

COMPLEMENTARITY AND COLLABORATION:  
LEVERAGING THE TITLE VI AND FULBRIGHT-HAYS INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMS

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We are all familiar with the theoretical logic of leverage and the multiplying effect of the Title VI and Fulbright-Hays international programs, but I would like to address these issues through a personal narrative to convey something of what this really means for those of us who use the programs—how the complementarity of the programs has made our work possible, how the programs have galvanized our institutions into action, and how in the last decade we have increased the programs' leverage through extensive institutional collaborations.

As an undergraduate at Western Kentucky University in 1973, I was invited to attend a faculty seminar on South Asia given by scholars from a small private school on the south side of Chicago. Little did I know that these distinguished faculty were from a *Title VI National Resource Center for South Asia* (NRC) and their presence was the direct result of their outreach program. That simple outreach investment produced an enormous return, because that weekend I was captivated by an urbanity and erudition I had never encountered, and I dreamed someday to study with those two men—Edward C. Dimock, Jr., and A. K. Ramanujan, both distinguished service professors. I tried to teach myself Bangla, but with no Bangla speakers—much less teachers—around, I drove the 75 miles to Nashville each week just to hear the language spoken. Armed with my self-taught Bangla, some three years later I followed these men to Chicago. During my eleven years of graduate work at The University of Chicago, I was supported at a critical juncture by a *Foreign Language and Area Studies* (FLAS) fellowship, then with a language fellowship to study Bangla intensively for a year in Kolkata at one of the *American Overseas Research Centers* (AORC), the American Institute of Indian Studies. I returned to Chicago fluent in the language, comfortable and well connected in Kolkata and India, and soon found my way back to study Hindu India on a *Fulbright-Hays Doctoral Dissertation Research* (DDRA) fellowship and my PhD soon followed. With these credentials I made the transition to faculty, joining North Carolina State University in 1986. A short time later, on a *Fulbright-Hays Research Abroad* (FRA) fellowship, I expanded my credentials to address Islamic Bengal in Bangladesh and there is where I now work: on the cusp between the Islamic and Hindu cultures that make up the Bangla-speaking world.

When I landed in North Carolina I was dismayed to discover that there were precious few South Asianists around and those who were had few professional connections. Working with colleagues David Gilmartin at NCSU, John Richards at Duke, and Joanne Waghorne at UNC, we started a small reading group, a works-in-progress colloquium to share our expertise, an exchange that led us to collaborate: team teaching, the occasional seminar or workshop, and lobbying to place ourselves on key committees to hire South Asia faculty on the three campuses. This working group became a faculty cooperative: the Triangle South Asia Consortium. Our growth was all serendipity until we turned to the *Title VI Undergraduate International Studies and Foreign Language* (UISFL) program to establish Hindi and Urdu on the campuses of UNC

and NCSU to complement Duke's lone faculty member. Language classes were broadcast live and interactively through teleconferencing studios, and within three years we were servicing more than 120 students per year. The universities committed to tenure-track faculty lines in the languages, and now enrollments average 170 per term. Following this success we returned to *UISFL* to jump start three other Less Commonly Taught Languages (LCTLs)—Bangla, Tamil, and Persian—but this time creating a mentoring system managed by a linguist, an expert in second-language acquisition who works on all three campuses. As a result, Persian is now vested in collaboration with our Middle East colleagues; Bangla and Tamil are still offered with subsidy because of small enrollments. Importantly both *UISFL* grants contained strong outreach components that created a network of community college faculty in North and South Carolina, many of whom at our urging have subsequently completed *Seminars Abroad* (SA) and *Group Projects Abroad* (GPA) bringing South Asia into the regular curricula. We are now working with our middle school and high school international baccalaureate programs to the same end.

We were frustrated, however, by the dearth of language-teaching materials available for the new technologies that we were deploying, so NCSU professor Afroz Taj was funded by a multi-year grant from *International Research and Studies* (IRS) to develop an ambitious first-year Hindi program for the web using interactive technologies for drills and grammar instruction, videography from class exercises as well as scripted dramas filmed in India. Titled "A Door into Hindi" ([http://www.ncsu.edu/project/hindi\\_lessons/](http://www.ncsu.edu/project/hindi_lessons/)), that program is one of two to set the standards for digital instruction in South Asian languages. It is currently being expanded to focus on Urdu through another *IRS* grant. As a result of these experiments in televideo instruction and new web-based pedagogical tools, extending now to include pod-casts, blogs, and language chat-rooms, we are now partnering with Fayetteville State University, an HBCU, to help them create a Hindi-Urdu language program.

The activities of Consortium faculty attracted others to the area, and the universities began to build faculty strength systematically; by 1997 we were formally sanctioned by the UNC system as the North Carolina Center for South Asia Studies (<http://www.jhfc.duke.edu/csas/>), having grown to more than three dozen South Asia specialists and another three dozen ancillary faculty. Because of the *UISFL* investment of less than \$100,000 per year for six years of this twelve-year growth period, our language capability grew, enrollments mushroomed, the universities invested heavily in new faculty positions—not just in language—and the three university libraries increased collection in the Indic vernaculars. In 2000 we submitted a successful bid for a *Title VI Undergraduate National Resource Center* (NRC) and again in 2003, with the latest application pending. Since 2000, the universities' combined commitments have risen to more than \$3,600,000 annually, more than a thirteen-to-one return on Title VI NRC annual investment (sources: NRC Grant Award P0015A000148 [FY 2000-2003], p. 30; NRC Grant Award PO15A0300153 [FY 2003-2006] p. 6; and NRC pending application [FY 2006-2010], p. 4).

Our experiments in collaboration were not limited to the Triangle Research Park area of North Carolina, but led us to look for partners nationally to address system-wide educational issues. Initially we teamed with The University of Chicago and Columbia University to create digital dictionaries for twenty-two Indic languages (<http://dsal.uchicago.edu/dictionaries/>). Funded by *IRS*, these dictionaries are free on-line, accessible through the larger Digital South Asia Library (<http://dsal.uchicago.edu/>) project portal, which has been funded by *IRS* and *Technological*

*Innovation and Cooperation for Foreign Information Access* (TICFIA). Both of those digital initiatives are now expanding. And as a result of that involvement, we became supporting members of the Center for South Asia Libraries (CSAL; <http://dsal.uchicago.edu/csali/>), which makes available research collections in the subcontinent and now functions as an *AORC*.

During the last decade, our kind of collaboration has increasingly become the norm. At our urging, South Asia NRC directors supported the creation of the first *Title VI South Asia Language Resource Center* (LRC; <http://salrc.uchicago.edu/>) focused primarily on the development of pedagogical tools and evaluation. And remembering vividly my own frustrations as an undergraduate seeking Bangla training in rural Kentucky, I persuaded the NRC Directors to subsidize the creation of a *South Asia Summer Language Institute* (SASLI; <http://www.wisc.edu/sasli/>), which now runs annually at the University of Wisconsin. Each *NRC* contributes dues and *FLAS* fellowships for students from all universities. We teach one hundred students each year in a dozen LCTLs from South Asia at the elementary and intermediate levels; for advanced study we route students through the complementary intensive year-long programs of the *AORCs*. We have created a pipeline that allows us to train students effectively in languages we cannot all afford to offer individually, and we accelerate the language acquisition of those aspiring to become specialists in the languages we do. One result is that *NRCs* and other graduate programs are requiring students to enter programs with a greater language proficiency, which in turn produces more sophisticated graduates. But trying to offer these languages regularly has made clear the dearth of available qualified instructors, so SASLI and the SALRC are teaming with the South Asia *AORCs*: American Institute of Bangladesh Studies (AIBS; <http://www.aibs.net/>), American Institute of Indian Studies (AIIS; <http://www.indiastudies.org/>), and soon American Institute of Pakistan Studies (AIPS; <http://www.pakistanstudies-aips.org/>), and the American Institute for Sri Lanka Studies (AISLS; <http://www.aisls.org/>) along with the *Council of American Overseas Research Centers* (CAORC; <http://www.caorc.org/>) to identify new talent, to train native language speakers, and start an exchange of faculty between SASLI and the *AORC* programs. CAORC in turn is working with the *AORCs* to increase the number of overseas summer language programs. As part of this coordinated effort to extend expertise in the region, it is not insignificant that the current Director of the North Carolina Center for South Asia Studies, John Richards, sensing a larger need, worked with CAORC to create the American Institute of Afghanistan Studies (AIAS; <http://www.jhfc.duke.edu/aias/>), a group that should become a new *AORC* shortly.

At every juncture—individual and institutional—Title VI and Fulbright-Hays international programs have provided critical support, usually the only support available anywhere in public or private America, in turn creating a multiplier effect: that seed money has stimulated non-federal support that over time has sustained and grown our programs into the dynamic forces they are today. Each of the Title VI and Fulbright-Hays competitions targets a clearly demarcated constituency and its special needs. But these programming areas are not arbitrary or haphazard, rather they are deliberately complementary, with opportunities in one area routinely supplementing and reaping benefits in others. As a result, individuals earn the credentials that forge the specialists our country so sorely needs, and our universities in turn are able to educate our students more effectively in an increasingly internationalized world. Yet the demand for this expertise is only growing as our government resources in the Title VI and Fulbright-Hays International Programs are not, in spite of their demonstrable successes.