



# A Partnership to Strengthen the Executive MBA Program at Alexandria University

**Associate Award  
Final Report**

# **A Partnership to Strengthen the Executive MBA Program at Alexandria University**

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*FINAL REPORT  
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## List of Acronyms

ACE	American Council on Education
AU	Alexandria University
AUFC	Alexandria University Faculty of Commerce
EMBA	Executive Master's in Business Administration
GSU	Georgia State University
HED	Higher Education for Development
LMDC	Leader and Management Development Centre at the Ministry of Investment
RCB	Robinson College of Business
RFA	Request for Applications
USAID/Egypt	United States Agency for International Development, Egypt Mission

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## Executive Summary

In May 2008, USAID Egypt initiated an Associate Cooperative Agreement with the American Council on Education/Higher Education for Development (ACE/HED) to improve the quality of business managers in the Egyptian private sector and, in the process, to enhance economic development in Egypt.

As part of the Associate Cooperative Agreement, HED conducted a merit-based, peer reviewed competition, from which Georgia State University (GSU) was selected to receive \$1,499,500 for a higher education partnership with Alexandria University (AU) in Egypt. The overall goal of this higher education partnership was to strengthen the quality of business managers in the Egyptian private sector through the development of a quality Executive MBA (EMBA) program by:

1. Reviewing and revising the curriculum for the EMBA program to focus on leadership development,
2. Enhancing faculty expertise through an ongoing teaching, research and advisory relationship between the partners,
3. Developing the administrative capacity of Alexandria University to promote and market the program, recruit students, and administer the program, and
4. Developing and implementing a business plan for long-term financial stability.

Major results of the Partnership to Strengthen the EMBA Program at Alexandria University included:

1. The modernization of the EMBA program at Alexandria University, including the creation of an international residency program at GSU in Atlanta.
2. The establishment of formal linkages between the EMBA program and the local business community through the creation of an advisory council.
3. The introduction of online course delivery methods and technologies.
4. The implementation of faculty exchanges and faculty development workshops to improve the quality of instruction in the classroom.
5. The co-teaching of courses by GSU faculty members.
6. The development of a marketing strategy for the long-term financial viability of the EMBA program.

This report highlights the activities and results of the higher education partnership implemented under the Associate Cooperative Agreement.

## Background

When the Partnership to Strengthen the Executive Master's in Business Administration (EMBA) Program at Alexandria University was launched in 2008, the national universities in Egypt were facing severe resource constraints. Enrollment had been expanding dramatically, eroding per-student budgets at the national universities in Egypt by 40%. The Faculty of Commerce at Alexandria University (AUC), a public institution, added an EMBA program in 2004 to complement its existing academic MBA program. The EMBA facility at the Alexandria University Faculty of Commerce reflected a significant investment by the university, with two renovated, technology-enabled class rooms, a conference room with state-of-the-art videoconferencing, and spacious lounges for discussions and study. The Partnership to Strengthen the Executive MBA Program (EMBA) at Alexandria University was initiated to help strengthen this EMBA program and create a mechanism within the Faculty of Commerce for outreach to the business community and the continuous strengthening of faculty teaching skills and the executive education curriculum.

## Associate Cooperative Agreement Goal and Activities

The Partnership to Strengthen the Executive MBA (EMBA) Program at Alexandria University was created to modernize the existing EMBA program at Alexandria University through the design and implementation of a partnership between a higher education institution in the United States and Alexandria University in Egypt to be managed through ACE/HED. This program was supported through an Associate Cooperative Agreement between the American Council on Education (ACE) Office of Higher Education for Development (HED) with USAID/Egypt that was effective May 2008 and ended December 2013. The goal of the program was to improve the quality of business managers in the Egyptian private sector and thus enhance economic development in Egypt and the region.

### ***Request for Application Development and Open Competition***

HED developed a Request for Applications (RFA) for the selection of U.S. partner(s) to receive an award to establish a higher education partnership with Alexandria University in collaboration with USAID/Egypt. As part of the RFA development process, USAID/Egypt set objectives for the partnership and required a two-year period of performance for the completion of all activities.

In May 2008, HED released a Request for Applications (RFA) with an August 22, 2008, deadline. The announcement was sent to more than 12,000 faculty members, the six major U.S. higher education associations for distribution to their members, numerous academic networks, and the nation's top 25 business schools.

Once the RFA was finalized, HED organized and conducted an open competition. HED received 10 applications in response to the RFA and convened a peer review panel of academics with expertise in business management, executive education, and development in the region to review the applications on September 8, 2008. The peer review panel recommended the application from Georgia State University (GSU) titled, "Executive Master's in Business

Administration in Alexandria, Egypt,” for the award. GSU was then informed that their application was selected for funding, and ACE/HED began negotiating a sub-cooperative agreement with GSU.

HED finalized and executed a sub-cooperative agreement in October 2008, and conducted a post-signing teleconference with GSU in November 2008. HED also issued a press release announcing GSU as the winner and collaborated with USAID to establish a procedure to process visas through TraiNet.

### ***Partnership Implementation and Monitoring***

Throughout the duration of Egypt EMBA, HED conducted regular teleconferences with GSU, USAID, and Alexandria University personnel to discuss implementation of the program. Given the short duration of the two-year period of performance, HED paid particular attention to oversight and closely monitored progress toward meeting program objectives and activities, periodically reviewed data and results reported by GSU for consistency and accuracy, and reported on the data and results to USAID on a semi-annual basis.

In March 2010, a team from HED traveled to Atlanta and met with the GSU team because of concerns over the slow pace of implementation and evidence of a strained relationship between partners. During this visit, HED leadership also met with the President of the University due to the seriousness of concern. The HED team, accompanied by the GSU partnership director, then headed directly to Alexandria, Egypt for a site visit where they met with officials from USAID and Alexandria University and EMBA students to review program progress. It became clear from the meetings that GSU and AU would require a no-cost extension to conduct international residencies for two cohorts of EMBA students, finalize and begin implementing a business and marketing plan for the program’s sustainability, co-teach courses, conduct short-term faculty development workshops and trainings, and admit a third cohort of EMBA students. As a result, USAID and the site visit team determined that a no-cost extension of the associate cooperative agreement between ACE/HED and USAID, through December 31, 2011, would be needed to support completion of the partnership program’s goals and objectives. USAID subsequently approved a no-cost extension request from ACE/HED, permitting ACE/HED to approve an extension of its sub-cooperative agreement with Georgia State University.

Based what was learned during the March 2010 site visit, HED, in consultation with USAID/Egypt, determined that it would be more effective to schedule a mid-term assessment at the beginning of the extension year, in lieu of a final evaluation, to allow time for the EMBA program to consider and incorporate recommendations for program improvement. The mid-term assessment examined the overall status of the partnership and the foundation upon which the partners could move forward and accomplish goals down the road. It also provided HED, USAID/Egypt, GSU, and AU with feedback on what the partnership was doing right and adjustments that needed to be considered. A former president of the American Evaluation Association, who had prior work experience in Egypt, was selected to serve as the evaluator.



The mid-term assessment revealed consensus among the partners, EMBA students, HED, and USAID as to the importance and quality of the program being offered and the issues that needed to be addressed. The mid-term assessment also uncovered a diversity in opinions as to why these issues arose and strategies that might be used to address these issues. Overall, the partners, EMBA students, HED, and USAID agreed that the partnership between GSU and AU for the EMBA program filled an important need in Egypt and that great value was associated with the partnership; however, several critical issues were highlighted as requiring immediate attention. These issues were related to the objectives and management procedures for the partnership.

Specifically, the data indicated that the curriculum is viewed as a valuable resource in Egypt that could be improved by increased participant engagement with the GSU faculty, provision of a web-based platform that would facilitate increased involvement and access to GSU faculty and resources, changes in assessment strategies, increased use of case studies, more effective use of technology for delivery of instruction, and clarification of electives in the EMBA program. The mid-term assessment also highlighted the effect of the change of leadership from one partnership director to another. The newest Alexandria University partnership director's efforts were praised by his colleagues and the students in the EMBA program; however, his heavy workload was preventing the program from operating as effectively as it could. As a result, the evaluator reinforced an earlier recommendation from HED's March 2010 site visit that AU should hire an assistant to coordinate daily activities for the EMBA program, assist with the visa procurement process, and maintain project archives and databases. Finally, the evaluator noted that, on the side of the GSU partnership, the communication style of GSU's partnership director was an issue needing attention. She recommended considering strategies to address it that take into account the complexity of the number of stakeholder groups and the need to establish a clear line of authority for decision-making.

Although a business plan had not yet been developed, the evaluator noted that AU appeared to be successfully marketing the program and that the long term sustainability of the program is supported by the number of students who want to enroll in the program and the business community's positive perspective on its importance.

## **Excerpts of Recommendations from the January 2011 Mid-Term Assessment**

### ***Curriculum & International Residency***

- AU needs to hire a program coordinator who can address the visa issues and provide answers to questions for the students.
- More attention needs to be given to the quality of the video conferencing strategies for delivery of information. This has good potential to address many of the issues, however, it is not being used effectively yet.
- Students asked for more engagement with AU and GSU faculty and with other EMBA students. This could also be arranged by making better use of the time when GSU faculty are in Egypt, as well as by the use of web-based communication that could happen both before and after the GSU faculty visits.

### ***Faculty Development***

- The Dean of AU Faculty of Commerce suggested that the faculty development part of the work needs to be restructured. He is willing to release his faculty to go to GSU for a week, a month or two months. However, he wants GSU to provide more workshops on teaching in Alexandria and Cairo. He also suggested that follow-up faculty development activities could occur by means of video conferencing once the GSU faculty members returned to the States.
- One faculty member who had traveled to GSU in June 2009 suggested that the AU faculty may have felt insulted by being asked to observe classes that they had been teaching for many years. Many of the faculty at AU obtained their PhD degrees at U.S. universities. They may feel that they should be looked upon as peers of the GSU faculty members, not as being “less than” their U.S. counterparts. This faculty member acknowledged that the AU faculty members were new to teaching in an EMBA program as opposed to an MBA program and voiced the opinion that the AU faculty would benefit by having professional development opportunities that focused on the differences in teaching in an EMBA program as opposed to an MBA program. This focus on the differences would allow them to fill the gap of not having taught in an EMBA program. GSU would need to develop faculty development activities that specifically focus on filling this gap.
- In the internal March 2010 monitoring visit report, HED reported that GSU agreed to provide a more structured program for faculty development when the AU faculty members are in Atlanta. The AOTR’s viewpoint is that a very detailed plan for faculty development needs to be developed prior to the arrangement of travel for AU faculty to GSU.

### ***Administrative Capacity, Marketing & Recruiting Students***

- The complexity of the relationships based on the multiple organizations in this project needs to be addressed.

### ***Business Plan, Marketing & Sustainability***

- More direction appears to be needed for AU to develop a business plan. Perhaps assistance from GSU would be useful in this respect.
- The sustainability beyond the funding period needs to be examined in greater detail with respect to the cost of the program being supported by tuition when the USAID funds are no longer available. Consider a small follow up grant to conduct a follow-up study to explore its sustainability.

### ***Sustainable Partnership***

- Open and frank discussion needs to occur about the management of the project. Conflicts of personality in partnership projects need to be addressed honestly. This might involve sessions on how to handle conflict.

Just as the mid-term assessment was being circulated among HED, GSU, AU, and USAID stakeholders, the January 2011 revolution in Egypt took place and slowed the pace of activities to a near stop. The key leadership position of Dean of the Faculty of Commerce at Alexandria University was left vacant, and the U.S. Consulate was closed for several months. State Department travel warnings to Egypt also prevented GSU faculty members from visiting Alexandria University. As a result, GSU and AU requested additional time to conduct international residencies for a final two cohorts of students, finalize and begin implementing financial and marketing plans for the program's sustainability, co-teach EMBA courses and a workshop on case teaching and writing, conduct short-term faculty development workshops and trainings for AU faculty, and award graduation certificates to EMBA students. In September 2011, USAID approved a second no-cost extension request of the associate cooperative agreement to December 31, 2012, and ACE/HED extended its sub-cooperative agreement with GSU by an additional year.

In spite of an improving safety situation during the second no-cost extension, the partnership continued to face challenges in program implementation. For example, GSU cancelled a trip of faculty members to Alexandria University to co-teach the EMBA courses due to instability surrounding Egyptian elections. In addition, visas for several cohorts of Egyptian students who were to come to GSU for international residencies were delayed and/or denied. As a result, HED requested and received approval from USAID for a third no-cost extension to the Associate Cooperative Agreement, through December 31, 2013. During this time, HED participated in a number of teleconferences with the USAID AOR and other USAID officials to discuss serious and persistent concerns with GSU's management of the partnership and its overall performance. On October 8, 2012, HED received written communication from formally raising the issue of GSU's partnership management. Following these consultations with USAID, HED formally suspended partnership activities in October 2012, pending resolution of USAID concerns raised around GSU's management of the partnership.

HED leadership and staff traveled to Egypt on a fact finding visit in November 2012. While there, the HED team met with USAID officials to discuss resolution of the suspension. The HED team also met independently with AU administrators and EMBA students to gain insights into activities being conducted under the partnership. The AU leadership expressed its concern that terminating the partnership would have a negative impact on the cohort of students that were currently enrolled in the EMBA program. HED subsequently lifted the suspension of partnership activities and processed a no-cost extension for the partnership through September 30, 2013. This decision was based primarily on feedback from USAID Egypt and AU officials during the fact finding site visit to minimize negative impact terminating the partnership would have on the EMBA students.

Despite the strained relationship due to delays, cancelations of visits, and visa denials, the partners successfully implemented the planned curriculum. AU was satisfied with the quality of the EMBA program and has been able to expand and build upon it.

## Partnership Overview

The partnership between Georgia State University's J. Mack Robinson College of Business (GSU/RCB) and Alexandria University (AU) improved the quality of business managers in the Egyptian private sector by developing a quality Executive MBA (EMBA) program at Alexandria University, with campuses in Alexandria and Cairo. Partners reviewed and revised the curriculum for the EMBA program at Alexandria University to focus on leadership development and formed an advisory council of local business representatives to provide a link to the business community for technical and financial support.

GSU and AU enhanced faculty expertise through intensive faculty development opportunities for Alexandria University EMBA faculty at Georgia State University. The partners also conducted international residency programs in Atlanta for five cohorts of EMBA students. These faculty and student exchanges allowed Alexandria University faculty and students gain greater awareness of the global business community and develop professional contacts.

### **Partnership at a Glance**

**Partner Institutions:**  
*Robinson College of Business at Georgia State University and Faculty of Commerce at Alexandria University*

**Region:**  
*Middle East & North Africa*

**Dates:**  
*Oct 2008–Sept 2013*

**Funding Level:**  
*\$1,499,500*

**Cost Share:**  
*\$595,313*

By September 30, 2013, nearly 200 students had enrolled in the EMBA program, with an additional 43 students admitted into Cohort 6 and 52 in Cohort 7 for the 2013 fall and 2014 spring semesters. In addition, 36 students graduated in April 2013 and 22 students graduated in August 2013. These graduates received a diploma from Alexandria University and a certificate from the RCB upon completion of their studies.

## Cumulative Program Accomplishments

With an overall goal improving the quality of business managers in the Egyptian private sector by meeting the needs of the Egyptian business community for further education of their high quality upper middle and senior level managers and leaders, a number of notable activities/outcomes were accomplished in support of the Egypt EMBA partnership's four objectives:

1. Review, streamline, and rationalize the curriculum for the EMBA program to more sharply focus on leadership development and activate a dormant international residency component
2. Enhance faculty quality through a series of replicable faculty development activities for junior and senior faculty, respectively, and by involving RCB EMBA faculty from diverse

disciplines in an ongoing teaching, research and advisory relationship with AUFC.

3. Develop the administrative capacity of Alexandria University to promote and market the program, recruit students, and administer the program.
4. Develop and implement a business plan for long term financial viability of the AUFC EMBA.

Since the partnership was established in 2009, GSU and AU have collaborated on a number of activities that contributed to the achievement of the above-listed objectives. A description of these activities is provided below.

***Objective 1: Review, streamline and rationalize the curriculum for the EMBA program to more sharply focus on leadership development and activate a dormant international residency component.***

- GSU conducted a needs assessment and evaluated the existing EMBA curriculum before making joint revisions with AU to the final curriculum. The purpose was to update the EMBA curriculum to better suit the needs of the Egyptian and international business community.
- The first semester of the EMBA program began in September 2009. Four courses were taught every semester, and each course module lasted approximately seven weeks.
- The revised EMBA program included student international residencies which began in fall 2010. In all, 153 students from five cohorts participated in the international residencies.

***Objective 2: Enhance faculty quality through a series of replicable faculty development activities for junior and senior faculty, respectively, and by involving RCB EMBA faculty from diverse disciplines in an ongoing teaching, research and advisory relationship with AUFC***

The Georgia State University / Alexandria University partnership contributed to human capacity building through visits by GSU professors to AU to co-teach EMBA courses and through faculty development trainings at GSU for AU faculty.

- Visiting GSU faculty co-taught 17 sections of course modules with AU faculty members.
- While in Egypt, visiting GSU faculty also conducted workshops and seminars for AU faculty, graduate students, and teaching assistants who are working toward becoming future AU junior faculty members. These workshops provided them with new research methods and executive education teaching skills.
- Eight AU faculty members were brought to GSU for 1-month of training and mentoring opportunities. These faculty development activities included:
  - Matching AU faculty with GSU faculty with similar areas of interest and expertise.
  - Attending regularly scheduled GSU faculty development workshops, including workshops on student-centered teaching methods and curricula and course planning.

- Mentoring by GSU faculty and opportunities to observe courses and participate in dissertation defenses.

**Objective 3:** *Develop the administrative capacity of Alexandria University to promote and market the program, recruit students, and administer the program.*

- Administrative development was undertaken when AU's Dean of the Faculty of Commerce and the AU partnership director visited GSU to discuss changes to administration to better accommodate the EMBA program.
- Open Houses were conducted in Alexandria and Cairo to recruit potential EMBA students and promote the EMBA program among local businesses. In addition, advertisements in newspapers and direct contact with local business publicized the EMBA program.
- Admissions committees comprised of senior AU faculty members were formed and assessed the qualifications and English language skills of applicants.
- Instructors were identified and hired to teach in Alexandria and Cairo.
- The Cairo and Alexandria locations were updated with the latest infrastructure and facilities; however, the Cairo location had to be moved from its initial location at EMAK International Academy to the Leader and Management Development Centre at the Ministry of Investment (LMDC) because the EMAK facilities were not adequate for an EMBA program.
- An in-country EMBA program coordinator was hired.
- Visits made by GSU faculty and direct contacts made by them with the business community increased awareness of the importance of executive education to building a cadre of competent executives in the business community. As a result, more businesses were willing to sponsor their executives. For instance, participation in meetings about the program's sustainability influenced the Alexandria Chamber of Commerce to convince some of its members to sponsor some of their employees' for an EMBA degree.
- Using the skills obtained through the EMBA, several graduates worked together to create an alumni network for individual participants of the program. The AU administration has provided the required resources and facilities to facilitate this network.
- A partnership website was created.
- The EMBA program also became a member of the EMBA Council, USA.

**Objective 4:** *Develop and implement a business plan for long term financial viability of the AUFC EMBA.*

- A draft sustainability, or business plan, was developed. Alexandria University also created a sustainability committee that included local businesses to discuss revisions to the plan. The sustainability committee, which met several times throughout program implementation, helped establish targets for tuition price, class size, and quality.
- The key to long-term sustainability was the engagement of the business community, so a marketing strategy to build the EMBA program's brand also was developed. The marketing strategy aimed to create awareness about the EMBA program in Egypt and the Gulf Region.

It is anticipated that this strategic marketing plan will lead to increased tuition for the EMBA program, employer contributions, and fund raising from the Egyptian government, the Egyptian private sector, and international donors.

## Lessons Learned

In spite of its notable achievements, the Partnership to Strengthen the EMBA Program at Alexandria University experienced significant challenges that provide the basis for lessons learned and recommendations for future programming. These challenges included interruptions caused by:

- Leadership turnover at the Faculty of Commerce and need for a greater on the ground presence and/or a local coordinator
- Delays issuing J1 visas for international residencies for students
- Political unrest, periodic strikes, and the Egyptian revolution
- Personality issues that plagued the management of the partnership and suspension of the partnership

**AUFC Leadership Turnover and Need for a Local Coordinator:** During the first two and one half years of program implementation, AU's administration of the program witnessed a change of leadership from one partnership director to another. With the appointment of the EMBA executive director as the AU partnership director in 2010, AU's leadership stabilized. As concurrent executive director of the EMBA program, however, this appointment resulted in a heavy workload for the AU partnership director, which prevented the program from operating as effectively as it could. As a result, HED, USAID, and the mid-term assessment evaluator recommended that AU hire an assistant for the AU partnership to coordinate daily activities for the program, assist with the visa procurement process, and maintain program archives and databases. Once hired, the local coordinator, who served a vital function in facilitating visas and supporting communications between AU and GSU, left before the end of her first year in the position. She was not replaced. The lack of a local administrative coordinator for most of the partnership duration greatly hampered the ability of the partnership to process J1 visas and other paperwork in a timely manner. It also affected the ability of AU and GSU to incorporate feedback from student evaluations into future courses.

*Lessons Learned:* Future higher education partnership programs in Egypt should require that a local onsite administrative coordinator be in place from the program offset to facilitate administrative and programmatic processes. Any turnover in this key administrative position should be addressed immediately.

**J1 Visa Delays:** Delays processing J1 visas for EMBA students caused the international residency program to be postponed several times throughout implementation. With significant support from USAID/Egypt and the designation of a project administrator at GSU solely responsible for the processing of J1 visas, GSU and AU were finally able to process visas through the system--

albeit with some difficulty-- and most EMBA students were eventually able to successfully complete their international residencies. Those students who did not receive visas were required to write a thesis in lieu of the International Residency course.

*Lessons Learned:* The amount of paperwork and effort involved in securing a J1 visa in Egypt cannot be understated. It is important to have well established visa processes in place prior to starting exchanges, and visa paperwork should start a minimum of 90 days in advance of any planned exchange. While appointing a project administrator at GSU to process the visas helped the partnership overcome some of the difficulties it experienced processing visas, the process would have been much smoother with the appointment of a second coordinator located in Egypt who would be tasked with gathering information, processing paperwork, and facilitating communications between training participants, USAID, the partner institutions, and HED.

**Political Unrest:** Egypt's revolution resulted in the cancellation of a number of planned visits by GSU faculty and administrators to Egypt. The lack of a GSU faculty teaching presence in Egypt had great potential to undercut the credibility of the co-branded certificates. In spite of urging from HED and USAID for GSU to maintain its presence in the program by sending faculty to co-teach courses when safety conditions improved and State Department travel warnings were lifted, GSU would not send its faculty to Egypt. GSU claimed that it could not locate faculty members interested in traveling to Egypt to co-teach courses due to safety concerns. During this time, GSU and AU decided to co-teach three courses using videoconferencing technology and online course software: one course on Information Technology Strategies was taught online, and two Introduction to the International Residency courses were taught using videoconferencing technology. Given the need for more visible

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"The advantage is to interact with foreign professors. This gives us a competitive advantage. The US is the most powerful in business. If we had only Egyptian professors, we would not have this advantage."

-- *EMBA Student*

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involvement by GSU in the program, HED asked the GSU and AU partners to consider co-teaching more courses using videoconferencing and online technologies when travel was not an option; however, additional courses were not taught using these technologies.

The Egyptian revolution, demonstrations, and unrest impacted partnership implementation in other ways. GSU was out of contact with Alexandria University for long periods of time throughout the year. This lack of contact between partners, in addition to U.S. Embassy closures, contributed to further delays in processing student visas for the international residency program in Atlanta, which meant postponing the last set of international residencies



to September 2013. The aftereffects of Egypt's revolution and upcoming elections also contributed to security concerns that resulted in travel difficulties for AU students and university faculty. Graduation ceremonies for Cohort 1 and Cohort 2 had to be postponed to summer 2012 due to the unsafe travel conditions.

*Lessons Learned:* HED and USAID can do little to encourage travel in an insecure environment—particularly if there is a State Department Travel Warning in effect. Programs in post-conflict countries need to be cognizant of the impact that lack of travel may have on the program's success and be willing to proactively implement other strategies for increasing collaboration, such as creating a virtual presence through videoconferencing and online course delivery.

**Partnership Management Issues and Suspension of Activities:** Throughout implementation, the GSU partnership director was criticized for his abrasive communication style. For example, due to the difficulty and problems the partnership was experiencing in gathering documentation and having J1 visas processed in a timely manner, USAID appointed a local Egyptian contractor to help GSU with the visa process. However, when the documents were not initially approved, the GSU partnership director sent a very harshly worded email to the contractor. As a result, USAID directed the contractor to stop working on the visas for the partnership, which further delayed the visas. As a second example, the first partnership director at AU resigned, citing his inability to communicate with the GSU partnership director.

While the next AU partnership director was able to maintain a relationship with GSU, over time the GSU partnership director's behavior began to seriously strain other partner relationships and alienate USAID staff. In October 2012, HED received a memorandum from USAID/Egypt's Procurement Office citing concerns with the GSU partnership director's management of the partnership and his unprofessional and negative interactions with USAID personnel and Alexandria University faculty, administrators, and staff members.

As a result of the continuing difficulties with the GSU partnership director, ACE/HED temporarily suspended activities in October 2012 and gave GSU two weeks to identify one or more replacements. ACE/HED also informed GSU that it would initiate close out of the partnership if GSU did not appoint new key personnel to the GSU partnership director position. When GSU refused to replace the GSU partnership director and make program adjustments, HED leadership and staff traveled to Egypt on a fact finding visit. While there, the HED team met with USAID officials to discuss resolution of the suspension. The HED team also met independently with AU administrators and students to gain insights into activities being conducted under the partnership. While GSU refused to make the requested changes, HED, at the direction of USAID, lifted the suspension of partnership activities and processed a no-cost extension for the partnership through September 30, 2013. This decision was based primarily on feedback from USAID Egypt and AU officials during the fact finding site visit and to minimize the negative impact terminating the partnership would have on the EMBA students.

*Lessons Learned:* If a key personnel's behavior and communication is unprofessional, it needs to be raised immediately with all stakeholders and decision-making conducted in a transparent manner with all options (including program termination) on the table. If a partnership is to be collaborative, unprofessional and harsh behavior is never acceptable.

## Overall Program Impact and Conclusions

The goal of the Partnership to Strengthen the EMBA Program at Alexandria University was to improve the quality of business managers in the Egyptian private sector and thus enhance economic development in Egypt and the region. As a result of the program, the Faculty of Commerce at Alexandria University now has a revised two-year Executive MBA program with a modern curriculum and faculty trained in the latest teaching methods. The international residency program established by the partnership also has helped AU bridge the gap between classroom teaching and business practice by allowing students to conduct on-site company visits throughout Atlanta and by creating a mechanism for the EMBA program to consult with local Egyptian businesses.

As Egyptian higher education continues to struggle with meeting the needs of a growing university population, while providing their graduates with the skills needed in a globally competitive economy, Alexandria University's EMBA program is now better positioned to train a new generation of executives and professionals for jobs being created through financial sector reform and economic liberalization in Egypt. In fact, by September 30, 2013, nearly 200 students had enrolled in the EMBA program, with an additional 43 students admitted into Cohort 6 and 71 students into Cohort 7 for the 2013 fall and 2014 spring semesters.

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"In Egypt, we have high unemployment. Overall there is a lack of training for job skills, but this is particularly true at the level of upper management. We need this program to train leaders. If we are going to see economic development, we need to have leaders who are exposed to multinational, international business programs."

*-- Representative from the Alexandria Chamber of Commerce*

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With a marketing plan in place, an EMBA curriculum that is responsive and relevant to the needs of the local business community, the establishment of an advisory council to provide guidance on branding and marketing the program, and a Memorandum of Understanding in place between GSU and AU for continued faculty and student exchange, the future sustainability of the EMBA program appears promising in spite of the challenges the program encountered. In fact, as of February 2014, the EMBA program continues to expand. In addition

to increasing class sizes at the Alexandria and Cairo locations, the EMBA program has opened 3 new branches in 3 different cities: Marsa Matrouh in Egypt (50 students divided into two groups) and Jeddah (20 students), and Riyadh (20 students) in Saudi Arabia.