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Chapter One

Introduction

Future Generations teaches and enables a process for equitable community change that integrates environmental conservation with development.

Mission Statement excerpt

Mission Statement

Future Generations teaches and enables a process for equitable community change that integrates environmental conservation with development. As an international school for communities offering graduate degrees in Applied Community Change and Conservation, we provide training and higher education through on-site and interactive distance learning. Toward this end, we support field-based research, promote successes that provide rapid expansion, and build partnerships with an evolving network of communities that are working together to improve their lives and the lives of generations yet to come.

Emphasis

While this self-study cannot formally have a “special emphasis” (as defined by the Higher Learning Commission¹), the Graduate School does have a specific focus that draws from its mission: we teach and enable equitable community change that integrates environmental conservation with development. This means that our instruction is focused in communities—and we now do this in 22 countries. The Future Generations Graduate School is making both the world of people and the environmental world a better place by working at the community level.

The Future Generations Graduate School does not seek to be a comprehensive graduate school. Rather, directed by its mission, it focuses on the dual tasks of teaching and enabling a process for equitable community change that integrates environmental conservation with development.”² The consequence is that our student body is uncommonly diverse, our pedagogy blends theory with application, the faculty are professionals who have themselves improved the world, and the results of our education are shown in the performance of our students and also the communities from which the students come.

Thus, the Future Generations Graduate School fills a particular niche in higher education: while many schools talk about improving people and the world, our school does that *and* establishes a process that helps students (and faculty) act in accord with their talk. The Graduate School offers a master’s degree in Applied Community Change and Conservation, which is the focus of this self-study. In addition, graduate level instruction includes academic credit-bearing courses that address specific components of the larger goal but may not immediately lead to a degree.

To achieve this mission, the Graduate School has utilized the pedagogy known as blended learning. Blended learning is commonly defined as combining face-to-face classroom-based instruction with interactive online instruction, and perhaps applied field learning. The Future Generations Graduate School tightened this definition; all our instruction occurs around a community-based learning focus.³

¹ Since the Future Generations Graduate School is not yet fully accredited, it is not eligible for a Self-Study focused on an area of special emphasis.

² See Criterion 1, Chapter 3 for details on *Mission and Integrity*.

³ See Criterion 3, Chapter 5 for details on *Student Learning and Effective Teaching*.

All our instruction occurs around a community-based learning focus.

- The *face-to-face learning takes place in community sites in five countries* (India, United States, Peru, Nepal, China), demonstrating lessons being taught and global best practice.
- *Students engage in the interactive online learning from within their home communities*, connecting these previously isolated places to formal higher education as well as introducing them to a vehicle for lifelong learning.
- The *applied field learning occurs through in-community work and research* through mentored practicum projects thus supporting students directly to make their communities better places.

Within the framework of blended learning, the master's degree in Applied Community Change and Conservation continues to evolve to better serve students and their communities and to achieve the Graduate School's learning objectives and mission.⁴ Dr. John Campbell, President Emeritus of Oklahoma State University and member of the first HLC peer-review team commends Future Generations for developing "a model of ways and means to implement impact-sustaining work in conservation, health, peace-building, women's empowerment, and governance to gather the energies of peoples and to grow from local resources" (exhibit 1.1).

To date, the two-year master's degree program has prepared students from 22 countries. Class sizes are intentionally small as the program determines how best to keep academic standards high. Completing this masters degree is a lot of work, for on top of their prior busy professional workloads, which gained them admittance to this program, students now add demanding academic workloads. Class One matriculated 17 students and graduated 8 in 2005. Class Two matriculated 18 students and graduated 10 in 2007. Class Three matriculated 16 and anticipates graduating 9 students in 2009 with two expected to finish requirements with the following class. Class Four is scheduled to begin in January 2010. Throughout these classes academic demands have risen, but as indicated by percentages of graduating students (47%, 56%, anticipated 56-69%) for Classes One, Two, and Three, respectively), the program is learning to better support students, enabling them to achieve the higher standards.⁵

During the master's degree program, the emphasis is on applied learning within communities; the result is that communities, organizations, and governments improve. *As students are learning, so also are their communities.* Life is improving. Students are making their communities into better places in which to work. In this context, it is important to note that alumni from Classes One and Two have remained not only in their home countries, but also in their communities continuing to guide positive change. In other academic programs, students learn and get a degree but the community does not benefit. As a result of creating new momentum to meet local priorities, the second half of the Graduate School's mission is being achieved: community change that integrates environmental conservation with development.

⁴ See Criterion 2, Chapter 4 for details on Preparing for the Future.

⁵ See Criterion 3, Chapter 5 for details on Student Learning and Effective Teaching.

Participating students have represented such organizations as the Heiltsuk Tribal Council in British Columbia, Canada; Mulago Hospital in Uganda; World Relief in Rwanda and Cambodia; and the West Virginia Partnership of African American Churches. Their work has spanned child health programs, the coordination of land-use management plans, the development of organic alternatives in agriculture, and the training and empowerment of adolescent girls.⁶

To support learning and advance knowledge in the field, the Graduate School's second focus after instruction is research into the effectiveness of community-based approaches to relevant global challenges that affect its mission of "integrating environmental conservation with development." For example, the Carnegie Corporation of New York supports a multiyear research project into the role of communities and citizens in engaging peace. UNICEF and the World Health Organization support a task force, chaired and co-chaired by two Future Generations faculty, investigating the effectiveness of community-based approaches in improving child health. The Moore Foundation recently supported a community-based conservation research initiative that is expected to continue.⁷ These research projects undergird the academic content of the Graduate School; each of them connects content with practice, as does the pedagogy. The result is a balanced graduate school that is advancing its field simultaneously through research and instruction.

Origins and Organizational Structure of the Graduate School

The Future Generations Graduate School (Graduate School) shares a mission statement with its founder, a legally separate civil society organization (CSO) also named Future Generations. The two organizations share parallel core strengths in education, research, and field implementation so as to extend more effective practices in development and conservation. Both institutions aim to learn from and strengthen community-based approaches to common global challenges (such as maternal and child mortality, poverty, hunger and unsafe water, conflict, and depletion of natural resources). To draw from the central verbs of their shared mission statement, the Graduate School "teaches" and the CSO "enables" the process of equitable community change and environmental conservation.

Future Generations, the CSO and parent organization to the Graduate School, began operations in 1992. It implements community-based action programs in Afghanistan, China, India, and Peru. This fieldwork and accompanying research represent significant learning resources for the Graduate School. The sites in China, India, and Peru serve as teaching locations for the Graduate School's field residentials as well as places for research, while the Afghanistan site is only a research base. Selected aspects of CSO operations are described in this self-study, as evidence of the resource-rich foundation upon which the Graduate School draws for its instruction and research endeavors.

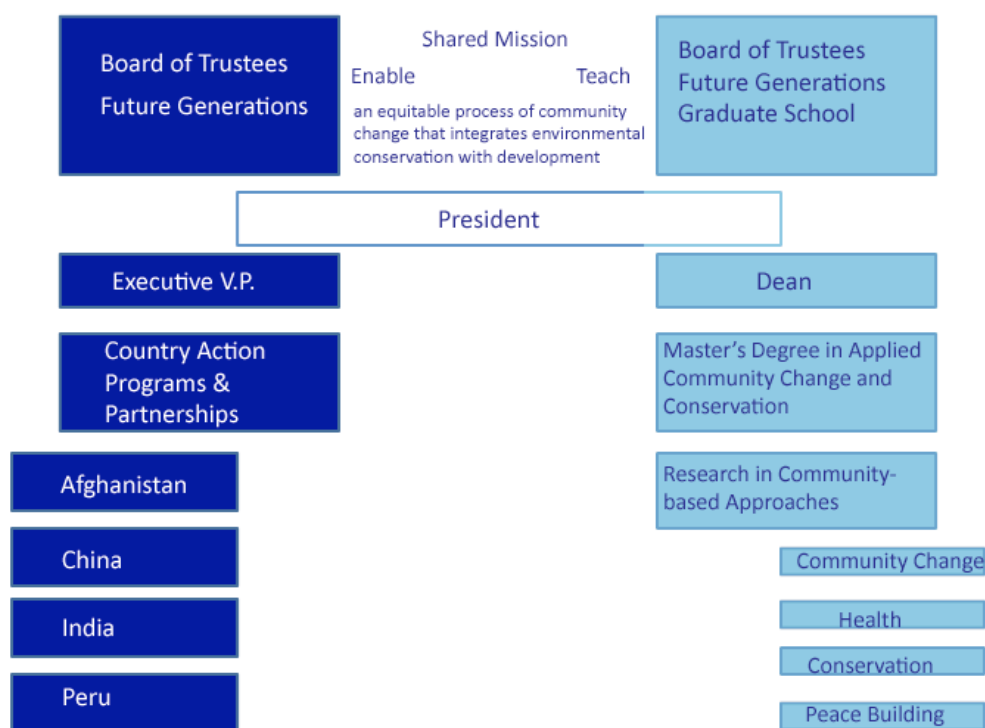
⁶ See Criterion 5, Chapter 7 for details on *Engagement and Service*.

⁷ See Criterion 4, Chapter 6 for details on *Acquisition, Discovery, and Application of Knowledge*.

The Future Generations Graduate School and the CSO are both headquartered on a sixty-acre campus on the summit of North Mountain in the Potomac Highlands of West Virginia. The two organizations are led by the same president. The accompanying organizational chart (Figure 1.1) and timeline (Figure 2.2) summarize the relationships and co-evolving synergies of both institutions.

Figure 1.1

ORGANIZATIONAL CHART

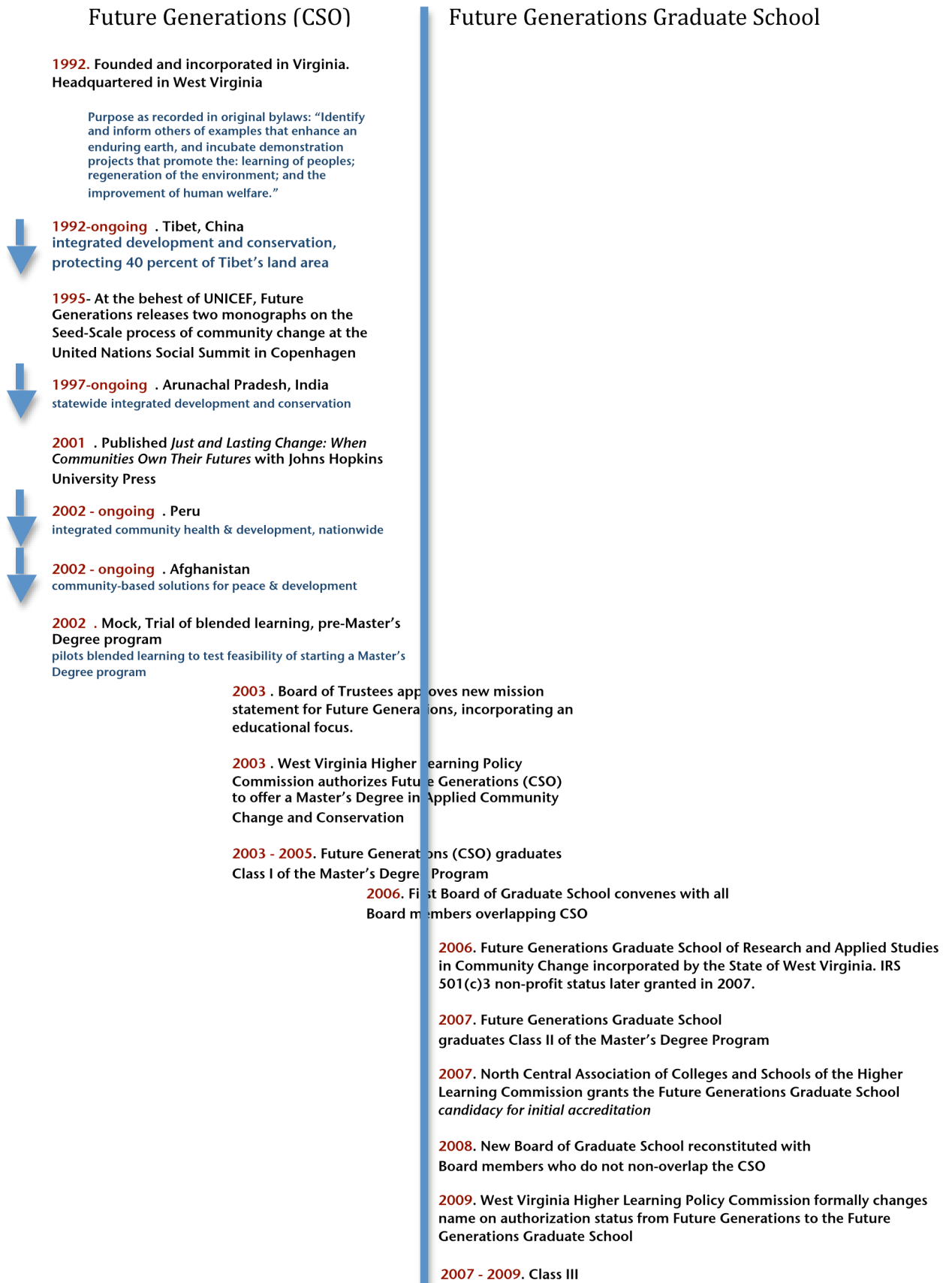


A frequently asked question is, “Why did Future Generations, the CSO, establish an independent Graduate School?” The foundational publication of Future Generations, *Just and Lasting Change: When Communities Own Their Futures*,⁸ sparked global interest in the process it advocated. This made evident the need for a nonprogrammatic approach to extension. *Just and Lasting Change* advocated a comprehensive community-based approach, but the CSO, instead of immediately creating programs in new countries and opening new country offices, investigated alternatives. The review suggested that applied higher education would be the most effective way to extend this new understanding of best practice across such fields as conservation, primary health care, and poverty alleviation.

Extension through education would: 1) meet an international need for well-trained leaders with both knowledge and skills in holistic community development and conservation (while there are many specialists, there are few “generalist” practitioners); 2) be much lower cost and more sustainable than starting new country operations; and 3) most important, build local capacity to create solutions that fit local cultures and conditions.

⁸ Daniel Taylor and Carl E. Taylor, *Just and Lasting Change: When Communities Own Their Futures* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002.)

Figure 1.2 TIMELINE AND ORIGINS OF THE GRADUATE SCHOOL



On December 1, 2001, the CSO Board of Trustees authorized investigation into how to start a master's degree program either through an existing graduate school or through a separate new program within Future Generations. The decision was made to start an independent program. In June 2002, a letter from Future Generations stating its intention to offer its own Master's Degree program was submitted to the Higher Education Policy Commission of the state of West Virginia. Following examination by the Commission, permission for Future Generations (the CSO) to grant degrees was awarded on April 24, 2003.

Following authorization by the state of West Virginia to offer graduate degrees, Future Generations developed a curriculum, hired faculty, recruited students, and raised funds to support this new program. Future Generations then applied to the North Central's Higher Learning Commission (HLC) with a Preliminary Information Form on March 31, 2005, and began the accreditation process seeking candidacy status. In January 2006, the state of West Virginia authorized the legal incorporation of the separate Graduate School. In February 2007, the Internal Revenue Service gave the Graduate School its tax-free status. Following submission of the institution's first Self-Study in July 1, 2007 and two site visits (at the North Mountain campus and at the instructional site in Nepal), the HLC awarded Initial Candidacy to the Graduate School on January 28, 2008. On May 18, 2009, the West Virginia Higher Learning Commission sent a letter formally changing the authorization status from Future Generations CSO to the Future Generations Graduate School. Now with submission of this Self-Study, application is formally made to the HLC for full accreditation status.

An Overview of the Master's Degree in Applied Community Change and Conservation

A Professional Degree

The context within which the Graduate School operates is summarized by the Council of Graduate Schools statement that "*One of the most exciting recent developments [in graduate education] is the creation of professional master's degree programs.*"⁹ The purpose of professional master's degrees is to prepare graduates for careers in business, government, and nonprofits, and most recently (and directly applicable to the Future Generations master's degree), the international development sector with a MacArthur Foundation-sponsored global initiative to create master's degrees in Sustainable Developmental Practice under the aegis of Columbia University's Earth Institute.

Within this context, the Future Generations master's degree in Applied Community Change and Conservation (the primary instructional program of the Future Generations Graduate School) is a professional degree as it takes community-based development practitioners and trains them to be research-competent change agents. Additionally, the Future Generations master's program meets the guidelines set forth in the Council of Graduate Schools policy statement *Master's Education: A Guide for Faculty and Administrators*, which defines a master's degree as one that:

⁹ From Council of Graduate Schools Web site at <http://www.cgsnet.org>.

- "...Is awarded to students who demonstrate a level of academic accomplishment and subject mastery substantially beyond that required for the baccalaureate degree."
- Where students have "... gained knowledge and skills not only from course work, research, and practicums but also from varied experiences and perspectives brought to the program and shared among students," and
- That "...usually require a capstone or culminating experience that indicates the ability to synthesize material from course work and to apply that information and knowledge to a specific issue or problem"¹⁰ (exhibit 1.2).

Subsequent material in this Self-Study shows how the Future Generations master of arts in Applied Community Change and Conservation meets these standards and practices for a master's program in U.S. higher education.

Emphasis on Skills and Knowledge in Community Change and Conservation

The Future Generations Graduate School focuses on applied learning with communities for the good of communities—in the words of its mission statement, it focuses on “an equitable process of *community change*.” This community focus runs as a consistent theme through all Graduate School academic and research programs. The community focus is the central requirement of this academic program, superseding all others. Within the master's degree, it is central to curriculum, pedagogy, and defines the manner in which the eligibility requirements should be evaluated. At the outset and as the primary entry requirement, all students must represent and be working with a community throughout the two-year program. Should a student lose this base, he/she would have to leave the program even if the academic performance was otherwise satisfactory. Or, framed in another manner, the community focus is reflected in the mode of pedagogy, where a significant portion of instruction occurs in communities.

This emphasis on *applied learning within communities* distinguishes the Graduate School from other academic institutions that focus on individuals and classrooms, whether physical or electronic, as the centers of instruction. The Future Generations community focus, however, does not dismiss classroom-based learning (indeed all courses in the Graduate School use classrooms in varying ways), but the community-based focus is the defining feature of this graduate school. A useful comparison of this community-based focus is the role of teaching hospitals in medical education. In medical school, the teaching hospital is central to instruction even while labs and classrooms are being used, and for internship and residency, the teaching hospital is the sole structure of instruction.

To achieve the blending between field and classroom instruction, Future Generations Graduate School partners with six other Future Generations organizations worldwide. They provide bases for instruction (i.e., teaching campuses); also, the Graduate School has connections with a growing network of other field-based organizations. What is being established is referred to in the Vision Statement shared by all parts of Future Generations as “100 nodes of change.” This growing network of both formally and informally affiliated

¹⁰ From Council of Graduate Schools Web site at <http://www.cgsnet.org>.

groups addresses two great challenges facing practitioners of community-based change: “How can the thousands of excellent small initiatives worldwide scale up to address the magnitude of the crises before humanity?” and, “How can humanitarian assistance become sustainable; that is, be able to function with minimal outside funding, without damaging the environment, and without destroying local cultures?” These were questions behind the creation of Future Generations in 1992. The teaching and research agenda of the Future Generations Graduate School addresses these questions and builds on earlier research by Future Generation (CSO).

At the behest of UNICEF in 1992, these questions formed the bases of two Future Generations (CSO) global research projects. To answer them, the organization attracted top talent in the development world, talent that was both academic and field-experienced. These were people who had seen the failures of many economic development and conservation efforts and who wanted to explore new directions to solve the problems of poverty, equity, and environmental sustainability. They wanted answers that scaled up and answers that were sustainable. Two global task forces worked with Future Generations to synthesize the world’s successful development programs into an implementable approach. The framework for action that evolved is known as Seed-Scale.¹¹

Seed-Scale was initially advanced by Future Generations (which had UNICEF sponsorship) at the 1995 U.N. Social Summit (held in Copenhagen, with 117 heads of state present) as a system to direct human energy to shape social programs. Future Generations has followed this approach since then, bringing forward an understanding that is grounded in the empowerment of people in communities, with other specific applications in conservation, peace building, governance, and now extension through higher education.

Simply summarized, Seed-Scale describes a process whereby seeds of human energy grow to societal scale. The core of the method is four principles:

- Build from local successes (as opposed to focusing on problems and needs);
- Create three-way partnerships of the top-down (government), bottom-up (communities), and outside-in (change agents and organizations) to synergize resources (do not develop solutions based solely on external resources);
- Make decisions based on evidence (do not decide according to power-based or opinion-based typologies);
- Seek behavior change among constituents as the key outcome (do not measure success solely by the usually preferred outputs of people trained, wells and springs constructed, etc.).

Seed-Scale forms a core component of the syllabi of several courses in the master’s program—but it is not expected that all courses operate under this framework, and indeed competing views are taught. The Graduate School teaches Seed-Scale as a

¹¹ Daniel Taylor-Ide and Carl E. Taylor, *Community-based Sustainable Human Development – Going to Scale with Self-reliant Social Development* (New York: UNICEF, 1995);

community-based approach to development and conservation and compares and contrasts it to other development philosophies and approaches. However, as a distinctive theory of change underlying the Future Generations institutions, Seed-Scale represents the operational approach. Many student evaluations point out that lessons from Seed-Scale have transformed the way they work with communities (exhibit 1.3).

As noted, the curriculum introduces students to many practical approaches and tools for leadership and community engagement, such as Seed-Scale, but it goes beyond broad theory and also develops core knowledge in the health sciences, social sciences, environmental sciences, and organizational management. In these areas the curriculum presents a breadth of knowledge that is essential but often lacking among community development and conservation professionals. Such a breadth of knowledge is essential for the broad field of applied community change and conservation.

The Pedagogy of Blended Learning

The Future Generations Graduate School pioneers the community-based application of blended learning. Blended learning is increasingly in vogue in higher education where it is used to draw together classroom with online instruction and maybe fieldwork. But while this pedagogy is increasingly popular, it is far from new. Socrates shaped his pedagogy by walking with his students through the Agora of Athens and questioning his students through peripatetic seminars. Plato, in an effort to transmit the great lessons of his mentor, distilled them into books (the *Dialogues*) and sought out a protected classroom (in the garden of Academus) where students studied their lessons. Plato's student Aristotle, in his instruction of his student Alexander the Great, then merged community-based mentoring with focused classroom instruction. It can be argued that Aristotle in his teaching of Alexander was the first great practitioner of "blended learning."

The blended learning pedagogy upon which the master's degree is built brings together three instructional modes: 1) face-to-face learning within the community context at outstanding global field sites; 2) community-based practica by students with faculty mentoring and supervision; and 3) interactive online instruction. Future Generations has blended and modified these in ways conducive to community-based learning. Specifically:

- Face-to-face classroom learning occurs in the "classroom" or "fieldroom" of outstanding community-based field sites as part of residentials. To participate, students travel from their communities to these sites whether they be in India, the United States, Peru, Nepal, China, or other possible places around the world. The purpose is to get students to see best practices and learn from them. The residentials integrate traditional seminars and lectures with field visits, community interviews, and hands-on group assignments. The instruction is more than faculty to student, but also includes community to student, and peer to peer. In many cases, professionals from the community, with experience in managing community-based programs, join as guest lecturers; simultaneously, students are asked to share their learning and findings with the host communities of these residentials.
- Customarily, graduate programs schedule practicum assignments (thesis research

and writing) so that it follows core instruction in basic knowledge and theory. The idea is to teach the theory first and then to get the students to practice it. The Future Generations Graduate School, however, begins the practicum on the first day of class, integrating theory and skills into this field reality, and builds upon this real-world grounding throughout the program.

- Interactive online learning is rapidly evolving as an increasing number of organizations experiment with many modalities. Typically, online work is viewed as a proxy for the classroom, allowing students to learn at their own pace, to keep their jobs, and to simulate class-based interactions electronically. The Future Generations Graduate School is also deeply and broadly engaged in these experiments, but we have added a further dimension. In addition to mimicking the classroom, online work as it is employed in the Future Generations program promotes community-based learning. It allows students to learn how to learn and to be supervised as they apply their learning wherever they might be scattered around the world.

The learning cycle thus incorporates and blends the three modes of instruction, currently throughout four terms over a two-year period. However, the Graduate School continues a review to determine optimal program length and structure. Class One was thirty-four months; Class Two was twenty-one months; Class Three was twenty-five months. Additionally, the Graduate School is considering experimenting with the term structure, including one option of separating the two years into six terms, which would allow for more residentials and more intense coursework during each term.

A standard set of courses, currently with no electives, provides a common framework for learning to ensure that students gain a comprehensive knowledge base. (In the future, however, electives may be implemented so students can focus their education in areas of specific interest.) To receive a master's degree, thirty-seven credit hours are required. The program now offers students thirty-nine credit hours of instruction in four subject areas: Community-Based Development; Globalization, Localization, and Sustainability; Community Change Skills; Monitoring and Evaluating Community Change; and two possible language credits (exhibit 1.4). All courses have a face-to-face component that occurs during the residential in which that course is taught. All courses have an online component to introduce foundational knowledge and theory and to facilitate synthesis and analysis in conjunction with the field residentials.

Table 1.1 and Figures 1.3 and 1.4 illustrate the current learning cycle and the synergy of blended learning.

Interactive Online Learning

The electronic base of faculty–student and student-to-student communication in this blended learning pedagogy is more robust than the commonly used distance learning and Web-based instruction. While state-of-art electronic platforms are part of the instruction (Blackboard until recently and Moodle and Dimdim Web conferencing currently), online coursework is not a stand-alone instructional mode but is grounded in the face-to-face learning of residentials. In this way, use of electronic communications is similar to that

Table 1.1 TWO-YEAR LEARNING SEQUENCE



TERM I

INDIA
(one month residential)

Begins at Gandhi’s ashram with a focus on social change movements and includes community-based health, development, and conservation programs in Maharashtra and Arunachal Pradesh

COURSES
(online and in community)

- * Community Change and Conservation
- * Sustainable Development
- * Healthy People, Healthy Communities
- * Practicum: Research Design & Methods



TERM II

UNITED STATES
(one month residential)

Begins in the Adirondack State Park in New York and includes training in leadership, conflict transformation, and nature conservation in Virginia and West Virginia

COURSES
(online and in community)

- * Nature Conservation and Management
- * Leadership and Organizational Dynamics
- * Social Change and Conflict Transformation
- * Practicum: Prospectus Design



TERM III

PERU
(one month residential)

Begins in Cusco at Machu Picchu with visits to surrounding indigenous communities and includes a study of Peru’s national health care system and field observations focused on food and water security

COURSES
(online and in community)

- * Going to Scale
- * Food and Water Security
- * Empowerment
- * Practicum: Applied Research I



TERM IV

NEPAL + CHINA OR BHUTAN
(one month residential)

Begins in Kathmandu, Nepal, includes a trek in Sagarmatha National Park and concludes with graduation either in Bhutan or at the base of Mt. Everest in Tibet, China

COURSES
(online and in community)

- * Nonprofit Management
- * Practicum: Applied Research II
- * Human Ecology of the Himalayas
- * Synthesis & Integration

on campuses, where professors teach in the classroom and support Internet platforms for group discussions and individualized mentoring.

Each professor uses his/her own judgment as to the optimal online learning platforms. One faculty member may prefer individualized mentoring and interaction, using e-mail and phone conversations to facilitate this one-to-one exchange. Another faculty member might require assignment postings and discussions on Moodle as well as real-time student-to-student and student-to-faculty interaction using Dimdim Web conferencing. For real-time exchange with students in different time zones, group sessions are scheduled at different times, requiring faculty to be online at nonconventional hours. The variety of instructional approaches varies in the Future Generations Graduate School to an extent equivalent to that used in other schools, but in all courses some balance of the components of blended learning is being utilized.

Site-Based Residentials (Field Campus Sites)

Site-based residentials combine coursework with observing “best practices” in community change and conservation. Students interact in these residentials with faculty and peers, share experiences, critique and debate development approaches, and as alumni evaluations demonstrate, create lifelong learning bonds. The residentials provide the space where students see and practice what they are learning. They provide diverse environments and conditions that are similar and yet distinct from their own home communities. Residentials allow students to break from their day-to-day work, their home life, and

Figure 1.3

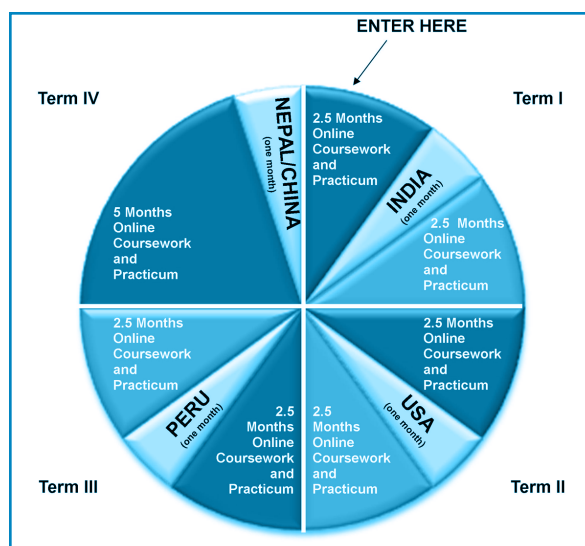
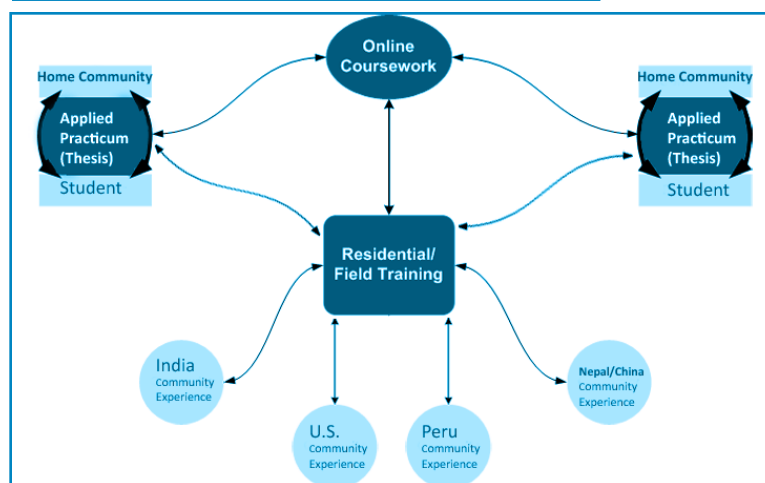


Figure 1.4



their communities to come to and to gain this state-of-the-art perspective of a global professional. Students have time to share with each other and reflect on what they are learning, and how it pertains to their life back home. They begin the residential as experts from their home communities and return with a new sense of potential of what their communities can become. “In India working with village women on how to improve their health system, I saw how we in Heiltsuk First Nations of Canada can improve our salmon fishery,” said Kelly Brown (graduate of Class One in this program).¹²

The residential instructional regimen is intense, with classes held everyday, long and rough travel to field visits, intense student-to-student interaction, and written assignments. While organized with classroom seminars and lectures, residentials are also in-the-field experiences where living conditions can be quite difficult and uncomfortable at times. Intense learning and bonding occur as a result. One day, the classroom may be a dusty, rutted road on an observation tour and the next day a modern facility with all the technology and library resources of a host-country university. This, after all, is the dichotomy students face as development and conservation professionals.

¹² Kelly Brown, in presentation to the Gordon & Betty Moore Foundation, March 2005.

The residentials are strategically chosen to complement the coursework for each term. To date, residentials have been held in India, the United States, Peru, Nepal, China, and Bhutan. The list is not firm. This global context, along the perspective and insights from each student's own community, creates an integrated campus that serves the synergistic roles of research and extension. Below is the structure proposed for Class Four.

India Residential, Term I

This is the master's students' first month-long residential experience. Opening classes for the course on Community Change are at Mahatma Gandhi's study center in central India. To illustrate the course in Healthy People Healthy Communities, students then visit two internationally recognized demonstrations: the Comprehensive Rural Health Program in Jamkhed and the Society for Education, Action, and Research in Health in Gadchiroli. To inform the course on Sustainable Development, students travel through the state of Arunachal Pradesh where they conduct village household surveys, lead focus groups, and study indigenous conservation practice.

United States Residential, Term II

Six months later (after having applied their lessons in their communities) the second residential begins in the Adirondack State Park of northern New York, where lessons group around the theme of how to keep community-based work sustainable (environmentally sustainable, financially sustainable, and culturally sustainable). Instruction continues at the North Mountain Campus of Future Generations. Here community-based survey methodology is taught and different community-engagement challenges are presented. Instruction expands to include social change, conflict transformation, and research methods. Students complete their month in the United States based out of Baltimore, where they study leadership skills with a guest team from Johns Hopkins University and learn the use of and access to research libraries and Internet-based library resources.

Peru Residential, Term III

Peru introduces students to the process of scaling-up and creating cross-disciplinary synergies. A community-based health program is used as the context; this serves seven million people and reaches more than 36 percent of the country. Peru also provides opportunities for coursework in food and water security, and the theory and practice of empowerment. Although practical, back-in-their community work has been part of the program since the outset, critically important in the Peru residential is pulling together the disparate and demanding aspects of their community work into rigorous student practica that meet the highest standards of graduate education. This residential occurs eight months before graduation, and typically many questions must be resolved. Hence there is extensive one-on-one guidance by faculty before students head back to their home communities.

Nepal and China Centered Around Mt. Everest, Term IV

Students gather for the final residential in two countries, Nepal and the Tibetan Autonomous Region of China. (Class Two used Bhutan as an experiment instead of China.) Synthesis, evaluation, and management are the course foci. Lessons on the very different sides (physiogeographically and politically) of Mt. Everest provide the geographical focus. The residential begins in Kathmandu, visits the mountain's south slope in the Sagarmatha National Park and concludes in Tibet at the north slope in

the Qomolangma National Nature Preserve. Graduation ceremonies are at Rongbuk Monastery at 17,500 feet at the base of Mount Everest, therefore prompting this master's degree to be playfully dubbed "the highest degree in the world."

Community-Based Student Practica

The third component of blended learning is the practicum. Here, students bring together the outside learning (residential and interactive online) with practice in their communities. The process allows students to try to implement ideas that sound good in the classroom with the realities needed to make them really work in the field. The home communities are filled with daily problems that have real, complex, and troublesome aspects never mentioned in book learning. This is the reality in which students must apply their higher education—and hence this master's degree never asks students to leave its practicalities. Eighty percent of the instruction occurs in this context (20 out of the 24 months). Since even on a residential they are never gone for over a month, students stay in touch with this reality. This reality more than grounds the instruction—it makes the instruction accountable.

Like a patient who is hurting and wants the medical student to take away the pain, the communities back home are demanding results. The demands of their communities encourage students to make similar demands of the faculty: give us learning that makes lives better. The community-based grounding of this instruction not only, therefore, gives relevance to the instruction, but also it forces accountability onto the faculty. The practicum grounds lessons and ensures students connect lessons to practice.

As evidenced by final practicum papers and presentations, students and alumni who have had this strong accountability to communities have tended to perform better academically than those who had weak community ties and obligations.

During the two years of the master's program, students work with faculty and community to shape inquiry around a topic to be investigated and grounded in the literature and community-based evidence. Some of these practica have a research focus; others are mentored application. Each student has an advisor on the faculty suited to guide the practicum topic. Each student also identifies a mentor in the locale who is an expert in the area of interest and can help inform the practicum project. To give rigor to their practica, students engage in formal coursework that include: Research Design and Methods, Prospectus Design, Applied Research I and II, and Synthesis and Integration. The result is a threaded practicum, grounded in their discipline. The culmination is a paper and a presentation during the final residential program where all students participate in a peer review of each other's research and/or community implementation plan.

The Students

The Graduate School meets the needs of professional development workers. It does so by giving them intensive and comprehensive training without requiring them to take leave from their development work. By doing so, it also uses their work environments as a classroom and strengthens performance on the job. This program is not for students fresh out of undergraduate programs; to utilize the training offered, students need to have had adequate years of field experience.

So far, students who have enrolled in this master’s program have come from the ranks of government civil service employees, not-for-profit private development organizations, church-related mission organizations, and international relief organizations. Table 1.2 shows the demographic profile of Classes One to Three.

One feature that allows the program to work for such a diverse study body is that typically students come to the program with work experience. As a result they are able to distill useful instruction from non-useful, drawing out the specifics from the wealth of information and learning opportunities.

Until now, as indicated above, each class has been highly diverse with students from all over the world, no class having more than two students from any one country. While this has been the student profile through the first three classes, consideration is now being given to experimenting with a more focused student body, drawing students from a similar geographic region. A whole class or group of students could potentially come from one region. While this would lower the global diversity of the present student body, it brings a shared experiential base, and might allow site-based mentoring by faculty in their communities. It is unlikely any one definition of the student body is universally appropriate (just as the number of terms in the two-year cycle could vary). Experiments will continue to find the balance that best achieves the specific learning objectives.

Self-Study Team: Organization and Process

Figure 1.5

WORLD MAP OF STUDENT LOCATIONS



- | | |
|----------------|---------------|
| Afghanistan | Iran |
| Bhutan | Mozambique |
| Bolivia | Nepal |
| Cambodia | Nigeria |
| Canada | Norway |
| China | Peru |
| Czech Republic | Rwanda |
| Egypt | Uganda |
| Ethiopia | United States |
| India | Vietnam |
| | Zambia |

Table 1.2 **STUDENT DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE**

	Class I	Class II	Class III
Countries Represented:	Canada, India, Nepal, United States, Zambia	Bhutan, Cambodia, Canada, Czech Republic, India, Rwanda, Uganda, United States, Vietnam	Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Bolivia, China, Egypt, Ethiopia India, Mozambique, Peru, Uganda, United States
Gender:	Male: 4 Female: 3	Male: 3 Female: 8	Male: 14 Female: 6
Ages:	25-29: 2 30-39: 1 40-49: 2 50-59: 2	25-29: 3 30-39: 2 40-49: 2 50-59: 4	25-29: 5 30-39: 10 40-49: 3 50-59: 2
Professions:	Land Use Plan Coordinator; West Virginia Rural Health Education Program Site Coordinator; Director of Development Programs; President of Church Partnership; Community Partner Specialist; Non-Profit Sector Communications Director; Development Associate/Women Empowerment	Education and Projects Executive Director; Child Survival Program Manager; Trek/Program Coordinator; Physician, Education Facilitator; Child Survival Project Director; Director, Public Health; Nurse; Social Development Director; Activist on Border and Immigrations Issues in New Mexico; English Instructor	Resource Management Project Coordinator; Physician; Senior Regional Manager of Water, Sanitation and Hygiene; Healthcare Coordinator; Youth Outreach Coordinator; Social Worker; Biodiversity Development Officer; Block Development Officer; Country Program Site Director; Development Specialist; English Instructor; Volunteer, Development Officer; Health Deputy Director
Serving These Organizations:	Cabin Creek Health Consortium, CARE International, Central Himalayan Rural Action Group, Future Generations China, Future Generations North Mountain, Heiltsuk Tribal Council, Partnership of African American Churches	An Giang University, Building With Books, Community Health Development ,Mulago Hospital, Future Generations India, Heiltsuk Tribal Council, Rural Development Services Center, Slunakov Environmental Education Center, Tarayana Foundation, World Relief Child Survival Program—Africa, World Relief Child Survival Program—Cambodia	Africa 2000 Network, BRAC-Bangladesh, Care of Afghan Families in Afghanistan, Community Based Rural Health Care—Afghanistan, Comprehensive Rural Health Project—India, Future Generations Afghanistan, Future Generations China, Future Generations Peru, Hope Corner, Hospital Municipal Modelo Corea in Bolivia, Medical Refresher Course for Afghans, Methodist Health Service—Bolivia, Peace and Justice Center, Philly Orchard Project, Royal Society for the Protection of Nature—Bhutan, Society for Education, Action and Research in Community Health

Following the January 28, 2007 award of Initial Candidacy Status, the Graduate School Board of Trustees took immediate action. Continued actions have followed as indicated below.

January 28, 2008	Candidacy for Accreditation received.
March 2008	Registrar maps out continuing actions needed.
May 2008	Board of Trustees takes series of actions to legally separate the two institutions.
June 2008	Faculty College creates plan to implement assurance and advancement recommendations.
August 2008	Dean initiates strategic planning process.
September 2008	Strategic planning moves forward on the Moodle interactive online platform.
October 2008	President establishes the self-study team with the President as chair. Dean and Registrar are co-coordinators.
November 2008	Dean submits a draft Strategic Plan and Faculty Handbook to Board of Trustees (Board of Trustees will send back suggestions on both documents).
January 2009	For personal reasons, Dean resigns—President takes over as Acting Dean. Intensive work begins on the preparation of the self-study.
February 2009	Thomas Acker, S.J. accepts appointment as Dean.
March 2009	The institution attends the Higher Learning Commission annual meeting in Chicago Self-study team members are all working on their respective criteria.
May 2009	Graduate School Board of Trustees reviews status, approves all foundational adjustments being made in the program.

As discussed with the Higher Learning Commission Ruling Board when Initial Candidacy Status was awarded on January 28, 2007, it was in the interest of the Future Generations Graduate School to move as rapidly as possible toward accredited status. By the time of Initial Candidacy, the Graduate School had already accomplished many of the accreditation requirements and full accreditation will substantially facilitate recruitment and fund-raising.

To write the Self-Study, given the small size and dispersed locations of the faculty and

staff, the President did not appoint subcommittees for each criterion, but empowered the team to engage whatever parts of the organization were needed to address pertinent issues. The result was that some individuals (for example Traci Hickson and Damian Christey in the Communications Division) were working as members of multiple criteria.

Self-Study Committee Responsibilities (by Members)

Self-Study Committee Chair: Daniel Taylor (President)

Self-Study Co-coordinator: Tom Acker (Dean)

Self-Study Co-coordinator: Christie Hand (Registrar)

Criterion 1 Mission and Integrity: Chris Cluett (Chair, Board of Trustees)

Criterion 2 Preparing for the Future: Jason Calder (Faculty) and Randy Brandt (Comptroller)

Criterion 3 Student Learning and Effective Teaching: Dan Wessner (Faculty)

Criterion 4 Acquisition, Discovery and Application of Knowledge: Mike Rechlin (Faculty) and LeeAnn Shreve (Director of Admissions)

Criterion 5 Engagement and Service: Christie Hand (Registrar)

Federal compliance: LeeAnn Shreve (Director of Admissions)

The preparation of the Self-Study involved three modes of interaction. First, the Self-Study team held special meetings on roughly a bimonthly basis. Also, time was allocated at annual international staff meetings, at faculty meetings, and at meetings of the Board of Trustees to gather information and update these internal constituencies on the Self-Study process. Finally, the 2008 and 2009 annual meetings of the Faculty College included working sessions where the faculty was actively engaged in the Self-Study process.

During their United States and Peru residentials, students from Class Three were involved in the process through formal surveys and accreditation group discussions. Alumni of Classes One and Two participated in a formal survey and informal interviews with Steering Committee members. The process worked toward a discussion of each criterion and its core components, including identification, evaluation, and documentation on Future Generations status in reference to the criteria, finally identifying opportunities for improvement. These opportunities for improvement inform both this Self-Study and also the Strategic Plan.

To facilitate discussions with the far-flung faculty and staff of Future Generations, an online space, using Moodle, was set up with faculty and field campus directors enrolled as students. This allowed Steering Committee members to post announcements and open discussion forums on Self-Study topics. In addition to the Self-Study process, Moodle was also used to coordinate faculty planning in creating the Graduate School's Strategic Plan (exhibit 1.5). The Strategic Plan was given a very large place in the year's work—after five years there was a base of evidence to use to suggest what was working and not working in this innovative graduate school's design, and also with full accreditation approaching the Trustees believed that as firm a position as possible should be stated for future growth. Ultimately, preparation of the new Strategic Plan consumed more than half a year. This careful planning process has greatly helped the Self-Study writing process. Moreover, the intense dialogue that was engendered helped to create a campus atmosphere among our globally scattered constituents, sharing ideas between academic and research sites.

The following objectives were approved for the Self-Study process:

1. Practice what we preach. A central tenet of the work of Future Generations is that decisionmaking should be based on information that is locally gathered and owned. In keeping with Seed-Scale, the particular process advocated is described through the acronym SEED, which stands for Self-Evaluation for Effective Decision making. Future Generations has been very intentional in its self-evaluation. Iteration upon iteration, evaluation has occurred, the curriculum and pedagogy improved. We expect this steady evolution to continue—it is what we tell others to do, and so it is what we are doing ourselves. We are fortunate to have the Seed-Scale process to guide; it allows the institution to accomplish the HLC objectives of AQIP even though the institution is not at this time operating under those.

Specifically, the four principles of Seed-Scale take form in the operations of the Future Generations Graduate School in:

- Building from success. Determine and strengthen what is working, pointedly building up places of excellence rather than trying to solve all its needs.
 - Three-way partnership. Identify resources available to the communities (financial, information, human, infrastructure) with which students work.
 - Evidence-based decisions. Establish evidence-grounded systems that students and their communities can use rather than promoting state-of-art evidence systems.
 - Behavior change. Effect new behaviors among graduates that promote change in their communities through empowerment rather than control as is a more typical result of professional training.
2. Design and project a program based around fiscal security. In a global climate of financial meltdown where much of American higher education has experienced unanticipated difficulty, fiscal security will involve both careful financial management (minimizing the costs of physical campus and operations), and innovative fund raising (broadening the conventional basis of tuition payment and building an endowment). The financial support base created is worth noting as it has several remarkable features: without a physical campus the Graduate School has created a low-cost operational structure; its community-focused student body promotes community support for tuition, thus expanding the base of who pays the tuition costs, and for a new graduate school, the approximate \$5 million endowment is substantial.
 3. Assist Future Generations Graduate School as it partners with a growing and more effective international coalition of organizations within a Web-like community of learners.
 4. Assess the Future Generations graduate program against recognized norms and standards for U.S. graduate-level education.
 5. Support the Graduate School as it seeks to integrate scholarly research and reflection with the scaling up of equitable community change, development, and nature conservation.