



Becoming a “Global Steward” - Our Path for Creating a Personal Analysis and Action Plan



Launch the right mindset before they leave...

Encourage your students to think about what they are looking to get out of the trip before they depart. Sadly, voluntourism (or travel volunteerism) is just what you might think from its name: tourists traveling to an area “in need” to complete a volunteer project. Through Global Citizen Reflection, students will be able to consider how service-learning is different from travel volunteering and which one offers a better approach to affect the reciprocal relationship between student and host organization.

Embrace the right start when they arrive...

The first moments and sensations we experience in a new place are often the ones that we want to remember the most. By intentionally amplifying awareness and engaging all of their senses, students will paint a picture to help others better understand their experience in their host country. By exploring the host organization’s mission and the needs of the community, your students will find their role in a new community.

Giving and receiving

An important element of service and community engagement is reciprocity, which is the idea that the service and the learning must be worthwhile and valuable for both the community and the student, blurring the lines between “server” and “served.” As students work in new communities, the opportunities for growth are exponential as they understand the human dimension of the community partner’s work, are mindful of the community partner’s resources, and consider the legacy of the partnership. Students will be able to reflect on the benefits and challenges of reciprocity among themselves, the community organization, and the community members.

Meeting the challenge and engaging critical consciousness

Some of the goals and potential challenges of service abroad are to increase awareness of self, expand one’s knowledge of other cultures, and heighten one’s awareness about other perspectives. These are elements of a social concept called “critical consciousness,” which encourages an in-depth understanding of the world as well as taking action against the perceived oppressive elements highlighted by that understanding.

When they come home...

When asked why students chose to participate in a service program abroad, they often express a desire for a cross-cultural experience, to develop professional and foreign language skills, and to give back to the community. These are all wonderful reasons to engage in service, but they are not beyond the need for reflection. The civic responsibility to “give back through community engagement” is not one that exists solely in an isolated abroad experience. It is a responsibility students share within their communities at home, as well. A well-designed program leaves students permanently inspired.

“Global Stewards” engage in a true analysis before developing a concrete action plan

The most effective and sustainable kind of community development teaches students to discover a community’s assets and capacities, and then gives power to those assets in order to create self-sustainability. Students take the vital lessons learned during their time abroad and, in turn, assess their home communities’ assets. Only after evaluating an asset-based perspective versus a needs-based perspective can students determine what will be more beneficial to a community in both the short and the long term.