. The IIE Office in Yangon includes the Chief of Party (COP), Deputy Chief of Party (DCOP), Finance and Administrative Manager, MEL Specialist, and Program Coordinator. The Yangon office is responsible for all in-country activities, including outreach and recruitment, selection, pre-academic training, pre-departure and visa processes, and alumni support. The COP is the main point of contact with USAID.

The team in the U.S. supporting the Lincoln Scholarship Program includes the USAID Programs, Finance, Grants and Contracts, Accounting, and University Placement teams. IIE in the U.S. will be responsible for academic placement, scholar monitoring, oversight of the conflict resolution and leadership trainings, and support to the Yangon office in administration of the project activities and development of deliverables.

During the start-up phase of the Lincoln Scholarship Program, IIE focused on the following management and staffing activities.

- Onboarding COP and DCOP: The COP and DCOP were identified during the proposal stage and confirmed their availability in August once IIE was awarded the Lincoln Scholarship Program. In September 2019, IIE finalized employment agreements for both the COP and DCOP. IIE worked with USAID to request visas and the COP and DCOP arrived in Myanmar on October 20, 2019. IIE provided support and training to both the COP and DCOP to train them in IIE's systems and processes, including requesting USAID approval to increase the housing allowance for both expatriate staff due to challenges faced in trying to secure housing by both staff members. In November 2019 the COP submitted his resignation for personal reasons. This is discussed in more details in *Section 7: Challenges and Solutions*. A new COP was immediately identified by IIE and approved by USAID and will arrive in Yangon in January 2020.
- Hiring Local Staff: In addition to the COP and DCOP, the IIE office in Yangon includes three local staff: Finance and Administrative Manager, MEL Specialist, and Program Coordinator. The MEL Specialist was identified during the proposal stage and he confirmed his availability in August once IIE was awarded the Lincoln Scholarship Program. IIE worked with local counsel in Yangon to draft an employment agreement once IIE's registration was finalized. The MEL Specialist started on December 9, 2019. In October 2019, IIE began recruitment for the Program Coordinator and Finance and Administrative Manager. Interviews were held in-person in Yangon once the COP and DCOP arrived in Myanmar. Employment offers were extended to the final candidates in November 2019. Both the Program Coordinator and Finance and Administrative Manager will begin their positions on January 6, 2020.

## 7. CHALLENGES AND SOLUTIONS

### 7.1 Chief of Party Resignation and Replacement

On November 18, 2019 the COP, Patrick Coughlin, submitted his resignation for personal reasons. The same day IIE received Patrick's resignation, IIE immediately informed USAID and devised a plan to quickly replace the COP and provide coverage for program activities during the transition period. During this time IIE also reflected on the original recruitment process for the COP to identify ways to prevent the resignation of key personnel so early on in project. IIE's Director of USAID Programs, David Simpson, traveled to Yangon for the first two weeks of December to provide support to the team in Yangon following the departure of the COP. In the meantime, IIE conducted a recruitment process for the new COP and submitted a key personnel approval request on December 9. On December 12, USAID approved IIE's request to hire Robert Letchford as the new COP for the Lincoln Scholarship Program. Mr. Letchford was previously a COP with IIE on a USAID capacity building program in Vietnam. After Mr. Letchford was approved, IIE worked with USAID to begin the visa process. Mr. Letchford will arrive in Yangon to assume his position as COP on January 25, 2020.

### 7.2 Condensed Outreach and Recruitment Timeline

One of the challenges the program faced from the very beginning is the condensed timeline for cohort 1 recruitment due to the date when the award was issued. The optimal scholarship recruitment period is five to six months with outreach and recruitment materials prepared to be distributed prior to recruitment. The Lincoln Scholarship Program had less than three months to develop program content, create outreach and recruitment materials, conduct recruitment events, and develop applications that would capture the right profile of people for the scholarship. With the name, description, and the fields

of study not being finalized until November 8<sup>th</sup>, 2019, the program had only one week to officially inform and invite local organizations, community leaders, and the general public to the outreach and recruitment events. To mitigate the effects of the reduced timeline, the outreach and recruitment staff spent extra hours every day working on developing program materials including a brochure, PowerPoint presentation, program description with eligibilities and criteria, application with essay questions, branding and marking, and detailed instructions. Except for the name and fields of study, everything was ready to be printed. When the name of the program was finalized on November 8, 2019, IIE was able to print and deliver the brochure to USAID on November 13, 2019 to be taken to Kachin State by USAID officials who were traveling there.

An additional challenge that came with the timeline was working with local organizations to host recruitment events and having people from remote parts of the country travel to the recruitment event location. The program had to plan, coordinate, and organize each event. For example, air tickets were bought ahead of time, hotel reservations were made, and venues for the recruitment events were all finalized within a very short span of time. As a result, the outreach and recruitment team could not conduct as many events or go to as many places as it would have liked. To maximize outreach and recruitment activities, the program partnered with community and organization leaders from remote regions to attend the nearest recruitment event so that they could take the information back to their own communities and organizations for distribution. The Lincoln Scholarship Program paid for local leaders' travel expenses in order to ease their financial burden and to make it easier for them to attend outreach events.

IIE will have more time to conduct outreach and recruitment for cohorts 2 and 3 thus eliminating some of the challenges that were faced with the first round of outreach and recruitment.

### 7.3 Launch Event Planning

With a late finalization of the launch event invitation and additional changes to the launch event agenda, planning for a successful event was challenging. First, IIE learned that invitation by email in Myanmar is not an effective way of inviting key stakeholders to attend such an event in Myanmar. Email invitations needed to be followed up by phone calls especially if the invitation was sent only a few days before the event. With very few RSVP's the day before the event, IIE worked with its local partner TEF to contact every individual who received an invitation, but did not respond, by phone and confirmed their participation. The event was well attended with a total of 98 people.

It was also a challenge to get the media/press to attend the event since they require at least two weeks in advance notice. There was no confirmation from any media/press to attend the day before the launch event. Outreach and recruitment staff along with volunteer staff from TEF sprang into action and worked overtime to individually contact each media organization and request their presence at the event. As a result of the additional outreach, eleven media outlets attended the launch event. Several media outlets (see table 4 below) covered the launch event and was aired by Mizzama News and Insights. For more information please access links below:

- <https://www.facebook.com/MizzimaDaily/videos/2676182262499738/>
- <http://www.mizzimaburmese.com/article/63519>

**Table 4: List of Media Organizations Attending Launch Event**

Media Organizations Attending Launch Event	
1. VOA	7. RFA-Burmese
2. Future Generation Media	8. Media Star
3. Fact Media	9. Perfect Magazine
4. MRTV 4	10. Nayarthir Media
5. Channel 11	11. Stars News Online
6. SkyNet	

Another challenge faced by IIE was the resignation of the Lincoln Scholarship Program COP, who resigned the week before the launch event. In order to provide support to the DCOP and show IIE’s commitment to the project at this high-level event, the Head of IIE’s Southeast Asia office in Bangkok attended the launch and served as the master of ceremony.

Despite the challenges, the launch event was very successful. Not only was the event well attended, but it also received great media coverage from 11 different major media outlets in Myanmar as listed above.

## 8. SUB-RECIPIENT ACHIEVEMENTS

### 8.1 Thabyay Education Foundation

The Thabyay Education Foundation (TEF) is a key implementing partner for the Lincoln Scholarship Program. IIE conducted initial discussions with TEF in September 2019 and their subaward was signed in October 2019. Their knowledge and reach within Myanmar directly contributed to the success of the program despite the challenges that were faced in Q1 2020. TEF provided administrative support to IIE by providing temporary office space while IIE searched for permanent offices. Furthermore, TEF assisted IIE with program logistics, and provided important information such as names of vendors for the purchase of office equipment and supplies. In an effort to develop a culturally appropriate name for the program, TEF conducted a survey among students at the Kant Kaw Education Center, sent out the survey to their partner organizations throughout the country, and followed up with individual phone calls to request their participation. TEF’s wide ranging network and its relationship with communities across the country as well as their efficiency in carrying out the process made it possible to conduct the survey in two days with a high response rate. Additionally, TEF conducted a survey for potential fields of study in a similar manner and participated in an analysis with IIE that produced recommendations for USAID.

TEF played an important role in planning the launch event for the Lincoln Scholarship Program. With many years of experience in planning such events, TEF solicited invitee’s responses and participations by contacting them individually. Moreover, TEF responded swiftly to a request of panelist for the discussion panel to be held during the launch event. TEF also assisted in securing media to attend the launch event.

TEF played an active role in conducting outreach and recruitment. TEF’s proven experience in scholarship management as well as a nationwide network with NGOs/CSOs was invaluable in planning recruitment events and developing the scholarship application and selection process. TEF liaised and collaborated with organizations, institutions, and community leaders throughout the country to plan and conduct inclusive

and far reaching recruitment events within a very short period. TEF took the lead in communicating with community leaders in the regions across the country to schedule outreach events and to reach potential applicants from underserved and disadvantaged areas. TEF's understanding of living situations and conditions of communities across the nation was crucial in making it possible for people in those areas to be able to attend Lincoln Scholarship Program information sessions. As such, TEF was able to plan the most effective way to reach all the regions and arranged for community and organization leaders to attend Lincoln Scholarship Program information sessions nearest to their community.

Due to time constraints, IIE was not able to develop an online application for cohort 1. However, TEF assisted in creating a PDF form and hosted the application on their website through a scholarship page where potential applicants can access program information and download the application. Furthermore, TEF provided recommendations and suggestions on the application format to ensure that diverse applicants can comprehend and fill out the form.

## 8.2 George Mason University School of Conflict Analysis and Resolution

The George Mason University School of Conflict Analysis and Resolution (S-CAR) will be responsible for developing and implementing a multi-phase training program on conflict resolution for scholars during their program in the U.S. Discussions with S-CAR took place during this reporting period to finalize a detailed scope of work, including a timeline and deliverables, for S-CAR's subaward with IIE. The subaward will be finalized and countersigned by both parties in January 2020.

## 8.3 CoreSkills, LLC

CoreSkills, LLC will be responsible for developing and implementing trainings on leadership and diversity for scholars during their program in the U.S. USAID did not provide approval in the award document for IIE to issue a sole source subaward with CoreSkills, LLC. IIE will discuss this issue with USAID in January 2020 to gain approval for a sole source award to be granted and a subaward given to CoreSkills, LLC, which will be finalized during the next reporting period.

# 9. PRIORITIES NEXT REPORTING PERIOD (JANUARY - MARCH 2020)

## 9.1 Selection of Cohort I

The application for Cohort 1 is due January 3, 2020. IIE will conduct the selection process of applicants from January 3-February 7. The Lincoln Scholarship Program developed a comprehensive selection process, timeline, selection member guidelines, and selection matrix for application review. USAID approved and reviewed all documents and timelines prior to implementation. To conduct a fair and transparent selection process, the program formed two sets of selection teams starting with the third screening stage to in-person interview stage. Representatives from TEF (Dr. Zin Mar Oo, Director), IIE (Klihsree Myat, DCOP), USAID (Maureen Seng Taung, AOR), and the leader of a CSO and scholarship alumnus (Ying Lao Noon Vo) will be reviewing information forms, essays and recommendation letters of candidates who earned 400 or higher scores on the English diagnostic test. Approximately 40 applicants will be selected to move on to a technical panel interview. For the in-person interviews, representatives



from IIE, USAID, and a representative from a respective sector/field will be involved. Below is a highlight of the selection activities that will take place during the next reporting period.

- Document Review (January 4-6): The first stage of the selection process includes reviewing the completion of application forms and ensuring that all supporting documents are included along with the application. Those who submitted a complete application package will move on to take the TOEFL-ITP test on the Thabyay E-learning Platform.
- English Diagnostic Test (January 7): The second stage of the selection process will eliminate those who do not earn a score of 400 or higher on the TOEFL-ITP test.
- Criteria Review (January 14-19): The third stage of the selection process includes screening of applications, essays, and recommendation letters by the core selection members.
- Background Check (January 20-24): Applicants who make it past the criteria review stage will go through an initial screening process to ensure that no one who makes it to the interview stage has any hits on a terrorist watch list or local police record. This process includes two steps:
  - 1) Applicants will be entered into the CSI Watchdog background checking system that IIE uses to vet all domestic and international program participants, hosts, and vendors.
  - 2) Candidates will be asked to fill out an additional information form that IIE will use to vet candidates through channels in Myanmar. The additional information form requests personal information, employment information, dependents, criminal history, police record, and names of references from their place of residence. Lincoln Scholarship Program staff will call all references and review police records to ensure that all candidates who move on the interviews do not have security concerns.
- Technical Panel Interview (January 27-31): The fourth stage of selection process will be an in-person interview by the technical panel.
- Submission of Recommended Final Candidates to USAID (February 3): Once the interview panels are complete, IIE will compile the scoresheets of all candidates and provide USAID with a list of recommended final candidates for USAID approval.
- Award Announcement (February 7): The final scholarship awards will be announced on February 7, 2020.

## 9.2 Pre-Academic Training of Cohort I

The Lincoln Scholarship Program's pre-academic training is designed to improve the English skills, deepen the understanding of US higher education, help with test preparation, provide graduate study skills, computer/information technology usage, as well as an overview of the university placement process and admissions requirements. The Lincoln Scholarship Program will provide accommodation for scholars to reside in Yangon during their pre-academic training for 15 weeks. These scholars from diverse backgrounds and ethnicities will have opportunities to share life together and learn from one another both in and outside of pre-academic training classes. The living arrangement for scholars is designed as a learning lab where they will practice embracing diversity. They will also be provided with mentors who studied in the U.S. and from whom they can learn and ask questions they may have about studying abroad.

## 9.3 Academic Placement of Cohort I

During pre-academic training, the Lincoln Scholarship Program will guide scholars through the steps of identifying, applying to, and choosing a degree program at a U.S. institution that best matches their professional objectives. The IIE Placement Team will work closely with the scholars to develop their application materials and a placement plan that includes three universities to apply to for each scholar from IIE's extensive network of U.S. academic institution partners. The academic placement plan will take

into account flexibility of institutions to accept late applications and lower standardized test scores, experience that IIE has working with the university and the support they've shown to IIE scholars in the past, scholar academic interests, academic community, access to university resources, and availability of cost-share.

## 9.4 Planning for Selection of Cohort II

### Lincoln Scholarship Webpage on IIE.org

Currently, information on the Lincoln Scholarship Program is available on TEF's website. During the next reporting period, IIE will work on updating IIE's website to include a program page for the Lincoln Scholarship Program. Draft webpages will be submitted to USAID for approval. IIE plans to launch the website once the first cohort has been selected to avoid any confusion by applicants and partners.

### Online Application

Due to time constraints with the timeline for cohort 1 outreach and recruitment, the Lincoln Scholarship Program utilized a paper application that was available to download from the Lincoln Scholarship Program page on TEF's website. During the next reporting period, IIE's Systems Team will move the Lincoln Scholarship application to the online platform, Slate, that IIE uses for all of its programs. IIE's Systems Team will work closely with the Lincoln Scholarship Program team to train staff at both IIE and TEF on how to utilize the Slate application so that it's ready to go live in time for the launch of the cohort 2 application.

## 9.5 Social Media Strategy

Per USAID's request, IIE developed a social media strategy and submitted it for USAID approval in December 2019. The social media strategy covers IIE's plans to utilize Facebook and Twitter for the purposes of outreach and recruitment, updates on program highlights, and an educational tool to encourage institutional buy-in with organizations in Myanmar who may be interested in supporting the program and for U.S. universities to understand the benefit of hosting Lincoln Scholars. Upon approval from USAID, IIE will begin to implement the social media strategy.

## 9.6 MEL Activities

Several MEL activities will take place during the next reporting period. IIE will utilize the information gathered from the following MEL activities to refine our outreach and recruitment process for cohort 2.

- Applicant Survey: A survey will send to all applicants on January 3 with a due date of January 7. The applicant survey will assess the outreach, recruitment, and application process from the perspective of those who submitted applications.
- Applicant Database: The MEL Specialist will develop an applicant database in January to track data about applicants which will be used for reporting to USAID. The MEL Specialist will update the database as the selection process progresses and is completed.
- Baseline Survey: A baseline survey will be developed and implemented to selected scholars during the next reporting period. The baseline survey will include questions on indicators that IIE will track and report on throughout the life of the Lincoln Scholarship Program.



## 9.7 Visit to Yangon by IIE Grants & Contracts and International Accounting

From March 6-14, three IIE team members from Grants & Contracts and International Accounting will travel to Yangon to provide training to the IIE Yangon office and TEF. The staff members include the International Accounting Lead, Wahab Mahdi, Director of Grants & Contracts, Elton Talka, and Grants & Contracts Officer, Mark Myers. During their visit they will provide training to IIE staff on USAID cooperative agreement management, procurement, financial reporting, subrecipient monitoring, ethics, and vetting candidates and vendors for terrorism and human rights abuses. They will also spend time with IIE's partner TEF to better understand their accounting, procurement, and management practices and troubleshoot any issues to ensure TEF is following USAID and IIE policies. The staff from IIE will also reach out to USAID to set up meetings.