



# FORD FOUNDATION INTERNATIONAL FELLOWSHIPS PROGRAM

## Introducing the IFP Global Alumni Newsletter!

Dear IFP Alumni and International Partners:

Welcome to the first formal edition of the IFP Global Alumni Newsletter!

The IFP alumni population encompasses a broad array of expertise and training that if shared, presents a tremendous opportunity to impact social justice internationally.

This is the first in a series of newsletters designed to facilitate that sharing.

Though organized at the IFP Secretariat, this newsletter is for, by and about you—the IFP Alumni. In order to best highlight the voices of the alumni, the content of subsequent newsletters will be driven by you—the IFP alumni.

Each issue, subsequent to this one, will feature a section highlighting alumni and alumni activities in each region.

Therefore, one month prior the IFP Secretariat will contact the International Partner and alumni in the specified “highlight country” to secure articles and information. The “highlight countries” will be randomly selected with all countries having the opportunity to be represented.

Specifically, we are hoping to secure newsletter articles *written by alumni*, who have the best knowledge of alumni activities in their country.

Despite the “country focus” in each issue, all alumni networks, are encouraged to send pictures and information that would be of interest to the global IFP community.

This includes information about social justice/development conferences, pictures/dates of alumni meetings, alumni achievements, job vacancies, etc—whatever you think may be of interest to the IFP community.

Your contributions will be vital to realizing the promise that the Ford Foundation International Fellowship makes—the cultivation of a network of social justice leaders who use their advanced training to solve their country’s most pressing problems.

We hope you enjoy the IFP Global Newsletter and find it a helpful tool for your alumni work.

Sincerely,

The IFP Secretariat

## Inside this Issue:

- **Dr. Damtew Teferra appointed new IFP Director Africa/Middle East**
- **In Their Own Words: A South African Alumnus recounts his meeting with Nelson Mandela**
- **Global Exchange: Alumni from Russia and Vietnam give “global flavor” to IFP India Alumni Meeting**
- **New Year’s Resolution: Ghana Alumni ring in the New Year with commitment to social justice!**
- **IFP Alumnus of the Month—Genner De Jesus Llanes Ortiz, Mexico**
- **Leadership Around the World...IFP Alumni In Action!**

## Dr. Damtew Teferra appointed IFP Director, Africa/Middle East



Dr. Damtew Teferra assumed the post of IFP Director for Africa/Middle East on February 1, 2007.

Prior to joining IFP, Damtew, an Ethiopian, served as Research Associate Professor of Higher Education at Boston College, Massachusetts.

Damtew is also the Director and Founder of the International Network for Higher Education in Africa and former founding editor-in-chief of the Journal of Higher Education in Africa.

In his new position, Damtew will be responsible for program activities in Africa and the Middle East. Damtew will also work on enhancing the overall policy impact of IFP on higher education

Damtew holds a Ph.D. in Higher Education Administration from Boston College and has written extensively on higher education, and capacity-building in Africa. One of his books (co-edited with Prof. Philip G. Altbach) *African Higher Education—An International Reference Handbook* recently received the 2006 Porter-Conover Award of the Association of African Studies.

Please join us in welcoming Damtew to the IFP family.



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### In Their Own Words: South African IFP Fellow Neo Ramoupi Shares His Experience of Meeting Nelson Mandela!

October 3, 2006 - - I finally came face to face with history; when I met Nelson Mandela –also known as *Madiba* or “father of the nation!”

When I was graduating with my Bachelor’s from the University of Kwa-Zulu Natal in Durban, South Africa in 1991, the university decided to award Mandela with an honorary degree in law. The African National Congress [ANC]—the leading anti-apartheid political party , refused the invitation on the basis that then-Vice Chancellor of the University, Judge Leon was anti-apartheid activists to death by hanging. Therefore, Madiba did not come.

After graduation, I ended up conducting research on Robben Island, the island that served as a political prison for many anti-apartheid activists including Nelson Mandela. As a result of my work on Robben Island, The Nelson Mandela Foundation invited me all the way from Washington D.C. – Howard University to participate in the “Memory for Justice” Colloquium in South Africa. Upon arrival, I was told that Mandela was out of the country for the same two weeks that I am in South Africa!

The Nelson Mandela Foundation offered me employment in August 2006. I accepted . Monday morning I called home to my parents, and shared the good news. Several days later, my father lost his fight against cancer. I rushed to pack to move back to South Africa—since my IFP fellowship was over and I was eager get back home

The day I started at the Foundation, I was told that I was to meet Mandela the next day! Walking in Mandela’s office was nerve-wracking, but he puts you at ease. I was with several other colleagues, and he asked us about our experience. I told him about my Robben Island doctoral research and he joked: “No! no! no, I fear you now! You are learned young people.” Then he became very serious, and said, “you know, **today you cannot lead without education.**” He repeated that phrase again, and continued “Today’s leaders must be informed about the world.”

In retrospect, I realize that one of the greatest things about Mandela is his ability to make people feel acknowledged, noticed and affirmed. That, combined with his social justice beliefs and education, makes him a great leader. It was definitely worth the wait.



Above: South African IFP Alumnus Neo Ramoupi stands by a picture of Nelson Mandela and boxer Mohammed Ali at the Nelson Mandela Foundation, where Neo now works as a historian for the Nelson Mandela Foundation in Johannesburg, South Africa. Neo is completing his Ph.D research in history.



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# FORD FOUNDATION INTERNATIONAL FELLOWSHIPS PROGRAM

## Alumni Happenings Around the World

### ***Spotlight on Africa: Ghana Rings in the 2007 New Year with Alumni Meeting!***

The IFP Ghana alumni network held a 2-day meeting January 4-5, 2007 at the Noghatil Hotel in Accra, Ghana. 12 alumni participated in the meeting, . The meeting was also attended by Tricia Callender, IFP Program Officer for Fellow Affairs. The primary goal of the meeting was to chart the way forward for Ghanaian alumni and consider how best to build a West African network composed of Senegalese and Nigerian alumni.

The meeting began with a “Welcome Back” dinner with allowed alumni to reunite and share stories from their experiences abroad. The keynote speech was delivered by Dr. John Ssewebufu, Director of Programs of the Association of African Universities (AAU), the organization which has oversight of the IFP program in the West Africa region. Dr. Ssewebufu stressed that the opportunities getting involved with social justice were abundant, and that IFP alumni was a rich resource to affect change in the region. Next to address the group was Araba Botchway, IFP Director for Ghana. She urged alumni to reinvigorate and commit themselves to social justice using the resources and knowledge that they had acquired during their IFP Fellowship.

The meeting participants then got to work focused on mapping out a one-year plan of action for Ghana. Tricia Callender presented the IFP Secretariat alumni action plan. Additionally, she provided a hands-on demonstration of the online professional development and fund seeking tools that could assist alumni in their work. Alumni then broke into working groups and mapped out a plan for their social justice initiative: mentoring and community outreach for at-risk children in Ghanaian schools.

After the creation of a comprehensive, preliminary plan, meeting participants recommitted themselves to social justice and pledged to use the momentous occasion of the 50th anniversary of Ghana's independence as a motivating force for continuing their social justice work and realizing the promise of the IFP Program.

To learn more about the outstanding work of the Ghana alumni association please visit the website at [www.aau.org/ifp](http://www.aau.org/ifp) or feel free to contact Tricia Callender at the IFP Secretariat at [tcallender-fordjpf@iie.org](mailto:tcallender-fordjpf@iie.org)



*Above: IFP Ghana Alumni Network Meeting Attendees pose for a picture at the January, 2007 alumni meeting in Accra, Ghana. Participants recommitted themselves to social justice and pledged to use the 50th anniversary of Ghana's independence as a motivating force for their social justice initiatives.*



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## Alumni Happenings Around the World

### Spotlight on Asia: Ford IFP India Has It's Largest Alumni Meeting Ever

The IFP India alumni network held a 3-day meeting from December 1-3, in New Delhi. 36 alumni participated in the meeting, representing the total population of more than 100 IFP India alumni. The meeting was also attended by the entire IFP India team (Vivek Mansukhani—Director of IFP in India, along with fellow staff members Neera Handa, Shirin Kujur, Akta Sawhney and, Madhura Nagchoudhuri), Dr. Mary Zurbuchen, IFP Director for Asia/Russia as well as Russian alumna, Oksana Silantieva, Vietnamese alumni Vo Thi Hoang Yen and Doan Thi Kieu Dung, and International Partner organization staff members Jaruwat Kiatiwongse (Thailand) and Nguyen The Thanh Binh (Vietnam).



Above: "Say Cheese"  
IFP India Alumni Network Meeting attendees pose for a picture at the December 1-3 meeting in New Delhi. IFP Asia/Russia Director Dr. Mary Zurbuchen and IFP staff and alumni from Thailand, Vietnam, and Russia were in attendance as well. This was the largest IFP India alumni meeting with

The goal of the meeting was to "formalize the India Alumni Network of the IFP program" To learn how best to strengthen the networks of Indian IFP alumni and the legacy of the IFP program, meeting participants heard from many established social justice leaders including Dr Ganesh Devy, famed tribal activist and linguist, Ruchika Bahl, Director of Ashoka's Law for All Initiative (LFAI) and Shankar Venkateswaran, Executive Director, India. of the America India Foundation (AIF). In addition, participants heard presentations from the visiting IFP alumni from other countries, allowing them to not only learn from their experiences but providing an opportunity from international alumni exchange—a key IFP program goal. During the meeting, the upgraded, new and improved, India alumni network website ([www.ifpsa.org](http://www.ifpsa.org)) was launched by Dr. Zurbuchen.

The three-day meeting concluded with the newly elected office bearers pledging their service to the IFP India alumni network. The pledge was written by an alumnus:

*We, the office bearer members of the IFPIAN, do hereby solemnly affirm, that we owe our allegiance to the LSJ principles of IFP; and that we commit ourselves to the formation of the IFPIAN. Thank you for the faith reposed on us.*

Participants noted that the meeting far exceeded their expectation and were inspired not only by the social justice leaders that presented, but the opportunity to learn from the insight and experience brought by international alumni members. Vivek Mansukhani, received a special "vote of thanks" for his facilitation of the entire alumni process.



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## FORD FOUNDATION INTERNATIONAL FELLOWSHIPS PROGRAM

### Alumnus of the Month: *Genner De Jesus Llanes Ortiz, Mexico*

Genner De Jesus Llanes Ortiz was born in Ticul, Mexico, a small shoemaking town home to Mayans—an indigenous ethnic group in Mexico. After completing high school, Genner obtained his baccalaureate degree in Social Anthropology at the Autonomous University of Yucatan. During his undergraduate years, Genner also worked with several NGOs. He was able to weave his professional and academic experience together in his thesis entitled “Diagnosis and Planning for Sustainable Development in Los Chenes, Campeche.” After graduation, Genner worked as a research assistant at the National Bureau for Anthropology and History in Yucatan. Together, with researcher Dr. Margarita Rosales, Genner conducted research on indigenous organizations in the Yucatan Peninsula as part of the national “Ethnography of the Indigenous Regions of Mexico in the New Millennium.” It was this work that made me want to learn more about the preservation about indigenous languages and culture in Mexico.

In 2002, Genner won a Ford Foundation International Fellowship and used it to earn his masters degree (with distinction!) in Anthropology of Development at the University of Sussex in Brighton, England. His master’s thesis was entitled “Intercultural University of Ecuador: Dialogue of Indigenous Organizations with Globalizing Knowledge.” With the support of the National Council of Science and Technology, Genner is now working on completing his Ph.D degree in Social Anthropology at the University of Sussex. He is also getting another masters degree in Methods of Social Investigation.

Genner says that all of his personal, academic and professional experiences are geared towards indigenous language and culture. He states, “Marginalization of and discrimination against the Maya, their language and their culture are two of the most shameful traits of Yucatec society. My grandparents and parents were Maya speakers and, even though they didn’t teach me the language, I grew up being aware that my ancestry was of indigenous peasants.” Genner says that his work on Mayan culture and language, led him to not only learn and understand the beauty of Mayan language, but to be more effective in his social justice work as well.

Genner is currently living in Mexico where he is completing his doctoral research. He is extremely active as one of the founding members of the IFP Mexico alumni association entitled “The Interdisciplinary Research Network for the Indigenous Peoples of Mexico” an organization dedicated to further research and development for marginalized indigenous groups in Mexico. Additionally, Genner has also served as a facilitator for two Leadership for Social Justice Institutes (LSJ) and is building on his leadership experience in the creation of initiatives for the IFP Mexican alumni network.

Despite all that he has done, Genner insists that his motivations are very simple. “The goal of the program that I work with is to advance the demands and expectations of Mayan people in what concerns to their social and cultural rights,” says Genner. With this, he is confident that “new ways of relation between the Maya and the National society are sought to be constructed.”

We are very proud of Genner and all of the alumni in the IFP Family.

To learn more about Genner and his work please visit his blog at <http://tsikbaloob.blogspot.com/> (in English and Spanish).

To learn more about the outstanding work of the all alumni associations please contact Tricia Callender, Program Officer at the IFP Secretariat at [tcallender-fordipf@jie.org](mailto:tcallender-fordipf@jie.org)



Above: (far left) Genner De Jesus Llanes Ortiz smiling at the camera.



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## Other Alumni Happenings Around the World

### **Spotlight on Tanzania: New IFP Director Africa/Middle East Damtew Teferra's First Mission: Meeting with Alumni, of course!**

Dr. Damtew Teferra's first mission was to visit Tanzania's alumni on January 28, 2007. In addition to meeting with IFP-Tanzania Director, Margaret Kasembe and other program staff, Damtew met with 24 Fellow-elects and alumni. "The diversity of interest and enthusiasm among IFP Alumni is simply gripping" said Damtew, "they are focused on broad issues such as HIV/AIDS, special education, children and women's rights" The diverse background of fellows solidifies the mission of the program—nurturing social justice"

After meeting his new IFP family, Damtew handed out certificates of completion for alumni who had newly returned home. He called it a special experience, and said "I am very much looking forward to working with the ground-breaking IFP program."

### **Mozambique has its very first alumni Meeting**

Mozambique held its first alumni meeting on February 10, 2007 in Maputo, Mozambique. The meeting boasted 18 participants including IFP Director of Mozambique, Celia Diniz. With help from meeting materials from Ghana, Mexico and India, the IFP Mozambique alumni network was able to hit the ground running and accomplish their meeting objective—to decide which structure would be appropriate for a Mozambican IFP alumni network.

There was unanimous agreement that there should be an alumni association in Mozambique and that alumni should start communicating electronically to determine some concrete short-term activities that could impact social justice in Mozambique. Additionally, participants will be working on the creation of website that will allow not only for communication with each other, but communication with other social justice entities and organizations in Mozambique.

The meeting went so well, that participants have already set a date for their next full meeting, August 11-12 in Maputo, Mozambique. Things are moving quickly in Mozambique indeed!

To learn more about the outstanding work of the all alumni associations please contact Tricia Callender, Program Officer at the IFP Secretariat at [tcallender-fordipf@iie.org](mailto:tcallender-fordipf@iie.org)



Above: Ford IFP Tanzania Alumni Network Meeting Attendees pose for a picture at their January, 2007 alumni meeting in Dar Es Salaam, Tanzania.



Above: Ford IFP Mozambique Alumni Network Meeting attendees pose for a picture at their February meeting in Maputo. This was the very first meeting of alumni in Mozambique.