

“Their future is so bright it burns my eyes.”

– Oprah Winfrey, commenting on CNN on the potential of some of the developing world’s most promising high school students, January 8, 2007

## **DEVELOPING TOMORROW’S WOMEN LEADERS** **A GLOBAL ISSUES LEADERSHIP PROGRAM**

**A Student-Faculty Visit to South Africa, June 8-20, 2009**

Tomorrow’s leaders are being forged in the classrooms of today. Many of them will share one significant characteristic: the ability to appreciate multiple points of view and to interpret local trends and developments in their larger, global context.

In June 2008, Alterra Global Education Initiatives, working with the National Coalition of Girls Schools (NCGS), launched its first Global Leadership Initiative to South Africa. The program responded to a need many NCGS schools have expressed: the wish to do more to promote global citizenship and awareness among their students and faculty.

In June 2009, Alterra again is offering NCGS students and faculties a unique opportunity to take part in a 13-day **Global Education Leadership Initiative** (GELI) in South Africa.

### **STRENGTHENING GLOBAL EDUCATION**

Why strengthen global-issue education? **First**, because the world has shrunk. From climate change and energy shortages to HIV and sweatshop factory conditions, what were once “foreign” concerns have now become global issues with domestic implications.

**Second**, global-issue studies and travel expose students to the staggering diversity of our increasingly fragmented world. As we move deeper into this century, nurturing global understanding through a comprehensive, rigorous, internationally-focused curriculum is what will give the next generation of American leaders the tools with which to engage foreign policymakers and business leaders across cultural lines.

### **WHY SOUTH AFRICA?**

Since apartheid ended in 1994, South Africa has undergone remarkable transformation and now has one of the world’s most progressive consti-

tutions. But the path has not been easy. Because of its history, South Africa embodies—often in magnified form—the teething problems other new nations are experiencing, together with many of the challenges Americans face, from racial tensions to undocumented immigration and unequal access to healthcare. This unique profile makes South Africa an excellent “lab” in which to observe and discuss a range of global issues—ranging from social fragmentation, human rights violations, and obstacles to democratic participation, to gender issues, the challenges of peace-building, and the effects of victimization on self-esteem and on a person’s life chances.

South Africa therefore provides fascinating case studies for both Africans and non-Africans eager to understand the country’s current situation and explore the promises and challenges of its future in the areas of human rights, political leadership, resource distribution, human development, and the building of a national consciousness to unite a people traumatized and torn by the most basic of human instincts: age-old discrimination.

**PRICING** Program fee for each participating school: \$4000

Cost per person sharing a room: \$5500

The per-person pricing includes airfare/taxes from and back to New York/Johannesburg, hotel accommodation, ground transportation in South Africa, tours, and daily breakfast, lunch and dinner.

### **TO LEARN MORE AND TO REGISTER**

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## DEVELOPING TOMORROW'S WOMEN LEADERS: A GLOBAL ISSUES LEADERSHIP PROGRAM

### PROGRAM COMPONENTS

The 2009 GELI Program has **three** components:

#### I. Symposium-Based Discussion

Students learn best not only by observing but by talking about what they are experiencing, and placing it within a conceptual framework that helps them make sense of it. Alterra has therefore arranged for some of South Africa's most experienced educators to lead your group in a series of symposium-based discussions. Along with a contingent of gifted South African student participants, the local educators will present a range of problem-based topics. To balance talk with action, they will then encourage your students to brainstorm in teams to come up with their own original policy solutions to the problems outlined. For 2009, the symposium topics are:

##### A. Building Democracy

Fundamentally, South Africa is still a post-conflict society, one in which apartheid left a legacy of inequality and social dislocation that the country is still working on. Like American society, South Africa still has much that it needs to heal from. Consequently, tomorrow's leaders, above all, will need to be reconcilers—people capable of forging common ground by building bridges, talking to the other side, and gently raising "taboo" issues. In short, they will need to be peacemakers. The **"Building Democracy" Symposium** will address a range of questions designed to bring into sharp focus the role that girls and women can play in this all-important project of building democracy.

##### B. Building Community: The Role & Needs of Women

Women make up a majority of the world's poor. Yet as Bangladesh's extraordinary Grameen Bank has shown, the poor are neither passive nor indifferent to their fate. They are often hopeful, resourceful people who respond magnificently to outside assistance. Poor women, in particular, have shown that they maintain better loan repayment rates than men and that they tend to be industrious, detailed managers of their affairs. But a majority of them battle severe constraints: poor education, meager resources, disempowering cultural attitudes, and policies that create obstacles, block access, or produce dead-ends.

Whether in South Africa or in the US, girls and women all over the world are dealing with similar challenges, in greater or less form. Through discussions led by reform-minded South African women leaders and organizations, the **"Building Community" Symposium** will address what is being done to empower African women to take back control of their lives, acquire valuable life skills, and overcome their self-image as victims of circumstance—and what else needs to be done.

##### C. Achieving Sociopolitical Awareness

South Africa has achieved what few other nations have—a fundamental restructuring to create the beginnings of a pluralistic society, with justice and equal opportunity as the foundational commitments of a new social contract. Because of its relatively well-developed infrastructure and educational depth, South Africa also plays a leadership role within the region and on the continent. Indeed, South Africa even offers conflict resolution training to public officials from as far away as Sierra Leone, and its Truth & Reconciliation approach to transitional justice is being used not only by the UN around the world, but also here in the United States.

The **"Achieving Sociopolitical Awareness" Symposium** will sharpen your students' analytical skills and broaden their horizons in the areas of civics, government, education, race relations, and economic development. It will also raise questions and address issues aimed at deepening your students' understanding of South Africa's social and political realities and of its promising role as an ally in the battle against global underdevelopment.

#### II. Leadership Development

The June 2009 GELI Program has one overriding purpose: to deepen the capacity of your students and teachers to think from characteristically global perspectives. *In short, to think big.* Every element of the program is structured to help your students see themselves as initiators and change agents—to begin to sense their place in the world of decision-making, policy formulation, and public action.

From discussion seminars and historic site visits, to carefully designed service learning projects and evening cultural activities, GELI will stretch their thinking, challenge their paradigms,

dismantle old boundaries, and nudge them to reach within themselves and draw out new capacities in order to make authentic connections with their South African peers, who will also be doing the same. **The goal:** To help transform your students not into female leaders but into leaders, *period*.

### III. Service Learning

Curriculum integration of community service is an increasingly popular trend at many schools. To stimulate your students to think globally but act locally, we will take them to two carefully selected sites where they can apply the leadership and community development concepts they have been learning about either during the preceding school term or just recently in the symposia.

The aim is to connect textbook learning to the real world. Leadership development conferences alone rarely achieve this. Evidence shows that the most effective learning occurs when students draw upon all their faculties to interact concretely with their surroundings—either rural or urban—while engaging local stakeholders in active conversation, listening and processing.

We have also learned that the optimal approach is to select a service learning project that can be curriculum-linked, so that students arrive there with an intellectual framework already in place, one in which they can situate the project.

In our 2009 visit, our service learning project will be drawn from a short list including the following:

#### I. Food Production: Stabilizing People's Lives through Resource Management

Together with their South African student peers, your students will work alongside the residents of a disadvantaged community on a project aimed at helping them achieve food self-sufficiency. Under the direction of a progressive, far-sighted NGO with a strong commitment to empowering the poor in this area of development, our visiting delegation will undertake a range of food gardening activities with the goal of helping the residents produce large yields of high-nutrient vegetables from modest patches of land, both for consumption and for sale.

Besides exemplifying what progressive groups are doing in countries like South Africa to help

people better manage global resources, this project has the potential of offering many powerful lessons and raising provocative questions. For example:

- ▶ Why do such successful interventions not occur more often?
- ▶ What exactly are the forces that promote global hunger? Does the world need to produce more food, or just share it more equally?
- ▶ Do our own lifestyle choices here in the US influence food security, climate change, and environmental degradation in Africa, South America or Asia?

#### II. Management Wildlife Parks: The Challenges of Conservation

Here, your students would work alongside experienced wildlife wardens in Polokwane, one of South Africa's largest municipally-owned game reserves, to undertake community service projects and participate in workshops. Examples of workshop topics and community projects:

- ▶ Eradicating invasive alien plants to restore ecological balance
- ▶ Counting wildlife at waterhole to evaluate population growth numbers
- ▶ Conducting a census of rare and threatened plant species

The workshops would embrace conservation topics such as poaching, climate change, culling elephants the ecological threat posed by new exotic plants, and how to control overpopulation in wildlife parks.

## STAYING CONNECTED

● **JOURNALING** To help them process the multiple experiences the GELI program will likely provoke in them, your students will be encouraged to create a journal chronicling their trip: what they saw, how they grew, the insights they gained, what puzzled, inspired or bothered them, and the emotional conflicts they encountered. The goal is to share parts of this journal in a series of debriefing seminars with their classroom peers upon return. Additionally, there will be daily debriefs with Alterra's own staff members during the trip.

- **ONLINE INTERACTION** Depending on the group's composition and size, we may also encourage students to set up a simple school website where they can upload digital photos, camcorder video clips, and daily trip reports in order to offer their peers at home real-time updates of their visit, as well as a chance for continual feedback. We also encourage our visiting delegations to download and use Skype to take advantage of free internet telephony.

- **READING MATERIALS** To prepare your students and faculty for the trip, we will provide them with background reading materials about the South African context. We will go over a detailed international travel to-do list.

- **SAFETY** Your students will be accompanied by faculty chaperones at all times, including even casual outings for shopping or sight-seeing.

## **WHO WOULD BE THE IDEAL PARTICIPANT?**

GELI will appeal especially to girls' schools because of South Africa's gender issues and the government's efforts to promote gender equality.

Secondly, because the program's components are structured to stimulate faculty-student intellectual interaction, a delegation of students and faculty representatives such as teachers, departments heads, dean, and school heads would make an ideal mix.

Alterra has extensive experience designing and administering customized educational programs. Girls schools that have participated in our programs include Chatham Hall, St. Timothy, Marlborough School, Hamlin, Agnes Irwin, Springside, St. Catherine's and Hathaway Brown.