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Volunteering and Social Development Across Cultures: A Credit Bearing Course for the Alliance for Global Education's Global and Public Health Program at Manipal University (India)

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ABSTRACT

This course-linked capstone presents full details for the creation, facilitation and evaluation of a new field-based course for the Alliance for Global Education's (Alliance) Global and Public Health program at Manipal University in India. Operating in partnership with Manipal University's Volunteer Services Organization (VSO), the course will increase opportunities for participant interaction with people both on and off campus, actively respond to participants' stated interest in volunteer work, and strengthen institutional ties between the Alliance and Manipal University.

The plan for the course, titled, "Volunteering across cultures: India and the United States", incorporates best practices and theories from international service learning (ISL); global service learning (GSL); critical service learning; intercultural maturity, emotional intelligence and social development with Alliance academic policies. This synthesis of theory and policy yields tangible course objectives and a robust curriculum focusing on volunteering in theory and practice in India and the United States, including challenges inherent in cross-cultural social development work. Volunteer work alongside Manipal VSO members combines with academic readings, lectures, discussions and structured online reflection to encourage recognition and critical analysis of cultural assumptions and underpinnings, identification of gaps in intellectual and cultural knowledge, and formation of connections between local experiences and global phenomena.

Keywords: International Service Learning, Global Service Learning, multivalent local cultures, critical service learning, volunteer organization partnerships, study abroad, India, dysfunctions in development, cultural maturity, online reflection, cross-cultural volunteering