

The University of Iowa

Innovations in Social Entrepreneurship, Management, and Microfinance 165:197 International Development, Sec. 009

Instructor: David Burgess (david-burgess@uiowa.edu)

Coordinator: R. Rajagopal (r-rajagopal@uiowa.edu)

Winterim 2011-12 (December 27-January 15/16)

Course Description, Syllabus, and Outline

Vision

In India, we will be surrounded by genius: the single mother and entrepreneur who runs a successful business selling organic produce she started with a \$250 microloan, and is now a leader in her community; the child who is now a 'topper' in his class at school after receiving microloan support to return to school instead of spending his days working in the fields; the devoted, expert executives at our partner organizations who run innovative educational institutions, have built global companies, and who have designed cutting-edge social entrepreneurship programs. Our goal is to observe, listen, and learn, and in so doing, explore ways that we could contribute. and apply the lessons we learn to our own ventures and projects.

This is a practical course designed to give students a hands-on, career-building and life-changing experience by actually working as social entrepreneurs, rather than merely learning theory in a classroom. We will have a unique opportunity to change ourselves, and to paraphrase Gandhi, to become the change we seek in the world.

Host Organization

The South State Business School situated within the St. Mary's College in Hyderabad, (<http://www.stmaryscollege.in/>) will be our host and partner organization. The St. Mary's College in Hyderabad collaborates with the St. Mary's University and the Bill Greehey School of Business in San Antonio, Texas (<http://www.stmarytx.edu/>) to offer selected educational programs. Director Abhirama Krishna of South State Business School and Mahender Reddy, Director of St. Mary's College will guide, coach, and mentor to successfully enable the implementation of this program. Director Krishna will serve as the single point of contact (SPOC) and actively assist the University of Iowa group to implement every component of this proposed program, including the content, logistics, and site-specific details. St. Mary's College in Yousufguda, Hyderabad:



Partner Organizations

Students will have the opportunity to visit and work with managers and executives at a number of partner organizations. We are working on partnerships with organizations and corporations such as the following:

The **Administrative Staff College of India** (ASCI) is one of the leading executive training and public administration institutions in India. <http://www.asci.org.in/>. For several decades, they have spearheaded the effort to encourage effective management, innovation, transparency, and sustainable development in India.

Students have the option to visit and learn from executives at several leading corporations with headquarters or significant facilities in Hyderabad. We are working on visits to several of the leading corporations in this growing center of global entrepreneurship, such as:

Mahindra Satyam <http://www.mahindrasatyam.com/> an IT service company. They are part of the Mahindra Group, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mahindra_Group, a \$13 billion company and one of the largest corporations in the world.

Dr. Reddy's Laboratories <http://www.drreddys.com/> one of the largest pharmaceutical companies in India, and among the largest in the world. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dr._Reddy%27s_Laboratories

GMR Group / Hyderabad International Airport – Part of one of India's largest transportation and infrastructure companies, and considered the best airport in the country, and most well-connected and integrated into the metro area's development plan. http://www.gmrgroup.in/Airports/GMR_Hyderabad_International_Airport_Limited.html

We plan to visit and collaborate with several of the leading microfinance organizations in India, who have major operations in the Hyderabad area, and are working on partnerships with MF organizations such as:

SKS Microfinance
(<http://www.sksindia.com/>)

Spandana Sphoorty Financial Limited
(<http://www.spandanaindia.com/index.html>),

Share Microfinance
(<http://www.sharemicrofin.com/>)

Microfinance has come under significant criticism recently, sometimes for not adequately considering the environmental impact of entrepreneurship programs, or for charging exorbitant rates of interest, or for becoming a major corporate industry that aims to grow loan portfolios even by lending to the middle class for so-called "consumption loans", rather than uplifting the poorest of the poor. See the recent New York Times article: <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/04/14/world/14microfinance.html>.

We plan to work with our partner institutions to give each of us a perspective on development in India, microfinance, management, and culture. They will help us develop theoretical frameworks to

understand the tremendous impact the microfinance movement has made in the last four decades, as well as the challenges it faces.

Course Content

Students will be comfortably housed to provide a safe, convenient work and study environment. Students will work directly with the course instructor, with our host organization's staff, and our partner organizations' management to learn and collaborate on projects.

To facilitate this aim, students will work with a successful, growing virtual team network called **BplansForHumanity** – founded at the University of Iowa in 2008.

www.bplansforhumanity.org Students can use **virtual teams for real change**. They will have a chance to involve others in their social entrepreneurship study and work by forming a virtual team to provide assistance, resources and ideas with colleagues at the UI and elsewhere as they develop their projects while in India. This leverages impact by allowing other students and volunteers who aren't able to travel with us to participate virtually and learn from us and from our partner organizations.

Students will apply their knowledge of or interest in entrepreneurship, sustainability, volunteer work, environment, education, writing, business, public relations, marketing, finance, communications, agriculture, water quality, multimedia, photography, and video, among other possible areas, to develop final projects at the end of the course which will help our partners and provide us with lessons we can apply our ventures and careers.

Almost nothing is more impressive on a resume than a study abroad experience in one of the world's leading economies, and fastest growing regions. Even better than that, is a course that doubles as an internship experience, where students research and develop projects for a partner organization, and present their results. This course aims to provide students with just that opportunity.

Students need not have taken a course in business. All instruction will be provided. The only course prerequisites include curiosity, flexibility, dedication, empathy, and a passion for hands-on learning and service.

Testimonials from past participants in past Entrepreneurship and Microfinance Winterim courses:

During my junior year winter break, I was fortunate enough to be a part of the Entrepreneurship and Microfinance course taught by David Burgess, a section of the program which worked closely with a local NGO in the Indian district of Tamil Nadu and one which had a pretty big wait list to get into. Our three week session was spent working closely with the various departments of Hand in Hand, an internationally recognized microfinance group in Tamil Nadu. Our small class was allowed very close contact with the operations at Hand in Hand; our task was to observe their programs and offer any positive insights we could come up with. Getting such an up close and personal view of a large, socially conscious organization was an invaluable experience. The course was not about grades and assignments (there weren't any); it was about working in teams to creatively come up with ways to help people in need. In short, we got to try our hand at social entrepreneurship. The fact that we got to work in the economically exciting, culturally breathtaking country that is India was just a bonus. I loved it.

Our section was filled with students and professionals with various backgrounds (finance, law, IT, education, and many others) and I really enjoyed working with peers with diverse perspectives. Our instructor, David Burgess, helped to keep our many different viewpoints and objectives focused on the common goal of helping Hand in Hand help others. We used a new online network developed at the UI, www.BplansforHumanity.org, to coordinate our many projects and goals. Getting settled in a strange new country and creating detailed reports on socially conscious programs in only three weeks would not have been possible without David's experience in creating workable plans for action and with adjusting to life in India.

-Ben Mescher (UI class of 2011)

My experience with David Burgess and the students during India Winterim 2010 was truly incredible. During our three weeks in Kancheepuram, students had the opportunity to see the entrepreneurship and microfinance concept in practice through visits to a variety of small businesses, schools and organizations run by Hand-in-Hand. Students gained valuable non-profit consulting experience through their field visits, interviews, research, and final presentations. Throughout the experience, David challenged the students to completely immerse themselves in the culture and the environment. His guidance and encouragement gave the students the confidence they needed to push themselves to the next level. The India Winterim program is truly a positive, life-changing experience.

-Melissa Baker, Assistant Director, Undergraduate Program Office, Tippie College of Business, University of Iowa

I loved the course at IRRAD [in Gurgaon/New Delhi] earlier this year and I really liked the fact that we weren't only working on microfinance. Unlike other courses and organizations I worked with in the US, I was able to get my hands into IRRAD's work from day one, and participate in and have an impact on programs I never thought I would. Expect the unexpected and have an open mind, and that will determine what you get out of this experience.

-Alex Brown (UI class of 2011)

I will forever remember my first trip outside of the US and the endless life experiences that have changed my life within three short weeks that I spent in India through the University of Iowa's study abroad program. I chose the course "Entrepreneurship and Microfinance" with David Burgess for a couple of reasons. I wanted to choose a program which would allow me to experience a new country (specifically incredible India) while simultaneously gathering important life lessons and education pertaining to my profound interest: nonprofit organizations. The program allowed me to work with a well respected NGO, Hand-in-Hand, while encouraging me to push my ideas and thoughts further than I could have imagined. I was able to witness, single-handedly, the many different highs, lows and hard-work that goes into such a large and successful NGO. My favorite experience working with Hand-in-Hand was the high expectation that they held for us University of Iowa students, they were looking for us to produce results to them, and it was this notion that made me feel my work was important and very worthwhile to both mine and their time. They asked us to help them become more efficient, what we thought as outsiders was working well and what needed some work. I knew going into the program that my passion was working with NGO's, and it intensified after having spent three beautiful weeks in India. Because of this program, I have decided to take what I have learned a step further to pursue my passion. I am going to be attending Minnesota State University this fall earning a Master's certificate in Nonprofit Leadership with the hopes of making a difference in the world mimicking what Hand-in-Hand does every single day.

I was thoroughly impressed with the way David Burgess, our instructor, completely immersed himself into each and every student in our group and our projects. He worked just as hard (if not

harder) than the entire class. It was very refreshing to have a Professor act as a mentor by guiding us through the sticky situations and problems that arose and, as very successful professors do, was able to turn any difficulties that we faced into a positive academic experience. I truly enjoyed working with David and would recommend anyone who is considering studying abroad who is interested in challenging themselves and pushing their ideas further than they thought possible while at the same time create a memorable experience to take his course in the Winterim in India program.”

-Alisha Otting (UI class of 2010)

My study abroad experience in India as a student in David Burgess’s “Entrepreneurship and Microfinance” course was not a typical study abroad experience. I did not sit in a classroom for half of my day and spend the rest at a tourist trap. Instead, I actively participated in the culture. Whether I was visiting local schools and talking to children for my project or sampling the food from local beach vendors, there are always opportunities for both learning and fun. This class helped me as a business major by exposing me to real issues global businesses face and giving me the opportunity to try and solve these issues.

David acted more as a mentor than a professor, helping me to learn while making this experience my own. I was able to actively use what I had learned in school to help the local community surrounding Kancheepuram. The only reason I will not be going back for another class is because I graduated! I think every student should experience Indian culture and learn outside a classroom setting once in their college career.

-Kyle Schlinz (UI class of 2010)

Course Instructor

David Burgess has been a Lecturer in UI’s Tippie College of Business, where he taught for eleven years, and a Lecturer in entrepreneurship at Cornell College, where he’s taught for two years. He now teaches entrepreneurship and social entrepreneurship part-time at both institutions so he can focus on building two businesses. He is the co-founder of and partner in NurturEnergy, Inc. (www.nurturenergy.com), which received the 2010 “Heroes of the Planet” award from the St. Louis Business Journal, and Smart Data Leads (www.smartdataleads.com), which won the top prize in the 2011 John Pappajohn Entrepreneurship Center’s and the Iowa Center for Innovation’s New Venture Competition. Previously, he worked in international development at USAID/Vilnius, in Lithuania, and had his first study abroad experience as a Fulbright Fellow. His teaching and professional experience focuses on social entrepreneurship, entrepreneurship, business ethics, communications, and marketing. He has taught three social entrepreneurship courses with the Winterim in India program since 2008, working with over fifty students, staff, and faculty course participants.

Required Texts

Creating a World Without Poverty: Social Business and the Future of Capitalism by Mohammed Yunus

Mountains Beyond Mountains by Tracy Kidder

Recommended Texts

Entrepreneurship by Bygrave and Zacharais

Poverty Capital: Microfinance and the Making of Development by Ananya Roy

Grading Policy and Procedures

Students will be evaluated based on their participation in and preparedness for discussions of readings and other course materials. Our work with our partner organizations will allow students to identify needs at our partner organization and design a project based on their reading, research, and initiative that may be implemented at our partner organization. Students will work hands-on with ASCI management, and our partner microfinance organizations, as well as the course instructor. Their projects will be presented at a final conference hosted at St. Mary's College, and again upon our return to the UI. Student grades will be substantially determined by the quality of their final projects.

Course Schedule

Week 1: Students get first-hand exposure to programs of our partner organizations. In collaboration with instructors and organization leaders, students develop initial ideas for their projects, depending on the needs of the program on which they are focused. Discuss in daily group meetings the textbooks and relate them to the initial experiences of the culture and the partner organization.

Week 2: Meet with project managers, workers, volunteers, clients, and community Members at our three microfinance partners. Research and collaborate with BplansForHumanity virtual teams. Conduct analyses, write brief success stories and document impacts with data, photographs, videos, etc.

Week 3: Final meetings with microfinance partner organizations and ASCI staff. Prepare and deliver project or Bplan to organization leaders, classmates, and instructors at student-led and organized conference at St. Mary's College.

In addition to the course activities outlined above, we will also visit several religious, social and cultural landmarks, including temples, ancient ruins, and places of contemplation. We will also have the opportunity to attend cultural events, such as music concerts or dance. We will experience Indian culture and see our partner organizations' initiatives in both urban and rural settings. Our experience will be broad, intensive, and life-changing.

After returning to UI: Present project or Bplan to the UI community at Winterim in India Conference. Continuing involvement through BplansForHumanity is encouraged, but not required.