

Social Justice Leaders in Action: IFP Impacts in Asia

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Social Justice Leaders in Action: IFP Impacts in Asia

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Throughout the report we include stories of IFP alumni working on social justice issues in their home communities. We hope that these stories provide concrete examples of the report findings and help illuminate the impacts of IFP alumni.

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On The Cover: Indian alumna Grace Albert using her training in movement therapy to work with children with special needs. Grace received an IFP fellowship in 2004 to pursue a Master’s in Dance Movement Therapy from Antioch College in the U.S.

FOREWORD

WHAT DOES THE IMPACT OF A TRANSFORMATIVE EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCE LOOK LIKE ON THE GROUND?

We explore this question in the second publication of the IFP Alumni Tracking Study, a ten-year longitudinal study of 4,305 alumni of the International Fellowships Program (IFP). Our first report, *Social Justice and Sustainable Change: The Impacts of Higher Education*, provided evidence for the impact of a program like IFP on a local and global scale. While that report helped measure the magnitude of IFP's impact 15 years after the program began in 2001, this second report takes us into the everyday lives of IFP alumni in remote communities and urban centers in three Asian countries—India, Indonesia, and the Philippines—to help us understand the stories behind the numbers, and to understand the pathways through which social change occurs as a result of an advanced educational experience.

Through the powerful tools of qualitative, action research, this report reflects our inclusive and participatory approach to carrying out our study and engaging IFP alumni. This approach mirrors the collaborative spirit of IFP, with alumni regarded not as passive recipients of aid but as active agents of change. We adopted a rigorous process where we triangulated our findings by speaking not just with alumni, but also individuals within their wider spheres of influence: community members, organizations where they work, and other stakeholders.

It is important to consider what this report is and is not. The report offers an in-depth look at the multi-layered impact of IFP alumni in their home countries. It provides an understanding of how individuals take the knowledge and skills gained through an advanced study experience and apply it to affect change at the grassroots and policy levels. While this report is about IFP alumni in three Asian countries, it is not an analysis about all Asian countries or all IFP alumni. What the report does offer is an in-depth look at three distinct slices of IFP, each of which varies significantly, especially in the types of social justice issues relevant to each country and the ways in which alumni apply their expertise.

It is also important to note that “social justice” is not a static concept, but rather an evolving movement that embodies the prevailing social, economic and political struggles within a society. As such, the original concept of social justice on which IFP was based included wide-ranging but locally relevant themes such as gender discrimination; religious and ethnic persecution;

poverty; racial discrimination; and disability. In the 15 years that have passed since IFP was conceived, many of these social justice issues unfortunately persist, and others have emerged to join them at center-stage, such as LGBT rights, gender violence, and environmental degradation. Our fieldwork shows that alumni across these three countries are working to drive change not only in the original areas of social justice that first inspired them, but also on emergent problems that their communities now face.

Our report also reveals complicating factors that make it harder for some alumni to affect change. These factors are as universal as gender (where IFP female alumnae reported more challenges to re-entry and assimilation) and as particular as whether the social and economic growth of IFP countries has kept pace with the transformation that occurred within the alumni as a result of their IFP experience. Some alumni experienced reverse culture shock, discovering that their communities were not ready for the social change they were trying to affect.

Finally, our conversations with alumni about these complicating factors revealed where things could have been improved. Many wished that they had received more assistance from IFP upon their return and following their fellowship. From a programmatic perspective, this presents a challenge for fellowship program design and the extent to which a program supports grantees once their opportunity has ended. Many alumni also expressed the desire for more engagement with other alumni in-country or even across the region. Where collaborations between alumni happened organically, the multiplier effect was evident, further extending the long-term impact of IFP. The takeaway is to identify opportunities for program alumni that enable them not only to build upon their individual experiences, but support them to bring about impacts as a collective whole.

Our entire research team in India, Indonesia, the Philippines, and the U.S. was humbled, inspired, and motivated by the work of IFP alumni. We hope you will be too.

Rajika Bhandari, Ph.D.

*Deputy Vice President, Research & Evaluation
Institute of International Education*

INTRODUCTION

This report presents regional qualitative findings from three countries in Asia—India, Indonesia, and the Philippines—where the Ford Foundation International Fellowships Program (IFP) was implemented from 2001–2013. The report is second in a series of research reports from the IFP Alumni Tracking Study, a 10-year study that explores the personal and professional trajectories of 4,305 IFP alumni from 22 countries.

The IFP Alumni Tracking Study began with a Global Alumni Survey conducted in 2015, the findings of which were published in an April 2016 report, *Social Justice and Sustainable Change: The Impacts of Higher Education*.¹ The qualitative findings presented in the current report, the second in the series, complement the broad themes that emerged from the survey and provide a deeper, more nuanced understanding of alumni experiences and impacts.

In-country researchers met with 274 alumni and other stakeholders from January to June 2016 to learn about the lives of IFP alumni since their fellowship and their efforts to advance social justice. The findings reflect a local and grounded approach to research conducted in the three Asian countries.

ORGANIZATION OF REPORT

The report begins with an overview of IFP and the methodology used to arrive at the qualitative findings. Next, an overview of current social and educational issues, and key themes from the region, forms a useful contextual base for the findings sections that follow. The findings sections are based on the theoretical framework for our study, beginning with outcomes at the individual level and progressing to outcomes and impacts at the organizational, community, and societal levels. The last section of the report presents the research team's reflections on the findings and how they can inform policy and decision-making, as well as lessons learned in carrying out a mixed-methods longitudinal study of the program.

INTERNATIONAL FELLOWSHIPS PROGRAM

Between 2001 and 2013, the Ford Foundation International Fellowships Program provided graduate fellowships to 4,305 emerging social justice leaders from 22 countries in the developing world. As a reflection of its strong commitment to social justice, the Ford Foundation provided \$420 million in funding resources for IFP, the single largest program commitment in its history.

IFP reflected the Ford Foundation's focus on social justice and higher education. The program selected individuals from marginalized communities who had traditionally lacked access to education and who demonstrated a commitment to promoting social justice in their home communities. By supporting people who met these criteria, IFP would invest in people propelling social change.

The 22 countries in which IFP operated were typically grouped into three regions: (1) Africa and the Middle East, (2) Asia and Russia², and (3) Latin America. The three countries discussed in this report—India, Indonesia, and the Philippines—represent 21% of the total IFP population. Future regional reports will cover ongoing fieldwork in the other two regions.

¹ Martel, M. & Bhandari, R. (2016). *Social Justice and Sustainable Change: The Impacts of Higher Education*. Ford Foundation International Fellowships Program Alumni Tracking Study, Report No. 1, April 2016. New York: Institute of International Education.

² Russia and China were originally considered for qualitative fieldwork, but due to difficulties contacting alumni in each country and challenges to planning site visits overall, the research team ultimately decided not to pursue fieldwork in these two countries, though it may consider doing so in the future. However, both Russia and China were included in the 2015 survey of alumni from all 22 IFP countries, and in the first report of the study (see Inside Back Cover).

IFP Alumni Population³

	INDIA	INDONESIA	PHILIPPINES
% Women	43%	49%	53%
% First generation study	63%	78%	51%
% Low socioeconomic status	72%	60%	64%



India

IFP India was implemented locally by the United States-India Education Foundation (USIEF) and supported 324 Fellows. Selection was focused on women; individuals from scheduled castes; religious minorities; and people with physical disabilities. Nearly all IFP Fellows (91%) studied in the U.S., Canada, or the UK. According to data from the 2015 Global Alumni Survey, 79% of respondents were located in their home country. While many Fellows have returned to their home regions, others have relocated to cities like Delhi and Bangalore for employment, and a final country report prepared by the India office in 2013 described high mobility and inter-state migration among alumni.

Indonesia

IFP Indonesia was implemented locally by the Indonesian International Education Foundation (IIEF) and supported 360 Fellows. Selection focused on women; members of indigenous groups; people with disabilities; individuals from conflict zones; and those in areas vulnerable to natural disasters and environmental degradation. Given the size of the archipelago and the privilege afforded to those living in populous regions, IFP also sought to recruit from rural areas of the main islands or remote islands in the eastern part of the country. Most Fellows studied outside Indonesia, with 38% studying in the U.S. and 24% in the Netherlands. 82% of alumni respondents were located in their home country, according to 2015 survey data.

Philippines

IFP Philippines was implemented locally by the Philippine Social Science Council (PSCC) and supported 222 Fellows. Selection focused on those who suffered from poverty or other forms of economic exclusion; people with disabilities; and individuals from ethnic minority groups, specifically members of communities that did not speak one of the country's eight major languages. Virtually all Fellows came from smaller urban and rural areas. The majority of Fellows studied outside the Philippines, with 68% pursuing study in the U.S. or the UK. 17% of Fellows remained in the Philippines to study. According to data from the 2015 Global Alumni Survey, 89% of respondents were living in their home country.

³ This table reflects final program data IIE received from IFP in 2013, as well as data from an IFP finalist survey gathered by the Center for Higher Education Policy Studies, University of Twente, the Netherlands in 2010.

FIELDWORK IN ASIA

The IFP Alumni Tracking Study is a 10-year longitudinal impact study that explores the personal and professional trajectories of IFP alumni. IFP’s theory of change guides the study’s approach, hypothesizing that the fellowship opportunity supported Fellows in developing their role as social justice leaders with the potential to drive social change locally and globally.

STUDY RESPONDENTS

Dedicated teams of local researchers in India, Indonesia, and the Philippines conducted the qualitative fieldwork from January to June 2016. Using a combination of participatory focus groups and interviews, researchers met with 274 alumni and community stakeholders. In addition to meeting with alumni that represented a variety of demographic characteristics, researchers reached 90 alumni who had not participated in the 2015 Global Alumni Survey.

In order to validate and enrich findings from alumni focus groups and interviews as well as survey data, researchers also spoke to organizational staff, community members, and other key stakeholders who were familiar with alumni and their work. In addition, 18 alumni (six from each country) were selected for in-depth case studies that demonstrated the range of IFP experiences. Selections from six of these case studies (two from each country) are included throughout the report.

Study Respondents	India	Indonesia	Philippines	Total
Alumni	67	53	74	194
Community Stakeholders	17	51	12	80
Total				274

ANALYSIS

The IFP Alumni Tracking Study’s research questions reflect the overall vision of IFP in linking higher education opportunity to social change. The first research question guides the study and serves as the foundation for analyzing change at various levels of impact. The qualitative fieldwork distinguishes itself from the Global Alumni Survey in that local research teams also focused on research questions two and three, as these questions required a deeper analysis of

the application of IFP outcomes in the local context. The answers to these questions were difficult to adequately capture through a survey, and thus were not an emphasis in the Global Alumni Survey report.

Research Questions

- 1) What have been the long-term impacts of the IFP experience on its alumni? How has the program enabled alumni to contribute to long-term impacts at the organizational, community, and societal levels?
- 2) What contributions to social justice have IFP alumni made as leaders in their communities as a result of their fellowship opportunity?
- 3) What is the link between higher education and social justice? How can higher education fellowship programs provide opportunities to address social inequalities?

Kirkpatrick’s Levels of Evaluation

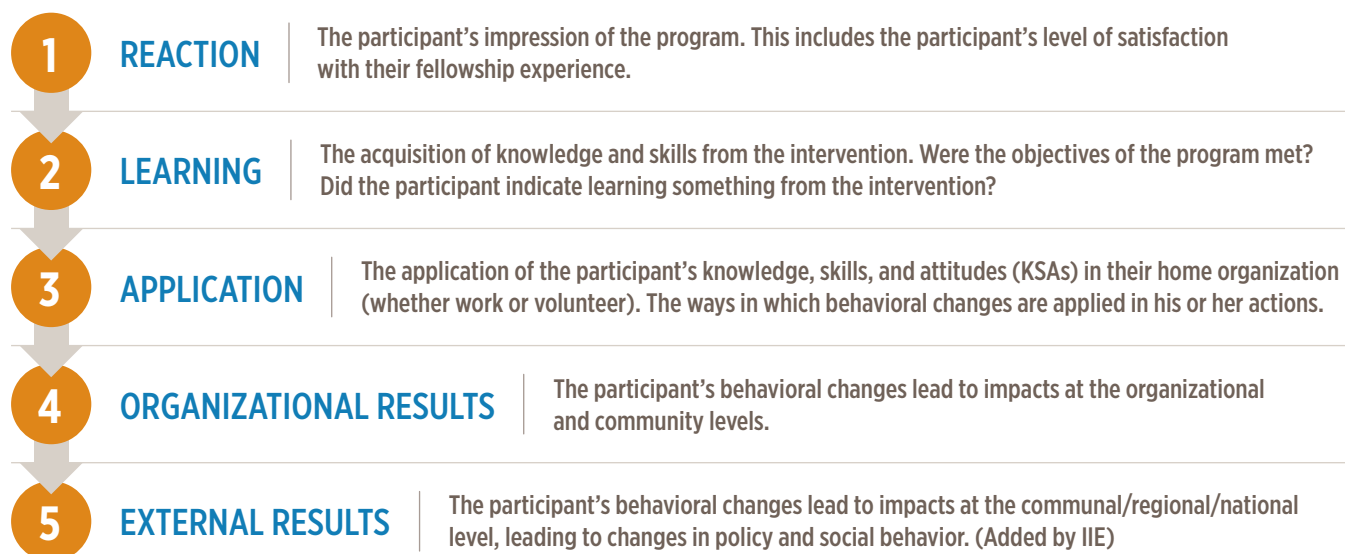
IIE is utilizing a revised version of the Kirkpatrick model to analyze mixed-methods data from the IFP Alumni Tracking Study.⁴ IIE adjusted the Kirkpatrick model by adding a fifth level, “External Results,” that studies the potential impacts that influence policy or social behavior at the community, national, or international levels.⁵

⁴ Kirkpatrick, D.L. (1979). Techniques for evaluating training programs. *Training and Development Journal*, 33 (6), pp. 78-92.

⁵ Adaptations of the Kirkpatrick model have been used in evaluations of several international scholarship programs, including the USAID ATLAS/AFGRAD program, which was the first to add a fifth level to measure impact beyond institutions.

USAID (2004). *Generations of quiet progress: the development impact of US long-term university training on in Africa from 1963-2003*, Report prepared by Aguirre International. Washington, DC: USAID.

Adaptation of the Kirkpatrick Model by IIE



LIMITATIONS

As with any large analysis of this kind, IIE is cognizant of the limitations of the report's conclusions. It is challenging to locate updated contact information for alumni given that over a decade has passed since early cohorts of Fellows completed the program, and over three years since the IFP Alumni Tracking Study began. The IIE study team made every effort to include all alumni in the study population. A particular effort was made in the qualitative research to include alumni who had not participated in the Global Alumni Survey.

The qualitative research generated vast amounts of rich data. To ensure an accurate and nuanced analysis, IIE conducted a layered and iterative data analysis process. Local researchers conducted country-level analysis and monthly calls with the entire research team. Guided by a code tree developed with the IIE team, local researchers conducted primary data analysis and summarized their findings in country-level reports. IIE then synthesized the country-level analyses into a regional report with the local researchers' inputs to ensure accuracy. As a result, this report synthesizes findings from all three country reports, and other relevant sources of primary and secondary data. It is important to note that due to the contextual nature of this analysis, it is problematic to extrapolate these findings to the rest of the Asia region, or to the IFP population as a whole.

Finally, as the qualitative fieldwork focused on alumni living in their home countries, the outcomes and findings of the report only reflect the work of those who returned home post-fellowship. According to data from the 2015 Global Alumni Survey, 84% of alumni are currently living in their home countries. For India, Indonesia, and the Philippines specifically, 18% of alumni are outside their home country and were not included in the population considered for the fieldwork. The study team plans to conduct interviews with alumni that are not living in their home country in the coming years to learn about their experiences and motivations for residing overseas, as well as the social justice impacts of their international careers.



Indonesian alumna Khanis Suvainita speaks at an LGBT youth camp in Trawas, East Java. Read Khanis' story on page 21.

REGIONAL CONTEXT

The three IFP countries chosen for fieldwork—India, Indonesia, and the Philippines—are as diverse as they are large, and the alumni from these countries represent an astounding range of communities, from tribal groups to religious minorities to alumni raised in small, rural villages. Higher education and community development in Asia has evolved during IFP’s implementation and since its conclusion,⁶ and these regional developments have relevance to the findings shared in this report. Nevertheless, it is important to caution readers about extrapolating the findings of this report to other IFP countries or the region as a whole, as this would undermine the particular nuances of the program’s implementation and impact in each country. Rather, we offer these themes as possible analytical lenses through which to consider the sections that follow.

ACCESS AND QUALITY OF HIGHER EDUCATION

Across the Asian region access to primary education increased significantly in the past two decades, particularly in the rates of enrollment. However, rates of secondary and higher education enrollment remain low, particularly for marginalized populations. In India, for example, less than 10% of the working-age population has completed a secondary education.⁷ Increases in access to primary education also have not been complemented by improvements in the quality of that education. As a result, some students, particularly from low socioeconomic status or under-represented communities, experience low education standards and continue to experience impediments. Low-quality education in primary and secondary schools presents challenges to adequately preparing students for higher education.

The size and geographic nature of all three countries pose barriers to higher education access, particularly because many universities are located in large, urban centers. In the Philippines, for example, those who live in rural or mountainous parts of the country in particular lack access to higher quality universities concentrated in urban centers. In Indonesia top universities are also concentrated in major urban centers—roughly a third of the country’s population lives on the island of Java—resulting in barriers to higher education for individuals who are in more remote parts of the country. As a result, the financial and social costs of pursuing higher education can be prohibitive to many.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The Asian region has experienced strong economic development, yet all three countries struggle with devastating income gaps between the rich and the poor. Individuals from remote areas and ethnic groups continue to live in poverty. These gaps in equity present challenges to improving social and economic development for the neediest populations. India is the world’s fourth largest economy, with a population of over 1.2 billion. Although it has made significant gains in reducing absolute poverty, it is still home to 400 million poor. Despite a growing middle class, economic inequality is prevalent, with poverty rates in India’s poorest states being “three to four times higher than those in the more advanced states.”⁸

⁶ Bhandari, R., & Lefebure, A. (Eds.) (2015). *Asia: The Next Higher Education Superpower?*. New York: Institute of International Education.

⁷ World Bank (2017). *India Country Overview*. Retrieved from www.worldbank.org/en/country/india/overview

⁸ World Bank (2017). *India Country Overview*. Retrieved from www.worldbank.org/en/country/india/overview



Indian alumnus Nekram Upadhayay working with a patient at the Indian Spinal Injuries Center in New Delhi, where he serves as the head of the Assistive Technology Department.

MARGINALIZED POPULATIONS AND EQUITY

Diverse populations comprise countries in Asia and Southeast Asia, which present complexities in economic, political, and social equity. India is a highly diverse country, with rigid and complex traditions and prejudices related to caste, class, gender, and religion that are deeply embedded in society. Indonesia has the world's largest Muslim population. As a former Dutch colony, its highly diverse population of over 240 million speaks more than 300 regional languages.¹⁰ As a former Spanish colony consisting of an archipelago of more than 7,000 islands, the Philippines is a large and highly diverse country in terms of geography and ethnicity. Both the Philippines and Indonesia have seen tensions between Christian and Muslim communities, while parts of India continue to struggle with friction between the Hindu and Muslim communities.

ROLE OF WOMEN

The advancement of women in social and professional spheres has challenged norms and the deep-seated cultural traditions of the anticipated role of women in society. Like other countries, the three countries included in our analysis have multifaceted views on the role of women as equals in society, and women continue to face a complex set of opportunities and challenges in battling inequity and discrimination. For example, although women in many Asian countries have achieved parity with men in higher education enrollment, they often remain underrepresented in the labor market as well as in the highest levels of education and research.⁹

READINESS FOR CHANGE

Many of the themes explored in our analysis can be linked to the ability for developing countries like India, Indonesia, and the Philippines to undergo change. A previous research brief published by IIE explored change readiness in the context of the IFP countries and the extent to which societies can “anticipate, prepare for, manage, and respond to a wide range of change drivers.”¹¹ The implementation of IFP can be seen as a change driver in promoting access to higher education as a venue to promote social justice. Through IFP, alumni increased their understanding of social justice issues and the necessary skills to address them, which they then attempted to apply upon returning to their home countries and communities to influence social change. The ability of countries and their societies to accept change can help bring into perspective the realistic application of IFP's anticipated outcomes and impacts.

⁹ UNESCO (2012). *World Atlas of Gender Equality in Education*. Paris, France: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. Retrieved from <http://www.uis.unesco.org/Education/Documents/unesco-world-atlas-gender-education-2012.pdf>

¹⁰ BBC (2016). *Indonesia Country Profile*. Retrieved from <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-pacific-14921238>

¹¹ Mirza, Z. (2014). *Exploring “Change Readiness” and IFP Social Impact*. New York, NY: Institute of International Education.

INDIVIDUAL IMPACTS

The IFP model focused primarily on personal and professional advancement, emphasizing self-development of each individual Fellow, with the expectation that building the capacities of social justice leaders from within marginalized communities would lead to broader social change. Impacts at the individual level align with the first two levels of the Kirkpatrick model: 1) “reaction”—the participant’s impression of a program, including their satisfaction with the services and support provided by the program; and 2) “learning”—the acquisition of knowledge, skills, and attitudes as a result of the program.

“We come from various regions, professions, and backgrounds, but what unites us is the common commitment to bring about positive change in our respective communities. The confidence and the resolve to be these change agents have been reinforced by the kind of education that IFP brought to our lives.”

—FILIPINO ALUMNUS

In addition to field-specific knowledge and skills, the following section describes the wide-ranging types of knowledge that IFP alumni gained. They became better informed, more analytical thinkers; they gained confidence in themselves and greater recognition from others; and they developed newfound identities in spite of—or because of—their status as marginalized members of society.

SELF-CONFIDENCE AND PERSONAL IDENTITY

Prior to participating in the program, IFP alumni felt limited and unaware of their potential and the opportunities available to them. For example, some alumni described feeling resistant to change prior to IFP.

“I had ideas, but no idea how to realize them. I lacked self-confidence too. So I was plagued by questions like—Who am I? What do I want to do? In addition, now when I reflect, I think that I was also resistant to change, as I feared failure. I was rigid and judgmental.”

—INDIAN ALUMNA

Many participants recounted how living in cultural contexts outside of their home communities and interacting with people from various backgrounds—including other IFP Fellows—provided them the ability to explore their own beliefs and recognize the importance of listening, dialogue and openness.

“I got exposed not only to new knowledge but also to shared experiences from IFP fellows and new friends from all over the world on the subject matter [gender issues].”

—INDONESIAN ALUMNA

Alumni gained a deeper awareness of their own experiences as members of marginalized communities. In addition to their studies, the exposure to a global range of experiences, contexts, approaches, and ideas broadened alumni understanding of their own circumstances and capacities for change. In the Philippines, an alumna from the Muslim minority spoke of living in a multiethnic and multicultural community while abroad and being exposed to positive, egalitarian attitudes towards diversity. As a result, she felt less insecure about her minority identity and was able to adopt a more nuanced understanding of her identity as a Muslim woman.

Women were particularly vocal about how IFP helped them better understand themselves and feel more comfortable in their own identities. Women in India said IFP transformed them, helping them to discover and value themselves. One Indian alumna described how living in a culture that did not place as much of an emphasis on traditional gender roles was not only liberating, it allowed her to better focus on her work. Self-realization, confidence in their abilities, and pride in their culture has affected how alumni interact and function in all aspects of their lives.

“My journey inward really helped me to understand myself and my [tribal] people better. For the first time, I did not want to look, talk or behave like others. I just wanted me to be me, to know my culture, my roots better.”

—INDIAN ALUMNA

CAPACITY AND COMMITMENT TO SOCIAL JUSTICE WORK

Increased confidence, knowledge, and critical thinking were the most commonly reported changes by all participants. Alumni indicated that IFP increased their knowledge in their area of study and their understanding of social justice within a more global context. According to the 2015 Global Alumni Survey, during their IFP experiences, 94% of survey respondents from India, Indonesia, and the Philippines said they built intercultural skills and 92% reported a strengthened commitment to social justice. Through their studies, they also sharpened their ability to think more critically about their work and socio-political contexts. In fact, 90% of the survey respondents in these countries felt that the IFP fellowship empowered them as social justice leaders to confront issues that they faced in the past.

When initially selected for the program, many alumni said they questioned their abilities to succeed. Some felt unprepared and feared that they lacked the academic base necessary for further education or the ability to adapt or be accepted in their host countries when coming from such “humble backgrounds.” After completing their studies and returning to the workforce, most viewed the knowledge they gained during their fellowship as significantly impacting their work and



Haslaida (fourth from left), with fellow Brandeis University graduates.

HASLAIDA ABUBACAR

Philippines (2010 cohort)

Master's in Sustainable International Development
Brandeis University, U.S.

Affectionately called Lalai by her family, Haslaida spent her formative years in a Muslim-majority community in Mindanao. In high school her family moved to a predominantly Christian community where Lalai had to cope with being exposed to sectarian violence resulting from clashes between the Moro Islamic Liberation Front and the Filipino government. Eventually Lalai adapted to her new community, but her experiences during this period placed her identity as an ethnic Moro and Muslim woman into sharp relief.

Lalai's passion for social justice was ignited by volunteer work with an NGO in Mindanao that promoted peace-building and interfaith dialogue. Since then, she has committed herself to working with youth, a focus she believes is critical for sustainable development. “If we want to change the society, we need to influence and empower our youth,” she says. “We need to mobilize and mentor them to realize their full potential as active citizens and future leaders.” Since completing her fellowship Lalai has worked with Save the Children and Catholic Relief Services on disaster risk management and reduction strategies, and her training programs are being used by local governments.

In addition to helping Lalai advance her development work, the fellowship has helped Lalai achieve financial stability for herself and her family. This greater stability is despite the fact that she turned down a more lucrative job offer from a private company. On a personal level, her time abroad also gave her a deeper appreciation for nuance and diversity because of her exposure to multicultural and multiethnic communities and discourses around equality. This, in turn, has instilled confidence and pride in her identity as a Moro Muslim woman.

“With my higher degree... I became a stronger and bolder person who believes in change but still keep my faith!”



lives since. Alumni reported a broad range of practical skills and knowledge as major catalysts in their work; from basic knowledge of the English language to planning and project management to specific scientific innovations that can be adapted to local contexts.

“The new technologies on fisheries that I learned have boosted my confidence. Professionally, now I know the direction where I am heading.”

—FILIPINO ALUMNUS

Perhaps as important as the boost to their confidence and self-assuredness is the fact that the fellowship triggered or reinforced alumni resolve and commitment to work on social justice issues. IFP continually offered motivation for alumni work in social justice. For some Fellows, the cultivation of this commitment began even before being accepted to the program. For example, an Indian alumna recounted that the IFP application stimulated her thinking about community work. “It asked questions about how one had contributed and impacted society. It was not like typical, drudgerous official forms, and made me stop to think about what I had been doing.”

There were many instances where the exposure alumni had to challenges faced by others globally inspired greater creativity in their work. Prior to IFP, an Indian alumna with a background in industrial design became dissatisfied with the lack of concern for ethical issues (such as the exploitation of crafts people and suppliers) in the design field and home goods market. Since receiving a Master’s degree in rural development, she has been able to combine her training in design with her new training in development and apply it to her current work running a design studio.

From the training and networks he developed during his graduate work in disability studies, an Indian alumnus applied the knowledge and connections he gained to his

current work in assistive technology. The hallmark of his creativity has been his ability to apply what he learned abroad to the Indian context.

“[At my host university] I had learnt about technology and disability. I realized that nothing like that existed in India. I realized the importance of assistive technology and how it could impact people and their lives.”

—INDIAN ALUMNUS

SOCIAL RECOGNITION AND CAREER MOBILITY

The prestige of an advanced higher education degree from well-regarded universities and the name recognition of IFP or the Ford Foundation increased alumni’s standing professionally and within their communities. 93% of survey respondents from the fieldwork countries felt that they had built professional credentials or reputation through the program (2015 Global Alumni Survey). The increased confidence, social recognition, and professional skills led to higher aspirations among alumni, which translated into better employment opportunities, financial independence, security, and upward mobility.

“Earlier my aspiration was limited to owning a bicycle, but now owning a car or flying by air has become a reality.”

—INDIAN ALUMNUS

Alumni reported IFP as propelling their career advancement, with faster increases in incomes and job mobility than they thought they would have had without the program. According to the Global Alumni Survey, 68% of survey respondents in the region reported working in higher-level positions than prior to participating in IFP and 64% said they received salary increases. Alumni described their ability to move quickly to higher profile or broader impact positions. In the Philippines, alumni described IFP as fast-tracking their careers. An Indonesian alumna said IFP helped her transform from a “little star” to a “big star in the sky.”

But the increase in status also came at a cost for some alumni, particularly those who faced high expectations from their families and communities. These high expectations were reportedly an issue for 32% of survey respondents upon their return (2015 Global Alumni Survey). Many described their families’ and community’s pride in them for being the first to receive an advanced higher education degree.



Indian alumnus Jagabandhu Sanda leading a women's empowerment group in Jharkhand.

“People expect more from me in terms of output. I need to be able to live up to their high expectations. It’s a big challenge but I willingly took the challenge!”

—FILIPINO ALUMNUS

A smaller number of Fellows reported being frustrated with or pressured by their ability to advance their careers. Some felt that the time spent away from their jobs while they were studying hindered the pace of their advancement or even translated into a demotion. Others felt the pressures of extremely high expectations in their responsibilities and performance, due to their prestigious degrees. Women were even more affected by this than men, particularly due to the cultural and familial expectations around childrearing.

CHALLENGES TO RE-ENTRY

Re-entry was often challenging and complex for Fellows, and depended on each individual’s areas of work and on the specific context into which they were reintegrating. One way of looking at what alumni were likely to experience upon returning is to consider whether the countries they were returning to were poised for change.¹² The KPMG Change Readiness Index helps understand the context within which the IFP alumni were working to affect social change. For the IFP fieldwork countries, the Philippines ranked the highest on the Index, indicating high resilience to change and ability to capitalize on opportunities arising from change. Indonesia

ranked in the middle, while India received the lowest ranking. It may be hypothesized that alumni could benefit from a country’s receptiveness to change, such as civil society organizations being able to practice freedom of expression and women participating in the labor force, among other factors.

“When you come back, you are further confused, you have acquired new identities, deconstructed some, but then you are confused. Where am I? Who am I? So you kept going back to the IFP for guidance but there was a huge vacuum there. They did not anticipate this need, so they did not plan for it. But the reality is that you come back with greater personal challenges... so we saw the best and the worst of IFP.”

—INDIAN ALUMNA

One concrete example of how receptiveness to change influenced IFP alumni was, as mentioned in the career mobility section above, that family members often increased their expectations of what alumni would contribute to the family income, at times to a degree that alumni felt was unrealistic. For other alumni, a deeper awareness of themselves and the environment in which they lived led to shifts in their personal relationships and feelings of isolation. Financial security was a significant issue for many. Those

¹² Mirza, Z. (2014). *Exploring “Change Readiness” and IFP Social Impact*. New York, NY: Institute of International Education.



Peter speaking at the launch of a school-based vocational training center.

PETER BELLEN JR.

Philippines (2003 cohort)
Master's in Development Studies
Institute of Social Studies, The Netherlands

One of nine children born to farm workers, Peter's humble upbringing is typical of many IFP alumni in the Asia region. Getting to high school from his remote village on the island of Luzon meant traveling by boat for five hours. The impossibility of such a journey led him to join a Catholic seminary just so he could continue his education.

Peter eventually left his path toward the priesthood and began working with out-of-school youth on entrepreneurship training. He was passionate about his work and identified with the communities he served, but because of his IFP experience he learned to look at social problems in more sophisticated and strategic ways. "Now I know there is a structural factor to those situations."

Like many IFP alumni in the Asia region, Peter faced significant re-entry challenges when he returned home. Although he had served as executive director of a community development organization before departing for his fellowship, he was deemed "overqualified" by the organization upon his return. In addition to his professional struggles, Peter felt alienated from his wife and children. "I couldn't locate myself in my own family," he says. "My wife was still her old self so we had different wave-lengths. My children [had grown up] and it was hard for me to pick-up where I left them off."

Peter eventually readapted to life in the Philippines and regained his professional footing through a network of European colleagues he formed while abroad. In addition to his current work managing vocational training programs for out-of-school youth in Mindanao, he leveraged his overseas contacts as well as government partners to build a high school in his home village.

"I felt I changed personally, but [like I had] somehow left my family behind."

who had jobs waiting for them upon their return reported a smoother re-entry than those who did not have that financial and professional security. In some cases, alumni reported accepting jobs with lower salaries than they received prior to IFP because they had such difficulties finding employment.

Many alumni expressed disappointment with the level of support received from IFP around their re-entry process. They had a sense of "reverse culture shock" and did not feel sufficiently prepared or guided through that process both personally and professionally. Alumni discussed wanting to have more emotional support from IFP during their re-entry.

LEADERSHIP CAPACITIES

IFP was designed to catalyze social change within marginalized communities by selecting Fellows who had proven leadership qualities in social justice and had potential for greater impact. They demonstrated their commitment to social justice through their actions and served as role models personally and professionally.

87% of survey respondents from the three countries reported developing leadership skills while participating in IFP (2015 Global Alumni Survey). Alumni applied the skills that they gained to lead the design and implementation of effective actions and in the modeling of socially just behaviors for others. For example, two alumnae working in the nascent field of LGBT rights in Indonesia have been able to continue their focus on LGBT issues and community rights through their advocacy work, as well as through roles as lecturers at local universities. Other alumni have been able to work at higher levels or undertake more sophisticated work because they have developed a variety of different competencies that are important for leadership.

An Indian alumnus noted that he now has a better understanding of "macro" issues and how they relate to the "micro" on-the-ground realities he was intimately familiar with before his fellowship. His ability to "see the link between everyday issues of the common man and its link to policy and policy implications" has helped him assume leadership positions within state government committees that give him the ability to influence high-level policy decisions while keeping a "foot in the community."



Indian alumna Saba Hasnain speaks with community members about their rights in Andhra Pradesh.

As they returned, alumni modeled more socially just behavior within their personal lives and actions to address the injustices around them. This was demonstrated in their career choices, program development, and advocacy, among others.

“I am a village boy from very humble background—acceptance by others always bothered me. But now people call me a mundi, that is, a leader. That has been the change.”

—INDIAN ALUMNUS

EXPERTS AND THOUGHT LEADERS IN ORGANIZATIONS

The gains that alumni achieved at the individual level influenced their actions within their organizations. Their increased understanding of social justice for themselves and their communities informed their work, enabling them to more clearly articulate and focus their efforts in social justice. Members of their organizations appreciated the deeper knowledge acquired by alumni during their IFP studies. Many saw the alumni as thought leaders on social justice and many alumni were eager to step into that role, putting their new learnings into practice.

For example, in Indonesia, alumni were sought after as key resources within their organization due to their technical expertise and strong knowledge of the English language. In one case, an alumna working at a remote university in Indonesia said she built “an international network and become the focal point for the university in cooperation

with international contacts from around the world.”

Another Indonesian alumna recently returned to her home community to lead one of the largest Muslim women’s organizations, and was appointed as the leading advisor on gender to the local government, which included drafting the Local Action Plan, Gender Profile, and gender related policies. In the Philippines, alumni have been invited by management to participate in their organization’s decision-making processes or strategic planning committees.

Alumni acted as role models within their organizations. Their presence in influential positions as women, members of indigenous communities, members of the LGBT community, people with disabilities, or from other disadvantaged groups communicated a powerful message to others from marginalized communities. In their more socially just behaviors and in their quest to advocate for social justice issues, alumni are serving as role models and leading others. In focus groups, some alumni described themselves as “thought leaders” or “change agents,” influencing organizational cultures on issues related to inclusion and rights. Indian alumni shared examples that ranged from raising the issue of separate toilets for women within government offices, to parity in recruitment and pay, to addressing corruption. In the Philippines, alumni spoke of teambuilding and training activities, mentoring students, and informally mentoring and coaching others within their organizations. In Indonesia, some alumni discussed incorporating new pedagogical approaches they learned during their studies that other professors then adopted, such as problem-based learning.

ORGANIZATIONAL IMPACTS

Equipped with new or enhanced skills and experiences—as seen at the individual level of impact by IFP—alumni were able to more effectively and strategically employ those learnings to improve the work of their organizations. The Kirkpatrick model articulates two levels that relate to the organizational and community levels of impact: “application”—use of the knowledge, skills, and attitudes acquired to their home organizations and communities; and “organizational results”—the impacts occurring within an organization or community as a result of the alumnus/a’s behavioral changes.

For IFP alumni, they sought opportunities within their own organizations to alter traditional relationships in cultural contexts. In particular, they addressed social structures, norms and hierarchies that impeded meaningful change, and they contributed to developing more socially just processes and programs that instilled meritocracy, diversity, and inclusion within their organizations.

SOCIAL JUSTICE INITIATIVES, POLICIES, AND PROCESSES

A majority of alumni advanced to higher positions and were motivated to significantly influence change within their organizations. According to the Global Alumni Survey, 68% of survey respondents in India, Indonesia, and the Philippines received a promotion to higher-level positions and 88% believe that they have made improvements in an organization where they work or volunteer as a result of IFP.

Many alumni became division heads, regional directors, university senior administrators, school superintendents, city planners, and more. Alumni leveraged their re-energized and more informed commitment to social justice and increased pride in their own cultures seen at the individual level to strongly influence organizational policies, processes, and programming. Their focus ranged from reviewing organizational processes and policies, addressing overall management systems, diversifying staff, promoting cultural identities, and ensuring gender sensitive practices. Some alumni worked holistically, addressing a range of related processes or policies at once. For example, in Indonesia, one alumna addressed the traditional management processes of the NGO where she worked by revising their program management and financial systems to be more transparent, professional, and inclusive. And in India, an alumnus

working in an IT company spearheaded the development of an organizational environment that is inclusive of people with disabilities through scrutinizing their policies, coaching and sensitizing their staff, and examining their operations and recruitment processes.

“Inclusion of disability is not only in terms of numbers, but the focus has to be on systems and processes.”
—INDIAN ALUMNUS

Other alumni focused specifically on influencing human resources processes, particularly in staff recruitment and merit-based promotion policies. A number described creating more inclusive approaches through local staffing and developing processes that are more horizontal or bottom-up. For example, in India, alumni reported more inclusive recruitment efforts that emphasized reaching people from diverse backgrounds, with a particular focus on women and marginalized communities. Many alumni discussed the importance of having influenced their organizations’ shift to a meritocracy, significantly impacting the ability for those who had been traditionally under-represented to be able to move into leadership positions solely determined by the quality of their work.

CHALLENGES TO THE STATUS QUO

The more complex understanding of their own contexts as members of marginalized communities and their increased pride and confidence described at the individual level, provided alumni with the focus and courage to challenge the traditional definitions and expectations functioning within their organizations. These are deep-seated cultural norms—often with firmly set hierarchical customs, seniority or specifically attributed roles depending on gender, ethnic group, etc.—that presented many challenges as alumni initiated changes to the systems in place.

“[The act of] raising a lot of questions [is] not appreciated and is not seen very kindly [in our culture].”

—INDIAN ALUMNUS

“Bringing gender in policies and the informal culture of the organization was not there... so one had to, in a sense, begin afresh which was not easy.”

—INDIAN ALUMNUS

Some were able to influence their organizations’ overall approach by addressing power dynamics and inclusive dialogue at a range of levels. For example, one alumnus shifted his approach to academic research from being driven by the academic’s curiosity and written for other academics, to research defined by farmers’ and researchers’ common areas of focus that are relevant for a range of stakeholders.

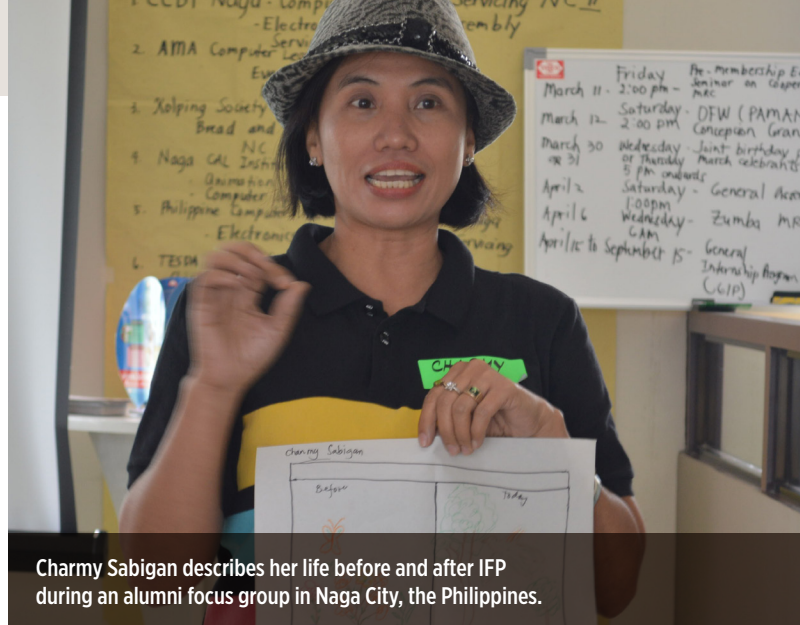
“We always assume that we [academics] were right and the most knowledgeable stakeholder... After coming back from [IFP studies]... now I have new views of the reality on the ground. Now I have a stronger dream to bridge science to policy and communities (farmers).”

—FILIPINO ALUMNUS

An Indonesian alumnus helped to shift his organization’s approach from a charitable to a capacity building model, one that empowers those in need and provides more lasting results.

“[It was not helpful] to simply give cash to the poor, once they had no money they start to ask again. We needed a new approach that empowers the local community so their capacity is strengthened to stand on their own.”

—INDONESIAN ALUMNUS



“Before [the alumnus]... the foundation did not focus on community development work; it instead focused on charity by giving donations, clothes and other food.”

—SUPERVISOR OF INDONESIAN ALUMNUS

Challenging the status quo was particularly significant for women, who had the added complexity of confronting cultural traditions for women’s roles in the work place and extensive family responsibilities. One example of this was a program designed by an Indian alumna who supported the development of women producers to be able to run their own businesses and contribute to family finances.

“Earlier we [women] would do farming work, which was tough. Now we can work from home, earn our own money and we don’t have to ask our husbands for money... Our children are going to school.”

—INDIAN COMMUNITY LEADER

SOCIAL JUSTICE FOCUS IN ORGANIZATIONAL PROGRAMS

A deeper understanding of social justice issues gained during their studies bolstered the alumni to analyze community needs within a more holistic context. They felt that IFP helped them to grasp the underlying concepts more clearly and therefore identify the communities’ needs within the intricacy and interconnectedness of social justice issues. More specifically, alumni reported employing more inclusive and empowering approaches to program design and implementation, increasing their relevance and effectiveness. For others, a focus on social justice issues entailed efforts to raise awareness within communities about their rights.

“[Programs on] livelihood promotion could not be successful without considerations of gender and culture.”

—INDIAN ALUMNUS

For those working in community development, their connection and alignment with global discussions on social justice issues augmented their impact on their organizations’ programs. In fact, alumni found that this new understanding led them to question not only their work, but also the fundamental definition of development and its effects on marginalized communities, considering power dynamics and inclusive decision-making. For example, one Indian alumna studied a government program intended to provide core infrastructure through sustainable and inclusive development. Her research discovered that the program’s plans would uproot tribal communities from their land, hurting those in most need of these improvements (e.g., those living in slums), influencing the program’s design.

NEW AND INNOVATIVE ORGANIZATIONAL APPROACHES

Alumni were also inspired by their exposure and experiences to address underlying causes through new, innovative approaches, while taking into consideration the interrelated nature of these issues. Many alumni described employing more participatory approaches or methods that supported the empowerment of others. For example, an Indian alumna explained the importance of representation of marginalized groups.

“Our emphasis in our community work has been service with rights. Of course, services for people with disability is important, but with rights including the right to be represented.”

—INDIAN ALUMNUS

In some cases, alumni incorporated capacity building components across stakeholders to have a broader, more sustained impact. Many provided capacity building in particular expertise, such as entrepreneurship, education for girls, business practices, and advocacy. A few incorporated capacity building into ongoing project implementation. For example, in the Philippines, when preparing a comprehensive development plan for her provincial government, one alumna introduced a “bottom-up, participatory approach,” reaching beyond those usually involved to also include those from less forthcoming groups. She enhanced the impact of her work by building the capacity of key leaders and stakeholders in these participatory planning processes.

In addition to directly influencing programming, some alumni also focused on building institutional capacity, through mentoring and training others within their organizations on social justice issues. A few alumni developed tools that could be utilized by others. This expanded the impact of their work and facilitated its continued implementation. A strong example of this was the development of the Gender Dialogue Tool by an alumna from India for her organization. This tool was designed to facilitate community and partner discussions on gender, caste and class. A colleague described an Indonesian alumna

as regularly employing a capacity building approach

when meeting, identifying shared understanding of the issues and potential solutions. The colleague noted that staff was continuously learning, equipped with new knowledge or skills to help them address their field work.



Philippines lead researcher Creselda Doble (seated, second from bottom left) with IFP alumni focus group participants in Cagayan de Oro City.

ORGANIZATIONAL STATUS AND ENGAGED POLICYMAKING

Stakeholders reported that their organization's social capital increased as a result of their connection to IFP. Alumni are increasing their organizations' visibility through publications, presentations, and participation in external opportunities. Some alumni have contributed to the quality of their organization's work and increased recognition through their expertise and global connections. For example, in a remote university in Indonesia, one alumna reported organizing regular guest lectures from Australia. She says this came about because IFP provided access and capacity to be able to publish her work internationally, which in turn led to collaborations with international colleagues and then the development of a regular program for academics from Australia to be guest lecturers at her university.

Other alumni increased their organization's status and influence to more effectively advocate for policy changes. For instance, a mentor and close associate of an Indian alumnus described how the skills the alumnus learned as a result of his fellowship helped influence policy makers. He noted that since completing his fellowship the alumnus has more clearly articulated how community-level public health issues can be addressed through policy, which has contributed to the organization's ability to engage more effectively with key stakeholders.

“[The alumnus] not only has enthusiasm but clarity and the ability to converse with ministers, political representatives, bureaucrats etc... His academic grounding has helped him to prepare background papers, dossiers with analysis, data... this helps [our organization] when we go to the government for a dialogue.” —IFP MENTOR



Irshadul in his office, where he manages his online Hindi news site.

IRSHADUL HAQUE

India (2005 cohort)
Master's in International Journalism
City University, London, UK

Born to a lower-caste, Muslim family in the state of Bihar, Irshadul embarked on a journalism career only to encounter caste-based discrimination while working for a leading national Hindi newspaper. Selected for IFP on his second attempt, he was impressed by the program staff's supportive, high-touch approach. “They were like family,” he says.

Although Irshadul had worked in print journalism before IFP, during his time in London he focused on digital journalism, learning how leading papers like the Guardian had shifted from print to online news and working with the BBC Hindi and Urdu online news services. As of 2004, he didn't even have an email address, but because of the training and experience he gained during his fellowship, in 2012 he launched www.naukarshahi.com, an online Hindi news site with a current daily readership of about 12,000.

Naukarshahi.com focuses on social justice issues not covered by mainstream media, such as violence against Dalits, who occupy the bottom of India's caste system. Irshadul also saw that he was uniquely positioned to contribute something new by launching the site in his native Bihar as opposed to say, Delhi. “I could have worked anywhere. But I was determined to start something on my own and influence public opinion. I wanted to give back.”

These sentiments also demonstrate how, for Irshadul and for many alumni, the IFP inspired and reinforced their resolve to promote social change. A longtime collaborator of Irshadul's who works at another Bihar-based Hindi newspaper noted the shift in his focus after the IFP fellowship. “There has been a change in perspective,” his colleague says. “He highlights the voices of marginalized in his website.”

“If you do good work, people are willing to support you to highlight the voices of the marginalized.”

COMMUNITY IMPACTS

The IFP program intended to inspire leaders in social change from marginalized communities to be agents of change within their communities and their countries. Each Fellow was supported in their individual pathway toward change and as a group they had a strong collective impact across disciplines, communities, regions, and society.

“The impact for social change at the family level is not about the fact that women can get higher education—but rather the fact that women... can have voices,” said an Indian alumna. She brought changes to her family and neighbors by practicing that women and men (girls and boys) eat at the same time, showing how seemingly small changes can affect community change.”

—IFP INDIA FINAL REPORT

Fellows remained connected and committed to addressing social issues within their home or other marginalized communities, whether working directly with them through their jobs, or supporting them outside of their professional responsibilities. Alumni applied their learnings at the individual level and implemented projects at the organizational level to impact changes across the community. These changes came about through consistent and deliberate actions by alumni to ensure diverse and inclusive approaches or structures. These occurred in a myriad of ways, such as directly engaging community members in the design and implementation of social programs, or encouraging more socially conscious behavior within their family and workplace, such as serving as role models for others.

COMMITMENT TO MARGINALIZED COMMUNITIES

Although IFP did not formally require alumni to return to their home countries or communities, or work in the social justice arena, the program’s written and verbal communications clearly stated the hope and expectation that Fellows would continue to promote social justice and serve marginalized communities. Qualitative data show the program was highly effective in appealing to alumni’s sense of responsibility and commitment to social justice, as well as to their home communities.

“[I wanted] to stay connected and give back in some measure what I had got in abundance from the fellowship.”

—INDIAN ALUMNUS

Greater understanding of their home country contexts as members of marginalized communities deepened alumni connections to their communities and their commitment to trying to improve social issues. For example, an Indonesian alumna helped design and implement a significant social policy intervention in her home city that required support to all students with special needs, including the establishment

of community based rehabilitation centers, strengthening schools with inclusive education, and a campaign on the rights of children with disabilities.

“...I owe it to IFP to honor my promise that I will return to my home country and use my leanings for its development. The IFP contract is very lax but what struck me was the part of the contract, after all the stipulations of its generous benefits that say, ‘We hope you will honor this contract.’ This humbled me and thought that I couldn’t break a contract as gentle and benevolent as that.”

—FILIPINO ALUMNUS

A number of Indian alumni stated that they felt the need to go back and work with “their own people and own community.” In fact, many Indian alumni participating in the qualitative research have assumed a mentoring role with youth from their home communities and younger peers within their organizations. One Indian alumnus created a website that significantly enhanced his audience’s knowledge and understanding of issues through highlighting the voices of marginalized people.

“With the fellowship, there has been a change in perspective, a broadening of [the alumnus’] horizon... there is a good perception of the website, which covers issues not covered by newspapers. The presentation of news is with objectivity and balanced reporting from both sides.” —STAFF MEMBER OF A LEADING NEWS AGENCY

There were some cases where alumni were not employed in positions that focused on social justice. Most of these alumni did report continuing to support their home communities through financial contributions to social programs or volunteering their time to address local needs. For example, a Filipino alumnus who manages his own consultancy firm provides academic scholarships to underserved students and pro bono business support to farmers’ cooperatives. In India, helped where alumni felt these financial or volunteer contributions helps to ground them in their communities. However, this seemed to be most evident in Indonesia, where a number of alumni reported donating time and money to support students, providing free translation services, among others.

“I feel that I have been given scholarship for higher education, so now is the time to freely share the skills; give back to the people.”

—INDONESIAN ALUMNUS

NEW INITIATIVES TO ADDRESS COMMUNITY NEEDS

Upon returning to their home countries, alumni employed the skills they gained to analyze their local context and identify needs of marginalized groups that were not being addressed. In a number of cases, alumni created their own organizations or structures to fill those needs, setting up associations, networks, blogs, and informal programs to support community development.

For instance, some alumni in India identified a particular gap in addressing the needs of people with disabilities. Inspired by what they learned through IFP, a few alumni created organizations that specifically addressed those needs. For example, one Indian alumnus established a fully functioning department on assistive technology



Khanis speaking at a workshop on LGBT rights.

KHANIS SUVIANITA

Indonesia (2009 cohort)
Master’s in Women, Gender and Development
Institute of Social Studies, The Netherlands

Although raised in a middle class family, Khanis had to cope with marginalization in her youth as a member of Indonesia’s Chinese minority and an early supporter of LGBT rights. She learned to defend herself against bullies at a young age, and later harnessed this fighting spirit as a human rights activist and counselor in East Java. In 1998, following President Suharto’s resignation, Indonesia experienced widespread political and economic crisis, including sexual violence against Chinese women. Khanis used her undergraduate training in psychology to counsel survivors.

Khanis continues to tackle challenging, complex topics in her wide-ranging community work. In addition to lecturing at the University of Surabaya, where she completed her undergraduate degree, she occupies a full-time advisory role at GAYa NUSANTARA, a leading LGBT rights organization in Indonesia, where she directs training, fundraising, and advocacy initiatives. She has also engaged in community organizing and capacity-building with other LGBT organizations. These efforts are not easy in conservative, Muslim-majority Indonesia, where the field of LGBT rights is so small that international donors avoid supporting LGBT issues because of the political hazards. “Even to talk about sexuality in a public setting is not easy,” says Khanis.

Working on LGBT issues in Indonesia not only requires dedication, it requires creating alliances with other communities and understanding the ways in which being LGBT is inextricably linked with other types of disadvantage and marginalization. Khanis’ training during her fellowship has given her a theoretical framework for understanding marginalization, and has helped her to think more critically about the complex issues facing the communities she serves.

“As a Chinese descendant I faced lot of discrimination and violence. These experiences [helped] me to be sensitive to minority issues and [eager] to understand [those issues better].”



Participants of a community focus group in Maros District, South Sulawesi, Indonesia.

in a commercial hospital, emphasizing the development of low-cost technologies, aids and appliances. The alumnus claimed and associates confirmed, “The department redefines what people living with disability can do by making them independent, functional and mobile. But in more ways than one, it helps empower people.”

Many participated in founding organizations to implement programs that support and enrich their home communities. Whether the contributions had a larger or smaller impact, together they represent the collective impact of IFP on these communities.

“You have to treat the people who are working with you as your partner... We are not in the business of charity but inclusive business where there is an equal focus on skill building as well as collectivization... I came back to the community that I grew up in and I have a strong belief in restoration, restoration of local art, craft, heritage and pride in one’s own roots.”

—INDIAN ALUMNA

In the Indian states where there are a high percentage of indigenous communities, there is a strong emphasis on promoting and preserving local culture and tradition. Some alumni from India continued working in their remote home communities to support this effort. For example, one alumna runs a business that trains and employs local artisans creating local crafts using environmentally friendly techniques and products.

Alumni in the Philippines created organizations that supported social justice through organizations or programs that improve conditions for migrant workers, fishing villages, and employing environmentally sustainable practices. For instance, an alumnus created a center providing social services to migrant workers.

“If not for [this IFP alumnus], we, the migrant families are still at a loss and are still on the blind spot! Now we know our rights; we know who to run to for help; we know how to defend ourselves; and most of all, we are capable of helping ourselves!”

—FILIPINO COMMUNITY MEMBER

INSPIRATION FROM HOME COMMUNITIES TO BROADEN IMPACT

Many alumni worked outside of their home communities for a variety of reasons: sometimes no appropriate work was available in their home communities, and they had to go where the jobs were. Other times they wanted to explore growth opportunities only available to them in larger urban centers. Regardless of the reason, most of these alumni continued to work on issues of social justice in positions outside of their home communities. Although these alumni may not have been working directly in their home communities, they were inspired by them and stayed connected to their issues, such as agriculture, disability, gender, and indigenous rights.

It was these types of questions that inspired many alumni in India from farming backgrounds to continue to work on agriculture through their engagement as government officials or as development practitioners. In the Philippines, a lawyer initiated “values formation” sessions for inmates to prepare them for reintegration into their lives after being released from prison. In Indonesia, alumni described being inspired by their work in their home communities to others in their area or region. In one case, an Indonesian alumnus returned to his home community and started a non-governmental organization (NGO) to support farmers, after spending a number of years working internationally with the United Nations.

“Even while I have been working, I have been thinking, what is it that I am doing for my own community? I come from a farming community, so I had this niggling question all the time: ‘What am I doing for the community that I come from, the community that I left behind?’

—INDIAN ALUMNA



Indonesia head researcher Jonatan Lassa leads an IFP alumni focus group in Jakarta.

SOCIETAL IMPACTS

It is challenging to assess the impact of one individual or a group of individuals on change at the societal level. In fact, IIE expanded the traditional Kirkpatrick model to include societal impact to capture alumni influences on societal change at the regional, state or national levels. Many alumni contributed to broader societal issues through policy-making, governance, and thought leadership. As a group, they have affected change from different angles and levels. Networks have served as support, inspiration and a tool for increasing collaboration and reach.

SOCIALLY JUST PRACTICES

The most prominent way that alumni improved social justice issues at the societal level was through designing, implementing and modeling structures and processes that influenced large-scale systems. Some alumni helped to create regional or national programs, procedures or policies. Others developed training programs conducted across their country. Many employed practices or created systems that served as models for others, expanding their influence beyond a particular community.

In their higher-level positions within the government, international organizations, and universities, among others, alumni are influencing strategic planning and program design to incorporate ways to address and improve social justice across the country. For example, one alumnus working within a United Nations Regional Center was able to promote social inclusion in the education system across Pacific and Asian countries. An alumna in India heads a division within an IT company that pioneers the policies and practices expanding the number and improving support for people with disabilities in its staff, which are now inspiring other companies to improve their practices.

Other alumni actively design and implement training programs that impact social justice at a societal level. In the Philippines, an alumna working in an international NGO developed three manuals that help to prepare communities in Disaster Risk Reduction Management (DRRM), as well as institutionalize a capacity building program for youth on DRRM across her region. In Indonesia, one alumna was involved in producing a policy manual on how to ensure justice and judicial certainty within the Indonesian judicial system.



Angela Grace Toledo-Bruno speaking during an alumni focus group in Cagayan de Oro City, the Philippines.

Alumni also impacted society through their academic research within the university setting. In India, alumni revived their sense of pride in traditional knowledge and culture, putting into question traditional development paradigms and definitions of inclusion and poverty in tribal communities by conducting research that provided evidence to question policies and programs. For instance, one alumna contributed to identifying and documenting the diverse languages, oral histories and literature in Kashmir, helping to build pride in the youth of their language and culture. In the Philippines, three alumni were the main researchers for a study that produced rice varieties resistant to climate change.

“It was quite stressful during the first two years after returning to the office in West Timor. I had to face great expectation from many colleagues... Unfortunately, such expectation couldn’t be materialized, because literally there was no opportunity given to me to contribute. I did not know what to do in the office but to wait for orders from the line supervisors.”

—INDONESIAN ALUMNUS



India lead researcher Renuka Motihar (sixth from left) and assistant researcher Aprajita Mukherjee (fourth from left) with IFP alumni focus group participants in Dehradun, Uttarakhand state.

NATIONAL POLICIES TO IMPROVE GOVERNMENTAL COLLABORATION

Many alumni worked with or within their government to incorporate more socially just practices and policies. Affecting change within the government enabled alumni to improve lives across the larger society. Some pointed to the skills they gained during IFP to analyze and relate the micro and macro levels as critical for their ability to effectively impact change within the government. Others noted that working through government bureaucracies to incorporate more socially just practices and policies was complex and at times would be blocked.

In one case, when a change in the Indonesian government occurred, the alumnus was ready to take advantage of the opportunity and collaborated on drafting a Five Year Planning Document for the whole district, including a new health care plan.

In India, alumni mentioned that working with the government is key to their ability to have an impact on the larger society. Many felt that their understanding of the village level and the broader political context – in part attributed to their learnings during IFP—helped them to more effectively engage with the government.

“I now have the language and skills to know how and what to present to the government.”

—INDIAN ALUMNUS

“The government... appreciates my role publicly in meetings because of the global best practices that I bring forth to the notice of the government. This is because of my training in IFP where we were always encouraged to read and read extensively on what exists, what is working, what is not working. You see the government ...works on a scale, so it needs that information where things have been tested and have worked. They appreciate this information because they need it but they need it in a format and language that they will understand.”

—INDIAN ALUMNUS

For other alumni in India, working with the government has not been as rewarding. Those working on environmental or corruption issues reported struggling, as these issues were not a priority for the government.



Bahrul speaks to community members in Klaten, Central Java, Indonesia.

BAHRUL FUAD

Indonesia (2003 cohort)
Master's in Humanitarian Assistance
University of Groningen, The Netherlands

Bahrul, known as Cak Fu, has emerged as a leading expert on disability in Indonesia. Although he has now worked in the disability field for 20 years and is pursuing his PhD at the University of Indonesia, as an undergraduate he had to change his major simply because of inaccessible buildings. Cak Fu uses a wheelchair, but the building that housed his classes lacked an elevator. As a result, he had to climb to the third floor to attend his engineering lectures. Eventually he was forced to change his major to psychology, which held classes on the first floor.

Cak Fu is now regarded as a public intellectual, providing interviews to television and radio shows and writing opinion pieces on disability policy for leading newspapers such as the Jawa Post and Kompas. He has worked with several Indonesian universities as a researcher and program manager, and has consulted for nonprofit organizations. Cak Fu has also contributed to the development of disability guidelines at the national level and has served as a disability inclusion consultant for government institutions in Indonesia.

In addition to his involvement in high-level discourse and policy-making, Cak Fu has maintained a focus on grassroots work, especially because changes at the policy level do not necessarily lead to meaningful changes at the local level. Many with disabilities in Indonesia wind up as beggars or exploited in local factories. To counter this, Cak Fu has helped implement economic cooperatives and micro finance programs so that people with disabilities can run small business. His efforts have helped to empower dozens of Indonesians with disabilities in the same way he believes higher education has empowered him.

“Since returning home, people listen to me more when I speak. People give me respect. Most people with disabilities do not have an education, and often receive a marginalized status.”

IMPROVED COMMUNICATIONS, ADVOCACY AND PUBLIC DIALOGUE

Alumni sought to share their deepened understanding of social justice to engage the public in thoughtful dialogue and encourage actions to address critical issues. Alumni wrote articles or blogs, convened conferences, produced theater, and one wrote a novel, all incorporating and questioning social justice issues faced by their communities.

Similar to their work with the governments, some alumni also explained that their dual understanding of both the micro and macro levels improved their ability to be more effective, attributing their experiences with IFP to improving the necessary understanding of theoretical frameworks. For example, an alumna in Indonesia explained that her more comprehensive understanding of the complexity of LGBT issues has improved her ability to communicate these concepts to other activists. She believes that her understanding of both the social phenomena and the community's perspectives enabled her to more effectively avoid resistance from the public and support LGBT issues within the community, such as sexual harassment and displacement.

Websites and Blogs

A senior government official described the ways in which an Indian alumnus' website is not only challenging the status quo; he is doing it in a way that is more likely to be convincing. “The website offers in-depth analysis and a different point of view and perspective,” the official said, noting that during the 2015 state government elections, the website featured articles that diverged from other election coverage and provided detailed analysis of caste-based alliances. “If you write with proof, evidence, there is no problem. People will accept what you write.” He noted that the site is popular with the bureaucrats.

Some alumni have shared their thinking about social justice and their work through articles, blogs and other written documents, demonstrating their commitment to social justice and, at times, putting their work and lives in danger. Alumni also write communications influencing public opinions on issues as varied as education and the environment. Although blogging about social justice occurred across all three countries, alumni in India were especially active in this area. For

example, one Indian alumnus who is a journalist launched a Hindi language website in the state of Bihar that provides well-researched and analyzed pieces on political and social issues, with an inclusive and sharp analytical perspective that brings the voices of the marginalized into the media. The website was based on his learning about new media through his IFP studies and is impacting the type of news produced in the Hindi heartland.

Civic Engagement

Alumni also promoted social justice by engaging and motivating large populations through activities and movement building. In Indonesia, an alumnus promoted his ideas about social change through political voting, encouraging people to vote for high quality candidates rather than the candidates offering the most cash. This understanding of political communications that he learned during his IFP studies was necessary to his developing this concept and its success.

The Arts

Other alumni communicated their messages through films, theater and novels. Addressing the needs of under-represented groups, alumni integrated scientific research and clear documentation into a range of art forms to broaden understanding about their contexts. These alumni felt that performing or presenting their plays, puppet shows, or films across communities increased accessibility and activism on universal social justice issues such as inclusion, tribal culture and identity, and human rights. This evidence, in combination with the broader, arts-based representation, informed and grounded dialogue, processes and policies focused on meaningfully improving the lives of those living in marginalized communities.

“Every action is political.” —INDIAN ALUMNUS

IFP ALUMNI NETWORKS

In addition to the global IFP network, formal and informal alumni networks in each country provided support and ways for alumni to stay engaged and collaborate with one another. IFP encouraged these networks and provided some funding for alumni organizations in each country, although many of these ceased to exist after the end of the program. In Indonesia and the Philippines, the alumni associations were strong, with alumni regularly collaborating and sharing ideas. According



Indonesian and Vietnamese alumni at an IFP gathering of Asian alumni in Khon Khen, Thailand.

to the 2015 Global Alumni Survey, 45% of Indonesian survey respondents interact with each other through their national alumni association, compared with 34% in the Philippines and 27% in India. Qualitative data suggested that the relatively low amount of interaction in India might have been due to a lack of consensus about the direction of the network.

Alumni, particularly in Indonesia and the Philippines, felt well supported by their fellow IFP alumni, although alumni would have liked more support during re-entry. The alumni associations served as a place to motivate, strengthen, and stimulate alumni work. In Indonesia, the alumni described the IFP network as catalyzing the social justice movement within the country.

In some cases, alumni developed more specific collaborations on particular projects. For example, an IFP Partner reported six Filipino alumni at the University of San Augustin who identified a need and collaboratively contributed to the enrichment and improvement of curricula in the Arts.

OTHER NETWORKS AND COLLABORATIONS

Alumni expanded their networks and connections beyond IFP, utilizing their national and international linkages to enhance their capacities, leverage partnerships, mobilize

funds and resources, and engage stakeholders around social issues. Alumni reached out to international tribal networks, national networks on disability issues, academic networks, scientific networks and academic networks. For example, an alumnus working on Islamic studies in Indonesia is connected with the global network of Islamic Studies in the UK and others, which led to his interest in promoting peaceful religion.

IMPACTS ON WOMEN

Emerging from the qualitative exploration of the impacts of IFP, one crosscutting theme was mentioned repeatedly in the data: that women's experiences post-IFP were more layered and nuanced. This theme was reinforced throughout the Fellows' interactions with the program. Alumni, like all individuals, are multifaceted combinations of many identities, often with an intersectionality of various marginalized identities. Based on the 2015 Global Alumni Survey, 83% of respondents from India, Indonesia, and the Philippines said that they still face more than one social injustice today to some degree.

During the fieldwork, many female alumni reported IFP as critical to their growth, particularly in India where there was, by chance, an all-female focus group. Studying in other cultures was liberating for women because they felt they were judged for themselves and their abilities rather than because of their gender.

“In England, I saw a completely different life... when you can live freely without thinking about being a woman all the time, your performance exceeds. This is what happened with me.”

—INDIAN ALUMNA

Many women from India recounted their IFP experiences as journeys of self-discovery. One Indian alumna summarized women's trajectories by drawing during the focus group:

“Education -> empowerment -> dignity”

—INDIAN ALUMNA

Women notably described a sense of having “arrived.” They felt that their time as students during the program provided them with the distance and space to reflect on themselves, their self-worth and how they wanted to live their lives moving forward. As an Indian alumna noted,

“During the course, I just forgot about my family, it was just time for myself- time to think, time to reflect, time to learn and unlearn. I found myself.”

—INDIAN ALUMNA

Some of the female alumni expressed their sense of increased respect and shifting roles in decision-making.

“I feel powerful now. I feel I can take decisions now... people tell me previously [I] just listened; now [I] question and challenge. This is also at the personal front. My husband says [I am] always questioning. I challenge gender stereotypes.”

—INDIAN ALUMNA

Similar to a stronger commitment to their communities or the cultural identities, female alumni felt their personal and IFP experiences further strengthened their commitment to work on gender issues, as academics, managers, and advisors.

Female alumni faced familial pressure upon their return. More often than not it was women who experienced challenges in changing relationship dynamics because of their return to families and communities that traditionally did not accept women as leaders, working outside the home, or being professionally more successful than men. In the Philippines, there were reports of marriages that were strained or dissolved after their return as women renegotiated their roles in a marriage.



Indonesian alumnus Abdul Hakim (center) meets with the facilitator of a rural development program in Maros District, South Sulawesi.

“You might be the most accomplished professional woman and working on empowerment, but it is very challenging to overcome these [cultural] expectations.”

—INDIAN ALUMNA

“Local government initiatives often were reduced to gender segregated data. So we have to challenge this approach, to move beyond numbers. We promote the idea to move beyond traditional gender development indicators and economic empowerment—to allow the local governments to talk about gender relations at the household level; [to also include] promoting public participation and accessing decision making.”

—INDONESIAN ALUMNA

On the other hand, one male alumnus from India described how his exposure to living in a more gender-equal culture inspired him to adjust his relationship with his wife, who is now studying overseas herself. He said IFP “allowed him to transcend cultural boundaries.”

Female Indian alumni also repeatedly mentioned the challenges of motherhood and, particularly, expectations of childcare. Many women in India reported that they felt they had to take a career break after motherhood to care for their children. This was not an easy decision for them. Given their expanded vision and opportunities for their careers, some felt restricted by cultural or familial expectations.

“I took a two year break to take care of my child... it was not easy because you have your own personal aspirations and ambitions... However the most difficult part is re-entry. It was difficult for me to justify the break professionally and I had no other option but to agree to join an organization at a lower position and profile... it was not easy at all.”

—INDIAN ALUMNA



Hiranmayee (center) with colleagues from the Women's Studies Center.

HIRANMAYEE MISHRA

India (2007 cohort)
Ph.D. in Women's Studies
University of York, UK

Although raised in a relatively affluent family in the eastern state of Odisha, Hiranmayee became keenly aware of India's rigid gender norms when she married outside her caste and was shunned by her family. She has continued to defy traditional gender roles since then, adopting a daughter and committing herself to promoting women's rights.

After her fellowship, Hiranmayee returned to teach at the U.N. Autonomous College in Odisha, where she has helped to spearhead a number of initiatives. In addition to serving as the Director of the Women's Studies Center, she helped set up an anti-sexual harassment committee as well as a zero-tolerance policy towards violence against women.

Hiranmayee also dedicates herself to mentoring youth. The majority of the college's 5,000 students hail from rural areas, and Hiranmayee is determined to expose them to possibilities beyond the confines of their gender, class, and caste. Her own life serves as an example, but she also tries to broaden their awareness through self-defense workshops, lectures, and off-campus field trips.

“The girls are shy, have limited mobility, and do not have enough exposure,” she says. “We talk to girls [at the Center] about their rights and dignity.” Hiranmayee also serves as a resource to male students, recognizing that meaningful progress on women's issues cannot be made without men. “Many boys across departments and other subjects come to me with their questions and curiosities. They see a friend in me.”

Ultimately, Hiranmayee says she is “in the business of changing mindsets,” and her work exemplifies the ways in which IFP alumni are uniquely positioned to guide and influence young people, particularly those from marginalized communities.

“Gender is everywhere. We live in a society where the lines are very firmly drawn...but [through] my work at the center [...] I want to say that these lines can be redrawn.”

HIGHER EDUCATION AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

IFP was a catalyst for the inclusion of under-represented groups to be able to speak for themselves and influence decision-making. Higher education seemed unattainable, unimaginable for many alumni coming from underprivileged communities. The mere fact that members of these communities now have advanced higher education degrees and are working in positions of power and influence is directly affecting social justice by aiding in leveling the playing field. IFP's reinforcement of social justice issues throughout the Fellows' participation in the program also helped alumni to develop a strong connection between their studies and the social justice work to which they had been committed prior to the program.

"I grew up in a not so peaceful community where higher education is for rich people only. The opportunity to pursue graduate studies [...] is a validation or expression that social justice can be achieved in many different ways." —FILIPINA ALUMNA

HIGHER EDUCATION AS AN ACT OF SOCIAL JUSTICE

IFP's unique mission to specifically focus on providing graduate-level study in international universities for people working in social justice from marginalized or under-represented communities is unlike any other. In India, alumni observed that the mere act of building a collective mass of people from marginalized communities with higher education degrees and commitment to social justice is—in and of itself—addressing social justice issues. In the Philippines, alumni explained that poverty is an injustice and the key to alleviating poverty in marginalized communities is through education. They also believed that this strategy to alleviate poverty would only work with a program similar to IFP that empowers people from disadvantaged backgrounds and raises Fellows' understanding of the social dimensions and promoting social inclusion and social justice. As one Filipino alumnus said, "Armed with our advanced degrees, we are now able to create holistic impact in our respective communities which is the key in addressing social justice issues through an interdisciplinary approach!" Indonesian alumni strongly stated that the key to linking higher education with social justice is the systematic exposure to social justice concepts designed and delivered by the scholarship program.

Local researchers and alumni said they were unaware of any scholarship programs for higher education overseas that focused on participants from under-privileged background or with a social justice element. In addition, they reported that IFP's selection process was unique in its focus on women and lack of an upper age limit. The alumni themselves confirm that if it had not been for IFP, they never would have had the opportunity for higher education studies overseas. One Indian alumna called IFP a "model of affirmative action."

"I have not seen a fellowship that was so well-designed for such a specific purpose... The IFP was not seen as a career advancement fellowship but as a social advancement fellowship."

—INDIAN IFP MENTOR

The outreach for candidates and selection processes were extensive. IFP Partners in each country conducted numerous meetings, traveling to remote areas to promote the program. Finding candidates that were the right fit was challenging. "It was like trying to find a needle in a hay stack," noted a former IFP staff member. "We were looking for academic

excellence or potential with a social justice element... We tried to go where no scholarship had gone before.” After selection, the program implicitly trusted candidates and believed in their potential. Program staff allowed Fellows their independence, trusting that they would abide by their commitment to social justice and “give back” to their communities and countries.

“You can’t pour commitment into someone. The rest you can work on, but that [commitment] is something that is critical.” —INDIAN STAKEHOLDER

Once Fellows were selected, the program was also unique in providing generous financial and preparatory support prior to departure for studying and living in another country. They also provided preparation in the English language, computer skills, and academic readiness. In addition, IFP facilitated acceptance of the Fellows into advanced degree programs in high quality universities.

HIGHER EDUCATION TO STRENGTHEN UNDER-REPRESENTED VOICES

With their advanced degree experiences and the focused IFP support on commitment to social justice, alumni became emboldened leaders in addressing social justice issues. Receiving advanced higher education degrees from prestigious universities garnered respect, increasing the impact of the alumni’s words and actions on others. Having alumni from the under-represented groups strongly represent their interests in various disciplines, levels and formats, provided a more complex impact on the social injustices they face. Some described higher education as an equalizer, providing access to knowledge and resources readily available to more privileged and critical for shaping and driving actions. In the Philippines, alumni also saw access to higher education as directly linked to the sustainability of their efforts.



India lead researcher Renuka Motihar and Indonesia lead researcher Jonatan Lassa brainstorm during a training workshop for all three research teams in the region.

INCREASED KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS, AND LEADERSHIP CAPACITIES

The graduate training alumni received provided them with critical thinking skills; inspiration to be creative and innovative; and confidence necessary to question and challenge others. Their degree programs also facilitated global exposure and helped them build their leadership capacities. Feeling more equipped with a sharpened understanding of social inequalities and prepared to engage with power structures, alumni designed and implemented their work more effectively. Thus, their graduate-level training led them to more clearly and effectively take actions addressing social justice at all levels of their lives and work.

STUDY REFLECTIONS AND LEARNINGS

The IFP Alumni Tracking Study integrates quantitative and qualitative methods to measure the potential for higher education scholarship programs to promote social change. Findings from IIE's qualitative fieldwork in the Asian region help contextualize the IFP program design in three countries—India, Indonesia, and the Philippines—as well as the program's expected outcomes and impacts on its alumni. The findings of this report are helpful to policymakers and practitioners intending to implement a scholarship and social justice program on a global scale, while recognizing the realities of program administration in the local context.

As IIE approaches the halfway point of the 10-year longitudinal study, our experiences from local fieldwork contribute to the many lessons we are learning in conducting a mixed-methods study of this size and scope. The opportunities and challenges of this endeavor enable us to reflect on our program design and share key insights about this type of research that can inform the larger field of program evaluation and impact assessment.

WHAT ARE WE LEARNING ABOUT CONDUCTING LONGITUDINAL STUDIES?

1. Employing a mixed methods approach provides a critical combination of breadth and depth of understanding. However, it is important to remember that the experiences from three case study countries do not represent the experiences for all countries, whether in the Asian region or globally. The findings of the qualitative research contribute to a contextual, local analysis that should be framed within the program contexts and expected outcomes and impacts.
2. Local researchers in each of the three countries provided an analytical lens that was crucial for understanding the national point of view and the local context. An inclusive, in-person training that brought together the researchers at the start of the study, and an overall collaborative process throughout the evaluation design, data collection, and analysis strengthened the reflections, insights, and utilization of the findings. Continued virtual dialogue during the writing process also ensured iterative data analysis and enriched the research findings.
3. Elements of the qualitative design that particularly enhanced the local fieldwork were focus groups that brought together alumni and allowed them to use participatory action research to reflect on their IFP experiences. Though more challenging to convene logistically, these focus groups provided a level of depth in understanding their transformative and collective experiences in a way that could not be captured through individual surveys and interviews.
4. The case studies, though limited, allowed IIE to learn about IFP alumni communities and contexts on a deeper level, providing invaluable information about actual application of social change and evidence of impacts beyond the individual. The researchers triangulated these findings by speaking to individuals in the organizations and communities where IFP alumni are focusing their efforts.

HOW CAN OUR RESEARCH INFORM POLICY AND PROGRAM DESIGN?

1. A decentralized management structure allowed IFP Partners to define marginalized communities and success factors based on the needs of each country, and allowed the Partners to evolve these criteria over time. This led to a nuanced approach to program implementation in each country. IFP provided layered, integrated programming to support alumni in attaining higher education with a continual emphasis on social justice. This, in turn, led to more committed and effective impact and allowed alumni to address social justice issues in their relationships and their work.
2. IFP provided life-changing experiences related to professional development, leadership, and commitment to social change. However, alumni also noted many challenges in reintegrating into their local contexts and their ability to apply what they had learned. Respondents pointed to the need for greater program assistance in accompanying and assisting alumni during their return and re-entry.
3. Program outcomes and impacts varied for certain subgroups, which became especially evident during the qualitative fieldwork when researchers had the opportunity to speak to IFP stakeholders and their communities in-depth. For example, women were more affected by cultural traditions and expectations during reintegration than their male counterparts, leading them to require and recommend additional attention and tools when reflecting on self-identity and challenging social norms.
4. As noted in the first report in this series, providing leaders from marginalized communities the opportunity for higher education is an act of social justice. IFP directly impacted social justice by reducing the inequity of marginalized group's access to higher education, and the global resources and professional recognition that affords.



Philippines lead researcher Creselda Doble (third from left) with IFP alumna Faith Antiquiera-Napigkit (far left) and her colleagues at the Bayawan Aquaculture Facility she founded after her fellowship.

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WE EXTEND OUR GRATITUDE TO THOSE WHO MADE THIS STUDY AND REPORT POSSIBLE.

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This report highlights the stories of IFP alumni and their communities. We want to thank the many alumni and community members who made themselves available for our alumni focus groups, interviews, and case studies. Local data collection efforts often took several hours and the alumni were always engaged and willing to share their triumphs and challenges.

The report would not have been possible without the dedication of our evaluation team at IIE. Andrea Brown Murga provided extensive support for the data analysis and report writing. Zehra Mirza contributed insights from the results of the 2015 IFP Global Alumni Survey. Also at IIE, Peggy Blumenthal provided valuable inputs to the report,

while Alexa Rowland assisted with its many administrative aspects. Sharon Witherell and Shana Childs disseminated the data to the media and wider audiences. In addition, several key individuals reviewed the report, including Pat Rosenfield from the Rockefeller Archive Center, and former IFP Partners Jaruwat Kaitiwongse in Thailand and Nurwening in Indonesia.

The IFP Alumni Tracking Study benefits from the continued guidance of its Expert Working Group (EWG), a team of researchers who advise the study's methodology. Current members of the EWG include Amparo Hofmann-Pinilla, Ankita Suri, Benjamin Lough, Douglas Wood, Evelyn Anyal, Jorge Balan, Martha Loerke, Mary McDonnell, Patricia Rosenfield, Tamara Fox, and William Dant.

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IFP ALUMNI TRACKING STUDY

The IFP Alumni Tracking Study explores the personal pathways and career trajectories of alumni of the Ford Foundation International Fellowships Program (IFP). Launched in 2013 with support from the Ford Foundation, the study is being carried out by the IIE Center for Academic Mobility Research and Impact. Between 2001 and 2013, IFP supported graduate-level education for 4,305 emerging social justice leaders from 22 countries in the developing world. IIE is collecting data at the global, regional, and country levels using a combination of surveys and local fieldwork. The Center plans to publish ongoing findings from the tracking study until its conclusion in 2023.

Study Timeline



The IFP Alumni Tracking Study contributes research to the field at large on how to design fellowships for maximum impact, and how to carry out impact studies over an extended period of time. By studying the link between higher education and social justice and the effect that higher education can have on marginalized populations and leadership, we are better able to understand the long-term impact of international higher education scholarship programs that seek to promote social change.

IN THIS SERIES

Report 1 – *Social Justice and Sustainable Change: The Impacts of Higher Education*, April 2016

This report shares the results of the 2015 IFP Global Alumni Survey and the responses of 1,861 IFP alumni from 22 countries. The findings show that investing in higher education for individuals can have significant multiplier effects for communities, organizations, and societies. By studying the link between higher education and social justice and the effect that higher education can have on marginalized populations and leadership, *Social Justice and Sustainable Change* gives us a first look at the long-term impacts of international higher education programs like IFP.

OTHER PUBLICATIONS

Issue Briefs

The IFP Alumni Tracking Study Issue Brief Series explores thematic issues related to IFP and its alumni, including social justice, leadership, community development, equity in education, and economic development. The series is meant to examine IFP through various research and analytical lenses and provide scholars, practitioners, and the IFP community with points of discussion and debate.

[Disability is not Inability \(June 2016\)](#)

[Promoting Gender Equity: Lessons from the IFP Fellowship \(October 2015\)](#)

[International Scholarships for Equity in Higher Education \(April 2015\)](#)

[Exploring “Change Readiness” and IFP Social Impact \(November 2014\)](#)

INSTITUTE OF INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION

Center for Academic Mobility Research and Impact

Founded in 1919, the Institute of International Education® (IIE) is a private not-for-profit leader in the international exchange of people and ideas. In collaboration with governments, foundations, and other sponsors, IIE creates programs of study and training for students, educators, and professionals from all sectors. The IIE Center for Academic Mobility Research and Impact brings together the Institute's in-house research expertise to conduct and disseminate timely research in the field of international student and faculty mobility. The Center is also a leader in the field of studying the impact of international exchange, leadership, and scholarship programs. The Center is currently carrying out a ten-year longitudinal impact study of the Ford Foundation International Fellowships Program (IFP), among other projects.

THE FORD FOUNDATION

The Ford Foundation is a globally oriented private foundation with the mission to reduce inequality by strengthening democratic values, promoting international cooperation, and advancing human achievement. The Foundation is guided by a vision of social justice—a world in which all individuals, communities, and peoples work toward the protection and full expression of their human rights; are active participants in the decisions that affect them; share equitably in the knowledge, wealth, and resources of society; and are free to achieve their full potential. The Ford Foundation International Fellowships Program (IFP) was initiated in 2001 with funding from the Ford Foundation through the single largest grant in the Foundation's history, and was housed at IIE throughout its operation.

