Walking the Talk: Applying Fair Trade Learning Principles to Alternative Breaks

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Student Sustainability Initiative: Leadership for Social Change

- Housed within Student Leadership & Involvement
- Student fee-funded, student-run initiative
- Holistic definition of sustainability
- Three programmatic focus areas
Center for Civic Engagement
Imagine a Better World. Make it Happen.

• Housed within Student Leadership & Involvement
• Hub for co-curricular community engagement and service-learning
• Facilitate reciprocal community engaged learning experiences
• Inspire social responsibility
Goals of Session

• To explore how sustainability education and civic learning can be coupled
• To articulate the principles of Fair Trade Learning
• To illustrate ways Fair Trade Learning can be applied to domestic short and long-term service trips
• To have fun in a collaborative learning environment
Session Overview

• Fair Trade Learning (FTL) Tool Kit
• OSU’s application of FTL in alternative breaks
• Q&A
Framework - Interdependence

“The way we harm the earth affects all people and how we treat each other is reflected in how we treat the earth.” - Paul Hawken
Potential problems in community based service-learning

Volunteer tourism good intentions…

- New forms of colonialism/economic dependency
- Commodification of experience and/or host community
- Cultural tourism or exploitation
- Pollution, environmental impacts
Challenging Attitudes

- “The Fixers”
- “The Idealizers”
- “The Pragmatists”
- “The Veterans”
- “The New Student”
What is Fair Trade Learning?

“Fair Trade Learning is global educational partnership exchange that prioritizes reciprocity in relationships through cooperative, cross-cultural participation in learning, service, and civil society efforts. It foregrounds the goals of economic equity, equal partnership, mutual learning, cooperative and positive social change, transparency, and sustainability. Fair Trade Learning explicitly engages the global civil society role of educational exchange in fostering a more just, equitable, and sustainable world.” -
What is Fair Trade Learning?

Core Principles:
- Dual Purposes
- Community Voice and Direction
- Institutional Commitment and Partnership
- Sustainability
- Transparency
- Environmental Sustainability and Footprint Reduction
- Economic Sustainability
- Deliberate Diversity, Intercultural Contact, and Reflection
- Global Community Building
Fair Trade Learning Toolkit

Tool Objectives:

1. To consider the role of ethics in community engagement education.

2. To review and apply the Fair trade Learning ethical framework.

3. To develop recommendations supporting continuous program enhancement, specifically in respect to quality community partnerships.
Fair Trade Learning Toolkit

- Pre-trip reading and video assignments
- Small group reflection & dialogue facilitation on an aspect of Fair Trade Learning
- Three touchpoints: pre-trip, during trip, & post-trip
Historical Analysis of Civic Education

Do something good

Do something good and learn something

Make a difference and become different

Co-create the world you want to live in
OSU Alternative Breaks

Breakaway from apathy.

Bond, Learn,
Serve, Transform.

Four annual trips

- Change, Not Coins: Housing & Food Insecurity in San Francisco, California
- Tangled Roots: Community & Cultural Engagement in Yakima, Washington
- Digging Deeper: Environmental Restoration & Conservation in Ashland, Oregon
- Native Voices: Community Wellbeing & Cultural Engagement in Warm Springs, Oregon
Critical vs. Traditional Service-Learning (Mitchell, 2008)

- Work to redistribute power
- Develop authentic relationships
- Work from a social change perspective
- Use service as a tool to motivate students to work for change in structural issues
- Challenging the term “service”
Fair Trade Learning Applied

- Guiding values
- Community site visits
- Reciprocity
- Community partners participate in creating:
  - learning outcomes, trip itinerary, reflective activities
- Pre-trip meeting curriculum/orientation
  - Readings, videos
Fair Trade Learning Applied

- Itinerary: community projects, educational sessions, reflection, place-based explorations
- Carbon footprint calculator into Ashland AB
- Reflection - pre-trip, during trip, post-trip
- Critical reflection (social change tree)
New Directions & Intentions: FTL Applied

- Engage students in carbon offset opportunities for all trip travel
- Create purchasing policies/guidance to focus on local business/sourcing, fair-trade, etc.
- Add more annual trips to regional locations
- Increase identity development and cultural-based education
- Explore opportunities to strengthen pre & post trip reflection
Reciprocity, Solidarity, Change

“If you have come here to help me, you are wasting your time. But if you have come because your liberation is bound up with mine, then let us work together.”

–Lilla Watson and Aboriginal activists group, Queensland, 1970s
Thank you for coming!

• Questions?

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References


