

Blum Center for Developing Economies

Real-World Solutions to Combat Poverty

September 15, 2008

Dear Friends of the Blum Center,

I'm delighted to share with you the inaugural edition of the Richard C. Blum Center for Developing Economies newsletter.

The Blum Center is an exciting enterprise, propelled by the energy and talents of faculty and students committed to helping the nearly three billion people in developing countries who live on less than two dollars a day.

It's been only a year since the launch of our Global Poverty & Practice minor -- but we've already surpassed the enrollment numbers projected for several years in the future. Our flagship course, Global Poverty: Challenges and Hopes in the New Millennium, offered by Professor Ananya Roy, is wildly popular again this semester, with over 600 students in attendance the first day. Interdisciplinary enrichment courses this semester include: Poverty & Technology, taught by School of Information Professor Jenna Burrell, and Water & Development, led by Energy & Resources Group Professor Isha Ray.

The signature element of our minor – experiential learning – is featured in a separate article in this newsletter entitled, *A Lesson in Global Citizenship*. This individualized hands-on experience gives students an opportunity to work on a specific problem in a developing country. In the few weeks since our students have been back on campus, we've only scratched the surface in learning about their amazing experiences. We look forward to sharing more of their stories on our website.

We're also proud of the innovative applied research by faculty and students we support in more than a dozen countries. Teams are designing and testing practical devices for safe water and sanitation; adapting wireless technology for the design and delivery of new services for the rural poor; and creating low-cost energy solutions that emphasize efficiency while minimizing negative environmental and health impacts. These are action-oriented, entrepreneurial efforts aimed at creating sustainable solutions for the poor that can be scaled-up and replicated in the real world. Future newsletters will feature some of these exciting projects.

Please take a look at our website at <http://blumcenter.berkeley.edu/> to learn more about the Blum Center's education and applied research initiatives. We also invite you to join us at the events highlighted in this newsletter. Most important, we welcome your comments and suggestions about our work and hope you'll get involved!

With best regards,
S. Shankar Sastry
Faculty Director, Blum Center and Dean of Engineering, Berkeley



A Lesson in Global Citizenship

By Abby Cohn

“Amazing.” “Transformative.” “Very humbling.” “Exceeded my expectations.”

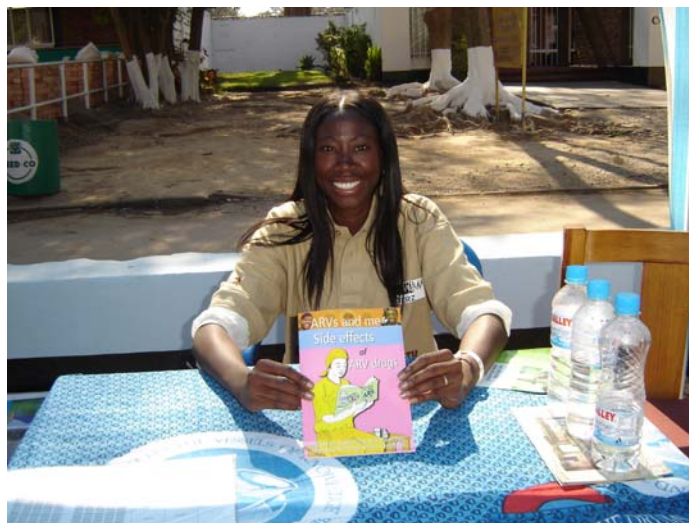
Blum Center students have no shortage of superlatives for this summer’s work and research experiences in developing countries around the globe. The international practice experiences are a signature element of UC Berkeley’s Global Poverty and Practice minor, launched by the Blum Center last year. UC Davis is exploring how to follow Berkeley in developing its own version of the minor.

In just over a year, 75 students from 36 majors across the Berkeley campus have enrolled in the minor. This summer, many tackled projects spanning more than a dozen countries, which took participants from land-squatting settlements in Tijuana to HIV clinics in Zambia to sustainable development projects in Nicaragua.

Fellowships for these summer experiences are awarded by the Blum Center using a competitive application process that considers both the quality of the proposed project and the financial need of the student.

These hands-on learning ventures, while making real contributions, aren’t intended as a quick fix to profound social ills. “This is as much about what the students get from the experience and how they’re transformed by it,” says Ananya Roy, the Blum Center’s education director and the associate dean for International and Area Studies. “Our hope is that this will shape how they act in the world, the way they are global citizens.”

Here are some snapshots from this past summer:



Zilose Lyons participating in community education efforts to combat HIV/AIDS in Zambia

Stepping inside an HIV/AIDS clinic in Zambia on a day devoted to treating infected children, Blum Center fellow **Zilose Lyons** braced herself for heartbreak. But what she witnessed was an inspiring and humbling scene: some 40 patients, from babies to teens, were being entertained by a health-oriented puppet show while waiting for free checkups and medications. “They’re dealing with it so courageously,” says Zilose, a Zambian who moved to the United States in 2001.

Thanks to a Blum Center fellowship, Zilose, a Development Studies student, spent two months in the capital city of Lusaka as a community intern for the Center for Infectious Disease Research in Zambia (CIDRZ). The NGO specializes in HIV/AIDS treatment and research. In a country where 14 percent of the population is HIV positive, Zilose learned about the emotional, social and healthcare challenges of a disease that touches nearly every household. She knows that pain personally, having lost a sister in 2006 to an HIV-related illness. “It was an obvious choice for me to go back to Zambia and do HIV work,” she explains.

Zilose participated in outdoor community education events, helped enroll newly diagnosed patients in treatment, and attended support groups led by HIV-positive peer educators. “To see AIDS work firsthand was actually a turning moment in my life,” says Zilose, who hopes to pursue graduate studies in medical anthropology or go on to medical school.

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Kiki Kalkstein (in white) and colleagues at the Uganda Village Project

Women in Uganda often endure a life of isolation and ostracism from a horrific medical condition known as obstetric fistulas. The result of prolonged and difficult labor, a fistula is a hole that develops between the birth canal and the gastrointestinal tract. The incidence of obstetric fistulas in Uganda is among the world’s highest.

Working with a nonprofit called Uganda Village Project, **Kiki Kalkstein**, a 21-year-old Public Health student, traveled to rural villages to educate women about the condition and recruit them for free surgical procedures to correct it.

“This will be a life-changing operation for them,” says Kiki. During her two-month stay, she trained local health workers to screen and refer patients to surgical “repair camps” offered by volunteer physicians and helped more than a dozen women receive surgery.

Kiki, who envisions working in international and women’s health, says her internship “really opened my eyes to the huge disparities that exist in the world. You can learn all about poverty in classes, but to actually go and experience it, it just really changes your perspective.” The trip was also a self-discovery process. “Some things were really tough,” she says. “I got to learn a lot about myself.”

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Matt Pruter has long been fascinated by cities and how they work. A 20-year-old Urban Studies major from suburban Los Angeles County, Matt spent three months in Mumbai this summer studying the impact of a sweeping national urban renewal project. Partnering with an organization called Focus on the Global South, Matt investigated how the urban poor are faring under the seven-year government initiative.

His assessment: “The government is not stepping in to help people who need help the most.” Matt, who is preparing a report for the NGO, says the project has so far failed to address many housing and educational gaps. Furthermore, a switch to privatized water and sewer services places a costly burden on the poor. Noting that such infrastructure improvements such as new bridges seem most helpful to wealthier residents, Matt says, “I think it’s a limited few who are actually benefiting from these projects.”

Also a recipient of a Blum Center fellowship, Matt says his internship provided valuable insight into urban renewal and urban theory overall, as well as a chance to get acquainted with a “magical”—if teeming—city of 16 million. “It helps a lot to see things on the ground,” says Matt, who wants to study urban theory in graduate school.



Blum Center in the News

Faculty, students and projects supported by the Blum Center have attracted the attention of local, national and international media outlets including *Fortune Small Business*, *Business Week*, *Technology Review*, *The Economist* and KQED Television.

[Lessons from the Community](#): An international internship program developed by the Blum Center and the Tata Group provided an opportunity for students to get involved with social development initiatives in India. (*Tata Group News*, July 28, 2008)
<http://www.tata.com/careers/articles/inside.aspx?artid=9OLnPi9+AJc=>

[Student Activism Can Change the World](#): Impassioned, student-led movements driving for social change hold plenty of lessons about innovation for executives and corporations. (*Business Week*, May 30, 2008)
http://www.businessweek.com/innovate/content/may2008/id20080530_606257.htm

[Producer's Notes -- Darfur Stoves Project](#): KQED reported on the “amazing work of [UC Berkeley Professor] Ashok Gadgil and his colleagues” to help the refugees in Darfur (*KQED Television*, May 20, 2008)
<http://www.kqed.org/quest/blog/2008/05/20/producers-notes-darfur-stoves-project/>

[Mobile-phone microscopes -- Doctor on call](#): Simple accessories could turn mobile phones into useful medical devices. (*The Economist*, May 15 2008)
http://www.economist.com/science/displaystory.cfm?story_id=11367989

[America's Best Colleges for Entrepreneurs -- Best for double majors](#):
The Blum Center’s campus-wide minor allows undergrads to explore the use of commercial and social enterprise in combating poverty in global communities.
(*Fortune Small Business* 2008)
http://money.cnn.com/galleries/2007/fsb/0708/gallery.bestcolleges_double.fsb/16.html



BLUM CENTER FALL 2008 FACULTY SPEAKER SERIES

The Global Food Crisis: Challenges and Opportunities
Noon – 1:00 pm, 290 Hearst Memorial Mining Building



The Blum Center for Developing Economies presents a newly created faculty speaker series. Each semester, the lectures and discussions will focus on a pressing issue facing developing economies.

The fall 2008 series is entitled “The Global Food Crisis: Challenges and Opportunities.” As food supplies become more scarce in the developing world, the price of food skyrockets, and consumers take to the streets in protest, Faculty speakers will provide their research and perspectives on the causes and challenges of the food crisis. The series is open to all students, faculty, staff and the general public.

Monday, September 15, 2008

“The Global Food Crisis: A World Development Report Perspective”

Professor Alain de Janvry

Co-author of the World Development Report

Department of Agricultural and Resource Economics, UC Berkeley

The world food crisis has focused attention on the role of agriculture in development. But will this make a difference? Or will agriculture continue to be neglected by governments and international development agencies, falling back into business as usual with extensive rural poverty and recurrent food crises?

Monday, October 20, 2008

“What is Behind the Recent Jump in Agricultural Commodity and Food Prices?”

Professor Daniel Sumner

Department of Agricultural and Resource Economics, UC Davis

This discussion will help clarify what has happened to food commodity and food prices by assessing suspected drivers such as oil price increases, biofuels policy, weather problems, demand increases in rapidly growing economies, and food import and export policies.

Monday, November 3, 2008

“An Agroecological Strategy to Taking Back Our Food System”

Professor Miguel Altieri

Department of Environmental Science, Policy and Management, UC Berkeley

World agriculture appears to be approaching a crossroads. The globalized economy has placed a series of conflicting demands on existing croplands. Not only is this land required to produce food for a growing human population, but it also must meet the increased demand for biofuels; and it must do both in an environmentally sound way that preserves biodiversity and reduces greenhouse emissions, while still representing a profitable activity for millions of farmers. These pressures are setting in motion a global food system crisis of unprecedented scope that is already signaled by food riots in many parts of the world. This crisis threatens the livelihoods of millions more than the current 800 million hungry people. It is the direct result of the predominant industrial farming model, which is dangerously dependent on fossil fuels and has also become the largest source of human impact on the biosphere.



MORE UPCOMING EVENTS

Information Session for the 2009 Tata International Social Entrepreneurship Scheme (TISES) Fellowship

Wednesday, September 17, 2008

12:00 – 1:00pm

Stephens Room, MLK Student Union

The Tata Group, one of India's largest private sector conglomerates and a global leader in innovative corporate social responsibility initiatives, recently launched the Tata International Social Entrepreneurship Scheme (TISES). The primary objective of TISES is to provide international students with opportunities to contribute to community initiative projects of Tata Group companies in India and in so doing promote international understanding. Berkeley will identify up to five upper division undergraduate or graduate students for eight-week summer TISES internships with Tata Group's community initiative programs. Competitively selected interns will join Tata community development teams working on the economic and social empowerment of communities surrounding the company's operating units. Learn more about the fellowship program, including how to apply, at this launch event.

Tata-Berkeley Student Symposium

Friday, September 19, 2008

1:00 – 4:00pm

International House, Home and Sproul Rooms

The Blum Center will host a Tata-Berkeley Symposium at the International House featuring presentations by UC Berkeley students who worked all over the Global South this past summer. Presentations will be made by 2008 Tata International Social Entrepreneurship Scheme Fellows

and by a panel of students from the Blum Center's Global Poverty and Practice minor. A poster session highlighting international experiences by students from across the campus will close the event.

Approaches to an International Career: A Conversation with Dr. Jody Olsen, Peace Corps Deputy Director

Tuesday, October 21, 2008

7:00 – 8:30pm, Reception at 6:00pm

International House, Chevron Auditorium

You are invited to this special presentation during International Career Week. Peace Corps Deputy Director Dr. Jody Olsen will share personal insights from a career in international development spanning more than 40 years and 80 countries. A former Peace Corps volunteer herself (Tunisia), Dr. Olsen has held leadership positions in international NGOs and CIES, the organization that manages the Fulbright Senior Scholar program. Presented by the Blum Center for Developing Economies, International House and Peace Corps.

Global Service Fair

Wednesday, October 22, 2008

10:30am – 2:00pm Alumni House – Toll Room

Campus and community organizations that provide students the opportunity to engage in both hands-on and policy-related work for international development and poverty alleviation will provide information on summer and on-going options for students in the Global Poverty and Practice Minor and from across campus. A list of participating organizations will be posted on the Blum Center website. <http://blumcenter.berkeley.edu/global-service-fair>



We welcome your questions and comments.

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