

## **Fair Trade Learning: Advancing Just Global Partnerships**

The pages below contain **one page of explanation** and **four pages of self-study** rubric for organizations, institutions, and individuals concerned with advancing just, fair, and conscientious global exchange, learning, and service partnerships.

**Fair Trade Learning (FTL)** is global educational partnership exchange that intends to make the means of global citizenship development consistent with the idealized ends. FTL prioritizes reciprocity in relationships through cooperative, cross-cultural participation in learning, service, and civil society efforts. Rather than focusing on volunteer or student development alone, it holds community-driven development in equally high regard. FTL therefore explicitly advances 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 (Hartman, Paris, & Blache-Cohen; 2012).

The FTL framework facilitates learning and growth even as concepts such as reciprocity and solidarity are re-negotiated in the tourism, volunteerism, and service-learning literatures. This immediate applicability of the framework could be seen as a response to a concern first raised by Crabtree (2008) and later echoed by Sharpe and Dear (2013). That is, “we need more than an ethos of reciprocity as a guide; we need to learn the...on-the-ground strategies that are more likely to produce mutuality” (Crabtree, 2008, p. 26).

The rubric below provides an opportunity for self-study and reflection among stakeholders in university – community, NGO-community, or abroad organization-community partnerships that include immersive learning and community engagement, around the world. The rubric is at least in part developmental. At times the “Ideal” state is fully dependent upon components expressed in advanced or intermediate stages. However programs could emerge as advanced or ideal, provided that they carefully review best practices before beginning. Long-standing, generative relationships, of course, can only emerge with time.

Many different kinds of organizations are engaging in immersive volunteering, service-learning, and community engagement. This rubric should be useful for universities, NGOs, ethical businesses, and faith institutions interested in best practices in immersive, community-engaged partnerships. Frequently, individuals and organizations involved in this work are uncomfortable with and contest many of the words involved. The purpose of this rubric is not to present a settled understanding of “service”, “development”, “community”, or “partnership”, among other terms. Rather, the hope is that the rubric helps any organization improve the intentionality and quality of partnerships specific to its own identity.

**Fair Trade Learning Rubric** below, as prepared for: Hartman, E. (2015). Fair trade learning: A framework for ethical global partnerships. In M.A. Larsen, (Ed.), *International Service Learning: Engaging Host Communities*. New York: Routledge.

Indicator	Ideal	Advanced	Intermediate	Entry
<b>Common Purposes</b>	Agreement upon long-term mutuality of goals and aspirations	Agreement upon overlap of goals and aspirations	Clarity from multiple stakeholders regarding how service* supports community and participant interests	Existing connection facilitates immersive exchange; service is added to “make a difference”
<b>Host Community Program Leadership</b>	Community members have clear teaching, leadership roles; Community-driven research initiatives are co-owned, including fair authorship rights to any co-generated publications	Content and activities of program, from educational through development intervention, are owned by the community through diverse input by community members	Multiple community members have remunerated speaking and leading roles	Key dynamic community member facilitates access
<b>Rights of the Most Vulnerable</b>	Most vulnerable populations in community have been identified; Appropriate training and safeguards are in place to ensure their rights and well-being in the community	Multiple community partners and stakeholders dialogue about and take action to ensure protection of most vulnerable populations that may be affected through the partnership	Vulnerable populations are not part of the exchange programming and/or specific steps are taken to ensure their rights and well-being specific to the exchange programming	Embedded assumption is that community partner leadership represents all members of the community
<b>Host Community Program Participation</b>	Community age-peers** of participants have financially embedded opportunities to <i>participate</i> (where applicable, in an accredited way) in programming	Community age-peers of participants are continuously invited for exchange, participation, and structured interaction	Deliberate spaces of free interaction exist within the program, and participants are made aware of opportunities to connect with local community members	Program is largely a bubble of visiting students; interactions with community tend to be highly structured, often as guest speakers

Indicator	Ideal	Advanced	Intermediate	Entry
Theory of Change (community)	Reasons for partnership – in terms of community and student outcomes – are understood and embraced by multiple and diverse stakeholders	The partnership is infused with and guided by a clear understanding of its approach to community outcomes	Stakeholders discuss assumptions guiding community intervention, considering multiple models of service and development	Service is not tied to consideration of its implicit theory of student or community development, community partnership, or social change
Theory of Change (students)	Reasons for partnership – in terms of community and student outcomes – are understood and embraced by multiple and diverse stakeholders	Clear efforts are made to systematically grow targeted intercultural skills, empathy, and global civic understandings and commitments through best practices in experiential learning	Reflective practice is employed to advance student learning in relation to experiences	Service is not tied to consideration of its implicit theory of student or community development, community partnership, or social change
Recruitment & Publications	Recruitment materials serve educative function; Shaping expectations for ethical engagement	Writers, photographers, web developers, etc., understand and express responsible social mission via materials	Recruitment materials portray diverse scenes and interactions	Recruitment materials reproduce stereotypical and simplistic portrayals of community members
Communication	University / NGO*** and community members know whom to communicate with about what; communication continues year-round	Communication occurs throughout year between institution and community, but increasingly dense network includes individuals unaware of one another	Communication among two individuals is steady; they hold relationship	Communication occurs with key leader; Increases and decreases dramatically near once-annual programming

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<b>Learning Integration</b>	Text and carefully facilitated discussion on responsible engagement, cross-cultural cooperation, and growth in global community are facilitated learning themes before, during, and after immersion	Participants are introduced to several materials specific to the community, culture, as well as service and development ideals and critiques, and encouraged to consider global citizenship or social responsibility	The idea of integrating reflection is present, but unsystematic “roses and thorns” or other “top of the head reasoning” is predominate	Formal programming focuses on service; conversations are organic
<b>Local Sourcing, Environmental Impacts, &amp; Economic Structure</b>	Economic and environmental impacts of experience are understood and discussed openly between sending institution and multiple community stakeholders; Impact is deliberately spread among multiple community stakeholders	Decisions about housing, transportation, and meals reflect shared commitment to community change, sustainability, and/or development model	Key local leader owns most of the decisions relating to sourcing; makes effort to distribute resources among community-owned businesses and institutions	Decisions about housing, transportation, and meals are not tied to consideration of community or environmental impact

Indicator	<b>Ideal</b>	<b>Advanced</b>	<b>Intermediate</b>	<b>Entry</b>
<b>Clarity of Commitment and Evaluation of Partnership Success</b>	Clarity of ongoing commitment or clear reason for alternative****; Mutual agreement on reasons and process for end of partnership	Partners have clear understanding of ongoing relationship and common definition of partnership success	Commitments are understood in relational terms and open-ended	Commitments are specific to individual program contracts, which reflect economic exchange and obligations
<b>Transparency</b>	Specific economic model, commitment, amount, and impact is publically accessible and regularly discussed among partners	NGO and/ or university shares full budget with one another and with interested community members, as well as with any other stakeholders who request access	NGO and/or university makes broad form of budget available, such as through 990 disclosure	Economic model, financial exchange amounts, and impacts are not accessible
<b>Partnership not Program</b>	Time horizon and commitments always stretch beyond single experience*** or individuals; Relationships are generative rather than merely exchange-oriented	Clear expectation of ongoing exchange of resources and people among multiple stakeholders in hosting community and in sending institution	Partners communicate about expectation of an ongoing programming relationship	Time horizon is program-specific, as are contracts, commitments, and relationships

\*Service is clearly a contested concept. Robert Sigmon's (1979) classic understanding of service-learning suggests those being served control the services provided; those being served become better able to serve and be served by their own actions; those who serve also are learners and have significant control over what is expected to be learned. This understanding informs the use of the term above, allowing space for communities and partner organizations to co-create and identify how the various forms of service – including learning as service, direct physical service, project-based service, social advocacy, and many other forms – inform their partnership.

\*\*The phrase “community age-peers” grew from observation that international volunteers' interactions have sometimes been limited to working with children in host communities. This phrase is intended to draw attention to the importance of adult dialogue on intercultural learning, global civic engagement, and growing global civil society, along with conversation specific to local realities. It is not meant to exclude older adults.

\*\*\*University/NGO refers to a number of different possibilities of organizational forms in respect to the “student-sending”, “volunteer-sending”, or “tourist-sending”, organization. This document was written primarily at the nexus of university-community partnerships, so University/NGO is most appropriate, but private sector organizations, faith institutions, and civic associations also choose to send volunteers around the world for immersive learning and service.

\*\*\*\*There are reasons for single immersive service experiences, such as a major crisis event, a very specific intervention, etc. A nonrepeating relationship can be ethically defensible with clear communication and intentionality.

Crabtree, R (2008) Theoretical foundations for international service-learning. *Michigan Journal of Community Service-Learning* 15(1): 18-36.

Hartman, E, Paris, C, and Blache-Cohen, B (2012) Tourism and Transparency: Navigating ethical risks in volunteerism with fair trade learning. *Africa Insight* 42(2): 157-168.

Sharp, E & Dear, S (2013). Points of discomfort: Reflections on power and partnerships in international service-learning. *Michigan Journal of Community Service-Learning* 19(2): 49 -57.

Sigmon, R. (1979). Service-learning: Three principles. *Synergist*, 8, 9-11.

The Fair Trade Learning Standards have been published in: Hartman, E., Morris-Paris, C., & Blache-Cohen, B. (2014). Fair trade learning: Ethical standards for international volunteer tourism. *Tourism and Hospitality Research*, 14(1-2): 108 – 116, and at <http://globalsl.org/fair-trade-learning/>.

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