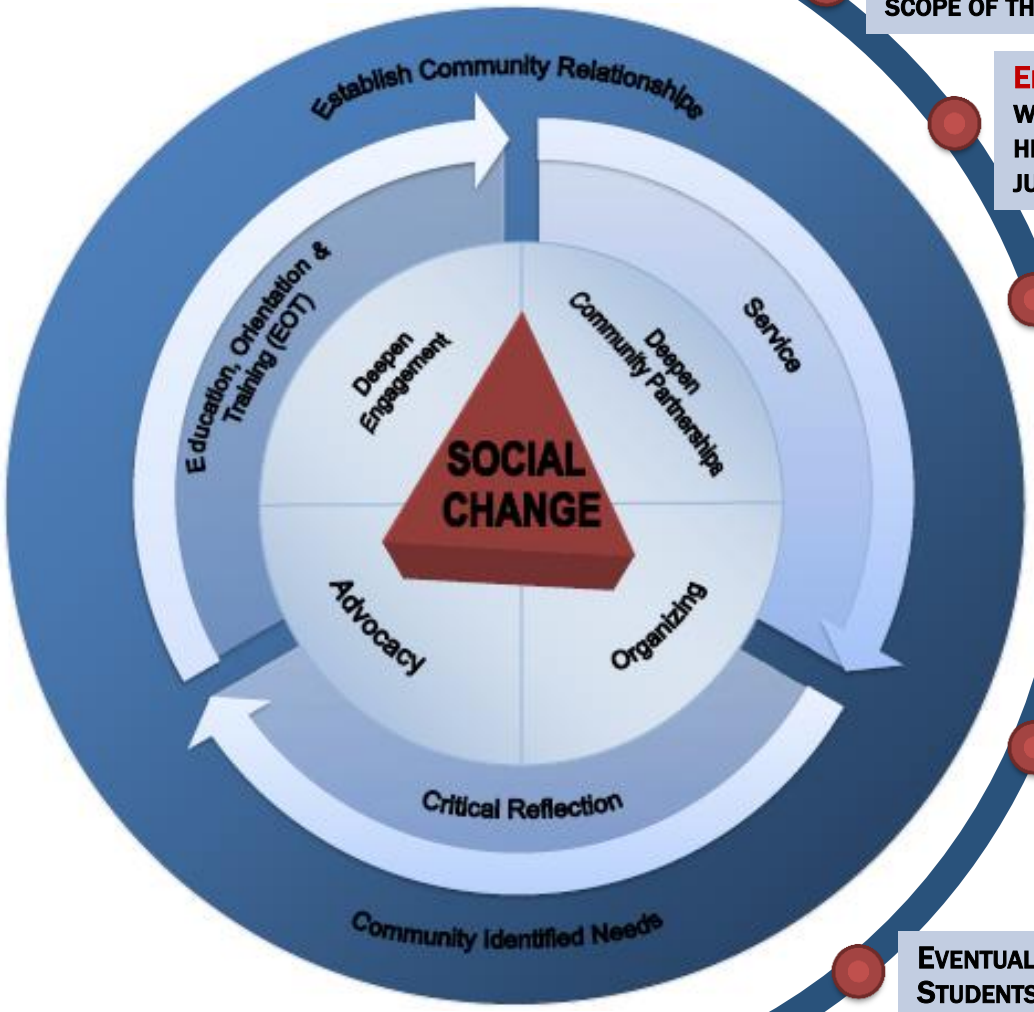
Alternative Breaks
How to Become a Trip Leader
April 12, 2012

Social Change Model



Establish community relationship with a focus on Community identified needs. This is the foundation to social change work. Community relationships and needs determine the direction and scope of the work.

Education/Orientation/Training (EOT) provides students with the context and skills surrounding social, economic, historical, and geopolitical issues related to social justice.

Students engage in **meaningful direct service** with community-based organizations.

Through **critical reflection** students examine their own identity and privilege. They analyze underlying issues of poverty, structural inequality, racism, discrimination, ability, sexual orientation, religion, ethnicity, race, class, power and privilege.

Students move from an initial awareness to a **deeper understanding** of the issues. As time progresses they engage more frequently, build long-term relationships and **deepen partnerships** with community organizations. Ideally, these community partnerships are built based on shared values of reciprocity, collaboration, interdependence, and trust.

Eventually students may become a leader around social issues. Students become **advocates** for an issue or a cause, often **organizing** in local communities or lobbying for policy change in state or federal government.

Social Change: Working towards a more just and equitable society.

Center for Community Engagement & Service

What is Alternative Break?

- Trips facilitate participant reflection on their role in the global community through
  - service
  - activism
  - academic inquiry
  - dialogue
  - leadership
- Creating a society of **Active Citizens!**

What is social Justice?

"If you have come to help me, you are wasting your time. But if you have come because your liberation is bound up with mine, then let us work together." Lila Watson

- The practice of promoting and protecting human rights and responsibilities, with a particular emphasis on the economic and social rights of society's most vulnerable groups.
- An understanding that social change will happen when groups work in solidarity with each other, without a "helping" mentality.

What is Alternative Break @ AU?

- Emphasize **self-awareness** through a critical debriefing and analytical process **before, during, and after the trips.**
- Trips are **inherently political** in that they address structural systems of **inequality, injustice, oppression, and marginalization**.
- Encourage participants to **examine their own privilege** while also recognizing their own personal role in the larger issues at hand.
- **Not to be paternalistic**, nor to impose personal views or perceptions; but rather to **engage in open dialogue.**
- Learn through listening and observing **by living within the local communities.**

Break Away's 8 Components of a Quality Alternative Break Program

- 1. Strong Direct Service
- 2. Orientation
- 3. Education
- 4. Training
- 5. Reflection
- 6. Reorientation (AU Post-Trip Activism)
- 7. Diversity & Social Justice
- 8. Alcohol and Other Drug Free

Break Away®
The Alternative Break Connection

Alcohol & Alternative Breaks

- WHY ARE ALTERNATIVE BREAKS ALCOHOL FREE?
  - Students founded the Alternative Break movement: **we are meant to be an alternative to the typical college spring break!**
  - Better group dynamic, group cohesion and solidarity, and it enriches the experience.
  - Avoids major liabilities: Alcohol impairs judgment, and can create major safety concerns that can ruin a trip.
  - **Community is a Priority:** We are working with communities for social change. We represent communities back home: the Alternative Break program, AU, the US, the National movement, your family and yourself.

Consequences of Violation

- All participants sign a binding agreement that they will not drink or consume drugs during any event related to Alternative Break programs.
  - This prohibits alcohol consumption or illegal drug use by anyone, **regardless of age**, during an Alternative Break trip, including student leaders and faculty/staff.
- Consequences of violating alcohol policy:
  - Issues of legality, liability, personal safety and group cohesion.
  - Negative Reflection/impact on the individual, the group, the program, the university, and the host community.
  - Participant would be sent home at his/her own expense.
  - Possible referral to the campus judicial system.
  - Not allowed to participate in future trips.

Which social issues can we address in an Alternative Break?

Successful past trips have highlighted the plight of people resisting oppression, while expressing solidarity with grassroots initiatives.

- Indigenous rights to land
- NAFTA
- Intellectual property rights
- Women's rights
- Immigrant rights
- HIV/AIDS in Africa
- Minority rights
- International Financial Institution policies (IMF/World Bank)
- The environment
- Labor and trade

Domestic Trips

Are more affordable and accessible for more students.

Many important issues to address in our own country:

- Poverty
- Racism
- Environmental Justice
- Prison Reform
- Education System
- HIV/AIDS
- Hurricane Katrina Rebuilding

Domestic Trip Resources

- Break Away site bank database: www.alternativebreaks.org

Login: 139

Password: 2012au

Click on SITEBANK DATABASE

- Links & Resources www.american.edu/altbreak

Powerful Trip Titles @ other schools…

- Seeing Beyond the Screen: Preserving Nature for the Future - *Wartburg College*
- Voices of Resistance: The Fight for Workers' Rights - *Gettysburg College*
- Reclaiming Identities: The Fight Against Human Trafficking and Domestic Violence - *Rice University*
- The High Price of Cheap Food- Healthy Living - Hillel at *University of Maryland*
- Consumer Debt in Las Vegas - *Princeton University*
- Beyond the Sea: Water Conservation - *Rollins College*
- Factory Farming: The Rights and Welfare of Farm Animals - *Xavier University*

Key Components for Quality Site Destination

- Community Interaction
- Education
- Housing
- Meaningful service work
- Supervision/contacts
- Social justice theme/issue
- Location
- Affordability

The Alternative Break Review Committee/ ADVISORY BOARD

What we are looking for in a proposal

1. Student Leadership Skills
2. Trip Proposal & Social Justice Theme
3. Staff/Faculty Advisor

Essential Conditions for Student Coordinators

- Leadership skills
- Participant on an Alternative Break program or comparable travel experience
- Knowledge of area/destination country
- Language ability (if applicable)
- Dedication to social justice
- GPA 3.0
- Time!

Leadership Skills Defined

1. Conflict Resolution Skills
2. Communication, fostering collaboration, delegating tasks
3. Facilitation, running meetings, guided reflection and team building
4. Project planning, time management, logistics
5. Intercultural competence, experience working with people different from you

TRIPS APPROVAL CRITERIA

- Social justice theme articulated
- Social justice theme represented in all activities and strong direct service
- Returning to build community partnerships
- Proposal well-planned and well-thought out
- Trip is feasible
- Trip is safe

Staff/faculty Advisor
Students choose appropriate staff or faculty to accompany trip

- Expertise on the issues being addressed
- Experience in country or region
- Experience with Alternative Breaks and service-learning/social justice
- Supportive of student-leadership
- Language ability (if applicable)
- Full time/exempt employee

Important Dates 2012-2013

- **May 21** RFP Preliminary application DUE 5:00 pm
- **June 13** Students contacted if we request full proposal
- **July 9** Students submit FULL DETAILED proposals 5:00 pm
- **July 23-25** Students contacted if moving on to interviews
- **July 25- Aug. 1** Week of interviews (in person or Skype)
- **August 8** Leaders Notified if Trip is Approved
- **August 21** Recruitment Materials Due
- **August 24** Leader Orientation

Leader Resources

- Go to: http://www.american.edu/altbreak
- Click on "Trip Leader Info"
- Quick Links:
  - Leader proposal
  - Sample Leader Proposal
  - Budget Worksheet (Excel)
- **Email altbreak@american.edu to request RFP & FULL PROPOSAL FORMAT**

THANK YOU!

COME VISIT US IN THE CENTER FOR COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & SERVICE

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