



A Model for Service Abroad Courses: Agriculture Development in Sierra Leone

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Introduction

- Internationalization of campuses and companies
 - Need for cross-cultural project management (Trooboff, 2008)
 - Ability to work in complex and fast changing environments (Williams, 2005)
- Partnerships formed



Njala University



Sierra Leone

- Civil War 1991-2001
- Infrastructure destroyed
- Agriculture and educational capacity diminished



Objectives

- 1) Introduce appropriate technologies into a community to improve food security for local populations
- 2) Place American university students within a learning environment where they were required to use their knowledge and skills to achieve an objective with limited resources
- 3) Introduce American students to the challenges and opportunities in international development



Methods

- Pre-departure Training
 - identified project ideas
 - attended training:
 - Water4
 - soil/water testing
 - collected materials for projects



Methods

- Separated into three groups:
 - food production
 - nutrition and economics
 - biosystems engineering
- Worked with children from local orphanage
- Each group taught children applied math, science, engineering concepts



Agricultural Production

Increasing food security:

- soil testing
- conservation agriculture
- composting
- drip irrigation



Nutrition and Economics

Fighting malnutrition:

- Market price evaluation
- Meal plan budgeting
- Studied “consumer” acceptance



Biosystems Engineering

Providing Clean Water:

- Well site selection
- Well drilling



Impact



Richard:

- Formed company
- Investors
- Contracts



Impact

Jesi:

- cont. well digging projects
- Fullbright Award
- Training students



Impact

Mark:

- Taught science and math
- Created Terra Rubea Engineer Exchange



Impact

Liberty:

- Soil and Water Conservation grant
- Built bio-sand filters
- Njala /Wellington training



Suggestions

- Pre-departure cultural class
- Structured discussion upon return



References

- Trooboo, Stevan, Michael VandeBerg, and Jack Rayman.
“Employer Attitudes Toward Study Abroad”. *Frontiers: The Interdisciplinary Journal of Study Abroad*, Vol. 15, 2008.
- Wiiilams, Tracy. “Exploring the Impact of Study Abroad on Students’ Intercultural Communication Skills: Adaptability and Sensitivity”. *Journal of Studies in International Education*, Vol. 9,p. 356, 2005.

