Engaging US College Students in Eco-Village Design for Disadvantaged Youth in Kenya

NACTA Conference
State College, PA June 2010
Children & Youth Empowerment Centre

• Street children in Kenya

• Established to address three gaps:
  – Standards of service provision
  – Program sustainability (especially in food provision)
  – Challenge of program exit

• Public-private initiative
CYEC Location
Stages of care

Intake
(Drop-in Center)

Primary Care
(CYEC)

Program Exit
(Zawadi Village)

Housing
Education (community or on-site)
Health care
Zawadi Village Objectives

• Exit avenue for former street-dwelling youth
• Economically self-sustaining
  – Agricultural production and processing
  – Tourism and entrepreneurial activities
• Healthy youth development
• Education and outreach
  – Appropriate technologies
  – Agricultural systems
  – Entrepreneurship
  – Model of land use and community planning
Experiential Service Learning

• Service-learning stimulates students’ curiosity and motivation to learn (Furco, 1996)
• Service-learning provides opportunities to apply and integrate – enhances learning (Bransford, 1993; Eyler & Giles, 1999)
• Higher levels of engagement and curiosity lead to greater learning and retention (Eyler & Giles, 1999)
• Also enhances higher-level thinking skills – analysis and critical thinking
Agricultural Systems in East Africa

- Cross-listed in Agronomy and Community, Environment & Development
- Team-taught by Ag Economist & Soil Scientist, w/ support from Rural Soc, Ag & Extension Ed and Ag Engineering
- Students researched socio-economic & agro-ecological conditions
- They also researched possible options for development (ag production & processing)
- Collected curricular materials
Three Weeks in Kenya

- Meetings w/ international and domestic research institutes; Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture & Technology
- Community assessment
  - Ag production
  - Soil & water analysis
  - Mapping
- CYEC ag curriculum
- Blog:
  http://ecovillagelamuria.weebly.com/index.html
Lamuria Zawadi Eco-Village

Site of initial eco-village

Semi-arid agricultural zone, Rift Valley

Focusing on water harvesting & management
Lamuria

- Water is over-riding issue
- Semi-arid
  - Ave. annual precipitation 600mm (23.6”)
  - Bi-modal rains
- Subsistence ag (some marketing)
- Maize, beans, wheat, potatoes, cabbage, onions, tomatoes, peas
- Only 10% has access to irrigated lands
- Potential for eco-tourism
Accomplishments

• Prioritizing Development Options
  – Initiating activities in Lamuria
  – 3 youth training in beekeeping

• Compiled Agricultural Curriculum for training and application at the CYEC
  – Vocational skills program
  – ‘Nature Club’
Prioritizing Development Options

- Beekeeping
- Rabbits (at CYEC)
- Aloe
- Hay
- Castor
- Indigenous vegetables
- Horticultural products
- Eco-tourism
Compiled Ag Curriculum for CYEC

- Applied
- Hands-on
Student Outcomes

• Greater awareness of complexity of food security
• Application of knowledge learned in other courses
• Depended on multidisciplinary expertise
• Enhanced research skills
• Greater interest in international issues
• Cultural immersion
PSU Benefits

• Integrative experience – multidisciplinary, service learning and global awareness
• Integrates teaching, research and outreach
• CYEC is an excellent partner institution