Bringing Agri-Science & Social Entrepreneurship to the Forefront: Enhancing Community through Environmental Education for Underserved Students

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DURHAM COUNTY FACED ISSUES WITH LOW PERFORMING SCHOOLS, LACK OF ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY FOR YOUTH, AND POOR WATER QUALITY. HOW DID THEY DESIGN A SOLUTION THAT ADDRESSED ALL THREE FACETS?

The Bionomic Educational Training Center (BETC, pronounced “Betsy”), opens opportunity to at-risk youth through education and apprenticeships to improve water quality, expanding their window into the world of agri-science, green industries and green infrastructure.

Level 1: Curriculum Teacher Training
Level 2: School Agribuisiness Development
Level 3: Short Term Contracted Work
Level 4: Summer Apprenticeship Program

What would an apprenticeship program look like in your city?
Q & A

Q: Because water pollution is a shared, regional concern, is there cooperation with other cities in addressing water pollution?
A: Durham is aggressive in addressing this through community engagement, which is the real focus of BETC. Durham hopes to expand the program into surrounding areas.

Q: Are there pathways for students into careers post-apprenticeship?
A: The green industry is the 2nd or 3rd largest industry in NC depending on the year and shows a deficit in employees. There is opportunity here for hiring of trained apprentices.

Q: What are the next steps for BETC?
A: Increase teachers to 10 and students to 40 and pursue further funding.

Q: What do the students enjoy the most?
A: Projects like Riparian Buffers and Rain Gardens where they can see dramatic change through their work.

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