



fsd: SLT

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development



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Service Learning Trips

An Introduction for group leaders and program participants

What is Service Learning?

Service learning enables participants to gain both a theoretical understanding and practical experience in community-driven development. Local communities collaborate with service learning participants to develop projects that are meaningful for all. Practical service is linked to lectures, workshops, and cultural experiences to provide participants with a broad-based understanding of international community development.

The Foundation for Sustainable Development's (FSD) Service Learning Trips (SLT) are based upon two important principles:

1. To build upon the work of our partner organizations through short-term, high-impact projects
2. To provide SLT participants with the opportunity to further their theoretical and practical understanding of international development and to contribute to community-driven solutions in a group setting

Principles

To build upon the work of FSD's partner organizations through short-term, high-impact projects

FSD promotes long-term sustainable development initiatives that are community-driven and supported. This work often requires short-term, high-impact projects that cannot be fulfilled by the limited resources available to our partner organizations. The FSD SLT program can contribute to this need; partner organizations can take advantage of the intense burst of enthusiasm and insight that SLT participant groups provide and engage in discrete short-term projects which provide a long-term impact to communities.

To provide SLT participants with the opportunity to further their theoretical and practical understanding of international development and to contribute to community-driven solutions in a group setting

Fieldwork at an FSD Program Site enables participants to put theory into practice and improve their understanding of sustainable community development. SLT participants are provided a forum in which to critically analyze theoretical knowledge and to assess its practical applications. Participants gain exposure to the international development profession as well as first-hand experience working on community-driven projects.

Framework

Each SLT is customized to meet the needs and interests of the group and the partner organization. The SLT Program begins with pre-departure preparation during which time participants select a site and identify their interest areas and learning objectives. Once this has been determined, the group will work collaboratively with FSD's Site Team staff, the partner organization and FSD San Francisco staff to design a practical project to be implemented in partnership with community-based organizations. While in country, the group will engage in a short-term service project while attending supplementary lectures, site visits, workshops, reflection sessions and cultural activities to reinforce the learning and immersion experience. Groups often return to share what they've learned, raise awareness in their communities and raise funds for FSD and their partner organizations.

The overarching framework for the SLT program is the "PARE model" for **Preparation, Action, Reflection, and Evaluation**

At all stages in the process (pre-departure, in country, and upon return) participants go through the cycle of Preparation, Action, Reflection, and Evaluation. This model allows participants to stay flexible and remain in tune with the needs of community partners. Participants also benefit from constant reflection and evaluation of their practices.



Key Components

Direct Service

Providing direct service to organizations is the focal point of the SLT. Examples of service learning projects include:

- Constructing sustainable gardens for community meal centers and raising awareness on the benefits of a diverse and balanced diet.
- Building computer literacy by designing educational workshops and developing instructional materials.
- Conducting door-to-door health outreach campaigns on preventative approaches for common public health issues.

Service projects are developed to complement, catalyze, or accelerate the work of FSD's partner organizations. Beyond implementing project work, FSD has structured activities where groups may learn about development and culture in a format that best fits their interests and knowledge base. These activities may include the following:

- Lectures, panels, and workshops provided by specialists to complement the project work and group's interests.
- Skills training for development projects (i.e. how to perform needs and opportunities assessment or conduct a community mapping project).
- Site visits to various non-governmental organizations, grassroots organizations, or community-based organizations.
- Group discussions to allow participants the opportunity to reflect on their experience and evaluate their work.
- Cultural activities in order to increase cultural sensitivity and understanding (i.e. local dance performances or concerts).

These activities are often supplemented with reading material, films, and radio clips to enhance the participants' understanding of international development.

SLT Development

How it works:

- The SLT group submits a group application outlining their preferred location, interest areas and learning objectives.
- Based on the group application, the FSD Site Team and partner organizations discuss SLT project possibilities.
- The FSD Site Team matches partner organizations with SLT groups based on mutual needs and interests, and together with the partner organization writes a draft SLT project proposal.
- FSD collaborates with group leaders, participants and the partner organization to finalize an SLT project and itinerary including lectures, site visits, and cultural activities.

Group leaders will work with FSD to ensure that all projects and activities contribute to the learning experience of the participants while meeting community needs and achieving project outcomes. At the end of the trip, FSD and participants will discuss ways in which the group can continue to support the project through advocacy and fundraising.



Roles and responsibilities

The SLT program is a collaboration among partner organizations, FSD, and SLT groups. Understanding the responsibilities of each stakeholder will aid in the creation of a mutually beneficial relationship and promote the goals of sustainable community development.

Partner Organizations

- Partner organizations perform needs and opportunity assessments and develop ideas for potential SLT projects.
- Partner organizations, in conjunction with the FSD Site Team, engage with the SLT group to collaborate on project development.
- Partner organization staff oversee the work of the group to ensure that project outcomes are being met and that the community's interests are central to the service project.

FSD

- FSD serves as a liaison between the partner organization and the SLT group throughout the project planning and implementation process, providing technical support and guidance throughout the trip.
- FSD develops a program itinerary together with the SLT group and partner organization that incorporates service projects and complementary activities to meet the learning objectives of the group as well as the needs of the community.
- FSD provides on-the-ground logistical support and infrastructure for the SLT group, including conducting orientation, ensuring the group's safety and security, arranging host family stays, securing transportation, etc.

Group Leaders

- Group leaders manage the exchange of information with FSD and partner organizations during the preparation stage.
- Group leaders help manage the pre-departure logistics, including coordinating payments, flight info, the submission of individual forms and contracts, etc.
- Group leaders facilitate in-country group discussions and reflection sessions, and organize advocacy efforts upon return.
- Group leaders, with assistance from the Site Team, enforce appropriate behavior and reinforce FSD's Professional Standards Commitments.

Group Participants

- Group participants collaborate with FSD and FSD's partner organizations in order to select and design a development project.
- Group participants adhere to FSD's Professional Standards Commitment throughout the trip.
- Participants continuously reflect on the service project to ensure the project is meeting community's needs and the group's learning objectives.
- Participants increase their understanding of international development by attending discussions, lectures, and site visits, etc.