



## U.S. Teachers Want to "Give Something Back" in Africa

### Sullivan Foundation sending 48 American teachers to Africa this year

By Susan Ellis  
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Abuja, Nigeria -- President Bush announced July 12 at the Leon Sullivan Summit being held in Abuja that the U.S. Agency for International Development is providing a new \$5 million grant to the Sullivan Foundation to support its program to send Americans to teach in African schools and universities. Mac A. Stewart, vice provost for academic affairs at Ohio State University in Columbus, Ohio, and an official in the Sullivan program, discussed the program with the Washington File.

The Sullivan Foundation program is called the International Foundation for Education and Self Help (IFESH). Stewart chairs the committee that sends teachers to Africa. He said 48 American teachers will be sent this year. They have been selected for their competence from about 800 applications and more than 1,000 enquiries.

The African countries "tell us what they want and we attempt to match that," he said, adding that occasionally it is a little difficult as when Benin asked for a Ph.D in mathematics. "We get more applicants from the humanities -- social and behavioral sciences, but we get the full gamut -- all the way from pre-school up through the university level," he said. In the program all the Americans teach African teachers.

The new grant announced by Bush, said Stewart, who has worked with the program for ten years, will provide "a continuation of the program for another two years."

Who are the Americans interested in giving up a year or more of their lives, with little pay, to teach in Africa? Stewart said "Very often the motivation of teachers who are going is their desire to help others. We attempt to arrange to meet the goal of IFESH, which is self help and self sufficiency. So we teach the teachers rather than just having a class and leaving."

Teachers receive "a small stipend, similar to that Peace Corps Volunteers receive," he said, "so it's essentially a volunteer activity. The country they're going to finds them housing." The main motivation, regardless of ethnic background of the teachers, is "interest in doing good and in Africa," Stewart said.

Asked whether they must find new jobs on their return to the United States, Stewart said universities often grant leave to such teachers, and this year "the Columbus (Ohio) public schools granted leave for persons participating in the program. This is the only such case I've heard of from public schools," he said, "but its going in that direction."

"Many of the persons who go are recently retired," he said. "In their applications many say this is something they're wanted to do, for a combination of two reasons: they have desired to visit Africa but they also desire to give back to others. Now they have that opportunity."

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