

IIE Center for Academic Mobility Research and Impact Evaluation Capabilities

The Institute of International Education's Center for Academic Mobility Research and Impact brings together IIE's in-house research expertise with leading minds from around the world to conduct and disseminate timely and relevant research and policy analysis in the field of international academic mobility. The IIE Center provides research and program evaluation services to domestic and international governmental agencies, non-governmental organizations, and foundations to facilitate the collection of more comprehensive and policy-relevant data on international education, and to assess the impact of fellowship and scholarship programs.

IIE evaluation staff has extensive experience in carrying out all stages of a program evaluation, from program process and implementation, to examining outcomes and program impact. Our evaluation work has focused primarily on assessing the effectiveness of international fellowship and scholarship programs that benefit undergraduate students, graduate (post-graduate) students, faculty, and mid-career professionals, including many programs that seek to develop leadership skills or promote access to higher education among underserved populations. This unique combination of substantive knowledge of the international exchange and leadership development fields and our methodological expertise equips us well to study the impact and multiplier effects of a wide range of programs.

Evaluation Approach

Our approach to assessing the efficacy of fellowship and capacity-building programs draws on IIE's deep understanding of the various program elements needed to bring about change at the individual, community, and social level. We recognize that it takes many years to achieve measurable impact and to bring about social change. Therefore, at the outset of the project, we work closely with program staff to develop a comprehensive and clear logic model or **theory-of-change** that maps out the short-, intermediate- and long-term outcomes that are expected from the program and the pathways and logical links through which these changes are likely to occur.

Most of IIE's evaluations have required a **mixed-methods approach** that combines **qualitative and quantitative data and analysis**, but we also have the capability to design and conduct rigorous evaluations that use a random assignment approach. Qualitative methods typically include focus groups and interviews that allow us to capture the intangible yet critical value-added of the program and its impact on the individual. Depending on the nature of the project and to address the potential bias of self-reported data, we

Past and current sponsors of IIE evaluations:

- Alcoa Foundation
- Cargill Foundation
- Carnegie Corporation of New York
- Ford Foundation
- German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD)
- Greater Texas Foundation (GTF)
- Higher Education Readiness (HER) Program – IIE
- Maternal Health Task Force, Harvard School of Public Health
- National Science Foundation (NSF)
- Schlumberger Foundation
- Seattle International Foundation
- U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID)
- U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA)

also conduct interviews with key informants such as employers and community partners, and seek input where appropriate from academic mentors at the host institutions where fellows studied and who may still maintain contact with some of these outstanding graduates of their programs. Quantitative methods typically include surveys and the analysis of secondary data.

For programs with a large number of participants, IIE also uses **social media** to stay in touch with thousands of program alumni and potential respondents dispersed all over the world. This networking is coordinated through popular sites such as Facebook and Twitter, and through our recently revamped www.iie.org site. We harness these, as well as other tools, for alumni tracking, for sustaining alumni networks, and for conducting quick snapshot surveys of the alumni that complement the in-depth data collected through the techniques described above.

Evaluation Expertise

In addition to our experience with U.S. Government-sponsored programs, IIE's evaluation team has proven expertise in studying the impact of programs sponsored by higher education institutions, private foundations and non-governmental organizations.

Relevant projects include:

- **Ford Foundation International Fellowships Program (IFP) 10-year Tracking Study:** From 2013 - 2022 we are conducting a ten-year tracking study of Ford Foundation's IFP program which served over 4,300 scholars from marginalized communities in 22 countries. Our conceptual framework uses the stages of the Kirkpatrick model to study the transformations that the alumni undergo in their professional and personal lives post-fellowship, with an emphasis on their work as social justice leaders in their communities.
- **Cargill Global Scholars Program:** Our team is currently working with the Cargill to integrate monitoring and evaluation (M&E) into the six-year program framework. Our evaluation techniques include pre- and post-surveys of scholars to identify changes in knowledge, skills, and attitudes, discussions with Cargill mentors to analyze the scholars' support networks, and an integrated analysis of the global network being created by the Cargill Global Scholars as they continue their professional lives.
- **Carnegie African Diaspora Fellowship Program (CADFP):** Our team is providing monitoring and evaluation support to Carnegie ADF program to measure the program's achievement in facilitating mutually beneficial higher education engagements between scholars in Africa and African Diaspora academics living in the United States and Canada. A mixed-methods approach is being utilized to gather and analyze data from the pilot program.
- **Higher Education Readiness (HER) Program:** This longitudinal study (2013 – 2016) measures changes to understand the potential effects of the HER pilot program in Ethiopia. A quasi-experimental design measures key program effects among two cohorts of young women in secondary school and their counterparts who were not chosen for the program.
- **Alcoa Foundation Global Internship Program:** We are conducting an evaluation that seeks to assess the program's achievement in preparing participants for the job market through workforce readiness skills training and counseling. Through a mixed-methods approach, data will be gathered from multiple sources including the interns, their host business organizations, and the NGO partners to measure impact from varying perspectives.

- **Centroamérica Adelante program:** With the launch of the program in 2015 we are conducting a comprehensive mixed-methods evaluation of the program's impact on participants' knowledge and leadership skills. The Center is utilizing Social Network Analysis (SNA) to measure the success of the program in creating national and regional networks of social change leaders. The program evaluation began with a comprehensive needs assessment that informed the program design.
- **Iraq Scholar Rescue Project Evaluation (IIE Scholar Rescue Fund):** We are completing a two-year mixed-methods evaluation of the Iraq Project's impact on its grantees, on Iraq's higher education and scientific research sectors, on the host countries' academic communities, and, more broadly, on the field of emergency response for scholars.
- **Schlumberger Foundation Faculty for the Future Program:** This impact study evaluates the success of the Faculty for the Future Program in supporting women to pursue academic careers in scientific disciplines. The mixed-methods study also looks at how program alumnae are impacting their home communities and countries by serving as role models for the next generation of female scientists.
- **Maternal Health Young Champions (MHYC) Program:** The MHYC Program evaluation served to assess how a group of young adults aspiring to become maternal health leaders were able to advance professionally to increase social change in their home communities. In order to collect and analyze data, a participatory qualitative approach was utilized.
- **Packard Foundation's Leadership Development for Mobilizing Reproductive Health Program (LDM):** The evaluation of the LDM program was developed jointly by IIE and research consultants. It demonstrated our ability to conduct a rigorous tracer study across five countries, while also incorporating qualitative methods such as participatory action research and the use of the fellows' stories to capture program impact.

These programs and the accompanying evaluations have spanned countries and regions such as Australia, Ethiopia, Europe, China, India, Iraq, Latin America, Russia, and the United States, among others. In addition, our research team has expertise conducting evaluations in over 40 countries.

IIE Metrics

Alongside evaluation of the IIE's individual programs, IIE's evaluation team measures organizational performance and supports IIE programs on monitoring and evaluation through support and training:

- **Organizational metrics.** We perform annual analysis of the IIE-wide metrics related to organizational performance and goals. We collect quantitative and qualitative data and work closely with the IIE's program staff to triangulate information and improve the internal reporting processes. Additionally, we are developing a comprehensive evaluation strategy to measure the overall program participants' satisfaction and open space for their participation in future programming.
- **Monitoring and evaluation training for program staff.** We are developing an evaluation tool-kit to strengthen IIE-wide research and evaluation capacity. Paired with on-site and distance training the tool-kit will educate the program staff on the importance of monitoring and evaluation and assist them in developing evaluation components for their programs. Our team also provides individual consultations and support to program staff in their efforts to evaluate their programs' performance.

Key Contacts



Dr. Rajika Bhandari
Deputy Vice President, Research and Evaluation
Director, Center for Academic Mobility Research and Impact

Rajika Bhandari is Deputy Vice President of Research and Evaluation at the Institute of International Education (IIE) in New York and Director of the Center for Academic Mobility Research and Impact. Dr. Bhandari leads two major research projects—Open Doors and Project Atlas—that measure international higher education mobility at the domestic (U.S.) and international level. Dr. Bhandari also conducts evaluations of IIE’s international scholarship and fellowship programs. Before joining IIE in 2006, Dr. Bhandari was a Senior Researcher at MPR Associates, an educational research firm in Berkeley, California, that provides research and evaluation services to the U.S. Department of Education. She also served as the Assistant Director for Evaluation at the Mathematics and Science Education Network at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. She holds a doctoral degree in Psychology from North Carolina State University.



Mirka Martel
Assistant Director

Mirka Martel is an Assistant Director with the Center for Academic Mobility Research and Impact. She manages performance and impact evaluations for IIE programs and external clients, including the Ford Foundation, Cargill Foundation, Alcoa Foundation, and the Harvard School of Public Health. Ms. Martel has over eleven years of international evaluation experience with U.S. government clients, NGOs, and private corporations. Prior to joining IIE in 2012, Ms. Martel was a Research Associate at the Aguirre Division of JSB International, Inc., where she provided monitoring and evaluation assistance to USAID and the U.S. Department of State. She holds a Master’s degree in International Affairs from Columbia University, and is currently pursuing a doctoral degree in International and Comparative Education from Teachers College, Columbia University.



Aminou Yaya
Senior Evaluation Officer

Aminou Yaya is a Senior Evaluation with the Center for Academic Mobility Research and Impact. He manages performance and impact evaluations for IIE programs and external clients, including the MacArthur Foundation, Cargill Foundation, the Greater Texas Foundation, and the Stavros Niarchos Foundation. Mr. Yaya has over ten years of international evaluation experience with Africa-based NGOs, the United Nations, U.S. government clients, and private foundations. Prior to joining IIE in 2016, Mr. Yaya was a Research Manager at the DC-based policy think tank Global Integrity where he managed the collection, quality control, and publication of data from more than 20 African countries as part of the Africa Integrity Indicators project. He previously worked with the Vera Institute of Justice in New York where he participated in the development, testing, finalization and implementation of the United Nations Rule of Law Indicators, a global

instrument used in the evaluation of justice institutions in conflict-affected countries. He holds a Master's degree in Sociology and a Bachelor's degree in English, both from the University of Lomé in Togo (West Africa).



Andrea Brown Murga
Evaluation Officer

Andrea Brown Murga is an Evaluation Officer with the Center for Academic Mobility Research and Impact. In addition to assisting the Center with program evaluations, Ms. Brown oversees alumni engagement and communications activities for a 10-year tracking study of the Ford Foundation International Fellowships Program (IFP). Her research and evaluation experience centers on qualitative research methods, including data coding and analysis conducted for an evaluation of the Iraq Scholar Rescue Project (SRF Iraq). Ms. Brown has over six years of experience in university administration and student affairs, and prior to IIE she served as a study abroad adviser at the University of California, Berkeley. She holds a Master's degree in International Education from NYU.



Zehra Mirza
Evaluation Officer

Zehra Mirza is an Evaluation Officer with the Center for Academic Mobility Research and Impact. She supports senior staff in carrying out program evaluations, with specific experience in instrument design, data collection and advanced statistical analysis. Ms. Mirza has a strong background in conducting quantitative and qualitative social science research in the Anxiety Disorders and Children's Learning Clinic at the University of Central Florida. More recently, she was involved in nonprofit work through Give Kids the World, a non-profit organization that grants Make a Wish Foundation wishes to children suffering from life-threatening illnesses. Mr. Mirza holds a Bachelor of Science degree from the University of Central Florida with a major in psychology and a minor in statistics. She is currently studying for her Master's degree in International Educational Development at Teacher's College, Columbia University with a focus on international policy and planning.



Evgenia Valuy
Data Analyst

Evgenia Valuy is a Data Analyst with the IIE Center for Academic Mobility Research and Impact. Ms. Valuy specializes in quantitative research methods including survey design and data collection, advanced statistical analysis and effective presentation of findings. Additionally, she leads the annual analysis of IIE-wide metrics related to organizational performance and goals. Ms. Valuy supports IIE programs in their monitoring and evaluation efforts and offers trainings on effective evaluation in program management to IIE staff. Ms. Valuy has prior experience in international research and evaluation with ASER Pakistan (Annual Status of Education Report), the refugee resettlement office of the International Rescue Committee and Better Future International. Ms. Valuy holds a Master's degree in International Education from New York University.

