

1.27. Area Study Programme

For the fifth time, CFSD, in cooperation with GMR, organized a pre-departure Area Study Tour in the Middle East. Building on the successful Study Tour that had taken place in Egypt over the last few years, a second week was added to the programme to include a component in Jerusalem to study Israeli issues and Palestinian issues.

Another addition to the Institute's Area Study Programme was the development of a session on Islam to provide a critical introduction to the historical, political, economic, cultural, and social dimensions of Islamic civilizations from the early Islamic period to the present. Given current security and political developments in the modern Muslim world, particular emphasis was to be placed on the evolution and diversity of interpretations and practices that continue to have contemporary relevance in the public sphere. The pilot was designed in partnership with the Aga Khan Foundation and will be delivered in the 2006 pre-departure season.

1.28. New Feature for the Foreign Service Development Programme

The suite of courses provided for new Foreign Service Officers of the Foreign Service Development Programme (FSDP) remains central to the professional development of these officers. A new "Buddy" system was put into place to allow new officers to obtain advice and support from those who have been in the FS group for a slightly longer time. Additional support was provided to the existing mentoring programme, with the addition of a regular newsletter and an increased number of structured social events. A new session on "Team Effectiveness" was offered to FSDP officers by a team of CFSD learning specialists during the planning stages of their Cross Canada Study Tour.

1.29. Public Affairs Programme for Locally Engaged Staff

The Institute continued its efforts to ensure that locally engaged staff had access to appropriate training opportunities. As an example, in late 2005, recently hired local staff in the public affairs area participated in a two-week programme in Ottawa, Vancouver, Halifax, Montreal and Toronto that provided an introduction to Canada and intensive skills development in the public affairs/public diplomacy area. This also enabled the staff to develop a valuable network of contacts among themselves to share best practices.

1.30. New International Affairs Curriculum

With the restructuring of the Foreign Service into four levels, the Department decided to ensure that appropriate training was provided to those at the middle and more senior levels to match the competencies for each level. Accordingly, the Department approved the framework for a new "International Affairs Curriculum." This curriculum will encompass a range of elective and mandatory courses focussed on the technical competencies (skills and knowledge) required for work in the international affairs area. Over the coming years, a range of pilot courses will be developed and delivered, and over time, a full curriculum will be put into place. The new pilot courses are planned to get underway in 2006-2007.

