

Evaluation of the Leland International Hunger Fellows Program

Summary Findings

“The Leland Program is a distinctive fellowship program that offers its participants a unique chance to experience the realities of both field and policy work within the context of global hunger.”

INNOVATION NETWORK



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The Evaluation

The Mickey Leland International Hunger Fellows Program of the Congressional Hunger Center (“CHC”) is a unique two-year fellowship that exposes fellows to food security programming and policy while deepening their understanding of global hunger and poverty. In 2011, the Leland Program marked its ten year anniversary and completion of its fifth fellowship class by partnering with Innovation Network to conduct a 10-year retrospective evaluation. Innovation Network is a Washington, D.C.-based nonprofit organization that provides evaluation consulting, training, research, and online tools for the nonprofit and philanthropic sector. The evaluation team used a mixed-methods approach, incorporating both quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis. A survey was administered to all program alumni from classes one through five, and in-depth interview protocols targeted a sample of program alumni, host organizations and CHC staff.

The methodology was designed to answer the following questions:

- **To what extent has the fellowship deepened the knowledge, skills, and abilities of participating fellows?**
- **How has the Leland Program influenced the career paths of participating fellows?**
- **What are the benefits of the fellowship to participating host organizations?**

Collecting information from multiple groups enabled the evaluation team to build a comprehensive view of the program’s efforts and the triangulation of data allowed for a high level of confidence in the evaluation findings summarized in this document.

Tammy Palmer, 1st Class Leland Fellow, was honored in 2011 as a CHC Leland Alumni Leader. USAID Administrator Dr. Rajiv Shah and Rep. Sheila Jackson Lee (D-TX) presented the award.



Sonny Odom

This executive summary was adapted from the 16-page evaluation brief submitted to CHC by Innovation Network in June 2012. Please go to <http://www.hungercenter.org/fellowships/leland/details/leland-program-evaluation/> to view the full brief.

Key Findings

- **To what extent has the fellowship deepened the knowledge, skills, and abilities of participating fellows?**

The fellowship is credited with developing and transforming fellows' perspectives on food security and international development. Key attributes of the fellowship program are the professional and substantive hands-on learning that takes place during both the field and policy placements and the unique perspective gained through the contrasts and connections of these two environments. Sixty-three percent of alumni felt that the program helped them a *great deal* to develop the skills, experience, and knowledge necessary to become a leader in their field.

[The Fellowship] was a professional position where I had leadership and management responsibilities that taught me a lot about... working in developing country contexts. – SURVEY RESPONDENT

I think there is a strong leadership emphasis, because it really pushed a lot of us out of our comfort zone and really challenged us to do things that we might not have done previously. – ALUMNUS, CLASS 2

Extent to which Fellowship Provided Alumni with a Helpful Foundation for Post Fellowship Pursuits

	Percentage	Number
Strongly Agree	71%	45
Agree	25%	16
Disagree	2%	1
Strongly Disagree	2%	1
Total		63

Ninety-six percent of the alumni survey respondents indicated that they *strongly agreed* or *agreed* that the fellowship provided them with a foundation that has been helpful in their post-fellowship pursuits.

Site supervisors concurred that the fellowship was instrumental in providing opportunities for fellows to develop leadership skills. As described by one policy site supervisor, *“Every single fellow I know of is playing a leadership role somewhere.”*

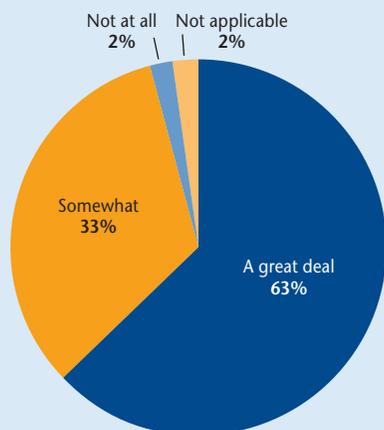
- **How has the Leland Program influenced the career paths of participating fellows?**

The Leland Program is recognized by its participants as an opportunity to build credentials and open doors into the field of international development and food security. More than half of the alumni survey respondents indicated that their current position addresses or directly relates to food security a *great deal*. A majority (83 percent) of alumni survey respondents indicated that the Leland Fellowship has influenced their career path a *great deal*.

The fellowship was spectacular in content... and in launching my career in international food security. – SURVEY RESPONDENT

The fellowship program exposed participants to different perspectives and experiences that continue to help alumni be more effective in their post-fellowship work.

Extent to which Fellowship Helped Alumni Develop Skills, Experience, and Knowledge to Become a Leader (n=60)



5th Class Leland Fellows meet with CHC Board co-Chair, Rep. Jim McGovern (D-MA), during Policy Training in 2010.



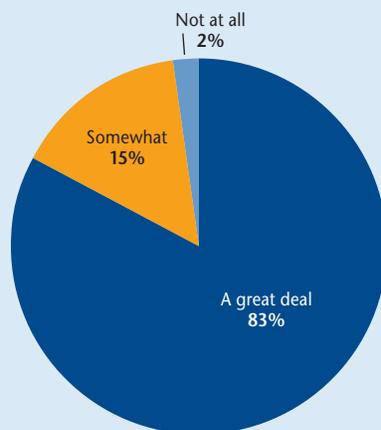
Margaret Zeigler

The people who come out of this program are very capable and they have a very wide view of how to make a difference in the field and within the organization. The experience itself builds confidence and allows them to really stretch themselves. – POLICY SITE SUPERVISOR

The program is credited with providing fellows with the following:

- Strengthened credentials
- Expanded work experience
- Access to key organizations and positions
- Broader networks

Degree to which Leland Fellowship Influenced Alumni Career Path (n=60)



● **What are the benefits of the fellowship to participating host organizations?**

Each fellowship placement aims to be a mutually beneficial one in which the fellow gains experience and expertise while the host organization benefits from the fellow’s skills and hard work. Fellows provided additional capacity for their host organizations both in the field and at headquarters.

Specific activities often performed by fellows include:

- Strengthening monitoring and evaluation
- Conducting quantitative and qualitative research
- Assisting or leading in the development and implementation of new programs/projects
- Developing technical training resources
- Conducting trainings
- Transforming research into policy documents, briefings, and white papers
- Participating in food security advocacy coalitions

Host organizations provided numerous reasons for choosing to host Leland Fellows, with the high skill level of fellows regularly cited as a primary factor. Additionally, host organizations place great value on the added perspective that fellows bring from the field year to the policy year.

Discussion and Recommendations

Overall, remarks regarding the quality and content of the fellowship from both alumni and host organizations were highly positive. A few areas in which the program can improve are outlined below.

Field-Policy Linkage

Program alumni indicated that organizational continuity was an asset and that fellows are better served when they conduct both their field and policy placements with the same organization. In instances where there was a clear connection between the placements, fellows were able to broaden their own understanding of the dual nature of field and policy work. In instances where the connection was not as clear or not present, program alumni felt that they did not get as much out of the fellowship as they could have.

Work plan Development

Both site supervisors and program alumni discussed the importance of developing mutually agreed upon work plans to enhance the overall quality of the fellowship for participating fellows and host organizations. It is recommended that in situations where the work plan is altered or where staffing changes have taken place in the host organization, a new work plan be negotiated and agreed on by all parties involved.

Fellow Communication/ Relationship Building

Site supervisors and alumni both cited the importance of regular check-ins by CHC staff, especially during the field placement. Representatives from the host organizations indicated that this is an area that has improved over time and encourages CHC staff to continue incorporating monthly reporting structures to keep all parties in the communication loop. Conversations with CHC staff further indicate that concrete mechanisms, both formal and informal, now ensure ongoing communication between fellows and Leland staff throughout the course of the fellowship.

Community Building

Community building was identified as a challenge by both program alumni and CHC staff. This is mainly due to the geographic distance between the fellows and CHC and among the fellows themselves during the first year. It is recognized that for community building to occur successfully, there needs to be 1) a willingness and desire among the fellows to participate and be a part of the network; 2) ease of access to the network; and 3) a benefit for all those taking part.

Conclusion

The Leland Program is a distinctive fellowship program that offers its participants a unique chance to experience the realities of both field and policy work within the context of global hunger.

Many participants complete the program with an enlightened perspective on the complexities of both international field and policy work. Program alumni talk openly about the positive impact of the fellowship on their careers; many of them credit the fellowship for providing opportunities and experiences that make them more effective in their professional lives.



Adam Norikane, 4th Class Leland Fellow, with Rep. John Lewis (D-GA) at the 2009 CHC Mickey Leland Tribute event.

Sonny Odom

Mickey Leland International Hunger Fellows Field Placements 2001–2011

Leland International Field Partners

Bangladesh

Helen Keller International
Land O' Lakes
Save the Children
UN World Food Program
World Bank

Benin

Catholic Relief Services

Bolivia

Adventist Development and Relief Agency
Bioversity International (formerly IPGRI)
PROINPA
Save the Children
World Food Program

Brazil

National Foundation for Education and Development

Cambodia

Helen Keller International
PACT
UN World Food Program

Chad

Catholic Relief Services

Chile

UN Food and Agriculture Organization (UNFAO)

Costa Rica

International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI)

El Salvador

FUNDE
SHARE Foundation
World Vision International

Ethiopia

Action Against Hunger
IFPRI
Land O'Lakes
Mercy Corps
Save the Children
UN World Food Program
USAID, Office of Food for Peace
USAID, Office of Health, Population and Nutrition

Ghana

UNFAO
World Cocoa Foundation

Guatemala

Counterpart International
UN World Food Program

Haiti

Meds and Food for Kids
Partners in Health

Honduras

Christian Children's Fund

India

Akshaya Patra Foundation
Bioversity International

Indonesia

International Land Coalition
Land O' Lakes
Mercy Corps

Kenya

AMREF
Catholic Relief Services
International Service for the Acquisition of Agri-Biotech Applications
Land O'Lakes
PACT
World Agroforestry Center

Laos

World Food Program

Malawi

CARE
United Nations Development Program
World Food Program

Mali

Catholic Relief Services
Helen Keller International
Millennium Challenge Corporation

Mexico

CIMMYT
The News

Mongolia

Mercy Corps

Morocco

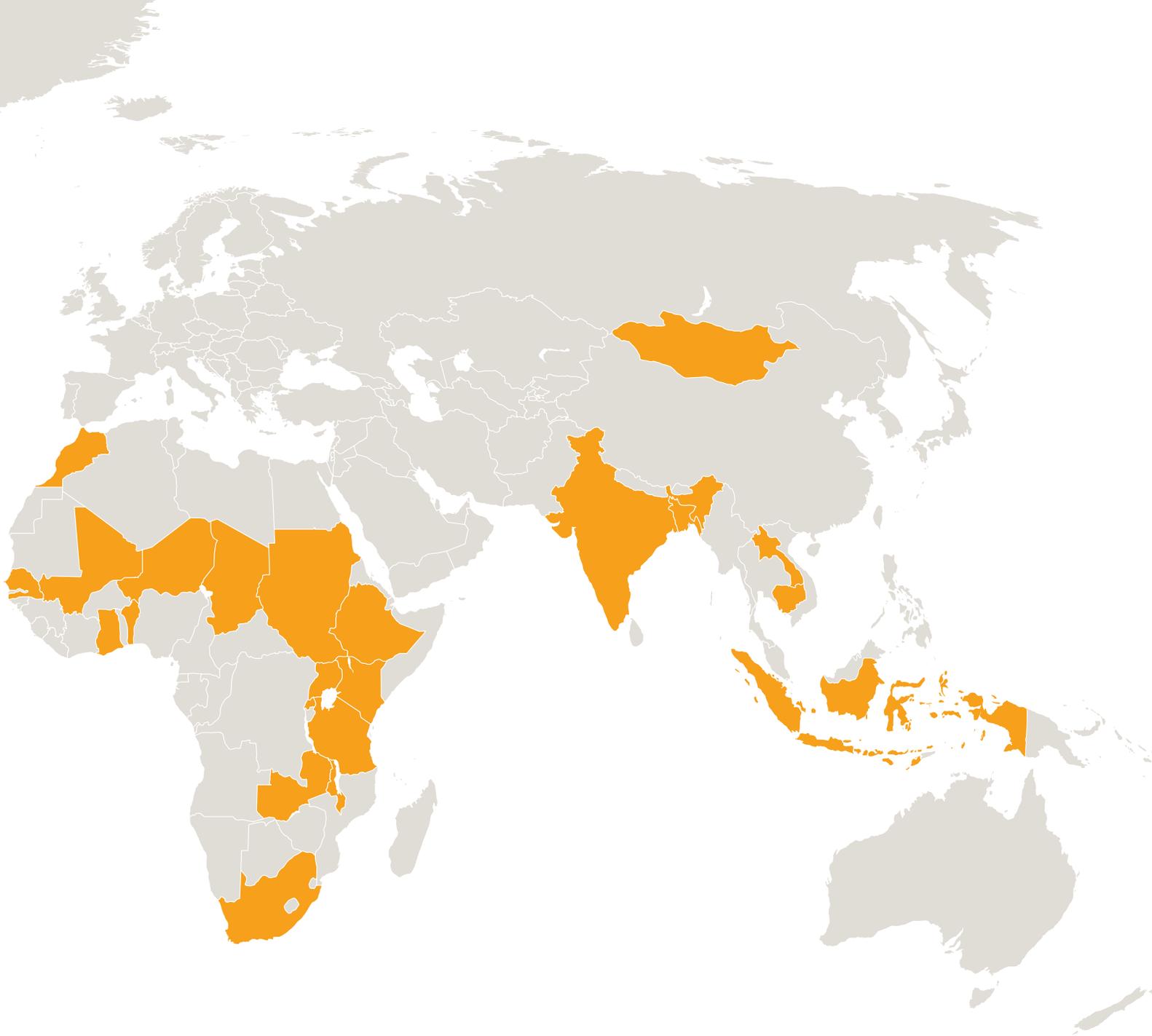
Management Systems International

Niger

International Crops Research Institute for Semi-Arid Tropics

Peru

Peruvian Center for Social Study (CEPES)



Rwanda

Action Aid

Senegal

Counterpart International
Helen Keller International
Oxfam America

South Africa

Africare
Afristar Foundation
Association for Rural Advancement
UN World Food Program

Sudan

Catholic Relief Services

Tanzania

Land O'Lakes

Uganda

AGHA
International Food Policy Research
Institute
Physicians for Human Rights
Save the Children
Uganda Land Alliance
UN World Food Program
USAID

Zambia

Christian Children's Fund
Concern Worldwide



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Leland Fellows work toward creating a food secure world for all.