



# Social entrepreneurs

*Program incorporates capitalism with social change, economic sustainability*



Standing: Vida Kufuor, Mwajuma Ramadhani, Ann Marie Almeida, Fundi Wisoba. Sitting: Rachel McCroy, Esmā Sabani, Imbi Mpunga, Jennifer Canalda, Sabina Salimovska, Yuri Nanami, Sabina Ramadhani.

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**M**anhattanville College summer student Jennifer Canalda wants to help customers of the microfinancial institution she works at in her country, the Dominican Republic, better manage their businesses through financial education to ultimately reduce poverty in the country.

So Canalda responded to a request from her company, Adopem, (The Dominican Association for the Development of Women) to come to New York and complete the Global Student Leadership (GSL) program at Manhattanville College.

"The program provides skills not only to communicate with others, but to improve leadership skills," Canalda said. "Its main goal is to create leaders in different communities around the world."

Michaela Walsh, founding president of Women's World Banking, launched the GSL program in 2000 with the support of Manhattanville College President Richard Berman and the help of Women in Community Leadership, a program offered at the college.

The program's vision is "to create a worldwide network of young women serving as local leaders and change agents with the self-confidence and enterprise management skills necessary to transform their communities," according to its Web site.

Since its inception, more than 250 students from 25 countries in Africa, Eastern Europe, Asia and Latin America have graduated from the program, which is also taught in Mexico and Tanzania.

"They all have a leadership for local change business plan," said Ann Marie Almeida, executive director of global women's leadership at Manhattanville College. "We are creating social entrepreneurs as opposed to capitalists. The

emphasis is on social change, leadership impact and evolving the community to a place of sustainability and economic and social vitality."

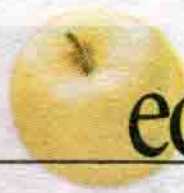
Almeida said the essence of the six-week GSL program is to provide students in different countries skills in leadership, entrepreneurship, advocacy and information technology.

"We train leaders to go back and make a positive impact in their local environment, encourage them to dream big and give them the tools to deliver," Almeida said.

Almeida said Macedonian student Sabina Salimovska's business plan approach to ending domestic violence in the Roma community in Macedonia melds both the social and the economic aspects of a major issue for the Roma community in her country.

"The way that she intends to do it is provide training information, awareness and impact studies to show how the community prospers when domestic violence is no longer in their community," Almeida said.

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# education

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Salimovska said she will conduct focus groups to determine what population to track through a multi-year process with a marketing and financial plan.

Another standout business plan came from a student in Tanzania last summer. The student wanted to plant gardens in the countryside to help eradicate hunger and help those who “can’t take their HIV cocktail without food in their stomachs,” Almeida said.

“The student was then able to pitch it to some funding agencies, and she has already had a first round of funding,” Almeida said. “What we’re asking people to be is confluent in not only the leadership of themselves, but their role in society.”

Canalda’s financial education plan will serve her country well; in a 10-year period she will train 24,000 micro-entrepreneurs in areas of cash flow, salary and accounting skills and account separation.

Canalda said the population is 9 million and the birth rate was 8.5 percent a year as of 2007. More than 25 percent of the population lives under the poverty line; 16 percent of them survive on \$2 a day.

Canalda said microfinance is actually one



Vida Kufuor, Rachel Mccroy, Sabina Ramadhani, and Mwajuma Ramadhani.

of the most important economical activities in the Dominican Republic because it contributes 23 percent to the gross domestic product.

“If we can help microfinancial entrepreneurs with better skills of managing their businesses we can also help the country get out of poverty,” Canalda said.

Canalda said she was inspired by graduates of the GSL program who came to speak to current students and discuss how their “action plans” were coming along.

“The reason why GSL works in all its different shapes and forms is because it inspires people to lead in very pragmatic ways,” Almeida said.