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

Karisa Fuerniss, M.S.Ed., ATC & Jenn Jacobs, PhD
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
Partnership Foundation:
Department of State Grant
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Formation of BYSC
NIU faculty create exchange program: Belizean Youth Sport Coalition

(Wright, Jacobs, Ressler, & Jung, 2016)
Partnership Foundation: Department of State Grant

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Focus of BYSC
Train to teach sport + life skills to minimize youth social issues

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Forward Progress
Shift power in responsive manner that empowers local context

(Wright, Jacobs, Ressler, & Jung, 2016)
Alternative Spring “BAE”

Belizean
Academic
Experience

Four day sport
science training
partnership
Experiences for University Students

Cultural Experiences

Tours:
Cave-tubing, Mayan ruins

Shopping:
Local markets, purchasing gifts

Cuisine:
Food stands, homecooked meals

Recreation:
Semi-pro game, team workouts

Jacobs, Fuerniss, Richards, & Wright (under review)
# Experiences for University Students

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

Your Future. Our Focus.
### Context: BAE Partnership Phases

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LO-2
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|  | • Days 4-7: training delivery  
|  | • Creating cultural experiences  
|  | • Delivering training  |
| **Post-Departure** (Mar.-Aug.) | • Maintaining connections  
|  | • Professional development  
|  | • Evaluation/research follow up  
|  | • Maintaining connections  
|  | • Providing ongoing education  
|  | • Providing feedback to U.S.  |

LO-2
Partnership Strategies Preview

- Pre-Trip
  - Journals
  - Icebreakers

- Buddies

- In-Country
  - Debriefs
  - Action Plans

- Post-Trip
  - Facebook
  - Instagram

Your Future. Our Focus.

LO-3
Pre-Trip Partnership Strategies

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).
In-Country Partnership Strategies

Breaking the Ice

“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**
“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)
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).
In-Country Partnership Strategies

Action Planning for Sustainability

I'm going to set attainable goals for my kids to achieve. KC
Post-Trip Partnership Strategies

Ongoing Collaboration

Belize National Sports Council BAEs
Summary of Strategies

**Relationships and Reflection**

1) Belizean Buddies
2) Icebreakers
3) Journals
4) Debriefs
5) Action Planning

LO-3

Your Future. Our Focus.
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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