



SIGNATURE INITIATIVE

International Fellowships Program

Since its inception in November 2000, the Ford Foundation International Fellowships Program has given more than 1,500 promising young leaders from around the world the opportunity for advanced study in universities at home and abroad. Created by the Ford Foundation and the Institute for International Education, this 12-year, \$280-million program is the largest initiative in the foundation's history. It will provide graduate fellowships for more than 3,300 talented individuals from 22 countries and territories by the year 2012.

The I.F.P. differs from other efforts to support international graduate work, such as the Fulbright or Rhodes programs, in crucial ways. First, it chooses fellows on the basis of their leadership potential and commitment to their country or community, as well as for academic promise. Second, the program's fellows come from groups that have limited access to higher education for reasons including caste, ethnicity, gender, geographic isolation, language, physical disability, political instability, race, religion or socioeconomic status.



Hu Jian, China

Mahidol University, Thailand
Master's degree in primary health-care management

"I.F.P. offered me a chance to study for my master's degree when I was already 40, which is very hard to do in China, and very few people from my poor province get these opportunities.

"I chose to study in Thailand because of the cultural and geographic similarities to places with similar public health challenges in China, and because Thailand has been very successful in fighting the H.I.V./AIDS epidemic that is now facing China.

"I was a medical officer in my home province of Guizhou for almost 20 years, and we sometimes would need to walk long distances to remote villages to provide maternal and child health programs. Women and children are the most vulnerable populations. My studies in Thailand have given me skills to manage programs more effectively, and to conduct research as well."

Oksana Silantieva, Russia

Bournemouth University, United Kingdom
Master's degree in multimedia journalism

"After completing my studies in the U.K., I returned home to Siberia and established a media training school that trains journalists to think independently. I see this as my contribution to constructing democracy in Russia, where the Soviet system of training journalists is still widespread.

"The program I completed at Bournemouth is taught in only four universities in the world. I learned how to do video, audio, photo, print and interactive forms of journalism. This idea of convergence—multimedia journalism—is not yet common, but will be in 10 years.

"I am not from a rich family, and my parents never dreamed of sending me abroad to study. The I.F.P. offered me a unique opportunity to gain the newest knowledge in my field. Now I feel strong enough to promote social justice and to change the stereotypical way of thinking in my community, my region and my country."





Bibiana Bangpouri, Ghana

Brandeis University, United States
Master's degree in development studies

“Unless and until one can work in a position that offers the opportunity to effect changes at a higher level of decision making, not much influence can be made. That is why I am striving to go beyond the community and district levels to work at the regional and national levels. Otherwise, we are just daydreaming about change. I want to move from helping hundreds of people to helping millions of people!

“My training at Brandeis University has given me academic grounding, improved my confidence level and broadened my horizons so I can apply my learning in my community work. Interacting with people from

many different countries has given me new perspective and new methods to address our problems here in Ghana.

“Generally it is very difficult for people from my background and from my rural region to gain graduate education. There are many deprived people here who are very promising, who could be future leaders, but cannot go for higher studies because our own community cannot support us to gain further education. I.F.P. saw that I could be a change agent in my community, and I have come home to be just that.”

International Fellowships Program fellows in each participating country are selected by independent national or regional committees that apply the program's global selection criteria in ways that are appropriate to different cultural contexts and country settings. Assisted by educational advising and placement services provided by the program, the fellows enjoy considerable freedom to choose where and what to study. They can enroll at universities abroad or in their home countries or regions, as long as they are committed to serving their communities and countries upon completing their studies.

The I.F.P. pays for up to three years of graduate education leading to a master's or doctoral degree at any university, but many fellows are clustered at some 30 institutions in a dozen countries, including the Asian Institute of Management in the Philippines, the University of Hawaii at Manoa and the University of London. They are at work in a wide range of academic fields, including development and gender studies, education, human rights law, natural resource management, public health and the social sciences.

To ensure that fellows are prepared for graduate-level study, the program emphasizes pre-enrollment preparation and training. It provides opportunities both in the fellows' home countries and at universities abroad for short-term language study as well as training in research and computer skills before fellows start their graduate programs.

Current fellows also convene each year for a leadership institute aimed at helping them apply their studies to problems in their home communities and encouraging them to forge a global network that will continue beyond their fellowship years. "Being here gave me another perspective, a global perspective, on what we can do together," said Fatou Amanita Lo, an I.F.P. fellow from Senegal, as the sixth institute drew to a close in July 2004. Lo, who is pursuing a master's degree in development management at the School for International Training in Vermont, added: "Injustice is global and I think that global action is needed. Being part of this group and discussing these issues gives me new hope."

Since the program began, about 200 fellows have successfully completed their studies. More than 800 are enrolled at nearly 400 universities in some 40 countries on six continents. Hundreds more fellows will begin their studies in the coming months. In the program's first four years, only a few fellows have left before completing their studies. About 85 percent of the alumni have returned to or resumed work in their home countries, while almost all of the others are engaged in further study.

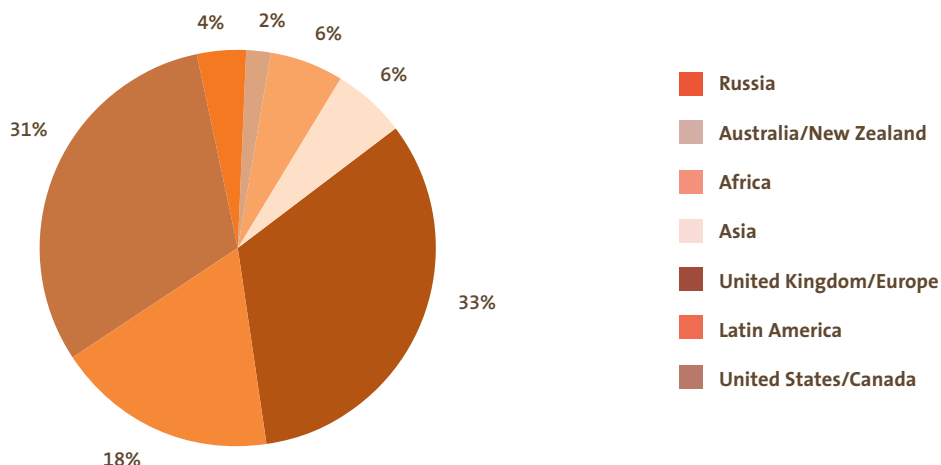
"I.F.P. is conclusively demonstrating that academic excellence can be more broadly defined," says Joan Dassin, the program's executive director. "When candidates with the greatest social commitment and leadership skills, as well as outstanding academic potential, are chosen for advanced study, they can and do excel in comparison with students selected according to more conventional criteria."

Moreover, Dassin says, when fellows are chosen because they want to make a difference in their societies, not just further their individual careers, those studying abroad return home, avoiding the "brain drain" that has been an unwelcome outcome of many international fellowship programs.

Hu Jian, a public health physician from China's Guizhou Province, was selected in 2001, in the first group of fellows. After some preliminary training in English and computer skills in Beijing, he enrolled in a master's program at Mahidol University in Thailand, where he studied primary health-care management and conducted research on H.I.V./AIDS among migrant fishermen in Ranong, Thailand. After he graduated, the university offered him a three-year scholarship to stay on and pursue a doctorate in demography, specializing in reproductive health and AIDS prevention. He says the knowledge, reasoning and skills he is developing at Mahidol will inform his subsequent work back home in China.

Regions Where I.F.P. Fellows Study

Total 1,055 fellowships awarded



Bibiana Bangpouri, a former schoolteacher from north-western Ghana, is the first in her family to complete more than a primary education. As an I.F.P. fellow, she earned a master’s degree in development studies at Brandeis University, where she received the Bailis Family Social Justice Award when she graduated in May 2004. Since returning home, she has been leading workshops in management planning and environmental issues. Recently, for example, she spent six weeks helping villagers in central Ghana develop the vocabulary and skills to weigh in on upcoming water projects sponsored by the World Bank and other international donors.

Francisco López Bárcenas, a Mixtec Indian attorney from Oaxaca, Mexico, stayed in his native country to study rural development at the Autonomous Metropolitan University in Xochimilco. Since completing his master’s degree, he has continued to defend the rights of indigenous peoples in Oaxaca and other parts of Latin America through legal advocacy and publications. An expert of growing renown, he has written many newspaper articles and several books on indigenous rights in Mexico.

I.F.P. fellows are excelling in their studies and contributing valuable grass-roots perspectives to their university communities. But the program’s most enduring impact will be felt off campus. By extending opportunities to people with a deep commitment to their communities, I.F.P. helps fellows draw on past experiences and personal contacts—in short, their social capital—as well as on their academic knowledge. Fellows like Hu, Bangpouri and López Bárcenas are finding this mix to be a winning combination.

Similar convictions motivate the program’s newest fellows, including Leonid Tskhurbaev, who begins working on a master’s degree in migration and refugee studies at the University of East London next fall. After completing his studies, he plans to return to the Caucasian Refugees Committee, which he founded in 1999 to help people displaced by conflict near his home in North Ossetia, a strife-torn region of the Caucasus along Russia’s southern frontier. Tskhurbaev hopes his graduate study will inform the committee’s work in ways that, he says, “help to make refugees’ burdens easier and to solve ethnic interaction problems in my community.”

The International Fellowships Program was launched in the belief that learning, leadership and commitment can combine powerfully to help promote social justice. I.F.P. fellows are now proving the hypothesis in practice, gaining skills that allow each, in the words of Encop Sophia, an Indonesian fellow who is studying

for a master's degree in political science at the University of Hawaii, "to become a social agent for themselves and for their societies."

I.F.P. International Partner Offices

Brazil Carlos Chagas Foundation (CCF)
www.programabolsa.org.br

Chile International Fellowships Fund for the Andean Region & Southern Cone www.programabecas.org

China Institute of International Education Beijing Office www.china-ifp.org

Egypt America-Mideast Educational and Training Services (AMIDEAST) www.amideast.org

Ghana Association of African Universities (AAU)
www.aau.org/ifp

Guatemala Center for Research on the Mesoamerica Region (CIRMA) www.cirma.org.gt/becas.htm

India United States Educational Foundation in India (USEFI) www.ifpsa.org

Indonesia Indonesian International Education Foundation (IIEF) www.iief.or.id/ifp/ifp.html

Kenya The Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE) www.ifpeastafrica.org

Mexico Center for Research and Higher Studies in Social Science (CIESAS) www.ciesas.edu

Mozambique Africa-America Institute (AAI)
www.ifpmoz.co.mz

Nigeria Association of African Universities (AAU)
www.aau.org/ifp

Palestinian Territories America-Mideast Educational and Training Services (AMIDEAST) www.amideast.org

Peru International Fellowships Fund for the Andean Region & Southern Cone www.programabecas.org

Philippines Philippines Social Science Council (PSSC)
www.pssc.org.ph/programs/ifp

Russia Institute of International Education Russia and Eurasia Office www.iie.ru/IFP

Senegal Association of African Universities (AAU)
www.aau.org/ifp/indexfr.htm

South Africa Africa-America Institute (AAI)
www.aaisa.org.za

Tanzania Economic and Social Research Foundation (ESRF) www.ifpeastafrica.org/

Thailand Asian Scholarship Foundation (ASF)
www.asianscholarship.org/ifp/ifp.html

Uganda Association for Advancement of Higher Education and Development (AHEAD)
www.ifpeastafrica.org/

Vietnam Center for Educational Exchange with Vietnam (CEEVN)
www.acls.org/ceevn/ifpguidelines.htm