Discussion or Reflection Activity

“Short Term Missions: Are they worth the cost?” (Jo Ann Avan Engen; The Other Side, Jan. 2000)

Share the attached article with your ASB participants and use it as a prompt for a discussion regarding the purpose and motivations for service-learning and/or ethical and effective service, or for a reflection paper.

Note: The focus of this article is short term Christian mission trips, but the experience, potential challenges/shortcomings and opportunities are very similar to our Impact Abroad service-learning trips.

Some possible questions for discussion or as a prompt for a reflection paper:

- What motivates you to be involved in a short-term international service-learning experience?
- What expectations do you have for this experience?
- What impact do you hope will be made through this experience?
- What is the value/purpose of the Stanford Impact Abroad experience?
- How can we best prepare for this experience? Individually and collectively?
- How do you/we hope to engage with the local community? What attitude and actions will demonstrate this?
- What is an appropriate attitude or posture we should demonstrate when involved in Impact?
- How may we be received going into a community that we are not a part of?
- How does our own background and/or privilege impact our service-learning experience?
- Share the following quote:
  “If you’ve come here to help me, you’re wasting your time. But if you’ve come because your liberation is bound up with mine, then let us work together.” – Australian Aboriginal Elder, Lilla Watson
- Are we going to help? Can we help?
- What contribution can we make?
- What can/will we gain?
- How does this quote challenge us to think about our experience?
- What does it mean for our liberation to be bound with others?
- What would “work together” mean or look like in this context?