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HONORS COLLEGE
2016

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ORNATE DRAIN RUNNELS

GULHANE PARK



KADIKÖY DEFINITELY HAD PERSONALITY. MOST BOLLARDS WERE PAINTED RAINBOW COLORS, VENDORS WOULD USE THEM TO PUT A STAND OF PUSSES BY, THE ARCHITECTURE LOOKED VERY 50s-60s, BUT THE STREET LIFE STILL FELT LIKE ISTANBUL. THERE ARE MORE WATERFRONT AREAS FOR PEDESTRIANS THAN ON THE EUROPEAN SIDE.

KADIKÖY



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FEATURE

Making a Difference in Mozambique

BY KENDALL CURLEE

Photographs by Will Gisler, Carol Gattis, Kendall Curlee and UA students



Left: Schoolchildren serenade the UA students; Right: Joe Hiltz and Stephanie Philpot work on a biosecurity checklist for poultry farmers.



Full disclosure, right up front: Nampula, Mozambique, is not a glamour destination. In the summer program Community Development in Mozambique, the day starts at 6 a.m. and stretches into long, dusty hours working on a poultry farm in the African bush. Students are sustained on a steady diet of chicken, rice and French fries, heavily dosed with *piri piri* sauce and washed down with Coke and instant coffee – a far cry from the flavor-blasted, calorie-packed variety they're accustomed to back home. Internet access and plumbing at the Bamboo Hotel can be sketchy. Nightlife? Think lukewarm shower, dinner, a group debrief by the pool and lights out by 9 p.m.

So why is this program full and turning away half the students willing to pay serious money to fly 9,000 miles to East Africa?

"It feels good to work and do hard labor, sometimes frustrating labor, for something you believe is making a difference," said Caleb Petersen, an honors finance junior.

The thrill of helping real people in real situations and learning on the fly are also major selling points for the program.

Take the water quality team: For three weeks they partnered with farm employee/translator Miguel Goncalves Jr. to demonstrate to local farmers that adding a capful of chlorine bleach to a 55-gallon drum of water made the water safe to drink. The concept of bacteria was completely new to the farmers, so the students used a handheld ATP test to put numbers on the invisible threat. The first time they dipped the monitor into untreated, then treated water, witnessed by a quiet group of Mozambican chicken farmers, the bacteria count dropped from 2049 to 20, rendering the water safe to drink.



"We showed that science works!" civil engineering junior Claire Stewart recalled. "I've never experienced something in school where I wanted to cry." The farmers asked a lot of questions, with several taking detailed notes.

"The risks are so much greater," said Annie Makuch, a biological engineering senior who led the team. "If you don't answer correctly, that changes their life. But the rewards are crazy."

Now in its fifth year, the Community Development in Mozambique summer program unites teams of poultry science, business and engineering students who tackle problems that range from assessing chick quality to corralling data from 33 different chicken farmers. Two faculty members working in international development lead the program: Lanier Nalley, associate professor of agricultural economics and agribusiness, and Amy Farmer, the director of the Office of Global Engagement and the Margaret Gerig & R.S. Martin Jr. Chair in Business. Both professors provide thoughtful support and worry over every upset stomach and bug bite—and both leave room for the students to figure things out on their own.

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Clockwise from left: Emily English, Anna Tovar and Austin Berry deliver hard-boiled eggs to schoolchildren; Claire Stewart adds a capful of bleach to the bucket while others look on; Andrew Cunningham, executive director, New Horizons

“This program teaches students the power of the individual to make a difference. I think they come back changed forever, with the responsibility that they need to do the same.”

—Amy Farmer, Director, Office of Global Engagement

“For me, it’s all about the kids learning to solve problems by themselves,” Nalley said. “They might fall on their face 100 times, but I think it’s how they get back up that defines who they are.”

“This program teaches students the power of the individual to make a difference,” Amy Farmer said. “I think they come back changed forever, with the responsibility that they need to do the same.”

New Horizons: Cultivating Hope, and a New Business Model

This hands-on service learning experience builds on the vision of a very dedicated team of people, both international and local, who have built New Horizons poultry farm from scratch. Andrew Cunningham, an owner and self-described “coach,” moved here from his native Zimbabwe 10 years ago.

“When we arrived, there were no roads, no water, no electricity. We lived in tents for the first six months,” he recalled. Blessed with a keen eye for talent, he began building a team to help him raise chickens and run the farm. Out of the first 70 hired, only a couple had held a job before. “Where some people see need, we see opportunity,” Cunningham said. “One of the things that happens here is that you become a part of making things happen.”

To date New Horizons has created several hundred jobs, has purchased grain, corn and soya from more than 40,000 individual farmers, and generated affordable protein in an area where there is chronic malnutrition. Outgrowers, the local farmers who raise chicks for New Horizons, have on average increased their annual income tenfold – in cycles lasting just seven to eight weeks.

The team has expanded the enterprise to include an egg business and schools that provide education and training opportunities for workers and their families. In the process, they have flip-flopped the usual business model. “For a lot of organizations, people are a means to an end – to make a profit,” Cunningham said. “We want to see people grow and develop, and feel a productive and profitable environment is one of the best places for this to happen. It’s a subtle difference, but it has a lot of potential.”

Cunningham’s message is an inspiring one, delivered the first day that the students arrive at New Horizons. The students would do anything to help the team – and the poultry team had the satisfaction of getting immediate results.



Clockwise from left: Paige Acklie cradles a chick; Lunch at New Horizons; A local woman prepares cassava flour, a starchy staple in the Mozambican diet; Stephanie Philpot confers with Lanier Nalley, one of the professors who leads the program.

Team Chicken

The poultry team launched its efforts with two all-night vigils in the hatchery, checking hourly to record every egg hatched. One thousand songs from poultry science major Joe Hiltz' middle school playlist kept them up, and by the end of the week, the farm saw a 4 percent increase in hatchability – money in the bank for a chicken farmer. “We’re not sure why – it’s possible that people working in the hatchery were pulling the egg trays too soon, at midnight instead of 7 a.m.,” said Dustan Clark, an extension poultry health veterinarian who came to Mozambique to share his expertise. “We’re also looking at hot and cold areas in the hatchery, since the data suggests that ventilation could be a problem.”

Clark and the poultry students also spent hours monitoring biosecurity at outgrowers' farms. With their thatched roofs and adobe block construction, Mozambican chicken houses look different from Northwest Arkansas' metal sheds. But the principles that govern chicken health and profitability remain the same: a secure entrance, a foot dip to clean bacteria from shoes, and a fence to keep predators away from the chicks, to start.

“Our goal is to make a biosecurity checklist for the outgrowers that is thorough but as short and simple as possible,” said Stephanie Philpot, an honors poultry science senior. When asked about the biggest biosecurity challenge faced by the farmers, poultry science major Matthew Coale responded: “They don’t know what bacteria is, and it’s difficult to grasp the concept that something they can’t see does hurt them. The coolest thing about it all is there’s only room for improvement. In the U.S. you visit farms, and it’s not as clear how you can contribute.”

Surveying Hunger

Helping New Horizons prosper is a big plus – but the team also wants to measure its own business' impact on the community, which will help in fine tuning and focusing the services provided.

Armed with scales, measuring tape, and packages of rice, beans and other staples, the Micro Nutrient Survey team set out to collect current data on one of Mozambique's toughest issues: hunger. Currently 38 percent of the population is undernourished, and 44 percent of children under five suffer from chronic malnutrition. Cassava – a starchy, tasteless tuber with low protein content – is the main staple here. Fresh vegetables, fruit and animal proteins are in short supply.

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Clockwise from left: Craig Cobb (left) and Katelyn Romero measure the arm circumference of a child; School children line up for lunch: a hard-boiled egg; Business students conducted market research for Eggs for Africa, an outgrowth of New Horizons.

The UA team surveyed the diet of 60 families in the area, comparing the health of outgrowers to those not employed by New Horizons. The process was a lengthy one. Every family member, from father to tiniest child, stepped onto a scale; the team also measured height and middle upper arm circumference. Then the children spread out a grass mat on the dusty ground, and the interview began: detailed questions on items in eight food groups, designed to ascertain exactly what each family ate, how much, and how often.

"We're still analyzing the data, but with food, for example, employees of New Horizons might eat beef once a month. Non-employees might eat beef once a year," said Maggie Jo Hansen, an honors alumna and graduate student in agricultural and extension education who led the team. The survey concluded with some general questions about nutrition that underlined the need for follow up. "More than half of the New Horizons employees couldn't define nutrition," Hansen said. "And when asked to identify the three healthiest foods and why, they'd say maize, rice and bananas because it 'makes me full.'"

The next steps are clear: an educational campaign on nutrition, and input from soil and environmental science students on how to improve the sandy soil so families can grow their own fruits and vegetables. "It's so doable – our students can do it, and that's what's so inspiring about this," Hansen said.

Taking Care of Business

Business students also made an impact, though their work tended towards the more workaday study of spreadsheets and market research. Austin Berry, an honors junior pursuing majors in economics, marketing and supply chain management, led the team aiding Eggs for Africa, an outgrowth of New Horizons that focuses on bringing fresh eggs to local markets.

"We were tasked with doing basic market research to figure out who the competitors were, and to see if the various vendors were interested in becoming agents for EFA," Berry said. The team proposed the idea of wholesaling the eggs, a concept that would up sales volume considerably. "This is actually my first true work experience in marketing, and I found that I absolutely love it," Berry said. "Now I know for a fact this is something I want to do in the future."

Berry's team also helped Eggs for Africa director John Wayne Kennedy prepare hardboiled eggs for children at a school near the poultry farm. They doled out one egg per child, per day – for many, the only meal until dinnertime. The UA students measured the kids' height, weight and upper arm circumference to establish a baseline on the nutritional impact of the egg program. After every last bit of egg was eaten, pick-up games of soccer and tag erased language barriers and readied all of the students for an afternoon of study and work.



From left: Maggie Jo Hansen (center), translator Ibrahim Hamido and Paige Acklie conduct a dietary survey; At the Bamboo Hotel, Beth Huff (left) and Stephanie Philpot check in with family and friends.

Struggles ... and a Starting Place

The data team faced the toughest task of all. While other students rode off into the bush to connect with local farmers, they camped out under a shade tree at New Horizons and struggled to convert hieroglyphic spreadsheets from five departments into a single Access database.

The scope of the project proved too large for the three weeks they were in Mozambique, so the students narrowed their focus to the outgrowers. Now, the team can track how many chicks and how much feed each grower receives and how many pounds of meat are ultimately sent to market. It's a good starting place. "People's lives are being changed by this business," Caleb Petersen said. "So if we can make New Horizons perform more efficiently, that's not just money in their pocket, that's food on people's tables, more people being hired from villages – and that's a better future for people."

“They’ve taught me a ton about life, about family, and working hard, and loving what you have, and not always wanting something else.”

–Craig Cobb, honors dietetics

Making a Difference – In the Students

Yes, this program provides a crash course in on-your-feet problem solving and solid experience for the resume. The opportunity to make a difference is prized by all of the students. But the greatest takeaway may be the lessons they learn from the Mozambicans they travel so far to help. Those hot dusty days, hard work and so-so food? Craig Cobb, an honors dietetics junior, is up for more. “I wish I could live here for a little bit ... They’ve taught me a ton about life, about family, and working hard, and loving what you have, and not always wanting something else.”

The experience more than 9,000 miles from campus will also impact these students once they return to the classroom. “It will change the way I study, for sure,” Caleb Petersen said. “It’s shown me so much what I don’t know, and what I hope to be in the future. There’s so much of an impact that I can make in this world, just the resources I have and that I have access to – as a student, that motivates me.”



View the video documentary on the Mozambique trip:
honorscollege.uark.edu/videos