



International Informant

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Informing you about Oklahoma State's international trade and development efforts

Calendar of Events

- Fall 2011: Wes Watkins Distinguished Lectureship

In This Issue

Message from Dr. Dicks Cont.	2
Cultural Values	3
Ubunta Youth.....	4

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Oklahoma State University:
Center for International
Trade and Development

A Message from Dr. Mike Dicks

President Barack Obama recently signed into law legislation implementing the U.S.-Korea, U.S.-Colombia, and U.S.-Panama trade agreements, as well as Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) reforms, the Generalized System of Preferences (GSP), and the Andean Trade Preference Act. The trade legislation moves the US closer towards free trade and hopefully fair trade with additional partners. Free trade refers to the absence of quotas and tariffs while fair trade refers to the alignment of labor, environment and other regulations that constrain production efficiency and profit. While some groups have argued these agreements will eliminate US jobs, others argue that US jobs will be created. But the trade agreements themselves are only enabling instruments. The impacts depend on the parties participating, what changes are occurring, and how each side reacts to the new trade rules. The agreement with Korea will likely have the largest impact as this is the largest economy of the three (the other two being Panama and Colombia).

The TAA reforms provide assistance to workers displaced as a result of the trade agreements. The GSP assists developing nations by allowing their goods duty-free access to our markets. The Andean Trade Preference Act aids Andean countries with their fight against

drug production and trafficking.

The United States and the Republic of Korea signed the United States-Korea Free Trade Agreement (KORUS FTA) on June 30, 2007. However, the agreement was never approved by Congress. Three years later, President's Barrack Obama and lee Myung-bak agreed to reopen the negotiations to resolve outstanding issues. The agreement was ratified by Congress on October 12, 2011. The KORUS FTA addresses issues of both free and fair trade.

While 95% of US goods exported to Korea will become duty-free over the next 5 years, the KORUS FTA also addresses significant non-price barriers that provide for more fair trade. For instance, the agreement deals with Korean auto safety standards that act as a barrier to US exports. The agreement



A Message from Dr. Dicks Con't.

provides new rules on how Korea can develop regulations pertaining to U.S. exports of aerospace, automotive, consumer goods, electrical/electronic goods, metals, scientific equipment, and shipping and transportation equipment and contains improved protections of intellectual property rights. Other areas covered by the agreement include services, agriculture, government purchases, the environment, labor rights and investment and financial services.

Korea is the 15th largest economy in the world according to the International Monetary Fund estimates of Gross Domestic Product (GDP- the value of final goods and services produced in a country by companies of any origin). Korea contains 0.7% of the world's population and accounts for 1.6% of world GDP while the US contains 4.4% of the population and 23.5% of world GDP. Also in Asia are the 2nd and 3rd largest economies of China (8.5% of world GDP) and

Japan (8.4% of world GDP). The main trading partners with Korea are China (24.5%), ASEAN countries (11.8%), Japan (11.5%), US (10.5%) and the EU27 (9.7%).

The US Korea FTA opens the door for the US to the ASEAN market through the Korea – ASEAN FTA. The ten ASEAN countries contain 8.5% of the world's population but only 2.7% of world GDP.

By dividing the % GDP by the percent population a relative measure of per capita incomes can be obtained across countries. For the US, Korea and the ASEAN countries the values are 5.3, 2.2 and 0.3 indicating that per capita income in the US is roughly 2.5 times greater than Korea and almost 17 times greater than in the ASEAN countries.

While the relative size of the markets of the new free trade partners is small, the addition of these new bilateral FTAs, when added to the FTAs already enacted, move

the US closer to the free market and fair trade position that we have unsuccessfully attempted to negotiate with all members of the World Trade Organization. The US market is mostly free to all countries and labor, safety, finance, and environmental regulations placed on US firms and products is amongst the most stringent in the world. Many of our foreign markets have met our exports with quotas, duties and a host of non-price trade impediments. The combination of stringent regulations at home and impediments abroad make our businesses and products less competitive and the bilateral FTAs provide a format for leveling the playing field.

Sierra Leone



Cultural Values

Switzerland

In September I wrote about multiculturalism vs. diversity. I hope you have had the opportunity to challenge yourself and began conversations with people from other cultures.

This month, I would like to discuss “Cultural Values”, a key concept in the rewarding journey to becoming interculturally competent. Understanding and respecting cultural values is a key issue when you are living in a diverse society. According to Peterson (2009), in his book *Cultural Intelligence*, cultural values are inferences and shared by a specific culture or community.

Cultural Values could be different or similar from group to group, but all cultures have them. When members of certain cultures share their values, they feel comfortable and require no effort to “fit in”. They are in their own microenvironment, they are sharing their values.

When we talk about cultural values, it is important to understand that there are no right or wrong cultural values. My own cultural values might not be acceptable for another particular culture. People might agree or disagree with my cultural values and it is culturally insensitive to try to impose these values on other cultures by indicating through my words or my actions that my cultural values are the only values acceptable. I like to think that my cultural values and your cultural values are what make my culture and your culture, magic and unique; our cultural values make us different, they make us who we are.

Having the opportunity to share



your cultural values with people from other cultures can be interesting and rewarding. You may be surprised to see how many values we share and how many we appreciate in a different way. What is important for my culture might be inconsequential for your own culture. When we share our cultural differences, we can understand and agree or disagree, but an interculturally competent person respects the differences.

Ignoring cultural differences is living in denial, pretending the differences are not that important is living in minimization. Recognizing the cultural differences, however it is the first step in becoming interculturally competent. Accepting the differences and modifying behavior to respect them is becoming interculturally competent. Asking people from other cultures to change their own cultural values or to adopt your cultural values is disrespectful and insensitive. Remem-

ber, cultural values are what makes every culture valuable and unique. What is good or acceptable for your culture might not be acceptable or good for my own culture. Each culture knows how to do things in “their own way”, and people should respect that.

But, learning and respecting cultural values can be difficult unless you first understand your own cultural values. What are the important values related to family, money, patriotism, religion, property, intellectual development, and health? Where did these values come from, family, friends, other members of society? Understanding your values and where they come from can aid in discussing others values and their importance in their culture.

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Ubuntu Youth, a Youth Empowerment Project

Three OSU students have teamed up to start a new nonprofit organization in the heart of the world's worst HIV pandemic. Nutrition senior Ashley Hesser, horticulture senior Derek Barchenger, and biological sciences senior Alyssa Peterson will be making the big move to KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa, early next year to launch the Ubuntu Youth Empowerment Project (Ubuntu Youth).

Ubuntu Youth will utilize a low-resource, education-based approach to fighting HIV/AIDS and other escalating issues in rural South Africa by working with communities, employing local staff, and conducting lessons, activities, and skills development training in classrooms after school.

In a country that expects to have 5.7 million orphans of AIDS by 2015, Ubuntu Youth will use daily contact with high school students to support these children on an immediate basis, while empowering them to overcome the long-term challenges they face as a result of high HIV/AIDS infection rates, crime and poverty.

Ashley, Derek and Alyssa will be working closely with Sbu Goba, a South African native, to sustain Ubuntu Youth in his own community. OSU is hosting Sbu for a month starting mid-November to expose him to many local youth organizations. While visiting, he will also learn water purification techniques, be given educational resources, and receive horticulture-based training. These lessons and training will be used on-site to further extend and benefit the project's success. Sbu will also be speaking on the HIV/AIDS pandemic and the effect it has had on his life as well as the realities of international aid. Part of his role, while at OSU, is educating based on his experiences and giving insight to an issue that is a real part of every-

day life in his community.

Two of Ubuntu Youth's major focuses are entrepreneurship and agriculture. By combining these focuses, youth will not only learn both skills through a microfinance model geared toward youth thanks to collaborative efforts with HOPE International's President and CEO, Peter Greer.

With the newly implemented service abroad program under Dr. Michael Dicks, OSU students are able to earn credit while assisting local staff on a sustainable grassroots project at Ubuntu Youth. Students will be able to work alongside the Ubuntu Youth team in various sectors of research and development in the fields of agriculture, business, family sciences, nutrition, communication, education, technology, natural resources, and construction. Being such a young organization, these OSU students will play a crucial role in assisting local staff and directors in the beginning stages of this grassroots project.

With local sustainability in the forefront of the team's mind, leadership training will be implemented. The directors will slowly phase themselves out of the grassroots project as the local staff gains confidence. Within four to five years, the project is expected to be managed entirely by the local staff. Directors will continue to maintain financial responsibility for Ubuntu Youth long after the phase-out is complete. Their goal is to also create a sustainable financial solution, ensuring the longevity of Ubuntu Youth in South Africa.

Currently, funding is the primary concern for Ubuntu Youth and its directors. In order for the project to launch at the first of next year, costs must be fully covered. The total budget is around \$10,000 per month, and it is the responsibility

of Ashley, Derek and Alyssa to make ends meet. Donations are greatly appreciated and would be put directly toward the first year of Ubuntu Youth's running costs. If you would like to work on this project during one of the service abroad opportunities or under an internship arrangement contact Dr. Dicks at michael.dicks@okstate.edu.

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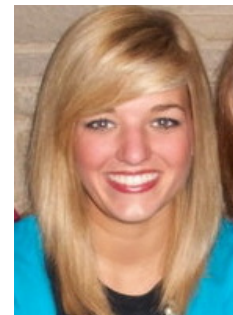
Directors



Alyssa Peterson



Sbu Goba



Ashley Hesser



Derek Barchenger