

**Hartman, E., Kiely, R., Boettcher, C., & Friedrichs, J. (2018). *Community-based global learning: The theory and practice of ethical engagement at home and abroad*. Stylus Publishing. 288 pp.**

Review by Alan H. Bloomgarden and Kirk Lange



**T**his latest offering from Eric Hartman and his colleagues documents and extends the comprehensive and thoughtfully critical treatment of ethical challenges to responsible, reciprocal, and just community engagement emerging from this important subfield of community engagement scholarship. Crucially, however, *Community-Based Global Learning* carries the reader forward, past purposeful critique to more reflexive, reciprocal/solidaristic practice that is theoretically grounded and informed by now many years of practice/praxis. The volume leverages a mix of scholarly work (surveying the field and highlighting relevant theoretical frameworks), applied case studies, and practitioner guidance. In doing so, it pulls forward not only individual readers, but the field as a whole, by bringing two inconsistently connected subfields—community engagement and international education—into new productive conversation. This approach breaks down the binaries that are reflected as much in our respective offices and titles as in our institutions' frequent curricular and cocurricular distinctions between "the global" and "the local," something we will return to below. We increasingly find these divides to obscure the commonalities and intersections in our work to prepare students and colleagues for building responsible, ethical, and reciprocal collaborations in local contexts everywhere, and to neglect the urgency to design programs that encourage critical self- and structural analyses that formally examine history, power, and identity in both contexts.

*Community-Based Global Learning* has become not only a resource for us, but a conduit to advance conversations that

dialogically connect our pedagogies, programs, and praxis. Reading the volume, for example, reminded us of how difficult yet essential it is to intentionally and effectively balance the cautionary with the constructive in our work. In his first year teaching a leadership development course for undergraduate interns serving as course and partnership liaisons to community agencies, one of us recalls making the well-intentioned yet ultimately flawed choice to bluntly challenge students to rethink their conceptual framework for community entry as built upon assumptions of benevolence, virtue, and assistance by distributing Ivan Illich's (1968/1994) widely employed cautionary tract "To Hell With Good Intentions." Although broadly useful as a way to open up critical conversation about these matters (and one recommended by this volume's authors too), no one who has employed this text with undergraduate service-learners will be surprised to hear that, absent ready and thoughtful responses to the question of "now what?," this critique can leave students deflated, frightened to leave campus, and unequipped to overcome the existential challenges of entering new spaces to apply themselves to social change, even as they may emerge with new or enriched and valuable critical lenses.

By contrast, the other of us finds the cautions that the volume offers to be essential preparatory work for students getting ready to enter communities across gaps of power and "culture." The principles and practices of "critical service-learning" and "critical global citizenship," such as self-reflexivity and cultural humility, that Hartman et al. emphasize, are crucial because they work against messages—and, indeed, an industry—that too often reinforces assumptions

that good intentions are enough. Of course, differentials of power and privilege, and the possibilities for further instantiating those, clearly exist in the domestic context. But when political borders are crossed and students and institutions become implicated in the U.S. role in the world, there are particular implications. As the authors note, global learning, in both study abroad and service-learning, has often been critiqued for being instrumentalized (e.g., for promoting national interests abroad, for credentialing students) and neocolonial. When global service-learning programs imply that good intentions and a U.S. education are enough to effect change across borders, they introduce opportunities to reify power differentials that echo practices of U.S. exceptionalism. So one of us remains more frequently concerned with putting the brakes on than worried about freaking students out. Our own encounter with the challenge of balancing caution with encouragement in this work has positioned us to truly welcome *Community-Based Global Learning* as a focal point and contribution to an emerging field of integrated critique and practical responses to historically challenging preparatory work, program design, and productive postexperience reflection.

*Community-Based Global Learning* invites us to think through the ways our subfields within experiential learning, and the positioning/positionality of our students vis-à-vis local and global (nondomestic) communities, create possibilities for nearby and distant learning and engagement. Importantly, by surveying the theories and practices of our subfields and their intersections, Hartman et al. provide shared terrain for thinking together. Even by explicitly analogizing our subfields in name—community-based learning (CBL) and community-based global learning (CBGL)—the authors provide common vocabularies and understandings. In turn, this creates new openings for us to communicate with colleagues about the commonality of our work and to provide a foundation for shared projects within our institutions. Perhaps most significantly, CBGL signals to our subfields, our students, and our colleagues that work with communities is always *local*, whether the community is nearby or distant. So, too, can we recognize that local communities have extralocal—often global—connections through economic, cultural, technological, and other processes that influence but do not fully determine local context. This ana-

lytic can also help students as they prepare to learn from and engage with those communities.

As directors of sister experiential learning programs at Mount Holyoke College, we worked closely together for several years, across our respective domains as facilitators of local and international experiential learning collaborations, to deepen our institution's practices for preparing students for global citizenship. In that time, we served as thought leaders and lead implementers for a faculty-staff team designing and beginning to assess learning from student pathways that connect curricular and cocurricular learning and engagement in international and domestic settings, under the umbrella of Mount Holyoke's Global/Local initiatives. Our efforts focused upon two things. First, we worked to build the educational scaffolding (curricular and cocurricular) to facilitate meaningful and developmentally appropriate sequences for fostering global and local engagement that are legible, navigable, and accessible, not only by the most self-initiated of our students, but also by the broader student population. We have presented about these emerging initiatives with colleagues from Smith College and the global education nonprofit Omprakash at national gatherings (Bloomgarden et al., 2019; Lange et al., 2013). Second, we worked steadily to enhance the delivery of research-informed early academic/preinternship preparatory guidance, planning, and skills development, and postinternship/advanced experiential integrative analytic and reflective practices by our offices, by other programs, and, most important, by faculty in classrooms and student advising efforts.

Among other benefits from reading this volume, we have reaped very practical learnings. Foremost, and especially thanks to the analyses grounded in the well-constructed literature reviews in Chapters 1 and 2, "Defining Community-Based Global Learning" and "Seeking Global Citizenship," we now have both more sophisticated and more specific, well-defined terms and learning objectives on which we can build curricular frameworks and student development assessment strategies for these global/local trajectories. A new course on which we collaborated during spring 2019 built upon these efforts further. This course, *Engaging for Social Impact*, was conceived to enhance student preparation

for global/local learning and engagement, and it employs these and other principles, best practices, and resources from this growing body of research-based pragmatic guidance.

Here is one immediate example. Chapter 2's exploration of the idea of what it takes to conceptualize oneself as a "global citizen" includes the exhortation that "CBGL practice . . . compels educators, practitioners, and theorists to join in this dialogue with our students. . . . As they interrogate their personal biographies, so should we" (p. 39). This is partly about ensuring our approach to programming as practitioners is, and remains, reflexive and responsive to ever-evolving conditions, concerns, and aspirations of our students and partners. But as the authors imply, it is also a pedagogical strategy with enormous potential. In the first meeting of our Engaging for Social Impact course, launched in partnership with Omprakash to prepare a cohort of students for upcoming summer and year-long local and international internships, we engaged as instructors in an interactive, modeling discussion of our biographies. We did this with intentionality together as coinstructors to explicitly encourage students to explore identity and biography with each other. The exercise created a supportive context for students to follow with their own candid and productive self-reflection and exchanges with each other that were unusually rich, provided strong grounding for practices of introspection and interrogation of motives and histories as part of thinking about community entry, and have served in the long run to inform and enhance class discussion dynamics.

This book also more generally advances what we see to be the longer term project of the subfield of community engagement scholarship: to reframe the conceptualization of global citizenship education from very northern and perhaps even North American-centric origins, imbued with ideas of expansive "exposure" and "horizon broadening" through international cultural exchange and travel. The book moves readers toward a breakdown and dissolution of dichotomies including here/there, north/south, us/them, and of course, global/local. It's surprising, for example, to take a fresh look through the conceptualization of their philosophical approach as "fair trade learning." Where and how are, or could be, our local approaches to engaging partners for

service and learning conceptualized in the justice and equity frameworks of fair trade? How do we move from thinking about the "disruption" that we seek to facilitate from community engagement as realizations of analogous yet parallel analyses concerning global and local phenomena, toward creating fluid, integrative understandings of global processes as linked, interconnected? One of the benefits from this integrative approach could be better interrogation of globalization, in both its expansive and diverse effects and manifestations, and its monistic, pervasive effects.

The authors provide both strong theoretical grounding rooted in significant professional experience, and valuable practical advice in Chapters 5 and 6, focusing respectively on "Community-Driven Partnerships" and "Immersive Community-Based Global Learning Program Design." Like them, we too are both attracted to and compelled by the concept of "Free Trade Learning" (FTL). Among the many strengths of FTL, as the authors point out (p. 128), is that the framework moves from high-level principles to concrete guidelines for practice (including a rubric). Through the GlobalSL meetings and other venues, the authors and their collaborators have been helping establish an array of good practice guidelines—from ethical practice in short-term health placements to the position against orphanages, as well as principles such as "cultural humility" and reflexivity. (As one would expect, the authors also rightly give credit to the significant number of allied organizations, thinkers, and movements doing this work.) This book is highly effective at consolidating these ideas and staking out multiple guideposts for the (sub)field(s).

We also appreciate the invitation in the volume's closing chapter to think of CBGL as not "reforming," but rather "preforming." The idea is to see higher education as a space for prefigurative (political) work to imagine and enact new possibilities (with organizations like Omprakash and Amizade as exemplars), rather than just labor against practices and structures that we understand to be nonemancipatory (e.g., orphanage tourism, nonaccreditation of experiential learning). However, we would also argue that the critiques and labor *against* remain crucial in decolonizing the U.S. academy. This is partly a matter of understanding where and how practices and programs of study for students challenge historically

colonial narratives and extensively neoliberal and commercial relations across the socioeconomic divides separating students, campuses, and destination communities. We also encourage maintaining focus upon critiquing the very ideas about where knowledge is created and by whom, and recognizing they are still deeply informed by historically elitist, racialized, and frequently exclusionary understandings that shape practices of reward and recognition within the academy.

As a guide through this and other knotty challenges that remain, and that will emerge, within our work together, we are grateful for *Community-Based Global Learning*. We hope it will also provide a touchstone to support and provoke conversations on other campuses and even with community partners. We look forward to the wider conversations in our subfields that can foster an expanded community of practice and a broadened learning community that work toward frameworks and modes that are progressively more ethical, reciprocal, and emancipatory.



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