**Engaging Contemporary Social Justice Themes with International Community Organizations**

Sherra Bennett
University of Michigan School of Social Work

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**Amsterdam, The Netherlands and Berlin, Germany**

I completed a Global Special Studies in coordination with a Global Course Connection: SW 710 International Community Organization.

The course provided intensive place based experiential learning, around comparative community work. In the course we examined the following: core concepts of community practice, major models of comparative policy work, practical steps for community-based work.

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**Community Partners**

**AMSTERDAM, THE NETHERLANDS:**
- PIC (Prositution Information Center)
- P&G292 (Prositution and Health)
- “Young In Prison”
- ACM (Amsterdam Coordination Center for Human Trafficking)
- Hotmamahot
- Hague University of Applied Sciences
- ILO Expertise Center for Youth, Community and Education

**BERLIN, GERMANY:**
- Gangway, E.V.
- Ploetzensee, Juvenile Justice Facility
- Aufwind, E.V.
- Paul Lobe School
- Richard Keller School
- Tempelhofer Feld – Syrian Refugee Center
- INVIA – Human Trafficking

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**Social Work Competencies Developed**

- **Competency 4: Diversity and Difference:** Allowed me to diversify my skill set and understanding of cultural humility.
- **Competency 10a: Engagement:** This opportunity involved engaged pedagogy and it’s application through action-based learning. I was afforded opportunities to gain knowledge concerning specific marginalized groups from an international standpoint.

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**Lesson Learned**

There are so many lessons I learned, it’s really difficult to put into words how transformative my experience was.

- Society is global, there is no you versus us.
- Think outside of American values and norms.
- It’s important to be flexible in community work.
- Take on new experiences as a learner.
- It’s okay and beneficial to allow yourself to be transformed by the communities you engage with.

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**CAREER CONNECTIONS**

My experience globally, has undoubtedly shaped my social work career. As a future social work practitioner, I plan to focus on management of human services and social policy and evaluation.

This opportunity has shifted my mindset in a global way, that can’t be changed. I view the world and policy different and realize the interconnected dynamics of our global society.

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**ADVICE**

- Research history and current events
- Be reflective and introspective
- Identify and check your privileges and bias
- Have an open mind
- Engage with an open heart
- Be Flexible

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