

COUNCIL ON INTERNATIONAL EDUCATIONAL EXCHANGE (CIEE) – Congress-Bundestag Youth
Exchange Program

S-ECAPY-10-GR-083(MJ)

Final Report: 2010-2011

Submitted by: Tsveta Semova, Director USA High School Operations and Scholarship Programs

The 2010-2011 program year marked the 14th year of CIEE's administration of the Congress-Bundestag Youth Exchange Program. CIEE is privileged to continue managing the scholarship, and looks forward to future years administering and enhancing the program. In PY 2010-2011, CIEE received 57 German participants screened, selected, and oriented by Experiment e.V., our partner organization in Germany. CIEE selected 50 American participants from the Southeastern United States and Puerto Rico to be received by Experiment in Germany. Local field staff as well as in-office staff in both Germany and the US supervised and supported the students throughout the year. In administering the grant award CIEE provided the following:

CB Inbound

Arrival Orientation: CIEE administered the program for 57 participants. By program end, we retained 98% of our participants, ending the year with 56 participants. One of the ways in which we gauged the outcome of the Arrival Orientation was to ask students to provide their feedback in the form of evaluations. These evaluations were very positive with most students expressing their satisfaction with the orientation and stated they had a good sense of preparation for their upcoming year.

International Education Week: CIEE received documentation from all 57 students for presentations they gave at elementary, middle, and high schools, as well as local churches throughout the US. The goal of International Education Week was met, as the students' exposure to the wider community enabled them to promote increased understanding of their home country through discussion and in most cases, visual presentations.

Mid-year Meeting: Mid-year meetings were held for 2 or more CB students between January and March 2011. The outcome of the mid-year meetings was that students overwhelmingly described their exchange year so far as a positive experience in their mid-year program evaluations. Another successful outcome of the mid-year meeting was the ability for many students to interact with state government, serving as pages or touring government offices. For many, this exposure fulfilled the program requirement to make contact with a Congressional Representative during their time in the US.

Community Service: 57 CB students reported their projects with over 2,600 volunteer hours spent in their host communities. In addition to the program components, CIEE's Community Project requirement enabled students to better understand the American cultural principle of volunteerism, and many students considered it a valuable experience which they hoped to put into action more widely in Germany.

Re-entry Meeting: The re-entry meeting prepared students through discussion and activities for their return home, but explaining the concept of reverse culture shock and how it may affect them more strongly than culture shock. The re-entry meeting also provided the opportunity for students to evaluate the program.

Program Monitoring: CIEE full-time staff visited a total of 17 CBYX students in their host families. This represents 30% of our CBYX students, 10% over our commitment of 20%. Host families reported enjoying the exchange experience and the presence of our students in their homes. We also visited high schools whenever possible and used the opportunity to meet and train field staff.

CB Outbound

Selection: 50 students were selected from a pool of 120 applicants. CIEE selected a group of participants that represented every state in the Southeast US region. By the end of the year, we had retained 92% of the participants.

Pre-Departure Orientation: All 50 students attended the program orientation in Washington, D.C. which delineated expectations for the year ahead through participant interaction with program staff and alumni.

Mid-year Meeting: Successfully conducted by Experiment e.V. from January 20-23, 2011. Through increased focus on seminars about communication and problem-solving for social situations, fewer students expressed need to change host families in the latter half of the year.

Re-entry Meeting: Students expressed much satisfaction with program management and structure and all students shared their strong desire to work on behalf of the program as alumni volunteers.

In summary, CBYX students benefitted their home countries (Germany and the US) and the society as a whole by educating their host communities, and in turn gained an in-depth understanding of life in their hosting country, which they were able to bring home with them after the program year.

FINAL PROGRAM REPORT

Grant Number S-ECPY-10-GR-084(SM) 2010-2011 Program Year

As part of the 2010-2011 Congress-Bundestag Youth Exchange for Young Professionals, 75 Germans and 75 Americans between the ages of 18 and 24 were exchanged between the United States and the Federal Republic of Germany for the purpose of fostering ties of friendship and cultural understanding. CDS International, Inc., (now Cultural Vistas after a merger with AIPT) headquartered in New York City, administered the program in the U.S., in cooperation with InWEnt gGmbH (now GIZ after a merger with GTZ), headquartered in Bonn, who administered the program in Germany. Program dates were July/August 2010 to July/August 2011. The participants in this program, chosen from diverse backgrounds, were able to gain first-hand experience of three major aspects of life in their respective host countries: the family, the academic community, and the workplace. The participant, given this otherwise unattainable opportunity of tripartite exchange, served as a cultural ambassador who knows what he or she has to offer and what he or she can gain in friendship, cross-cultural learning, skill acquisition, professional development and institutional impact. Participants on both sides of the program were able to act as multipliers by interactions with people they met both during the program and as alumni. Special emphasis was once again International Education Week. Participants were students were required to participate in various projects and activities in their communities. There were 2 break-offs on the American side: One due to medical reasons and the other unfortunately never communicated the reason for leaving the program with the administering organizations. On the German side were three break-offs, two due to severe homesickness and one due to disciplinary reasons. In this program year, CDS continued its active involvement in the international exchange community in the interest of protecting programs like CBYX. The increased visibility of CDS staff at professional conferences, continued to enhance the program's stature in the eyes of university and college administrators and among the business community. Efforts to enhance program prestige and support in the public sphere by more directly involving members of Congress were further intensified, by requiring community service of German participants and by further promoting and developing the CBYX community on the State Department alumni website for all CBYX participants to support follow-on activities.

Grant Summary Report - Ben Franklin Transatlantic Fellows Initiative

Award #: S-ECAPY-10-GR-087(JJ)

Allan Loudon, Director; Alessandra Von Burg, Curriculum Dir., Linda Petrou, Administrator

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The 2010 program was a success in exploring intersections among new media, public advocacy, and social enactment. New thematic elements in 2010 included documentary film and civic engagement. Each theme was designed to integrate Internet and public outreach with an accent on transatlantic issues.

Most importantly, the highly interactive nature of the Institute stressed face-to-face bonding. The Fellows forged strong relationships and there has been heavy post-Institute Internet traffic among all participants. They reported an overall satisfaction with your BFTF experience at WFU of 4.82 in 2010 (5 point scale) Data is reported in the full narrative providing ratings and open-ended responses for all institute features; administrative, curricular, and activities.

The story of the Ben Franklin Institute is best documented at <http://bftf.org>, the program's web page.

In addition we have funded follow-on projects involving numerous fellows across countries and years. Two short examples: A group of eight received funding of over 50,000 Euros (including) to run a debate workshop in 2009 in Belgium. They are held another in 2011 year in Germany. Additional follow-on projects were chronicled at the website, including Ben Franklin style programs, serving large numbers of students in Luxembourg and Armenia. Numerous other projects are underway or have been implemented by the fellows.

From our perspective the outcome of the program that matters most was not the curriculum or activities *per se*, but rather the *personal empowerment* the fellows discover in themselves. Dozens of the fellows have found ways to return to the US for higher education and have stated to us that participating in BFTF made the difference in their admittance. Many more Fellows have become civically engaged in their countries. Simply put, they believe they can change the world and that they have the character to do so.

COUNCIL ON INTERNATIONAL EDUCATIONAL EXCHANGE (CIEE) - Future Leaders Exchange Program

S-ECAPY-11-GR-090(MJ) Final Report: 2010-2011

Submitted by: Tsveta Semova, Director USA High School and Scholarship Programs

CIEE successfully administered the FLEX program to 72 students throughout the 2010-2011 program year. We had five early returns, ending the year with 67 students. CIEE's FLEX students were active members of their host families and communities, and worked diligently to overturn stereotypes of Eurasian countries. In doing so, students gained first-hand insight into American society and culture. CIEE worked closely with American Councils and ECA throughout the year to ensure that any issue that arose was carefully handled, and in collaboration with our experienced and dedicated Field Staff, we were able to resolve each problem to the best of our ability.

Through their involvement in their schools and communities, FLEX students achieved the primary goals of the FLEX program including gaining a deep understanding of civic responsibility, leadership, and community service. During their participation in program activities FLEX students developed essential skill sets and useful tools which they were able to bring back to their home countries and share with their natural families, community members, and peers. CIEE had 100% participation in International Education Week 2010, and many of our FLEX students gave multiple presentations to varying audiences in diverse settings. Students prepared thoughtful presentations, and proudly shared their traditions, cultures, and customs with their classmates and community members. In this way FLEX students acted as ambassadors to their home countries.

CIEE requires FLEX students to complete a minimum of 20 community service hours per program year, and during the 2010-2011 year we had one student complete over 100 hours of service which qualified her to receive a Service Award from the ECA for her commitment to serving her hosting community. Students participated in clean-up projects, assisted with natural disaster relief, volunteered their time with local animal shelters, and helped organize events for young children. Students learned the countless ways their efforts can directly benefit others and gained an understanding of how vital it is for members of a community to help and support each other.

Local Coordinators organized educational enhancement activities to expose FLEX students to US government and democratic values. Direct interaction with members of state and local government educated students about the role of civil servants as well as the importance of leadership and accountability. Enhancement activities, including tours of businesses and enterprises as well as meetings with small business owners, provided FLEX students with real examples of a free market economy in the US. One example of students being directly exposed to the US political system is the cluster in Indiana visited the state house and participated in the Page program where they met local representatives.

Each year CIEE reviews and analyzes the statistical data collected from the volunteer surveys sent to students and host families. This allows us to assess the progress and growth of the FLEX program and to highlight areas which need improvement. When asked to rate how supported they felt by their Local Coordinator throughout the year 78% of FLEX host families rated their Local Coordinators good or excellent. Considering that 66% of FLEX host families had never hosted an exchange student before, 83% of all FLEX host families reported that their experience was good or excellent, and 59% would host again in the future. FLEX students responded to the end-of-year survey as well: 96% of FLEX students said the program was effective in introducing them to volunteerism and community service, 100% felt that the program increased their understanding of U.S. democratic values and U.S. government, 98% said that they felt they were exposed to diversity within their schools and communities and 100% felt they gained leadership skills throughout their exchange experience. 81% of the students reported that their overall opinion of the U.S. improved as a result of coming on the program. One of the students commented: "I learned a lot about American culture and I understand now why it is so different. I also taught a lot of Americans Russian culture. I tried so many new things, for example volunteerism, school clubs and school musicals. I developed excellent relationships with my host family and my friends. It's been a great year!" Many FLEX students mentioned in the survey that this was the best year in their lives. One FLEX student wrote: "I love my host family, American friends and my host city! Thanks for this year! You made my dream come true".

To summarize, FLEX students directly benefitted US society and their home countries by educating their peers and community members about life in Eurasia. The relationships they formed helped to further their understanding of life in the US which they were able to bring home with them after the program year. FLEX students actively assisted in promoting tolerance and peace by dispelling stereotypes and misconceptions about American and Eurasian cultures.