



**Northern Illinois  
University**

*Your Future. Our Focus.*



# **Alternative Spring “BAE”: Equipping University Students and Empowering Local Leaders in Belize**

Karisa Fuerniss, M.S.Ed., ATC &  
Jenn Jacobs, PhD

# Learning Objectives



Participants will be able to:

1. Explain why sport for development and peace serves as an effective **partnership model** (LO-1)
2. Describe the research-based, practical experience-oriented **program design** (LO-2)
3. Implement strategies for “fostering exchange and application of **mutually beneficial** and socially useful knowledge” for university students and international partners (LO-3)

(Terms from *Kellogg Commission Report, 1999*)



## Background

- Importance of cross-cultural experiences
  - Problem: study abroad drawbacks
  - Solution: short-term experience

# Partnership Model: Sport for Development and Peace



- **Intentional use of sport** to attain specific development and peace objectives
  - Combine **sport** + non-sport components
  - **Integrate** SFDP with other initiatives
  - **Empower** participants (students + Belizeans) by engaging them in program design and delivery
  - Pursuing **sustainability** and collaboration after international partnerships



LO-1

# Partnership Foundation: Department of State Grant



LO-1

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# Partnership Foundation: Department of State Grant



## Formation of BYSC

NIU faculty  
create  
exchange  
program:



*Belizean  
Youth  
Sport  
Coalition*

(Wright, Jacobs, Ressler, & Jung, 2016)

LO-1

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Train to  
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## Feedback from BYSC

Still a gap  
in basic  
sport  
science  
knowledge  
(first aid,  
marketing,  
etc.)



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## Forward Progress

Shift  
power in  
responsive  
manner  
that  
empowers  
local  
context

(Wright, Jacobs, Ressler, & Jung, 2016)

LO-1

# Alternative Spring "BAE"



## Belizean Academic Experience



Four day sport  
science training  
partnership



# Experiences for University Students



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## Cultural Experiences

### Tours:

Cave-tubing, Mayan ruins

### Shopping:

Local markets, purchasing gifts

### Cuisine:

Food stands, homecooked meals

### Recreation:

Semi-pro game, team workouts

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Jacobs, Fuerniss, Richards, & Wright (under review)

LO-2

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Local markets, purchasing gifts

### **Cuisine:**

Food stands, homecooked meals

### **Recreation:**

Semi-pro game, team workouts

## Teaching Experiences

### **Sport Management:**

Keeping the Fans On

### **Athletic Training:**

Basic First Aid

### **Coaching:**

Coaching Growth Mindset

### **Sport Psychology:**

Extreme Teambuilding

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Jacobs, Fuerniss, Richards, & Wright (under review)

LO-2

# BAE Participants



- U.S. Students (n=4)
- U.S. Program Director
- U.S. Graduate Student Director
- Belizean Partners (n=4)
- Belizean Sports Coaches (n=21)

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# Context: BAE Partnership Phases



	<b>U.S. Students (n=4)</b>	<b>Belizean Partners (n=4)</b>
<b>Pre-Departure</b> (Jan.-Mar.)		
<b>In-Country</b> (Spring Break)		
<b>Post-Departure</b> (Mar.-Aug.)		

LO-2

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<b>Pre-Departure</b> (Jan.-Mar.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Building cultural competence</li><li>• Developing team culture</li><li>• Devising training program</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Sharing cultural insight</li><li>• Giving input to program</li><li>• Securing facilities/equipment</li></ul>

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<b>In-Country</b> (Spring Break)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Days 1-3: cultural immersion</li><li>• Days 4-7: training delivery</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Creating cultural experiences</li><li>• Delivering training</li></ul>

LO-2



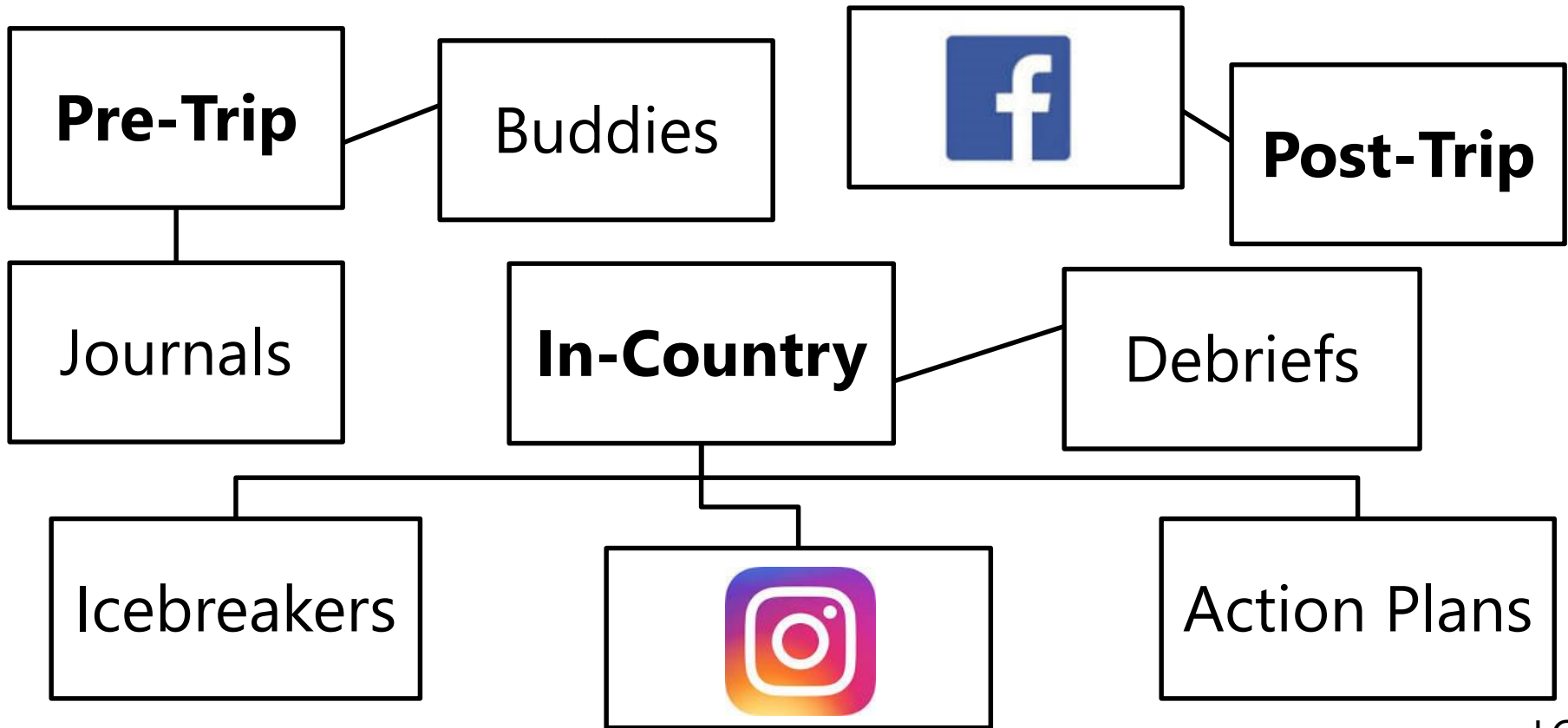
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<b>Post-Departure</b> (Mar.-Aug.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Maintaining connections</li><li>• Professional development</li><li>• Evaluation/research follow up</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Maintaining connections</li><li>• Providing ongoing education</li><li>• Providing feedback to U.S.</li></ul>

LO-2

# Partnership Strategies Preview



LO-3



## Establishing Relationships



[We talked with our Belizean buddies] “on and off for about two months or so, **chitchatting about how it was going...** what’s life like over here and over there” (John, Focus Group).

LO-3



## Ongoing Reflection

Mansa explained, “We need to keep our purpose of why we are going—**exchanging knowledge** so that we can help use sport for social change. This is not us trying to save the Belizeans from their struggles” (Pre-Trip Journal).



LO-3



## Breaking the Ice

LO-3

“One priority was to build relationships...so we intentionally did a lot of icebreakers to **get to know people**...I think this part of training connected with [Belizean] values”  
(Researcher, Focus Group).





## Using Instagram as a Reflective Tool

- Students responded to **prompt to guide** reflection  
Ex: *Day 6 (Day 3 of Training) 1) How's our BAE team's chemistry in Belize? Share a cool example or 2 from any point on Belizean soil. 2) Also, what are you learning from them personally? Professionally?*
- Platform allowed **authentic, rich reflection**  
(18 pages of captions, 100+ pictures)



LO-3



## Sharing Snapshots

**“They learned so much...from us and in turn **we learned so much...**from them. We will go home with more knowledge and understanding than when we arrived. This is true for both sides.” –Mansa (Instagram Post)**



turn we learned so much information from them. We will go home with more knowledge and understanding than when we arrived. This is true for both sides of the training the BAE team and the NSC. I feel so privileged and welcomed since I have been here. I have accomplished 2 of my 3 goals that I set for my self I have gained an amazing network and have gotten to know passionate and truly honorable people my life just been enhanced since I've been here I have more



## Daily Debriefing

I learned to be “flexible and my teaching was not written in stone... I needed to **cater to the Belizeans’ needs**... I wanted them to absorb this so they can walk out better coaches”

(Brooke, Post-Interview).

LO-3



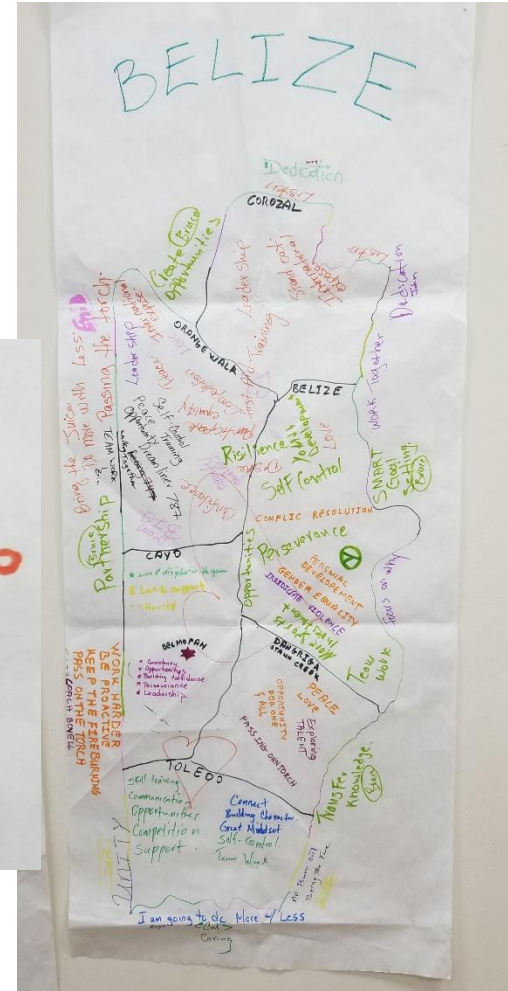


# In-Country Partnership Strategies



## Action Planning for Sustainability

*I'm going to set attainable goals for my kids to achieve. KC*



LO-3

# Post-Trip Partnership Strategies



## Ongoing Collaboration



Belize National  
Sports Council  
BAEs

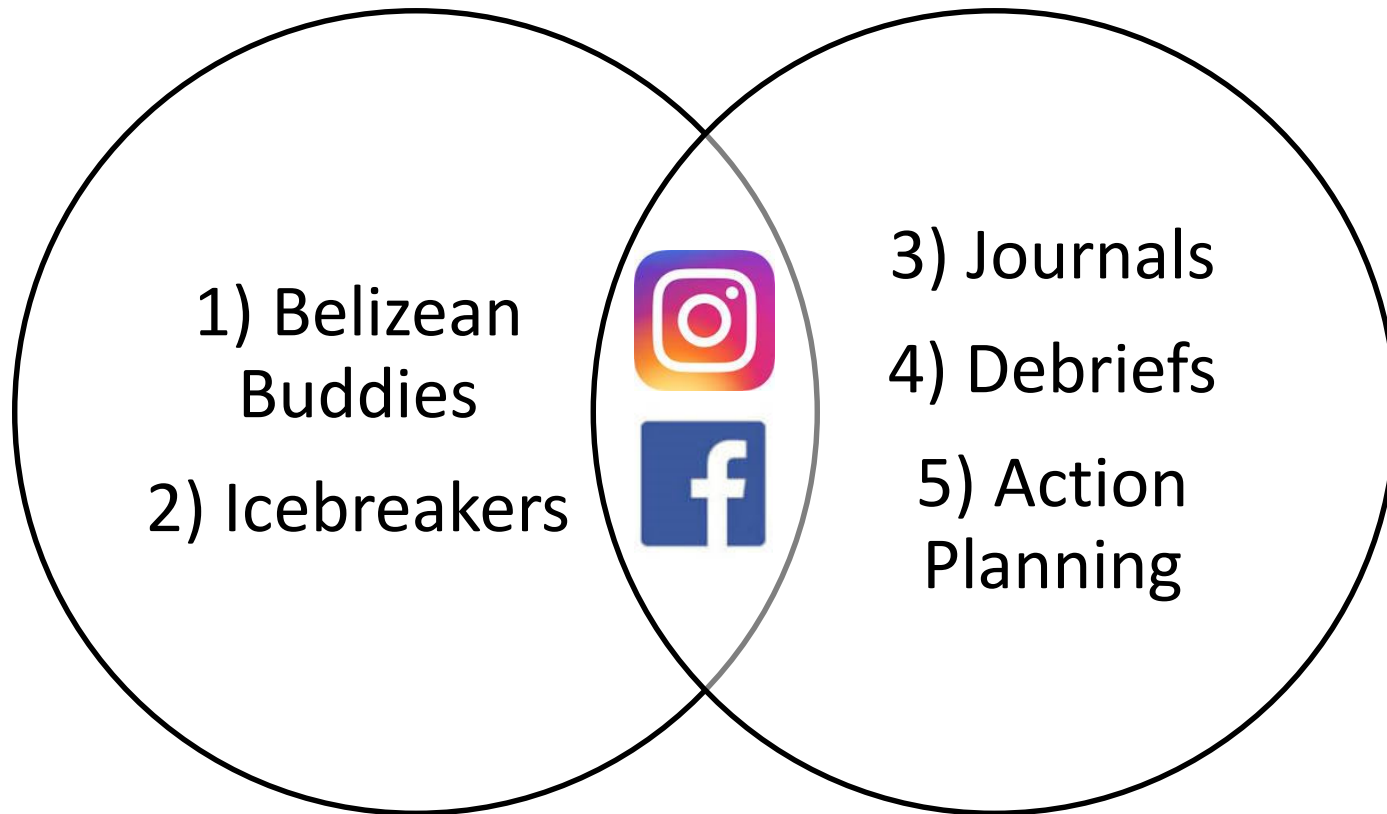


LO-3

# Summary of Strategies



## Relationships and Reflection



LO-3

# Implications & Future Directions



1. Intentional program design can **empower** both university students and in-country partners.
  - Foster student **global mindedness** and teaching
  - Promote **local expertise** and leadership
2. Explore the impact of cultural immersion on university students in the **long-term**
3. Examine the effectiveness of a follow up program to continue partnership (**BAE 2.0**)

# Acknowledgements



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