Returns to Communities of the Social Entrepreneurship and Environmental Design (SEED) Integration Results in Architectural Training

Authors : P. Kavuma, J. Mukasa, M. Lusunku

Abstract : Background and Problem: The widespread poverty in Africa- together with the negative impacts of climate change- are two great global challenges that call for everyone's involvement including Architects. This in particular places serious challenges on architects to have additional skills in both Entrepreneurship and Environmental Design (SEED). Regrettably, while Architectural Training in most African Universities including those from Uganda lack comprehensive implementation of SEED in their curricula, regulatory bodies have not contributed towards the effective integration of SEED in their professional practice. In response to these challenges, Nkumba University (NU) under Architect Kavuma Paul supported by the Uganda Chambers of Architects– initiated the SEED integration in the undergraduate Architectural curricula to cultivate SEED know-how and examples of best practices. Main activities: Initiated in 2007, going beyond the traditional Architectural degree curriculum, the NU Architect department offers SEED courses including provoking passions for creating desirable positive changes in communities. Learning outcomes are assessed theoretically and practically through field projects. The first set of SEED graduates came out in 2012. As part of the NU post-graduation and alumni survey, in October 2014, the pioneer SEED graduates were contacted through automated reminder emails followed by individual, repeated personal follow-ups via email and phone. Out of the 36 graduates who responded to the survey, 24 have formed four (4) private consortium agencies of 5-7 graduates all of whom have pioneered Ugandan-own-cultivated Architectural social projects that include: fishing farming in shipping containers; solar powered mobile homes in shipping containers, solar powered retail kiosks in rural and fishing communities, and floating homes in the flood-prone areas. Primary outcomes: include being business self –reliant in creating the social change the architects desired in the communities. Examples of the SEED project returns to communities reported by the graduates include; employment creation via fabrication, retail business, marketing, improved diets, safety of life and property, decent shelter in the remote mining and oil exploration areas. Negative outcomes-though not yet evaluated include the disposal of used-up materials. Conclusion: The integration of SEED in Architectural Training has established a baseline benchmark and a replicable model based on best practice projects.

Keywords : architectural training, entrepreneurship, environment, integration