

Student Projects

2009-10

Water Purifiers Project: Addressing the Need for Clean Water to Enhance Living Conditions in Vietnam

Students: Tuyetnga Vo, David Don Nguyen; Faculty Mentor: Michael Cullinane, Center for Southeast Asian Studies; Community Partner: Catalyst Foundation – Northfield, MN.

This project seeks to ameliorate the living conditions of over 100 families living in the local landfills of Ho Chi Minh City and Dong Thap Province in Vietnam. In conjunction with the Catalyst Foundation, the project will work with local Vietnamese doctors and medical practitioners to distribute water filters, as well as administer health check-ups, medication, and community-wide disease prevention educational sessions. Upon return to the U.S., the project will maintain communication with Catalyst Foundation contacts in Vietnam to monitor long-term effects and compile information for future health-related projects.

Building Family-School Relationships for Enhanced Academic Success of Children

Students: Zina Knox, Sherri Bester, Timothy Fish, Celeste Hammer, Celeste Lewis; Faculty Mentor: Professor Boyd Rossing, School of Human Ecology; Community Partner: Midvale-Lincoln Parent-Teacher Organization (PTO) – Madison, WI.

Via a multi-faceted approach, this project seeks to improve the academic achievement of African-American elementary school students in Madison. The project focuses on enhancing family-school relations through a tutoring program that incorporates collaborative parent-student-teacher-tutor meetings and increased opportunities for parent-to-parent connections. The project will partner with the Lincoln-Midvale PTO to facilitate greater participation of parents of African-American students through a strong Lincoln neighborhood outreach campaign.

Providing Sustainable Self-Empowered Poverty Alleviation: Microfinance and its Social Impact

Student: Caroline Reddy; Faculty Mentor: Professor Brad Barnham, Department of Agriculture and Applied Economics; Community Partner: Working Capital for Community Needs (WCCN) – Madison, WI.

While it is clear that microfinance provides an important pathway out of poverty for people around the world, there is a lack of scientific evidence documenting the effects of microfinance, particularly at the borrower level. This project will analyze data from a large-scale household survey administered by WCCN to loan recipients, paying special attention to the impact of microfinance on women entrepreneurs and rural households. An ethnographic account of Nicaraguan loan recipients will supplement the survey analysis data. The outcome of this work will allow WCCN to quantify the effects of microfinance, attract future lenders and continue to aid people living in poverty.

Rwanda Agricultural Demonstration Project

Students: Matt Carlson, Emily Burris; Faculty Mentor: Professor Giri Venkataramanan, Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering; Community Partner: Rwanda Agriculture Project – Ngororero District, Rwanda.

This project addresses the identified need to improve food security in the Muramba region of Rwanda by laying the foundation for an agricultural demonstration project focused on increasing crop yield using low-cost agricultural techniques. Paramount to this effort is the incorporation of local knowledge, such as the partnerships that will be developed with agricultural students from the Institut Supérieur d'Agriculture et d'Élevage (ISAE) as well as project managers and laborers. Project members will work with ISAE students to gather data on existing agricultural practices and design future experimental and demonstration agricultural plots, to be implemented in subsequent years of the project.

Promoting Equal Access to Education: Menstrual Pads for Female Students in Uganda

Students: Hope Houle, Liz Chadwick, Kylee Hintz, Tracy Wilson; Faculty Mentor: Professor James Ntambi, Departments of Biochemistry and Nutritional Sciences; Community Partner: Community-Based Integrated Nutrition (COBIN) – Kampala, Uganda.

Through the distribution of menstrual pads to female students in the rural village of Kiruhura, Uganda, this project aims to improve the quantity and quality of education for women, address gender inequalities in access to education, and support local jobs. Maka menstrual pads, made locally out of sustainable materials—recycled paper and papyrus—will be distributed to female students to alleviate low school attendance rates during menstruation. To supplement these efforts, the project will work with COBIN to provide educational health workshops for pad recipients. Additionally, the project will facilitate awareness of Ugandan health issues by engaging in outreach efforts on the UW-Madison campus.

Exercise and Nutrition Intervention in a Low-Income Community

Students: Megan Sauer, Irem Duyar, Kathleen Phelan; Faculty Mentor: Sharon Younkin, School of Medicine and Public Health; Community Partner: Allied Wellness Center – Madison, WI.

This project utilizes community input in the design of a culturally-relevant fitness and nutrition program to be implemented at the Allied Wellness Center in southwest Madison's Allied Drive Neighborhood. The program will feature organized exercise opportunities and other activities that contribute to strengthening the social fabric of the neighborhood. Throughout the program, significant cultural events will be incorporated into activities, such as "virtual destinations" reached in the walking program that correlate to historical events in African-American history. To round out this project, workshops, educational sessions and social dialogues will be conducted around health education topics.

Empowering Underrepresented Low-Income Girls for Success in Soccer and in Life

Students: Jyun-Yi Michelle Hu, Nicol Valdez; Faculty Mentor: Professor Cameron MacDonald, Dept of Sociology; Community Partner: Millenium Soccer Club – Madison, WI.

This project will design and implement a summer soccer-based program for low-income, underrepresented fourth and fifth-grade girls at Lincoln Elementary school in south Madison. The goals of the project are to enhance the self-esteem capacity, leadership abilities and soccer aptitude skills of participants, as well as to fill the need for targeted youth programming for low-income underrepresented girls. Additionally, through workshops and field trips to the UW-Madison campus and other locations, the project will demonstrate to participants that skills and lessons learned on the soccer field are applicable to success in life off the field.