

Short-term Study Abroad Including Service-Learning with Critical Reflection Provides Transformative Experience for Students: Case Study from Kenya

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The lens through which social work and other social science students view the world impacts their understanding of the type and scope of interventions necessary to affect change in an increasingly global world. Social work educators are charged to educate future social workers to be competent professionals in a complex and changing social environment. Without an understanding of cultural competence, interventions fall short of the desired impact whether those interventions occur at the micro, mezzo, or macro level. Changing that lens for students, or at least giving them tools to understand it, is a vital part of their education. Opportunities for students to experience international practice also encourage the development of contextual knowledge (Payne and Askeland, 2008) and reinforce the profession's commitment to responsible global citizenship (Cox and Pawar, 2006). To meet this obligation, social work programs should be vigilant about increasing opportunities for all students to have transformative experiences. Recognizing that only 10% of US students study abroad, and those who do primarily go to Europe (Deruy, 2016) highlight the challenge. Although these experiences are beneficial, different issues exist in the developing world, and exposure to these issues can be important in student development. Programs are challenged to develop meaningful experiences that are tailored to the realities of contemporary students, many of whom are working, are parents, and do not have the extra financial resources to consider study abroad. Short-term study abroad, by itself, has been criticized as providing a sort of academic voyeurism where students have no real emersion in the culture. Service-learning, however, provides a high impact learning experience that engages students in both community development and problem solving. When service-learning is combined with an international experience, student learning is broadened and critical reflection enables them to make connections that they can bring to their practice at any level. Because these experiences are shorter

Abstract

As the world has become more accessible to everyone through modern technology such as airplanes and the internet, the need to educate students to function in a global society has received increasing attention. Short-term study abroad opportunities (1-3 weeks) have evolved as a viable option for contemporary students to give them exposure to life outside of their daily experiences. These short-term programs have been criticized for providing only "tourism" and not any real depth of experience with local people and culture. This paper provides an overview of a short-term study abroad (10 day) paired with a service-learning project that lasted an entire semester and was embedded within a for-credit university course. The structure of the project is described as well as observed impact on student learning. Conclusions provide an argument that short-term study abroad, when paired with service-learning and critical reflection, can provide the type of transformative student experience desired by universities and enable a broader section of the student body opportunities for international experiences.

in duration, they enable a broader cross-section of students to participate, drawing in students who have historically not been able to travel abroad.

Literature Review

As part of their response to the American Association of Social Work and Social Welfare's Grand Challenges for Social Work Initiative (GCSWI), Nuruis et al. (2017) suggest that social work educators offer transformational educational experiences that prepare students to work with clients from diverse backgrounds, with interprofessional teams, and with local and global communities and constituents (see also Estes, 1992; Healy, 1992; Midgley, 1994). Further, research identifies the need for social work educational programs to include more international and cross-cultural content. As early as the 1960s, Healy (1986: 135) stressed the professional responsibility of social work educators, "we neglect our responsibility in social work education when we do not provide a world view to our students and we neglect our responsibility to our profession and our government when we do not contribute to international service". Social workers must be able to handle a rapidly changing and increasingly complicated landscape. Accordingly, their skill sets must include global consciousness, cultural competency, and knowledge of diversity and human rights. They must be prepared to work in a multicultural environment that recognizes the ways in which global events affect local people and concerns. Some social workers need to be prepared to work internationally, and others need to understand international issues when working at home.

Although international social work does not have one clear definition throughout the discipline, generally the field includes some reference to social work action at local or global levels to redress inequalities in a global context (IFSW, 2005; Cox and Pawar, 2006; Payne and Askeland, 2008). Educators generally accept that students require a background understanding of international social work to be fully prepared to work in any country (Roholt and Fisher, 2013). Scholars argue that social work in the twenty-first century should reflect its global responsibilities with specific emphasis on the need for the profession to respond to global challenges at all levels of practice from local to global (Cox and Pawar, 2006). Further, Payne and Askeland (2008) advocate for greater efforts to globalize the social work profession so that 'economic, political and cultural relationships between people across the world are enhanced' and 'contextual knowledge' creation is encouraged. Western social work must maintain the effort to enact the core values of empowerment, social justice and human rights and to fulfil the mission of social work and its emancipatory aims at the global level (Cox and Pawar, 2006).

Equally important, however, is that Western social work traditions and standards are not imposed on non-Western social work traditions and that indigenous social work knowledge is validated. An understanding of indigenous social work knowledge is best understood from first hand observation and interaction with those practices in the culture in which they were developed. Indeed, social work as a global profession stands to benefit from the conceptual richness of a critical, post-colonial approach to diverse social work tradition (Payne and Askeland, 2008; Wehbi, 2009; Staniforth et al, 2011; Bell, 2012; Dominelli and Hackett, 2012). Social work educators, have a key role to play in internationalizing social work curricula and specifically to ensure that social justice and human rights principles are central in social work education as they are reflected in

a global context (O'Brien, 2011). Lough (2009) encourages social work educators to focus not only on the development of students' professional competencies, but also to engage students in mutually beneficial relationships with host countries to foster transformative educational experiences focused on social change and social justice; the types of exchanges promoted through service-learning principles.

The incorporation of international experiential learning opportunities is well-supported in the literature (Cox and Pawar, 2006). For example, many social work schools in Canada, the US, Australia and New Zealand place students abroad. The identified gaps in learning, however, are that little is done to effectively integrate international learning into the curriculum (Cox and Pawar, 2006). Based on that identified gap, the argument was posed that experiential learning be imbedded into international educational opportunities to enhance social work students' commitment to informed action toward social justice and human rights in a contextual sense.

Short-term study abroad service-learning experiences are rooted in the works of Paolo Freire (1970:9). Freire articulates an educational theory that emphasizes the need to critique oppressive structures throughout society and focus on the action reflection dialectic of praxis. Gaining popularity as a vehicle for such experience are short-term international courses, defined as educational trips outside the US lasting 1 to 3 weeks, meant to offer alternatives to traditional semester long or year-long abroad experiences (Fisher and Grettenberg, 2015). The university study body in the US has changed; many students already have families and jobs or are working to pay for their educations. These students do not have the time or ability to be away from home for such large lengths of time. Whether attributed to non-traditional student body, economic disparities, or lack of interest, problems of limited participation in study abroad courses is substantially more pronounced in the southeast region. For example, only .99% of students in Alabama study abroad (nafsa.org). In fact, the southeastern United States has very few students who participate in study abroad options (MS, .79%; GA 1.98%; FL 1.01%; and TN 1.75%). In addition to educational benefits, research indicates that study abroad opportunities help students develop soft skills such as flexibility, initiative, and collaboration (Deruy, 2016). As such, study abroad is considered a high-impact learning tool in higher education; however, many students, particularly students in the south, have not traditionally taken advantage of these program.

Study abroad programs offer students a transformative experience that goes beyond social work education based on instrumental competencies (Lough, 2009). International service-learning must go beyond taking students abroad for academic voyeurism, or to merely examine an international context. They should be active learners and leave the community with some benefit them having been there. In other words, students should not just take, they should also give to the international communities thus providing reciprocity of benefit (Roholt and Fisher, 2013). These are the goals of service-learning.

A central focus of service-learning is reciprocal benefit: both the community partner and the students should learn and benefit from the project. Desired outcomes for co-curricular service-learning include identity and leadership development, multicultural awareness, clarifying career and life goals, understanding of local and global social issues (Jacoby, 2015). Service-learning opportunities create leadership for social change among participants. Further, community-based research defined as a

collaborative research partnership that engages community agents together with higher educational partners in research projects that address community-identified questions or issues, are required for successful service-learning engagement (Paul, 2009).

Multicultural education within service-learning can help students expand their emotional comfort zones in dealing with difference, gain an increasing ability to view the world from multiple perspectives, and reflect on their own social position in relation to others (Wade, Boyle-Baise and O'Grady, 2001). Critical service-learning experiences work to dismantle structures of injustice and inequality by helping to redistribute power and eliminate social inequalities by helping students identify systems of oppression and power. Further, these experiences transform students' understanding of human difference and commonality and help them identify systems of oppression and power and privilege (Jacoby, 2015). Through critical reflection, students learn to confront their own stereotypes, power, and privilege as well as their role as a global citizen.

Purpose of Study

Not much research has been conducted on the combination of service-learning and study abroad experiences. However, the importance of imbedding service-learning in international experiences is expressed in the recognition that service-learning without thoughtfully integrated multicultural education and reflection can validate assumptions, perpetuate stereotypes, and create a mentality of separateness and superiority (Jacoby, 2015). Likewise, multicultural education without engagement with communities of difference isolates students from the individuals who are different from them and from the larger community of which they are a part (O'Grady 2000). That type of learning does not provide authentic context in which service provision needs to occur. By combining service-learning with education abroad, students interact directly with community and observe first hand effects of racism, sexism, poverty, and oppression in the context in which it occurs. Benefits to student learning include personal growth and development, academic learning, interpersonal outcomes and outcomes related to college experience, as well as empathy, a sense of social responsibility. Previous studies indicate that service-learning promotes an increase retention and understanding of course content, the ability to apply theory to practice, critical thinking and cognitive development. In addition to student benefits, service-learning should benefit the community through infusion of new energy, ideas, and manpower. Additional manpower allows assistance to broaden delivery of existing services or to begin new ones: fresh approaches, enhanced capacity to conduct and use research

The social justice orientation focuses on the redistribution of power among all participants in service-learning. Students develop authentic relationships in the classroom and in the community where they work and use critical reflection to deconstruct and understand the systems of power and privilege that sustain inequalities (Mitchell, 2008). While service-learning is common in social work education, there is a need for more research investigating students' perceptions of benefits of and challenges to participation in service-learning, especially with international programs (Lough, 2009). By assessing the effectiveness of teamwork with service-learning, we hope to better understand best practices for social work education in an international setting. In this article, we describe our short-term international study abroad course with a service-learning element that was imbedded in a full semester university supported course.

Additionally, we examine the specific learning objectives of service-learning and evaluate those by using student reflections, discussions, and presentation findings to better understand whether the combined experience of being out of the US and engaging in service-learning provided transformative student learning. The results are presented in a qualitative context analysis. The course provided 3 hours of credit for either graduate or undergraduate students.

The Class

Although the course was housed in social work, it was open to all students across campus. The course was designed with our community partner With My Own Two Hands (WMO2H) based in Laguna Beach, California.¹ WMO2H provided all in-country contacts and accommodations that made the course viable. On the classroom side, students worked in teams to develop content, design interventions, and deliver that intervention to a rural school in Namanga, Kenya. As part of their time in Kenya, students worked in teams to complete service-learning projects that provide a service to the Maasai community, primarily working at Tumaini Academy, while also informing their own learning. This approach helps students gain a deeper and practical understanding of the international social work practices, as well as, a broader appreciation of how social workers engage with groups, communities and organizations in Kenya.

The class: Women's Rights and Health in Kenya, met every Tuesday night during the spring semester of 2018. Twelve students enrolled in the course, all female, but representing a diverse racial and ethnic mix. Students were also diverse in age and educational level. The class was structured around three components: pre-travel readings, reflections, and discussions; in-country journals and reflections; and post-travel reflections, discussions, and presentations. Student reflections and presentation materials comprise the data for this paper. One of the advantages of this short-term study abroad experience was that it was embedded in a semester-long for-credit course. We believe this is a critical component to the success of such short-term experiences. Students had preparation before traveling as well as debriefing after traveling.

Students began a series of readings, lectures, and guest speakers related to laws, culture, and practices in Kenya and of the Maasai ethnic community. Additionally, students were asked to research issues on their own related to women's health in Kenya. A critical issue that continued to surface in class discussions was the subject of menstrual health and women's loss of educational opportunities because of it. We also talked to our community partners to determine their knowledge about menstrual health in the projects where they work. WMO2H identified access to proper feminine hygiene items as a barrier that they had been told about from all of their projects. Specifically, they were asked to bring underwear for girls at every project. Some people donate sanitary supplies but fail to realize that the girls do not have underwear. Without underwear, the supplies are useless to the girls. Research revealed that menstrual hygiene management for school girls in places like Kenya have been neglected and have been associated with girls' absenteeism from school because they do not have absorbent materials, they lack facilities for changing and washing appropriately, they

¹ For more information see www.withmyown2hands.org.

fear leakage, and they suffer discomfort (Sommer and Sahin, 2013). Absences from school lead to poor academic performance (McMahon et al., 2011; Mason et al., 2013).

Two issues related to the discussion of reusable pads have been raised. The first is, why reusable pads instead of disposable pads. The answer to that question relates to waste management issues in this area of Kenya, as well as sustainability of the interventions. Most latrines in the intervention area of Kenya are not connected to sewage systems and amount to a hole born into the ground. Thus, the disposal of sanitary napkins in school poses significant issues of sanitation, odor, and flies. While disposable sanitary pads are an immediate fix, and probably a viable alternative for emergency situations, they do not provide an environmentally friendly long-term solution. Similarly, with a focus on sustainable solutions, disposable pads are just that; disposable. They are only good for one use and then they are trash. The cost of purchasing these supplies presents a tremendous burden for poor girls and this would be an expense necessary every month. Alternatively, the reusable pads are good for up to 5 years depending upon the care taken to clean and preserve them.

After consultation with our community partners in the US and abroad, students decided to build an intervention to address this need. Although other organizations have done some of this work, through communication with our community partner, this type of project had not been delivered in the sites that we would visit. These discussions in class lead students to talk about a project they knew about that originated in the nursing department through their community health project. That project made reusable pads for women in a different country. Discussions lead to questions about whether we could make pads to take to Kenya and design a lesson plan around female adolescent health that would include proper menstrual health management.

The first premise of service-learning is that there should be reciprocal benefit to the community partner and to the students. Working in an international context required assessment of the cultural acceptance of the topic, and the ability to successfully deliver the topic. We did not want to develop a project that was not needed, not wanted, or not possible. Thus, after students had conducted several weeks of reading and discussing issues in the Maasai community, we forwarded areas of interest to WMO2H who reached out to the project in Kenya to determine the viability of the lesson plans. The literature informed us that menstrual health management was an issue, but we needed the community where we would visit to tell us that this was an issue and that they would be receptive to lesson plans surrounding this issue.

Before we settled on this project, we contacted the local school in Kenya, through our community partner WMO2H to make sure that the girls had access to water and a private place in their living quarters to address their needs. We also asked if they had access to soap and how they do their laundry to ensure that each girl would have ownership of her supplies. If such local investigation does not occur ahead of time, projects will be useless. If the girls do not have access to soap and water, they will not be able to clean their pads and they will not be reusable. Additionally, if they do not have a private space to address their needs, they are not likely to use these products. We also sought support and permission to address this topic with the girls, recognizing that different cultures handle issues differently. Fortunately, this topic well received by the project director, so much so that he invited neighboring schools to bring their girls over to partake in the lesson

Further investigation led us to find a pattern to make the reusable pads (Etsy). We got donations from some interested parties to purchase supplies, which were not very expensive, and we all cut out different pieces of the pads that we planned to assemble. Another social work colleague referred us to a sewing co-operative in our community that is a non-profit that conducts many different sewing initiatives in our community. We contacted them and they offered to provide a sewing lesson and access to 10 sewing machines at one time. The cost to rent the space was \$300. Luckily, as part of the service-learning initiative at our institution, professors who have participated in the faculty fellows in service-learning course are eligible to receive a \$300 mini grant once each semester to support projects directly related to a service-learning project. That mini grant paid for 12 students to learn to use a sewing machine and sew reusable feminine pads. These pads are environmentally friendly, as disposal of waste is a huge problem in Kenya. They are also economically advantageous because they can be washed and reused.

Learning to sew the pads proved to be a challenge. Many of the students had never used a sewing machine. They did not know how to thread the machine or how to use it. Each machine is a little different. The first lesson was all about how to thread the machine, wind the bobbin, load the bobbin, and make the machine work. Then we set about sewing the pads from all of the pieces that we already had cut out. We had to throw away a few of the early products, but for the most part, they were usable. However, in 3 hours, we only completed 10 usable pads. Some students took the pads home (if they had access to a sewing machine) and two faculty members worked on sewing pads. The sewing teacher also took some home with her and we planned to meet once more at the sew-op to finish up the pads. Finally, students had to learn how to sew on snaps that are used to fasten the pads into the panties. Students and faculty also collected panties so that each girl would receive 2 pads and a pair of panties.

We worked with Tumaini Academy to deliver the lesson in the girls' dorm – but it was too small and too hot, so we had the lesson behind the girls' dorm. The Director, and the Head Teacher, wanted it to be away from the boys so the girls would be free to ask questions and not be embarrassed or shy. The Director's daughter, a social work graduate from Kenya, translated everything for us so that all children could understand at the same level. Although English is the official language in Kenya, the community language is Swahili. Depending upon when children started coming to school, their English proficiency varies. From our team, two students delivered the content of the lesson describing the female reproductive system and how it works, which the others were on hand to support the effort, answer questions, and assist with making bracelets to identify cycles. At the end of the lesson, our team distributed the reusable pads to the girls. We did not have enough, but the girls expressed excitement in receiving them and we were able to leave a sewing machine on site so that additional pads could be made after we left. The pad project is being evaluated and will be the subject of a future research study. The focus of this paper, however, is the US student's transformative learning after being involved with such a service-learning project abroad.

Data Collection Methods

First, students conducted a series of pre-travel reflections, in-country reflections, and post-travel reflections (see attached A). Students began by identifying their desires

for the course, their concepts of global citizenship, and their personal goals for growth. In-country, they were asked to reflect on their experiences as being outsiders, and with communication difficulties, and similarities and differences they experienced with the people with whom they were interacting. These reflections were designed to have them be fully present in the experience instead of just showing up as a tourist. Further, the discussion of content of readings, guest lectures, and documentary films that they engaged in prior to travel presented them with facts and cultural issues that they could expect to encounter. All journals, reflections, and discussions were analyzed for common themes and transformative learning experiences. These themes were then placed into categories around issues identified as service-learning principles.

Findings

The first premise of service-learning is that there should be reciprocal benefits to the community partner and to the students. Examining the journals and reflections of students involved in the class reveals that both of these criteria were met. First, to the benefits to the community partner, Tumaini Academy and the students that attend there, we were able to provide important information about female health and provide an intervention that will be sustainable. Our team provided answers, and shared information concerning some of the most basic issues female biology. For example, one child asked, "If you have a period does that mean the baby died?" Other experiences that were reflected in the journals of program participants relate to providing factual information to the girls:

The girls did not have any idea that the cycle was a 28-day cycle that repeats each month. They did not know how to track their period and be prepared. We made bracelets with them that had 7 of the same color beads lumped together and then 21 different color beads. The beads showed them how to count their cycle and how to become aware of the consistency of their own cycles and be prepared.

We learned that many families and communities had myths about female reproductive health. For example, the story about the girl who was beaten because she started her period and her family thought that it meant she was having sex – told by the school teacher.

Providing accurate information to the girls empowered them to take control of their lives. They were so excited to receive the reusable pads. They giggled and smiled and shared with each other when we were short. (Many more girls were in attendance than we had originally been told). The project was such a success that the school personnel agreed to continue the efforts after we were gone.

Students benefited from feeling empowered to actually address a problem in a sustainable way. Student reflections include the following:

I am very honored and humbled to be part of the reusable pad project. It was something I did originally with MedHope and being able to bring it to Kenya and actually see the girls receive them and the teachers appreciate them so much is

an amazing opportunity. I am thrilled that Eunice is going to take up the project as a community education initiative as well.

The most lasting impact I saw was with the reusable pads and sewing patterns we gave out there to the neighboring school. Beyond a one-time visit and getting to play and talk together, this seems like something that will help the girls out every single month. Additionally, it is being given the opportunity to expand as they have been given the resources to continue the project independently now that we are back home.

Overall the lesson went amazing. It was cool to see how this topic, even though awkward, allowed for the girls to ask questions. Hearing some of the misconceptions was sad, but luckily [we] were able to clear these issues up. Handing out the pads and seeing the girl's face light up will probably be one of the best moments.



The menstrual health lesson at Tumaini was a great learning point and it felt great to feel like we were helping provide information and resources that were really need in this community.



The atmosphere for the MHM lesson was great. It felt like such a safe space, conducive for learning about women's health and feeling more comfortable with the issue altogether. I feel like all of us talking about menstrual health plainly and laughing and being easygoing about the topic helped reduce the stigma. I was just overjoyed that it was so well received. The teachers said they were grateful because they say their girls gaining a lot from the lesson and they knew it would make a difference in the long run. She said she planned to review everything with them in homeroom to make sure they remembered everything. The girls seemed really interested in learning about menstrual health and using the reusable pads, so I really hope that it will be useful to them in the future.

I think the lesson went really well and I am so grateful for this experience. It has truly changed my life to be able to make a difference in someone else's and I will never forget it.

Reciprocity in the relationship is demonstrated by two important prospects. First, students were able to identify with the girls and women about this critical aspect of female life. They talked about "girls being girls and talking about girl things." Next, the project directors at Tumiani were so excited about the project, and the benefit to the girls, their families, and the schools, that they have continued it after our study abroad was complete. We continue to search for ways to support the efforts, but the project director refers to this as "life changing work." Both the students and the partners have benefitted from this project.

Another cornerstone of service-learning for transformative student experience is that service-learning must be partnered with multicultural education and reflection. Likewise, multicultural education without engagement with communities of difference

isolates students from the individuals who are different from them and from the larger community (O'Grady 2000). Both of these components were carefully crafted in the course, and we believe, were accomplished. Content was designed to ground them in the social justice issues with which they would be faced in Kenya, especially as they relate to women and girls. It was important for students to put aside their experiences of being a female in America and be able to understand the cultural expectations and gender role definitions of females in Kenya. Without such understanding, presentation of solutions would be unrealistic.

Based on the information contained in their reflections, students seemed prepared for their experience, and really embraced their role as support and not savior to the girls and women they met and interacted with. In response to identification of the greatest barriers faced by women and girls in Kenya, students reflected:

The biggest barrier is the deep-rooted cultures that value a patriarchal society.

The best way to advocate for girls and women is through education. Kenya, as a country, has laws and rights for women, but many individuals aren't aware of them and some cultures still enforce other rules in opposition to them. Many of the adults don't even understand things like female biology which results in the girls not receiving proper education and support from their families and not receiving proper supplies. They have a desire for education and advancement.

Greatest barrier facing women and girls: a simple lack of resources. A girl could be seen as equally deserving of an education by her family, but if the money isn't there to sponsor her through secondary school, what other option is there besides marriage for a family who can't afford to feed or house her any longer?

Women and girls have a lot of issues they deal with that seem to be universal, such as struggles with puberty and sex education, gender inequality, gender roles and expectations, sexual violence, and oppression based on strict traditional values. Feminism empathy and understanding of these similarities helped us to communicate openly and effectively even in a cultural setting that was so new and different to us.



Students were also asked to reflect on the greatest strength that they noticed among the people they met and interacted with in Kenya. This reflection was designed to have students see positives of a society and a culture that is different from their own. As social workers, we are a strength-based profession. Being able to see strengths is a hallmark of our ability to empower people to take charge of their own lives. In response to this reflection, students related:

These females are super heroes. They are strong and smart. They have big dreams, and they possess the tools to achieve them. They are independent and powerful, but they are also caring and form a community of support for one another. That is the image we should show the world: strong, capable, determined women they are and not as helpless. They need support, but they do not need rescuing from us.



Greatest displays of strength: to know that young girls were willing to leave their homes to pursue educations over marriage, and to hear what they wanted to be as they continued their educations was incredible.

The main connection that I observed between all the stories I heard and people that I met is the great amount of strength and resilience that these young girls displayed.

Americans perception of Africa is very sad. America portrays the citizens of Africa as being miserable, uneducated people and this is just not true. Every picture I saw from a child was positive and the kids were all smiles while painting. I loved seeing how happy the kids were to see pictures of themselves.



Students were also asked to reflect upon their learning about different cultures and what they wanted others who had not had this experience to know about the people they met and worked with in Kenya. This reflection was designed to help them give voice to their learning, to appreciate the engaged part of the learning. They did not only study about a group of people, they met them and worked with them. Thus, their cultural experience was paired with engagement to reinforce their learning. In response to questions about what they wanted people to know who had never traveled to Kenya, students relayed:

I learned that every person is the expert of his or her own life. I've heard it in classrooms and been instructed to apply it as we began field placement this semester, but this experience was the realest example I have seen so far, as something I lived through more so than other opportunities this semester.

Something that really stuck out in my mind was how to serve and support communities in need without taking on a role of a white, colonial savior. Communities need "support, not saving." Cultural competency is a key concept in social work practice and education, and I think this trip helped me learn more about how to be a culturally competent social worker. Empathy and flexibility were important

I think my perspective changed in that I realize just because we are shown filth, disaster, and need doesn't mean that is all there is to that country. It was never brought to my attention all the positive things they have there.

Desired outcomes for co-curricular service-learning include multicultural awareness, clarifying career and life goals, and understanding of local and global social issues. Journals and Reflection indicate that these goals were met through this course.

Multicultural awareness:

Sharing our lessons with children and women in Kenya was a great learning experience that forced us out of our comfort zones and helped us gain experience and learn about some of the practical skills needed to work with different communities and cultures, particularly regarding sensitive topics.



I would like people in the US and everywhere to understand more about people from Kenya and any other country is that they are all human. We are more alike than we are different.

I learned that you should never believe what you hear about countries (from the media). It is assumed that going to Africa is so scary and dangerous when in reality, it is no worse than America. The people we came in contact with were so kind and really seemed to care about us. I have never met anyone like our guides. They are the kindest and most loving people. To be afraid of Africa or anywhere in the world because of some preconceived notion of it is narrowminded. I am excited to travel more in my future.

Clarifying career and life goals:

This trip and this class has made me more willing to talk about these things regarding women's rights and women's health like periods, contraceptives, HIV and STI, and FGM. It is important and I've now seen those who it affects the most. I can't not do something now.

I have always been focused on health, but now I really want to focus on women's health. This trip brought me face to face with how important it is to make sure that women have both information and access to health.

I think the lesson went really well and I am so grateful for this experience. It has truly changed my life to be able to make a difference in someone else's and I will never forget it.

Understanding of local and global social issues:

Each person you attempt to help through service work regains their autonomy. People in need of social services or other resources are not lost puppies that need to be picked up and told where to go. They are the ones telling you what they need, they are the ones that know why they need it, and they are the ones who know their pasts and who will have to live their futures.



These are people and communities we should advocate for and support, but while standing beside them and not attempting to stand or speak over them. They are not by any means helpless or incapable of helping themselves and making decisions for their future. They are definitely not deserving of pity. Every person is deserving of their own autonomy and respect.

Sitting down and talking to the projects social workers allowed me to see the difference between social work in Kenya versus America. The conversation allowed me to see that the same type of cases are dealt with in Americas as in Kenya.

Students reflected on how it felt to provide lasting impact on an issue of women's health. Many of their journal entries related to being able to share something personal to girls with other girls. They laughed, they giggled, they asked and answered tough questions. They cleared up misunderstandings that American students take for

granted. These experiences helped bond them to the girls in Kenya and formed a common thread.

Discussion and Conclusions

This paper demonstrates that short-term study abroad experiences coupled with critical service-learning opportunities can provide transformative student learning. Additionally, these opportunities allow a broader section of the study body to participate in international learning because they are less expensive and more manageable for the nontraditional student who has work and family obligations. We believe several important lessons were learned from this experience.

First, we cannot express enough the importance of advanced communication with community partners and a strong commitment to the same goals of the project. This project would not have been successful if the partners had not been supportive or if the environment had not been conducive. If the girls did not have soap and water and private drying space, this would not work. If we had not had a translator, if we had not had privacy away from men and boys, if the children had not had time off from their regularly scheduled classes. All of these logistical issues were addressed ahead of time by the community partner. The follow-up, continuation, and evaluation have all been attributed to the community partner. Thus, any program planning a service-learning trip abroad, especially a short-term experience, should begin working with the community partner well in advance for a successful project and learning experience.

Next, reflection and discussion are critical to student learning. Reflection helps students process what they have experienced. It imprints the experience in their minds and helps them retain it better. It also allows them to see their own misunderstanding, preconceived ideas, and role in making the global relevant to the local.

Additionally, for such a short-term experience, we believe that the success hinged on the arrangement of the course as a semester long for credit course. Students did not just show up and go abroad for 10 days and return. They spent time reading about the conditions in-country, watching documentaries about issues in-country, and meeting with other people from the country to talk and discuss issues. These pre-travel preparations grounded them in what to expect and what was realistic. It helped to identify inequalities, oppressive structures and policies, and the privilege that they live in before traveling abroad. We believe students landed in Kenya with an open mind and a willingness to truly experience the culture. Having students in class for a month after they returned from Kenya was also beneficial. This time gave the course instructor opportunity to process with the students what they had experienced. In one of the meetings, students were asked to bring in photos from the trip that demonstrated their role as global citizens. The entire course discussion was around that topic. Students were also required to present their experiences two different times, once at the University wide Research Expo and again at the reception for the class that occurred on the last night of class. These post-travel requirements forced students to really reflect on their time abroad and share their experiences with students who were not able to travel.

Finally, journals and reflections from these students indicate that this short-term experience has made them consider their career and personal goals differently from before. Some want to go into the field of international social work and others want to

work with refugee groups in the US. All of them have indicated a new level of respect for people in third-world countries that they are strong and innovative and have survived without many of the resources available in the states. These types of insights enable students to begin the process of understanding their role as global citizens.

Allowing a larger cross-section of the student population to take part in international experiences is perhaps the strongest argument to incorporate short-term study abroad into curricula, particularly in places that have a predominately non-traditional student body. Several of our participants were mothers who left their children with family members for the week. They each expressed throughout the experience that they could not believe that they were actually able to take part in a study abroad. They never thought the opportunity would present itself at the point in their lives where they already had children and families. Additionally, many of the students who participated in this experience have jobs and support themselves while they are in school. They were able to plan well in advance and get the time of work. Those students also stated they never thought they would be able to participate in study abroad because they didn't think it would fit into their schedules.

Overall, short-term study abroad experiences coupled with service-learning projects, when carefully planned and delivered can provide transformative student learning that we are seeking to provide our students. Strong relationships with community partners that assist with logistical planning are critical. Also coordinating with those partners about the needs and desires of the local community are critical. Finally, providing opportunities for reflection and processing of information is important so the experience involves active learning and not "tourism."

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