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“The Warm Heart Of Africa” Program Proposal For S.T.E.P Into The World

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SIT Graduate Institute

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"THE WARM HEART OF AFRICA" PROGRAM PROPOSAL FOR
S.T.E.P INTO THE WORLD

Adam Goldberg

PIM 69

A Capstone Paper submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for a Master of International Education at the SIT Graduate Institute in Brattleboro, Vermont, USA.

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Abstract

This capstone paper introduces “The Warm Heart of Africa”, an education abroad program proposal for pre-service and in-service K-12 teachers designed for the newly formed organization, S.T.E.P (Supporting.Teachers.Educational.Progression) Into The World. “The Warm Heart of Africa” will offer a month-long intensive program in the African nation of Malawi during the summer of 2012 with the purpose of providing participants with training in intercultural communication alongside an unforgettable cultural immersion experience. With a base of experiential learning, “The Warm Heart of Africa” design focuses on providing participants with a strong foundation in cross-cultural competency and sensitivity as it combines service-learning projects, a homestay, and cultural programming with classroom-based activities, structured group dialogue, and reflection. “The Warm Heart of Africa” is designed as a contribution to the internationalization of the field of teacher education and will act as a model for future study abroad programs aimed at providing intercultural training to educators.

Over the past several decades great importance has been placed on the development of intercultural competence through study abroad opportunities. The field of study abroad continues to grow and with this growth has come a new target audience: K-12 educators. Research indicates that most American schoolteachers do not receive proper intercultural training. Many struggle to effectively manage their multicultural classrooms and are often unable to teach their students about the world (Wang, et. al, 2009).

Introduction

In today's interconnected world it is more important than ever that we develop the ability to communicate across cultural barriers. Educational institutions throughout the United States and elsewhere are taking notice and offer study abroad programs to meet requirements that graduates have cross-cultural competencies and an international perspective (McCabe, 2001). After studying abroad, students report that negotiating cultural differences within a global context outside of their norms had a greater impact on their multicultural understandings and global competencies than traditional classroom learning (Wang, et. al, 2009).

International education provides students with the opportunity to better understand themselves and the world around them. International experiences introduce participants to people and cultures that differ from their own and allow them to gain a better understanding of both their culture and others. These experiences, when thoughtfully constructed, can achieve transformational learning outcomes for participants that broaden their worldview and increase their ability to be competent cross-cultural communicators.

According to Iben Jensen, Professor of Intercultural Communication at the University of Roskilde, there is a new target group within the field of intercultural communication, "The professional practitioners in multiethnic societies: the nurses, the social workers, the lawyers, the teachers, etc., who in respect to their professionalism are responsible for a successful intercultural communication" (2004). This capstone adds to this literature

as it represents a fresh design of a study abroad program for U.S. based pre-service and in-service K-12 teachers. "The Warm Heart of Africa" is the topic of this proposal design. The "The Warm Heart of Africa" education abroad experience takes place in Malawi and is organized for the new organization S.T.E.P (Supporting.Teachers.Educational.Progression) Into the World. This proposal details the pilot program to be run in the summer of 2012.

A carefully planned study abroad curriculum gives teachers a direct, multi-dimensional experience with diversity in an international context, and creates opportunities for exploring and teaching multicultural and global issues. Study abroad provides teachers with an opportunity to apply classroom teaching to concrete situations and the conditions for reflecting on the role of historical and cultural processes that effect the schooling of minority, immigrant, and other diverse children in the U.S. American classrooms (Wang, et. al, 2009). The theoretical and practical insights gained from engaging in and exploring the cultural practices and beliefs of an unfamiliar worldview allow for a complex understanding of behaviors and attitudes of minority students. It also helps teachers break the barriers that now exist between teachers and their students.

Past experience working within public and charter schools introduced the S.T.E.P Development Team to the difficulties many teachers face while working with students from diverse backgrounds. Research indicates that many American schoolteachers today find themselves working within increasingly diverse school environments, yet are often unprepared to manage their multicultural classrooms (Walters, et. al, 2008). S.T.E.P Into The World is a California-based 3rd party study abroad provider that has been

created to contribute to the internationalization of teacher education and will provide teachers with intercultural competence training aimed at preparing them to navigate the complexities of the multicultural classroom.

“The Warm Heart of Africa” acts as a model for future programs administered by S.T.E.P Into The World as well as a possible model for others in the field. Participants engage in a short-term study abroad program that interweaves an education in intercultural communication into a structured cultural immersion experience that will begin the process of developing the knowledge, skills, and attitudes that are needed to bridge the cultural gap between teachers and their students. The design is constructed around Kolb’s Experiential Learning Cycle and develops two core concepts of intercultural communication within program participants; cultural self-awareness and an ethnorelative understanding. By the end of the program, participants will be versed in both the theory and practice of intercultural communication and better prepared to face the challenges that exist while working with students from an ever-increasing diversity of backgrounds and cultures. By providing teachers with the lived experience of studying abroad and teaching them practical intercultural communication strategies and methods S.T.E.P Into The World will provide them with the skills needed to create equitable and productive classroom environments.

Needs Assessment

The need for more intercultural training within the field of teacher education in the United States has only recently been identified. As noted in the introduction, teachers who receive intercultural training are better prepared to effectively manage their increasingly diverse classrooms. This

needs assessment explores this need for more intercultural training within the field of teacher education and the opportunities that now exist for the development of niche markets within the field of international education.

A needs assessment allows for the needs of all potential stakeholders to be determined and establishes parameters for moving forward. The needs assessment for "The Warm Heart of Africa" was initially conducted based on personal observation. Working within the Los Angeles Unified School District some years ago introduced me to the challenges many teachers face while working with students from various cultural backgrounds. Additionally, several friends of mine who are teachers have expressed to me their frustrations while working with students from different cultures. Doug Lemov, founder of Uncommon Schools, a network of 16 charter schools in the Northeast and author of Teach Like a Champion: The 49 Techniques That Put Students on the Path to College noticed similar challenges and is now focused on the mechanics of teaching, "I believe in content-based professional development, obviously, but I feel like it's insufficient. It doesn't matter what questions you're asking if the kids are running the classroom" (2010).

The idea for this capstone developed during the on-campus phase at SIT while I was taking the course Education for Social Justice. It became apparent that many educators do not have the tools to effectively manage their classroom environments nor are they able to inform their students about the world. I concluded that the average schoolteacher does not receive adequate intercultural competence training and determined that there is a need within the field of teacher education for this type of training.

The needs of all possible stakeholders, the participants, S.T.E.P Into The World, Kumbali Country Lodge, and the communities we visit in Malawi, have been aligned with the program. The literature review and theoretical foundation sections of this paper further detail the needs of the program participants.

The field of international education has expanded greatly over the past several decades, yet only recently has there been a concerted effort to internationalize teacher education as teacher education is cited as one of the least internationalized curricula in the United States (Heyl and McCarthy 2003). S.T.E.P has been created to answer the need for more intercultural training programs within the field of teacher education at a time when it has become a topic of interest among international educators. NAFSA held a colloquium on internationalizing teacher education at its 2010 Annual Conference that was attended by over seventy international education professionals and will once again host a colloquium at its' 2011 Annual Conference. Several universities across the nation (including California State University, University of North Carolina, Michigan State University, & University of Maryland) have established programs aimed at internationalizing teacher education.

While universities across the nation are beginning to incorporate intercultural training into their curriculums for prospective teachers, research indicates there is little support for K-12 teachers who are already working professionals. Several organizations, including World Savvy and The Summer Institute for Intercultural Communication, offer multi-day professional development workshops in intercultural communication and

global competence. The Institute of International Education sends a few dozen teachers abroad each year on the Toyota International Teacher Program. While these programs foster global awareness, none take educators abroad with the main focus of developing intercultural skills.

There are a number of challenges that make it difficult for teachers to study or teach abroad. Institutions often have restrictive policies in place that make it difficult for prospective teachers from taking the time to study abroad. Many institutions, for example, require that education students complete their practicum locally. Prospective teachers often have busy schedules that make spending time abroad difficult, “Internships abroad create logistical and financial challenges for prospective teachers, requiring them to shoehorn an extra course or series of courses into an already crowded curriculum, while incurring debt associated with flights and housing” (Walters, et. al, 2007). Similarly, current teachers only have the summer months off, making it difficult to take extended time off to travel, work, or volunteer abroad. Current teachers are rarely provided with an incentive to spend time abroad. Slowly, however, these issues are being addressed.

Teachers throughout the country are required to earn professional development credit towards career and salary advancements. Several states, including California and Massachusetts, are now granting current teachers professional development credit for time spent abroad. California schoolteachers, for example, receive a unit of academic credit for every seven days spent traveling (Ballesteros, 2011).

Malawi provides the perfect location for S.T.E.P to run its first program. Malawi is a safe and stable African nation and its’ people have a

reputation for being friendly and hospitable. Running a program in Malawi offers program participants with an opportunity to explore Africa without the dangers that exist in other African nations. Additionally, building relationships with in-country partners is essential to the success of S.T.E.P program as partners administer in-country logistics, keep S.T.E.P staff up to date on current events in their country, and provide participants with local knowledge and insight. In Malawi, S.T.E.P Into The World has built a strong partnership with Kumbali Country Lodge.

While the major focus of the program is on the needs of its participants, the program will also have a positive impact on the Malawian communities that are visited. The program is designed to maximize potential for cultural exchange. Before intimately interacting with Malawians program participants will read a book about Malawi and attend a cultural training as they gain an in-depth understanding of Malawian culture. Structured into the curriculum are service-learning opportunities to volunteer at an orphanage and teach at a secondary school. Participants will also have the opportunity to develop deeper relationships with the community of Chirombo Bay during the homestay portion of the program. By creating the space for meaningful cultural exchange the program can not only impact participants, but also open up the minds and change perceptions of the people they meet along the way. Additionally, a small portion of the profits will be donated to a community-based organization working towards sustainable development in Chirombo Bay.

Context: S.T.E.P Into The World

S.T.E.P Into The World, co-founded by Adam Goldberg and Ashley

Townes, is an international education organization that offers short term summer abroad professional development programs to both pre-service and in-service educators and its mission is, "to provide summer abroad professional development programming in intercultural communication that open the doors to the world and acquaints participants with a toolkit of strategies and methods aimed at increasing intercultural sensitivity" (About Us, 2011). The vision of S.T.E.P is "to empower educators, from diverse backgrounds, on both a personal and professional level, to be competent cross-cultural communicators and responsible global citizens while enabling them to connect international experience with life back home" (About Us, 2011).

S.T.E.P programs are three to five weeks long and visit four to six communities within a single country. Community stays range from two days to one week. All S.T.E.P programs are developed in order to allow participants to take their experience and knowledge back into their classrooms and home communities.

The core components of S.T.E.P programs include a four-day orientation, structured time for group dialogue and reflection, a homestay, and a two-day re-entry workshop. All programs take an interdisciplinary approach towards educating about local culture. Some, however, are theme specific and focus more heavily on particular topics, such as the arts, sustainable development, language, and history. At the beginning of each program participants are introduced to the core theories and concepts of intercultural communication and experiential education through lectures and other classroom-based activities before engaging with local communities.

Participants engage in the practice of group dialogue and reflection throughout each program.

Each S.T.E.P program hosts ten to fifteen participants. The typical S.T.E.P participant is from the United States and works or will work in K-12 public and charter schools. More specifically, S.T.E.P targets current or future teachers who work or will work in multicultural environments. For each program S.T.E.P hires a Program Facilitator. Program Facilitators must have previous experience in country and a passion for intercultural education. Program Facilitators are essential to the success of the program and attend a three-day leadership training workshop prior to departure. S.T.E.P's in-country partners handle other staffing needs and logistics of the program, including transportation, food, and accommodation.

Program Description: "The Warm Heart of Africa"

S.T.E.P Into the World has partnered with Kumbali Country Lodge in the design and implementation of "The Warm Heart of Africa". Program participants will spend a month in the small African nation of Malawi, known as "The Warm Heart of Africa", because of its' friendly, welcoming people and pristine natural environment. Like all S.T.E.P programs, "The Warm Heart of Africa" design includes a four-day orientation, structured time for group dialogue and reflection, a homestay, and a two-day re-entry workshop.

A major theme running throughout the program is that of sustainable development in the Malawi context. Malawi is one of the poorest countries in the world and is currently facing a number of social and environmental challenges due to a 14% HIV rate, population growth, malnutrition, and rapid deforestation (Makoka 2004). Program participants will experience firsthand

the issues at play and meet people, from all walks of life, working towards creating a sustainable future. Language-wise, while Chichewa is the official language of Malawi, English is the common language making direct immersion a real possibility.

S.T.E.P is partnering with Kumbali Country Lodge, which has over 12 years of experience hosting foreigners in Malawi, a great reputation, and an extensive network of contacts around the country making them a perfect partner for this program. Located just outside the capital of Lilongwe on a 650-hectare farm, Kumbali has recently started hosting volunteers and gap year students from around the world on 4-8 week cultural immersion programs. Kumbali will manage all in-country logistics, ensuring that program participant's are in good hands and see Malawi through the eyes of the locals.

Ten participants will be recruited for the flagship program. All participants must submit a completed application that details how they plan to bring what they learn from the experience back home into their classrooms and home communities. Applicants must be currently working as a K-12 teacher or be enrolled in a teacher-training program. Pre-service teachers must have at minimum sophomore standing and demonstrate at least a 2.75 cumulative GPA.

Literature Review

The literature review focuses on understanding who teachers are, who their students are, and examines the reasons why many teachers struggle to effectively manage multicultural classroom environments. It also provides an overview of the challenges institutions of teacher education are facing and

the approaches that they are taking as they train teachers to be interculturally competent.

The United States is a nation with a rich history of cultural diversity. It is often described as a 'melting pot' or 'multicultural salad'. In the Los Angeles Unified School District, for example, 81 languages are spoken (Dessoff, 2009). The Institute of Education reports that,

Forty-three percent of public school students were considered to be part of a racial or ethnic minority group in 2004, an increase from 22 percent in 1972, while the percentage of public school students who were White and of European descent decreased from 70 to 57 percent (2008).

While classrooms have become more diverse, faculty makeup has remained rather homogeneous, "Over 80% of America's public school teachers are middle-class Euro-American white women from rural areas, small towns or suburbs, who grew up in largely White neighborhoods and graduated from largely White high schools. They have little knowledge of diverse cultures (FERENCE & BELL, 2004)." According to a study by The National Center for Educational Statistics (1999), only 20% of the U.S teachers expressed confidence in their ability to work with children from diverse backgrounds. The average teacher is rarely aware of the history, values, and traditions of non-European cultural groups, whose mores and customs sometime clash with mainstream American culture (Yeh, et. al 2005).

Camille Gibson, Professor at Prairie View A & M University states, "The disparity between teachers' identities and experiences and those of their

students create classrooms where teachers are unable to adequately address the needs of this multicultural student cohort” (2004). These disparities often lead to negative educational outcomes as teacher practice fails to align with student culture (Mahon, 2006). This inability to understand and work with other cultures may be due to current and prospective teachers’ lack of experience with different cultures and lack of knowledge of their own background, “The majority of teachers do not recognize that they have a culture, nor do they see racial, ethnic, and cultural difference between themselves and their students” (Mahon, 2006). For many teachers these issues were never addressed through formal educational experiences.

In response to these challenges, various teacher education institutions have initiated reforms. The National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE), for example, has based accreditation of teacher education programs amongst other mandates, on standards that require teachers to provide evidence that they have had experiences with diversity and have developed an understanding of multiculturalism (NCATE, 2008). Many teacher-training programs now require prospective teachers to take at least one course focusing on diversity. These courses often focus on developing a theoretical understanding of culture. Other opportunities exist through study and teach abroad experiences.

Teacher education institutions throughout the country are developing study abroad programs in an effort to address two major challenges specific to the teaching profession: 1) how to prepare White, middle class, female students enrolled in teacher education programs to work with the increasingly diverse students they will teach in the future (Sleeter, 2001);

and, 2) how to develop global perspectives in pre-service teachers (NCATE, 2008). Some programs, further seek to raise pre-service teachers' awareness of the struggle for social justice as an international issue (Bigelow & Peterson, 2002).

Teacher education abroad programs provide participants with opportunities to venture beyond their own particular culture, involve them in cross-cultural experiential learning encounters, and broaden their horizons in ways that could never be achieved on their college campuses or in their hometowns (Mahon & Cushner, 2002; Mahan & Stachowski, 1990). Furthermore, abroad experiences often enhance intellectual growth, personal development, and global mindedness while increasing intercultural sensitivity among participating individuals, "As a result of their international experiences prospective teachers learn to embed flexibility and cultural responsiveness in all areas of their professional practice, including classroom discipline, interactions, relationships, and shared respect with students, families, and colleagues" (Hayden & Thompson, 1998). On a deeper level, prospective teachers with significant international experience have become less ethnocentric and found learning potential in all situations (Deardorff, 2006).

Theoretical Foundation

Globalization theory lays the foundation for this program. Anthony Giddens has described globalization as, "The intensification of worldwide social relations which link distant localities in such a way that local happenings are shaped by events occurring many miles away and visa versa" (Smith and Doyle, 2002). A byproduct of globalization has been the increase

of interdependence, connectivity, and integration on a global level with respect to the social, cultural, political, technological, economic, and ecological levels (Burande, 2010).

As the world globalizes cultures inevitably collide. It is unavoidable that different cultures will meet, conflict, and blend together. Journalists Ester Wojcicki and Michael Levine emphasize the need for intercultural competence in their article "Teaching for a Shared Future" (2010), "Our nation's most pressing problems – from cooperative security measures in the Middle East – to the clean-up of the Gulf region – to the imperative to develop environmentally safe, renewable energy – depend on intercultural work teams that practice the values of openness and respect."

In order to work together effectively in today's globalized world we must learn to effectively communicate across cultural barriers, understand our own culture, and develop the ability to accept other cultural perspectives as equal to our own. Intercultural communication is defined as the communication between people from different cultures and occurs whenever a message is produced by a member of one culture for consumption by a member of another culture (Samovar and Porter, 1991). Intercultural competence refers to one's ability to communicate effectively and appropriately in intercultural situations based on one's intercultural knowledge, skills, and attitudes (Deardorff, 2009). The intercultural competent practitioner is described as someone who has, "A professional knowledge about concepts such as globalization, the concept of culture, language, intercultural communication, cultural identity – and work with anti-discrimination and equal rights as a basic assumption" (Jensen, 2004).

Intercultural competence does not just naturally occur in most people; rather intercultural competence must be intentionally addressed through education. Furthermore, intercultural competence development is a lifelong process (Deardorff, 2009).

S.T.E.P draws upon two core principles of intercultural communication, cultural self-awareness and ethno-relativity, as it develops intercultural competence within program participants. Cultural self-awareness can be defined as the ability to describe the lens through which we see the world,

Cultural awareness is the foundation of communication and it involves the ability of standing back from ourselves and becoming aware of our cultural values, beliefs, and perceptions. Why do we do things in that way? How do we see the world? Why do we react in that particular way? (Quappe and Cantatore, 2007).

As people see, interpret, and evaluate things in different ways it is imperative that we understand who we are as we work with people from cultures other than our own. Once we have a solid understanding of our own culture we can move along the path of ethnorelativity.

Milton Bennett introduced the concept of ethnorelativism as part of his Development Model of Intercultural Sensitivity. There are six stages in Bennett's model. As one becomes more accepting of other cultures they move from an ethnocentric orientation, represented by the stages of denial, defense, and minimization, to an ethnorelative orientation, represented by the stages of acceptance, adaptation, and integration. According to Bennett,

An ethnorelative orientation represents a fundamental shift in mindset

from the unconscious ethnocentric assumption that one's own culture is (or should be) the exclusive definer of reality to a more conscious assumption that one's own culture is one among many viable constructions of reality (Bennett & Hammer 1998).

Bennett (1998) explains that one must develop an ethnorelative understanding to communicate effectively across cultures, "The ethnorelative stages are ways of *seeking cultural difference*, either by accepting its importance, by adapting one's perspective to take it into account, or by integrating the whole concept into a definition of one's identity."

"The Warm Heart of Africa" is carefully constructed around these key concepts of intercultural communication. Participants will develop the ability to be culturally self-aware as well as a thorough understanding of the qualities needed to move along Bennett's development model. Jack Levy, in the Intercultural Sourcebook, defines intercultural training as a "cohesive series of events or activities designed to develop cultural self-awareness, culturally appropriate behavioral responses or skills, and a positive orientation towards other cultures" (1995). It is with this definition of intercultural training that "The Warm Heart of Africa" has been developed.

Theory to Practice

Experiential learning is a hallmark of intercultural training and key to the development of intercultural competence (Fowler, 1994). Experiential learning occurs when a person engages in an activity, looks back at the activity critically, draws a useful insight(s) from the analysis, and puts the result to work through a change in behavior (White, 2006). The effectiveness of experiential learning is based on the fact that nothing is

more relevant to us than ourselves. One's own reactions to, observations about, and understanding of something are more important than someone else's opinion about it. Research has shown that people learn best by doing (White, 2006). Experience alone is insufficient to be called experiential education, for it is the reflection process, which turns experience into experiential education (Joplin, 1995). Two theoretical frameworks, Knowles' Adult Learning Theory and Kolb's Experiential Learning Cycle, lay the foundation for the experiential education program model for "The Warm Heart of Africa".

Adult Learning Theory recognizes that adults have specific needs and motivations behind learning and identifies the following as essential to adult learning,

Adults are autonomous and self-directed. Adults have accumulated a foundation of life experiences and knowledge that may include work-related activities, family responsibilities, and previous education and need to connect learning to this knowledge/experience base. Adults are practical, goal-oriented, relevancy-oriented, and need to be shown respect (Lieb, 1991).

At the beginning of the program, participants will set individual goals in an effort to maximize their experience. Each participant brings with them a wealth of experience and knowledge and a curriculum has been constructed that provides the space, in the form of structured discussion, dialogue, and reflection, for participants to learn from one another.

Kolb's four-stage Experiential Learning Cycle shows how experience is translated through reflection into concepts, which in turn are used as guides

for active experimentation and the choice of new experiences (*See Appendix A for Kolb's Learning Cycle*). The first stage, concrete experience, is where the learner actively experiences an activity and is referred to as the *feeling* stage. The second stage, reflective observation, is when the learner consciously reflects back on that experience and is referred to as the *watching* stage. The third stage, abstract conceptualization, is where the learner attempts to conceptualize a theory or model of what is observed and is referred to as the *thinking* stage. The fourth stage, active experimentation, is where the learner is trying to plan how to test a model or theory or plan for a forthcoming experience and is referred to as the *doing* stage (Kolb, 1984).

"The Warm Heart of Africa" is designed to engage participants in all four stages of Kolb's cycle. By developing a program around this learning cycle, each stage of learning is achieved, providing participants with a methodical and complete learning experience. "The Warm Heart of Africa" focuses on each stage of Kolb's Learning Cycle, as described below:

Concrete Experience

"The Warm Heart of Africa" will allow participants to bring knowledge from past professional and life experiences into the curriculum. Participants will also be exposed to new experiences through lectures, experiential activities, the homestay, and cultural programming. These new experiences will push them to explore their own cultural identities and develop the skills needed to be effective intercultural communicators.

Reflective Observation

This stage of learning will occur when participants engage in group

reflection and are encouraged to write reflective journals. Creating space for reflection will make participants think critically about their experiences, both new and old, and encourage the process of self-exploration.

Abstract Conceptualization

“The Warm Heart of Africa” will allow space for participants to analyze their ideas and foster their intellectual understanding of socio-cultural issues in Malawi and at home, what it means to be a competent intercultural communicator, and how to effectively manage in multicultural environments. Over the course of the program, participants will engage in group discussions and dialogue as they are challenged to express their viewpoints, beliefs, and judgments, in a safe and supportive environment.

Active Experimentation

Participants will put their newly acquired knowledge in intercultural communication to practice throughout the program. Structured into “The Warm Heart of Africa” are service learning and teaching opportunities, during which participants will be working with Malawian children. Participants will volunteer at Adzawa Orphanage and teach at Chirombo Bay Secondary School. Participants will also practice leading group dialogue and giving constructive feedback. Informally there will be many opportunities to practice communicating with people from different cultural backgrounds.

In an effort to maximize the abroad experience, the S.T.E.P Development Team has drawn upon past experience as Group Leaders for The Experiment in International Living to thoughtfully construct a program that serves participant needs. The Experiment in International Living has a

long and successful history in providing authentic intercultural experiences for high school students. All EIL programs incorporate a homestay and draw upon in-country partnerships. Essential to the success of their programs is the homestay portion of each program,

EIL introduced the concept of the homestay to the world when it was founded in 1932, placing Experimenters in the homes of host families to enhance the intercultural and/or language study aspects of each program. The homestay allows students to develop friendships and understand different cultures in a personal, meaningful way. Since the introduction of homestays organizations including People to People Student Ambassador Program and SYA have adopted the cultural immersion technique to facilitate understanding (Roberts 2005).

According to Chris Frantz, an Experiment administrator,

Our model starts with in-country partnerships. The Experiment is unique in that every country where we run a program we collaborate with an in-country hosting organization. These partners are able to tap into local resources and stay very updated about security warnings or concerns (Roberts, 2005).

EIL is known as a leader in high school travel whose programs provide authentic cultural immersion experiences. Partnering with local organizations and building the homestay experience into each program have proven to contribute to the success of short-term study abroad program aimed at direct immersion.

Rather than completely reinventing the wheel, S.T.E.P will adapt the EIL model to fit a different audience. Much like students, in order for

teachers to develop a deep understanding of cultural differences it is advantageous for them to step outside of their comfort zone and be authentically immersed in a culture far different than their own. Teachers, who are responsible for effective communication in their classrooms, will also need to develop a deeper understanding of intercultural communication in order to effectively lead in multicultural environments, Schools need educators who can relate instruction to the cultural background, learning styles, and personal and future needs of their students. They will employ teachers who have demonstrated a willingness to develop a broader understanding of themselves and our global village (Kissock and Richardson, 2009).

Needs of Participants

The starting point, or foundation, for intercultural competence is with the teachers attitudes. A research-based study of over 20 leading intercultural experts conducted by Darla Deardorff, Professor of Education at Duke University, (2006) found that three key attitudes were necessary before intercultural competence could be further developed: openness, respect and curiosity. Once these attitudes are in place teachers can hone their knowledge and skills.

The experts agreed that the essential pieces of knowledge required are that the individual develops both cultural self-awareness and an ethno-relative worldview. Listening, observing, and engaging in active reflection are the most valuable skills required to be an interculturally competent teacher (Deardorff, 2009). In order to develop these attitudes, knowledge, and skills within participants' S.T.E.P has designed a curriculum grounded in the

theories of Experiential Learning, Adult Learning, and the core principles of intercultural communication (*See Appendix B for Deardorff's Process Model of Intercultural Competence*).

Program Goals and Objectives

Goal: To provide a replicable framework for S.T.E.P Into The World which addresses the need for the development of participants' knowledge, skills, and attitudes in intercultural competency.

Objectives:

1. To provide ten U.S.-based educators with a one-month training designed to introduce them to the qualities needed to be competent intercultural communicators and effective classroom managers
2. To establish the first summer abroad professional development program in intercultural communication to Malawi
3. To establish the necessary theoretical framework for communicating in multicultural environments
4. To create a safe environment that fosters deep reflection in which intercultural learning is maximized
5. To increase profit by \$9000 by June 2012

This flagship program is designed to serve as a curricular model for future S.T.E.P programs as S.T.E.P adds a dynamic option to the field of teacher education. This program will be able to financially support itself and act as a proof of concept as S.T.E.P looks to expand in future years.

Participant Goals and Objectives

Goal: To equip participants with the tools to demonstrate effective and appropriate communication and behavior in intercultural situations while

encouraging them to pursue lifelong intercultural learning.

Objectives:

Participant's will:

1. Develop cultural self-awareness & an ethnorelative understanding
2. Increase their knowledge of Malawian history and culture, its' current socio-economic reality, and attempts towards sustainable development
3. Express their viewpoints, beliefs, and judgments through dialogue and discussion
4. Develop the ability to incorporate experiential learning design into lesson planning
5. Demonstrate their ability to facilitate group dialogue, reflect deeply, and provide constructive feedback
6. Develop meaningful relationships with each other and the people they meet in Malawi

The participants who attend this program will learn to step out of their comfort zones and reflect deeply while developing an understanding of the world, culture, and themselves. They will go home with both the confidence and skills required to be effective leaders in multicultural environments.

"The Warm Heart of Africa" Curriculum

S.T.E.P adds an innovative option to the field of teacher education for both future and current teachers. "The Warm Heart of Africa" is designed to economize the study abroad experience. Participants will save both time and money by attending a short-term program during the summer months. By offering a well-designed short-term international program in collaboration with a local organization S.T.E.P will encourage participants to become

immersed in the culture of Malawi while increasing their intercultural competence through skill-building activities. “The Warm Heart of Africa” program model is solid, very well thought-out, and planned for complete immersion and exploration of Malawian culture.

S.T.E.P offers substantive experiential education programming with academic components worthy of credit and is currently searching for an accredited university to partner with as it seeks to gain accreditation for its programs. Once accredited participants will receive either academic or continuing education credit upon successful completion of the program. “The Warm Heart of Africa” is designed to provide support during the accreditation process.

“The Warm Heart of Africa” will be a summer program running between June 23, 2012-July, 18, 2012. The book [The Boy Who Harnessed the Wind](#), which provide background on Malawian culture will be required reading prior to the program (*See Appendix C for Recommended Reading List*).

The program is broken into three parts:

- **Part I: Lilongwe-Arrival Orientation, June 23-26**

The orientation will be co-facilitated by the Program Facilitator and Kumbali’s in-country staff and serves to introduce participants to one another, the leadership team, and the main themes of the program. It will also prepare participants to maximize their intercultural learning over the course of the rest of the program as it introduces them to theoretical concepts and provides cultural context.

- **Part II: Various locations around Malawi-Cross-cultural**

Encounters, June 27-July 16

The second part of the program will present participants with an authentic cultural experience that challenges them to reflect on who they are while creating the space for them to learn from the people they meet. To get the most out of the experience and deepen their learning participants will meet regularly for group dialogue and reflection, which will often include Malawians.

- **Part III: Lilongwe-Re-Entry Workshop, July 17**

The final part of the program will bring everyone together for a two day re-entry workshop. Participants will reflect upon the experience and discuss ways in which they can bring their experience home and apply their learnings to both their professional and personal lives. Participants will also be encouraged to engage in lifelong intercultural learning and introduced to resources for future reference (*See Appendix D for Program Calendar*).

Curriculum Context

“The Warm Heart of Africa” curriculum design draws heavily upon experiential learning as it focuses on developing cultural self-awareness and a more ethnorelative understanding within program participants. The S.T.E.P website states, “At the core of S.T.E.P Into The World’s philosophy is the notion that one must first look inside and examine themselves and their own culture before becoming authentically immersed into another culture” (About Us, 2011). “The Warm Heart of Africa” is designed with this philosophy in mind and has been constructed in such a way that participants first cultivate the ability to be culturally self-aware, before they develop an understanding of ethno relativism. During the orientation, time will be set

aside for participants to reflect on who they are. They will create a cultural timeline and set individual goals for the program. Once participants have examined who they are and gotten to know the rest of the group they will be introduced to the key knowledge, skills, and attitudes needed to progress along the path of ethnorelativity and become immersed in Malawian culture.

The curriculum will introduce participants to key theoretical frameworks while engaging them in experiential processes. The design consists of lectures, icebreakers, hands-on activities, cultural programming, group dialogue, and individual and group reflection. Participants will be asked to draw upon past experience and introduce ideas and activities to the group that promote the development of intercultural competence and teambuilding. The curriculum has been created to ensure that participant needs are met and that the space is provided for trust to be built among the group.

Participants will gain an in-depth understanding of Malawian culture both inside and beyond the borders of the classroom. The program will introduce participants to the core theories behind experiential learning and intercultural communication, give them the space to develop the ability to lead group dialogue, give constructive feedback, reflect deeply, and teach them the core elements to experiential learning design. Program participants will return home where they will be able to share their experience with their students and colleagues, put into practice their newly acquired skills in facilitation and experiential learning design, and draw upon a wealth of resources as they continue to educate themselves as to how to be effective cross-cultural communicators.

Arrival Orientation Curriculum

S.T.E.P will host a four-day orientation for participants upon arrival in Lilongwe. S.T.E.P will provide participants with selected reading and worksheets aimed at aiding them through the experience. Participants will also be given a notebook, in which they can take notes, and a journal, for individual reflection. Essential to the success of the program is that participants understand that they are to leave at the end of the program with both the theoretical knowledge and concrete intercultural communication skills that will make them better educators.

Who they are: This part of the orientation focuses on the participants. It helps to establish initial connections, provide icebreakers, set group norms, and create bonds through team building. Participants will be asked to reflect deeply upon their own culture. They will create a cultural timeline, engage in group discussion, and take an inventory of their individual learning styles. Goals, fears, and expectations will also be discussed for the month.

Where they are: This part of the orientation deals with issues of culture. The local staff will provide survival Chichewa language lessons in order to prepare participants for their time in Malawi. The group will also participate in a workshop on culture in which they are introduced to the history and customs of Malawi. In the evenings the group will attend traditional dance and theatre performances that highlight local culture.

What they will be doing there: The group will be introduced to what to expect from the rest of the program. An overview of the program will be provided. Participants will be introduced to the core theories of globalization, intercultural communication, and experiential learning as well as the

importance of reflection and the process of dialogue. Each member of the group will at some point facilitate a dialogue. The Program Facilitator will lead the first dialogue session and provide pointers towards effective facilitation. Participants will also be given the task of designing a lesson around the experiential learning cycle that they will present during the homestay portion of the program (*See Appendix E for a detailed Orientation Curriculum Outline*).

Cross-cultural Encounters

After being thoroughly prepared to embrace the experience the group will embark on an unforgettable journey as they are intimately exposed to the rhythms of rural Malawian life. The group will travel to five locations around Malawi: Lilongwe, Leopard Bay, Chirombo Bay, Liwonde, and Mulange. Participants will be introduced to a variety of organizations working towards sustainable development at the community level, have a 5-day homestay, volunteer at a local orphanage and school, and explore several National Parks.

Sustainable Development in Action

Malawi is facing a number of environmental and social challenges moving towards the future. For participants to truly understand Malawian culture they must be made aware of both the challenges people face as well as potential solutions to these challenges. "The Warm Heart of Africa" will introduce participants to organizations and individuals who are working on creative responses to these challenges.

While in Lilongwe participants will take a two-day crash course in Permaculture Awareness for Educators at Nature's Gift Permaculture Centre.

Nature's Gift is a permaculture training and demonstration centre located on the same land as Kumbali Country Lodge. Permaculture is a design system for sustainable living that focuses on building a mutually beneficial relationship between humans and the environment. The course will introduce participants to true sustainable development at work and engage them as to how they can bring the core concepts of permaculture into their lives as educators. Many aspects of permaculture can be incorporated into school life including lessons on environmental education, the creation of school gardens, and improved school nutrition.

The group will also visit Adwiza Community Orphanage Centre, which is home to over 400 orphans. Unlike other orphanages, the children live with host families and go to school on site. Participants will have the opportunity to volunteer and join in different activities during their two days at the orphanage. These activities include teaching, infant care, feeding program, general maintenance, gardening, sports, and afternoon activities. Once away from Lilongwe the group will visit a number of different communities. At each site the group will visit community-based projects, such as a rice research station, fish farm, and an animal sanctuary, and learn firsthand how these projects are helping to improve quality of life.

Homestay

At the midway point of the program the group will travel to the village of Chirombo Bay where they will experience a five-day homestay. Chirombo Bay lies on the shores of Lake Malawi. Most villagers are either fisherman or farmers. Each participant will be individually placed with families. During this time participants are to experience life in a Malawian village. The local

Homestay Coordinator has carefully vetted homestay families. Families receive their own orientation about expectations and considerations with American participants. During this portion of the program group time will be limited in order to maximize the immersion experience. Participants will visit the local secondary school where they will each present a lesson on a topic of their choice. Participants will be encouraged to incorporate experiential learning design into their lesson planning and the Program Facilitator will provide support during the planning process. The homestay portion of the program will close with a farewell celebration in which families and participants will come together.

Cultural and Recreational Activities

Cultural and recreational activities are added to expand participants' cultural horizons while providing opportunities to relax, deepen friendships, and incorporate adventure into the experience. Malawi is a land with a rich arts history. The arts provide a powerful interpretation of culture. Program participants will attend traditional dance and theatrical performances that tell stories of local history and culture. Participants will also be exposed to the natural side of Africa. They will go on a two day camping safari at Liwonde National Park and have the option to go hiking up Malawi's tallest mountain, Mt. Melange. Activities, including visiting a tea plantation and waterfall, will be arranged for participants who are unable or do not want to climb Mt. Melange.

There will also be time set aside to enjoy free time/social time. Developing cross-community friendships form a vital part of the group experience. In order for friendships to flourish, and for the necessary rest,

relaxation, and reflection, the participants will also have time set aside to use as they wish.

Dialogue and Reflection

Participants will engage in group dialogue and reflection throughout the program. Dialogue and reflection are powerful tools that they can use with coworkers and in their classrooms. Dialogue is a form of discussion aimed at fostering mutual insight and common purpose. Author Scott London suggests that, "The process of dialogue is more important than ever because the confrontation between different cultural traditions and worldviews requires some process by which people can communicate across differences" (2011). The process of dialogue involves listening with empathy, searching for common ground, exploring new ideas and perspectives, and bringing unexamined assumptions into the open (London, 2011). Participants will each lead one dialogue circle on a topic of their choice.

Similarly the practice of reflection can really enhance any experience, "Reflection provides an opportunity for individuals and groups to consider the ramifications of the service they provide and better understand their role in the larger community" (Ohio Union, 1997). The capacity to reflect on action so as to engage in a process of continuous learning, as Donald Schon suggests, is one of the defining characteristics of professional practice (Atherton, 2011). While on the program participants will engage in group reflection at key points during the program and be encouraged to practice individual reflection to add meaning and depth to their experience. Participants will gain appreciation for, become comfortable with, and further

develop their skills at facilitating group dialogue and reflection.

Reentry Workshop

At the end of the program the Program Facilitator will host a two-day re-entry workshop. The re-entry workshop is a crucial part of the participants' experience. It is intended to provide participants with an opportunity to reflect upon their experience, digest what they have learned, and be a springboard for ideas of how to apply their experiences once they return home. The workshop is also important for S.T.E.P staff to monitor and evaluate concluding thoughts from participants about the program. Evaluation forms will be distributed for participants to fill out.

In the first part of the workshop participants will engage in discussion around the topics of facilitation & feedback. The Program Facilitator will provide pointers & handouts that offer useful suggestions. Participant will also be asked to provide live feedback to the Program Facilitator on how the program was conducted. The second part of the workshop will be a brainstorm session as to how participants can bring what they have learned back home. Collectively they will generate ideas and discuss how to effectively apply these learnings upon returning home. The group will also come together for one final reflection circle.

The final piece of the workshop, which will happen just before the group goes its separate ways, will be an appreciation circle. An appreciation circle is a great closing activity and aims to emphasize a culture of appreciation. The group takes turns speaking appreciatively of one another. The group will also discuss about the importance and benefits of creating an environment that fosters appreciation. (*See Appendix F for a detailed Re-*

Staffing Plan

This program requires that S.T.E.P hire and train one Program Facilitator to lead the program (*see Appendix G for job description*). Kumbali will provide all other staffing needs, specifically a homestay coordinator, a cook, and a driver. The Program Facilitator is responsible for setting the tone for the program, facilitating the orientation and re-entry workshop, and administering program logistics and budget. Ideally the Program Facilitator will be a Malawian or an American who has experience living and/or working in Malawi. S.T.E.P looks to hire an experienced facilitator for this role who will follow a well-designed curriculum that will allow them to incorporate their own style. It is imperative that this person is comfortable in leading dialogue and reflection, as they are essential pieces of the curriculum.

S.T.E.P takes the development of its staff very seriously. S.T.E.P will host a three-day training workshop before the program. The workshop consists of curriculum, safety, and “best practices” reviews, as well as training in dialogue and reflection facilitation. The final goal of the workshop is for the staff feeling supported in a sense of ownership for each program.

Marketing & Recruitment

The target markets for S.T.E.P are US-based future and current K-12 teachers. Each market has different needs and must be reached via different channels. Therefore the marketing strategy is two-fold.

There is a growing trend within the education field at the university

level to internationalize teacher education. In order to capitalize on this S.T.E.P will target universities that are already moving in this direction. To establish these contacts S.T.E.P will send a representative to attend the colloquium on teacher education at the annual NAFSA conference. Campus marketing will be done through the use of promotional material including brochures that students can pick up at their study abroad offices, as well as at the faculties of education, and flyers posted near classrooms. In all promotional material, the benefits of study abroad (career-enhancement, personal growth, unique experiences) will be stressed. The promotional material will emphasize the uniqueness of the program that incorporates skill-building, homestay opportunities, service learning, and adventure. Informational meetings will be held on select college campuses to market the program and recruit teaching students who would be interested in a summer abroad. A mailing will be distributed to a list of Schools of Education and academic advisors at universities throughout the US.

To reach current teachers S.T.E.P will follow a similar path visiting schools to give presentations and distribute promotional material. S.T.E.P will also attend a select number of conferences geared towards current educators. Initially S.T.E.P will focus its marketing campaign in the states of California and Pennsylvania (*See Appendix H for Marketing Brochure*).

A website component will include photos, a FAQ section, a detailed itinerary, syllabus, and health and safety information. It is important to include this information to help ease any worries that participants may have. A promotional video will be created for the website, and once having run the first program participants will be invited to share their experiences or footage

in the form of a video for the website.

The program will develop a viral marketing presence through the program's social networking sites; a Facebook group for participants to interact with each other, a Facebook fan page and a Twitter page have been created. The website has a forum where former, current and future participants can interact with each other, and where S.T.E.P staff can provide support for students. Return participants will have the opportunity to become alumni ambassadors. Alumni ambassadors can give a presentation at their school, write an article about their experience for the newsletter, or engage in other ways to help promote the program. Ideally, these marketing strategies will recruit students to participate in the program.

The recruitment strategy is three-fold: meeting the needs of and creating benefits and exchanges for potential participants (Faculty-led Study Abroad Guide, 2008). S.T.E.P staff will be upfront and honest and will facilitate open communication with all potential applicants. The program will be meeting needs and creating benefits that set participants apart from other teachers because they will have hands-on experience in Malawi while enhancing their ability to be effective intercultural communicators. As for creating exchanges, potential participants may ask what they will gain and what they will give up by spending a summer abroad. S.T.E.P staff will make sure potential participants know that by spending a summer away from home, they are gaining an invaluable experience. Potential participants will know that S.T.E.P is a worthy investment and will be screened through a thorough application process to ensure they fit with the S.T.E.P philosophy.

Admissions

S.T.E.P Into The World values diversity and encourages educators of all backgrounds, school, and subject types to apply. The application deadline is May 1, 2012. Applicants must successfully complete all application materials, including all medical information. The S.T.E.P team will review each application according to dedication to professional growth and the potential impact on school and community. All must submit a clear plan outlining how they will share their experiences on the program with their students, colleagues, classroom, school, and home community. Applicants still in pre-service training must have completed at least one year of academic courses at the university level, have sophomore standing, and a minimum 2.75 GPA.

Logistics

Pre-departure

The pre-departure logistics for this program are coordinated between S.T.E.P staff and Kumbali Country Lodge. Pre-departure information cover basic information about the program, arrival, and in-country logistics and will be mailed to participants as soon as they have been accepted to the program. Participants are responsible for their own flights, obtaining a passport, immunizations, and medications.

The documents available are:

- ^ International Travel – This document describe when and where to meet other group members upon arrival, airlines servicing the airport, general entry requirements, and contact information. It

will also provide information regarding a group flight option.

- ✧ Passport and Visa Documents – Information regarding passport and visa requirements. American citizens are granted a 30-day tourist visa upon arrival to Malawi. Participants planning to stay in Malawi after the program will be taken to the immigration office in Lilongwe by Kumbali staff upon completion of the program where they can purchase a visa extension.
- ✧ Country Overview – General Information about Malawi
- ✧ Program Overview – Housing, transportation, banking, and communication
- ✧ Safety, Security, and Health – Discussed further in the Health and Safety section
- ✧ Packing guidelines – Suggested electronics, gifts, luggage, etc.
- ✧ Readings, Assignments, and Resources – A list of required and recommended readings, resources, and guidelines for lesson planning
- ✧ Participant Handbook – Participant rights and responsibilities, general policies, etc.

In-country

Transportation

Kumbali staff will pick participants up at the airport in Lilongwe and transport them to their orientation accommodation. Kumbali will have a car and driver available for pick up in the case that participants arrive on a different day than the rest of the group or are delayed. For travel around the country the group will travel in Kumbali's private minibus.

Housing

Housing will differ for each phase of the program. Participants will be well prepared as to what to expect before departure. In Lilongwe the group will stay at Kumbali Cultural Village. Once outside of the capital, accommodation will vary. While in Leopard Bay and on safari in Liwonde National Park the group will be camping. In Chirombo Bay participants will stay with homestay families. At Mt. Mulange the group will stay in a guesthouse at the base of the mountain and in mountain huts while hiking. All accommodations are simple, yet comfortable. Participants will have access to clean water in all locations and electricity in most locations.

Banking

Most in-country expenses are covered in tuition. Personal expenses during the program vary based on individual spending habits and budgets. S.T.E.P recommends participants bring \$200 to cover additional in-country expenses. S.T.E.P advises participants to either bring dollars or a credit card. The official currency is Malawian kwacha. Participants can withdraw kwacha upon arrival at the airport. There are also visa electron and cirrus ATMs as well as banks that exchange money in the capital and in major towns along the route.

Communications

Good communication is essential to the success of the program. All participants will carry a card with the phone number of the home office, Program Facilitator, and the manager of Kumbali based in Lilongwe on it. Participants who would like to activate their own phone in-country can purchase local sim cards while in Lilongwe. Internet is available at Kumbali Country Lodge and participants will have the opportunity at both the

beginning and the end of the program to check their email. Once out of the capital internet access is limited.

Health and Safety Plan

The safety and security of program participants is a top priority for this program. All students will be required to submit a health form detailing their medical history and identify an emergency contact person, so that in case of an emergency the staff knows whom to contact to make medical decisions. If a participant is under the treatment of a medical professional at the time of application, s/he will need to submit an official letter from his/her medical professional confirming the participants ability to safely complete the program.

After participants have been accepted into the program and have turned in their deposit, they will receive a packet of information regarding health and safety. The packet of information will include information about logistics, the environment, climate, and political information associated with Malawi. The packet will also educate participants about potential safety risks and strategies in how to keep themselves safe within the new location. It will also include a list of immunizations and medications for Malaria recommended for travel to Malawi as well as medical forms and medical release forms.

Travel health insurance is mandatory. S.T.E.P will assist participants in purchasing health insurance through World Nomads, Inc., if their health insurance provider does not cover international health care. Once the group has been finalized and prior to arriving in Malawi S.T.E.P staff will register the group online with the U.S. Embassy in Lilongwe. S.T.E.P is available to

participants and their families 24/7 through local staff in Malawi and an international emergency line in America.

Additional health and safety measures are taken by S.T.E.P Into The World through the use of a local partner. Kumbali has over 12 years experience hosting foreigners in Malawi and provides on the ground support throughout the entirety of the program. S.T.E.P staff has tailored health and safety guidelines, with the assistance of the local partner, to the program, location, and context. The Program Facilitator will be trained in how to deal with health and safety issues as they arise.

Crisis Management Plan

S.T.E.P has established the following two-level plan to be prepared in case of a crisis. Each level indicates a type of problem that might arise and the appropriate actions to take to prevent and manage any of those types of problems. S.T.E.P understands that both levels of crisis have common aspects. Any crisis can result in a disruption or early termination, cause significant emotional stress, and can ultimately be managed with the right preparation and support. A complete crisis management handbook will be created by the S.T.E.P staff, during staff training, and will be evaluated every year. In the event of an emergency, S.T.E.P Into The World staff will immediately contact the U.S. Embassy in Lilongwe.

Level 1: Participant and Program Health and Well-being

These types of problems include health and travel issues.

To prevent such issues from affecting the participants information regarding visa, travel, and travel insurance will be sent in the pre-departure packet. During the orientation the participants will be reminded that the

staff is well versed in crisis management and are available to help if problems arise. The staff and participants will be close together the entire program making communication easy.

Level 2: Large Scale Emergencies

These include natural disasters and social or political unrest.

To prevent the need to respond to such an emergency, S.T.E.P evaluates the social and political situation of Malawi before the start of each year. In the event of such a serious emergency, the program will be suspended. The staff will make the call and evacuate regarding appropriate instructions for the situation, and will follow appropriate phone tree lists to keep participant primary contacts and the S.T.E.P home office well informed. S.T.E.P is prepared to evacuate through the appropriate channels if the emergency warrants it. The S.T.E.P contingency fund will cover all incurred expenses for such an emergency.

Budget

The budget has been developed by the S.T.E.P staff and consists of in-country expenses, materials, staff travel and salary and is \$20,800, assuming there are ten participants. A contingency fund of \$100 per participant, including the Program Facilitator, has been established to cover any unforeseen expenses. In-country expenses include program fees from Kumbali Country Lodge. These expenses consist of transportation, accommodation, meals, homestay, guide, and park entrance fees and total \$1,500 per participant. S.T.E.P will pay a fixed cost of \$500 to Kumbali to cover the in-country costs for the Program Facilitator. A budget of \$30 has been set aside to cover communication costs. S.T.E.P will purchase

notebooks, journals, and coursepacks for all participants at a cost of \$35 per participant.

Participants are responsible for tuition and will pay \$3,000 in program fees. S.T.E.P Into The World program fees include costs associated with instruction, field excursions, full room and board, and transportation. Additional costs include international airfare, books, immunizations, and health insurance. Personal expenses during the program vary based on individual spending habits. S.T.E.P will turn a profit of \$9000.

| 1 month intensive | Fixed Costs | Variable Costs | Units | Quantity | Total | Total cost to Partic |
|--------------------------|--------------------|-----------------------|--------------|-----------------|--------------|-----------------------------|
| Expenses | | Cost | | | | |
| In-country | | | | | | |
| For Participants | | 1500 | partic | 10 | 15000 | 15000 |
| For Staff | 500 | | | | | 500 |
| Materials | | | | | | |
| Journal | | 20 | | 10 | 200 | 200 |
| Notebook | | 5 | partic | 10 | 50 | 50 |
| Instructional Supplies | | 10 | | 10 | 100 | 100 |
| Travel | | | | | | |
| Leader's Airfare | 1800 | | | | | 1800 |
| Other Costs | | | | | | |
| Leader's Salary | | 2000 | | 1 | 2000 | 2000 |
| Leader's cell phone | 30 | | | 1 | 30 | 30 |
| Contingency Fund | | 100 | | 11 | 1100 | 1100 |
| Total Expenses | | | | | | 20780 |
| Revenues | | | | | | |
| Participant Fees | | 3000 | partic | 10 | 30000 | 30000 |
| Total Revenues | | | | | | 30000 |
| Bottom Line | | | | | | 9220 |
| | | | | | | 9220 |

Budget Notes

The budget is divided into fixed costs variable costs, overhead, and revenues. It assumes there will be ten participants. All prices are in US Dollars.

Expenses

The expenses are divided as follows: in-country expenses, materials, travels, other.

In-Country expenses

In-country expenses include food, accommodation, transportation, park entry fees, homestay, and guide fees. The amount is fixed, but the cost is variable depending on the number of participants. The cost for staff is fixed.

Materials

Participants will each be given a journal, notebook, and binder containing readings and worksheets.

Travel

Included in the budget is the price of a roundtrip plane ticket to Malawi for the Program Facilitator.

Other

This includes the salary for the leader, communication costs, and a contingency fund to cover the unforeseen.

Revenues

The profit that S.T.E.P will accrue according to the revenues of the student fees will be reinvested into program development and marketing as S.T.E.P looks to expand over the years.

Evaluation Plan

“The Warm Heart of Africa” is designed to prepare its’ participants to be more competent intercultural communicators and effective classroom managers. S.T.E.P has designed an evaluation plan that will qualitatively measure if program and participant goals are being met. This process requires that the Program Facilitator and participants complete evaluations at the end of the program. Additionally, participants will be surveyed after a

year to determine if they have put what they have learned into practice. S.T.E.P encourages open communication throughout the program and will anticipate honest feedback on the evaluation forms (*See Appendices I and J for Sample Course Evaluations*).

At the end of the program, the Program Facilitator and participants will be asked to evaluate the program as a whole. The Program Facilitator will compile a report. This report will provide a synopsis of both the learning outcomes of the program participants as well as an overview of program operations.

Participants will fill out and return evaluations of the program, highlighting thoughts, overall satisfaction levels, and suggestions for improvements. Participants will be asked whether or not they successfully met the goals they had set for themselves at the beginning of the program and if they feel better prepared to work in multicultural environments. Specifically, participants will be asked to provide examples that detail that they have a firm understanding of cultural self-awareness, ethnorelativism, and the current socio-economic reality of Malawi. Participants will be asked to comment on their level of comfort as to leading group dialogue and reflection, designing lessons that incorporate experiential learning design, and giving and receiving constructive feedback. Participants will comment on their homestay experience and if they believe the program fostered a supportive environment that allows for all voices to be heard. Participants will also be asked to write themselves a letter reflecting upon the experience. The letter will be returned a year after the completion of the program in an effort to deepen learning. In order to assess mid-term impact, after a year,

program participants will be surveyed. Upon completion of this program and after analyzing the end of program feedback the S.T.E.P staff will determine if the program objectives have been met. The S.T.E.P team will analyze feedback and make changes, accordingly, to guarantee quality programming and create up-to-date marketing materials.

Conclusions/Implications

As the field of international education expands avenues are opening up for providers who aim to target niche markets. Researchers have identified the need for intercultural competence training within the field of teacher education and teacher education accreditation agencies and institutions of teacher education are adjusting policies and creating programs aimed at internationalization. The S.T.E.P Into The World team sees a gap in the current market and “The Warm Heart of Africa” is designed to provide support to this internationalization process.

S.T.E.P Into The World will provide more opportunities for teachers and teachers in training to experience learning overseas in a safe and supportive environment. Program participants will gain a thorough understanding of their own worldview, get an education in experiential learning and intercultural communication, and explore a culture far different than their own. Participants will be better prepared to confidently and effectively manage their classrooms and teach about the world. Participants will be set on a path of lifelong intercultural learning towards ethnorelativism that will help them transform their schools and classrooms into more inclusive and productive learning environments. Upon completion of the program, participants will be encouraged to return to their communities to

become leaders in intercultural communication.

“The Warm Heart of Africa” will directly influence the ten participants who attend the program and the Malawian citizens who they will meet. Indirectly “The Warm Heart of Africa” will also influence dozens of students and colleagues who will study under and work alongside these participants. The successful implementation of this program could convince universities and school districts around the nation that they should promote such programs among educators, proving that such a program can be beneficial for entire school communities.

Challenges exist as S.T.E.P gets off the ground. The long-term goals are to gain accreditation and fundraise in order to offer scholarships to those working in multicultural environments. Initially S.T.E.P will not be accredited. This presents problems in that participants will not get credit for attending this program and thus takes away the extra incentive most study abroad providers offer. By running this flagship program and creating this design S.T.E.P hopes to partner with a university that can provide accreditation.

At this time. S.T.E.P does not have start up capital, which is required for most any organization to get off the ground. The S.T.E.P Development Team will be working hard over this coming summer to write a business plan and attract potential investors. “The Warm Heart of Africa” is to act as a blueprint for future programs administered by S.T.E.P as the organization looks to work with partners in China, Japan, Nicaragua, Brazil, and Thailand.

Children are our future, by training teachers to be better communicators we can change the world one classroom at a time. The

S.T.E.P Into The World team believes that by starting small and building upon this sound foundation it can advance the internationalization process of teacher education and be recognized as a leader in providing authentic study abroad experiences for educators from a variety of backgrounds.

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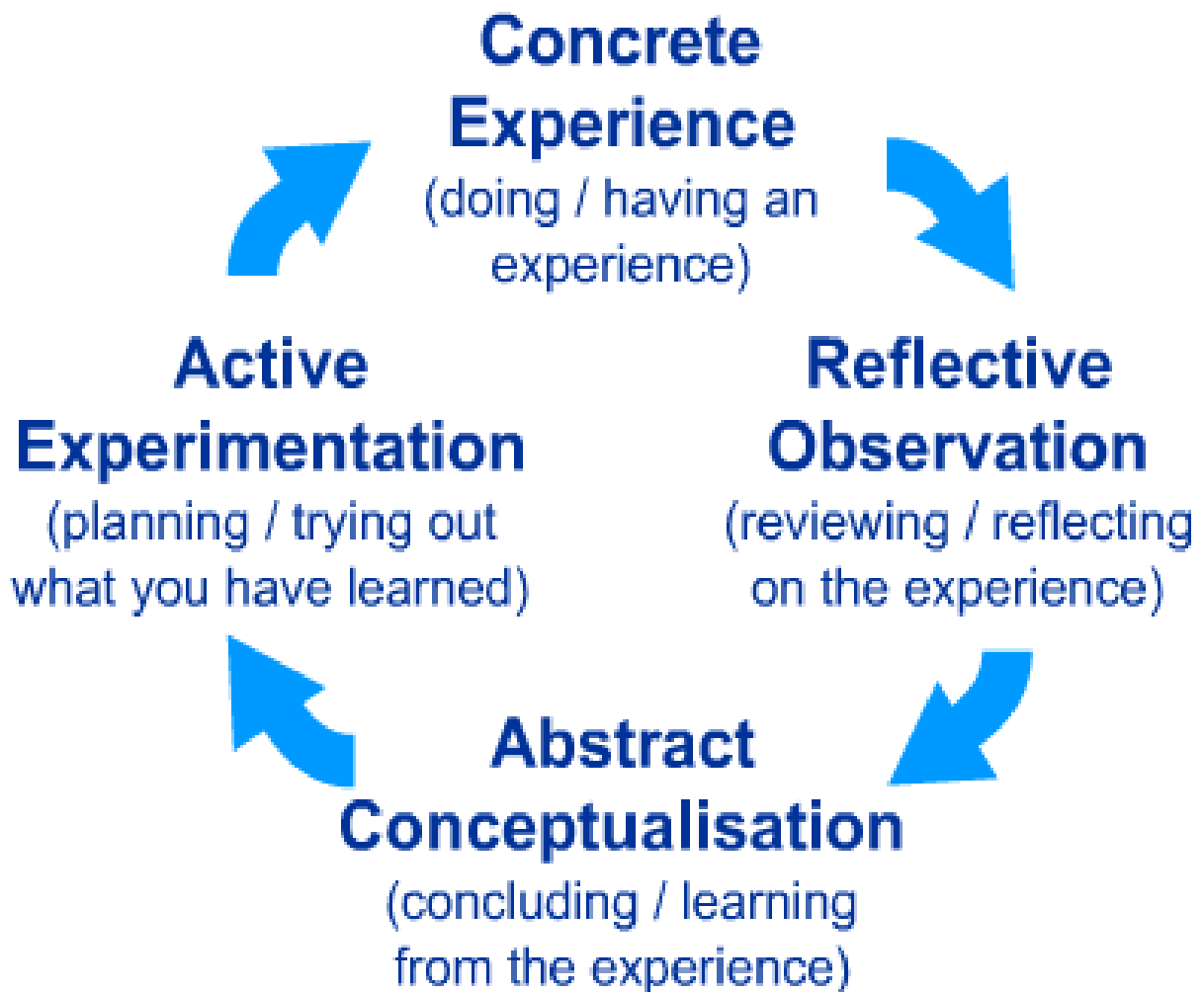
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Appendix A: Kolb's Learning Cycle

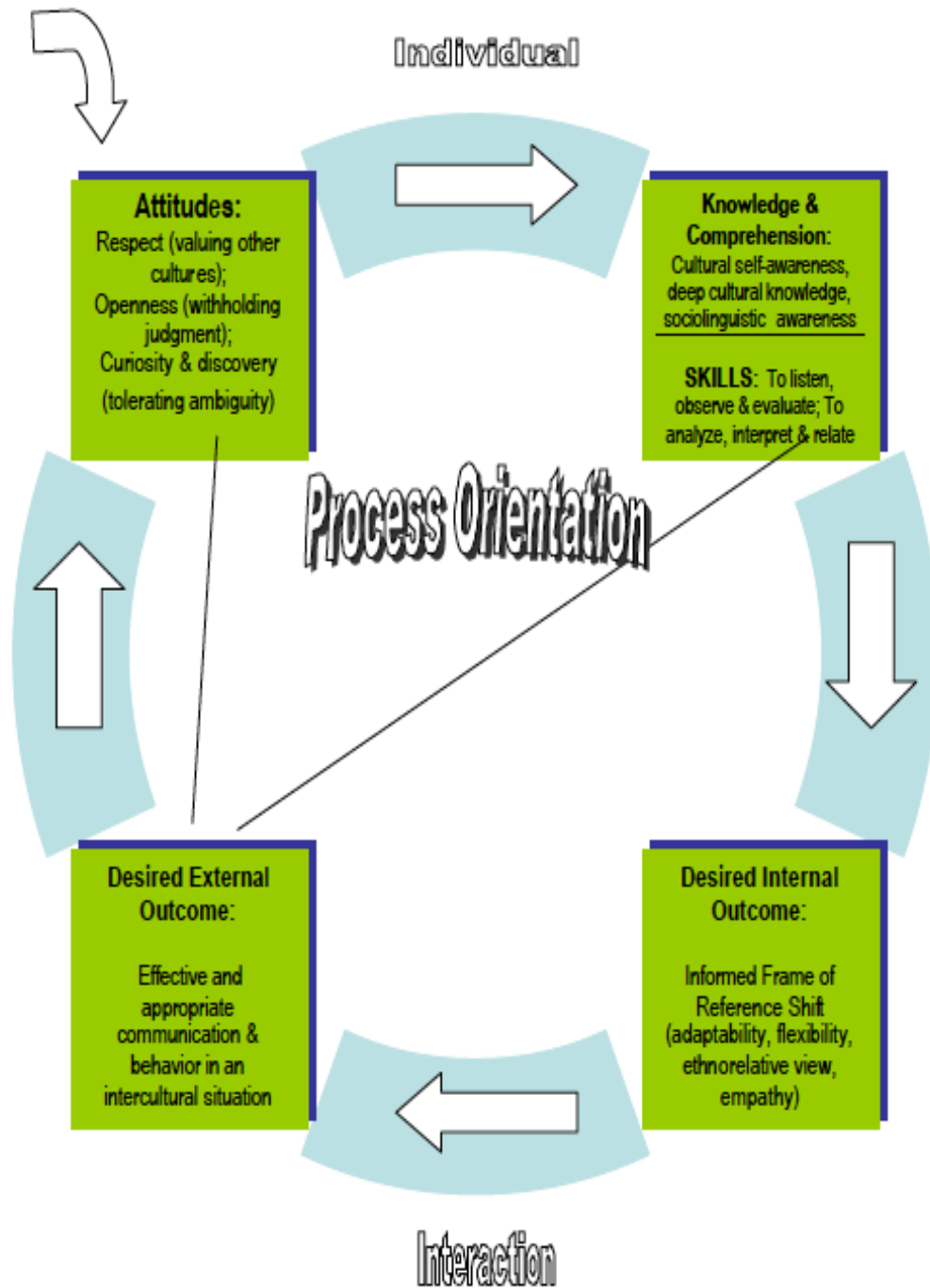
S.T.E.P Into The World: The Warm Heart of Africa



Appendix B: Process Model of Intercultural Competence

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Process Model of Intercultural Competence (Deardorff, 2006, 2009):



Notes:

- *Begin with attitudes; Move from individual level (attitudes) to interaction level (outcomes)*
- *Degree of intercultural competence depends on acquired degree of attitudes, knowledge/comprehension, and skills*

Appendix C: Recommended Reading List

S.T.E.P Into The World: The Warm Heart of Africa

Prior to the program:

Kamkwamba, W. & Mealer, B (2009). The Boy Who Harnessed the Wind: Creating Currents of Electricity and Hope. London: Harper Collins

Post-program suggested reading:

Cornes, A (2004). Culture from the Inside Out: Travel and Meet Yourself. London: Nicholas Brealey Company

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Appendix D: Program Calendar

S.T.E.P Into The World: The Warm Heart of Africa

June/July 2011

Sun Mon Tues Wed Thurs Fri Sat

| Sun | Mon | Tues | Wed | Thurs | Fri | Sat |
|---|---|---------------------------|--------------------------------|--|--|---|
| | | | | 23 Arrive Lilongwe Icebreakers | 24 Orientation Theatre | 25 Chichewa Culture Dance/Dinner |
| 26 Chichewa/ Visit to local village/ 1 st Dialogue Session | 27 Permaculture | 28 Permaculture | 29 Orphanage | 30 Orphanage/ Travel to Leopard Bay/ Reflection Circle | 1 Hill Climb/Lesson Planning/ Rest | 2 Fish farm & rice research station |
| 3 Hippo pools Dance | 4 Travel to Chirombo Bay | 5 Homestay | 6 Homestay | 7 Homestay | 8 Homestay Farewell Party | 9 Travel to Liwonde/ Reflection Circle |
| 10 Safari | 11 Travel to Mulanje | 12 Tea Estate | 13 Climb Mt. Mulanje | 14 Plateau Hike | 15 Climb down and rest | 16 Travel to Lilongwe |
| 17 Re-entry Workshop Farewell Party | 18 Appreciation Circle/ Fly Home | | | | | |

Appendix E: Orientation Curriculum Outline

S.T.E.P Into The World: The Warm Heart of Africa

S.T.E.P Into the World will host a four-day orientation for participants upon arrival in Lilongwe. The orientation will revolve around the three joint themes of discovering: 1.) *who* they are, 2.) *where* they are and 3.) *what* they will be doing there.

Orientation

Day One

Icebreaker: Name Game 16:00-16:15

Introductions 16:15-17:00

Campfire

Day Two

Icebreakers: Describe How You Feel, Shake It Out 9:00-9:15

Program Introduction 9:15-10:00
Program overview

Lecture: Theory in Practice 10:15-12:30
Introduction to the cores theories and concepts of globalization, intercultural communication, and experiential learning

Lunch Break 12:30-1:30

Individual Activity: Cultural Timeline, Goals, Fears, and Expectations 1:30-2:45
Participants will map out a cultural timeline and pinpoint individual goals, fears, and expectations for the rest of the program

Intercultural Game: Barnga 2:45-3:30
A card game about intercultural awareness in which participants experience the shock of realizing that despite many similarities, people of differing cultures perceive things differently or play by different rules

Lecture: The Group Process 3:45-5:00
Overview of Tuckman's Five-Stage Model of Team Development and setting of group norms

Evening Activity: Theater Performance 7:00-8:00

Day Three

Icebreaker 9:00-9:15

Lecture & Discussion: Cultural Differences & Worldview 9:15-10:30

| | |
|---|-------------|
| Cultural Training <i>Introduction to Malawian culture</i> | 10:45-12:30 |
| Lunch Break | 12:30-1:30 |
| Cultural Training <i>Introduction to Malawian culture</i> | 1:30-5:00 |
| Evening Activity: Traditional Dance Performance | 7:00-8:00 |
| <u>Day Four</u> | |
| Language Training: Survival Chichewa | 9:00-12:00 |
| Lunch Break | 12:00-1:00 |
| Visit to Local Village | 1:00-4:00 |
| Group Circle: Dialogue <i>Program Facilitator will facilitate the first group dialogue and provide pointers towards effective facilitation</i> | 4:00-6:00 |

Appendix F: Re-Entry Workshop Curriculum Outline

S.T.E.P Into The World: The Warm Heart of Africa

At the conclusion of the program, S.T.E.P will host a two-day re-entry workshop that will allow the participants to reflect upon their experience, digest what they have learned, and discuss ways in which they can apply what they have learned at home.

Day One

| | |
|---|-------------|
| Discussion: Facilitation & Feedback <i>Participants discuss the requisite knowledge, skills, and attitudes needed to be an interculturally competent educator and the importance of feedback</i> | 10:00-12:00 |
| Lunch | 12:00-1:00 |
| Discussion: Takeaways <i>Participants discuss how to incorporate their experience into life back home</i> | 1:00-3:00 |
| Reflection Circle <i>Participants meet one last time for group reflection</i> | 3:15-5:30 |

Day Two

| | |
|--|------------|
| Appreciation Circle <i>Participants discuss the importance and benefits of creating an environment that fosters appreciation and take turns speaking appreciatively of one another.</i> | 8:30-10:30 |
|--|------------|

Appendix G: Program Facilitator Job Description

S.T.E.P Into The World: The Warm Heart of Africa

Responsibilities:

S.T.E.P into the world is a provider of summer abroad professional development programs for educators. S.T.E.P is in the process of launching its' flagship program in Malawi and is searching for a Program Facilitator who will run our first program in the summer of 2011. The Program Facilitator is responsible for leading a group of up to 15 participants on an unforgettable journey around Malawi. The desired candidate must either be Malawian or someone who has experience working or studying in Africa and willing to travel to Malawi for a month. The Program Facilitator will work alongside the staff of Kumbali Country Lodge to ensure the success of the program. S.T.E.P into the world is committed to providing and preserving a safe and supportive environment for participants and employees in which individual ideas and uniqueness are recognized, valued, and given the given the opportunity to grow.

Program Duties:

- Coordinate and implement program curriculum, evaluate of the academic program, & propose needed changes
- Manage the relationship with host partner (Kumbali Country Lodge) & keep home office informed
- Ensure the participant's safety & welfare
- Guide participant's through dialogue & reflection process
- Increase participant's knowledge of the country & culture, develop intercultural communication skills, & cultivate new attitudes & awareness
- Facilitate the learning experience and encourage professional & personal growth of the participants

Qualifications:

- Teaching Certification/Experience
- Native or near-native fluency in English
- Knowledge of Malawian culture & history
- Strong leadership skills
- Experience facilitating group dialogue & reflection

**Please send resume and cover letter to
s.t.e.pintotheworld@gmail.com**

Appendix H: Marketing Brochure

S.T.E.P Into The World: The Warm Heart of Africa



About S.T.E.P

S.T.E.P Into the World, in its' first year, is thrilled to offer its' flagship summer abroad professional development program to educators from a variety of backgrounds. S.T.E.P. aims to walk participants down a path towards ethno relativity and arm them with a toolkit of intercultural communication strategies & methods to take back home as they explore the small, land-locked East African country of Malawi. We invite future, current, and former educators from public, private, and charter schools, as well those working within organizations in formal and non-formal educational settings to embark with us on an unforgettable journey through Malawi.

For more information please visit our website: www.stepin2theworld.org

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S.T.E.P.

Into The World

(supporting. teachers. educational.
progression.)

"It only takes one step forward towards
your way to self-discovery"





, LTD

Founders & Facilitators

ley R. Townes & Adam Goldberg

Contact Us

ie: (267) 257-3122

il: s.t.e.pintotheworld@gmail.com

Check Out Our Website

www.stepin2theworld.org



Appendix I: Participant Program Feedback

S.T.E.P Into The World: The Warm Heart of Africa

Please comment on the following:

1. How did you originally hear about S.T.E.P into the world?
 - S.T.E.P website
 - A friend
 - A S.T.E.P rep/recruiter at my home university
 - A professor
 - A study abroad website. Please specify: _____
 - Other. Please specify: _____
2. Would you recommend S.T.E.P to others?
 - Yes
 - No

Please elaborate...

3. Would you act as a representative for S.T.E.P and hold a presentation at your school or in your community?

4. What do you wish you had learned through this program that wasn't covered?

On a scale of 1-5 (1 meaning "not at all satisfied" / 5 meaning "extremely satisfied")...

5. How satisfied were you with the arrival orientation? Please also share your thoughts.

1 2 3 4 5

6. How satisfied were you with the service-learning component? Please also share your thoughts.

1 2 3 4 5

7. How satisfied were you with the course content? Please also share your thoughts.

1 2 3 4 5

8. What are your overall thoughts about this program? Please also include any suggestions you may have for improvement.

9. How has being involved in this program enhanced your professional development? Have you met your goals for the program?

10. How was your homestay experience?

11. Do you feel after this program that you have a thorough understanding of the theoretical framework of intercultural communication? Please explain

12. How comfortable do you feel with leading group dialogue, reflection, planning lessons around experiential learning, and giving and receiving constructive feedback? Do you plan to use these tools upon returning home?

13. Would you be able to teach a lesson back home about Malawi? If so, what would be the theme of your lesson?

J: Group Facilitator Program Feedback

S.T.E.P Into The World: The Warm Heart of Africa

1. Did you feel adequately prepared to lead such a program?
2. How accessible and helpful was the Kumbali staff?
3. Describe the food and accommodation, was it adequate, etc.?
4. What political, social, cultural, environmental developments on site warrant special attention for next year's program?
5. How has the program enhanced participant's intellectual, personal, professional, and cross-cultural learning?
6. What do you wish you had been covered through this program that wasn't?
7. What are your overall thoughts about this program? Please also include any suggestions you may have for improvement.