



May 1, 2014

Board Members

**Brady Deaton, Chairman**  
*Chancellor*  
University of Missouri

**Gebisa Ejeta**  
*Distinguished Professor*  
Purdue University

**Catherine Bertini**  
*Professor, Maxwell School of  
Citizenship and Public Affairs*  
Syracuse University

**Waded Cruzado**  
*President*  
Montana State University

**Harold Martin**  
*President*  
North Carolina A&T State  
University

**Marty McVey**  
*McVey & Co. Investments*

Dr. Rajiv Shah  
Administrator, USAID  
Ronald Reagan Building  
1300 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20523

Dear Dr. Shah,

I am forwarding to you the “Report of the Study Team on Human and Institutional Capacity Development (HICD)” commissioned by BIFAD in response to your request to the Board to address the needs of Feed the Future (FTF) countries to develop sustaining capacity for agricultural and economic development. We generally endorse the recommendations of the report (please see attachment), recognizing that the action steps to implement the recommendations are the shared responsibilities of many entities, including other agencies of the federal government, the higher education community and its associations (APLU and others), and the private sector. In many recommendations, we are asking you to champion the cause identified, to provide an important voice of advocacy and to strengthen our institutions of higher education to more effectively live up to the legacy of earlier USAID successes in building critical, constructive linkages between US and needy countries.

The Report begins with explicit recognition of the prescient role of USAID in establishing a framework for higher education (Title XII institutions) to develop new, or partner with older institutions abroad in order to establish “land grant-type” universities to serve the needs of agricultural and human resource development in their countries. With few exceptions, these institutions have stood the test of time; have led to subsequent establishment of new institutions of higher education; and provided the architecture and sustaining institutional capacity for agricultural development. Many of these higher education institutions were role models of success for subsequent developments and provide the foundation for one of the most important recommendations in the Report: to support a continuing relationship between globally engaged US universities and leading universities in Feed the Future Countries to take advantage of the creativity and innovation prevalent in the new environment now faced by higher education at home and abroad.



Dr. Rajiv Shah  
Page Two  
May 1, 2014

Indeed, a recent World Bank study found that the highest rates of return to investments in all levels of education were in higher education in sub-Saharan Africa (double that for secondary and almost double for basic education), and that the highest rates of return are inversely correlated with the level GDP per capita of nations. In other words, the soundest investments in higher education are in the poorer countries, and these investments make a big difference in the economic development of the country. Identifying the educational “engines of growth and development” will enable USAID to guide and participate in a broad partnership for sustainable development. This is a propitious time in history for USAID to call for a transforming change in US university relationships with their counterparts in the FTF countries. We recognize that USAID recently has launched initiatives that support increased US university engagement with FTF country universities, such as: the Feed the Future Innovation Labs, the Higher Education Solutions Network (HESN) and the new USAID Higher Education Strategy.

We recognize that universities today work in a more complex environment that has significantly enriched our capacity to serve our colleagues abroad and strengthen the economic and social transformative roles of FTF country universities. Here and abroad, we conduct our programs of research, instruction and outreach in partnership with private sector entities, electronic forms of education and inter-institutional arrangements with other educational providers including National Agricultural Research Systems (NARS), USDA Agricultural Research Service (ARS), CGIARs, community colleges, vocational and technical providers. Other approaches include distance education, social media, and specialized instruction tailored to the emerging needs of the labor market and emerging relationships in the value chains that meet the needs of agricultural, environmental, and infrastructural investors, be they private sector or components of governmental providers. These linkages are almost always a mix of virtual (electronic) and face-to-face, on-site interaction to deliver high quality learning experiences and conduct research most relevant to the needs of the specific region and community.

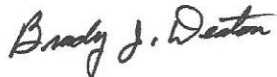
We see higher education as the fundamental requisite for sustaining the pathways to sustainability, environmental integrity and economic growth. Building independent institutions that can educate, conduct relevant research, and be the economic and knowledge base for the future remains our goal. We see USAID as the prime mover in this critical policy space. Consequently, a lynchpin of our recommendations is to target steps that increase access to higher education and training, building on the creativity embedded in this new environment.

Several recent studies by APLU and other institutions such as the World Bank have given prominent recognition to analyses that emphasize the critical role of higher education in economic and social development. Accordingly, with your support, BIFAD will undertake an international web consultation on this topic that will enable us to further examine the conclusions of this Report, integrate the variety of viewpoints, and garner any new thinking currently being examined.

Dr. Rajiv Shah  
Page Three  
May 1, 2014

We thank you for the opportunity to submit this report, and look forward to discussing it with you in the near future. The BIFAD will hold an executive session on May 21st in Washington, DC, and we will try to schedule a meeting with you during that time.

Best wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Brady J. Deaton". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'B'.

Brady J. Deaton  
Chairman

Attachment

cc w/att: Susan Owens  
Tjada McKenna



**Report of the Study Team on Human and Institutional Capacity Development (HICD)**  
May 1, 2014

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

The recommendations in the Report are grouped into four thematic sets and will be addressed sequentially in that order.

The **first four recommendations** are designed to identify ways that USAID can support “Strengthening Institutional Capacity and Partnerships to Advance Impact Pathways”:

**Recommendation 1** asks that USAID build on the widely recognized strengths and contributions that US Universities have made in strengthened human capacity development and in establishing and/or supporting emerging counterpart universities in developing countries. These achievements of trusted academic partners are points of pride in USAID accomplishments that are internationally recognized. Individual human capacity development is especially noteworthy, but the relative success of institutional strengthening programs is less clear and has not been effectively measured and monitored for continuing growth. These universities in the US and abroad now operate in a new and exciting environment that encompasses new learning and research technologies, distance learning, specialized electronic assistance to address the specific needs of unique clientele and address human resource training needs. Key attributes of university strength can now be drawn upon to enable globally engaged US Universities to be paired with counterparts in each FTF country. One flagship university in each FTF country could then serve as a center for scientific excellence and innovation, an economic driver for agricultural and nutritional achievements, and a knowledge base for new enterprise development and leadership. The long term partnership envisioned would enable the FTF based university to achieve fully integrated programs of research, instruction and outreach drawing on the quality curricula, scientific expertise, and technological infrastructure of at least one 1862 and an 1890 university on demand. This form of partnership has some characteristics of the Indefinite Quantity Contracts (IQC) that were used in the past to support USAID missions.

**Recommendation 2** addresses the need for US universities to modify their promotion and tenure recommendation to give more weight to international experience, especially for young faculty who have yet to gain tenure and promotion. We recognize that educational organizations such as APLU, AAU, and ACE will be the most appropriate entities to carry this message, and that this is not a responsibility of USAID. Nevertheless, we ask for your voice of support, particularly in communications with these organizations. Your concern would be respected for the important message it conveys, and would call national attention to the urgency of international development needs. In turn, BIFAD pledges its support in every constructive way.

**Recommendation 3** identifies the need for more leadership training in the education of international students from FTF countries. Again, we recognize that this will require the support of faculty and leadership of our universities. As in the previous recommendation, we ask for your voice of support. BIFAD pledges to work with you to strengthen the appeal of such components of university education and training.



**Recommendation 4** asks that USAID undertake the process of developing a “branding strategy” to call attention to the importance of HICD. The strategy would include the development of outcome measures for identifying the components of a “high capacity university,” defined as one that can successfully partner with other universities and NARS to achieve development goals. The absence of measured progress in HICD from the FTF Reports is a grave concern of the Board. The Report recognizes some of the essential components of high capacity institutions, but argues for a more comprehensive approach that will require collaboration with APLU and perhaps other educational associations. BIFAD recommends that APLU be asked to take leadership in a vigorous effort to establish appropriate measures that can be used to identify high capacity institutions in each FTF country. Each mission and agency within USAID would then be held accountable for achieving the measurable expected outcomes established through this process. We would expect progress on these measures, or the lack thereof, to be reflected in FTF Program Reports.

The **second set of four recommendations** is tailored around the theme of “Strengthening Access to US Higher Education Systems by students from FTF Countries”:

**Recommendation 5** recognizes the need to explore new and expanded forms of access to learning opportunities through innovative Information and Communication Technology (ICT) and asks USAID to help stimulate ways that greater access to learning opportunities can be achieved through electronic access to training and degree offerings. Continued attention to streamlining the financial and logistical aspects of the contracting process, that supports “Preferred Partner” institutional arrangements, including easy entry for qualified international students, is also called for. An umbrella agreement to serve as a prototype should be considered as a means of developing and testing contractual measures and risk mitigation. Continuous quality improvement will improve the process that enables international students to study here in the US.

**Recommendation 6** urges your voice of support and policy modifications for increasing significantly long term training opportunities that will improve the attraction of US universities for international students, particularly from the FTF countries. USAID Missions and contractual processes for research and further study can provide major support for students who need the scientific and technical education that will more directly address development needs.

**Recommendation 7** calls for government leaders at the highest levels to engage in collaborative strategies with US universities to more aggressively support student opportunities to study for higher education degrees and training in the US. Other major nations of the world are increasingly successful in attracting partnerships. The US should step up more aggressively with meaningful financial and educational partnerships. Other US agencies will be responsive, we believe, to the appeal of USAID leadership for partnering in this effort.

**Recommendation 8** represents a voice of thanks on the part of BIFAD for USAID programs of support for women and girls. We urge continued efforts in this area as the gains may be fleeting in the absence of your strong advocacy.



The **third set of three recommendations** is designed to enhance collaboration among US and FTF universities with public and private sector institutions.

**Recommendation 9** focuses on regional organizations such as CAADP, New Partnerships, National Governments, AGRA and CGIAR. USAID is deeply involved with these groups in many ways. We believe existing relationships can be strengthened and universities here and in FTF countries can be guided and supported financially and logistically.

**Recommendation 10** calls for strengthening the curriculum of universities in FTF countries to address the needs for agricultural science, technology, and nutritional adequacy more effectively. US universities partnering with these universities can be effective supporters of needed changes. The educational groups identified above can also be powerful advocates and supporters.

**Recommendation 11** urges USAID to involve Missions in the FTF countries in HICD program development by linking their efforts more closely with in-country public/private institutions, including higher education institutions, as they develop annual goals that capture the appropriate measures of capacity of the educational institutions and the attraction of students to study in the US.

The **fourth set of three recommendations** addresses the need for Building Developing Country Access to US Technology. In spite of the tremendous rate of globalization and IT flows, these needs still remain major barriers to the pace of scientific progress.

**Recommendation 12** urges explicit attention to network developments drawing on Institutional Alums, professionals in the Diaspora, and technological partnerships that will enable FTF countries to leapfrog over older types of technologies and embrace the innovations that can be realized through effective partnerships among universities, the private sector and NARS. New delivery tools render older technologies obsolete. These technologies are capable of enabling professors, their students and the FTF institutions of education and of government to undertake a new era of thought leadership. Networks include international and regional organizations, such as the CGIAR, RUFORUM, FARA and others.

**Recommendation 13** encourages investments in infrastructure for ICT that enable linkages with the global digital networks. Guidance can be provided by USAID and universities in the US and their partners in FTF countries to guide NARS, Universities, World Bank and other international organizations that target and strengthen the efficacy of infrastructure investments. More targeted investments will occur as a consequence of this concerted approach.

**Recommendation 14** suggests that gains can be made in targeting smallholder investments at the farm level and throughout the value chain by collaborative work between US and FTF country universities. Small scale operations can be guided into larger scale operations using their present base of operations rather than seeking substitute investments that disrupt existing marketing, processing and farming operations. The efficiency savings can be transformed into greater scale and expanded output at a time it is most needed.