Service Learning: Rutgers - South Africa Connection
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The Leadership Scholars Certificate Program is a two-year selective, interdisciplinary certificate program that prepares Rutgers undergraduate women to be informed, innovative, and socially responsible leaders.

Leadership Scholars design and implement social action projects to expand their understanding of issues and problems and to develop leadership skills.

This project gives Scholars the opportunity to apply the theoretical knowledge they have gained about leadership, advocacy, and social change with the practical and experiential knowledge they have developed about a particular policy issue or problem through the field site placement. It also further develops leadership skills by giving undergraduates the opportunity to practice leadership through action.

To find out more please visit the Institute for Women’s Leadership’s website at http://iwl.rutgers.edu.
Where it all began...

- Summer 2013 – IWL funded me to study at the African Gender Institute at the University of Cape Town in South Africa for 2 weeks

- At the time, I was working at the Center on Violence Against Women and Children

- Among many other places and lessons, I visited Saartjie Baartman Centre for Women and Children in Cape Town
  - “one stop” domestic violence shelter
  - experienced a tour and Q&A session

- One thing mentioned by staff members was a fear of burn-out due to short staffing
With the help of IWL alumna, Dineo Thompson, an idea of a connection immerged
My Social Action Project Now

- Study “Politics of Gender and Sexuality in an African Context” to understand South African culture and then volunteer at an organization like Saartjie Baartman Centre
  - Undergraduate and Graduate students

- This is a project a bit different than those in my cohort considering I will continue my work on this after the semester is over

- Anticipated service-learning trip in Summer 2015

- Possibly expanding even more
  - connect IWL and AGI more – leadership scholars program in SA?
Barriers

- Bull-dozer
  - Service-learning in Chile – “study discovered a cultural misunderstanding between the students and the local community organisation participants about the goals of the local community organisation. This study raises some important questions about the cultural differences between the service learning program and the local community organisations with whom students work” (Annette 88).

- Money / Time
  - “combining service learning with study abroad is a powerful pedagogical innovation for increasing adult students' intercultural competence, language skills, and experiential understanding of complex global problems related to their academic program of study” (Kiely)
Domestic violence cycle can occur anywhere

http://www.domesticviolence.org/cycle-of-violence/
Domestic Violence as a World Issue

- In the US, National Coalition Against Domestic Violence (NCADV) states that “One in every four women will experience domestic violence in her lifetime” this can be compared to research by reputable NGO’s in SA concluding that, “One in four women countrywide is in an abusive relationship” (Bateman)

- South Africa Stress and Health Study resulted in 31% of population reporting intimate partner violence in recent marriage/relationship (Baldwin)

- “although unquantified, personal violence was a ‘major cause’ of death and injury in the Western Cape” (Bateman)

- A woman is killed by her intimate partner in South Africa every 6 hours, the highest rate that has ever been reported in research anywhere in the world. (Bateman)
Social Justice-Based Women’s Leadership

- Must work in a variety of policy areas:
  - United Women’s Organisation Conference in April 1981
    - Public Policy
    - “the birth of a constitutional state and multiparty democracy, and the constitutional commitment to eliminating racial and gendered discrimination.”
    - Attempt to end patriarchy via paper
  - Must work collectively
    - Importance of Regional Networking
Institute for Women’s Leadership
Rutgers University

Center on Violence Against Women & Children
New Brunswick, New Jersey

Saartjie Baartman Centre for Women & Children
Cape Town, South Africa

African Gender Institute
University of Cape Town


