The PEACE Program in The Gambia: An Evaluation of Institutionalization, Sustainability, and Effects on SMCM Student Participants

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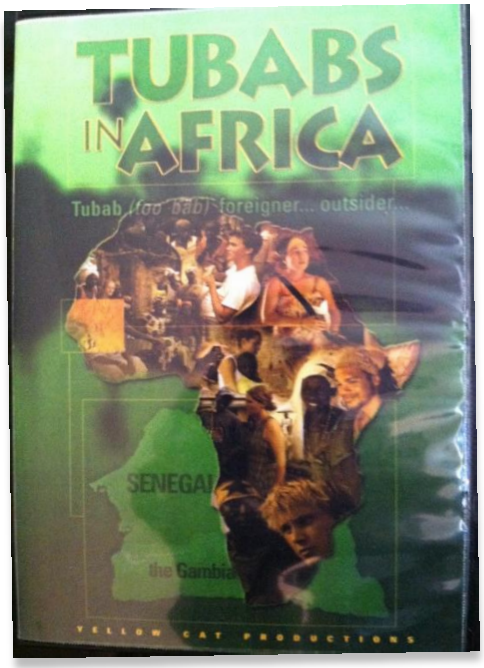
What is The PEACE Program?

- First study tour: Summer 1996
  - 10 undergraduate students
- Summer study programs in 1998, 2000, 2002
- Archaeology Field Component added in 2004
- Became Signature Program in 2006 (Now called St. Mary's IN)
- 331* SMCM participants as of May 2012
- International coalition consisting of:
  - Students
  - Educators
  - Administrators
  - Employees
  - Institutions
  - and Friends



Vision:

To sustain educational and cultural exchange that promotes understanding and friendship as the basis for collaborative research, advocacy, and activism among individuals, organizations, communities and nations in the pursuit of peace and development of democracy.

Mission:

To expand the exchange of SMCM and other non-Gambian students, faculty and staff with the UTG and other educational institutions in The Gambia and Senegal as a means to increase understanding and enhance academic excellence among all partners.

From Praxis Application 2011

Research Goals

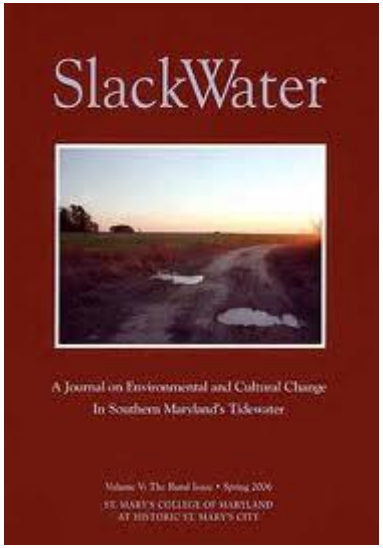
1. Evaluate the PEACE Program's progress towards institutionalization and sustainability as it moves into the future?

2. Evaluate the effects of the PEACE Program on individual participants from SMCM. Particular emphasis on students' life-aspirations and a change in attitudes and perspectives on their place in the world, as well as how their own worldview has be shaped by this experience.

Theoretical Perspectives

- Evaluation Anthropology:
  - Use of anthropological techniques and social science theory
  - Grounded Theory
- Mike Agar's "Rich Point"
  - "Instances when an outsider to a culture or language feels uncomfortable interacting within the culture and feels what we know as ***'culture shock'***." (Agar 2006, emphasis added)

Methodology



- Interviews
  - In-person
  - Email
    - See response rate
- Student reflection papers
- Research papers by participants
- MAXQDA
  - Coding
  - Code Relationships
- Event Analysis
  - Process of Institutionalization
    - Positive Feedback Loop
  - Program Sustainability

MAXQDA 10
The Art of Text Analysis

Response Rates of Email Interviews

Participants	Initial Response	1st series	2nd Series	3rd Series
1	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
2	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
3	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
4	Yes	Yes	No	No
5	Yes	Yes	No	No
6	Yes	No	No	No
7	Yes	No	No	No
8	No	No	No	No
9	No	No	No	No
10	No	No	No	No
11	No	No	No	No
% of Total	63.6%	45.5%	27.3%	27.3%

	Responded to email
	Given all questions in first email
	Did not respond to email

Table 1. Response Rates from Email Interviews: Conducted during the course of this research, these email interviews made up part of the qualitative data set used in analysis. Notice the two respondents that received all questions at once gave zero responses at all. Therefore I quickly adopted another method of disseminating questions through email and was for the most part successful. It seems that returning of the second series of questions back was the key deciding factor in if a respondent was going to finish the interview.

Research Motivations

- International Education office underwent external review
  - Supplement literature available when making program changes
- Collection of qualitative data for future research
  - Organized PEACE Program information into one location
  - Propose future potentially significant research areas

Courtesy of www.smcm.edu/Gambia

Levels of Analysis

Effects on the Individual:

- Unit of Analysis:
  - Individual level
- Identify patterns in qualitative data set
  - Coding data, hierarchal coding system
- Connections between patterns
  - Relations of codes

Tracking Institutionalization:

- Unit of Analysis:
  - Event level, meso-level
- Event Analysis
  - Critical events
  - If critical events do not occur:
    The Program never achieves sustainability.
  - Ex. MOU w/ UTG; Signature (St. Mary's IN) Program designation

Both use qualitative data as base for analysis, although not exclusively

Codes	Coded Segments
The Gambians	24
Changing perspectives	15
Culture shock	14
Couping with life	14
Gambian time	13
Intercultural Competence	12
Life changing	10
Changing Worldview	10
Changing Life Aspirations	10
Partnerships	10
Partcipant Attitudes	10
Why Gambia?	8
Institutions	8
Expansion	8
Happy camp	7
Participant Research	7
UTG	6
Other institutions	6
Historic St. Mary's City	5
The Americans	5
Campus Attitudes	5
American Attitudes	5
Gambian Attitudes	5
Family Attitudes	4
Participants	3
Participant motivations	2
Scholarships	1
Attitudes	1
Institutionalization	0

Attitudes	76
Institutionalization	54
Changing Perspectives	98
Total Coded Segments	228

Coding System

- 29 Codes
- 228 Total coded segments
- 3 Code Groups:
  1. Changing Perspectives;
  2. Attitudes;
  3. Institutionalization.

- Code groups posses sub codes, some of which posses another level of sub codes…

- Color Coding System used throughout project:
  - Red (Orange)- Changing Perspectives
  - Green- Institutionalization
  - Blue- Attitudes

Lexical Frequencies

Word	Frequency	%
gambia	134	1.45
people	112	1.21
time	81	0.88
know	57	0.62
them	54	0.59
program	54	0.59
experience	53	0.57
family	50	0.54
think	48	0.52

- "*gambia*" & "*people*" also found frequently in 'Changing Perspectives' & 'Attitudes' type codes
- "*program*"; "*family*" and "*experience*" present in 'Attitudes' type codes
- "*them*" – 'Structuralist' central dichotomy?
  - However, no significant empirical indications

Changing Perspective and Attitudes

Changing Perspective:

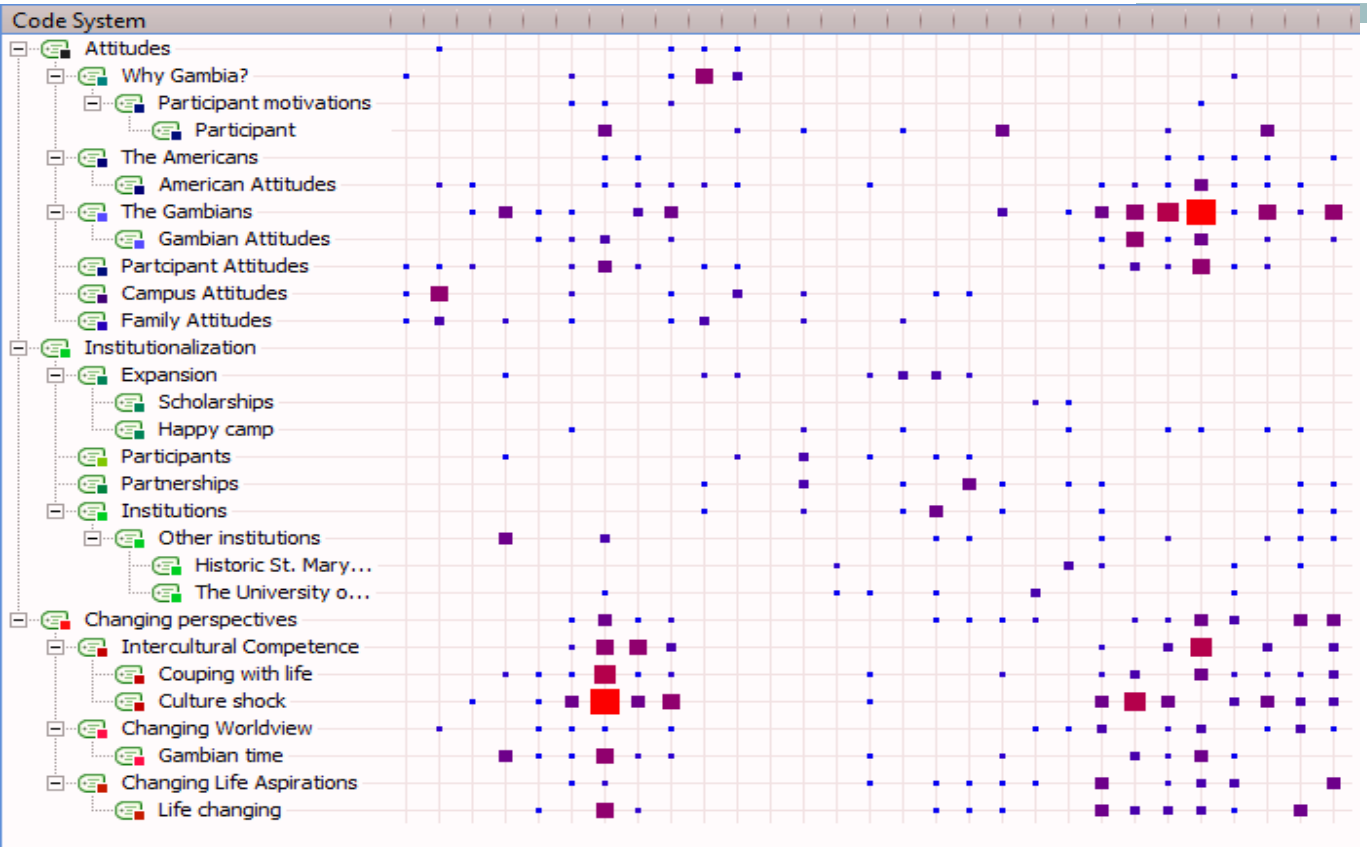
- Participant self-reflection
- Life-changing experiences
  - Scary; Fun; 'Annoying'; Interesting; *Incidental* (Younes & Asay 2003); Career choices
- Exemplifications of intercultural competency
  - Comfortable in a unique situation
  - Demonstrate a knowledge of culturally acceptable practices

Attitudes:

- Includes attitudes participant's expressed about:
  - Themselves
  - Gambians
  - Family
  - Friends
  - Motivations
  - Research/Service Learning

AHHHH DATA!!!

Attitudes	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Why Gambia?	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Participant motivations	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Participant Research	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
The Americans	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	0	0
American Attitudes	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	0	0	0	0
The Gambians	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	2	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	3	1	2	4	0	3	1	3
Gambian Attitudes	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	1
Partcipant Attitudes	0	0	0	0	0	1	4	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	2	0	0	0	0
Campus Attitudes	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Family Attitudes	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Institutionalization	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Expansion	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	2	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Scholarships	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Happy camp'	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
Participants	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Partnerships	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	1	0	4	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0
Institutions	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	4	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0
Other institutions	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0
Historic St. Mary's City	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
The University of The Gambia	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Changing perspectives	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	3	0	4	2
Intercultural Competence	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	0	1	0	1
Couping with life	0	0	0	0	1	1	2	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	2	0	1	0	1
Culture shock	0	0	0	0	0	2	4	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	2	0	0	2	0	1
Changing Worldview	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	1	2	0
Gambian time	0	0	0	1	1	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	2	1	0	0	0
Changing Life Aspirations	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	1	0	0	4	0	0	0	2	0	0	3
Life changing	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	2	1	1	1	0	0	3	0



Colors represent coded segments that are simultaneously coded as another code;

Larger the square (red), more instances

- Ex. "People in the Gambia are also extremely friendly; … This is a stark contrast to social life in America." – *Anonymous Reflection Paper Fall '12*
- Coded as:
  - Attitudes/The Gambians
  - Attitudes/The Americans/American Attitudes
    - Includes participant reflectivity about American culture
  - Changing Perspectives/Changing Worldview/Gambian Worldview
    - Participant speaks about Gambians taking their time to talk to everyone they see while walking "through the market."

Attitudes	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Why Gambia?	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Participant motivations	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Participant Research	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
The Americans	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	0	0	0
American Attitudes	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	0	0	0	0	0
The Gambians	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	2	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	3	1	2	4	0	3	1	3
Gambian Attitudes	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	1
Partcipant Attitudes	0	0	0	0	0	1	4	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	2	0	0	0	0
Campus Attitudes	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Family Attitudes	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Institutionalization	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Expansion	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	2	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Scholarships	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Happy camp'	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
Participants	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Partnerships	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	1	0	4	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Institutions	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	4	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Other institutions	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Historic St. Mary's City	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
The University of The Gambia	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Changing perspectives	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	3	0	4	2	
Intercultural Competence	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	0	1	0	1
Couping with life	0	0	0	0	1	1	2	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	2	0	1	0	1
Culture shock	0	0	0	0	0	2	4	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	2	0	0	2	0	1
Changing Worldview	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	1	2	0
Gambian time	0	0	0	1	1	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	2	1	0	0	0
Changing Life Aspirations	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	1	0	0	4	0	0	0	2	0	0	3	
Life changing	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	2	1	1	1	0	0	3	0	

So what does this mean?

Facebook Post April 17th by Jane Brown Riff '96:

" When you're placed in situations that are so far outside your "normal" reality, you come face-to-face with the only constant, you."

Email Interview with 2002 participant:

"I think my worldview changed was that I realized how little it takes to be happy–truly happy. My (now) husband and I pride ourselves on living simply. We try to reuse or fix rather than buy new, out of respect for the earth but also because it's important to us."

If This, Then That, Right?

If: The normative belief in the study abroad field is: It's possible for an expansion of a participant's worldview in a semester (Wells 2006:121)…

And: Students in "*countries with greater differences in social and cultural norms… may have proportionally greater opportunities for learning and personal growth." (Wells 2006:121)….*

And: Gambia is unquestionably a nontraditional study abroad destination….

And: The empirical data suggests a relationship between participant perspectives and attitudes particularly about their place in the context of the bigger world upon reflection of their experiences….

Then: It can be assumed participants in the PEACE Program commonly experience changes in their attitudes and perspectives as a direct result of their involvement in the program.

Event Analysis

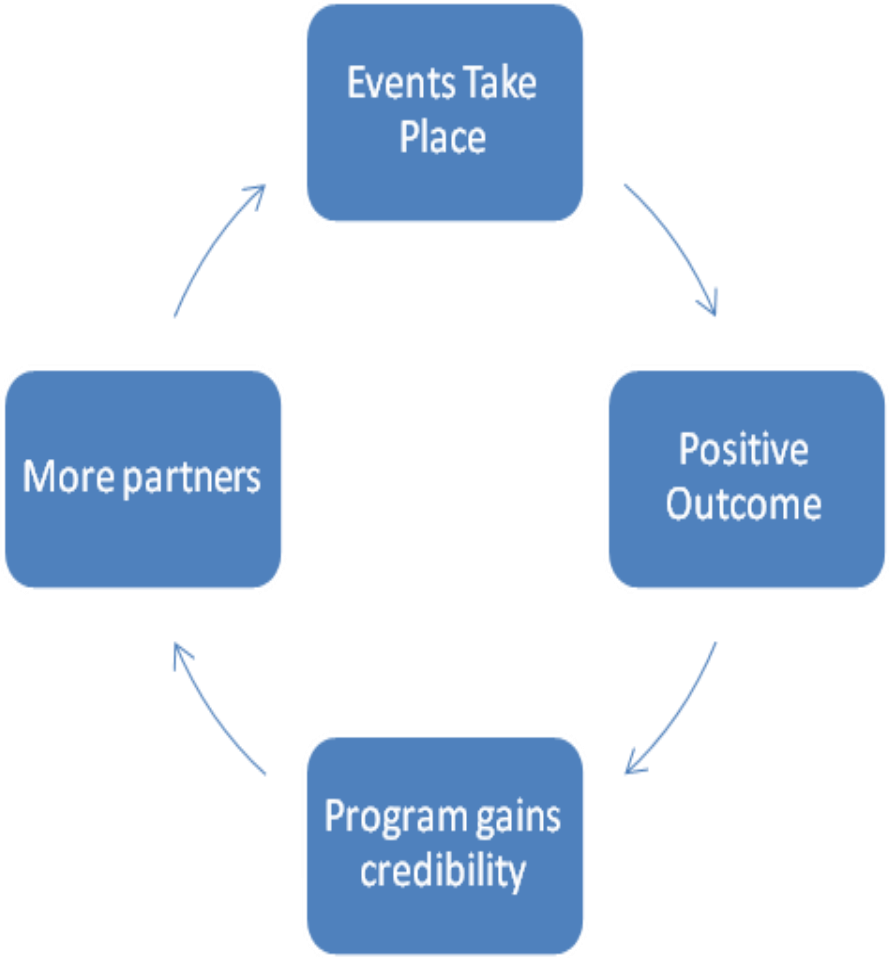
Second Study Tour	1998	*6 weeks*	*Summer*	*Tubabs Two: From the Baobab to the Bantaba; Published by Kent Hall Press*	Second successful trip is nearly as important as the first, it assures the 'home institution' that this is a viable study abroad option for the future, as well as the beginnings of fruitful relationships between SMCM and Gambian institutions, such as Abuko Nature Reserve and the NCAC.
First Gambian to Attend HSMC Field School	1998	*10 weeks*	*Summer*		First Gambian to come to SMCM through PEACE program. Formed a lasting link between HSMC and The Gambia that provided opportunities for Gambians in the future.
Third Study Tour	2000	*6 weeks*	*Summer*	*Together in Friendship: M'be karafaring nyoma; Published by Kent Hall Press*	Continues successful subsequent summer study tours, thus builidng credibility within the eyes of the 'home institution,' but particularly the student body. This is because students have started to 'spread the word' about the Gambia study tour.
Fourth Study Tour	2002	6 weeks?	Summer	*Tubabs in Africa;* Documentary Film; Published by Yellowcat Productions	Ditto. On top of the above reasons, this study tour was fortunate enough to have the opportunity to be filmed by Yellowcat Productions, and the documentary "Tubabs in Africa" was produced later. This connection with Yellowcat Productions has provided the program a unique resource and partner. Who now, after the 2002 summer study tour, has a vested interest in the program's contiuation and success
Semester program to UTG	2003	15-16 weeks	Fall		This is the first opportunity a SMCM student has the chance to study for an entire semester. This is a massive step for the program, because after this event a SMCM student has been in The Gambia every year (or almost, but not every semester). This continuity is has proven the positive prosepects for program sustainability moving into the future.
Jammeh gives Convocation at SMCM	2004	3-4 weeks	May	Point News Articles,	Jammeh stands alone as the only head of state to give a convocation address at SMCM. He is a polarizing figure; he has brought much prosperity to the Gambian people, but his extreme social views have made him internationally known. Even the trip he made to SMCM divided the college community.
First UTG Students study at SMCM	2004	16 weeks			This is the beginning of a fruitful relationship between partner institutions. In hosting UTG students at SMCM, the PEACE Program planted a seed that has proven to enhance its prospects for sustainabilty. Future students from the UTG paths' were paved to come and study at SMCM after this first successful semester.
First Archaeology Field School in The Gambia	2004				Professor Liza Gijanto started this field school in 2004 and has continue to run bi-annually ever since. This has created a link between the history of The Gambia, its implications for modern day Gambia and our knowledge of Atlantic trade in West Africa, as well as access to artifacts and analysis from across the world, which is stored at SMCM's archaeological lab.
SMCM Faculty Visit the UTG	2005		Summer		A group of over 40 faculty and staff members from SMCM were invited to The Gambia by President Jammeh. This trip provided many of the faculty and staff the opportunity to experience the country and understand the importance of the program. Many of the people who went on this trip played essential roles in progressing the program towards sustainability.
Memorandum of Understanding created between SMCM & UTG	2005	(X) Years			This not only provides experienced professors the opportunity to expand their pedagogical repitoire but it creates a cross-cultural learning environment, enriching both students and educators through immersion into a vastly different culture.
Signature Program Designation given by SMCM Int. Ed. Office	2006	16 weeks	Fall		Now called the St. Mary's IN programs, which there are only three left, the PEACE Progam being one of them. This designation provided the institutional structures, financial, physical and the like which allowed the program to have a lasting influence. This event can be considered critical to the Program's progress towards institutionalization.
UTG Delagation makes first visit to SMCM	2008				
Revised Memorandum of Understanding	2008		September		Every time SMCM and UTG sign another Memorandum of Understanding, they are taking another step towards program sustainability by acquired legal, binding documents that are created with the intention of promoting the success of both signees.
Hire First Full-time Program Coordinator	2009				Yamai Secka-Jack is hired as the first full-time Gambian Program Coordinator. This is the first step towards a sense of permenence within the program. Having a the same face see years of students, that person becomes institutionalized with the program itself, thus enhancing its own capital and therefore its prospects for sustainability
International Education Office External Review	2011-2012		Throughout year	Published public review materials available on the International Education Office's website.	Provided the impetus for this project and granted the Int. Ed. Oficce to opportunity to understand where their strengths and weakness lie, giving them time to correct the flaws and make stronger the quality parts of its operations.

The PEACE Program Critical Events

- Summer 1996- Summer Study Tour
- Summer 1998- First Gambian to attend HSMC Field School
- May 2004- Jammeh's Convocation at SMCM
- Summer 2005 – SMCM Faculty/Staff Trip to The Gambia
- 2006- President O'Brien designates PEACE Program a SMCM Signature Program
- 2011/2012 Five-year MOU with Elizabethtown

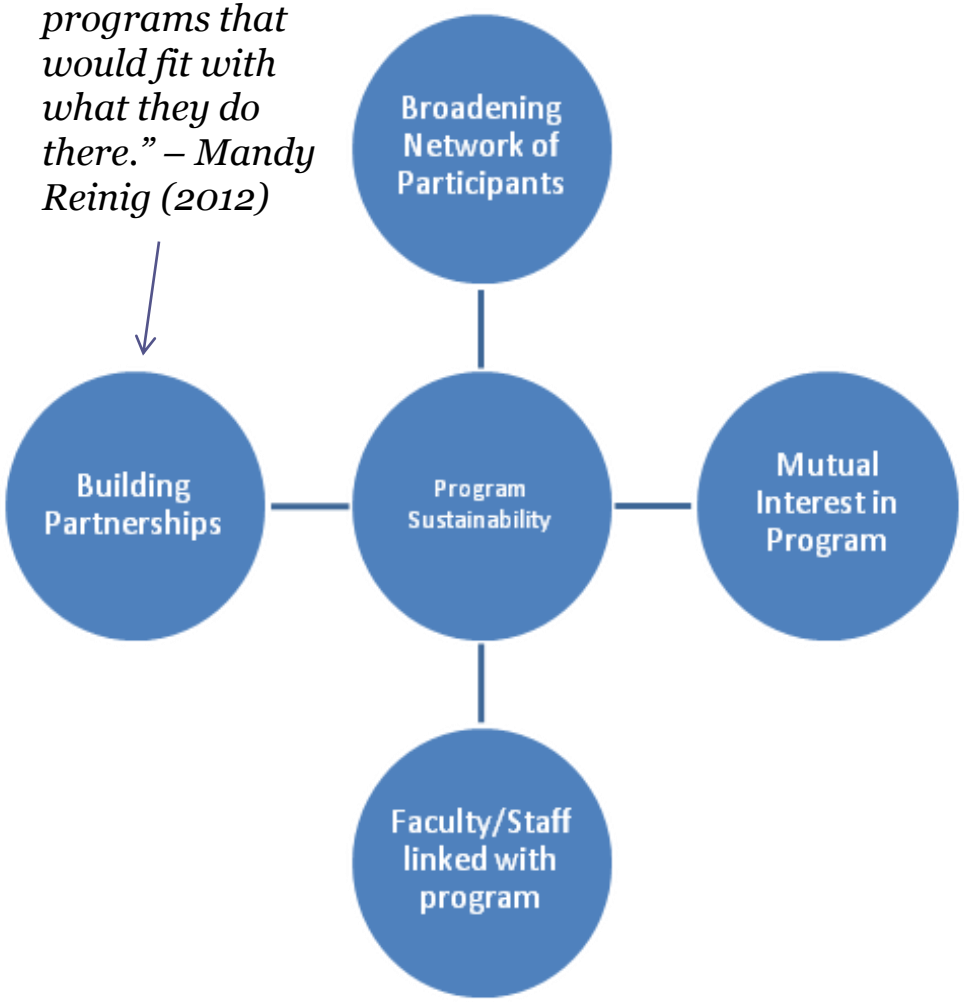
Process of Institutionalization

- Positive Feedback Loop
- A PEACE Program event takes place…
  - Ex. Program designated Signature Program in 2006
- Positive outcome leads to…
- Program gaining credibility from…
  - Student population
  - Program's 'Home Institution'
- More credibility leads to more partnership opportunities
  - Causing more events to take place,
  - Meaning more partners,
  - Thus more opportunities for program expansion.



Program Sustainability

"...looking to reach out to other institutions that are similarly minded, and have programs that would fit with what they do there." – Mandy Reinig (2012)



1. Broaden participant network
   - American participants are Program's life-blood
2. Continue to hire full/part time faculty and staff
   - Yamai Secka-Jack
   - UTG liasons
3. Create mutual interest in program
   - Program alumni network
4. Build partnerships, particularly with other American institutions
   - Elizabethtown (this year)
   - Students from Dartmouth, Bridgewater, etc.

Sources

- Roberts, Bill
  2011 Praxis Application.
- www.smcm.edu/Gambia
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- https://encrypted-tbn2.gstatic.com/images?q=tbn:ANd9GcTOoDml4tyJDDrNXm_KGfoStrR_fKurRQLbbrdm8mbstkgfEKZeuA

Agar

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