Ethics in Global Service Learning: Power, Privilege and Justice

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Objectives:

1. Understand ethical dilemmas of working in international communities.
2. Identify pitfalls possible in international service.
3. Gain strategies to avoid negative impacts in communities and promote a more equitable exchange.
4. Gain strategies to make international service focused on root causes, and equip students to understand and act on poverty, human rights abuses, inequality and discrimination.
Welcome

- Who we are
- Who are you?
Alternative Breaks

- Student-led
- Short term immersion programs
- Social issue & learning component
- Strong direct service
- Post-trip follow-up & continued engagement
- Present at most colleges & universities: 70,000 students on alternative spring breaks in 2012
International Service Learning

“International Service Learning combines academic instruction and community-based service in an international context…. Objectives include increasing participants’ global awareness, building intercultural understanding, and enhancing civic-mindedness and skills.”
EXPLORING POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE IMPACTS OF GLOBAL SERVICE

justice and charity
Defining terms

- What do we mean by “community?”
How can global service be positive in terms of:

- Student Learning
- Community Benefit
Benefits of global service

For students

- Understanding local culture and issues beyond host family and excursions experiences
- Enhances academic rigor
- New perspectives
- Active Citizenship

For community

- Access to resources through students (labor, finances, advocacy)
- Struggle is recognized and vision promoted by outsiders
- Capacity-building
How can international service have negative impacts on:

- Students
- Communities
Negative impacts of global service

For students

- Reinforcing negative stereotypes or ignorance, without preparation for culture or knowledge of US involvement
- Frustration and disillusionment
- Expense (compared to domestic service)
- Challenge of following up for long-term effects

For community

- Perpetuating legacies of colonialism and inequality
- Handouts, not capacity-building, leading to dependence
- Displacement of local labor and undermining local systems
- Short-term impact without long-term capacity for continuation
- Poverty tourism and objectification
Social Justice

- A process, not an outcome, which (1) seeks fair (re)distribution of resources, opportunities, and responsibilities; (2) challenges the roots of oppression and injustice; (3) empowers all people to exercise self-determination and realize their full potential; (4) and builds social solidarity and community capacity for collaborative action.

- UC Berkeley (socialwelfare.berkeley.edu/sjs/)
A justice model of global service learning

- Service-only approach addresses immediate needs in a community
- Justice perspectives looks at sustainable, long-term change
  - Capacity-building
  - Provides social, economic, historical, and geopolitical context
  - Emphasizes identity, diversity and inclusion
  - Ensures equal access for all students
  - Builds academic connections across disciplines
STRATEGIES & EFFECTIVE PRACTICES IN PROGRAMS

Before service
During service
After service
Before service

- Preparing students with understanding of justice and privilege, cultural competence, self-awareness
- Developing strong projects from the beginning
- Ensure mutually-developed goals
During service

- Critical reflection
- Engagement with the partner – are we on track with the work plan?
After service

- Assess impact
- Advocacy and education as action
TAKE-AWAYS
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THANK YOU!