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Abstract

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Keywords

The Ford Foundation International Fellowships Program, Social Justice, Higher Education

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This book addresses the major themes that emerged during the International Fellowships Program (IFP) University Symposium in 2012. Organized by the East West Center (EWC) in Hawaii, the symposium involved participants representing nine of the ten countries in which at least 100 IFP fellows had studied, such as the United States, United Kingdom, Spain, the Netherlands, Mexico, Russia, Thailand, South Africa, and Chile. With three days of interaction and exchange, the symposium aimed to explore the impacts and experiences of IFP's university partners regarding their involvements with the program's social justice ethic and IFP fellows. The expectation was to develop further the university understandings of the IFP programs, gather important lessons from the partnerships, and think about the implications for future policy and practice in the field of higher education. Since all of these essential understandings and lessons from IFP are included inside this book, it is considered as the legacy of the Ford Foundation IFP.

The volume consists of thirteen articles written by different authors divided into four parts. The first part raises the topic of the IFP program from a comparative perspective and two articles are discussed. The articles highlight the approach and achievement of the IFP on promoting social inclusion in international education and compare the IFP programs with other types of international scholarship programs from governments, universities, private or public organizations. The purpose is to provide fundamental understandings of the IFP's overall goals and the achieved outcomes after one decade of implementation. Based on the survey conducted by the IFP, the results show that underrepresented groups can perform well in higher education, and by targeting fellowships at candidates committed to development and

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social justice, it potentially opens a path, not only to individual advancement, but also to broader social change.

The book continues with the subject of restructuring higher education systems, discussing the role of partners and the importance of partnerships in a global fellowship program as well as the transformation in policies and the impact of the IFP on international student and scholar services. The IFP created three types of partnerships: the Placement Partners, Strategic University Partners, and International Partners. The roles of each of the partners are different and significant for student achievement and encouragement of transformative policies for equity and inclusion in higher education. At the University of Chile, for instance, their partnership with the IFP inspired the university to consider low-income students and recognize internal inequity issues. A set of objectives and strategies was designed to provide access to higher education and equity in opportunity to experience high quality teaching and learning and successful educational outcomes.

In the third part, the authors focus on how the existence of the IFP Fellows promotes diversity and enriches the learning environments at the host universities. The impact of indigenous students at a Mexican university, University of Hawai'i at Manoa, and the Asian Institute of Technology are discussed to provide detailed explanations. It is revealed that the IFP Fellows inspired their classmates and teachers with alternative perspectives, real-life experiences, insightful stories, reality testing, and creative problem solving. They successfully created a successful route toward inclusion through knowledge sharing in the classroom. Furthermore, the last part of the book highlights the experiences of partnering with the IFP in international development studies from social justice perspectives. The institutional experiences disclose an alternative view within the prevailing international education system. It is reflected that education is more than exam results and can make a difference in difficult environments or disadvantaged areas, educating people for social change.

The data used in this book involve surveys, interviews, and reflections from the IFP Fellows, professors and faculty members regarding the one decade of the IFP implementation. All of these data depict the impact of the IFP on individual empowerment and on institutional practices in higher educational systems, although there is little comparison to other types of international scholarship programs. Due to the limited scales of data, the results of the analysis might not allow for generalization; however, the IFP might be an important model for demand-driven development projects in the future. Since the IFP received high levels of funding, considered the largest privately funded postgraduate fellowship program ever at the international level, more detailed data on the use of money and the financial effects towards the success of the IFP implementation might add more insights.

The IFP aims to empower individuals from disadvantaged areas who have limited access to higher education with the expectation to create leaders for the community to address social justice issues. Nonetheless, none of the authors in this book talked explicitly about or made a connection to social justice theories, though the theories are essential to frame the context of the IFP implementation and goals. Throughout the book, the explanations are more descriptive with little argumentation toward the mainstream international scholarship programs, whereas the IFP is the pioneer among international scholarship programs committed to underrepresented social groups without considering academic achievements. The case studies at the University of Chile and the University of Texas at Austin of the way the IFP Fellows contributed to the development of visions and strategies of the universities for implementation of their equity and inclusion policy and impacted the International Student and Scholar Services are very enlightening. Those would have been more critical and

argumentative, however, if social justice theories were used either in the explanations or in the analysis.

Basically, this book provides an example of the implementation of a fellowship program that addresses the limited access to higher education in underrepresented social groups and enhances potential leaders for social justice within the social groups. The implementation includes administrative procedures, strategies to define and reach the targeted population, and development of partnerships with international higher education in the US, Europe, and specific home countries. With the untied aid policy, the IFP allowed the Fellows to pursue postgraduate studies in foreign or home countries outside of the US, although funding came from the Ford Foundation based in the US. In the present day, such types of scholarships can hardly be found despite the widespread commitment to addressing social justice issues among international scholarship programs.

It is implicitly argued that a fellowship program should not only concern academic achievements of the applicants or their foreign language proficiency. Those who come from low socioeconomic groups tend to be less competitive when it comes to academic achievements and foreign language proficiency, while they have limited access to postgraduate studies both domestically and internationally. A fellowship program will never reach these underrepresented groups if it keeps looking at those two aspects. In contrast, the majority of the IFP fellows-elect came from social groups and communities that lacked systematic access to higher education for reasons specific to each society. To cope with the weaknesses in academics and foreign language proficiency, the IFP partnered with the Institute for International Education in New York, handling nearly one-third of the IFP's 4,300 fellows, most of them studying in the US or Canada, and Nuffic, the Netherlands-based organization responsible for more than 500 placements in continental Europe, particularly in the Netherlands and Spain. Pre-academic Trainings were prepared in the home and host countries before the IFP Fellows started their Master's or Doctoral degrees. It appears that although some of the IFP Fellows were not among the top ranks in the class, they made the teaching and learning process become more dynamic and engaging.

Nonetheless, the book might seem to be giving one side only. The qualitative data from professors and faculty members who were involved in the IFP implementation process could have been developed in a way where readers could see comparisons with other types of scholarships. This would enable readers to see clearly what makes the IFP different from other international scholarship programs. The authors might also have tested or built certain theories related to social justice issues on the IFP experiences and parties involved. The existence of this book might influence the practices of other existing international scholarship programs or the new ones that will be established.

The book is very well organized and clearly written as well as informative and engaging. Nowadays, there is an increase in the number of government-sponsored international scholarship programs which carry different goals and agendas. This book will be very helpful for the scholarship sponsors seeking better procedures and implementation of scholarship programs. One of the important points highlighted in this book is that underrepresented social groups can perform well in postgraduate studies either in national or international universities and upon their return to home countries, they are still active and engaged in communities to address social justice issues, such as poverty, gender inequalities, discrimination, and so forth. Policymakers, researchers, and educators working in comparative and international education will find this book enlightening, broadening their understanding of addressing social justice issues by educating the potential leaders from disadvantaged communities.

The contribution of this book to the understanding of the comparative and international education (CIE) field lies in the genuine idea of the IFP program itself. It has pioneered a fellowship program addressing the lack of individual access to higher education. The ambitious goal of the IFP program is to identify individuals who have exceptional leadership potential and support their success in postgraduate degree programs in the fields of the Fellows' choice at universities in the home or foreign countries. It helps CIE scholars with conceptualizing the impact of fellowship programs on social justice issues, the restructuring of higher education systems for inclusion, and the influence of diverse learning environments as well as the institutional experiences in fellowships program partnerships.

About the Author

Budi Waluyo is a PhD student from Indonesia who is studying Comparative and International Education at Lehigh University, USA. He is one of the five Fulbright PhD Fellows from Indonesia under the Fulbright Presidential Scholarship program. His Master's degree was completed in 2012 at the University of Manchester, United Kingdom funded by Ford Foundation International Fellowships Programs. Studying about international scholarship programs is one of his research interests, while still exploring other areas involving the internationalization of higher education, teacher training, ICT and rural education, and educational policy.