

Our Village Is Dying

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2009 Pride of CASE V Awards Program

Category No. 40 Excellence in Feature Writing, Individual

Submitted by:

Matthew Dewald, Assistant Director of Communications
Office of University Communications, University of Dayton
300 College Park, Dayton OH 45469-2963
dewald@udayton.edu; 927-229-1404

Story by Matthew Dewald

Magazine edited by Thomas M. Columbus

Budget

The writer traveled to West Africa for two and a half weeks, living with the students in Barombi village and traveling with them throughout Cameroon. Travel, meals and lodging were arranged through the University's campus ministry, which was reimbursed for \$4,500. An additional \$100 was reimbursed to the writer for expenses, totaling \$4,600 in expenses for the story. (Photographs were provided by students or shot by the writer.)

Staffing

The story author is the assistant director of communications. His responsibilities include managing editor of the *University of Dayton Magazine* and editor of the *Dayton Educator*, among others. The magazine has no full-time, dedicated staff; it is produced by a department of four editors (who also act as writers and proofreaders), an art director, a staff photographer and a project manager. Additional communications staff members contribute to the publication. No freelancers were used on this story.

Measure of Effectiveness

In our 2009 reader survey, 325 respondents offered answers to the question, "What story from the past year sticks most in your mind?" More than 25 percent of the responses referred to "Our Village Is Dying" (number = 83). The story, reprinted in part in a later *Dayton Engineer* alumni magazine, elicited a similar response. The School of Engineering is reprinting the story for use as a student recruitment piece. And, after reading the magazine article, one graduate contacted the faculty adviser with a request: May I please discuss with the students their solutions to various challenges? This alumnus was embarking on a similar service project through a fellowship with his employer and looked to the students as experts on the subject of cross-cultural communications on construction projects.

The story perfectly reflected the mission of the University and the goals of the publication: We are a diverse community committed, in the Marianist tradition, to educating the whole person and to linking learning and scholarship with leadership and service. Through our magazine, we entertain, engage and enlighten, with the goal of building alumni pride and developing a sustainable donor base. The magazine's audience is alumni, donors, employees, parents of current students and opinion leaders.