



INTERNATIONAL VISITOR LEADERSHIP PROGRAM

<http://exchanges.state.gov/education/ivp>



Introduction

The U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs funds and administers the International Visitor Leadership Program (IVLP), one of its premier professional exchange programs. The IVLP is designed to build mutual understanding between the U.S. and other countries through carefully designed visits that reflect the participants' professional interests and support U.S. foreign policy goals. Participants are established or potential foreign opinion makers in government, public policy, media, education, labor, the arts, and other key fields. Selected by American embassies abroad, International Visitors come to the United States to meet and confer with their professional counterparts and to gain an appreciation of the ethnic, cultural, political, and socio-economic diversity of the U.S. In 2008, approximately 4,000 International Visitors participated in the program.

The IVLP is carried out through close collaboration with eight non-profit program agencies in Washington, D.C. and a network of over 90 community-based organizations across the U.S. whose members arrange professional meetings, cultural activities and home hospitality for the visitors. These organizations are members of the National Council for International Visitors (<http://www.ncin.org/>). Tens of thousands of Americans volunteer their time and expertise to strengthening relations between the United States and other countries through the International Visitor Leadership Program.

IVLP SNAPSHOT

- Over 190,000 International Visitors have participated in the program since its inception in 1940.
- A typical IVLP project is three weeks in length, and includes visits to four U.S. cities. IVLP participants meet with professional counterparts and visit U.S. public and private sector organizations related to the project theme. In addition, IVs are usually hosted by American families and participate in cultural activities.
- As an example, ten Pashtun tribal elders and community leaders from the border regions of Afghanistan and Pakistan met with U.S. government officials and non-governmental entities to explore strategies of cross-border cooperation and the integration of tribal traditions and governance with national development priorities.
- At any given point during the year, approximately 250 IVs are on projects in the United States. In 2008, over 4,000 IVs participated in over 900 projects on themes such as:
 - Counter-terrorism
 - International Crime and Drug Prevention
 - Combating HIV/AIDS
 - Civic Education
 - NGO Management
 - Foreign Policy
 - Religious Tolerance
 - Democracy and Rule of Law
 - Journalism

Alumni

Almost 300 IVLP alumni are current or former Heads of Government or Chiefs of State. Alumni include:

- *President Hamid Karzai of Afghanistan ('87)*
- *President Alvaro Uribe Velez of Colombia ('98)*
- *President Mwai Kibaki of Kenya ('99)*
- *Turkish President Abdullah Gul ('95)*
- *Former Prime Minister Helen Clark of New Zealand ('98)*
- *President Nicolas Sarkozy of France ('85)*
- *Prime Minister Gordon Brown of The United Kingdom ('84/'92)*

Educational and Cultural Programs

The International Visitor Leadership Program exchanges are among more than 30,000 annual exchanges managed by the Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs. Other academic and professional exchange programs include the Fulbright Program and the Citizen Exchanges Program. For further information, see www.exchanges.state.gov.



"The IVL Program offers priceless opportunities to understand the United States and the American people through direct experience, and to make valuable contacts...I am immensely grateful for the insights into the U.S., which this exchange scheme provided. I have drawn on them regularly since then."

— Tony Blair, former British Prime Minister