

## PRESENTATION



# Rethinking Post-2015 Development

## Conceptual and Policy Implications Beyond MDGs

Saturday, April 18<sup>th</sup>, 2015

*Venue:* EDR (Educational Divide Reform)  
30 JFK St. 3F & 4F, Cambridge, MA 02138

*Cosponsored by:* CASID, EDR and the PhD Program in  
Global Governance and Human Security at UMass Boston

# **Globetrotting or Global Citizens?**

## **Understanding Trends and Motivations for Participation in Learning/Volunteer Abroad Programs**



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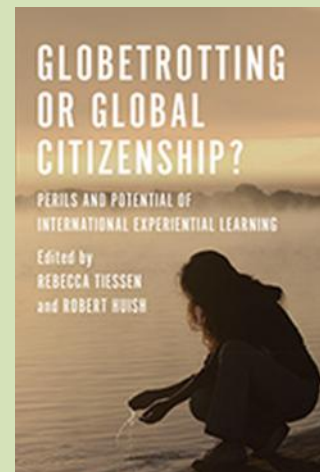


# About my Research

- 2005 – pilot study
- 2007-2011 – funded research :interviews in Canada: 139 Canadians (longitudinal and return)
- And abroad: 181 interviews with participants from **Peru, Guatemala, Jamaica, India, Malawi, Zambia and South Africa**
- Co-investigator: Barbara Heron, many RAs
- Funded by the **International Development Research Centre** in Canada.

# Research Outputs

- Collaboration with colleagues – panels
- *Globetrotting or Global Citizenship? Perils and Potential of International Experiential Learning* (ed. Tiessen and Huish)
- Several book chapters and journal articles, many public presentations
- Course development: Global Citizenship and International Experiential Learning
- Websites:  
<http://cdnglobalcitizenship.wordpress.com/>
- <http://cdnglobalcitizenship.weebly.com/open-access-publications.html>



# Globetrotting or Global Citizenship?

- Does international experiential learning (or learn/volunteer abroad) produce globetrotters or global citizens?
- How do we understand global citizenship?
- Thick/thin or Critical/Soft GC education?
- Racisms, oppression, (neo)colonialism, etc
- Narratives and making sense of how we represent the Global South
- Making the most out of these experiences

# Snapshot

Trends among Canadian Youth	Host Country Participant Reflections
1. Part of a growth industry	Practice should continue
2. Shorter time frames	Minimum of 6 months
3. Global South as a 'cheaper' option	Dumping ground versus credibility of donors
4. Younger participants (15-17 years)	Time spent 'caring for' youth or 'support'
5. Increasingly personal motivations	Formerly political or solidarity-oriented motivations
6. Voluntourism - Allure of adventure	Appreciation of the desire to travel so long as it does not interfere with work

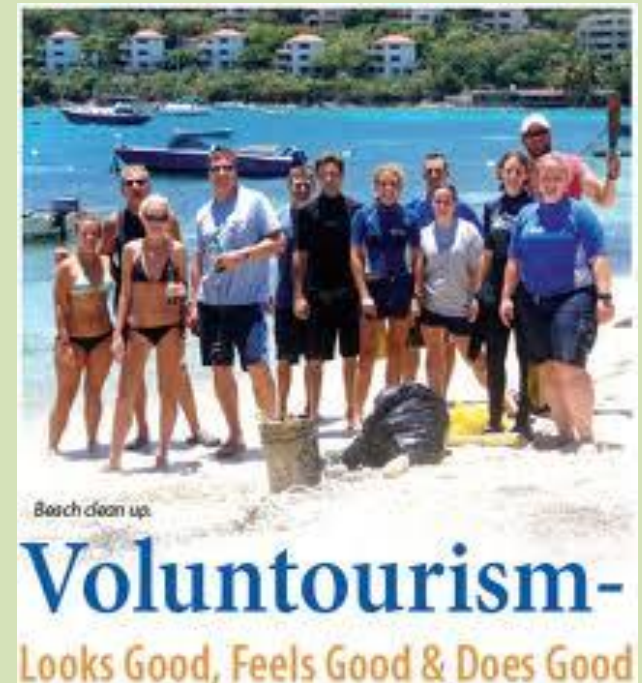
# Trend 1: Growth Industry

- From call to action to rite of passage
- 1.6 volunteer tourists per year (value of \$2.2 billion USD) – (travelmole, Tourism and Research Marketing, 2008)
- Mintel (2008): expected value of volunteer abroad in 2010 of \$35 billion USD
- Lough (2010): 1,032,780 reported volunteering abroad
- One program in Canada 'Me to We' sent 13,000 participants abroad in 2010



# Trend 2: Shorter time frames

- 51% of the market spends one month or less abroad
- 6-12 month programs dropped from 10% to 33 % of the market
- Lough (2010) 39% of volunteers spent less than one week abroad
- My study participants: short term was 2 weeks, long-term was 3-6 months





# Trend 3: Global South

- Brookings (2008) survey of top 10 destinations:
- Peru, Mexico, Kenya, India, Honduras, Ecuador, Brazil, Belize, Costa Rica and Sudan
- My study: majority travelled to Africa



# Trend 4: Marketing to younger individuals (15 – 17 year olds)

- Increasing demand for Gap Year programs
- A range of highschool program options



# Trend 5: Personal rather than Political

- A Guatemalan participant, Jose Miguel: *volunteers come better prepared but for shorter periods of time and that their motivations have shifted and “Before, the motivations were political, now they are personal, institutional and cultural motivation.”*



# Trend 6: Voluntourism/Travel and Adventure

- Shopping for a country based on what you can 'do' there (anecdote)
- To what extent is the travel, tourism and adventure the primary motivation for going abroad?
- To what extent do places/adventures become trophies?



# Learn/Volunteer Abroad Marketing

- “glossy posters depicting faraway locations urge students to spend a spring break, summer, semester, or year encountering new people, places, and languages in a destination of their choice” (Zemach-Bersin, 2009:303).
- in the United States, American undergraduates have unconsciously and consciously absorbed thousands of images and advertisements before they finally decide on their destination of choice.



# Beneath these comments: a glimpse at entitlement and luxury

- namely feeling bored, isolated or stagnant as reasons for wanting to go abroad
- “I was feeling that I was probably in the same place for too long and I wanted to go to a completely different place that was very far away from where I was”.
- “I was kind of tired of being in school for a long time”
- a privileged act of leisure accorded to very few people in the world



# Host Country Reflections on Travel and Adventure for Western volunteers

- **Positive:** volunteers as open-minded
- volunteers work hard and play hard





# Considerations:



- These trends have implications for host partners and how we we teach students and prepare the participants before going abroad
- A consumable product?
- Cultural capital that an be turned into economic capital (employment, social class)
- Neo-colonial experiences: re-creating the other in the images we consume and re-produce
- Expectations, entitlement, timing and inequality of opportunity

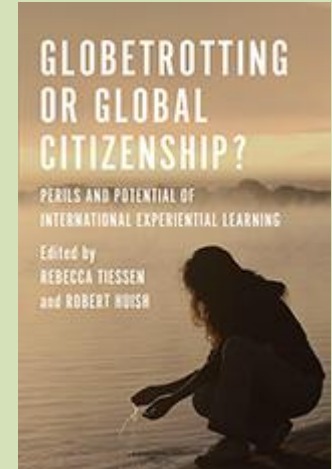
# « Effective Practices » for International Volunteering

- The next step
- Best practices
- 12 countries 960 surveys, partnership development
- Development outcomes?
- Next: holding organizations accountable: code of conduct? Monitoring VSOs?

# Thank you

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***Globetrotting or Global Citizenship: Perils and Potential of International Experiential Learning***

*Rebecca Tiessen and Robert Huish (eds)*

*University of Toronto Press, 2014*

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