



**Request for Proposal
For
Assessment of the Short-term Results of the Education Leaders' Training
Program and the Principals' Training Program**

**Sofia
May 2017**

Letter of Invitation

America for Bulgaria Foundation (ABF) is issuing a Request for Proposal (RFP) for developing a methodology and conducting a study of the Education Leaders' Training Program (ELTP) and the Principals' Training Program (PTP) to assess their short-term results. ABF is soliciting responses from organizations (companies and NGOs) or consortia with experience in evaluating training programs and results-based evaluation. Respondents will be competing to provide the services set forth herein in the Terms of Reference. The submissions of all Respondents shall be compared and evaluated pursuant to the evaluation criteria set forth in this RFP and a single Respondent shall be selected.

This RFP does not commit ABF to select any organization, award any work order, pay any cost incurred in preparing a response, or procure any services or supplies. ABF reserves the right to accept or reject any or all proposals received, cancel or modify the RFP in part or in its entirety, or change the RFP guidelines, when it is in the best interest of ABF to do so.

Selection Criteria:

- ✓ Demonstrated clear understanding of the assignment;
- ✓ Composition and Experience of the team:
 - Proven experience of the team leader in conducting complex evaluations;
 - Solid knowledge and understanding of programs for professional qualification of teachers and school principals;
 - Proven experience of the team in assessing training programs;
 - Demonstrated strong knowledge of Bulgarian school education system;
 - Knowledge of the world's best educational systems;
 - Experience in sample design, devising qualitative and quantitative methodology and implementing social studies and impact evaluations;
 - Experience in evaluation of effectiveness and efficiency of programs, projects and policies.
- ✓ Adequacy of the proposal and choice of the analytical framework;
- ✓ Organization of the assessment process, quality assurance methods, and risk mitigating measures;
- ✓ Firm track records.

Proposals should include:

- ✓ A cover letter;
- ✓ A description of the proposed approach/methodology for carrying out the assignment;
- ✓ Statement of Qualification of the Organization, including samples of relevant previous pieces of work, and contact list for tentative recommendations;



- ✓ Staff qualifications (CVs of the proposed key experts);
- ✓ Detailed Cost Proposal in USD broken down in categories;
- ✓ Conflict of interest disclosure.

The deadline for submission of proposals is **6:00 p.m. Sofia time on May 29, 2017**. Late submissions won't be considered. Proposals shall be submitted in electronic format to itzankova@us4bg.org with a copy to ibossev@us4bg.org

Yours sincerely,

Ivanka Tzankova
Director, Impact Assessment and Evaluation

Terms of Reference

1. Background Information

Supporting good teaching is a priority of ABF in the education sector. Improving the professional qualification of teachers and equipping them with new skills and practices to apply in the classroom is a key approach to modernizing the teaching and learning processes at school, thus contributing to the improvement of Bulgarian school education. While ABF has received extremely positive feedback about its teachers' and principals' training programs, we would like to take an unbiased look at the results of these programs and assess what changes they have resulted in. Five years is not long enough to expect radical changes at the classrooms/schools of the trained teachers/principals. Nevertheless, we hope that some initial and short-term results can be registered. The findings of the assessment will allow ABF to fine tune the programs to make them more efficient.

Description of the Programs

Education Leaders' Training Program (ELTP): This program has been implemented since 2012. The educators travel to the U.S. for a dynamic three-week training program, including academic sessions, followed by practicum at NYC schools.

The academic component (customized seminars on various themes) takes place at Columbia University's Teacher's College. Topics include: the best and most innovative teaching methods; use of interactive teaching and learning techniques that will help students achieve optimal retention and improve their critical thinking skills; emerging technologies as a tool for enriching learning experiences throughout the education continuum; how to deploy, manage, and evaluate information and communication technologies in classrooms for optimal educational effect; and how to create a nurturing classroom environment that encourages student participation, facilitates intellectual discourse and generates critical thinking skills.

In addition to academic training, the program includes visits to New York City's (NYC) most creative, results-driven and innovative schools. Bulgarian teachers are paired with NYC teachers of the same or related subjects to foster productive discussions and lay the foundations of long-term relationships and collaboration. At the end of each class day, participants have the opportunity to debrief their respective master teachers and ask in-depth questions about what they experienced throughout the day. For more information, please see Appendix 1.

Thus far, 74 Bulgarian teachers have participated in the program.

Principals Training Program (PTP): The PTP provides rich professional development to a range of principals in Bulgaria's public school system. The program has run successfully since 2014 in two complementary components: a week-long seminar in Bulgaria and an 8-10 -day exchange visit to New York.

Utilizing the custom-designed curriculum, experts from the Bank Street College of Education facilitate a weeklong seminar in Bulgaria for 30 Bulgarian principals. Experiential in nature and emulating the real work of principals, the seminar sessions are designed using the most advanced approaches in adult learning and incorporate research and the use of protocols for group work. Furthermore, the seminar focuses on both individual and team learning. The focus is on helping principals work with their teachers to create learning communities that will in turn support greater student engagement.

Following the seminar in Bulgaria, the school principals work to develop a School Innovation Plan (SIP), a final assignment which is due two weeks after the completion of their program. The SIP, which normally incorporate the material covered during the seminar, outlines the principals' visions and plans for improving their schools. The SIPs is evaluated by the U.S. seminar facilitators. The seminar participants with the strongest SIPs are invited to participate in a 10-day Principals' Delegation Program in the United States usually in the beginning of the school year.

This program component addresses the reported need for a stronger management culture and skills among public school principals and their need to better develop effective school and/or teacher strategies. The PTP program involves learning about effective school leadership, educational management, and new integrative curricular practices in the contemporary classroom. The vehicle for much of this work is through learning how to begin and sustain successful learning communities in their schools. In NYC the PTPs visit predominately "underserved" urban public schools that face a range of challenges that parallel many issues faced by principals in Bulgaria. For more information, please see Appendix 2.

Thus far, 93 principals have participated in the Bulgarian seminars and 40 of them have traveled to the States under the exchange component of the program.

2. Evaluation Objectives and Expected Results

ABF would like to pursue a study of the ELTP and PTP programs to assess their short-term results and use the findings for improving and fine-tuning of the design of both programs. The main objectives are:

- Assess and document the short-term results of ELTP and PTP;
- Check the following hypotheses:
 - ✓ The effect of ELTP at a school level depends on many factors, including the number of teachers participating in the program: with one teacher, the effect dwindles down very quickly; with more teachers participating in the program the possibilities for getting more tangible improvements/changes/innovations grow;
 - ✓ The constructive and active involvement of the school principal is a key factor for the expected overall positive changes at school level after participation at ELTP;
 - ✓ The program could have more results if continuous professional support is provided to the participants.

The study should answer the following **research questions**:

ELTP Participants:

1. What have the participants learned at the training program at Columbia University in New York?
2. How many of the teachers trained under ELTP are still working as teachers? What has happened to those who no longer teach at school?
3. What are the new or improved methods and practices that ELTP participants have introduced to their teaching practices as a result of the program, if any?
4. Are the teachers using the practices and methods for assessing students' achievements that they were exposed to during the training?
5. What changes, if any, have occurred in the beliefs and behavior of the ELTP participants, i.e. relationship with their colleagues, relationship with the students, motivation, desire to continue to learn, to mention a few things? Analyze the reasons if no changes have taken place.
6. What other type of support would be helpful to the ELTP trainees once back to the country?
7. Have the trained teachers reached out to other teachers? How many teachers were reached out? At the same school or not only? Provide evidence for how that has happened.
8. Have the ELTP trainees had any impact on the teaching methods and practices of other teachers? At the same school or not only? Provide evidence. What were the trainees able to do together with other teachers?
9. What is the initial impact of the new teaching methods and practices on the students of the ELTP trainees?

PTP participants:

1. What is the biggest effect of the PTP seminars on the participants? What are the personal and institutional changes that have occurred as a result of the training?
2. What has happened to the School Innovation Plans developed by the participants?
 - Which parts of the SIP have been implemented? Which were not? Are there trends across or within cohorts? Are there patterns in terms of obstacles reported by principals?
 - Have they been implemented and what are the major changes/effects?
 - How do the results relate to the number of teachers who have already been exposed to other ABF programs?
 - Has the model been adopted by the school as appropriate for future improvements?

- What has been the reaction of the students and teachers at the school and the community?
 - Analyze the reasons if the School Innovation Plans were not implemented.
3. Have the principals created a collaborative environment for the teachers, i.e. have they nurtured the establishment of Professional Learning Communities (PLC), a major tool introduced during the principals' training? What are the cultural tensions for them at Bulgarian schools?
 4. What has been the effect of the PLCs?
 - Do PLCs exist at the school? Are they vibrant?
 - What are the major benefits of the PLC for the participants?
 5. Are the principals using protocols and what for?
 6. What other changes have occurred in their leadership practices?
 7. What has been the most pragmatic thing taken away from the PTP seminars?
 8. What are the perceived barriers to perceived change?
 9. What additional support would the principals like/expect to receive?
 10. What is the added value of the overseas component of the program?

For both programs:

1. What are unexpected short-term results, if any?
2. Can we observe differences in the results depending on the year of the training, years of professional experience of the teacher, geographic location of the school, to mention a few factors?
3. What are the factors contributing to the successful use and application of the knowledge and practices learned at the training?
4. What else can be done so that each of the programs is more useful for the participants?

3. Scope of the Evaluation Assignment

ABF is seeking the services of an evaluation team to develop the evaluation methodology and survey tools as well as to perform the data collection and analysis based on the specifications described in this TOR. The methodology shall include an adequate mix of quantitative and qualitative methods and may consider the use of benchmarks if feasible. The evaluation shall answer the questions listed in the Evaluation Objectives and Expected Results section while analyzing and explaining the findings.

The evaluation team could access the following data, most of it internally collected by IIE and ABF:

- Anonymous feedback surveys from participants;

- The short video presentation prepared for the 2016 Educational conference supported by Capital and ABF;
- Documentaries developed for participants at the ABF's School of the Future program.
- Ongoing Facebook postings by PTP participants that are voluminous and voluntary conversations about practice

Some of the key requirements for the evaluation are:

1. The survey shall cover the period October 2012 (first cohort of ELTP participants) – October 2016 (fifth cohort of ELTP and third cohort of PTP participants);
2. Consider the students' feedback on the changes introduced to teachers' practices;
3. The evaluator shall collect examples of teaching and assessment practices that the teachers apply as a result of the training. One or two examples from each participant;
4. The evaluator shall produce several case studies of the outliers and of a typical response.

4. Deliverables and Schedule

The selected evaluation team/entity shall work closely with ABF throughout the entire evaluation. Workflow and deliverables shall be proposed in three phases:

4.1 Planning Phase – Preliminary Findings and Definition of methodological approach: As a key part of the proposal, the selected entity shall propose the most adequate methodology and survey tools for conducting the evaluation. During the planning phase, the selected entity shall work closely with ABF's Evaluation team to fine tune the methodology and make sure that it meets the evaluation objectives. In order to get a better understanding of the Summer Entrepreneurship Program, the selected entity shall get access to more detailed project information during the planning phase.

Deliverable: Detailed Evaluation Execution Plan. The guidelines for the development of the Evaluation Execution Plan will be shared with the successful bidder.

4.2 Testing and Implementation Phase - Fieldwork: At the beginning of this phase, the selected entity shall finalize all tools and instruments that have been approved by ABF for applying in the evaluation process and will test them. Once the instruments have been tested, the evaluation team shall organize the data collection on the ground and shall arrange other events as required to get first-hand information about the program. Depending on the type of instruments used for data collection and observation, ABF shall have the right to include its representatives in some of the activities.

Deliverables:

1. Fully developed and tested evaluation tools using the ABF approved methodology;
2. Raw data collected and submitted to ABF;
3. One-page summary of the field efforts and challenges.

4.3 Reporting Phase: Once the field work is over, the Respondent shall prepare a preliminary report of findings with draft recommendations to share with ABF. The report shall be in English and shall follow the structure outlined below:

- I. Executive Summary (5 pages, standard formatting)
- II. Project Background (title, grantee, amount of funding, objectives (1 page)
- III. Evaluation design and Methodology
 - 3.1 Purpose of the Evaluation
 - 3.2 Scope of the Evaluation
 - 3.3 Methodology used
- IV. Findings and Analysis
- V. Conclusions
- VI. Recommendations

ABF shall provide feedback on the content before the final report is produced.

- Deliverables:**
1. Draft Report to be reviewed and approved by ABF;
 2. Final Report **not to exceed 30 pages, annexes excluded.**

ABF shall work closely with the implementer in a collaborative manner during all phases of the evaluation process to make sure that it is exhaustive and productive. The evaluation organization shall be flexible to adapt its approaches if and as required by ABF.

4.4 Schedule

Planning Phase:	Three weeks
Testing and Implementation Phase:	Four weeks
Reporting Phase:	Two and a half weeks (for all drafts and the final report)
First Draft of the Report, Excluding students' assessment and feedback:	mid-August 2017
Final Report:	November 10, 2017

5. Required Qualifications

The evaluator should suggest a team to work on the assignment. It is highly recommended that at least one of them is of Bulgarian nationality. All team members should have at least 5 years of experience in economic development or other relevant for the evaluation areas of expertise and a strong proficiency in English. The leading experts must have a minimum academic training at the Masters level, though doctoral degree is preferred. In addition, the team must have the following mix of skill and abilities:

- Solid knowledge and understanding of programs for professional qualification of teachers and school principals;
- Excellent knowledge of Bulgarian school education system;
- Knowledge of the world’s best educational systems;
- Experience in assessing training programs;
- Experience in evaluation of the effectiveness and efficiency of programs/interventions;
- Established track record and demonstrated experience in sample design, devising qualitative and quantitative methodology and implementing social studies and impact evaluations;
- Ability to evaluate the effectiveness of the survey instruments and methodology, and to revise as needed to achieve the best results;
- Proven ability to plan, manage and execute complex projects, and to ensure high quality delivery of results;
- Ability to adapt to unexpected program needs and changing work requirements;
- High ethical standards and deep sense of integrity and commitment.

6. Logistics and Timing

6.1 RFP Schedule: The RFP process shall proceed according to the following anticipated schedule:

May 9, 2017	RFP Issued
May 15, 2017	Deadline for all questions and clarification inquiries submitted via e-mail to itzankova@us4bg.org and ibossev@us4bg.org
May 19, 2017	Deadline for all answers to Respondents’ questions
May 29, 2017	Proposals due
June 6, 2017	Selection of implementer completed & notification sent

6.2 Instructions for Submission of Responses: All responses shall be sent by email to itzankova@americaforbulgaria.org and ibossev@americaforbulgaria.org no later than **May 29, 2017, 6:00 pm Sofia time (Greenwich+2)**. Parties interested in undertaking this assignment shall submit the following information **in English**:

6.2.1 Cover Letter

6.2.2 Description of the Suggested Evaluation Methodology: This is a core component of the proposal that each Respondents shall provide. The narrative shall justify the use of specific quantitative and qualitative methods and the approach the Respondent shall apply for achieving the objectives of the subject evaluation;

6.2.3 Statement of Qualifications of the Organization: All responses shall include a statement of qualifications, experience and description of the Respondent organization and its history in implementing projects related to assessing training programs (1 page max). Samples of relevant previous pieces of work, and contact list for tentative recommendations shall be included as well;

6.2.4 Staff Qualifications: All Respondents shall identify the individual(s) who will have primary responsibility in the evaluation and shall submit their CVs. In addition, a contact person for communications with ABF and/or a person authorized to negotiate and contractually-bind the Respondent shall be specified;

6.2.5 Cost Proposal in USD: The Respondent shall provide a cost proposal for the Required Services, which includes:

- ✓ Budget inclusive of all resources needed to successfully complete the proposed activities, and detailing, at minimum, the following cost categories:
 - Staff (details of any subcontractors and roles of all staff listed in the proposal should be included in the budget narrative). The estimated days of involvement of each staff member should be specified, preferably broken down by the three phases of the evaluation outlined above;
 - Travel
 - Any indirect costs (broken out and identified as such)
- ✓ Detailed budget narrative

6.2.6 Conflict of interest: Should the Respondent has worked in a way for any of the two programs – ELTP and PTP, or has been associated with the Teachers College At the Columbia University or the Bank Street College, the fact shall be disclosed.

The proposal should not exceed 15 pages, annexes excluded.

6.3 Evaluation Process, Criteria and Selection: ABF shall evaluate each response with timely and complete submission. After review of the offers, interviews might be requested.

Selection Criteria:

- ✓ Demonstrated clear understanding of the assignment;
- ✓ Composition and Experience of the team:
 - Proven experience of the team leader in conducting complex evaluations;
 - Solid knowledge and understanding of programs for professional qualification of teachers and school principals;
 - Proven experience of the team in assessing training programs;
 - Demonstrated strong knowledge of Bulgarian school education system;
 - Knowledge of the world's best educational systems;
 - Experience in sample design, devising qualitative and quantitative methodology and implementing social studies and impact evaluations;
 - Experience in evaluation of effectiveness and efficiency of programs, projects and policies.
- ✓ Adequacy of the proposal and choice of the analytical framework;
- ✓ Organization of the assessment process, quality assurance methods, and risk mitigating measures;
- ✓ Firm track records.

**THE BULGARIAN YOUNG LEADERS PROGRAM
COMPONENT III: EDUCATIONAL LEADERS TRAINING PROGRAM**

Over the last 20 years in Bulgaria, as a result of years of political, social and economic uncertainty and hardship, there has been a significant decrease in education spending which has led to deterioration in the quality of the Bulgarian secondary education system. In particular, largely due to a lack of funding and adequate support, in recent decades high schools all over Bulgaria have not kept abreast of the latest pedagogical innovations that would allow them to implement new technology and teaching methodologies in the classrooms.

1. Problem(s) Identification and Context Analysis

Since its inception in 2008, the America for Bulgaria Foundation (ABF) has recognized the importance of updating and supporting the Bulgarian secondary education system and has funded numerous secondary education projects and partnered with schools all over Bulgaria in order to help Bulgaria modernize and increase the standards of its education system. ABF launched the Education Leaders' Training Program (ELTP) in 2012 with the objective to bring the Bulgarian secondary education system up to date with 21st century teaching technology and pedagogical methods. ELTP brings on average 15 primary and secondary school educators from schools throughout Bulgaria to the U.S. for a dynamic three-week training program to learn about the latest pedagogical and technological innovations and collaborate with their U.S. counterparts on the following key themes:

- Fostering and implementing innovative pedagogical methods in the classroom.
- Using technology to transform the classroom experience.
- Tracking student progress and measuring success.
- Implementing current instructional models in the education of secondary school students.

The program has two distinct, but integrated components: an academic training experience at Columbia University's Teachers College and a mentoring/observational study tour opportunity to learn first-hand from secondary educators utilizing innovative pedagogical instruction and new technology in their classrooms.

2. Goals and Objectives

The program's agenda is shaped to develop networking and training opportunities with the goal of building a cohort of education leaders who will become early adopters and pioneers of using new technology in the classroom, as well as implementing the most innovative approaches to pedagogy in Bulgaria. Thus, this select cohort of education leaders will lead the way in innovating, modernizing and improving the Bulgarian secondary education system by inspiring teachers, students, schools and communities in Bulgaria to understand and embrace the use of new technology in the classroom, as well as the most innovative approaches to pedagogy to engage all parties in student-centered learning.

3. Description of the Program

Application Process: The application for ELTP is open only to teachers from secondary schools in Bulgaria – low and high secondary. Eligible secondary teachers participate in a competitive selection process. The application is comprehensive and designed to solicit maximum feedback from applicants about their interests, knowledge and experiences. Applicants are required to write several short essays that include questions on leadership, future aspirations and intended goals. This helps the selection committee in assessing how the educators think and how they would plan to integrate lessons learned from their experience into their home institutions. The application process is in English.

Review and Selection Process: A selection panel of distinguished Bulgarian educators evaluate the written applications and shortlist finalists for in-person interviews. In the second round of selection, the selection panel conducts in-person interviews with the finalists. At the end of the selection process, the best finalists go through a language test to confirm that their English language listening and reading comprehension skills and grammatical abilities are sufficient to successfully complete their training in the United States.

The Training Program: The program’s academic component, a customized seminar tailored to ELTP’s key themes, takes place at Columbia University’s Teacher’s College. The seminar, which focuses on exploring the best and most innovative teaching styles for gifted students, is led by distinguished experts in curriculum design and technology in education. The seminar challenges participants to embrace the complexities of the classroom and to explore the art of teaching and the delicate balance of subject mastery, judgment, intuition and creativity. Participants may further explore the use of interactive teaching and learning techniques that support students to achieve optimal retention and improve their critical thinking skills. The seminar addresses the following questions and topics, which are in line with ELTPs program goals:

1. Which emerging technologies hold greatest promise for enriching learning experiences throughout the education continuum?
2. What pedagogical strategies should designers embody in instructional materials, including those based on multimedia and those reflected in gaming environments?
3. How should educators deploy, manage, and evaluate information and communication technologies in classrooms for optimal educational effect?
4. What principles of design and practice should educators incorporate into distributed educational courses and programs?
5. How do you design a program curriculum for students that enables them to become independent thinkers, think outside the box and actively engage with the educational material?
6. What are the pros and cons of interactive curriculum design and how do you motivate your pupils to get the most out of their classroom experience?
7. How do you create a nurturing classroom environment that encourages student participation, facilitates intellectual discourse and generates critical thinking skills?

To enhance the learning process and engage the Bulgarian teachers in a first-hand experience of how U.S. educators grapple with the afore mentioned issues and implement best pedagogical methods in their respective classrooms, each seminar day is followed by two to three days of New York City school visits. The school visits are arranged with a number of New York City’s most creative, results-driven and

innovative schools. The group of Bulgarian teachers is divided into small cohorts of two to three and each of these cohorts is sent to a selected school. The Bulgarian teachers are paired with New York City teachers that teach the same or related subjects in order to foster productive discussion and lay the foundation for longer-term relationships and collaboration once the teachers return to Bulgaria. At the end of each class day, participants have the opportunity to debrief with their respective master teachers and ask in-depth questions about what they experienced throughout the day.

The Bulgarian teachers might also have meetings with some of the leading educational NGOs located in New York City whose mission includes preparing educators and leaders who will transform schools and have a high impact on the lives of students. The final day includes a de-briefing meeting so that participants can share their impressions and lessons learned regarding their overall experience and begin planning how they will integrate new ideas into their classrooms and schools upon return home.

Calendar of activities for the program:

October 6	October 7	October 8	October 9	October 10	October 11	October 12
Arrival in NYC Participants are met and greeted at the airport and accompanied to the hotel	Full-Day Seminar	Full-Day Seminar	Full-Day Practicum- NYC School Visit	Full-Day Practicum- NYC School Visit	Full-Day Seminar	Organized Cultural Activities and free time
October 13	October 14	October 15	October 16	October 17	October 18	October 19
Organized Cultural Activities and free time	Full-Day Practicum- NYC School Visit	Full-Day Practicum- Educational NGO Meetings	Full-Day Seminar	Full-Day Seminar	Full-Day Practicum- NYC School Visit	Organized Cultural Activities and free time
October 20	October 21	October 22	October 23	October 23	October 25	October 26
Organized Cultural Activities and free time	Full-Day Seminar	Full-Day Practicum- NYC School Visit	Full-Day Seminar	Full-Day Practicum- NYC School Visit	Full-Day Seminar/ Wrap-up Closing Ceremony	Afternoon Depart for home

Timetable

- **November – January:** ABF distributes information about the program.
- **March:** Application deadline and selection panel assessment of candidates.
- **October:** Program in the United States.

**THE BULGARIAN YOUNG LEADERS PROGRAM
COMPONENT IV: PRINCIPALS TRAINING PROGRAM**

Over the last 20 years in Bulgaria, there has been a significant decrease in education spending as a result of years of political, social and economic uncertainty and hardship. This has led to deterioration in the quality of the Bulgarian secondary education system. In particular, largely due to a lack of funding and adequate support, in recent decades high schools all over Bulgaria have not kept abreast of the latest pedagogical innovations. Moreover, high school principals have been overburdened with managing underfunded schools with crumbling infrastructure and low paid and, sometimes, demoralized teachers. Few Bulgarian principals have had the opportunity to attend professional development seminars and to tackle and strategically think about important issues such as introducing technology and innovative teaching methodologies in their schools or designing a unique school culture.

1. Problem(s) Identification and Context Analysis

Since its inception in 2008, the America for Bulgaria Foundation (ABF) has recognized the importance of updating and supporting the Bulgarian secondary education system, funded numerous secondary education projects and partnered with schools all over Bulgaria in order to help Bulgaria modernize and increase the standards of its education system. The Principals Training program (PTP) is an attempt to magnify ABF efforts to help bring the Bulgarian secondary education system up to date with 21st century teaching technology and pedagogical methods. PTP selects 30 Bulgarian primary and secondary school principals for a week-long education leadership seminar in Bulgaria. Furthermore, from among the seminar participants, ABF selects 15 finalists who participate in a customized 10-day leadership and professional development experiential program in the United States. The trainings enable participants to do the following:

- Become thoroughly grounded in the theory and practice of education leadership.
- Understand the uses of technology in education and administration, and acquire key skills to use technology effectively.
- Be able to lead and support effective teaching and learning for all kinds of teachers and students.
- Understand the principles of organizational culture and behavior and acquire key skills needed to provide effective organizational leadership.
- Be able to create a school culture that welcomes and supports educational innovation, new pedagogical practices, and the use of contemporary educational technology.

The U.S. portion of the program has two distinct, but integrated components: an academic training experience at Bank Street College of Education and a mentoring/observational model where participants shadow and learn first-hand from top notch NYC school principals.

2. Goals and Objectives

The program offers networking and training opportunities with the goal of building a cohort of principals who are committed to questioning the status quo and dedicated to finding the best ways to create an innovative and supportive school culture. Furthermore, the program enables the Bulgarian principals to learn about the advantages of using new technology in the classroom, as well as the benefits of implementing the innovative pedagogical approaches in the classroom. This select cohort of principals is expected to lead the way in innovating, modernizing and improving the Bulgarian secondary education system by inspiring teachers, students, schools and communities in Bulgaria to understand and embrace the use of new technology in the classroom as well as the most innovative approaches to pedagogy in order to engage all parties in student-centered learning.

3. Description of the Program

Application Process: Applications for PTP is open to principals from a wide range of Bulgarian high schools. Eligible principals participate in a competitive selection process. The application is comprehensive and designed to solicit feedback from applicants about their interests, knowledge, experiences and motivation. Applicants are required to write several short essays that include questions on leadership, future aspirations and intended goals. This helps the selection committee to assess how the principals think as well as how they would plan to integrate lessons learned from their U.S.-based experience into their home institutions. The application process is in Bulgarian.

Review and Selection Process: A selection panel of distinguished Bulgarian educators evaluate the written applications and select the 30 participants for a week-long education leadership seminar in Bulgaria.

Bulgarian Seminar/Workshop: Utilizing the customized curriculum developed during the design phase, the U.S. experts facilitate a weeklong seminar in Bulgaria for 30 Bulgarian principals. Experiential in nature and imitating the real work of principals, the seminar sessions are designed using the most advanced approaches in adult learning and incorporate research and mini lessons. Furthermore, the seminar focuses on both individual and team learning. In addition, the principals work to develop a School Improvement Plan (SIP), a final assignment which is due two weeks after the completion of their program. The SIP, which incorporates the material covered during the seminar, portrays the principals' visions and plans for improving their schools. The SIPs are evaluated by the U.S. seminar facilitators. The 15 seminar participants with the strongest SIPs are invited to participate in a 10-day Principals' Delegation Program in the United States.

Principals' Delegation Program: To enhance the learning process and engage the Bulgarian principals in a first-hand experience of how U.S. principals create a supportive and collaborative school environment, the U.S. education management experts identify leading principals from diverse New York City public schools that are a strong match with those of the visiting Bulgarian principals. The group of Bulgarian principals is divided into two small cohorts of five and each of these cohorts is sent to a selected school. At the end of each visit, participants have the opportunity to debrief with their respective NYC host principals and ask in-depth questions about what they experienced throughout the day. This includes



hands-on experience and opportunities to learn how to effectively design creative solutions to challenges while dealing with competing priorities.

Follow Up: Upon returning to Bulgaria, each of the 15 participants is expected to facilitate three public presentations about their experience in the United States. These presentations inform other principals and the Bulgarian public at large about the lessons learned from the United States. In addition, the presentations serve as an “unofficial” marketing tool for the following year’s program.

Timetable

- **October – January:** ABF distributes information about the program.
- **February:** Application deadline and selection panel assessment of candidates.
- **April:** Bulgarian Seminar
- **October:** Program in the U.S.