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Community-based Learning: Connecting Classroom to Community through a New Civic Agriculture and Food Systems Minor



College of
Agriculture and Life Sciences



Virginia



Tech

VIRGINIA POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE AND STATE UNIVERSITY

USDA Higher Education Challenge Grant

Restoring Community Foodsheds: A Multidisciplinary Curriculum Translating Science into Practical, Innovative & Sustainable Solutions for Economic Viability, Food Security & Health



Background



CALS: Adapts curriculum to meet needs of society by offering students the opportunity to observe how agriculture, human nutrition & health, & community development are interrelated.



Alternative Spring Break 2008
Service Learning Experience



Grant Objectives



Develop, implement, assess, & evaluate an undergraduate, multidisciplinary, experiential-based curriculum minor within CALS



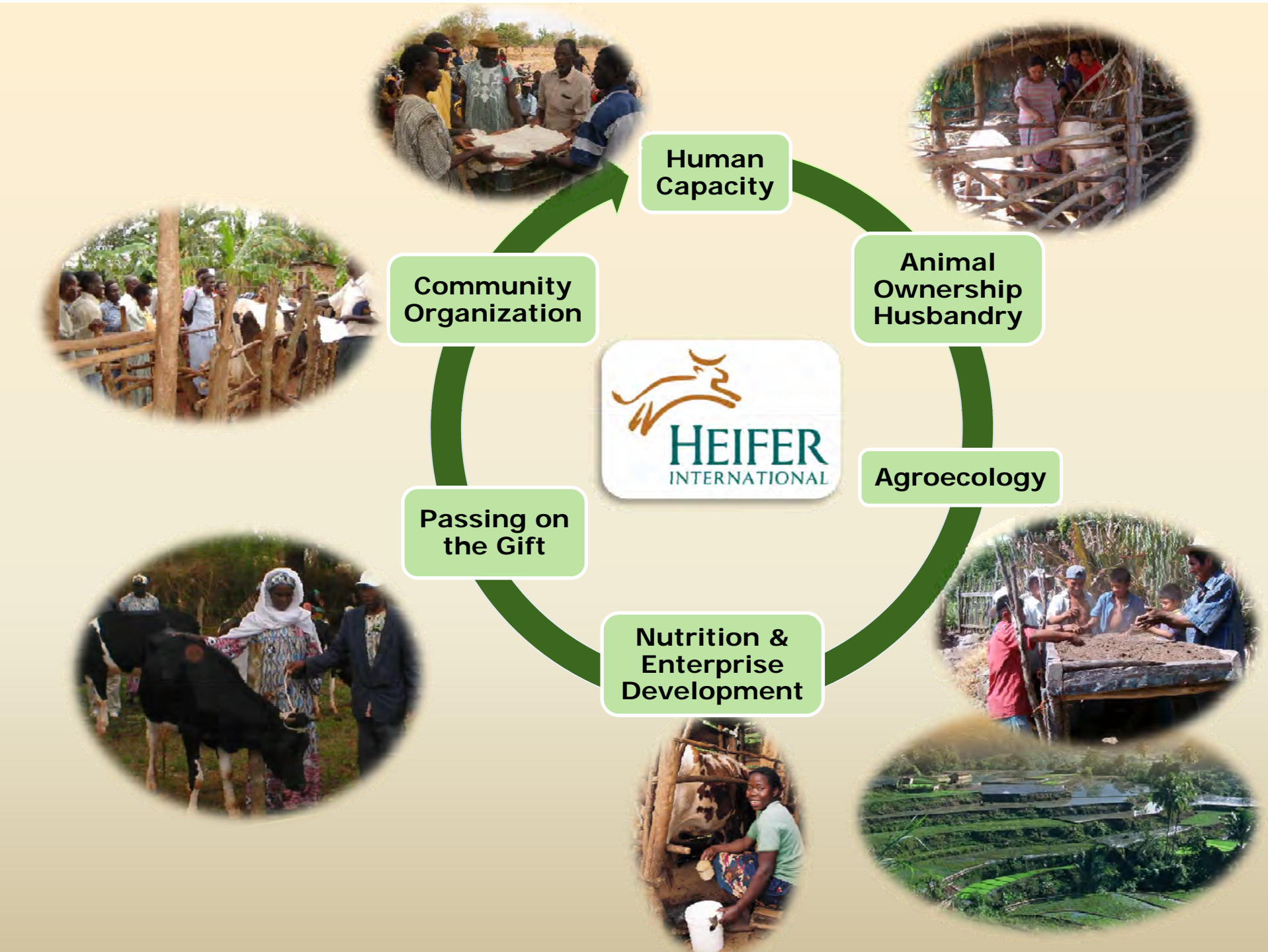
Parallels HI's Sustainable Community Development Model & integrates sustainable agricultural practices & food systems that promote good health, economic viability, & environmental stewardship;



Develop experiential learning prototypes on sustainable agriculture and food systems and coordinate, assess, and design learning outcomes for service learning opportunities;



Develop faculty-student collaborative research with community partners.



Integrated Curriculum





CALS
Undergraduate
Multidisciplinary
Experiential
MINOR
Smithfield Farm
Kentland Farm

Experiential
Alternative
Spring Break
Heifer Abroad
Undergraduate
Research

Experiential
YMCA Hale
Organic Garden
Undergraduate
Research

Experiential
Food Corps
Farm to Fork
Student Farm
Undergraduate
Research

-  "Transforming Ag Education to Effect Change in Teaching & Learning"
-  Chronicles in Higher Education 2009 Report

Curriculum Development



- VT** Formed the Curriculum Task Force Committee
 - VT** Sponsored Heifer International Workshop
- VT** Established the minor's name & description
- VT** Identified Student Learning Outcomes
- VT** Identified Core knowledge & skills
- VT** Defined the Six Cornerstones (Value-based)
- VT** Created Core courses
 - Identified supporting courses

Multidisciplinary Team



- ❑ Human Nutrition, Foods & Exercise (*S. Clark, E. Serrano*)
- ❑ Agricultural & Extension Education (*T. Broyles, K. Niewolny*)
- ❑ Dairy Science (*K. Knowlton*)
- ❑ Horticulture (*B. Benson*)
- ❑ Crops, Soils & Environmental Sciences (*O. Abaye, S. Hodges*)
- ❑ Applied Agriculture Economics (*S. Sink*)
- ❑ Food Science Technology & Academic Programs (*S. Sumner*)
- ❑ University Honors (*M. Blackwell*)
- ❑ Students (*C. Byker, Graduate & E. Dulys, Undergraduate*)
- ❑ Student Engagement & Community Partnership (*M. Deramo*)
- ❑ Virginia Tech Dining (*R. Budowle*)
- ❑ Heifer International (*R. Enoch*)
- ❑ YMCA Blacksburg (*A. Convery, J. Schwanke*)

Civic Agriculture & Food Systems Minor

Embodies a commitment to developing and strengthening an economically, environmentally, and socially sustainable system of agriculture and food systems that relies on local resources and serves local markets and citizens.



The minor is committed to serving the needs of all students using multidisciplinary, collaborative teaching strategies and experiential learning. It is designed to promote academic enhancement, personal growth, and civic engagement while strengthening student's capacity to learn about civic agriculture & food systems through reflection and experiential practice to solve "real-world" problems. - Thomas Lyson

Civic Agriculture & Food Systems Minor

Program Goals	Student Learning Outcomes
1. Provide a foundation of knowledge consistent with an entry-level civic agriculture, food systems education. <i>(SLO 1)</i>	1. Demonstrate in-depth interdisciplinary knowledge in the policies & practices of civic agriculture & food systems by developing & implementing an educational strategy through community partnerships & programs.
2. Aid in the development of effective broad-based communication skills in civic agriculture food systems education. <i>(SLO 2, 3)</i>	2. Apply effective communication, leadership, & teamwork skills to develop interventions to affect change & enhance civic agriculture in diverse communities.
3. Provide a learning environment that fosters critical thinking skills in civic agriculture food systems education. <i>(SLO 2, 3)</i>	3. Apply reflective and articulated learning to make decisions, to identify civic agriculture problems and determine and evaluate interventions.

Cornerstones



1. Food Sovereignty/Community Food Security
2. Civic Engagement and Democratic Participation
3. Strong Local Economies
4. Ecological Stewardship
5. Healthy People & Communities
6. Collaborative Teaching & Experiential Learning



Welcome



Welcome to my ePortfolio!



“Heifer helped me to realize the importance of fostering a sense of place, something that I have found to be increasingly absent in Blacksburg.”

“Our Heifer group’s take home plan...to promote local food purchases on campus. We hope it will help to facilitate a student culture that holds a deeper awareness and connection to Blacksburg and the New River Valley.”

Other Student Quotes

"Since I've returned to Blacksburg from the Heifer Ranch I have made a conscious effort to reduce my plate waste".

"I knew I could apply everything I learned back in this "real world" when I came home".

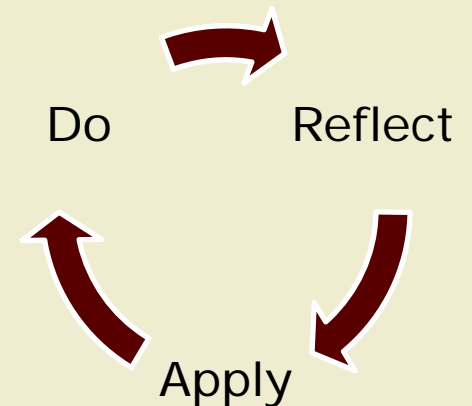
"Today with our team building exercises, we learned that we can do more than we might think if we take small steps together. *"not one cup, one cow."*

"Now I buy organic, local food at Farm & Fields & when I go out to eat I choose local, organic food."

"I've been reflecting more. Since returning from Arkansas, I have had a lot of opportunities to stress Heifer's mission in my endeavors with the Sustainable Food Corps, during Virginia Tech's Earth Week..."

"I use the Heifer model in my everyday life- from solving problems in clubs to even the smallest interactions with people. I feel like in this way, I have passed on the gift."

"Since I'm a Food Science major, perhaps I will start a company that is focused on caring for the human and earth-not so much the profit."



Scholarship of T & L



1. Experiential Learning
2. Collaborative Teaching
3. Partnerships
4. Critical thinking and problem solving

