

Fair Trade Learning: Ethical standards for community-engaged international volunteer tourism

Tourism and Hospitality Research
 2014, Vol. 14(1–2) 108–116
 © The Author(s) 2014
 Reprints and permissions:
 sagepub.co.uk/journalsPermissions.nav
 DOI: 10.1177/1467358414529443
 thr.sagepub.com



Eric Hartman

Kansas State University, USA

Cody Morris Paris

Middlesex University Dubai, United Arab Emirates

Brandon Blache-Cohen

Amizade Global Service Learning, USA

Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to articulate a set of ethical standards for international volunteer tourism. The standards are focused on promoting Fair Trade Learning (FTL) principles in the management and operation of volunteer programs. Because of the unique social mission, research, and evaluation capacities of higher education, we propose first applying these principles specifically to international volunteer programs operating at the university–community nexus. These standards have emerged through a collaborative, in-person, and online process during the last 2 years with input by numerous concerned global citizens, international education practitioners and researchers, nongovernmental organization representatives, and community members. The document shared below represents current “best practice” for maximizing the benefits and minimizing the negative impacts of volunteer tourism programs for both host communities and volunteers.

Keywords

Voluntourism, community development, sustainable tourism, justice tourism, solidarity tourism, host–guest relationship, global service learning, international education

Introduction

Globally, the youth travel and tourism industry is growing, and higher education and volunteering represent the largest growth sectors (Staywyse, 2012). Already, the industry is worth US\$173 billion per year, and it is estimated that emerging markets will surpass advanced economies in international arrivals (Staywyse, 2012). Within sub-Saharan Africa, the youth travel market, including volunteer tourism (or voluntourism), is one of the fastest-growing tourism niches and offers potential for continued development.

Estimates indicate more than 1.6 million annual volunteer tourists spend upwards of two billion dollars (\$USD) globally (Tourism Research & Marketing, 2008). On the Volunteer Abroad website (Volunteer Abroad, 2012), Africa has more organizations (451)

offering more individual programs, or products, (2070), than any other region. Additionally, Ghana, Kenya, Tanzania, South Africa, and Uganda are some of the most popular destination countries for volunteer programs. These programs are usually marketed toward young people from Europe, North America, Australia, and New Zealand (Sin, 2009) who want to have unique experiences that combine learning, travel, and volunteering. Participants travel as part of short-term, often less than 4 weeks (Callanan and Thomas, 2005), volunteer vacations,

Corresponding author:

Cody Morris Paris, School of Law, Middlesex University Dubai, Knowledge Village, Block 16, Dubai, United Arab Emirates.
 Email: c.paris@mdx.ac

study and service learning programs for university credit, or as part of a gap year or overseas experience program (Lyons et al., 2012; Simpson, 2004). Within the tourism literature, volunteer tourism has received increased attention (Wearing and McGehee, 2013); however, there have been relatively few studies focused on volunteer tourism in Africa. Some recent studies have focused on South Africa (Stoddart and Rogerson, 2004), Tanzania (Laythorpe, 2010), Rwanda (Barbieri et al., 2012), and Ghana (Forsythe, 2011).

Wearing and McGehee note that “International volunteer tourism often focuses on humanitarian and environmental projects with the intention of serving the communities in need” (2013: 121). While many programs start off with good intention, there have been a variety of very valid criticisms of and documented mistakes in the volunteer tourism, service learning, and international development industries (Easterly, 2006; Grusky, 2000; Stoecker and Tryon, 2009; Tomazos and Butler, 2011; Tomazos and Cooper, 2012). Much of the criticism has focused on the potential of volunteer tourism to lead to new forms of colonialism and dependency (Caton and Santos, 2009; Guttentag, 2009; Hammersley, 2013; Vrasti, 2013) and the potential exploitation of host communities (Friends International, 2012; Palacios, 2010; Theerapappisit, 2009), as well as the rapid increase in private companies selling international service experiences as a commodity (Higgins-Desbiolles and Russell-Mundine, 2008; Sharp and Dear, 2013).

In spite of these criticisms, the continued, and likely increasing, demand for international volunteer programs will drive the market (Wearing and McGehee, 2013). There will continue to be those in more developed countries who wish to “make a difference” while traveling, and those in developing countries who will be willing to, for a variety of reasons, cooperate with international institutions and operators. These ongoing incentives, despite trenchant criticisms, call for a framework for ethical engagement that can be clearly understood and applied by host communities, sending organizations, and (potential) volunteers. International volunteer tourism includes a wide range of organizations that often do not self-identify as being part of the tourism industry (McGehee, 2002; Wearing and McGehee, 2013). These include nongovernmental organizations, international humanitarian and development institutions, community development organizations, and academic institutions. It is important for these organizations involved in volunteer tourism to be “catalysts” of positive impacts and good practice rather than assisting neocolonial dependency to take hold (Hammersley, 2013; Palacios, 2010), particularly as international volunteer tourism becomes

increasingly commodified by the growing number of commercial operators motivated by profits and satisfying their “volunteer” customers (Higgins-Desbiolles and Russell-Mundine, 2008; Wearing and McGehee, 2013).

Recent demands for better ways to manage volunteer tourism (The International Ecotourism Society, 2012) echo research on ways to increase the positive benefits of volunteer tourism while also mitigating the negative impacts (Benson and Blackman, 2011; Broad, 2003; Coghlan and Gooch, 2011; Ledwith, 2005; Sin, 2010; Theerapappisit, 2009; Wickens, 2010). This desire to articulate and advocate for more robust forms of tourism has also emerged previously under the name of solidarity exchanges and social tourism (Higgins-Desbiolles and Russell-Mundine, 2008). Many of the above authors and movements intend to offer more balanced benefits among the three major stakeholders in international volunteerism: the volunteers, the volunteer organizations, and the host communities. Any ethical framework for volunteer tourism must therefore strive to maximize the benefits for both the host communities and the volunteers.

Universities have several institutional characteristics that make them ideal catalysts for promotion of best practice in this growing sector. They frequently have nonprofit status due to their professed public-serving missions, suggesting that more than the financial bottom line alone should inform their practices, as matters of law and institutional structure. They also house considerable academic expertise regarding humanitarian and environmental efforts, providing an opportunity for internal critique and evaluation to determine whether the aims of international volunteerism indeed lead to similar ends. Finally, higher education has been identified as a growth market in international volunteerism (Staywyse, 2012), particularly in respect to the service-learning movement.

The focus of this article is therefore articulation of standards for programs that operate at the nexus of global university–community engagement. The focus on this nexus is also based on the practical experiences of the authors with global service learning pedagogy, organizations, and programs. There has been a recent increase in the number of institutions in developed countries that support community-based educational experiences within communities in developing countries. These experiences include community-based participatory research, service learning, international volunteerism, study abroad, ethnographic interviewing, field schools, and other varieties of community-engaged international education (Open Doors, 2012). Many of the organizations behind these practices aim to employ approaches

that support community development, yet in practice these initiatives may subvert their stated purposes and reinforce inequality, dependency, and/or ethnocentric thinking (Crabtree, 2008; Sharp and Dear, 2013; Talwalker, 2012).

Recognizing the profound challenges embedded within even defining “community,” “reciprocity,” or “development” as part of intercultural partnership practice, the purpose of this article is to call attention to and receive feedback on this evolving set of Fair Trade Learning standards. These standards are intended to direct attention to the most important issues, imply the most compelling questions, and drive continuous improvement for individuals and organizations approaching this practice with conscientiousness and care. Fair Trade Learning (Hartman et al., 2012) is global educational partnership exchange that prioritizes reciprocity in relationships through cooperative, cross-cultural participation in learning, service, and civil society efforts. It foregrounds the goals of economic equity, equal partnership, mutual learning, cooperative and positive social change, transparency, and sustainability. Fair Trade Learning explicitly engages the global civil society role of educational exchange in fostering a more just, equitable, and sustainable world (Building a Better World Forum for Global Service-Learning, 2013).

In a review of a conceptually and politically similar effort, Higgins-Desboilles and Russell-Mundine provide an engaging account of justice tourism and solidarity tours that aim to provide tourism opportunities for the economically marginalized. These opportunities are intended to ensure participants have the chance to understand issues beyond what is communicated by the mass media, analyze issues in their own communities, and link travelers and activists around the globe. The authors posit that volunteer tourism may have the capacity to contribute to the values of global peace, understanding, and solidarity *if* it can avoid being co-opted as a lucrative niche market. The authors call for volunteer tourism to grow into an embrace of the principles of solidarity tours and also express desire to see “projects which are locally initiated” (2008: 192).

The Fair Trade Learning construct, which originated with efforts of the Association of Clubs (AOC) in Petersfield, Jamaica, could be the approach called for. A model of community tourism, based on participatory budgeting and community-driven development, emerged through many years of dialogue between the Petersfield-based AOC and its nonprofit partner in the United States, Amizade Global Service-Learning. The construct has helped the organizations “stay honest” with one another, as they both work to

uphold ethical, community-centered principles despite market pressures to do otherwise.

Indeed, the framework facilitates learning and growth even as concepts such as reciprocity and solidarity are renegotiated 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: 26, emphasis in original). As the service-learning sector and portions of the tourism sector call for deeper clarity on what is meant by assertions of solidarity, justice, mutuality, and reciprocity, there are also related calls for deeper clarity on participant learning processes. In a recent article, Coghlan and Gooch call for pedagogy that pushes volunteer tourism, “beyond a simple rhetoric of doing something worthwhile to life-changing experiences that benefit the volunteer, the host community, the environment and the society at large” (2011: 724).

The numerous calls for action in the literature demand response, but first we should attempt deeper conceptual clarity regarding intentions and ideals. Service-learning researchers recently conducted a comprehensive review of the ideal of reciprocity in service learning and civic engagement, philosophy, evolutionary biology, leadership, and indigenous meaning-making (Dostilio et al., 2012). The concept review across these disciplines and epistemologies suggests there are three primary categories of implied meaning attached to the term reciprocity, thereby developing the three different orientations of exchange reciprocity, influence reciprocity, and generativity reciprocity. These orientations indicate (Dostilio et al., 2012: 19–20):

Exchange reciprocity: Participants give and receive something from the others that they would not otherwise have. In this orientation, reciprocity is the interchange of benefits, resources, or actions.

Influence reciprocity: The processes and/or outcomes of the collaboration are iteratively changed as a result of being influenced by the participants and their contributed ways of knowing and doing. In this orientation, reciprocity is expressed as a relational connection that is informed by personal, social, and environmental contexts.

Generativity reciprocity: As a function of the collaborative relationship, participants (who have or develop identities as co-creators) become and/or produce something new together that would not otherwise exist. This orientation may involve transformation of

individual ways of knowing and being or of the systems of which the relationship is a part. The collaboration may extend beyond the initial focus as outcomes, as ways of knowing, and as systems of belonging evolve.

Table 1 considers the location of other international volunteer activities and initiatives within these frameworks before providing examples of how the Fair Trade Learning construct positions itself across all three orientations. Arranging these ideals within this chart also highlights that these various justice, fairness,

or reciprocity-oriented initiatives intend to alter outcomes for both participants and communities.

The concept review is helpful to organize our thinking and consider what types of reciprocity the FTL ideal may advance. Yet we also find insight in Keith's (2005) compelling concern that the ideal of reciprocity may not offer a precise fit with the fields of service learning and development, particularly in light of global interdependencies and its frequently severe economic inequities rather than the local variety of interdependence and comparatively narrow inequity.

Table 1. Reciprocities, international volunteerism, and Fair Trade Learning.

	Exchange reciprocity	Influence reciprocity	Generativity reciprocity
Relevant Framework(s)/ Proposal(s)	Assumption of mainstream volunteer tourism: by visiting economically marginalized communities and volunteering there, participants contribute otherwise unavailable (human) resources. This may include English Language tutoring, infrastructure development, and a variety of other skilled and unskilled contributions. Many of the critiques mentioned above question core assumptions in this approach and demonstrate that unwanted projects have been developed for rather than with community members.	For participants and community members, immediate or near-time outcome of solidarity and justice (Higgins-Desbiolles and Russell-Mundine, 2008). For participants, transformative learning (Kiely, 2004) and building of understanding and international relationships as a foundation for a stronger social and developmental agenda (Hammersley, 2013).	Long-term outcome envisioned in idealist conceptions of tourism, volunteer tourism, and justice and solidarity tourism is global peace, understanding, and solidarity.
FTL Application	Volunteers offer direct labor, share resources. Community members share housing, cooperate in labor projects, tell stories, and orient volunteers to other ways of being. FTL standards call for transparency in economic exchange, living wage remuneration, and local sourcing to the fullest extent possible. Community members have strong participatory voice in all components of FTL planning and implementation, reducing risk of unwanted projects and paternalistic assumptions.	Deliberate intercultural contact, facilitated reflection, community voice, connection to home communities and, if applicable, institutions and academic careers, are all part of the FTL components designed to maximize the creative and visionary alternative imagining possible in cross-cultural, solidarity-oriented relationships. This includes commitments to scholarship participants from host communities and seed multidirectional exchange.	The Fair Trade Learning ideal is itself an unforeseen outcome of a collaborative relationship between the AOC and Amizade. This is one among countless examples of global civil society initiatives and constructs resulting from equitable partnership and exchange. Higgins-Desbiolles and Russell-Mundine (2008) review other global partnerships and initiatives resulting from similar relationship commitments over time. Outcomes continue to evolve.

We are working, in other words, with a concept that has been developed largely through practice and iterative organizational improvements, in cooperation with community organizations around the world, that *may be* better informed through academic efforts at conceptual clarity and distinct lines of inquiry.

Considering Fair Trade Learning standards

Based on reflections of our own experiences and the experiences of our colleagues we offer the standards below in that spirit, eager for experience-based feedback as well as academic insight that may improve the quality of the concept and its communication. Importantly, our colleagues attempting to advance and implement these ideals in practice largely recognize the valid criticisms of the sector. Their concern is not with lack of clarity on critiques, but with proposals to move forward in a sector increasingly dominated by a noxious combination of slick marketing and underinformed consumers. Researchers with experience in social marketing, alternative economic models, and public outreach may contribute by increasing our collective understanding of how to not only conceptualize ideals and develop standards, but also—and crucially—to capture the imagination of an interested public.

The standards presented are meant to provide guidance and best practice within the global service-learning sector, and more generally to the volunteer and educational tourism industries. These standards are aligned with recent calls for the introduction of a fair trade labeling system for volunteer travel organizations (Mdee and Emmott, 2008) and the recent application of fair trade principles to the tourism industry, where South Africa is at the forefront (Fair Trade Tourism South Africa, 2013).

The standards are separated into core principles, community, and student-centered components, because it is often the case that different administrators, offices, leaders, or faculty members attend to these different foci. Yet the position expressed in this document is that student learning and community goals must reinforce and inform one another. Either is undermined by the absence of the other.

These standards have emerged through a collaborative, in-person and online process (Building a Better World Forum for Global Service-Learning, 2013) during the last 2 years with input by numerous concerned global citizens, international education practitioners and researchers, nongovernmental organization representatives, and community members. In-person feedback was received at the International Association for Research on Service-Learning and Community Engagement, The Forum

on Education Abroad, the Cornell University–New York Campus Compact Global Service-Learning Institute, and the Building Bridges Coalition’s International Service-Learning Summit, and has been incorporated in the current standards set.

Fair Trade Learning principles

These standards are intended as aspirational guidelines, not as limiting proscriptions. While our strongest aspiration is that all programs would achieve the standards indicated here, we also recognize that program building and institutional change are most frequently characterized as journeys rather than revolutions. These guidelines are intended to help draw attention to key issues and thereby suggest a robust way forward.

Core principles

These core principles provide the overall FTL standards that require buy-in from all stakeholders.

- 1.1 *Dual Purposes.* Programs are organized with community and student outcomes in mind. The ethics of integrating community development with student learning necessitates that as much attention is paid to community outcomes as to student learning. One purpose is therefore never primary. Rather, community-driven outcomes and student learning about ethical global engagement must be held in balance with one another.
- 1.2 *Community Voice and Direction.* Drawing on best practices in community development, service-learning, and public health, community-based efforts must be community driven. Community engagement, learning, program design, and budgeting should all include significant community direction, feedback, and opportunities for iterative improvements. Attention to the best practices referenced above suggests practitioners should triangulate community voice, actively seek the voices of the marginalized, and otherwise be systematic about inclusion of broad community perspective and multiple stakeholders regarding direction and goals. While student outcomes are certainly important and we point to dual purposes above, the typical bias of universities to serving students and organizations to serving customers requires a special focus on and attention to community voice and direction.
- 1.3 *Commitment and Sustainability.* International education programming should only be undertaken within a robust understanding of how the programming relates to the continuous learning of

the student and community-defined goals of the host community. For students, this translates as a relationship between the program, preparatory courses, and re-entry programming. Such programming should support the development of the individual student and/or continuous connection to the community partnership or ethical question addressed after returning to campus. Ideally, on-campus faculty, activities, and programs support students' efforts to engage in ongoing global civic engagement and social change programming related to their immersion experiences. For community partners, this means clarity regarding the nature of the commitment with the university or international education provider, as well as a clear vision of likely developments in the partnership and community-driven goals for the next year, three years forward, and even as many as five years in the future.

- 1.4 *Transparency.* Students and community partners should be aware of how program funds are spent and why. Decision making regarding program fund expenditures should be transparent. Lines of authority should be clear. Transparency should extend throughout GSL relationships, from the university to and through any providers and to the community.
- 1.5 *Environmental Sustainability and Footprint Reduction.* Program administrators should dialogue with community partners about environmental impacts of the program and the balance of those impacts with program benefits. Together, partnership leaders must consider strategies for impact mediation, including supporting local environmental initiatives and/or opportunities for participants to travel to and from their program site "carbon neutral" (e.g. by purchasing "passes" or "green tags").
- 1.6 *Economic Sustainability.* Program costs and contributions should be aligned with local economies or social dynamics within the community. Donations or project support should reflect a sustainability perspective, thereby taking into account and/or developing the capacity of the community partner to manage funding effectively and ethically. University-based practitioners may also need to cooperate with their development and finance offices to create the capacity to responsibly manage funds targeted toward these specific initiatives.
- 1.7 *Deliberate Diversity, Intercultural Contact, and Reflection.* The processes that enhance intercultural learning and acceptance involve deliberate intercultural contact and structured reflective processes by trusted mentors. This is true whether

groups are multi-ethnic and situated domestically, comprised of international participants, only students, or community members and students. Program administrators and community partners should work to enhance diversity of participants at all points of entry, and should nurture structured reflective intercultural learning and acceptance within all programs.

- 1.8 *Global Community Building.* The program should point toward better future possibilities for students and community members. With community members, the program should encourage multi-directional exchange to support learning opportunities for individuals from the receiving communities, as well as continuous contact and commitment regarding local development and/or advocacy goals. With students, the program should facilitate a return process whereby learners have reflective opportunities and resources to explore growth in their understandings of themselves as individuals capable of responsible and ethical behavior in global context.

Community-centered standards

These standards elucidate the areas of focus by all stakeholders to ensure a fair and positive impact of programs on communities in which they operate.

- 2.1 *Purpose.* Program administrators should engage in continuous dialogue with community partners regarding the partnership's potential to contribute to community-driven efforts that advance human flourishing in the context of environmental, economic, and social sustainability. Continuous dialogue should include minimally annual evaluation and assessment of the partnership and its purposes.
- 2.2 *Community preparation.* Community organizations and partners should receive clear pre-program clarity regarding expectations, partnership parameters through formal or informal memoranda of understanding, and sensitization that includes visitors' customs and patterns, and fullest possible awareness of possible ramifications (both positive and negative) of hosting.
- 2.3 *Timing, duration, and repetition.* Program administrators should cooperate with community members to arrive at acceptable program timing, lengths, and repetition of student groups in communities. Different communities have demonstrated varying degrees of interest in timing of programs, their duration, and their regularity of repetition. This, like all such

conversations, must be highly contextualized within particular communities and partnerships.

- 2.4 *Group size.* Program administrators must discuss ideal group size with community members and arrange program accordingly. Large groups of visiting students can have positive and negative effects on local communities, including undermining traditional cultural knowledge and distorting the local economy.
- 2.5 *Local sourcing.* The program should maximize the economic benefits to local residents by cooperating with community members to ensure program participant needs are addressed through indigenous sources. Community-engaged programs should categorically not parallel the economic structures of enclave tourism. Maximum local ownership and economic benefit is central to the ethos of community partnership. For example:
- 2.5.1 Transparently reimbursed host families offer stronger local economic development than hotels or hostels that are frequently owned by distant corporate organizations.
- 2.5.2 Local eateries, host families, and/or local cooks should be contracted to support local economic development and offer opportunities to learn about locally available foods.
- 2.5.3 Local guides and educators should be contracted to the fullest extent possible, including contracting with professionalized/credentialed as well as non-professionalized and non-credentialed educators who hold and understand local knowledge, history, traditions, and worldview.
- 2.6 *Direct service, advocacy, education, project management, and organization building.* To the extent desired by the community, the program involves students as service-learners, interns, and researchers in locally accountable organizations. Students learn from, contribute skills or knowledge to, and otherwise support local capacity through community improvement actions over a continuous period of time. Ideally, community members or organizations should have a direct role in preparing or training students to maximize their contributions to community work. Students should be trained in the appropriate role of the outsider in community development programs. They should also be trained on participatory methods, cultural appropriateness, and program design, with a focus on local sustainability and capacity development.
- 2.7 *Reciprocity.* Consistent with stated best practices in service-learning, public health, and development, efforts are made to move toward reciprocal relationships with community partners. These efforts

should include opportunities for locals to participate in accredited courses, chances to engage in multi-directional exchange, and clear leadership positions, authority, and autonomy consistent with the ideals articulated in “Community Voice and Direction” above. Outcomes for communities should be as important as student outcomes; if this balance is not clear, program design adjustments should be made.

Student-centered standards

The student-centered standards are focused on maximizing students’ learning and experiences before, during, and after their participation in the programs.

- 1.9 *Purpose.* The program leaders instill an ethical vision of human flourishing by systematically encouraging student reflection and growth regarding responsible and ethical behavior in global context.
- 1.10 *Student preparation.* Robust learning in international education is clearly predicated upon careful preparation for participating students. Student preparation should include pre- or-in-field training that equips learners with the basic conceptual and experiential “tools” to optimize field learning, with greater or less attention given to the concepts mentioned here based on program design, community desires, and student learning goals. Programs may expect students to acquire a working knowledge of the host country’s political history and its relationship to global trends and pressures, current events, group customs and household patterns, ethnographic skills, service ethics, and research methods, as well as culturally appropriate project design, participatory methods, and other community-based approaches and tools. This may require transdisciplinary courses and multidisciplinary cooperation among faculty members.
- 1.11 *Connect context to coursework and learning.* The program leaders engage documented best practices in international education, service-learning, and experiential education broadly by systematically using reflection to connect experiential program components with course goals, global civic engagement goals, and intercultural learning goals.
- 1.12 *Challenge and support.* Program leaders embrace lessons learned regarding reflection in experiential education and intercultural learning by ensuring the living and learning environment is characterized by “challenge and support” for students.

- 1.12.1 Student housing opportunities encourage sustained intercultural contact, opportunities for reflection, and connection to intercultural learning.
- 1.12.2 Students are systematically encouraged to engage in contact with the local population that deliberately moves students out of “group cocoons” and into interpersonal relationships with a variety of local individuals.
- 1.12.3 Service projects or community programs are conducted collaboratively, with students working alongside community members to maximize cultural understanding and local context knowledge.
- 1.13 *Program length.* Program design decisions recognize the strengths and limitations of different lengths of programming, and learning outcomes and educative processes are specifically calibrated to achieve outcomes consistent with program length.
- 1.14 *Instruction and mentoring.* The program provides the necessary external facilitation and supervision to keep students focused, active, and reflective in their learning. The field support system includes “mentor-advisors” drawn from the host community (e.g. host family members, service supervisors, language coaches, and research guides).
- 1.15 *Communicative skills and language learning.* Based on the length of the program and consultation with community partners, the program leaders choose the best possible strategy to improve current language and communication skills and spark interest in future language learning. The growth in short-term study abroad should in this light be seen as an opportunity to entice students toward language learning, rather than an excuse to avoid significant language development. More and deeper language learning is always optimal for improved communication and community partnership.
- 1.16 *Preparation for healthy return to home communities.* Before and after return, program leadership offers guidance, information, reflective opportunities, and exposure to networks intended to support students’ growth as globally engaged, interested, and active individuals. This is part of both course planning and institutional support, as it should extend from the course into student programming and organizations as well as career services and academic career opportunities.

Conclusion

This paper presented a set of standards for international volunteer tourism programs operating at the nexus of university–community engagement. The main contribution of this paper is the articulation of a set of practical standards as well as a conceptual framework for international volunteer tourism. The goals of this paper are aligned with Wearing and McGehee’s recent concluding recommendation for “the development of criteria and credentials for good practice in volunteer tourism” (2013: 127). While these standards were developed with university–community programs in mind, hopefully, they will gain traction with organizations that manage other forms of international volunteer tourism. Additionally, the Fair Trade Learning standards articulated in this paper can provide a conceptual framework for future exploration and research into volunteer tourism. While the standards presented in this paper will be useful for stakeholders engaged in international volunteer tourism globally, they are particularly relevant for the international volunteer tourism industry in Africa, the leading destination region. Also, as mentioned previously, these standards are meant to be just the beginning. The discussion and ongoing amendment of these standards will continue to take place on the Building a Better World Forum for Global Service-Learning online.

Acknowledgements

Special thanks to Dr Richard Slimbach of Azusa Pacific University, whose “Program Design for the Common Good” played a formative role in the first iteration of these standards. Special thanks also to Amizade Global Service-Learning, which provided a first iteration of the Fair Trade Learning ideal through its partnership with the Association of Clubs in Petersfield, Jamaica. Additionally, we are appreciative of considerable written and spoken feedback from Slimbach himself along with GSL administrators, practitioners, and scholars including Jeffrey Bouman, Matthias Brown, Lauren Calderera, Mireille Cronin-Mather, Jessica Evert, Ethan Knight, Richard Kiely, Julia Lang, Robin Pendoley, Nora Reynolds, Rebecca Stoltzfus, Cynthia Toms-Smedley, and numerous individuals who provided feedback at the 2011 and 2012 International Association for Research on Service-Learning and Community Engagement Conferences, 2013 Forum on Education Abroad Conference, and 2013 Cornell Global Service-Learning Institute.

References

- Barbieri C, Santos C and Katsube Y (2012) Volunteer tourism: On-the-ground observations from Rwanda. *Tourism Management* 33: 509–516.

- Benson A and Blackman D (2011) To distribute leadership or not? A lesson from the islands. *Tourism Management* 33: 509–516.
- Broad S (2003) Living the Thai life—a case study of volunteer tourism at the Gibbon Rehabilitation Project, Thailand. *Tourism Recreation Research* 28: 63–72.
- Building a Better World Forum for Global Service-Learning (2013) Fair trade learning. Available at: <http://criticalservicelearning.org/2013/09/18/fair-trade-learning/>
- Callanan M and Thomas S (2005) Volunteer tourism: Deconstructing volunteer activities within a dynamic environment. In: Novelli M (ed.) *Niche Tourism: Contemporary Issues, Trends, and Cases*. Oxford: Butterworth-Heinemann, pp. 183–200.
- Caton K and Santos C (2009) Images of the other: Selling study abroad in a post-colonial world. *Journal of Travel Research* 48: 191–204.
- Coghlan A and Gooch M (2011) Applying a transformative learning framework to volunteer tourism. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism* 19: 713–728.
- Crabtree R (2008) Theoretical foundations for international service-learning. *Michigan Journal of Community Service-Learning* 15: 18–36.
- Dostilio LD, Brackmann SM, Edwards KE, et al. (2012) Reciprocity: Saying what we mean and meaning what we say. *Michigan Journal of Community Service-Learning* 19: 17–32.
- Easterly W (2006) *White Man's Burden: Why the West's Efforts to Aid the Rest Have Done So Much Ill and So Little Good*. New York: Penguin Press.
- Fair Trade in Tourism South Africa (2013) Available at: <http://www.fairtourismsa.org.za/>
- Forsythe R (2011) Helping or hindering? Volunteer tourism in Ghana and its critical role in development. Paper presented at the conference *Rethinking Development in an Age of Scarcity and Uncertainty*. University of York, 19–22 September 2011. Accessed at: <http://eadi.org/gc2011/forsythe-365.pdf>
- Friends International (2012) Children are not tourist attractions. Available at: <http://www.thinkchildsafe.org/thinkbeforevisiting/>
- Grusky S (2000) International service learning: A critical guide from an impassioned advocate. *American Behavioral Scientist* 43: 858–867.
- Guttentag D (2009) The possible negative impacts of volunteer tourism. *International Journal of Tourism Research* 11: 537–551.
- Hammersley LA (2013) Volunteer tourism: building effective relationships of understanding. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*. DOI: 10.1080/09669582.2013.839691. <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/09669582.2013.839691#.UzBrHKiwKtM>
- Hartman E, Paris C and Blache-Cohen B (2012) Tourism and transparency: Navigating ethical risks in volunteerism with fair trade learning. *Africa Insight* 42: 157–168.
- Higgins-Desbiolles F and Russell-Mundine G (2008) Absences in the volunteer tourism phenomenon: The right to travel, solidarity tours, and transformation beyond the one-way. In: Lyons KD and Wearing S (eds) *Journeys of Discovery in Volunteer Tourism: International Case Study Perspectives*. Oxfordshire: CABI, pp. 182–194.
- Keith N (2005) Community service learning in the face of globalization. *Michigan Journal of Community Service Learning* 11: 5–24.
- Kiely R (2004) A chameleon with a complex: Searching for transformation in international service-learning. *Michigan Journal of Community Service-Learning* 10: 5–20.
- Laythorpe K (2010) Backpackers as volunteer tourists: Evidence from Tanzania. In: Hannam K and Diekmann A (eds) *Beyond Backpacker Tourism: Mobilities and Experiences*. Clevedon: Channel View, pp. 140–152.
- Ledwith M (2005) Personal narratives/political lives: Personal reflection as a tool for collective change. *Reflective Practice* 6(2): 255–262.
- Lyons K, Hanley J, Wearing S, et al. (2012) Gap year volunteer tourism: Myths of global citizenship? *Annals of Tourism Research* 39: 361–378.
- McGehee N (2002) Alternative tourism and social movements. *Annals of Tourism Research* 29: 124–143.
- Mdee A and Emmott R (2008) Social enterprise with international impact: The case for fair trade certification of volunteer tourism. *Education, Knowledge & Economy* 2: 191–201.
- Open Doors (2012) Open Doors 2012: International student enrollment increased by 6 percent. Available at: <http://www.iie.org/Who-We-Are/News-and-Events/Press-Center/Press-Releases/2012/2012-11-13-Open-Doors-International-Students>
- Palacios C (2010) Volunteer tourism, development and education in a postcolonial world: Conceiving global connections beyond aid. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism* 18: 861–878.
- Sharp E and Dear S (2013) Points of discomfort: Reflections on power and partnerships in international service-learning. *Michigan Journal of Community Service-Learning* 19: 49–57.
- Simpson K (2004) 'Doing development': The gap year volunteer-tourists and a popular practice of development. *Journal of International Development* 16: 681–692.
- Sin H (2009) Volunteer tourism: 'Involve me and I will learn'? *Annals of Tourism Research* 36: 480–501.
- Sin H (2010) Who are we responsible to? Locals' tales of volunteer tourism. *Geoforum* 41: 983–992.
- Staywyse (2012) *Youth travel – The next BIG THING at ITB Berlin 2012*. The Association of Youth Travel Accommodation. Available at: <http://staywyse.org/2012/03/09/youth-travel-the-next-big-thing-at-itb-berlin-2012/>
- Stoddart H and Rogerson CM (2004) Volunteer tourism: The case of Habitat for Humanity South Africa. *Geoforum* 60: 311–318.
- Stoecker R and Tryon E (2009) *The Unheard Voices: Community Organizations and Service-Learning*. Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press.
- Talwalker C (2012) What kind of global citizen is the student volunteer? *Journal of Global Citizenship and Equity Education* 2: 21–40.
- Theerapappisit P (2009) Pro-poor ethnic tourism in the Mekong: A study of three approaches in Northern Thailand. *Asia Pacific Journal of Tourism Research* 14: 201–221.
- The International Ecotourism Society (2012) International Voluntourism guidelines for commercial tourism operators. Available at: <http://www.ecotourism.org/voluntourism-guidelines>
- Tomazos K and Butler R (2011) Volunteer tourists in the field: A question of balance? *Tourism Management* 33: 177–187.
- Tomazos K and Cooper W (2012) Volunteer tourism: At the crossroads of commercialization and service? *Current Issues in Tourism* 15: 405–423.
- Tourism Research & Marketing (2008) *Volunteer Tourism: A Global Analysis. A report by tourism research and marketing*. Barcelona, Spain: Association for Tourism and Leisure Education.
- Volunteer Abroad (2012). Available at: <http://www.goabroad.com/volunteer-abroad>
- Vrasti W (2013) *Volunteer Tourism in the Global South: Giving Back in Neoliberal Times*. Oxon, UK: Routledge.
- Wearing S and McGehee N (2013) Volunteer tourism: A review. *Tourism Management* 38: 120–130.
- Wickens E (2010) Journeys of self. Volunteer tourists in Nepal. In: Benson A (ed.) *Volunteer Tourism: Theory Framework to Practical Applications*. Oxon, UK: Routledge.