

Undergraduate Research Symposium May 17, 2013 Mary Gates Hall

Online Proceedings

POSTER SESSION 1

Commons West, Easel 1

11:00 AM to 12:30 PM

Ekyalo Omukisa, or the Unlucky Village: The Role of Traditional Ecological Knowledge in Pursuing Food Sovereignty in the Luweero Triangle

Haley Rose (Haley) Millet, Junior, Public Health-Global Health, Anthropology

Mary Gates Scholar

Mentor: Devon Pena, Anthropology

In rural Kyakitanga village of the Luweero Triangle in Central Uganda, inequalities resulting from structural violence of colonialism and the post-independence regimes of Milton Obote and Idi Amin trickle down as negative effects on the local food system, which in turn degrade the environment and peoples' health. Locals express a desire to remedy this food insecurity through modern farming techniques. My research explores the potential role of Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) in the village's pursuit of food sovereignty and the formation of a future food system. TEK is the usually place-based intergenerational knowledge of indigenous populations about how to thrive in a mutually evolving and beneficial relationship with the environment; as an informer of subsistence methods, TEK tends to be more environmentally sustainable and socially equitable than modern farming. My methodologies included literature review of colonial and post-colonial political economic history of Uganda, current food insecurity in rural Sub-Saharan Africa, TEK in East Africa, and examples of TEK recovery in other communities. Additionally, in Summer 2013, I will conduct participant observation and a community-based participatory action research (PAR) study involving multigenerational semi-structured individual and group interviews in the village. I will collaborate with locals in the research process and share all results with Kyakitangans as a resource for pursuing food sovereignty. My research is significant because it addresses upstream issues of local autonomy, historical trauma, and ecological factors that are often neglected in public health and development discourses in the Ugandan context, which is historically dominated by verticalization and neoliberalism. As applied anthropology, my research will promote the autonomy and agency of an oppressed community, and lead to relevant broader implications for global health and development work and discourse.

POSTER SESSION 4

Commons West, Easel 40

4:15 PM to 5:45 PM

The Expression of Self in Place-Shaping and its Role in Developing a Sense of Place

Brittany Alyson (Brittany) Bear, Senior, Anthropology

Mentor: Devon Pena, Anthropology

Over the past year, I have conducted ethnographic and oral history research here in the Puget Sound-area to understand the role of urban parks and organic farming in the development of a bioregional concept of sustainability. Throughout the research process I have maintained a focus on the study of sense of place, as this is one important aspect of bioregional ethics and design principles. This study was completed using collaborative ethnographic methods including participant observation, talking circles, surveys, and interviews with forest stewards at Seattle's Carkeek Park, and farmers at Viva Farms in Skagit Valley. Through this I discovered the role of autotopography, the expression of self through place shaping practices, a process that contributes to a developing sense of place and is often overlooked. Some members of the Carkeek Park forest stewards, or WEWO as they call themselves, and some of the farmers used the act of shaping landscapes to express themselves in ways unique to the individual, and my data supports that this act was, and is, important to their developing a sense of place.