



*Experiential and Transformational Education
- EARTH University -*

What is EARTH University?



An international institution in Costa Rica with an innovative four-year undergraduate program in agricultural sciences and natural resource management.

History of the University




Established in 1990 with financing from USAID, The Kellogg Foundation and support from the Government of Costa Rica

Our mission



Prepare leaders with ethical values to contribute to sustainable development and to construct a prosperous and just society.

Graduate Profile

- 
1. Leadership
 2. Ethical behavior
 3. Social and environmental commitment
 4. Effective communicator
 5. Skilled in collaboration and teamwork
 6. Self directed and life-long learner
 7. Critical thinker and problem solver
 8. Solid technical and scientific understanding
 9. Entrepreneurial mindset and managerial capacity
 10. Commitment to sustainable agricultural development and natural resource management

Our admissions process



Highly-personalized :

- Centered on visits to rural communities and schools
- All pre-selected candidates interviewed by faculty members
- Commitment to providing opportunities to young people who otherwise may never have an opportunity for higher education

A global student body



420 from **37** countries
40% female
76% from rural areas

Highly-subsidized model
with more than **60%** on
full scholarship

Our educational model

10:1 student/faculty ratio (40 faculty from 19 countries)

Faculty as facilitators

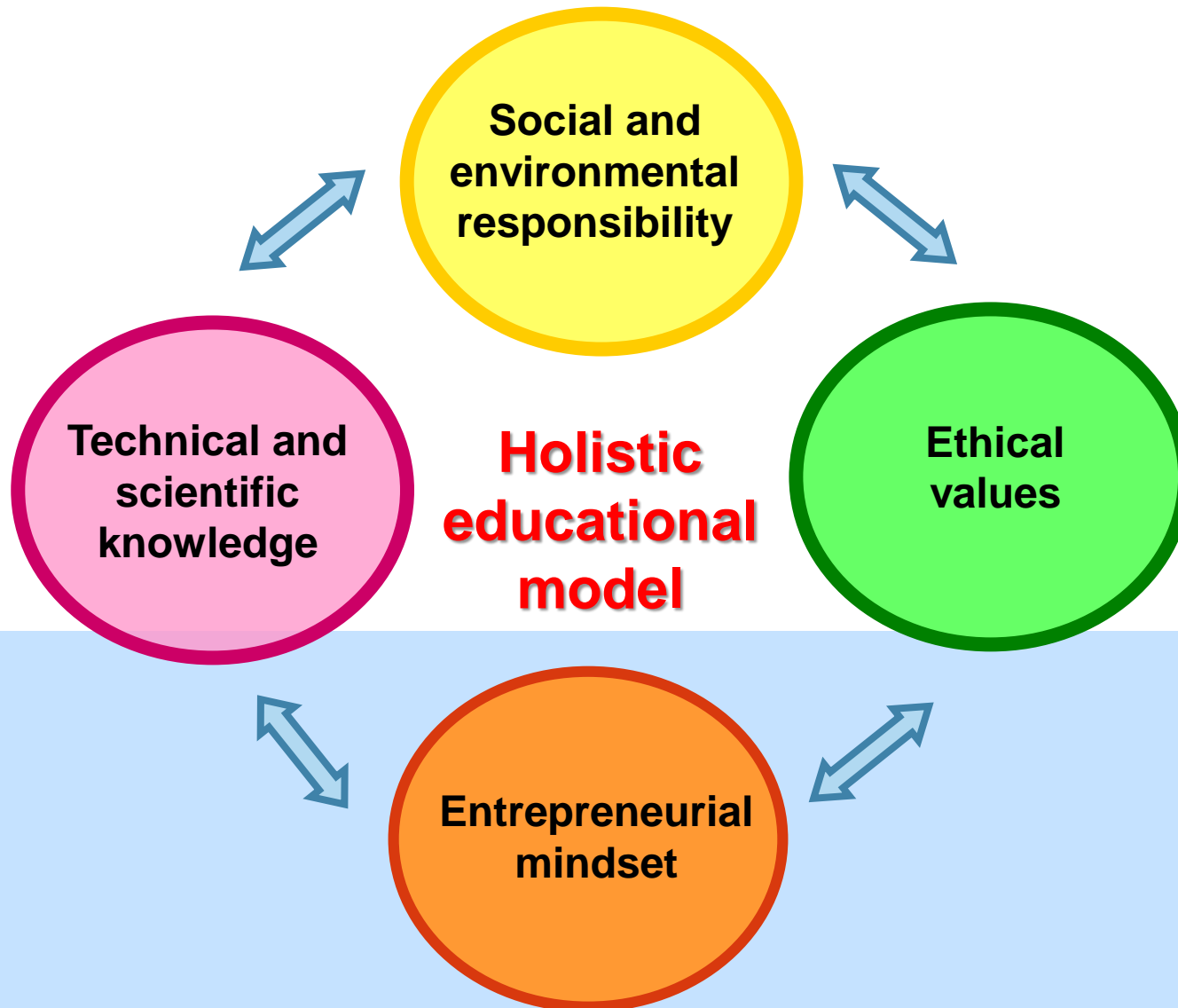
Integrated and multi-disciplinary

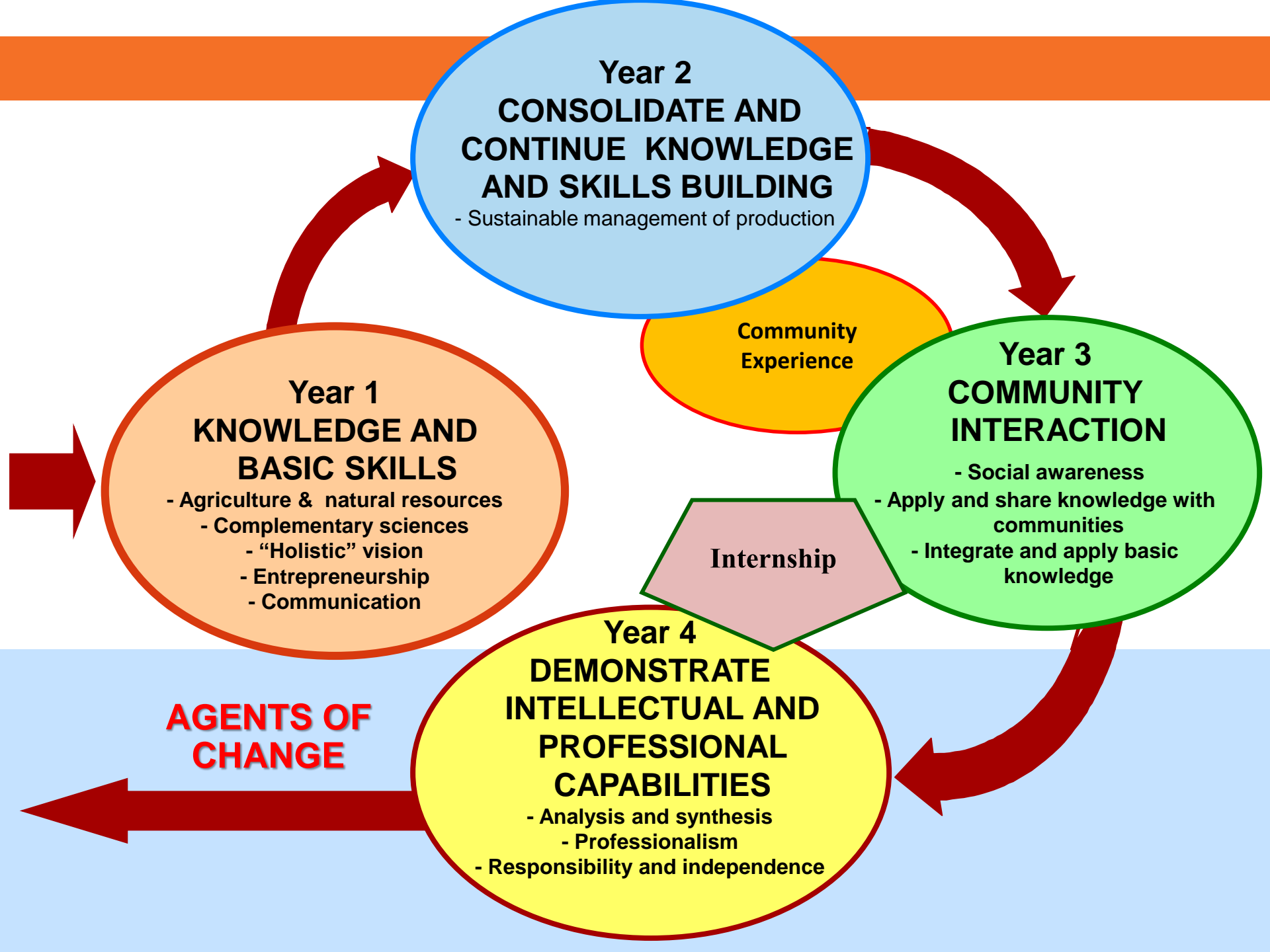
Student-centered learning

Experiential and participatory



Pillars of our Educational Model





EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING AT EARTH

- The learner constructs knowledge and acquires abilities based on experience and reflection
- The teacher designs and facilitates the experiences
- The learner links experience with critical analysis
- The teacher encourages the student to understand problems and to search for innovative solutions.

Technical & scientific knowledge



Intensive, experiential academic program leading to a *licenciatura* degree (between a bachelor's and a master's degree) in the Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resource Management in four years.

Social and environmental awareness



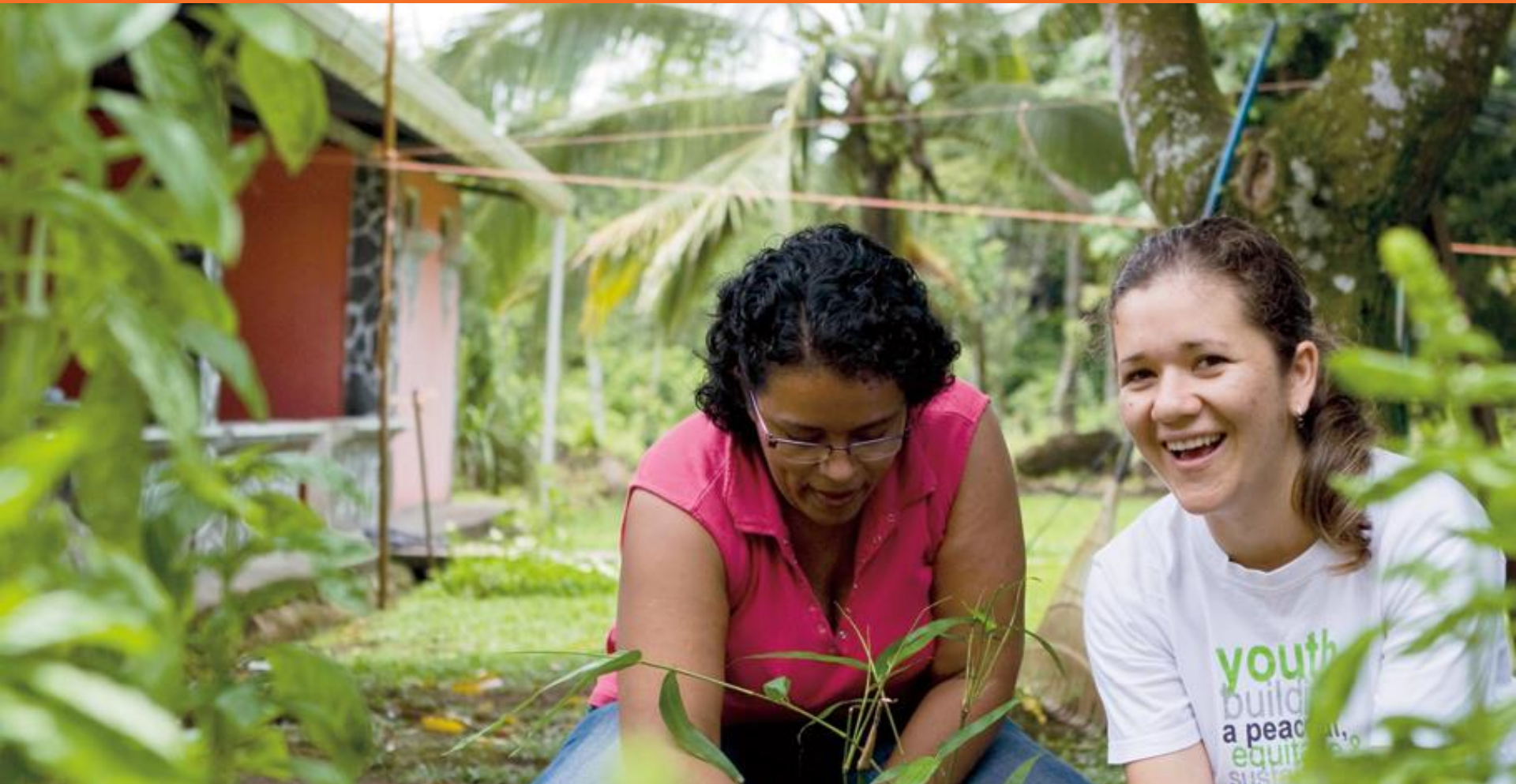
Social commitment:

- Community development program
- Experience at EARTH-La Flor
- Community development requirement during internship

Environmental commitment:

- Sustainable agricultural systems
- Organic farming
- Carbon neutrality
- Waste management
- Alternative energy

Values and ethics



- A critical element in all University activities, both academic and co-curricular
- Professors/staff teach by example
- Ethical behavior an important element in Entrepreneurial Projects Program
- Actively promote cultural understanding, conflict resolution and dialog

Transformational Education



Entrepreneurial Projects

Entrepreneurial Project Course

Overview:

- 3-year, on-going course
- Multicultural/international setting
- Knowledge integration
- Students responsible for decision making process
- Time management
- Innovation and creativity
- Connections with the private sector



Transformational Education



Internships



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Work Experience

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Community Participation

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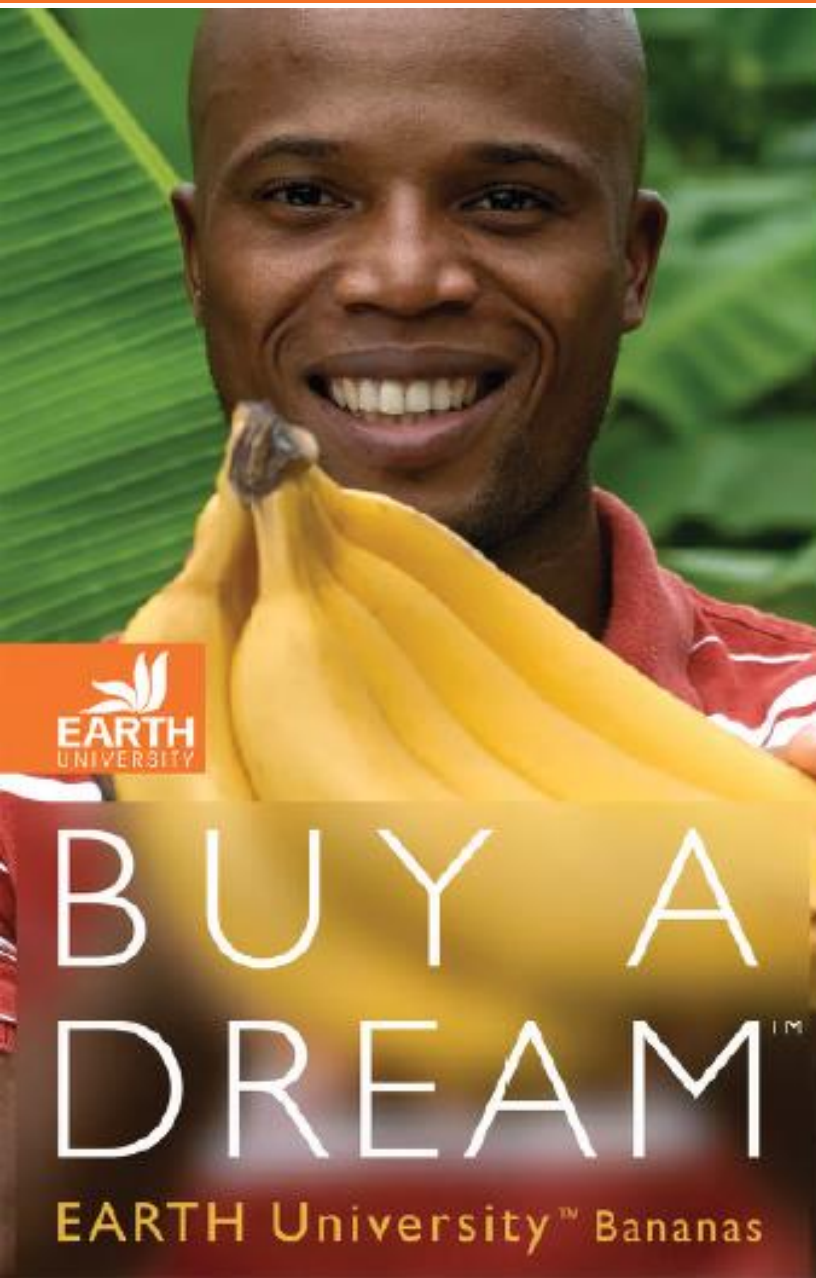
Professional Experience

Transformational Education



Graduation Project

Commercial activities – “Walk the Talk”



Products:

1. Whole Foods Market partnership: bananas, flowers, frozen fruits and coffee
2. Bananas for local market
3. Agricultural inputs and bio-stimulants
4. Natural cleaners

Benefits:

- Generates economic resources
- Enriches academic program
- Influences the private sector



Partnership with Whole Foods

- Started exporting bananas to Whole Foods Market in 2002:
 - 38,400 40 lb. boxes
- In 2013:
 - 732,111 40 lb. boxes
- More than 70 annual scholarships provided to secondary school students
- 2002-2011 scholarship fund
 - \$1,104,590

EARTH in Africa

- Sustainability, Education and the Management of Change in the Tropics (SEMCIT) international seminars (1999-2003)
- 80 students (16 countries); 25 alumni
- Faculty and student exchange
- Alumni working in Africa
- Gates Foundation/RUFORUM collaboration to strengthen capacity in experiential based education, community engagement and entrepreneurship



Alumni impact



1829 alumni from 28 countries

88% work in their country of origin

22% run their own or family business

75% report social impact

62% report environmental impact

External Evaluation

External evaluation, concluded in September 2014, by the Research Institute for the Development of Education – INDE – of the Universidad Iberoamericano of Mexico (Jesuit University System) under contract with the Royal Embassy of Norway in Nicaragua, Guatemala and Honduras



Study carried out with graduates on the Atlantic coast of Nicaragua, Honduras and Guatemala. Included surveys, interviews and focus groups of graduates, employers and community members.

External Evaluation

A Sample of Findings:

Economic Impact:

- ✓ 97% of graduates returned to their countries
- ✓ 95% are economically active
- ✓ 93% have actively participated in the creation of employment opportunities
- ✓ 18% of the graduates have begun their own enterprises and are solely dependent upon them
- ✓ 94% of the graduates work in activities related to what they studied
- ✓ 74% of the graduates are in leadership positions – directors, managers or supervisors

External Evaluation

According to the interviews with graduates and employers, the technical formation of graduates is very good, but is not the aspect that distinguishes them from agricultural professionals educated in other institutions...

External Evaluation

...the graduate competencies that most influenced their success are:

- Leadership and communication
- The capacity and desire to investigate and continue learning
- The competency that was most stressed by employers and the graduates themselves was that they act in accordance with their values.

External Evaluation

- Graduates are acting as change agents... they are incorporating the perspective of sustainable development in their activities, both in their work, their communities and in their personal lives.
- With their behavior, graduates radiate this perspective and they “transfer capacity” towards others with whom they are in contact in their family, work and community.
- The EARTH agronomist acts as a change agent when they develop sustainable agricultural projects, but they mainly promote change through their everyday actions at their workplace, as citizens and members of their family and community.



Educating today the leaders of tomorrow



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