

# MISSION

**U.S. philanthropic foundations are helping improve the standards and quality of international higher education by sending students abroad, funding foreign students and scholars, research initiatives in foreign universities, and programs that combine the efforts of researchers from different countries.** BY DARLENE BREMER

The Wang Foundation's first Service Learning Program in 2006 brought together 68 American students, 8 American professors plus 442 Tsinghua University students.



WANG FOUNDATION



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INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION ISN'T JUST A PRIORITY FOR COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES ANYMORE. Nowadays people from backgrounds other than education are beginning to recognize that learning and work can't happen in a vacuum within a nation's borders. Whether it's due to an increasing demand for an internationally competent workforce in a global economy, the creation of new jobs requiring new skills and competencies, the need for increased diversity in our nation's classrooms, workplaces, and communities, or the need to solve national and human security challenges, such as poverty alleviation, environmental degradation, terrorism, and HIV/AIDS, international education is now on a much wider radar than ever before. The word is on the street—international education matters—and philanthropic organizations are taking notice by funding projects that support the mission and goals of international educators.

教育扶贫社会实践活动  
Learning Program in Rural China 2006.7.28





## Improving Higher Education in Africa

In 2000 the Rockefeller, Ford, Carnegie, and John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundations joined forces to form the Partnership for Higher Education in Africa. Each foundation brings to the partnership its own focus, based on each organization's mission and history. The partnership's first commitment was for five years, and an initial pledge of \$100 million was made to reaffirm the importance of a vibrant intellectual environment in Africa for nourishing social, political, and economic transformations. Working in the six countries of Uganda, Tanzania, Mozambique, South Africa, Nigeria, and Ghana, the partnership surpassed its initial pledge and invested \$150 million in grants between 2000 and 2005. Then, in 2005, the William and Flora Hewlett and Andrew W. Mellon Foundations joined the Partnership, an additional commitment for \$200 million was made for the next five years, and Kenya, Egypt, and Madagascar were added to the list of countries the partnership would work in.

According to Suzanne Grant Lewis, coordinator of the partnership for the Rockefeller Foundation, each of the founding organizations, which already had grant making programs in Africa, joined together to make a public statement of how critical higher education is to Africa's future and to building the necessary intellectual capital required for social and economic development. "Joining the partnership was important for the Rockefeller Foundation because it allowed us to broaden and strengthen the power of our grant-making capabilities. Also, together we could tackle larger initiatives than we could each do individually," she said.

As a member of the partnership, Rockefeller Foundation's goals are to help change the nature of support to higher education in Africa, create synergies among the partnership foundations, and create greater visibility for higher education in Africa. "Changing

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the nature of support for higher education in Africa is being accomplished by moving away from making grants that support discrete university departments and moving toward grants that support the strategic plans of the universities," Lewis said. The partnership is creating synergies among the participant foundations by melding each organization's focus into an overall strategy that will help African universities evolve, and is creating greater visibility of higher education through advocacy initiatives that demonstrate the importance of self-sufficiency for the continent.

For its first five years, partnership grants to universities that have demonstrated relevant reform totaled \$173.5 million and an additional \$27.6 million was granted for the first three quarters of 2006. Twenty-two universities in nine countries have received \$1 million or more since the partnership's inception. "The partnership works in countries undergoing systemic public policy reform and in which two or more of the partnership foundations have a programmatic interest and mandate," said Lewis. Measuring the impact of the program will be based on the grantees' effective use of information technology, having a student body from a diversity of background, the production of high-level professional talent, the transferring of skills essential for the development of the particular country, and participation in a global network of teaching and research.

One beneficiary of Rockefeller's involvement in the partnership is the Nigeria ICT Forum, an Initiative of Nigerian Research and Higher Education. According to Dr. Aminu Ibrahim, convenor of the forum, the goal is to help build institutional capacity in Information Communication Technology (ICT) for teaching, learning, research, and community service. "The Forum helps make intensive ICT training and technical help more accessible and more affordable for students," he explained. By hosting various ICT educational opportunities, such as workshops and seminars, the forum is developing a Nigerian national research and education network which will, through collaboration among teachers and students, increase economic benefits throughout the country, according to Ibrahim.

The Carnegie Corporation of New York, another member of the partnership, has had a long history of working in Africa. Andrew



KAREN THEROUX

The main building of Makerere College, a PHEA/Carnegie grantee.

Carnegie began the efforts by building libraries in Africa when he led the foundation in the early 1900s. In the 1970s, according to Susan King, vice president of public affairs for the foundation, the Second Carnegie Commission on Poverty, which helped fuel the anti-apartheid movement, recognized the need for training South African leaders, many of whom today are beneficiaries of Carnegie grants. “It is the belief of Vartan Gregorian, current president of the foundation, that universities are central to developing leadership, incubating innovation, and molding a country’s culture,” she said. The foundation switched its focus to strengthening African universities in an attempt to help alleviate poverty and to partner with African leaders to develop their higher educational infrastructure to produce the future leaders required by their societies.

Carnegie Corporation provides grants in five of the seven countries that the partnership works in; Ghana, Nigeria, Tanzania, Uganda, and South Africa. “The partnership chose the countries it works in based on a sense of momentum of democratic promise, and the universities were chosen because of the progressive strategic plans and culture of change already in place,” King observed. The Carnegie Corporation is providing grants to nine universities to help bolster their self reliance and to establish standards of excellence and long-term sustainability.

Each foundation in the partnership has its own goals that reflect their priorities. “Carnegie’s goal is to strengthen the educational infrastructure of universities,” she said. Grants focus primarily on items that universities need to strengthen themselves, such as creating more efficient ways for Information Technology (IT) systems to operate and improving their ability to serve students and faculty, improving operations such as the bursar’s and registrar’s offices, and scholarships that increase women’s participation in higher education and enhance professional opportunities for women within the university.

Overall, the biggest impact of Carnegie grants, according to King, is that the community of higher educators in Africa are networking and examining the problems they face with IT and the need to connect to the Internet for transforming higher education and societies. According to Fenela Mukangara, director of the Gender Centre and the senior librarian at the University of Dar es Salaam (UDSM) in Tanzania, Carnegie’s Partnership grants are helping the university undertake institutional transformation in areas of gender equity and ICT enhancement. Access to university education for female students has been one of the visible gaps at UDSM and in Tanzania generally. Carnegie’s direct support of marginalized women has resulted in the full sponsorship of about 360 students



**Dmitry Makarov graduated from the New School of Economics in 2002 and received his Ph.D. in finance at the London Business School. He has recently returned to Russia.**

over a period of six years and has enabled female students to benefit in a wide range of disciplines, including medicine, microbiology, engineering, and law. “Carnegie has also facilitated the process of creating an enabling environment for female students by supporting the process of gender mainstreaming,” Mukangara observed.

In addition, support for enhancing the university’s ICT efforts has enabled UDSM to provide hardware and software for computer labs in students’ residential halls, enhanced the electronic provision of information and books, and supported and financially facilitated the dissertation abstracts of UDSM graduates. “Grants also support the expansion of bandwidth and have provided standby generators that allow students to continue with their studies during the critical time of frequent blackouts or power cuts,” she added.

### Reaching Out to Russia

In Russia, the John D. And Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, in addition to its participation in the Partnership for Higher Education in Africa, seeks to support universities and other elements of scholarly infrastructure to enhance the skills and capacities of scholar-practitioners, and to support the development of modern university-based science and social science research and training capabilities. The Russian Higher Education Initiative began in 1992 when the MacArthur Foundation opened an office in Moscow and began making grants to higher educational institutions for research. Over the years, the program’s focus has switched from making grants to individual researchers NGOs, journalists, and academics, toward supporting higher educational facilities. According

NEW ECONOMICS SCHOOL (NES)

to John Slocum, director of the Initiative on Global Migration and Human Mobility, and co-chair of the Russian Higher Education Initiative, the foundation to date has granted \$85 million of its initial total \$100 million commitment to higher education and research in Russia, with the program expected to extend to at least 2012.

The money is supporting 29 Centers of Excellence at Russian state universities, as well as three private institutes of graduate study and research. "Support at state institutions is across a number of disciplines in the natural, physical, and social sciences and humanities," said Slocum. Support for the private graduate study and research programs primarily focus on the social sciences, such as economics and political science.

After the fall of the Soviet Union, Russia began an unprecedented transformation to a democracy and market economy, which requires a capacity for research and analysis of issues, such as public policies and political science that the country did not possess. The foundation had had previous experience funding cooperative programs between U.S. and Soviet scientists and recognized an opportunity to help Russia successfully make its transition. "Over time, as the foundation began supporting more university-based programs, it has done so with the understanding that a strong democracy requires strong universities," Slocum explained. The initiative is designed to better connect Russia to the world, to keep the West connected to Russia, and to sustain those connections over time. "Our university-based funding is intended to help create and sustain new higher educational institutions in Russia and help strengthen existing state universities to modernize Russian society and support its democracy and market economy," he added. To receive grants, a Russian university must exhibit a combination of intellectual strengths and organizational capacity, involvement by younger scientists and students in activities and projects undertaken by the centers that foster international connections over time, and an improved ability to clearly communicate with international audiences and become competitive in fundraising both within Russia and abroad.

The impact of the university-based programs MacArthur cofunds, in conjunction with the Russian Ministry of Education and Science and the Carnegie Corporation of New York, has been the creation of 18 new university centers, as well as support for more than 3,000 students, 2,000 faculty, and more than 3,000 graduates from private schools. "The initiative has funded 350 post-doctorate students through the Russian Science Centers to help counter 'brain drain' in Russia. In addition, the funding of technology transfer of-



NEW ECONOMICS SCHOOL (NES)

**Andrei Bremzen graduated from the New Economics School (NES) in Moscow in 1999 and later received in Ph.D. in economics at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT). He returned to Russia in 2004.**

ices has allowed several Russian universities to find significant new resources and develop new patents," Slocum explained.

The MacArthur Foundation's support of the New Economics School (NES) in Moscow has enabled the institution to bring young Russian economists with western Ph.D.s back to the country, provide them with incentives and resources to perform high quality research and to teach, build a high quality faculty that publishes in the very top international academic journals, and expose almost 1,000 regional faculty to modern economics to enable them to improve their curricula.

Dmitry Makarov, for example, graduated from the New School of Economics in 2002 and received his Ph.D. in finance at the London Business School. "Although my decision to apply to NES was somewhat spontaneous, I immensely enjoyed the two years spent there and the new opportunities that were opened to me after graduation," he said. According to Makarov, access to higher education gave him a purpose in life and a fascinating and challenging area in which to work. "Russia heavily needs to diversify its economy to achieve long-term stability and higher education is crucial for making such diversification possible." Makarov recently accepted an offer from the NES to return to Russia that will enable him to fully focus on research and to live in the land he loves. "In terms of economics research, being in Russia will allow me to focus on new projects, rather than on more mature and predictable ones, that have great growth potential," he added.

After graduating from the NES in 1999, Andrei Bremzen received in Ph.D. in economics at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT). He returned to Russia in 2004. "I believe in NES' mission. Russia has a huge potential for economic education and research and now is the time to develop it," he observed. Bremzen believes that the access to higher education he received at NES has led to a career he could hardly have imagined otherwise. "NES is a place where students and faculty from different backgrounds meet, which is imperative for maintaining the highest quality of education and research and essential for comprehensive training," he explained.

"The next step," according to Sergei Guriev, the school's rector, "is to make the institution sustainable." For example, MacArthur's funding has helped the school develop training in fundraising efforts. "Our new endowment campaign has already borne fruit. We expect to raise \$30 million within three years, which will transform the school from a project into a serious international player in the field of economics," he said.

## Collaboration in Central America

Beginning in the mid 1980s, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) began looking into how capital could be infused into the troubled Central American economy and develop ways to support higher education that encouraged people to remain in the region. "At the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, we saw this concept as an opportunity to help preserve the ecology and economies of low-wealth communities in this volatile region," said Rick Foster vice president for programs. Central America's rain forest contains 80 percent of the world's biodiversity and is one of the most easily damaged ecosystems.

"One of the program's goals is to examine how subsistence agriculture could be encouraged without destroying the environment," Foster said. To help increase agricultural production and sustainability on small farms in the humid tropics, the foundation began supporting the Escuela de Agricultura de la Region Tropic Humeda (EARTH) University by providing a bridge grant for the construction of a campus in the heart of the Costa Rican rain forest. An initial grant of \$400,000.00 was used for a feasibility study, and then another \$400,000.00 was granted for construction until the USAID could begin funding the project. The university opened its doors in 1990.

Over the years, the Kellogg Foundation has provided a series of grants to improve EARTH University programs, such as building a sustainable farm, providing continuing education opportunities throughout Central America, engaging the community through female entrepreneurs and encouraging women throughout the region to build small businesses, and providing scholarships earmarked for students from poor communities who would otherwise not attend college. "This is an important initiative because it truly engages higher education as a solution to the economic problems in the region," observed Foster. The education provided at the University helps improve the application of knowledge to the problems of people that live in these low-wealth communities and who have very little access to technical and educational support. "Every phase of EARTH graduates' education is hands-on and based at the community level," he added.

An EARTH education is designed to provide students with the experience, knowledge, and ability to be creative in designing and establishing businesses that will strengthen the local and regional economies. During any given year, there are about 400 students enrolled in the university and about 25 percent are there on Kellogg

scholarships. "In 2006 we granted \$10 million for 40 to 50 endowed scholarships," Foster observed. Grantees must demonstrate that they will use their education to address the environmental and economic problems of the region and that they can become future leaders in their communities and in area organizations and governments.

According to José A. Zaglul, president of the university, Kellogg's scholarship grants are having a direct impact on communities throughout Latin America and the Caribbean through the program's graduates. "Thanks to the scholarship program, the university today has 1,182 graduates from 19 countries in Latin America and the Caribbean, as well as from Spain and Uganda, who are acting as agents of change in their countries," he said. Forty-five percent of the university's graduates are working in the private sector and are making their businesses more environmentally and socially sustainable. In addition, 16 percent are running their own or a family business and are creating jobs and sharing their knowledge with the community.

The EARTH model is being examined by other distressed areas of the world where similar environmental and economic problems exist. "The university has opened its doors to students and

faculty from around the world to learn how to engage with the community and organize their universities to follow the educational model," said Foster.

The real success of the program is demonstrated by the fact that 87 percent of graduates are working in their country of origin and 94 percent are working in Latin America. Although EARTH University can only educate a selected group of young men and women from the

developing world, it is, according to Zaglul, a place of continuous innovation and experimentation in the delivery of higher education, a beacon of hope, and a model for change.

Ariel Miranda comes from a poor family in the eastern part of Bolivia where agriculture is the primary activity. He received a Kellogg scholarship to attend EARTH University and carries with him his family's dreams for a higher education. "EARTH has provided me with an opportunity to study in an institution of high quality and to take valuable information back to my home and be a conduit between the outside world and the people in my community," he observed. What attracted Miranda to EARTH University were its ideals of service and sustainability. "Since I was 13 years old, I have wanted to work for a better world and to serve others. My EARTH education has showed me how and has enabled me to become mature in my knowledge and to grow."



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## Fellowships for Underprivileged Foreign Students

In 2001 in addition to its participation as a founding member of the Partnership for Higher Education in Africa, the Ford Foundation launched its International Fellowship Program, an innovative model that broadens access to advanced study for people from some of the world's poorest communities. Ford projects the program will continue through 2014 with active fellowship grant selections through 2010. Although there are no restrictions on the grantee's academic field, the fellow's area of study must promote the general goals of the Ford Foundation and have practical developmental applications.

"The International Fellowship Program is the largest initiative the Ford Foundation has supported in its history," observed Joan Dassin, executive director of the Fellowship Fund. Before the first grant of \$280 million was committed in 2001, the foundation worked with its field offices to identify the organizations that would carry out the Program in the 22 countries in Africa, Asia, Russia, and Latin America where it wanted to invest in supporting higher education.

The goal of the initiative is to identify talented leaders from poor or marginalized communities who otherwise might not have the opportunity for advanced study. More than 2,500 grants have been awarded since 2001 and Dassin projects that by the end of the program, the Ford Foundation will have awarded more than 4,000 fellowships. To that end, an additional \$75 million has been committed for the program between 2007 and 2012. Criteria to receive a grant include demonstrating academic achievement, leadership skills and potential, and a social commitment to one's country and community. "We expect that the fellows that receive grants will use their acquired knowledge to help transform their societies."

In achieving its goals, the International Fellowship Program seeks to identify qualified and diverse types of candidates that fill the profile for graduate level work, to provide fellows with a first rate education at the highest ranking universities around the world, and to ensure that students succeed and return to their communities. "To date, 99 percent of the grantees have completed their fellowships, 85 percent have gone on to complete their graduate degrees, and about 75 percent of 1,000 alumni that have completed their formal education have returned to their home countries to apply their knowledge," Dassin observed.

The program demonstrates that there is no contradiction between providing increased access to higher education and maintaining standards of quality and that students who come from poor or marginalized backgrounds, have restricted access to education, or face barriers of discrimination are succeeding in their areas of study. In addition, the program has demonstrated that brain drain is not inevitable in poor or small countries when higher education is accessible. "Offering higher educational opportunities to community leaders is actually an incentive for them to return home and use their talents to improve their communities," she added.

As a teacher in a middle school in China, Jing Kong recognized that better methods were needed to teach English to speakers of other languages. She was just beginning to consider pursuing further study in the United States (and finding out how expensive it was) when she heard of Ford's IFP and decided to apply. Kong is currently in the Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) program at the Teachers College at Columbia University. "The fellowship I received from the Ford Foundation has enabled me to become better informed about the methods of teaching English as a Foreign Language/English as a Second Language (EFL/ESL) at both the theoretical and empirical levels," she said. Upon graduation in May, Kong intends to return home and apply what she has learned to the practice of teaching English in China. "TESOL is a comparatively

new field, even in the United States. I hope to provide insights into foreign-language teaching, exchange ideas and experiences with my old and other schools, and engage more teachers in researching EFL/ESL teaching in the community, the region, and the country," Kong added.

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### Sending U.S. Students to Rural China

Established in 2004, the Wang Foundation, Pebble Beach, Calif., advances international exchange and service learning as key elements in shaping the world's future. The foundation's current focus is to represent Tsinghua University's School of Continuing Education in the development of a consortium of U.S. colleges and universities that will nominate students and faculty participants to Tsinghua's Poverty Alleviation Project through a Service Learning Program (SLP). "The Service Learning Program in China brings together American and Tsinghua University students who live and work side-by-side while providing critical educational resources to the poorest regions of China," said Peter Wang, chairman and president.



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Tsinghua University is the highest ranking science and technology university in China. After the central government identified 592 poverty-stricken provinces in the country, the university, recognizing that modern Internet technology is the only way to provide education to these places and alleviate poverty, established distance learning centers. "To date, 113 learning centers have been established," Wang observed. The University welcomed the foundation's efforts to improve international education by taking young American students to China and giving them one month free room and board and the opportunity to team up with Tsinghua students and faculty and travel to poor provinces to teach local teachers and public officials conversational English and to acquire computer literacy, learn about each other's cultures, practice global citizenship, and mitigate chronic poverty at the grass roots level.

The 2007 SLP will enable up to 150 U.S. students to partner with up to 300 Tsinghua students and 50 faculty in ongoing poverty alleviation projects. Participants live and work together in small teams as they assist the local staff of 50 select distance learning centers. "The SLP adds a significant new dimension to China's vocational training capabilities by reaching the traditionally uneducated sectors of many rural areas, while, at the same time, helping U.S. students learn first-hand about the real China through delivering community services on a personal level," Wang explained.

In 2006, the first year of the program, 152 U.S. students applied, 75 were accepted, and 68 participated in the SLP. For the 2007 program, which runs from July into August, the Wang Foundation hopes to have 100 American participants. To date, 50 U.S. students have applied, and the prerequisite 50 Tsinghua faculty members have signed up. To qualify, the U.S. student must want to make a difference in the world, be concerned about global issues, want to shape a more just, peaceful, and sustainable world, and have a strong interest in learning about Chinese culture and be capable of living in a cross-cultural, third-world environment. "Participation in the program requires flexibility, toleration of ambiguity, respect for differences, and the ability to move outside of one's normal comfort zone," Wang added.

The impact of this program is demonstrated by the fact that more universities in China are attempting the same model of delivering education to selected poor provinces. "The foundation is investigating the possibilities of teaming up with these other uni-

versities and is working closely with the Chinese government to establish more scholarships to expand these programs," Wang said. Of the U.S. students who have participated, at least a dozen want to return to China to teach English, at least three want to teach at Tsinghua University, and others have stated that their awareness, understanding, and appreciation of a different culture have been enhanced. "If there were one common sentiment that has prevailed beyond the participants' time in China, it would be the indomitable spirit of hope that fueled each student's commitment to build a better world," added Ron Moffatt, director of the International Student Center at San Diego State University, who is also a member of the Wang Foundation Advisory Board.

Amanda Woodward, who currently attends the University of Washington in Seattle majoring in cellular, molecular, and developmental biology and minoring in international studies, participated

in the 2006 program. "It was an opportunity to explore a region of the world where most Americans don't get to go and to help local teachers become more comfortable speaking and teaching English," she said. The program enables Chinese teachers to become inspired to teach English and to inspire their students to learn the language and become prepared for a university-level education, Woodward added.

Wai Yin Choi, currently a senior at Wayne State University studying business management and Chinese, participated in the

2006 SLP because she wanted to help the poor and learn more about Chinese culture. "The experience changed both how I look at the world and at myself," she explained. The SLP certainly gave her a taste of international travel, but it also provided her with the opportunity to represent the United States in a positive way. "I found that people from other countries are very curious about the States and that sometimes you have to dispel myths they might have about the country and the people," she observed. Choi plans to return to China to help new students that participate in the program make a smoother transition from student to teacher—just one of many examples of how charities like the Wang Foundation and others are helping to advance international education across the globe in a mission to do good work.

**DARLENE BREMER** is a freelance writer based in Solomons, Maryland. Her latest article for *IE* was "Wanted: Global Workers" in the May/June 2006 issue.



**Jing Kong, the IFP Fellow, reads aloud surrounded by her students in China.**