

MSU College of Education to Collaborate with Egyptian Universities and Schools

In keeping with MSU's long-standing involvement in international education, the College of Education has launched a project funded by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) to collaborate in the reform of teacher education programs in Egypt. The Faculty of Education Reform (FOER) project is part of a worldwide USAID effort known as the Educational Quality Improvement Program (EQUIP), managed by the American Institutes for Research and the Academy for Educational Development.

In Egypt, FOER is just one component of a broad-based initiative for the systemic reform of elementary and secondary education. The focus of FOER will be the creation of mutually beneficial school–university partnerships to improve, for example, student teaching, induction programs, in-service education, and school-based reform. Funding for MSU work over the five years of the project is \$7.3 million.

To accomplish this paradigm shift in relationships between schools and universities, the project is working initially in ten Egyptian universities in seven governorates across the country. The project's main office in Cairo houses the project director and four content-area specialists, all members of faculties of education in different universities who come to the project with distinguished professional backgrounds and records of achievement. The Cairo director is Mark Ginsburg, on leave from his position as professor and director of the Institute for International Studies in Education at the University of Pittsburgh. At MSU the project is led by Jack Schwille, assistant dean for International Studies in Education, College of Education, and campus project director Gretchen Sanford.

Part of the long-term success of this project will be based on more extensive engagement by MSU College of Education faculty in the multitude of opportunities available in the expansive project. A number of faculty members have made visits to Egypt since the project started in summer 2004.

Although the project is primarily based in Egypt, plans have been made to offer many collaborative group experiences on MSU's campus. The first of



In September 2004, a kickoff conference was held in Cairo, Egypt, for the Faculty of Education Reform (FOER) project in that country. The conference drew education faculty from a number of Egyptian universities. Here, several people involved in the administration of the FOER project are on the rooftop of the project headquarters in Cairo. Shown (left to right) are John Weideman, professor of education and sociology and director of the Institute for International Studies in Education, University of Pittsburgh; Rhonda Egidio, professor of counseling, educational psychology, and special education, MSU College of Education; Richard Prawat, chair of the Department of Counseling, Educational Psychology, and Special Education; Mary Anne Walker, managing director of the MSU Office of International Development; and Mark Ginsburg, Faculty of Education Reform Division Director, Egypt Education Reform Project.

these study tours occurred in January 2005 when 15 professors from different universities in Egypt spent a week on MSU's campus. The program allowed participants to get a better understanding of the U.S. educational system with special emphasis on how MSU establishes relationships with school districts in Michigan. Participating MSU faculty members presented technical information regarding their research, planned school visits for the Egyptian participants, and informally shared their professional interests with fellow colleagues.

The project will capitalize on the latest educational technology to provide online collaboration among U.S. and Egyptian professors and school personnel. The aim is to support communication and interaction at a level commensurate with projects in which all participants are in the same place and share the same building.

—Gretchen Sanford and Jack Schwille