

Annex 5: Key Scholarship Program Components

Recruitment and Selection

The recipient will need to establish procedures to recruit, screen, and select scholarship candidates from disadvantaged and marginalized populations in the participating countries. Recruitment and selection need to be designed to identify candidates that meet the criteria of targeted beneficiaries (as defined in section A.6.4). The goal will be to recruit and select disadvantaged young people with limited access to tertiary education who show academic potential and promise as leaders. In developing the recruitment systems, recipient will need to consider the trade-offs between online, paper-based, and hybrid application systems, particularly in reaching the most disadvantaged potential beneficiaries, who may not have access to computers or the ability to use an online application system.¹ Family support (or lack thereof) plays a significant role in young people's ability to complete their studies. Given this, written commitments of support to prioritize and allow time for the finalist's studies are required from the family.²

To the extent possible, the program should engage the networks of CASS and SEED alumni in both recruitment and selection of scholarship recipients. USAID will help to make the initial connections with alumni networks and may engage in recruitment and selection of scholars, including identification of key populations to target or include, such as graduates of a USAID basic education program. Community and business leaders also will be important partners on identifying and recruiting good candidates. Finally, the targeted technical training institutions must be engaged in the final selection of scholarship recipients.

Technical Skills Training

The scholarships will provide access to the two and three year technical skills training programs being strengthened under result 1. Technical skills areas will be selected based on the criteria described in the parameters section.

Internships

The technical education must include internships that give participants practical experience to better apply and utilize their new skills. Private sector and alumni partners should be engaged on this component.

Leadership and Life Skills Development

An important component of the program is the enhancement or development of participants' leadership and life skills and ability to contribute as change agents. Through hands-on activities, project-based assignments, and training, the program should provide opportunities for participants to develop a range of skills that will enhance their ability to contribute as leaders within places of employment, their countries and communities. The program should encourage participants to take part in community and grassroots leadership activities upon their return to their own countries.

¹ Evaluation of LAC Higher Education Scholarships Program, February 2013, p.13-14.

² If a finalist does not have family (e.g., orphan), this will not be required.

Community Service

Instilling an attitude of community service is also an important part of the program that contributes to the beneficiaries going on to serve as change agents. It is a well-known fact that service learning opportunities are important ways that young people without work experience can gain relevant skills and experience for the job market. For example, participants could begin planning for a capstone applied community service project at application. The project would help to ground the training in participants' experience and the realities of their countries and unify their studies. Recipient would need to consider how to support participants in implementing their service projects post-graduation.

In addition to the capstone projects, participants should be required to complete a minimum number of community service hours during their studies. Recognizing the important link between service learning and job-relevant experience, the community service opportunities should be identified to support specific program goals, which include technical, leadership or other goals.

English Language Training

English is not required at the time of application for in-country scholarships. It is expected that scholarship recipients and trainees will predominately be non-English speakers, who speak Spanish or a local or indigenous language as their first language. The scholarship program should give all scholarship beneficiaries the option to study English in-country. The goal of the English classes in-country will be to help scholars gain functional fluency in English while providing accreditation/certification of the English level reached. The reason for the English training is two-fold: (1) it is valued in the local job market; (2) for scholarship beneficiaries interested in applying for the opportunity to complete one or two semesters of their program in the U.S., a minimum level of English language proficiency will be required.

The recipient should develop plans to provide high quality English language training with a focus on basic functionality. The design of the English language training will be based solidly on ESL research and of a consistent high quality across institutions. Where possible, opportunities for students to immerse themselves in contexts where English is spoken should be identified. These could include, for example, internships at USAID, the U.S. Embassy, Peace Corps, international PVOs and NGOs, and other settings in which English is spoken and can be practiced.

For those beneficiaries who receive the opportunity to study in the U.S., continued English language instruction will likely be required. The English training in the U.S.-based scholarships program should include paced integration into general academic courses so that trainees can benefit from the technical training while gaining working proficiency or fluency in English. At the end of their studies, participants should receive accreditation/certification of their language ability that is recognized in their home country [e.g., Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL), International English Language Testing System (IELTS)].

Wraparound Services

It can be expected that the individuals targeted by this program will need additional guidance and support in order to complete and fully benefit from their studies and experiences. The program

will need to ensure that participants are prepared and supported to complete the college-level technical training and to apply their new skills in their workplaces and communities. Such services would include mentoring, counseling, guidance on job searches, advising about other scholarship opportunities, internships, in-country host family opportunities, assistance with adapting to a new context, etc. The recipient should consider establishing host-family opportunities for rural students moving to urban areas for their education, or others moving to attend institutions distant from their home. Host-family opportunities should be a component of the U.S.-based scholarships. Alumni of the CASS and SEED programs are well-positioned to help support some of these services, including mentoring, networking, guidance on job searches and internships, identification of in-country host families, etc.

Cross-Country Interaction

The program should support development of linkages between participants from various countries and networks and links between program participants and alumni. For example, Recipient could hold a conference once a year to bring institutions and scholars together or identify other opportunities for networking. Recipient also should foster strong ties of solidarity within training cohorts.

U.S. Study Opportunity

The opportunity to study abroad should be competed among the scholars that received the local scholarships and used to motivate them to apply themselves to their study. Recipient will need to determine the length of study in the U.S., while balancing the impact on recipients with the number of scholarships that can be provided given limited funds for this component. Six-month to one-year study abroad experiences appear to allow for meaningful impact on technical, cultural and language skills. However, the Recipient may justify another length of study in the U.S.

The U.S.-based scholarships need to include the components described above including recruitment, technical skills training, internships, leadership development, community service, English-language training, wrap-around services, and cross-country interactions. It should also include a host family experience to support language learning as well as provide cultural exposure and introduce participants to U.S. life. Other cultural experiences can be included to enrich participants' language learning and their participation in and understanding of U.S. culture. To the extent possible, the cohort studying at a U.S. institution should include a balance of participants from the different target countries in order to support cross-country interaction.

Coming from rural or marginalized populations, often with limited exposure to non-local cultures, study abroad participants will need significant support to adjust to living and studying in the U.S. The program will need to ensure that participants receive adequate pre-departure preparation. The recipient should develop plans to comprehensively prepare participants for their U.S. experience and smooth their adjustment to a new culture, including new living situations and academic expectations. Some participants may want to remain in the U.S. after the conclusion of the program. The recipient is required to provide guidance and support to scholarship recipients and training participants while in the U.S. to help them complete their studies and return home. The recipient must develop plans to ensure that participants return to their home countries upon conclusion of the program.

Recipient will need to identify appropriate community colleges and other host institutions in the U.S. to deliver the study abroad component. To the extent possible, these institutions should be competitively identified and selected. Recipient will need to ensure that credits from the study in the U.S. are recognized and transfer to local universities.

Post-Scholarship Support

The Recipient shall provide support to participants as they complete their studies, including through use of alumni networks. The program will need to provide participants with support in securing employment in their home countries. Participants will need support and guidance to find and keep good jobs using their new skills. They also will need support in carrying out their capstone community service projects. The program can draw on alumni to organize and facilitate meetings between graduating participants and employers to support a high employment rate among graduates. Ties with other alumni, both within their own countries and in other countries, can provide significant support both on career issues and participants' commitment to grassroots and community leadership.

Additionally, when they return home, those participants who studied in the U.S. are likely to initially experience reverse culture shock and readjustment challenges. They will benefit from support to facilitate their (and their families') adjustment to their return.

Alumni Engagement/Role

The SEED and CASS alumni serve as a key resource for scholarship programming. Alumni should be engaged in shaping the in-country implementation design and plans and should also assist CASS/SEED alumni with formalizing and strengthening the alumni association in the target countries and incorporate alumni of this program to the associations. USAID will help to facilitate contact with these associations. It is also expected that alumni will be engaged in several components of the scholarship activities, including the following:

- a) Assist with recruiting and selection of scholars
- b) Assist with review of potential local universities
- c) Assist with finding host families for in-country piece
- d) Recruit alumni as adjunct professor/trainers/professors in LAC institutions
- e) Identify connections to private sector
- f) Mentoring during and after scholarship
- g) Assist with preparing participants for the study abroad
- h) Help to re-orient study abroad returnees
- i) Post-program support to scholarship beneficiaries; some types of support have suggested they could offer include accompaniment of the capstone community service projects; organizing or coordinating workshops, for example, "how to write and submit a proposal in English" (e.g., to raise funds for a community service project); "project design and management course" such as is offered to its volunteers by Peace Corps; and support with job search.