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International Pedagogy: Nonprofits in Civil Society - A Guatemalan Case Study

Teresa VanHorn
Elaine Elliott
University of San Diego

Introduction

International courses, particularly in developing countries, can facilitate the achievement of complex learning goals that will benefit nonprofit management students. To be effective, such courses require careful design and management. Students enrolled in such courses may gain a deeper understanding of the context of their workplace in the United States and may be challenged to exercise their leadership to make positive changes in our globalized world. In the modern context of interconnectedness, even universities have become committed to providing international education. From the mission and core values of the University of San Diego International Center, we selected the following learning goals to design our international courses:

• promoting awareness, appreciation, and respect for the complexity of cultural, political, environmental, and social issues worldwide
• building theoretical and practical skills needed to interact effectively in today's global society (University of San Diego, 2010)

In the design of these courses, we particularly wanted students to understand the context of post civil war society in Guatemala, with its strong economic and ethnic divisions, and the practical role that nonprofit leaders currently play in rebuilding the country. The example of the creative work of these nonprofit leaders could serve as models for developing the leadership skills of our students.

This paper examines our journey to achieve these learning goals from a sequence of experiences over a two-year period:

1. Proposing a course in Guatemala and taking an exploratory trip (June 2007).
2. Cross-listing two service learning courses from the disciplines of Nonprofit Management and Sociology, classes that included undergraduates and graduates (January 2008).

3. Analyzing student journals, reflections, papers, and evaluations that showed the impact of the courses, including the impact of the encounter with people in a post-conflict environment.
4. Revising the course for graduate nonprofit management students and shortening the amount of time spent in Guatemala (January 2009).
5. Analyzing student responses.

Review of Literature

To teach about nonprofit work and leadership in a post-conflict setting, we chose to structure the courses as seminars, using the examples of Guatemalan nonprofit leaders to address topics such as organizational leadership; internationally operated nonprofit organizations versus Guatemalan nonprofit organizations; youth and human service organizations; medical and disaster relief operations; land disputes; impunity and the Historical Clarification Commission; and funding, legal issues, and staffing.

Experiential education is a proven pedagogical method, and we relied on presenting abstract hypotheses (preparatory classes), active testing and concrete experiences (in-country), and reflective observation (final paper and discussion) (Kolb & Kolb, 2005; Moon, 2004). The Association of Experiential Education defined experiential education as “a philosophy and methodology in which educators purposefully engage with learners in direct experience and focused reflection in order to increase knowledge, develop skills and clarify values” (Association for Experiential Education [AEE], 2010). The guiding principles included an emphasis on the student as an engaged, responsible, active learner who is constructing meaning from carefully chosen experiences “supported by reflection, critical analysis and synthesis” (AEE, 2010). In the first course, we also included a service-learning component, a sub-type of experiential education, also a proven strategy (Eyler & Giles, 1999).

Suzanne Gulledge pointed out in *Global education as good pedagogy* that a variety of perspectives should be used in global education. The Guatemalan context inevitably brought forth additional topics such as war, poverty, and human rights. Our courses eclectically consisted of a number of these competing themes: pedagogy for social justice; offering a world perspective as a new lens for culturally responsive local work; and reflection focused on common core ideals across cultures (Gulledge, 2010).

Modeled on travel seminars inspired by Paolo Freire (1970), the courses allowed participants to hear directly from community leaders and to critically reflect on these encounters. Typically, travel seminars were developed among church groups, particularly in the 1980s. Those seminars took participants from the industrialized world to third-world countries and gave them encounters with multiple people from the country. Participants had the opportunity for reflection in the form of discussion and writing and were expected to commit to personal changes as a result of the experience. Drawing from Paolo Freire’s methods of *Pedagogy for the Oppressed*, a model of “traveling for transformation” became a *Pedagogy for the Non-Poor* (Freire, 1970; Evans, Evans, & Kennedy, 1987). The uniqueness of our approach, drawing from these ideas, was to focus on the creative solutions generated in the nonprofit sector for addressing social problems. Nonprofit leaders demonstrated how the sector had brought social change in Guatemala, which in turn provided inspiring models of leadership for the students.

Students in the leadership courses were given the opportunity to meet and interact with transformational leaders in the nonprofit sector in Guatemala. In *Transformational Leadership,* Bass and Riggio (2006) defined the characteristics of transformational leaders:

> Transformational leaders are those who stimulate and inspire followers to both achieve extraordinary outcomes and, in the process, develop their own leadership capacity. Transformational leaders help followers grow and develop into leaders by responding to individual followers' needs by empowering them and by aligning the objectives and goals of the individual followers, the leader, the group, and the larger organization. Evidence has accumulated to demonstrate that transformational leadership can move followers to exceed expected performance, as well as lead to high levels of follower satisfaction and commitment to the group and organization (p. 3).

The literature has traditionally characterized transformational leadership as a superior style of leadership when examining success in organizations (Feinberg, Ostroff, & Burke, 2005; Karakowsky & Kotlyar 2007). Research demonstrates advantages of transformational leaders to organizations: followers often exert extra effort, form higher performing work groups, and receive higher ratings of effectiveness and performance (Bass, 1985; Yammarino & Bass, 1990; Yammarino, Spangler, & Bass, 1993). Michael Hartsfield (2003) wrote of a "spirit of transformational leadership," which works "to maintain and communicate a group, department, or organizational vision" (p. 5-6). Too frequently in nonprofit organizations, leadership is lost when the leaders are preoccupied with the day-to-day problems that continually arise, causing them to lose sight of the vision and mission. Given the economic situation of our country, keeping nonprofit agencies financially sound has increasingly become a challenge, and concerns with financial development and everyday management have taken precedence. Transformational leaders are interested in developing followers concerned with personal and corporate growth and development (Avolio, Waldman, & Yammarino, 1991). Examples of this type of leadership inspired the students in our course and remained powerful examples for students when they returned to their jobs in the United States.

Methods

Pre-trip lectures and readings set the stage, and, in Guatemala, we engaged with people who could tell us their stories. The course components included the following: preparatory classes, time in different areas of the country, speakers, site visits, reflection, a post-session class, and a final paper. In the different areas of the country, we met with a broad selection of nonprofit agencies to examine their role in the rebuilding of a post-conflict society, and students were provided opportunities for tourism.

Experiential education principles required us to think about appropriate responses to emotions and dissonance raised by encounters with people affected by a 36-year civil war. "The educator's primary roles include setting suitable experiences, posing problems, setting boundaries, supporting learners, insuring physical and emotional safety, and facilitating the learning process" (AEE, 2010). We prepared carefully for leading frequent reflection on all that was encountered during the trips.

As one source for reflection, we turned to philosopher Viktor Frankl for wisdom. Having experienced the Holocaust, Viktor Frankl emerged from his encounter with extreme cruelty with a philosophy of freedom in *Man's Search for Meaning* (1992). He affirmed three ways of finding meaning: "We can discover this meaning in life in three different ways: (1) by creating a work or doing a deed; (2) by experiencing something or encountering someone; and (3) by the attitude we take toward unavoidable suffering" (p. 139). Frankl (1992) advocated "tragic optimism," a

positive stance despite pain, guilt, and death. He asked how life can retain meaning despite tragedy and how the negative can creatively be made constructive and gave this advice:

> What matters is to make the best of any given situation. "The best," however, is that which in Latin is called *optimum*—hence the reason I speak of a tragic optimism, that is, an optimism in the face of tragedy and in view of the human potential which at its best always allows for: 1) turning suffering into a human achievement and accomplishment, 2) deriving from guilt the opportunity to change oneself for the better, and 3) deriving from life's transitoriness an incentive to take responsible action (p. 139).

We found Frankl's statement a useful framework. The 36-year civil war, which nominally ended in 1996, included 667 state-initiated massacres, kidnappings, disappearances and torture; 200,000 killed; and over a million displaced (Comisión de Esclarecimiento Histórico [CEH], 1999). The aftermath included a pattern of lynching; femicide; lack of social cohesion from the impunity given to human rights violators, gangs, and highly organized crime; and drug trafficking (Seligson, 2005). On the positive side, we saw an increased space for political and social action, more Mayans with higher education taking responsibility in the public sphere, and more international investment in the social sector. However, government social sector spending was low, and over 50% of the population, particularly the Maya, had inadequate access to health, education, and economic opportunity. Racism, poverty, and a broken judicial system pre-date the conflict but worsened during the war. A climate of unease was still evident as one student wrote, "I have to admit that even with the traveling I've done I didn't realize how naive I was regarding how other people live when there is oppression and fear. The most striking feature of Guatemala City is the number of armed guards" (Lewis, 2009, p. 4).

Other sources of themes for reflection included Sharon Daloz-Parks who proposed a new metaphor for leadership as artistry (Daloz-Parks, 2005). An additional resource was Scharmer's leadership theory of presence, which refers to opening minds, hearts, and wills to our deepest values and purposes to then create transforming action and visions for the future (Roberts, 2007). To transform situations of conflict, we need leaders who have cultivated moral imagination so they can creatively seize unexpected opportunities when these are presented and move toward social justice (Lederach, 2005).

For preparatory reading, in addition to articles and videos on Guatemala's history, culture, current political challenges, and nonprofit (international and local) sector, we assigned a novel, *A Mayan Life* written by Gaspar Pedro González (1995). This book is acknowledged as the first novel by a Maya author and the first written in a Mayan language. González's story of the life of a man from a small Q'anjob'al village from birth to death offers an artist's rendering of the richness of Mayan culture, the oppression and racism experienced by those communities, and the poverty growing out of that oppression. González is also a poet, and his book *The Dry Season* contains bilingual Q'anjob'al/English poems. An encounter with him and an evening of poetry reading and conversation about his novel created a reflective space for the students. "When Gaspar Pedro González read from his poetry, I felt the passion and meaning behind his words although I could not understand the words. I thought of the importance of his work and how beautiful the sound" (Ross, 2009, p. 2).

Even the temporary barrier of language created an opportunity for grasping something intangible about this country where there are 23 official languages spoken. Students were moved by the elemental themes of González's novel and poetry, the portrayal of his rich Mayan cultural

heritage, and his own narrative of moving from a small village to the roles of professor and leader in the Ministry of Culture.

The students' reflection was grounded in these core ideas—that there are circumstances of suffering that cannot be explained or easily assimilated, that modern leadership requires deep inner work that includes the encounter with that reality, and that we can cultivate a moral imagination that creates the possibility of change. Not only the students but also the instructors engaged authentically to explore and examine their own values. Our goal was to integrate suffering, compassion, justice, and reconciliation.

We learned in dialogue with nonprofit leaders from the country who were working for social transformation. Among the many stories we heard, were those of a community organizer, a former guerrilla commander, and a woman whose sister's death caused her to create a major human rights organization. Other speakers included a congresswoman who started a nonprofit for families of the disappeared; an American who did significant work on evaluating human rights work in Guatemala; leaders doing land mediation; a Mayan lawyer from a government institution working on women's rights; several international nonprofits such as Catholic Relief Services and Mercy Corps; and several nonprofits that started internationally but have become Guatemalan like SHARE and Common Hope. We gained perspective from these multiple voices sharing their work and telling their stories.

A person indispensable to the course, our Guatemalan instructor Ignacio Ochoa, shared community organizing work done by the nonprofit he created, the Nahual Foundation. Most significant, however, was his presence with us throughout the days and the evenings of our stay in Guatemala. His life and relationships, so extensive and enriching, made for an unforgettable fund of stories. His storytelling created a space for us to understand the complexity of the conflict and the challenges of rebuilding social fabric. A student recognized Ochoa as a model of transformational leadership:

> This meeting demonstrated that Fundación Nahual was effective in enabling local citizens, whether stay-at-home mothers, senior citizens, or political hopefuls, to take control of their community's destiny and make educated decisions. By empowering indigenous citizens to make their own development decisions, Fundación Nahual is honoring not only the law but also the spirit of the Peace Accords (Borgatti, 2009, p. 8).

Ochoa's eclectic array of relationships enriched our experiences. He invited the nephew and great-nephew of Bishop Gerardi to share the story of the murder of this iconic human rights leader. Students were moved to hear it was the first time the family members had been asked to share their stories.

Cesar Montes, a former guerrilla commander, discussed founding a nonprofit that addressed health and housing issues for ex-guerrillas. The nonprofit was named in honor of his mentor, the fallen guerrilla leader, Turcios Lima. The presentation was interesting and very emotional on many different levels for students. The former commander still used the *nom de guerre,* Cesar Montes, one of many he used during the civil war. His death was inaccurately reported in the papers several times. He resurfaced after the Peace Accords and has become a public figure, assisting with political campaigns and working in collaboration with government projects. He was one of the earliest revolutionary leaders in the 1960s and co-founded one of the four major guerrilla organizations in the country. Montes's story gave insight into the armed left and its motivations, strategies, successes, and failures. The anti-American aspect of his motivation created strong reactions in our students, passionate exchanges with him over lunch, and discomfort with his state-mandated bodyguards. Though students critiqued the self-

protectiveness of his persona and adopted name, they nevertheless found his story compelling, and many chose to buy signed copies of his autobiography.

Montes crystallized the anger students felt, but he was not the only cause for the emotion. “There were many times on the trip when I felt angry. I felt frustration over the inefficiency, corruption, and irresponsibility of the government. I was upset with my own country’s role in Guatemalan history, but also annoyed with the continued view of America as the bad guy” (Feazelle, 2009, p. 1). One of the instructors who had lived in the area where Cesar Montes fought shared her experiences with the class describing the negative impact on the communities in the area she lived, her own forced exit from the area, and the ferocious army response to the guerrilla presence.

One Guatemalan nonprofit, the Myrna Mack Foundation, began out of a story of tragedy. An anthropologist who began documenting human rights abuses in the countryside, Mack was murdered by government agents in 1992. Helen Mack founded this nonprofit in honor of her sister and has won numerous legal cases, one of the few to provoke a public apology from the government. The executive director explained on-going work on human rights, and the challenges, including safety risks, that arise from confronting systemic impunity. The encounter generated personal reflection on the risks inherent in leadership, and the call to take those risks in our own context:

> Perhaps the areas that impacted me the most were the values and attitudes of the people we met juxtaposed to our own. It’s hard for me to wrap my mind around how at peace the people are. I felt so much anxiety when we were at the Myrna Mack Foundation and I contemplated my own leadership and my own commitment to social justice within the American context. A conversation that I have had with several friends, family members and colleagues is the question of “What are you willing to die/live for?” This experience made me think about my own role in my family, work, and in the community. As this is a leadership program, I always try to think about things I am learning within the context of leadership and leadership practice. This helps me put into perspective my thoughts and it allows me to shift myself out of complacency and continue to develop myself (Cocino, 2009, p. 4).

A theme of artistry wove through our experience. The Nahual Foundation promotes arts with youth, including musical and theater performances. An annual project has been instruction in making the Day of the Dead kites flown from the cemetery in one particular village. These six-foot diameter works of art made from intricately designed colored tissue paper mounted on bamboo spokes celebrated the transformation of death. Kites adorn the foundation offices as well as the office of the Mayan development agency as symbols of identity and hope.

Ochoa invited his musician friends to share with the group in memorable evenings of relaxation. One student had an opportunity to play with a well-known musician on one occasion, a personal highlight for him. Other experiences with an artistic underpinning included listening to performances of the traditional Guatemalan instrument, the marimba; watching people engaged in a traditional Mayan ceremony; and observing weaving demonstrations. Visits to marketplaces and purchase of the unique and beautiful weavings for which the country is so well known gave us a sense of being in a nation of artists. We wove the arts into the service-learning experiences through immersion in a rural community and working with children to create and paint murals at a school. Murals had a theme of health and hygiene practices and service

consisted of fundraising, building a restroom, and painting a place for children to wash their hands at an elementary school.

SHARE Guatemala hosted us in a rural community. We saw pride in garden and animal husbandry projects, shared a meal in a home with the animals in the courtyard with us, and ate unfamiliar food. The program to treat child malnutrition impressed our group, but students expressed concern about long-term sustainability. This first-hand exposure to a level of poverty we rarely see in the United States was disheartening, but one student wrote perceptively of those we met, “The people of Guatemala, and particularly the Maya, struck me as being ‘rich,’ but not ‘wealthy.’ This means that their connection to the earth and their understanding of their culture and who they are as a people is very strong” (Proulx, 2009, p. 2).

A site visit to Common Hope, a nonprofit with educational, housing, and health programs, also provided first-hand learning on practical strategies for addressing poverty. Students admired the concept of “sweat equity” where families contributed labor in exchange for services. Many commented on how impressed they were with how the rural poor in Guatemala responded to their poverty with great resourcefulness, realistically low expectations of receiving help from the government or agencies, and immense cheerfulness. Some identified with this from their own life experiences, “I felt a little more connected to my very rural roots and saw similarities, I think, in some of the ways that people seemed to look out for one another, the way the work day is different, and the time you spend with family is different” (Towne-Cardenas, 2009, p. 8). This contrasted with the social service sector in which students work in the United States where many programs and policies inadvertently undermine resourcefulness and create dependence.

Results

Students all expressed a sense of being changed by the experience: “Emotionally and spiritually I was stretched to a new level.” “The trip stretched my worldview.” “This class was an exercise of extreme intellectual stimulation, restructuring, rethinking, and overall realignment. This class changed my life.” “It expanded my global view.”

Students demonstrated increased “awareness, appreciation, and respect for the complexity of cultural, political, environmental, and social issues” that they encountered through the new lens of the international experience. They also demonstrated increased understanding of the roles of nonprofits in our global society and of the practical skills being used to create change, and they were able to incorporate such learning into their own actions, thus achieving the university learning goals (University of San Diego, 2010).

During the class reflection back in the United States, after writing final papers, at least four themes emerged in the discussion: 1) Deeper understanding of the role of the United States in the world and some critique of our own cultural ways, 2) appreciation for the self-reliance and resilience of people who are materially poor but culturally rich, 3) deeper awareness of suffering, oppression, and racism, and 4) finding hope in nonprofits with visionary leaders.

Most students said that their previous ignorance of the policy of the United States toward Guatemala would keep them alert to how our government currently exercises its power in the world. Though overwhelming to monitor all that is being done, thoughtful analysis would shape their interpretations of current events. In the reflection session, a student commented that now that the blinders were off he couldn’t pretend he didn’t know anymore (Carrillo, 2009). Another student wrote regarding the privilege represented by being American, a privilege that could become capricious even in our own group at times with episodes of cultural insensitivity that had to be addressed.

The level of identification with suffering varied with the social space from which people came in the United States. Students with a middle-class background expressed feeling overwhelmed with the current poverty and history of oppression. Students with immigrant and/or working class backgrounds identified with the challenges of racism and class-ism they saw pervading the society. One student wrote a compelling paper comparing the post-war aid societies after the Civil War in the United States with the current institutions in Guatemala. Her critique included the following:

> "There is no justice or democracy or peace in any nation where the words 'indigenous,' 'aboriginal,' 'native,' 'minority,' and 'resident' are institutionalized and organizations receive governmental or philanthropic donations to monitor human rights infractions, high infant mortality rates and femicide" (Fox, 2009, p. 10).

One student wrote of the entire experience in an anonymous course evaluation, "[It] challenged my ability to integrate personal history of working in very traumatic situations to empathizing with people who lived trauma every day for decades and centuries." Another student was unable to complete the course, citing the emotional stress raised by the experience. Such a decision underlined for us the risk in creating immersion experiences and raised concern to openly discuss managing our own stress.

On our first trip, students were moved by the photograph a woman had made, pasting herself in a photo with her husband in front of a dwelling in Houston, TX, and pasting him in a photo of her in front of the house his remittances had helped her build. The photograph crystallized the complexity of human suffering around immigration. After working with the community on the school and becoming acquainted with children and parents over several days, a reflection meeting created the context for hearing the tragic stories of suffering during the conflict from the people in the room. Suddenly, the abstract became concrete as the readings were transfigured into real people.

While the violent history shocked us, a student gave a moving performance of her poem critiquing the violence in the United States, making the point that what we saw in Guatemala was not that different than our own history, simply not part of our usual narrative. Entitled "amerikkka" (Fox, 2009), one couplet read,

> "Terroristic acts on amerikkkain soil are not new
> But on nine-one-one it finally troubles you"

Students saw how despite the conflicted history of the involvement of the United States in Guatemala's history, being American did not need to be a barrier to joining with those working for change today:

> I did not get a sense of anger towards us as Americans considering the history between the countries. Instead, I felt their desire to share themselves and their stories and mostly to be heard. The present realities of the country are only understood by knowing the history. Since Guatemala is in such a developmental phase I appreciated the willingness to have others come in, not to ask others to fix, but to witness the transformation and join in hope and solidarity for the future (Henwood, 2009, p. 6).

Students realized that Guatemala compares poorly in terms of GNP and the human development measures of the United Nations and has the worst malnutrition in the hemisphere. However, they recognized that the measures are not the complete story. The variety of culture and the creativity of the everyday arts are part of the country's wealth:

> My view of poverty was transformed … in Chichi. I was blown away by the abundance. The combination of cultures, faiths and commerce was amazing. The Mayan processions at the foot of the Catholic Church represented such a beautiful expression of how diversity can bring such abundant unity when human beings can find peace and harmony amongst each other's differences. The flowers all over the steps, the grains for sale, the fabrics, colors and market were alive and rich. It was an amazing space where culture and commerce came together in harmony. It was RICH beyond measure. I realized how much segregation exists in our city and how poor communities are. The isolation of cultures and faiths is very real in our city. I remember speaking out loud to a member of our group, 'this is not a poor country' (Petrou, 2009, p. 3).

Students were impressed that so recently after the Peace Accords so many nonprofits had been involved in efforts surrounding conflict resolution and social rebuilding. A particularly strong example came from an international nonprofit:

> I found hope in the work of Mercy Corps. Their work to resolve land conflicts showed me there was a way to address the root of a problem, and hope for a solution. Their mission matched my ideals and I would like to find more organizations like them. Their solution was both innovative and obvious - sit down and talk face to face. (Feazelle, 2009, p. 1).

Overcoming racism was challenged in small ways. A visible change in the number of young professional Mayan women wearing their traditional clothing in public spaces was matched by the opportunities for employment that have arisen through the nonprofit sector:

> I saw and heard of nonprofit activities in Guatemala that I found refreshing. An example being that … we spoke with employees whose demographics were like the people they served. This can be very important in gaining trust and being able to better relate with your constituents. Unfortunately, in the United States I would say that frequently the employees do not represent the people they serve (Osoff, 2009, p. 7).

The leaders we met inspired us with their courage and commitment to transformative work. The optimistic spirit of so many people of the country gave us an example to follow. Despite challenges of history and difficult current realities, they modeled for us rich relationships, creativity, and the ability to transform suffering that Frankl believed gave meaning to life:

> Every person that I encountered from cab drivers, to the women we met in San Martin, to Ignacio all shared values of love and hope. Their attitudes towards us were humble, welcoming, and sincere. As such, despite such alarming headlines in the paper, I experienced a sense of tranquility and I felt safe (Cocino, 2009, p. 4).

Another student who expressed a desire to return to Guatemala, hoping to see improvements in the living conditions of the country, reminded us that there is always hope and cited lines from Maya poet Humberto Ak'abal (Ak'abal, 1999):

> The last beam of daylight
> Bends
> To the darkness of the night
> It does not break
> Seems like hope

Students responded with reflective conversation and journaling as well as their own art and photography. While an article cannot do justice to this aspect of their learning, these images will doubtlessly bring back significant moments for the students for many years, representing their encounter in many cases with great irony and beauty. The course critiques included, almost universally, a desire for more time for reflection and more time in the country.

A final theme that emerged was the sense that their learning continues. Student responses on anonymous course evaluations captured the sense that they continue to be challenged by the course, "I don't think anything I write down will explain how the class has stretched my thinking." "Just know that it has changed and affected my journey." "What I learned would encompass a book…" (Borgatti, 2009, p. 3). "And like our instructors…I will be courageous enough to take a group of strangers to foreign soils, to open their hearts and minds to realities in a post-war society" (Fox, 2009, p. 12).

Upon our return to the United States, students showed their appreciation and commitment to Ochoa by starting a project to create a fund whereby donations would go to his work in Guatemala, and this project has since been completed. Students expressed a desire to have him come to our University to teach, and their evaluations acknowledged the critical role he played.

As we encounter former students professionally, we see the important leadership and work they do through their employment, and we appreciate every encounter. Their work fills us with hope, and we are grateful to have been one part of their journey and to have had the opportunity to share the experience in Guatemala.

Implications for the Sector

Global education in our sector is necessary in our increasing interconnected and dependent world. Our experiences indicate that teaching nonprofit leadership in an international context is very effective. Our teaching methods satisfied curricular guidelines set forth by the Nonprofit Academic Centers Council (NACC) for graduate and undergraduate study in nonprofit leadership, the nonprofit sector, and philanthropy. The courses addressed the role of the nonprofit/voluntary sector in society; examined comparative perspectives on civil society; and voluntary action across cultures and contexts. The impacts of global, social, economic, and political trends on the role of the sector were discussed and made vivid by presenters who shared how these trends affected their nonprofits. The coursework dealt with the foundations of civil society, voluntary action, philanthropy, and organizations, focusing on the size, impact, and trends in philanthropy and on associational development throughout the world (NACC, 2007). The models of transformational leadership provided inspiration for students to cultivate their own leadership with consequent benefits to nonprofit organizations, executives, and board

members. American education should concern itself with global education in all disciplines, given our increasingly globalized world.

In the United States, nonprofit leaders encounter immigrants, refugees from ethnic conflicts from many parts of the world, families who come from the poverty of developing nations, and societies where educational opportunities are limited. Consequently, the experiences from cross-cultural education transfer from the course to the daily life and work of our students.

Recommendations

Our recommendations for implementing a similar course include practical steps:

1. Set appropriate learning outcomes. Decide in advance what type of course you will be constructing for your students: immersion, service-learning, voluntourism, international experience, and/or seminar.
2. Choose a colleague as co-instructor from your institution. A colleague facilitates the amount of planning involved and assists in attending appropriately to students in-country. A colleague may also provide the opportunity to collaborate across departments, schools, or colleges in the university.
3. Hire a translator and a cultural advisor for the trip. Managing teaching, translating, and logistics are too much for one person. If it is possible, find a local instructor in-country who is bi-lingual and has gifts that lend to working with students. A translator and a cultural advisor can provide an experience far beyond what is possible for North American instructors alone. Possible sources for the position include universities in-country.
4. Limit the number of students in a class. This will help facilitate travel plans: smaller numbers will make the task of arranging transportation, lodging, and class space easier.
5. Work closely with any institutional structures designed to facilitate study-abroad programs. University international programs can provide important support in terms of safety, health issues, risk management, finances, and recruitment.
6. Establish in-country partnerships and meet during a preparatory trip, if possible. On the exploratory trip, one can see first-hand what the partners may have to offer and how they may assist in making decisions regarding logistics. Contact local nonprofits that have international affiliates to assist in making arrangements. Research potential agencies on the Internet and set up contacts prior to leaving the United States. Contacts can be made through e-mail or by telephone for effective use of time.
7. Seek out any campus or local experts who can provide deeper understanding of the country you will be studying. Read and research the country's history to find potential readings for the course.
8. Connect through familiar U.S.-based nonprofits (e.g., YMCA, Junior Achievement, Catholic Relief Services, and Mercy Corps) to their international counterparts. Most organizations also have locally staffed nonprofit partners at the grassroots level. Some may be experienced in receiving international students for service-learning.
9. Provide pre-sessions with country and cultural background. Use the pre-sessions as an opportunity to agree on group norms and as a time to develop a positive group dynamic.

10. Prepare yourself to exercise extra patience and sensitivity with students and with all the participants. The cultural differences and immersion over a short time-period have the potential to be very stressful.
11. Think through themes for reflection. Give students and faculty opportunity for on-going reflection frequently during the trip. Journaling or reflective writing assignments are helpful. Hold at least one post-session to debrief the experience and to allow students to assimilate their experiences.
12. Provide opportunities for students to continually reflect in the months following the course in person and/or by e-mail.
13. Encourage students to take advantage of university counseling services if readjustment issues occur following re-entry to the United States.
14. Be willing to be an on-going resource to students as they transition back to the workplace and apply their learning in the U.S. context.
15. Take advantage of mistakes since "the design of the learning experience includes the possibility to learn from natural consequences, mistakes and successes" (AEE, 2010).

Despite the extra stress and work that such a course requires, the rewards are significant, and the learning for both instructors and students can be transformational. The method described can be replicated elsewhere to allow students to see, hear, and learn from nongovernmental organizations internationally, and we are confident outcomes will be equally strong.

Conclusions

Drawing lessons from our experiences, the sense of hope expressed by one student is something that each of the instructors treasured as the ultimate impact of the course, the result of the careful planning:

> It has opened my eyes, my world and my heart in so many ways, and I know that this deeply personal experience has been shared by my classmates. Because of the care and preparation that was taken by each of you before, during and after our journey, you were able to construct a rich environment for us to learn and assisted in the creation of a safe, collective space that I believe we all hope will last ... . I would like to extend my appreciation and gratitude to the many inspirational and thought provoking individuals who you organized for us to meet. There is a great comfort in knowing that our collective ideals and vision for an optimistic future are shared by so many across the globe (Henwood, 2009, p. 16).

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