

# Exploring Outcomes Two Years after an International Faculty Abroad Experience

T. Grady Roberts<sup>1</sup>, Mary T. Rodriguez<sup>2</sup>, Jessica L. Gouldthorpe<sup>3</sup>, Nicole L. P. Stedman<sup>4</sup>, Amy Harder<sup>5</sup>, and Marta Hartmann<sup>6</sup>

## Abstract

*The National Research Council (2009) emphasized the importance of enhancing the undergraduate experience to better prepare graduates to work in a global economy. The NRC went further to suggest college faculty might need professional development to make appropriate changes. In 2010, as a part of a USDA Higher Education Challenge Grant, eight faculty in agriculture and natural resources from the University of Florida participated in a 14-day faculty abroad experience to Ecuador to explore their discipline in that country. The purpose of this study was to understand the outcomes evident two years after that experience on the faculty participants. Results revealed changes in attitudes, aspirations, knowledge, and behaviors. Changes in attitudes and aspirations included: the importance of international experiences, the benefits of meeting new colleagues, the value in learning from the other participants, the importance of multidisciplinary interactions, credibility, the importance of authentic interactions, and a desire to learn more. Faculty participants in this experience learned about the Ecuadorian context, learned about their discipline, and learned about pedagogy. Behavior changes included: considering the cultural context, focusing more of their work on Latin America, emphasizing study abroad programs, interacting with new people, and teaching others about what they learned in Ecuador.*

Keywords: evaluation; global education; faculty development

## Introduction

Colleges and universities have long since been tasked with globalizing education for their students. There is a global interdependence among economies and societies that cannot be ignored, which places a significant amount of pressure on educational institutions to prepare future citizens for successful participation in this environment (National Research Council, 2009). Many scholars,

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<sup>1</sup> T. Grady Roberts is a Professor of Agricultural Education in the Department of Agricultural Education and Communication at the University of Florida, 117C Bryant Hall, PO Box 112060, Gainesville, FL 32611, groberts@ufl.edu

<sup>2</sup> Mary T. Rodriguez is an Assistant Professor of Community Leadership in the Department of Agricultural Communication, Education, and Leadership at The Ohio State University, 204A Agricultural Administration Building, 2120 Fyffe Road, Columbus, OH 43210, rodriguez.746@osu.edu

<sup>3</sup> Jessica L. Gouldthorpe is a Lecturer in the Department of Family, Youth, and Community Science at the University of Florida, 3028D McCarty Hall, PO Box 110310, Gainesville, FL 32611, jlgould@ufl.edu

<sup>4</sup> Nicole L. P. Stedman is an Associate Professor of Leadership Development in the Department of Agricultural Education and Communication at the University of Florida, 217B Rolfs Hall, PO Box 110540, Gainesville, FL 32611, nstedman@ufl.edu

<sup>5</sup> Amy Harder is an Associate Professor of Extension Education in the Department of Agricultural Education and Communication at the University of Florida, 117B Bryant Hall, PO Box 112060, Gainesville, FL 32611, amharder@ufl.edu

<sup>6</sup> Marta Hartmann is a Lecturer in Agricultural Communication and Extension in the Department of Agricultural Education and Communication at the University of Florida, 117D Bryant Hall, PO Box 112060, Gainesville, FL 32611, martah@ufl.edu

administrators, and professionals agree there is a need to be more engaged in international education (Bruening & Frick, 2004). Future graduates should demonstrate a level of understanding and global competence upon entering the work force. Platt (2004) emphasized the need for globally competent graduates who can work expertly with other cultures and countries. This need can be met through several different methods including, but not limited to, study abroad opportunities, travel courses, and incorporation of global topics into the curriculum. Many scholars believe the understanding of diversity gained through these international experiences helps students to bridge the cultural gap (Bruening & Shao, 2005).

Despite the importance of developing cultural competence, only a limited number of students take advantage of study abroad and travel courses. In 2012, only 273,996 of all undergraduate students enrolled in higher education institutions in the U.S. participated in any kind of study abroad opportunity (IIE, 2012; National Center for Education Statistics, 2012). Study abroad is not the only way for students to increase their global knowledge. Russo and Osborne (2004) stated obtaining diverse and knowledgeable worldviews could happen in the classroom, either in general education classes or elsewhere, outside the classroom, and off-campus. As a precursor for this to happen, faculty should be internationally experienced and incorporate international content into their courses (Russo & Osborne, 2004). However, many challenges make it difficult for faculty participation in study abroad programs (Moseley, 2009). As a precursor for globalizing the educational experience for students, teaching faculty must gain international experience (Gouldthorpe et al., 2012).

In an effort to increase the international experience of teaching faculty within the agricultural and life sciences, the Teaching Locally, Engaging Globally (TLEG) project was designed to provide a professional development opportunity to visit several locations in Ecuador. This experience allowed faculty to observe their discipline in a different cultural context and then teach their students about what they learned. Specifically, participants were required to create reusable learning objects (RLOs) and then use those RLOs in their classes. Financial support for this project was provided through a USDA Higher Education Challenge Grant. Four of the authors on this article managed the project and traveled with the participants to Ecuador.

Planning and delivering such a professional development activity required a considerable amount of resources, both in terms of faculty time and actual costs. The true value of such an investment can be determined by evaluating the impact on participant knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors after the experience. Previous research (Gouldthorpe et al., 2012) identified the short-term outcomes for these participants *immediately* following the experience. Participants were asked to reflect on changes from participation in the program in their initial attitudes or beliefs, perceived benefits gains, and anticipated impacts on academic activities (Gouldthorpe et al., 2012).

This study explored the outcomes described by participants *two years* after they visited Ecuador and a year after completion of the project and end of funding. Researchers were expected to hypothesize about how the outcomes and impacts of their proposals will live on past the funding period. The research presented here documented what happened beyond the conclusion of the TLEG project.

### Literature Review

Participation in faculty abroad programs can benefit the faculty themselves and their students in various ways. Hall (2007) found his teaching was greatly enhanced through his experiences abroad. Those experiences broadened perspectives and allowed for the integration of appropriate examples into the classroom. Hall proposed faculty would be able to increase their international competence through international travel and then apply what they learned in their courses.

While there is much research being conducted about global competence, research to evaluate the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and experiences, in relation to global competence, is still

lacking (Gouldthorpe et al., 2012; Hayward, 2000; Hunter et al., 2006;). The TLEG project set several objectives to identify changes among faculty participants and their students.

Gouldthorpe et al. (2012) found international experiences can impact the participant in many different ways. The participants expressed changes in knowledge and attitudes about Ecuador and its people, increased cultural competency, and lastly, changes in aspirations (Gouldthorpe et al., 2012). These aspirations highlighted the desire to integrate global activities into their courses and future research due to participation in the program (Gouldthorpe et al., 2012). Similarly, Dooley et al. (2008) examined a faculty abroad program to Mexico and found the program encouraged the integration of global perspectives for teaching and research.

To better understand the changes, it is important to look at not only the immediate outcomes of the trip, but also the medium-term outcomes and longer-term impacts. Rockwell and Bennett's (2004) Targeting Outcomes of Programs (TOP) model was used to frame the TLEG project from which this data were collected. This model suggests investigating medium-term outcomes several months or years after program implementation. The TOP model similarly uses Kirkpatrick's (1994) four levels of outcomes: reaction, learning, behavior, and results which all have various implications for how faculty process their experience.

Reaction measures how the participants immediately respond to the experience (Kirkpatrick, 1994). In looking at the medium-term outcomes, it is important to see the changes as a result of the experience after a certain amount of time. For this study, two years was identified as an appropriate time to observe changes in course planning, established connections for planning a study abroad, and other academic integration efforts. This time period also provided an opportunity to examine impacts over one year after the funding period was over, thus providing an opportunity to examine actual academic enhancement and continuation activities, both of which were criteria specified by the funding agency. Kirkpatrick (1994) said that positive immediate reactions may not guarantee learning; however, negative reactions will greatly reduce the chances of it occurring. Learning is the extent to which the participants change attitudes, improve knowledge, and/or increase skills (Kirkpatrick, 1994). Learning has taken place if one or more of the following occurs: attitudes are changed, knowledge is increased, or skills are improved (Kirkpatrick, 1994). Medium-term outcomes measured after the experience would allow insight into retained knowledge, changes in aspirations, and skills acquired over time. Behavior can be best described as the extent to which change has occurred because of participation (Kirkpatrick, 1994). Behaviors can change over time. Investigating this at the medium-term level might show what behaviors have continued or changed long term as a result of the experience. Lastly, results are changes in the larger systems, which occurred because of participation in the experience (Kirkpatrick, 1994). Rockwell and Bennett (2004) specified that long-term results should focus on changes in social, economic, or environmental conditions.

### **Purpose**

The purpose of this study was to explore outcomes two years after faculty participated in the professional development experience in Ecuador. The initial, primary objective was to identify medium-term outcomes. An emergent, secondary objective was to describe short-term outcomes still evident two years after the experience.

### **Methods**

This study was conducted using a basic qualitative research design (Merriam, 1998). Participants ( $N = 8$ ) were faculty at the University of Florida who represented a variety of departments including: Agricultural and Biological Engineering; Agricultural Education and Communication; Agronomy; Family, Youth, and Community Science; Food Science and Human Nutrition; Fisheries and Aquatic Sciences; Religion Studies; and Wildlife Ecology and

Conservation. Participants were selected to participate in the program based on an interest in learning about Ecuador and a desire to integrate new international perspectives into their undergraduate courses. The 14-day experience involved touring a variety of sites to learn about the agriculture, natural resources, and the culture of Ecuador. The experience included stays in the large coastal city of Guayaquil, a small village in the Andes called Salinas de Guaranda, and the Galapagos islands. The TLEG project covered about two-thirds of the costs for each participant with the remaining costs paid by each faculty member.

This study, conducted two years following the in-country experience, was designed to explore the medium-term outcomes from the cumulative experiences of faculty members. The number of faculty selected ( $N = 8$ ) was consistent with the purpose of the inquiry (Patton, 2002) as well as the time and resources made available through the TLEG project. According to Patton, “in-depth information from a small number of people can be very valuable” (p. 244). All eight faculty participants participated in a follow-up interview.

### **The Interview Process**

Using a semi-structured interview protocol, each participant was asked to reflect on his/her time in Ecuador by identifying memorable experiences and explaining the personal and professional impact from the overall experience. Additionally, each faculty member was asked to identify how the knowledge gained from the experience had been integrated into undergraduate classroom lectures and activities. The faculty members were also asked to describe the impact program experiences had on their interest and involvement in multidisciplinary teams or international projects. Finally, participants were asked to provide program coordinators with suggestions and critiques for subsequent cohort activities.

Each of the eight interviews was conducted in the respective faculty member’s office over the course of a two-month period in August and September 2012, two years after the trip to Ecuador. Each interview was scheduled to last no longer than 60 minutes. Responses were received from all participants. Each interview was recorded using hand-held audio recording device. A paid transcriptionist transcribed each of the interviews. The transcriptionist was asked to focus particularly on word choices rather than timed pauses or additional technical items (Kowal & O’Connell, 2004). Upon completion of the transcription, the interviewer listened through each of the interviews in its entirety while reading along with transcript to correct or interpret any items left blank from the transcriptionist’s efforts.

### **Data Analysis**

To provide consistency in the analysis, a single researcher analyzed the data. Data were analyzed using a constant comparative approach (Dooley, 2007). Analysis began with line-by-line open coding, which was then reduced into categories using axial coding (Corbin & Strauss, 1990). Then categories were organized into themes using selective coding (Corbin & Strauss, 1990). Finally, themes were organized using the Kirkpatrick (1994) framework for assessing impacts. To establish trustworthiness and credibility, the findings were sent to participants for member checking (Dooley, 2007) and also reviewed by the remaining team of researchers for peer debriefing (Dooley, 2007).

### **Subjectivity Statement**

The researchers involved in this project are all advocates for global education and all have traveled extensively. Three of the researchers have lived outside the United States for long periods of time. One of the researchers was born in Latin America. One of the researchers was director for the TLEG project and three researchers were co-directors. The remaining two

researchers were not involved in the Ecuador trip, but were involved in other aspects of activities related to the project.

## Results

### Short-Term Outcomes: Changes in Attitudes and Aspirations

**Importance of international experience.** All eight participants expressed the importance of international experience. Three sub-themes emerged: *developing new perspectives*, *desire for future international projects*, and *study abroad*. P2 and P8 discussed how these kinds of experiences help someone *develop new perspectives*. P1 and P2 also discussed a *desire for future international projects*. P2 indicated she would like to do more work in South America, while P1 talked about working in multiple regions of the world including South America and India. Seven participants reported the importance of international experience for students in the form of study abroad (P1, P3, P4, P5, P6, P7, P8). P8 said the experience “kind of solidified my perspective” about the benefits of study abroad. P6 said the experience made her much more comfortable in what it would take to lead a study abroad trip herself.

**Meeting new colleagues.** Five of the eight participants shared one of the most memorable parts of this experience was getting to meet new colleagues (P2, P3, P6, P7, P8). P2 said, “I would think the relationships with the faculty was the biggest thing.” P6 and P8 shared the lengthy bus rides provided a great opportunity to talk about a wide variety of issues, including reflections about what they had observed, ways of improving their courses, and a variety of personal issues. P7 added that the design of the experience allowed participants to have “rich discussion[s] in a world in which very few of us have the luxury of time.”

**Multidisciplinary interactions.** All eight participants discussed how this experience influenced their perceptions about multidisciplinary teams. Several subthemes emerged within this theme: *desire to branch out*, *desire to work in teams*, *importance of other viewpoints*, and *multidisciplinary vs. interdisciplinary*. P6 and P7 expressed a *desire to branch out* by partnering with someone “outside my department” (P7) and how this experience had “really broadened my view of ability to collaborate with [the Agricultural Education and Communication] department” (P6). All eight participants expressed a *desire to work in multidisciplinary teams*. Two participants said they always liked working in multidisciplinary teams and this experience reaffirmed that belief (P4, P5). Other participants shared that this experience increased their desire to engage in multidisciplinary teams (P1, P2, P6, P7). Three participants shared how the experience made them realize the *importance of other viewpoints* (P6, P7, P8). P6 said, “It would be a lot more fun to go with people who have all these different perspectives” as opposed to traveling with people who all think the same way. P6 and P8 differentiated between *multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary* interactions. In distinguishing the two and indicating his preference, P8 said “so it is more than multidisciplinary work, it is interdisciplinary work for me.”

**New perspectives from other participants.** Every participant expressed the value of learning something new from the other participants. P8 thought he learned more from the other participants than from the interactions with Ecuadorians. Referencing the other participants, P1 liked that she was able to learn from “the specialist’s point of view” and P2 agreed her learning was enhanced from “having people in different backgrounds because you look at things very differently.” P5 and P8 mentioned much of their learning from the other participants occurred while “sitting in the back [of the bus and] talking to them.”

**Credibility.** Several participants responded the experience made them feel more credible when talking about Ecuador and the issues observed (P5, P8). P5 said she felt she could speak on the issues because “I’ve been there. I’ve seen it.” The value of first-hand, personal experience made participants feel much more comfortable in their ability to speak about the issues.

**Authentic interactions.** P1 and P4 believed the authentic interactions they had with Ecuadorian people impacted them the most. Participant 1 enjoyed talking with the people at ESPOL University in Guayaquil, while P4 made it a point to differentiate between the “people” and the “researchers” at the university. Participants valued the ability to interact with people as they went about their normal daily routines. P4 recalled one of his more vivid memories was “seeing the little women [from the small village Salinas de Guaranda in the Andes] who were carrying all of the materials in their arms and on their head.”

**Desire to learn more.** Participants reported this experience increased their desire to learn more (P1, P2, P5, P6, P8). The specific nature of what they wanted to learn varied. Based on what she saw in Ecuador, P1 wanted to learn more about similar issues in the United States. P5 wanted to learn more about agriculture and natural resources. P6 and P8 wanted to learn more about Latin America in general. P2 said “I need to learn Spanish at the least.”

### Short-Term Outcomes: Changes in Knowledge

**New knowledge about the context.** All eight participants expressed they learned about the context of Ecuador. Multiple sub-themes emerged from the data: *general*, *issues*, *people*, and *global*. The *general* knowledge included learning about the geography (P5, P7), the topography (P5, P7), and the great diversity present in Ecuador (P1, P2, P5, P6, P7, P8). Participant learning was often presented as comparisons to the U.S. (P1, P5, P6). P7 summed it up nicely, “I learned a lot about Ecuador.” Many of the participants expressed they learned about *issues* impacting Ecuador (P1, P2, P4, P5, P6, P8). Some specific examples mentioned included: land tenure (P1), malnutrition (P2), food sovereignty (P4), sociopolitical issues (P8), and environmental issues (P8). Seven participants specifically mentioned learning about the *people* of Ecuador (P1, P2, P3, P4, P6, P7, P8). Some of the participants spoke specifically about what they learned about the people in Salinas de Guaranda, a small village in the Andes (P1, P2, P3, P7). Participants also compared the people they met in different regions of Ecuador (P1, P4, P6, P7, P8). P7 specifically mentioned interacting with the indigenous people. Finally, participants also indicated this experience gave them a better *global* perspective (P1, P2, P4, P5). P5 said it best, “every time you go to a new place, it just puts another piece of the puzzle together.”

**Technical knowledge.** Five of the eight participants shared they learned technical knowledge from this experience (P2, P3, P5, P6, P8). Two sub-themes emerged in the data related to technical knowledge: *pedagogy and instructional design* and *science*. In relation to *pedagogy and instructional design*, P5 came to the realization that “the field of education and pedagogy is a discipline.” P6 felt the discussions about pedagogy were “fabulous” and she now knows how to make her classes more interdisciplinary. P5 shared she learned how to create instructional materials. P6 specifically mentioned she learned new skills related to PowerPoint. Three participants reported learning more about their respective *science* (P2, P3, P8). P2 and P3 learned about agricultural production practices. P3 also learned about scouting techniques for plant diseases. P8 learned about the environmental and economic impacts related to aquaculture production.

### Medium-Term Outcomes: Changes in Behavior

**Considering the cultural context.** Several participants shared this experience has led them to now overtly consider the cultural context (P2, P7, P8). P8 summed up his thoughts by saying, “the impact that it had on my disciplinary research is that it caused me to ... put some of the things that I have done or will do in the future in a better context ... that incorporates the culture.” P7 shared she is now using more Latin American case studies in her teaching. P2 and P7 shared they now use cultural examples from Ecuador in their teaching.

**Focusing work on Latin America.** Three participants reported they are now focusing more of their work on Latin America (P2, P5, P7). P7 shared she was actively seeking opportunities for more work in Latin America. P2 expressed she was working to bring an exchange student from Latin America to work in her program. P5 encouraged her own teenaged daughter to travel to Peru on a food security project.

**Emphasizing study abroad.** Half of the participants reported this experience impacted their efforts related to study abroad programs (P2, P4, P7, P8). Two sub-themes emerged from the data: *encouragement* and *planning*. P2 and P4 reported they were now more overtly *encouraging* students to do study abroad programs. P2 said, “I definitely have suggested that students should [complete a study abroad].” P7 always encouraged students to participate in study abroad programs and this experience had not changed her desire to encourage students. P2, P4, P7, P8 shared they started planning a study abroad program. P4 and P8 submitted proposals to lead study abroad programs; P4’s program was to Ecuador and P8’s program to the Caribbean.

**Collaborating with other participants.** Most of the participants indicated they collaborated with one of their fellow participants after the experience (P1, P2, P3, P4, P5). Several sub-themes emerged within this theme: *general collaboration*, *grants and projects*, *teaching*, and *student committees*. P1 and P3 reported they had been in contact with another participant in *general* discussion about a variety of collaborative ideas. P4 and P5 shared they collaborated with another participant on a *grant or project* proposal submission. P5 shared that P3 invited her to be on a grant he was submitting. These two participants did not know each other prior to this experience. P3 and P5 said they collaborated with a fellow participant in a *teaching* activity. P5 and P7 had been planning to co-teach a course together and P5 shared “our ability to team teach was enhanced by the fact that we went on this trip together and we had the time to sort of talk about the course.” P3 reported he had been invited to be a guest speaker in a class from one of the project team members. P2 and P5 stated they had been invited to serve on a graduate student committee for another participant’s student.

**Making Connections.** P2, P3, and P5 conveyed participation in this experience allowed them to build connections with people beyond the participants. P5 shared she made a connection with one of the people she met while in Ecuador and she was now much more comfortable contacting that person. P3 reported he collaborated with faculty in other countries on grant projects. P2 shared she built connections in other countries to bring exchange students to the United States.

**Integrating examples.** One of the most common changes in behavior reported by participants was the integration of examples from Ecuador into their teaching (P1, P2, P3, P4, P5, P6, P7). Several participants shared that they implemented the required RLO for the project (P2, P4) and P1 also used other participants’ RLOs. Beyond the required implementation, participants shared they had shared stories about Ecuador (P1, P4, P5, P6, P7), as well as showed pictures and video (P1, P3, P4). P5 elaborated this experience allowed her to share “how indigenous farmers do

it ... it was kind of neat to be able to share that with the students.” P1 relayed she “enjoyed using the photos in a lot of [her] PowerPoint [presentations].”

P5 expressed this experience caused her to change several additional aspects of her teaching. She shared that using what she learned in this experience, she created additional materials for her classes. More notably, P5 also shared that because of the process she experienced in this project (collecting teaching materials while traveling), she was now taking advantage of her travels to collect other materials to use in her teaching.

**Building friendships.** Six participants shared they built friendships that lived beyond the experience (P1, P2, P4, P5, P7, P8). P6 and P8 specifically mentioned the value of the long bus rides in building friendships. P2 expressed she “established relationships with people that I don't think would have been established otherwise.” P4 said he stayed in touch with two of his fellow participants and one of them became a very good friend.

**Sharing the experience.** Beyond the classroom integration examples noted above, participants also shared the experience both in *personal* and *professional* settings. Participants reported they shared stories with *personal* acquaintances like family (P2, P4), friends (P2, P4), and in the case of P4, his church. P2 and P6 added they also shared stories with *professional* acquaintances like peers (P2) and graduate students (P6).

### Summary and Discussion

Two years after a faculty abroad professional development experience, this group of eight faculty expressed the experience made an impact on their personal and professional lives. These outcomes were expressed as changes in attitudes and aspirations; knowledge; and behavior (see Table 1) (Kirkpatrick, 1994).

#### Short-Term Outcomes: Changes in Attitudes and Aspirations

The changes in attitudes and aspirations expressed by participants included: the importance of international experiences, the benefits of meeting new colleagues, the value of learning from the other participants, the importance of multidisciplinary interactions, credibility, the importance of authentic interactions, and a desire to learn more.

This experience impacted how participants viewed the importance of international experience, both for themselves and for their students. Some participants already believed in the importance of these experiences and reported the Ecuador experience reconfirmed their beliefs, while other faculty reported this experience enhanced their desire for engagement in international experiences. Given the call for globalizing college campuses (Bruening & Frick, 2004; Bruening & Shao, 2005; National Research Council, 2009), it would appear experiences like this one in Ecuador may be a valuable professional development opportunity for faculty.

Some of the most reported outcomes from this experience focused on the value of getting to know their fellow participants. Participants appreciated the casual interactions, which allowed them to learn about each other on a personal level, but they also appreciated the opportunities to learn about the other participants' disciplines. Participants especially enjoyed hearing how someone from another discipline interpreted a given situation and the benefits of hearing multiple viewpoints. This experience seemed to enhance (or at least maintain) the desire of participants to engage in multidisciplinary teams in the future. This was reported immediately after the experience by Gouldthorpe et al. (2012) and it would appear faculty continue to value working in multidisciplinary teams.

Table 1  
*Outcomes of a Faculty Abroad Professional Development Experience*

Short-Term		Medium-Term
Attitudes and Aspirations	Knowledge	Behaviors
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Importance of International Experience                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Developing New Perspectives</li> <li>○ Desire for Future International Projects</li> <li>○ Study Abroad</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Meeting New Colleagues</li> <li>• Multidisciplinary Interactions                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Desire to Branch</li> <li>○ Desire to Work in Teams</li> <li>○ Importance of Other Viewpoints</li> <li>○ Multidisciplinary vs. Interdisciplinary</li> </ul> </li> <li>• New Perspectives from the Other Participants</li> <li>• Credibility</li> <li>• Authentic Interactions</li> <li>• Desire to Learn More</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New Knowledge About the Context                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ General</li> <li>○ Issues</li> <li>○ People</li> <li>○ Global</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Technical Knowledge                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Pedagogy and Instructional Design</li> <li>○ Science</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Considering the Cultural Context</li> <li>• Focusing Work on Latin America</li> <li>• Emphasizing Study Abroad                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Encouraging</li> <li>○ Planning</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Collaborating with Other Participants                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ General Collaboration</li> <li>○ Grants and Projects</li> <li>○ Teaching</li> <li>○ Student Committees</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Making Connections</li> <li>• Integrating Examples</li> <li>• Building Friendships</li> <li>• Sharing Experience                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Personal</li> <li>○ Professional</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

It is reasonable to expect faculty would feel more credible after an experience like this one as their own first-hand knowledge of the context is now greater. Gouldthorpe et al. (2012) found this same group of faculty felt like they were more aware of the Ecuadorian context immediately after the experience, which appears to have translated into a feeling of credibility. Although they felt credible, this experience also motivated faculty to learn even more about Latin America, about speaking Spanish, and about how some of the issues observed in Ecuador occur within the United States. The impact from authentic interactions with Ecuadorians during the experience was first noted by Gouldthorpe et al. (2012) and was still recurring two years later. These interactions seemed to affect faculty participants on both a personal and professional level, with faculty being able to recall vivid details of specific interactions. Both Dooley et al. (2008) and Gouldthorpe et al. (2012) found strong affective outcomes on participants.

**Short-Term Outcomes: Changes in Knowledge**

Faculty participants in this experience learned about the Ecuadorian context, learned about their discipline, and learned about pedagogy. This professional development experience was designed to allow faculty to learn about their respective discipline in an Ecuadorian context. The findings of this study reveal this did indeed happen. However, learning extended beyond the planned outcomes. Beyond specific applications to their own disciplines, participants learned about Ecuador including some of the cultural and sociopolitical issues facing the people of Ecuador. It was nice to see these broader outcomes, although it is important to note the short duration of this

experience could not provide participants with a complete understanding of the complexities related to some of the issues in Ecuador. Dooley et al. (2008) found similar types of learning from participants in faculty abroad programs.

Learning also occurred from interactions with other participants. The logistics of this experience created plenty of opportunities for participants to interact casually, including the bus rides in between scheduled visits, dinners, and evenings around the hotel. It appears faculty took advantage of these opportunities to learn from their peers. Participants learned about each other's disciplines, as well as how someone from a different discipline might interpret a given situation. This was reported immediately after the experience (Gouldthorpe et al., 2012) and appears to be a continuing outcome from the experience. One interesting discovery from this study was faculty learned about pedagogy and instructional design. In retrospect, this does seem like a plausible outcome because this was a teaching-focused project designed to help faculty integrate global aspects into their courses. The surprising part of this discovery was most of this learning happened during casual interactions in between faculty participants, rather than through planned workshops offered by the project team. Enhancing one's teaching skills is a valuable outcome and is in alignment with the National Research Council's (2009) call for improving the undergraduate experience in colleges of agriculture and related sciences.

### **Medium-Term Outcomes: Changes in Behavior**

Participants reported numerous changes in their behavior as a result of this experience. These included: considering the cultural context, focusing more of their work on Latin America, emphasizing study abroad programs, interacting with new people, and teaching others about what they learned in Ecuador. Gouldthorpe et al. (2012) previously documented *aspirations* for changes in behavior and this study now reveals *actual* changes in behavior.

One of the purposes of this professional development experience was to allow participants to learn about their discipline in Ecuador, thus exploring the cultural context as it relates to a given issue. Based on the findings of this study, participants have embraced the importance of culture and recognize the richness that working in Latin American can provide. Multiple participants reported they now consider the cultural context when examining an issue. Additionally, three participants specifically indicated they are now focusing more of their work in Latin America. Given the broader focus of this professional development experience, it was rewarding to see many of the participants are now looking at social aspects in their work, and more of the participants are now working in Latin America. This newfound desire to consider the social aspects was especially noteworthy because half of the participants were not social scientists.

It was shared earlier that faculty recognized the importance of international experience. Participants reported the importance of study abroad experiences for students. Several participants have long recognized the value of these experiences, however multiple faculty shared their experience in Ecuador enhanced their interest in study abroad programs. Half the participants started to plan a study abroad experience and two participants submitted a proposal since returning from Ecuador. Beyond leading their own programs, faculty also encouraged their students to participate in study abroad programs in general.

Participants built new relationships with their fellow participants, which continued in both personal and professional ways. A few participants relayed how they now have a close friendship with another participant. More commonly, participants shared how they are now collaborating with other participants on projects, in their teaching, and by serving on graduate committees. Three participants also reported new connections with people other than participants. The importance of relationship building was previously documented by Dooley et al. (2008).

Faculty participants also shared what they learned on this experience with others. The design of the overall TLEG project required faculty create a RLO and implement it in one of their classes. Participants shared their experience beyond just the RLO, including professional and

personal interactions. Participants reported they used examples from Ecuador in their teaching and they shared what they learned with other colleagues and graduate students. Participants also shared stories with family and friends.

### Recommendations

The literature is full of assessments documenting the *immediate* outcomes from a variety of programs. This study examined *longer-term* impacts from a program and the results were insightful. It is recommended that more researchers assess medium and longer-term impacts from the programs they implement. Results from such studies can be helpful for practitioners, funding agencies, and other researchers.

The outcomes of this faculty abroad experience demonstrate the efficacy of such a program. Colleges of agriculture and related sciences should consider dedicating resources to providing similar experiences to faculty, thus addressing the National Research Council's (2009) call to transform the learning experience for students.

If additional faculty abroad programs are implemented, this study provides some considerations for those experiences. First, consider focusing the program around a single issue, which would require faculty to collaborate in a multidisciplinary or interdisciplinary manner. Second, build in opportunities for faculty to have in-depth, authentic interactions while abroad. This implies the need for depth as opposed to breadth with a longer duration in a single location rather than many locations in some kind of study tour. Third, provide frequent opportunities for faculty to interact before, during, and after the experience. Some of these interactions may be planned with specific outcomes in mind, while others may be informal. Fourth, create a comprehensive experience for faculty that goes beyond just a short trip to another country. Consider developing activities before and after the experience to help faculty learn about relevant topics such as culture, pedagogy, instructional design, and team science. It may also be helpful to follow up the experience with sessions related to developing and facilitating study abroad programs.

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