
A MACRO AND MICRO LOOK AT SIFE: STUDENTS IN FREE ENTERPRISE

**Alvin Rohrs, President and CEO
Students in Free Enterprise**

SIFE AT THE MACRO LEVEL

The Inaugural SIFE World Cup was held July 11-13 in London, where the SIFE National Champions from 18 countries competed for the crown of SIFE World Champion - a title won by Drury University for the 4-year division. Butte College, the SIFE USA Champion in the 2-year division, was also announced as the 2-year World Champions since there are not any 2-year divisions outside the U.S. This was a milestone for SIFE in a year when SIFE achieved another milestone - 1000 colleges and universities in 25 countries enrolled in SIFE.

In the United States, over 750 colleges and universities were enrolled in SIFE representing 30% of all colleges and universities and 39% of all four-year universities. The number of schools participating in SIFE in the U.S. has been growing at an average 15% a year and is expected to continue growing at double digit rates.

The primary source of funds to support this effort is the contributions of the Board of Directors - 175 top business leaders.

SIFE AT THE MICRO LEVEL

The macro view of SIFE shows significant growth but the real value of SIFE is best seen at the micro level ... at the campuses where SIFE is active and in the communities where those SIFE Teams operate.

What Is A SIFE Team?

A SIFE Team is lead by a faculty advisor, named a Sam Walton Fellow, who recruits a cadre of students to conduct free enterprise education projects throughout their community. The mission of a SIFE Team is teaching others.

What Do SIFE Teams Teach?

Market Economics, Entrepreneurship, Personal Success Skills and Business Ethics. These concepts are embodied in the four main SIFE Judging Criteria. The Criteria is:

How creative, innovative and effective were the students in teaching:

- | | |
|----|--|
| 1. | How free markets work in the global economy. |
| 2. | How entrepreneurs succeed by identifying a market need and then profitably producing and marketing a product or service to fill that need. |
| 3. | The personal, entrepreneurial, communications, technology and financial management skills needed to successfully compete. |
| 4. | Practicing business in an ethical and socially responsible manner that supports the principles of a market economy. |

In their educational programs, how effective were the students at:

- | | |
|----|---|
| 5. | Measuring the results of their projects. |
| 6. | Utilizing mass media and the Internet. |
| 7. | Involving non-business majors and utilizing a Business Advisory Board. |
| 8. | Communicating their program through their written report and verbal presentation. |

How Do SIFE Teams Teach?

SIFE's learning philosophy is "Tell me and I will forget, show me and I might remember, involve me and I will understand." SIFE Teams determine what audiences they want to target and then develop outreach projects to teach their selected audiences. This process can include acquiring and using materials from other sources or developing the materials themselves. The teams are encouraged to develop and use the most effective and creative teaching methods.

What Motivates SIFE Teams?

The primary motivation for the students and faculty are to see the impact their educational efforts have on those they teach. SIFE also introduces a secondary motivation, which is intercollegiate competition and recognition. SIFE Teams compete with each other to see who is the best at teaching others market economics, entrepreneurship, personal success skills and business ethics.

SIFE Teams compete in the overall competition at regional, national and global competitions, and in several categories of special competitions.

What Do SIFE Students Learn?

The SIFE experience is a unique learning opportunity for SIFE students. SIFE's leadership philosophy is; people support what they help to create. SIFE students learn leadership, teamwork and communications skills. By creating education projects, SIFE students learn and practice brainstorming, project management, marshalling resources, time management, interpersonal communication and public speaking, to list just a few. SIFE is unique among most student organizations because SIFE students receive recognition only by teaching others to succeed and only for the team's effort

How Do Faculty Benefit?

Faculty advisors/Sam Walton Fellows get to become true mentors of the students on the team, improve the lives of those they help reach, improve their community and improve the learning on their campus.

How Can Economic Educators Benefit?

Including the organization of a successful SIFE Team into current economic education activities increases significantly the amount of activities that can be conducted and can increase the quality of those efforts. This is due primarily to the volunteer efforts of the students. This is documented very well in the Larry Dale article; “Student Performance in Economics and Economic Education” (*Journal of Economics and Economic Education Research*, Volume 1, Fall 2000, pg. 44-52.)

At the macro level SIFE is “Changing the World” by involving thousands of students and faculty around the world in teaching economic and business concepts to millions of people in 25 countries.

At the micro level SIFE is “Changing the World” one life at a time.

ECONOMIC EDUCATION ARTICLES

