

# MDP Program Newsletter

## Issue 4 | Fall 2013



**+** Training a new generation of practitioners to address the complexities of sustainable development in innovative and participatory ways



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## Director's Note



In this newsletter, we're excited once more to provide an update on the University of Florida, Master of Sustainable Development Practice (MDP) Program. Since our last newsletter, our third cohort of students has returned from their respective field practicums carried out in 10 countries of Africa, the Caribbean and Latin America. While abroad they worked closely with host organizations and local communities, to contribute to ongoing development initiatives and gain invaluable experience for their future careers in sustainable development. Since their return, students have been working closely with their supervisory committees to develop a final report of their experiences and findings, concise summaries of which were presented in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual MDP Poster Session discussed on page 6 of this newsletter. I would like to congratulate the students for their efforts requiring a considerable degree of adaptability in challenging contexts. I would also like to express my appreciation to the faculty members, representatives of host organizations, and communities who collaborated closely with our students in the realization of their field practicums. For persons interested in learning more about these experiences, copies of the posters will be posted on the program website and many of the final reports will be incorporated into the UF institutional repository.

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One unfortunate aspect that characterizes many countries where our students have carried out their field practicums is the fact that they have been subjected to conflict in the recent or not too distant past. Conflict greatly increases the already complex challenges of development, leading to the tragic loss of human life, accentuating processes of environmental degradation, interfering with processes of production and undermining efforts to further economic growth. Recognizing the crucial importance of conflict to sustainable development, the MDP Program Coordinator, Cynthia Tarter, and Jon Dain, Latin American Studies and core faculty member of the MDP, submitted a successful proposal to the United States Institute of Peace (USIP) to carry out a seminar series and workshop on peacebuilding as part of the MDP Practitioner Forum Series. This project was made possible with matching support from the Center for Latin American Studies, the Center for African Studies and the UF International Center. Participants in the series had the unique opportunity to engage with inspirational leaders and practitioners who have devoted their lives to processes of peacebuilding and conflict resolution. More information on this series can be found on page 3 of this newsletter.

Now that two cohorts of students have graduated from the MDP Program, we are excited to learn about their professional pursuits and activities. In this newsletter, MDP graduates Stephenie Chatfield and Erica Odera share with us a synopsis of their ongoing work in Ethiopia and Kenya. We would like to congratulate Stephenie for her recent promotion to Country Director of Water is Life International in Ethiopia, the host organization with which she carried out her field practicum in 2012. We will continue to provide updates on our graduates in future newsletters.

In the Faculty Spotlight section of this newsletter on page 10, we extend our deep appreciation to Dr. Marianne Schmink, who was not only instrumental in the creation of the MDP Program in UF, but who has served as the MDP Graduate Coordinator for over three years, providing guidance to four cohorts of students, and carrying out numerous other key functions in support of the MDP Program. As she enters into a phased-retirement period in 2014, Dr. Schmink is stepping down as Graduate Coordinator. Here, it is important to recognize Dr. Schmink's

invaluable and enthusiastic support to the program and express our gratitude for her future contributions. We are quite pleased to announce that Dr. Renata Serra, Center for African Studies and core MDP Faculty, has accepted the role of MDP Graduate Coordinator beginning January 2014. We are grateful for her acceptance to assume this role and look forward to her contributions to the MDP Program in this new capacity.

During its formative years, the MDP Program has been quite fortunate to receive sustained and invaluable support from the UF International Center (UFIC). Dr. David Sammons, the Director of UFIC during this period, retired at the end of December 2013 and here I would like to extend our sincere appreciation to Dr. Sammons and his staff for this enthusiastic support. Dr. Sammons participated in the 3<sup>rd</sup> MDP Global Summit in Bangladesh, the 1<sup>st</sup> International Conference on Sustainable Development Practice in New York, was instrumental in integrating UF into the UN Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN), and participated in a regional SDSN visioning meeting in Texas A&M in the Norman Borlaug Institute of International Agriculture to explore opportunities for future cooperation. UFIC has also provided timely financial support to the MDP Program as indicated in the aforementioned peacebuilding series and in the development of scholarship agreements. Once again, we would like to extend our heartfelt thanks to Dr. Sammons and wish him the best in his new challenges and endeavors.

Finally, many thanks to our graduate assistant, MDP student Elizabeth Poulsen, who took leadership in the development of this newsletter and who has provided enthusiastic support for many activities carried out by the program, since she assumed the position of Graduate Assistant in September 2013.

Let me finish by wishing all our readers a happy and successful 2014. We look forward to another exciting year, thanks to your generous support and collaboration.

Sincerely,

Glenn Galloway  
MDP Program Director

## Program News

# MDP Practitioner Forum Series: International Conflict Resolution and Peacebuilding



Virginia Searing, SC, Executive Director of the Centro de Paz, discusses reconciliation for communities in Quiche, Guatemala



Judy Anderson and Dr. Joseph Sebarenzi discuss peace and conflict in Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of Congo

In July 2013, the MDP Program was awarded a grant from the United States Institute of Peace (USIP), Public Education for Peacebuilding Support (PEPS). The grant was made possible by a cost-sharing commitment from the Center for Latin American Studies, Center for African Studies, and the UF International Center. The objective of the grant was to enhance the understanding of international peacebuilding and conflict resolution concepts and strategies among UF graduate students, faculty and others interested in the theme via a seminar series and workshop organized through the MDP Practitioner Forum Series.

UF students and faculty from multiple departments carry out fieldwork with international communities at local, regional and national levels, many of which have been impacted by past or present conflict. Developing

a basic understanding of the concepts and skills related to conflict resolution and peacebuilding is important to students in graduate programs linked to Centers like Latin American and African Studies. USIP grant activities were designed to generate a greater awareness of, and interest in, international conflict resolution and peacebuilding among students by providing examples and encouraging discussion of the theme.

Three seminar events, organized and facilitated by MDP Program Coordinator Cindy Tarter with support from LAS Faculty member Jonathan Dain, were held on September 26th, October 17th and November 4<sup>th</sup>. The four invited speakers, Eric Hubbard, Dr. Joseph Sebarenzi, Judy Anderson, and Virginia Searing are each actively engaged in international work connected to conflict and peace in





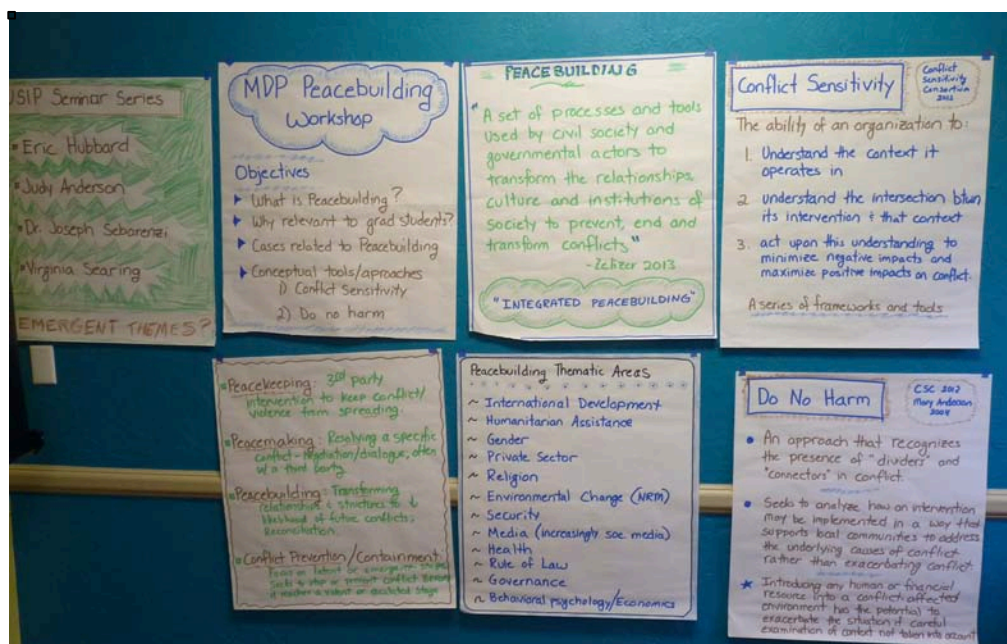
Eric Hubbard talks about the Cycle of Conflict

regions of Africa and/or Latin America and they shared their experiences with non-governmental organizations, the United Nations and, in the case of Joseph Sebarenzi, his own government in Rwanda. The diverse approaches and stories presented included experiences from Guatemala, DR Congo, Rwanda, Liberia, Angola and South Sudan.

Specific seminar topics included theoretical analyses of conflict work as “development”, advice for future practitioners working in areas impacted by conflict, the

mental health needs common to post-conflict regions, the role of women in peacebuilding, and personal experiences of surviving conflict and genocide. An emergent theme throughout the series was the challenge and importance of forgiveness as an element of the post-conflict reconciliation process.

The final activity funded by the USIP grant was an integrative and experiential Peacebuilding workshop held on November 15<sup>th</sup> for MDP Students, facilitated by core MDP faculty Jonathan Dain. The workshop incorporated and built upon the themes from the three seminars while providing conceptual tools designed to grow peacebuilding and conflict resolution skills and knowledge.





## SDP Certificate Spotlight: Mary Rodriguez

***The Sustainable Development Practice (SDP) Certificate is available for any non-MDP graduate student at UF. It provides hands-on training in interdisciplinary knowledge and skills in sustainable development for researchers and practitioners, integrating social, health, natural and management sciences. To obtain the certificate, students at the Master's level are required to take 12 credits, while PhD students must complete 15 credits of required coursework.***

Mary Rodriguez is currently earning an SDP certificate as part of her PhD in Agricultural Extension and Development, in which she is focusing on community development, food security, and gender.

Mary's interest in agricultural education began several years ago, during her undergraduate experience at Texas A&M, where she became certified to teach high school classes in agricultural sciences. Mary then came to UF for her Master's program, in which she was able to apply her skills on an international level, serving as a study abroad course coordinator at Earth University in Guasimo Costa Rica, where she designed and recruited international participants for a course on rural sustainable development.

Following her Master's program, Mary served in the Peace Corps in northern Cameroon, conducting capacity-building activities with rural women working in

the agricultural sector. She designed and implemented a program to strengthen the organizational capacity of these women, leading trainings about group work, elections, budgeting, record-taking, leadership, communication, and time management.

The SDP certificate was a natural fit for Mary's experiences and interests, and she is especially interested in gaining a theoretical background in development theory to complement and give depth to her on-the-ground experience. She feels that as the certificate draws from many academic areas, it is well suited for giving her a holistic and well-rounded picture of the interconnected nature of development.

Mary feels that the SDP certificate also complements her career goals – she plans to work in higher education, preparing future development practitioners for work in international contexts. She is especially interested in teaching about participatory research methods, organizational change, international communication and leadership, and agricultural extension.

*For more information about the SDP certificate visit:*

<http://www.africa.ufl.edu/mdp/academicprograms/sdpcertificate.html>



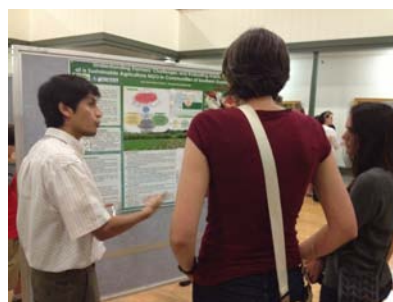


The MDP Program held its 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Poster Session on December 4<sup>th</sup>, 2013 in Ustler Hall's Atrium. MDP graduate students who recently completed field practicum projects in **Colombia, Ecuador, Paraguay, Tunisia, Peru, Haiti, Moçambique, Uganda, Guatemala** and **Belize** presented posters on their fieldwork. These projects were carried out in conjunction with diverse host institutions focusing on governance, gender, health, climate change, youth leadership, irrigation, reforestation, hygiene, wastewater reuse, wildlife, environmental stewardship, sustainable agriculture and value chain analysis. MDP students applied a wide array of methodologies in their engagement with communities, farmers, and representatives from governmental and non-governmental organizations and the private sector.

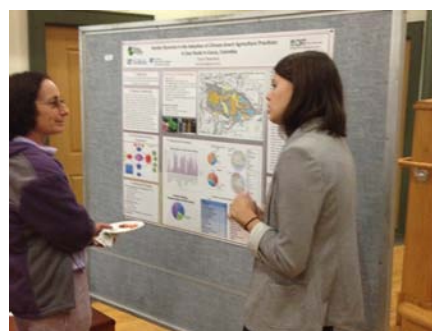


**Cohort 3 poses after the poster session.** Standing (left to right): Hans Goertz, Dan Stirling, Raina Zantout, Sebastian Pazmino, Jessica Jefferson, Gentry Mander, Antonia Lliteras, Leandra Clough, Taryn Devereux; Front: Jose Juan Perez Orozco (right), Seth Marsala-Bell (left)

Students addressed questions related to their work on a one-on-one basis and in small groups. The selected panel of judges assessed each poster based on a set of criteria, and a 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> place poster presenter was given special recognition. Judges included UF faculty Dr. Arlan Rosenbloom, Dr. Muthusami Kumaran, and Dr. Christine Overdevest.



After careful deliberation to reach consensus, the judges awarded 1<sup>st</sup> place to **Jose Juan Perez Orozco** and 2<sup>nd</sup> place to **Jessica Jefferson**. The MDP Program wishes to congratulate them and all the student presenters for the development of excellent posters and their engagement with attendees at the session.





UF MDP at the conference (from left to right, back row): Kristen Augustine, Director Glenn Galloway, Hans Goertz, Cindy Tarter, Dean David Sammons, Jennifer Meisenhelder, Tyrell Kahan, (front row: Left to Right): Alexandra Sprague, Renata Serra, Jeremy Lambeth

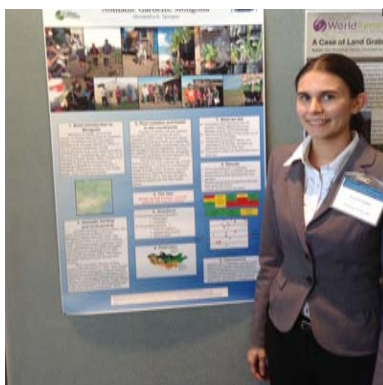
## First International Conference on Sustainable Development Practice (ICSDP)

The Global Association of Master's in Development Practice Programs, in collaboration with the UN Sustainable Development Solutions Network, hosted the First International Conference on Sustainable Development Practice on September 6-7, at Columbia University in New York City. The theme of the conference was *Advancing Evidence-Based Solutions for the post-2015 Sustainable Development Agenda*.

Several UF MDP students, alumni and faculty, and staff attended the conference. Core faculty member **Renata Serra** led a session on sustainable agriculture and food systems, discussing collective action as a solution to enhance female small-scale farmers' access to markets. MDP affiliate faculty member **Thomas Ankersen** also led a session on clinical legal education in support of



MDP students Hans Goertz (above) and Alex Sprague (below) with their posters during the conference's poster session



sustainable development. **Kristen Augustine** (Cohort 1) led a session in which she discussed her experience building networks and social capital among women in Jordan.

Two current students participated in a poster/networking session, including **Hans Goertz**, who presented his experience with implementing tree-planting strategies in Haiti, and **Alex Sprague**, who discussed her experience carrying out nomadic garden projects in Mongolia.

The conference was a great networking opportunity for UF MDP staff, faculty, and students, who had a chance to meet with several other MDP affiliates from around the world.



## MDP Welcomes Cohort 4



Cohort 4 of the MDP program (from L to R): Jeremy Lambeth, Liz Poulsen, Alex Sprague, Amber Zappia, Samantha Davis, Antonieta Eguren – Beau Bryant in back and Christa Roberts in front.

This fall, eight new students joined the ranks of the UF MDP program. Members of Cohort 4 come from as far as Alaska and Chile, and have worked on development initiatives in many areas of the world.

Several students were awarded assistantships to help fund their studies, including Beau Bryant, who is working as the graduate advisor to first-generation college students through the Florida Opportunity Scholar program, Amber Zappia, who is an administrative assistant for the Travel and Recreation Program (TRiP), and Liz Poulsen, who is the MDP Program graduate assistant. Alex Sprague received a fellowship through the Tropical Conservation and Development program, and Antonieta Eguren received a scholarship through the Chilean government.

All students in Cohort 4 have experience working in developing countries. Samantha participated in a project with Engineers Without Borders in Ghana, and Jeremy has worked on various initiatives in

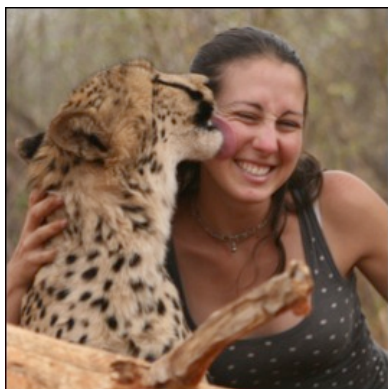
Haiti, Jordan, and Indonesia. Liz taught classes on sexual and reproductive health during her Peace Corps service in Guatemala and Niger, and Alex designed a nomadic gardening project during her year in Mongolia with the Fulbright program, and previously taught English in China and worked on community-based conservation projects in Peru. Christa has spent time in Mexico and has several years of experience in the business sector. Amber also has experiences in several Latin American countries, including Guatemala, Peru, and Ecuador, where she has worked in organic farming, tutoring, constructing clean-burning stoves, and teen leadership. Beau has taught English in Morocco and Japan, and has worked on other development initiatives in Nigeria, Ethiopia, and Haiti.

Check out more in-depth bios on our website!

<http://www.africa.ufl.edu/mdp/people/currentstudents.html>



## Field Practicum News



Cohort 3 student **Leandra Clough**



A view from inside the Sabie Game Park in Mozambique

## Field Practicum Partner: The Southern African Wildlife College

The Southern African Wildlife College (SAWC) is located in Hoedspruit, South Africa on the border of Kruger National Park. In the summer of 2013, they initiated two pilot programs for governance training in Community-Based Natural Resource Management (CBNRM). One program was in communities near Kruger National Park in South Africa and the other was in communities bordering Sabie Game Park in Mozambique. The program included unlocking economic benefits from wildlife, and training communities in proper governance for the equitable distribution of benefits and management of resources.

MDP Core Faculty **Dr. Brian Child** (Geography and African Studies) has been working with Sandy-Slater Jones at SAWC on initiatives to transform education opportunity in community-based conservation. To contribute to the pilot program in Mozambique, **Leandra Clough** (Cohort 3), with support from her committee chair Dr. Child, conducted a situational analysis of the five villages in which the program was being implemented. This involved many participatory methods such as historical timelines, needs assessments,

stakeholder analyses, natural resource trends, and community mapping, combined with more traditional surveys in household livelihoods, economics, and governance.

The results showed that household livelihoods are very diverse but heavily reliant on natural resources, which are declining as a result of over-exploitation. Community members currently have very negative values of wildlife as a result of human-wildlife conflict, low benefits, and unfulfilled promises. However, there is potential to reverse the view of wildlife by providing financial benefits from Sabie Game Park and improving the relationship between the local people and the park.

The information generated in the situational analysis was used to guide the CBNRM project and future land-use planning in the villages. In addition, the surveys created a baseline data to be used in monitoring the program's effectiveness in the future. There are many opportunities for MDP students to partner with the Southern African Wildlife College on these CBNRM projects in South Africa and Mozambique. Cohort 4 students **Antonieta Eguren** and **Alex Sprague** will be carrying out their field practicums at SAWC next summer.

## Faculty Spotlight



**Dr. Marianne Schmink** is a core faculty member in the Center for Latin American Studies, Department of Anthropology, Tropical Conservation and Development (TCD) Program and the Master of Sustainable Development Practice (MDP) Program. Dr. Schmink has carried out research and

practice in the Brazilian Amazon for over 25 years. Since 1980, her leadership and work in Latin American Studies and in the development and consolidation of the TCD Program has created the institutional foundation and interdisciplinary vision for the MDP Program.

Since the inception of the MDP Program, Dr. Schmink has served as a member of the program's Management Committee, Curriculum Committee, Admissions Committee and Steering Committee, and has counseled all MDP students as **MDP Graduate Coordinator**. Her vast experience has enabled her to provide timely, invaluable support to the program and its students. She has a special vocation for advising students and for program development that has resulted in many contributions to our program. In addition to her efforts relating to student advising and program development, she teaches and contributes to core classes in the program, and has served on multiple MDP students' supervisory committees, both as chair and committee member.

Words can only partially convey the impact Dr. Schmink has had on the creation and conduction of the MDP Program. However, the evidence of her involvement can easily be detected in many areas, for example, in the success of MDP students and alumni, in the interdisciplinary and dynamic approaches to teaching and advising inherent in the program, in the explicit recognition of the importance of understanding gender and its role in development, and in the innovative integration of social and natural sciences to address conservation and development issues. For her leadership and unflagging enthusiasm we harbor the deepest gratitude and wish to convey our thanks to Dr. Schmink.

We posed a few questions to Dr. Schmink regarding her time with MDP students and vision for the future....

### 1. What have you most enjoyed in your role as MDP Graduate Coordinator?

MDP students come to UF with significant previous practical experience in the field, extremely strong commitment, diverse skill sets, and great creativity. In providing academic advice to MDP students, I have enjoyed working with them to link their practical interests and needs with UF's extensive campus resources: faculty, courses, and programs in areas such as natural resources and agriculture, water, global health, business, gender, climate change, and organizational management. The MDP Program builds on over 30 years of experience with the Tropical Conservation and Development (TCD) Program in the Center for Latin American Studies, and is a logical extension of TCD's increasing incorporation of practical work at the interface of development and conservation, with partners (universities, NGOs, development organizations) in Latin America and Africa. In fact, UF's international reputation in the field of sustainable development in Latin America recently was recognized in the awarding of new senior faculty "pre-eminence" hires for 2014. UF's institutional strength and experience includes a wide array of faculty and programs to help provide the diverse tools and strong analytical grounding necessary for MDP students to consolidate their expertise as development practitioners, in the short but intense time-frame of their Master's program. It has been rewarding to help them navigate the complexity of our large institution to make the best of their time here.

### 2. What do you perceive as the most critical issues for the continuing growth and success of the MDP Program in the future?

My five-year vision for the MDP Program is grounded in active, long-term partnerships to carry out sustainable development projects contributing to improved environmental governance and well-being in communities in local sites of Latin America and Africa. These partnerships will bring together diverse teams of

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graduate students from different universities with practitioners, in field courses and practical activities focused on local development problems to be addressed over a long-term series of courses and practical projects carried out by these teams. TCD and MDP faculty already have been developing these partnerships and field course activities for several years in southern Africa, the Amazon region, Mexico, Colombia and Paraguay, among other countries, and are beginning to develop a concrete model for linking graduate training with practical impact in sustainable development at the local level in Latin America and Africa. These innovative programs will require diverse sources of funding to support fellowships for students from Latin America and Africa, as well as faculty time and other costs of practicum work in the field for successive cohorts of student/practitioner teams.

### 3. How would you like to see the MDP Program in five years time?

Building strong, concrete partnerships, and finding funds to support MDP fellowships and practicum projects in the field are the two key issues for UF's MDP Program. The MDP Program of my five-year vision will have a secure funding base for student support, and continuing new grants to support field projects that involve teams of students and practitioners in a long-term partnership. Stronger links with other MDP programs, including joint placement of students and team projects through the global network, as well as continued expansion of affiliate faculty at UF, will help build partnerships in new directions and sites.



Global Classroom Fall 2013: Students with Course Professors: Dr. Schmink and Dr. Serra

*"I feel very lucky that I had the chance to be an advisee of Dr. Schmink and to benefit from her candor and consistently constructive criticism."* – **Gentry Mander, MDP Cohort 3 Student**

*"Marianne was a great inspiration and support during my time in the UF MDP Program. Our program wouldn't be where it is without her and neither would I."* – **Sydney Nilan, MDP Cohort 2 Alumni; Currently Program Coordinator at Fundación Runa, Peru**

*"Dr. Schmink has been an incredible resource for students in the MDP Program. As a teacher she guided us through the hard questions of relief and development. As a practitioner she made plain the realities of field research and work. As an advisor she challenged me to take on work of consequence and publish the results."* – **Hans Goertz, MDP Cohort 3 Student**

As Dr. Schmink enters a phased-out retirement period beginning in Spring 2014, she is handing the role of MDP Graduate Coordinator to Center for African Studies and **MDP Faculty, Dr. Renata Serra**. We want to express many thanks to Dr. Serra for generously accepting to take on this important advisory role in the program.

## Student Activities



**Raina Zantout** (Cohort 3) presented the results of her field practicum research during UF's 2013 Graduate Student Research Day this October, which was hosted by the I-Cubed Graduate Student Advisory Council.

Students **Antonieta Eguren**, **Alex Sprague**, and others from Cohorts 3 and 4, along with MDP affiliate faculty **Rosalie Koenig** and **Gregory MacDonald**, harvested peanuts on UF's Agronomy Teaching Farm as part of the Tropical Crop Production course – a new addition to the MDP core curriculum.



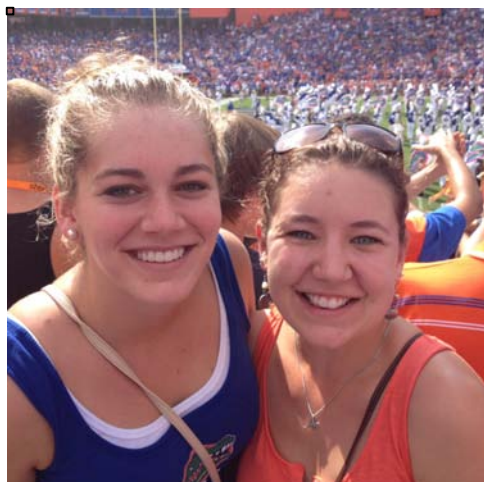
**Hans Goertz** (Cohort 3, left) and **Alex Sprague** (Cohort 4, right) presented their experiences planting trees in Haiti (Hans) and implementing a nomadic garden project in Mongolia (Alex) during Tropilunch – a weekly seminar run by the Tropical Conservation and Development (TCD) Program in which students present and discuss their research projects with peers and faculty.







Cohort 3 student **Hans Goertz** began an internship this semester with the Nutrition division of the USAID Mozambique mission. The remote internship is conducted through the Virtual Foreign Service Volunteer program. Hans is working with Demographic Health Survey data to report on nutrition trends in the country.



(Left): Cohort 4 students **Samantha Davis** and **Liz Poulsen** show their Gator pride at the Florida vs. Tennessee game.

(Right): Cohort 4 student **Amber Zappia** performed with Agbedidi, a West African dance ensemble, in Gainesville and Miami.



Cohort 3 student **Sebastian Pazmino** sports a winning smile as he leaves Grinter Hall for his job at Florida Opportunity Scholars (FOS). Many MDP students bike each day to UF using the several bike routes located on and off campus.

## Alumni News

### Stephenie Chatfield, MDP Cohort 2, 2013



Stephenie Chatfield is currently the **Water and Sanitation (WASH) Coordinator** for **Water is Life International**: an NGO based in Orlando, FL whose mission it is to facilitate the provision of water, sanitation, and hygiene services to impoverished communities throughout Ethiopia. In her role as WASH Coordinator, Stephenie is responsible for the management of ongoing well-drilling and community-based sanitation projects, the implementation of the Sustainable Living Group initiative, communication between in-country partners and Water is Life staff, and the strategic development of WASH materials. She travels between rural project areas in southern Ethiopia to facilitate with community members and implementation staff, and Addis Ababa to meet and plan with key in-country partners.

The purpose of this role is to ensure the fulfillment of Water is Life International's mission and specific project objectives, to promote quality, sustainability, and respect in their projects, and to ensure that community members receive the most benefit from the organization's work.

Stephenie writes, "The MDP Program prepared me in many ways for my current role with Water is Life International. More than anything, through the MDP program I garnered a more analytical mind in regards to development programs, and an appreciation for the value of participatory techniques and true sustainability.

The MDP Program prepared me practically for my current job by improving my writing skills (specifically, in regards to proposals and concept notes), by giving me the necessary tools to navigate cross-cultural communication and coordination, and by allowing me the space to develop my own ethos and views on development topics and issues. I learned and grew through the MDP Program more than I ever hoped, and I know it has directly benefited me in my current job."



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## Erica Odera, MDP Cohort 1, 2012



“As an MDP student and now graduate, my driving passion is to pursue work that improves the lives of those living in poverty in the developing world. Since 2010, I have been working on assisting a small-scale women’s business with my husband Levy, a Kenyan native and small business expert. Together, and through our nonprofit organization named Rural Empowerment and Development Innovations, Inc. we work directly with a women’s group located in western Kenya. Their name is Wakonyre, which in the Swahili languages means “we help ourselves,” and their group does just that. They took the initiative to contact us (Levy had worked with them previously a few years ago) and asked for our technical assistance to help them start a poultry farming business. We agreed, and last summer we took nearly one dozen UF students, recent graduates, and a team of students and faculty from Valdosta State University along with us to Katonde village, Kenya, located near Lake Victoria.

We hosted several hands-on workshops covering the basics of business management and how to keep detailed logs of activities and costs. We are committed to working with the women long-term and to see their business expand. In partnership with Valdosta State University’s ENACTUS student organization (a group of business students applying their skills to help small enterprises) we facilitated a small loan of \$2,000 to the women’s group to begin their business. With that money they built a chicken coop and purchased 200 baby chicks in July.

It has been nearly four months and the chickens have laid their first eggs. The women have done an excellent job caring for the chicks and only 6 chicks have died. We are currently working on helping them plan for marketing and distribution of their new eggs.

My personal experience and education in MDP really prepared me to take on this new adventure, particularly my training in learning how to develop a business plan, how to run hands-on workshops, and developing grant proposals. I actually wrote the initial proposal for this project while in Dr. Galloway’s Development Administration course. However, and perhaps most importantly, my field practicum in Botswana really gave me confidence in working directly with a rural village community, how to work in a diverse team and how to learn to ‘go with the flow’ when plans inevitably change!”

For more information about this project, or my experience in MDP, please feel free to contact Erica through email: [ericaodera@gmail.com](mailto:ericaodera@gmail.com)