



Solving Community Problems Through Bi-national Global Service-learning Projects



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Need for Innovation

- Many institutions and colleges of agriculture offer study abroad courses.
- Some of these programs may include a service-learning (SL) component.
- But hardly any have an SL component that consists of U.S. students partnered with host-country students to create bi-national team projects.

Binational Team Projects

- In Uganda, the SL program was conceptualized in 2005 out of a participatory needs assessment between Iowa State University (ISU), Makerere University (MAK) Colleges of Agriculture, and stakeholders in the rural Kamuli district¹.
- **Bi-national team projects are a component of the school gardens that help to address community issues.**
- Students from both ISU and MAK work in groups under the guidance of outreach staff of the ISU Uganda Program (ISU-UP) – [who implements the livelihood programs of the CSRL in Kamuli] and faculty from both institutions.

How It Works

- To get started, students are oriented on the previous years' completed projects in Spring semesters at both universities.
- There are eight projects, in addition to activities of the school garden program.
- Projects include agroforestry, livestock, soil, irrigation, beekeeping, sanitation, school feeding, and postharvest of crops.
- Students choose three projects from which two projects are assigned.
- Students are then encouraged to link up with peers – in-person and e-mails
- Each project is assigned an ISU-UP staff in charge of their area of specialization.
- The program staff writes a concept note, develops a project budget, and helps to procure the materials before students arrive in the summer.
- The staff decides aspects students will work on.
- Students add creativity as they apply their knowledge toward solving the problem through implementing the concepts.
- Students work on projects for a half-day every Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday.

Results To Date

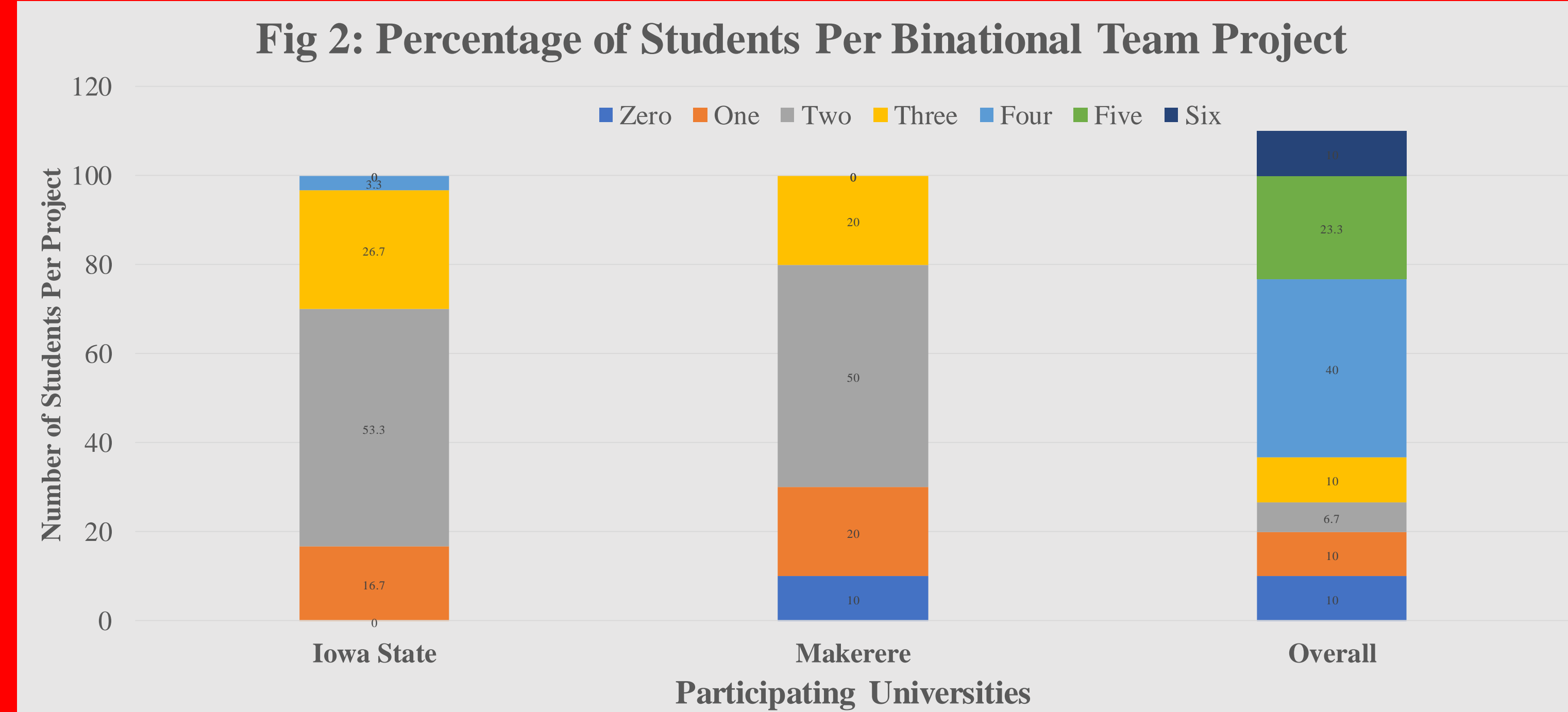
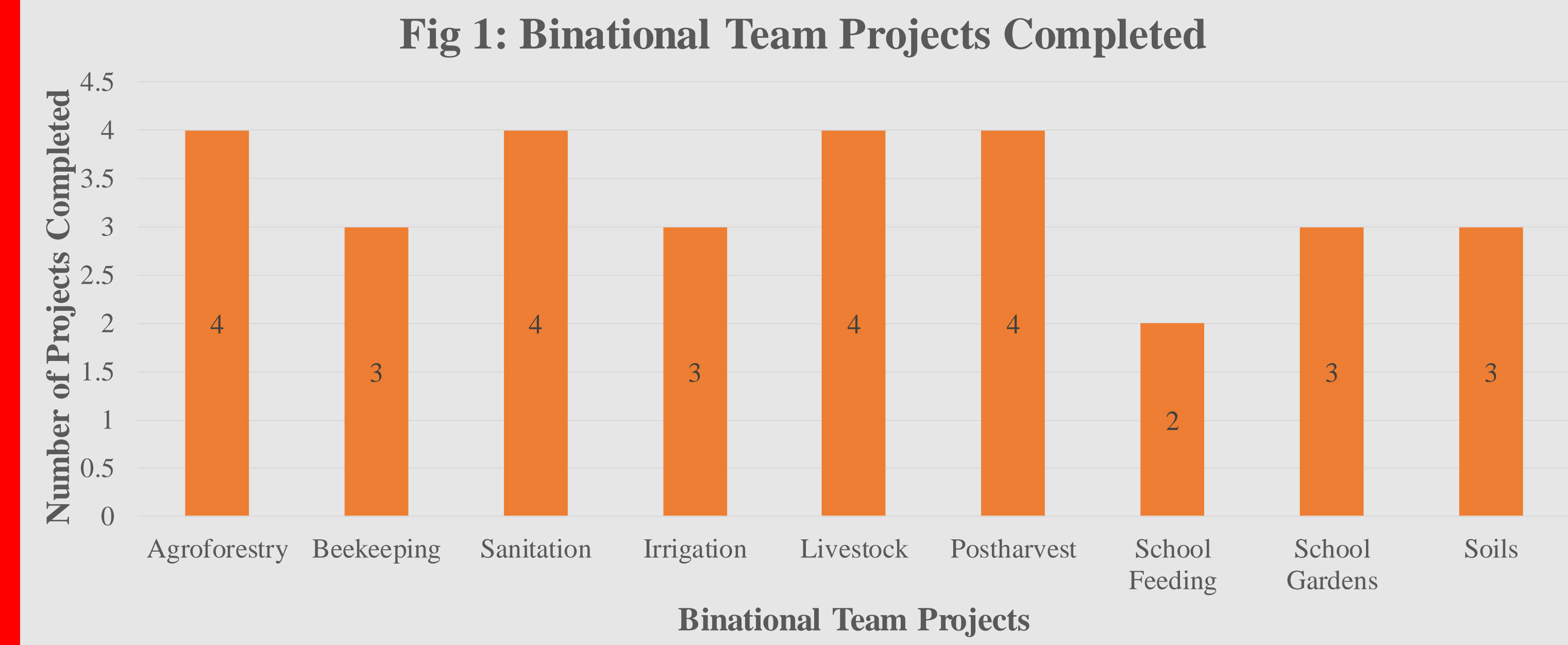
- Beneficiaries since 2006 are 294 summer service-learners; 169 are from Makerere and 125 from Iowa State University.
- A total of 30 Binational team projects were accomplished between 2015-2019².
- Most specific bi-national projects were accomplished in agroforestry, sanitation, livestock, and postharvest (see Fig.1).
- More than half of the projects had at least two students from each university who participated (see Fig.2).
- 90% were completed within the schools partnering with the CSRL/ISU-UP including Namasagali Primary School P/S, Nakanyonyi P/S, Naluwoli P/S, Namasagali College Staffs' Children P/S, and a high school - Namasagali College.
- The other 10% of the projects were completed in the community and were related to gender-based violence, access to health services, and the use of irrigation systems.

Impact on Students, Schools, and Communities

- In the postharvest project, a MAK Junior in Agricultural Engineering cleaned maize at Naluwoli P/S for a school lunch project using a grain sieve.
- He found the process tedious and time-consuming with support from ISU-UP and MAK, "he created his first pedal-operated maize cleaner" which has since been adopted by the CSRL/ISU-UP for use in communities and schools³.



- In these projects, students develop research skills through conceptualizing and implementing ideas and leadership skills while working as a team.
- Students also develop communication and intercultural competence while working with members of different cultures.
- An ISU Global Resource Systems Junior had an experience in agroforestry:
 - "I went to fill watering cans to irrigate the fence we had planted. a man approached who was obviously gathering water for his family. He insisted I go first. Not with words, but with gestures., so he pumped the water for me. Then I pumped the water for him., We didn't speak at all but much more was said in that moment. He renewed my faith in humanity."⁴.



Advice to Others

- To solve community problems and promote deep learning, educators should involve learners in bi-national team projects to harness knowledge from a variety of perspectives in a team of peers.
- In planning these learning projects, collaboration among students, faculty, and staff of bi-national organizations helps to meet their goals reciprocally.

Resources Needed

- Cost is dependent on the project and program design. If incorporated into a current study abroad, there may be no additional cost.
- Currently, the program provides about \$1,000 for each project.
- Success requires an interest by the host country and organization, and leadership.

References

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2. Center for Sustainable Rural Livelihoods (CSRL). (2019). Uganda service-learning projects 2019. Iowa State University. Retrieved from <https://www.csrl.iastate.edu/uganda-service-learning-projects-2019>
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Acknowledgments: Center for Sustainable Rural Livelihoods for the Financial Support; Iowa State University - Uganda Program Staff for the Coordination and Supervision of Service-learning Projects; and Department of Agricultural Education and Studies for Financial Support.