

Cultivating Global Citizenship in Higher Education: Civic Engagement and Service Learning in Joint Study Abroad Courses

Cómo Cultivar la Ciudadanía Global en la Educación Superior: Compromiso Cívico y Aprendizaje-Servicio en un Programa en el Extranjero

Como Cultivar a Cidadania Global na Universidade: Compromisso Cívico e Aprendizagem na Comunidade em um Programa no Estrangeiro

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The authors developed an alternative Spring Break Study Abroad course to bring University of South Florida (USF) students to Moldova to study with their counterparts at the Free International University of Moldova (ULIM). The course was a Political Science seminar about the history, government, and politics of Moldova. The authors shared a desire to cultivate "global citizens" and to provide opportunities for their students to work collaboratively. The course was distinctive in its level of integration of U.S. students with colleagues in Moldova. Students had the opportunity to meet with leaders of NGOs working to strengthen civil society in Moldova. In addition to their time spent in direct service, students learned from agency staff who answered questions about social issues, the formation of social policy, and social justice in Moldova. Students volunteered together at orphanages and at a domestic violence shelter. In addition to working with the students enrolled in the joint course, one service project was implemented with the Lion's Club Chişinău with students from several other universities in Chişinău as well.

Keywords: Study abroad, Global citizenship, Moldova, Civic engagement international, Service learning.

Los autores de este artículo llevaron a unos estudiantes de USF (University of South Florida) a Moldavia para estudiar con estudiantes de ULIM (Free International University of Moldova) por medio de un programa en el extranjero durante la primavera. El curso fue un seminario de ciencias políticas sobre la historia, el gobierno y la política de Moldavia. La meta de los autores fue promocionar la "ciudadanía global" y darles oportunidad a los estudiantes para que pudieran colaborar. El curso fue una experiencia única por el nivel de integración de los estudiantes de Estados Unidos con los de Moldavia. Los estudiantes tuvieron la oportunidad de reunirse con los líderes de unas ONG que trabajan en Moldavia. Además de ayudar a la comunidad, los estudiantes entrevistaron al personal de varias agencias acerca de los problemas sociales y de la política y la justicia social en Moldavia. Finalmente, los estudiantes trabajaron como voluntarios en orfanatos y en centros de acogida para víctimas de violencia de género. Además de colaborar con los estudiantes de Moldavia, un proyecto de servicio a la comunidad se llevó a

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cabo con el Lion's Club de Chişinău con estudiantes de otras universidades en Chişinău.

Descriptoires: Estudiar en el extranjero, Ciudadanía global, Moldavia, Compromiso cívico, Aprendizaje-servicio.

Os autores deste artigo levou a alguns alunos da USF (University of South Florida) à Moldávia para estudar com alunos de Ulim (Universidade Internacional Livre de Moldova) através de um programa no exterior durante a primavera. O curso foi um seminário de ciência política sobre a história, governo e política na Moldávia. O objetivo dos autores foi promover a "cidadania global" e dar oportunidade aos estudantes para que pudessem colaborar. O curso foi uma experiência única pelo nível de integração de estudantes norte-americanos com a Moldávia. Os alunos tiveram a oportunidade de se reunir com líderes de algumas ONGs que trabalham na Moldávia. Além de ajudar a comunidade, os alunos entrevistaram funcionários de várias agências sobre os problemas sociais e de justiça política e social na Moldávia. Finalmente, os alunos se ofereceram em orfanatos e abrigos para vítimas de violência doméstica. Além de colaborar com estudantes de Moldova, um projeto de serviço comunitário foi realizado com o Lion's Club de Chişinău com estudantes de outras universidades em Chisinau.

Palavras-chave: Estudar no estrangeiro, Cidadania global, Moldova, Engajamento cívico, Aprendizagem-serviço.

"This experience has inspired me to want to give more to my community here."

"I found that it was a perfect chance to learn a lot about the culture through that community interaction."

"By travelling to Moldova and interacting with the people, I have gained confidence to interact with different cultures and have also learned a lot about myself."

Introduction

Today's students must be prepared to function in and contribute to an increasingly complex and ever-changing world. American universities have responded by including reference to "global citizenship" and "global awareness" in their overall mission statements¹. While "global citizenship" may be difficult to define, there seems to be consensus that promoting international experiences such as those that can be provided through study abroad will help instill values and intercultural skills necessary to develop "global citizens." We have come to expect that as a result of study abroad, students will learn to value diversity and to develop respect for other cultures. Tarrant argue "by engaging in an experientially structured study abroad program, a new worldview (global citizenship), predicated on a change in environmentally oriented values, norms, and behaviors, is nurtured and promoted" (Tarrant, 2010, p. 435).

As a result of the emphasis on study abroad, participation in study abroad opportunities at U.S. universities grew at a rate of 150% between 2000 and 2010, "attesting to the importance many American college and university students today attach to the value of international educational experience"(Streitwieser & Light, 2010, p. 5). Still, far too few

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students have this international study abroad experience: “about 1 percent by most estimates – and the numbers are skewed to wealthier students from elite colleges and universities” (Bellamy & Weinberg, 2006, p. 21).

While more needs to be done to increase the opportunities for American students to study abroad, it is especially important to engage students in Florida, as studies of Florida’s civic health paint a bleak picture. Florida Millennials have the depressing distinction of being the most disengaged group in one of the most civically disengaged states in the nation. In terms of volunteerism, voter turnout, and other measures of civic engagement, Florida has consistently ranked near the bottom among the 50 states (Florida Civic Health Index, 2011). For example, 44% of Florida Millennials (age 18–29) were registered to vote (rank: 31) and only 21% did vote (rank: 34) in the 2010 mid-term election. Only 3% contacted a public official (rank: 41), only 2% attended a public meeting (rank: 46), and only 18% volunteered for a group (rank: 44).

Out of their desire to cultivate “global citizens,” the authors developed an alternative Spring Break Study Abroad course to bring Floridians from the University of South Florida (USF) to Moldova to study with their counterparts at the Free International University of Moldova (ULIM). The course was a Political Science seminar about the history, government, and politics of Moldova, and it provided opportunities for the US and the Moldovan students to work collaboratively in the classroom as well as in the community.

This course was distinctive in its level of integration of U.S. students with colleagues in Moldova, and it provided a unique opportunity to spark interest in a challenging, post-Soviet space in Eastern Europe. Students worked together in seminars, class discussion, and research collaboration (that included presentations at an international conference and publication in a social science journal) and participated together outside of the classroom in community service projects. Students had the opportunity to meet with leaders of NGOs working to strengthen civil society in Moldova. In addition to their time spent in direct service, students learned from agency staff that answered questions about social issues, the formation of social policy, and social justice in Moldova. The civic engagement component of the course saw USF and ULIM students volunteering together at orphanages and at a domestic violence shelter. Aside from working with the students enrolled in the joint course, one service project was implemented with the Lion’s Club Chişinău with students from several other universities in Chişinău as well.

The authors will use (i) analyses of pre and post surveys, (ii) a qualitative review of students’ written assignments (reflection papers, journals, blog entries), and (iii) personal observations and interactions with students to evaluate the effects of incorporating this international service learning experience in their course. We will analyze whether and how the knowledge gained through collaborative research and through civic engagement opportunities expanded students’ perspectives on global citizenship.

1. Course Design: Comparative Politics. Moldova

This course was devoted to the study of the complex history, politics, and government of the Republic of Moldova. The Study Abroad portion of the course took place during the American students’ Spring Break. Considered by Lonely Planet to be one of the Top

10 Travel Destinations in Eastern Europe, Moldova provided a unique opportunity for us to study and to experience life in a country in transition.

The Republic of Moldova, a small country landlocked between Romania to the west and the Ukraine to the east, is arguably the most complex of the 15 countries born out of the collapse of the Soviet Union two decades ago. Moldova is a borderland that is “deeply divided between Romanian speakers drawn towards European Union member Romania and Russophone Slavs who continue to feel the tug of old ties to Moscow.” Vasile (Botnaru, Hodorogea, & Ceapai, 2011, p. 23). “Straddling East and West, it absorbs cultural and political influences in both directions” (Adamcyk Colby, 2011, p. 26).

While Moldova gained independence from the USSR two decades ago, it is still a country very much in transition. The Republic of Moldova is torn between its Soviet past and a (potential) European future with an uncertain present, making it a complicated and profoundly interesting state to explore. Russian tanks and troops are stationed within the Republic of Moldova along the Nistru River, the border between the Republic of Moldova and the de facto separatist state of Transnistria. Recent parliamentary election results did not provide as strong an endorsement of the reform process as some had hoped. Moldova is at a crossroads, deciding whether to become closer to the European Union or to strengthen ties with Russia.

Students had the opportunity to learn more about the complex political and economic history of Moldova, about democratization and judicial reform efforts, and about its foreign policy challenges, with Moldovan faculty and student classmates from ULIM. This was a robust and engaging comparative politics course. We also had the opportunity to immerse ourselves in Moldova’s rich cultural heritage –to enjoy traditional folk music and dances, to taste its delicious cuisine, to explore cave monasteries, medieval fortresses, and world-famous wineries (Moldova’s largest industry). Student Learning Outcomes for the course included the following:

- Describe the political history of Moldova
- Explain the structure of the Moldovan government
- Discuss leading issues in Moldovan constitutional law
- List the major political parties in Moldova and compare the role of political parties in the U.S. and in Moldova
- Discuss recent campaigns and elections in Moldova
- Describe the economic history of Moldova and discuss the issues related to the transition to a capitalist economy
- Discuss Romanian and Russian influences on Moldova’s foreign and domestic policy
- Describe the role of the Council of Europe, OSCE, European Union in Moldova
- Discuss political, legal, economic, and policy implications and hurdles related to Moldova’s accession to the European Union
- Compare and contrast the foreign and domestic policy challenges presented by the separatist region of Transnistria (the continued influence of the Russian

Federation; security issues in the Black Sea region) with the autonomous region of Gagauzia (federalism in Moldova?)

- Appraise human rights violations and the influence of the European Court of Human Rights in affecting legal and political reform in Moldova
- Discuss judicial reform efforts and rule of law initiatives and assess their impact
- Explain how the issue of language (the state language, Romanian, and the continuing dominance of the Russian language) affects politics in Moldova
- Describe the system of crime and punishment in Moldova
- Discuss the issue of corruption and its public policy implications
- Participate in community service projects and reflect on the role of civil society and civic engagement in Moldova
- Develop research skills and draft major research paper on one of the above topics

For the USF students there were five pre-departure meetings on campus before leaving for Moldova, and one course meeting after we returned: (1) a pre-departure orientation that included general background information about Moldova, an orientation to the course, instructions for blogging and journaling (2) a bibliographic research session at the library and meeting with instructor to discuss research paper topics, (3) & (4) seminars at which we discussed required readings, including students' presentations of their seminar papers, (5) USFSP International Week panel at which students presented their (draft) research papers and met their Moldovan colleagues via Skype videoconference. When the USF students returned to Florida, we had a final meeting for students to submit all assignments (Journal, blog entries, Civic Engagement Project Paper, final version of research paper) and for a final de-briefing and discussion about the Moldovan experience. USF Students also participated in an international research conference (via Skype videoconference) hosted at ULIM in April. Students' research papers were later published in a social science journal published by ULIM, and four of the students presented their research at a USFSP colloquium the following semester.

Key components of the Moldovan Spring Break Itinerary were as follows:

- ✓ Joint seminar at ULIM. We partnered with the department of History and International Relations to develop a course for ULIM and USFSP students to take together in Chişinău. We hosted a series of guest speakers (faculty experts, NGO representatives, journalists and public officials) and field trips/site visits (Constitutional Court of the Republic of Moldova, the Supreme Court of Justice, trial courts). Many students published their research papers in a social science journal published by ULIM. (Those students worked to revise and re-submit their papers during the summer.) All students received a certificate for successfully completing this course.
- ✓ We organized a roundtable discussion in conjunction with Women's History Month with the President of the American Studies Center (ASC) at Moldova State University. We organized a panel on the role of civil society at the American Resource Center (ARC) of the U.S. Embassy. Students presented at the English Teaching Resource Center (ERTC) at Ion Creanga University. And we also met with the deputy director of the Institute of Political Science

and European Integration at the Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Moldova.

- ✓ We explored Moldova so we could learn more about the history, politics, and culture of Moldova. We visited the medieval fortress in Soroca, the monastery in Curchi, the cave monastery in Orheil Vechi, the winery Chateau Vartely, and the monastery in Capriana. We ate traditional Moldovan cuisine, including lunch in a traditional peasant house. Students also had time to explore the Chişinău City Center, to visit the Archeology Museum, the Art Market, the Flower Market, and the Central Market. ULIM hosted a welcome reception and farewell reception, and a local law firm hosted a reception as well. At these events, USF students socialized with Moldovan students, faculty, community leaders, lawyers, and officials.
- ✓ Students completed service projects while in Moldova. This is the focus of the remainder of this article.

2. Logistics and Project Design of the Service Learning Component of the Course

The authors first met when McLauchlan was teaching at Universitatea Libera Internationala din Moldova (ULIM) in Chişinău, Moldova on a Fulbright in 2010, the university where Patlis was (and is) an Instructor. They have collaborated on several projects over the years. The bulk of the planning for this Joint Study Abroad course took place during the Summer of 2012, when McLauchlan was in Moldova for a returning Fulbright Award, and during the Fall of 2012, when Patlis was in Florida at USFSP as a Carnegie Fellow. Both shared a desire to cultivate global citizens and to provide an opportunity for their students to work collaboratively together. Developing this joint study abroad course provided a mechanism to do so.

Students from ULIM and USF attended seminars together as a part of the joint course. This provided an opportunity to learn more about the history, politics, and government of the Republic of Moldova together, but the authors were keen to maximize the interaction between the Moldovan and American students outside of class. The service learning aspect of the course allowed students to work together and to get to know each other outside of class –while also learning more about the role of civil society in addressing community needs.

While in Moldova, students completed service projects and had the opportunity to meet with NGOs working to strengthen civil society. In addition to their direct service, students learned from agency staff that answered questions about social issues and about the formation of social policy in Moldova.

We met with staff and worked with children at the following centers as part of the service project component of the course: Municipal Orphanage in Chişinău, Casa Marioarei (Domestic violence shelter) in Chişinău, and the Titus Center in Telenesti. Dr. McLauchlan also organized a panel of experts who discussed the role of civil society in Moldova at the American Resource Center of the U.S. Embassy. Panelists included representatives from the Moldova Civil Society Strengthening Program, Lion’s Club Chişinău, LaStrada, and Wave Week Moldova. In addition, we had opportunities to

meet with Peace Corps Volunteers, Wave Week volunteers, volunteers from La Strada, and others with whom we discussed their civic engagement work in Moldova. For example, we met with a Peace Corps Volunteer over dinner to learn more about his economic development work in Telenesti with the Consiliul Raional (local government council).

For the USF students, the Civic Engagement Assignment was worth 25% of the USFSP students' final course grade. The grade for the Civic Engagement Project was based on (1) participation in the activities at the agencies, (2) Journal entries and blog posts about participation in these activities, and (3) Reflection Paper (5-7 pages). Below are the assignment requirements as indicated in the handout:

2.1. Participation in Community Service projects

It is expected that you will be active participants in the community service projects that I have arranged in Chişinău and in nearby villages.

You should also actively seek out opportunities to “interview” Peace Corps Volunteers, Wave Week Volunteers, La Strada Volunteers, ULIM students who are active volunteers with the Lions Club and other organizations and talk to them about their work.

Record all service projects, meetings, and interviews you conduct with volunteers on the Log Form included in this packet. All of these meetings and interviews will provide the data upon which you will draft your reflection paper.

2.2. Journal entries and blog posts about community service projects and other meeting and interviews about the role of civil society

You will be turning in your complete Journal and blog separately. For the purpose of this assignment, please photocopy/scan the pages relevant to this assignment and print out the blog posts relevant to this assignment and attach them to your Civic Engagement Reflection Paper. (They will still remain a part of your complete Journal and Blog.)

I will be sharing your Reflection Papers with the Bishop Center as a part of the grant requirement, and it would be helpful if these additional photographs, artifacts, and descriptions of your community service work in Moldova could be included with this Civic Engagement Assignment as well.

2.3. Reflection paper

You will also submit a five page Reflection Paper about what you learned as a result of these community service activities.

Your paper should reflect on what you learned about the role of civil society in shaping social policy in Moldova as a result of this project. This civic engagement assignment should provide insights about social issues in Moldova, the effects of the transition from Soviet communism to a market-based economy, efforts to increase civic engagement and participation in Moldova's emerging democracy, and many of the other topics we are covering in our course.

2.4. Service Projects

While on a returning Fulbright in Summer 2012, McLauchlan laid the groundwork for the service projects and then continued to work with partners in the Fall (via the

internet) to finalize details. McLauchlan worked to identify community partners in Moldova for whom we could complete a “Done in a Day” project, since we were only going to be in Moldova for our Spring Break. Once the details of the service projects were confirmed, McLauchlan and her students set about securing the supplies necessary to complete them. We are most grateful for a Faculty Course Development Grant from the USFSP Bishop Center for Ethical Leadership and Civic Engagement (<http://www1.usfsp.edu/bishopcenter/>) which enabled us to pack extra suitcases with all of the supplies that we needed to bring with us for these projects. We were also fortunate to garner support from members of our local community in the Tampa Bay area who supported our endeavors, including Mayor Leslie Waters (<http://www.myseminole.com/>), local dentists (Drs. Prasatthong and Levitt), and Judge Raymond Gross, each of whom contributed by providing us with essential funds and supplies to carry out our service projects in Moldova.

Our first charitable project was a sizable donation of books on the subjects of American politics and law for ULIM’s library (<http://jainmoldova.blogspot.com/2013/05/donations-to-ulim-library-joint-course.htm>) The American students each carried several pounds of books overseas in their suitcases in order to transport all of the books. (As a bonus, this would also ensure that they had enough space in their suitcase on the way home to carry treasures from the Chişinău Art Market back home to Florida). Dr. McLauchlan packed an extra suitcase with sports equipment, toothbrushes, games, and art supplies.

The American students were able to complete between 25 and 35 service hours on the civic engagement component of this course through the many community service projects and volunteering opportunities. In Moldova, the first, and most eye-opening, community service projects brought the American students and the Moldovan college students active in the Lion’s Club Chişinău to an orphanage in Chişinău, where they learned about the plight of children without families to care for them. Upon arrival at the orphanage, the director gave the students a presentation where he explained the need for the facilities and the purpose they serve in the community. This was followed by a tour of the facility, after which the students were able to interact, despite the language barrier, through an arts and crafts project with the children using the supplies brought from the United States. Afterward, the Lion’s Club volunteers presented gifts they brought to donate to the orphanage. Following the visit to the orphanage, the American and Moldovan students held a roundtable discussion about youth participation and volunteerism in our two countries.

The Joint Course students, both the Americans and their Moldovan colleagues, were able to visit the only domestic violence shelter in Moldova, where an American Peace Corps Volunteer gave a presentation about domestic violence in Moldova. Students were shocked when they learned about the frequency of domestic violence and the lack of resources for victims. After the presentation we toured the facility, which provided shelter for women and children, as well as out-patient style support for those who were unable to stay long-term. The students then presented donations of arts and crafts supplies they brought over for the children staying at the shelter.

Later in the week, the group left the capital city and traveled to The Titus Center, a children’s center in Telenesti, approximately a two-hour drive. The Center Director and staff met with the Joint Course students to discuss the work of the center and its adjacent orphanage and to take the USF students on a tour of the facility. USF students

delivered sports equipment for the new field which had recently been completed by grants and through the work of Peace Corps Volunteers. USF students also brought games and art supplies from the U.S. to donate to the Center. The toothbrushes, toothpaste and other supplies provide by Drs. Prasatthong and Levitt were used in an oral hygiene presentation and then distributed to the children. Joint Course students played with the children, first indoors working on arts and crafts and later outdoors, playing games in the courtyard. The students and the children were able to interact and play together, despite the language barrier. Everyone was laughing and having a lot of fun, chasing each other around the yard in games of cat-cat-dog (duck-duck-goose). (Running around also gave the Floridians a chance to warm up in the cold outside temperatures of Telesesti!)

This trip also included a tour of the village of Telenesti and an opportunity to discuss rural village life in Moldova, providing unique insight for the American students into the day-to-day activities in one of Europe's poorest countries. This excursion even provided an opportunity for an impromptu service project – when the group was frantically approached by a woman who asked for help unloading a truck-load of carpet for a new church in the village. We gladly obliged. Our day in Telenesti concluded with a dinner of delicious Moldovan cuisine with the Peace Corps Volunteer. He discussed his economic development work with the council government, life in the village, and his service in the Peace Corps.

The class also visited the American Resource Center, where they were invited to a roundtable discussion on civil society in Moldova and the role of organizations such as LaStrada, the Lion's Club Chişinău, Wave Week Moldova, and the Peace Corps play in the development and strengthening of civil society. Students learned about the extensive work going on in this sector of Moldovan life and its community impact. Developing a strong civil society is vital to efforts to strengthen the economy, the government, and community life.

In addition to the time spent on the direct service projects and field trips, USF students in the course wrote reflection papers, journal entries, and kept an online blog where they were able to reflect on their civic engagement activities. All presentations and tours were conducted in English (or translated into English); however, the children served either spoke Romanian or Russian. Two of the American students in the class were able to communicate with the children in Russian: one an undergraduate Russian Studies Minor, the other a graduate student who had spent a year in Serbia on a Fulbright. The rest of the students were amazed at how well they could communicate with the children while they worked on art projects and played games outdoors. Everyone was pleased that language did not present a barrier to meaningful service projects. Consider these student reflections:

Even though we couldn't communicate very well with the children, they seemed to really enjoy the attention they were getting. . . . it is my hope that our efforts there, though small, created a memory for them that reinforces the idea that someone cares about them. (USF Student Journal entry)

...we began to let ourselves play like we were children again and were reminded how much fun it can be. We weren't just going through the motions to be polite, we were actually playing with these kids and I think they could tell. (USF Student Journal entry)

The civic engagement component of the course was integrated into the curriculum, and the meetings with community partners and volunteer opportunities were scheduled throughout the duration of the trip.

3. Methods

We will analyze whether and how the knowledge gained through collaborative research and through civic engagement opportunities expanded students' perspectives on "global citizenship" by using (1) analyses of pre and post surveys, (2) a qualitative review of students' written assignments (reflection papers, journals, blog entries), and (3) their observations and interactions with students to evaluate the effects of incorporating this international service learning experience in their course.

3.1. Results: pre-test and post-test surveys

The instructors administered Pre-Test and Post-Test Surveys to the students to measure the extent to which this project affected students' perceptions of "global citizenship."

In the Pre-Test and Post-Test Surveys we used a 5-point scale (with 5 being "strongly agree" and 1 being "strongly disagree") to ask students how much they agreed with the following statements (Levintova, Johnson, Scheberle, & Vonck, 2011, p. 247):

1. I consider myself informed about global politics.
2. Global politics plays only a small part in my everyday life.
3. Democracy requires citizens to regularly participate in government.
4. Democracy requires citizens to be knowledgeable about their government.
5. Global sustainability requires involvement of all nations.
6. I feel comfortable discussing foreign policy.
7. It is important for nations to reconcile differences.
8. I enjoy having discussions with people whose ideas and values are different from my own.
9. Learning about people from different cultures is a very important part of my college education.
10. I am confident that I can communicate with people of a different culture or ethnicity.
11. I feel that I can influence my own government.
12. I feel that I can contribute to the global community.

Students were also asked a series of Yes/No questions (Brunel, 2013, p. 21):

1. I have discussed global issues with my peers.
2. I have discussed what we could do about a global issue.
3. I have spoken publicly about a global issue.
4. I organized a committee meeting on a global issue

5. I joined an organizing on a global issue.
6. I worked with groups on campus about a global issue
7. I worked with groups from the community on a global issue
8. I raised money for a global issue.
9. I contacted a public official about a global issue
10. I sought information on the Internet about a global issue.

The data reveal that students from both Florida and in Moldova considered themselves more informed about global politics, felt more confident communicating with people of a different ethnicity, and had greater confidence that they could contribute to the global community after participating in the joint course.

For example, answers to the question: Global sustainability requires involvement of all nations; saw a 29-point increase (to 100% answering “5” which corresponds to Strongly agree) in the post-test questions. Similarly, the question: It is important for nations to reconcile differences; saw an 18-point increase to 75% of students answering “5” in the post-test survey.

We also asked students open-ended questions, such as “what does it mean to be a global citizen” and “what was the most valuable aspect of working on an assignment with a colleague from another country?” This word cloud graphic portrays the key words in student’s (both USFSP and ULIM) answers to the question (figure 1), “To you, what does it mean to be a global citizen?”

This pie chart represents USF student responses to the statement: It is important for nations to reconcile differences. There was an 18-point increase in the number of students who responded “5” on the post-test survey (figure 2).



Figure 1: Word Cloud: What does it mean to be a ‘global citizen’?

Source: Elaborated by the authors.

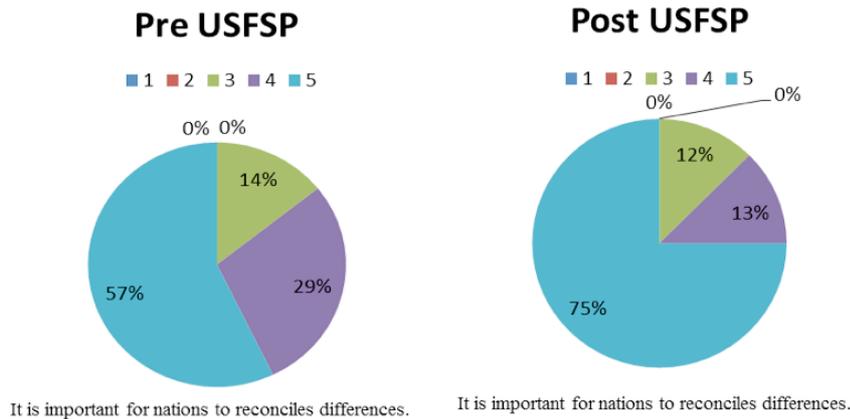


Figure 2. Pie Chart: It is Important for Nations to Reconcile Their Differences
Source: Elaborated by the authors.

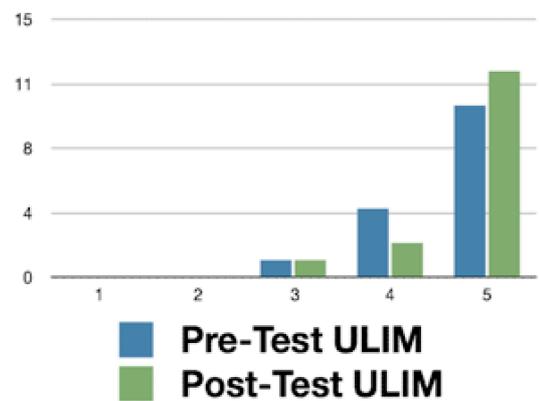


Figure 3: Bar Graph: Democracy Requires Citizens to be Knowledgeable about their Government?
Source: Elaborated by the authors.

Another interesting finding was the percentage of ULIM students who considered that democracy requires citizens to be knowledgeable about their government. Prior to the Joint Course 66% of ULIM students found this topic to be important; after the Joint Course the figure rose to 80%.

3.2. Results: student reflection papers and journals

Students at USF were asked to record their experiences throughout their journey in Moldova. Through this course, the students kept journals, an online blog, and wrote a reflection paper once they returned to USF.

Though our trip was brief, USF students found that the civic engagement component of the course gave them a deeper understanding of Moldovan politics and culture, and they appreciated the opportunity to contribute to the community. The USF students were pleasantly surprised that language was not a barrier during their service projects. Positive interaction with the children was achieved through arts and crafts as well as outdoor games.

It is truly a wonderful feeling to know we made a difference in a small way. (Lauren, USF)

I found that it was a perfect chance to learn a lot about the culture through that community interaction. (Kendel, USF)

Students reported that the civic engagement component of the course was an integral part of the experience and the cultural learning that took place while abroad. The civic engagement component of the course gave the students the opportunity to better understand Moldova's culture, and the social and political challenges faced by this country in transition.

This was a sobering moment for everyone, as it was heartbreaking to see the young children abandoned. (Jared, USF)

Our experiences in Moldova gave us a wider and more extensive appreciation for the issues this small country faces, and provided some insight into the long road ahead for Moldovan civil society to improve its conditions. (Marissa, USF)

While it was clear that this new Republic faced significant challenges, USF students were heartened by what they learned from community partners and from the Moldovan students in the course:

It was so amazing to see so many different people for all walks of life trying to make a difference in this relatively new country. (Royale, USF)

The primary purpose of the civic engagement project in the course was to help the students learn more about Moldova, but the result was that students also wanted to become more engaged in the community once they returned home.

This experience has inspired me to want to give more to my community here. (Patricia, USF)

As far as a "cultural literacy" and developing a comfort level interacting with others from a different culture and political history, the Joint Course format allowed our students to learn together inside a classroom and outside the classroom as well, while volunteering in the community and at social events.

I have gained the confidence to interact with different cultures and have also learned a lot about myself. (Sebastian, USF)

While the focus of the course was Moldovan history, politics, and government, the Moldovan students also benefitted from the Joint Course format, in that they were able to look at familiar topics through the eyes of the American students and to reflect on Moldovan culture and politics in new ways while in discussions with the American students.

В рамках данного курса мы смогли узнать альтернативное мнение студентов к различным событиям у нас в стране, которые никогда не были в Молдове и, в принципе, ничего о нас не знали. Интересны были именно их вопросы по тем или иным моментам и ответы наших преподавателей. И хотя говорили о том, что мы уже знали о нашей стране, но вырисовывалось какое-то другое понимание. Поэтому на этом курсе и было очень интересно.

Translation: In the framework of the course we had the opportunity to find out alternative views to different events in our country from students who have never been to Moldova before, and had no idea about it. We were interested in listening to questions from American students on various issues and to learn the answers from our professors. Although we were discussing things we [Moldovan students] already knew about our country, some other understanding was shaped. That is why this course was so interesting. (Andrei, ULIM)

Объединенный курс «Moldova: History, Government and Politics» был интересным, как с точки зрения межкультурного общения, так и с точки зрения более глубокого осмысления сложившейся политической, социальной и правовой

ситуации в Республике Молдова. Данный курс, хоть и в краткосрочной перспективе, поспособствовал сотрудничеству студентов ДВУХ государств в исследовательской области, что стало новым и полезным опытом.

Translation: The joint course "Moldova: History, Government and Politics" was interesting both in terms of cross-cultural communication, and from the point of view of a deeper understanding of the current political, social and legal situation in the Republic of Moldova. This course, though short in its term, contributed to cooperation of students from two countries in the field of research, which became a new and rewarding experience. (Zoreana, ULIM)

The collaboration between Moldovan students and faculty also introduced them to different styles of teaching and political science methods.

The 2013 spring joint course was a great opportunity to study side by side with a group of American students and so to get a fair impression on their style of learning. As most of the topics were related to the Republic of Moldova, it was very interesting to see and discuss their observations on different local realms. (Teodor, ULIM)

Students appreciated the cultural exchange and the intercultural dialogue provided by the Joint Course – in the formal lectures, the volunteer opportunities, structured round-table discussions outside of class, visiting historic landmarks and governmental institutions, and informal social gatherings.

Конечно, это был и культурный обмен. Я был в Штатах и рассказывал о нашей стране, но когда граждане США находятся здесь, и мы ходим с ними по улице, рассказывая и показывая, – это намного интереснее и веселее. Особенно интересно было наблюдать, как они многому удивлялись и спрашивали. Вот в этом, на мой взгляд, и заключается та самая изюминка совместного курса. Поэтому по окончании курса я сказал, что хотел бы участвовать в подобном курсе еще, так чтобы в следующий раз молдавские студенты поехали в США.

Translation: Certainly it was also a cultural exchange between us. I have been to the United States and talked about our country, but when citizens of the United States are here, and we walk together with them on the street, talking and showing - it's much more interesting and fun. It was especially interesting to see how much they were amazed and asked questions. This is, in my opinion, the very zest of the joint course. Therefore, by the end of the course I said that I would like to participate in such a course again, so that the next time Moldovan students could go to the U.S. (Andrei, ULIM)

Для нас, студентов, живущих в стране, где только происходит процесс становления демократии и гражданского общества, весьма познавательно изучить опыт государств, где демократические механизмы давно работают. Нам было очень интересно поучаствовать в данном проекте, в первую очередь, потому что мы не познавали материал в теоретических лекциях, монографиях и статьях, а непосредственно общались с экспертами; слушали точку зрения людей, которые участвуют в развитии американской демократии; могли дискутировать с участниками проекта и обмениваться мнениями. Надо отметить, что каждое мероприятие отличалось оригинальностью, интересным подходом, где особо я выделил бы интерактивное общение. Хочу выразить благодарность своему преподавателю Ларисе Патлис и преподавателю из USFSP, Judithanne Scourfield McLauchlan, за предоставленную возможность участвовать в этом проекте, который помог мне открыть для себя новые горизонты в изучении политической науки.

Translation: For us, students, who live in a country where the process of democracy and civil society is only being established, it is very informative to learn the experience of countries where democratic mechanisms have long been working. It was very interesting for us to participate in this project: first, we were not learning the material from theoretical

lectures, monographs and articles, but communicating directly with the experts; second, we listened to the views of people who are involved in the development of American democracy, and third, we had the possibility to discuss some issues with project participants and exchange our views. It is important to note that each event was distinguished by an original and interesting approach, and especially I would highlight interactive communication. I would like to express my gratitude to my professor Larisa Patlis and Dr. Judithanne Scourfield McLauchlan from USFSP for the opportunity to participate in this project, which has helped me to discover new horizons in the study of political science. (Alexandr, ULIM)

This course was an outstanding experience for me in the field of intercultural experience and not only. To study with American students and share to each other different points of view was a very useful thing to do for my personal and professional improvement. The end of this course brought me more specific knowledge in the field and international friends. (Vlad, ULIM)

It was a great experience and I feel lucky to have been a part of it. The colleagues from Florida were very heart open and informed about the history, the problems and the general situation of our country. The article on a problematic issue regarding R. of Moldova was a nice opportunity to share our visions and work in groups. The joint course was very well organized event and all the moments spend together will for sure let good memories in all participants' memory. Hoping it will repeat again and again. Regarding the students from Florida and Lions Club meeting I can say it was a very important one. At the American Resources Center I have told some information about the Lions Club and their actions. After this we had the opportunity to visit the orphanage "Aschiuta" from Chisinau where we got involved in common games with the children. At the final stage of this joint course we had a common dinner where we share all our thoughts and expectations for future collaborations between Lions Club, students from ULIM and students from Florida. (Ecatarina, ULIM)

The instructors created a facebook group for the Moldovan and American students in the course, and this has provided a forum to discuss current events (e.g., Russian military action in Ukraine and the recent Moldovan parliamentary elections) and to keep the students connected, well after the semester ended.

I ascertained, with great pleasure that we still keep in touch, 2 years later, with the friends we made during that course. (Teodor, ULIM)

The design of the Joint Course allowed for friendships to develop between the American and Moldovan students, and these friendships have continued in the years since the course.

4. Discussion and Recommendations: Cultivating Global Citizenship

Today's students must be prepared to contribute to an increasingly complex and ever-changing world. American universities have responded by including reference to "global citizenship" and "global awareness" in their overall mission statements (Dolbi, 2008, p. 51). Indeed, the USF Strategic Plan's top priority is to "develop well-educated and highly-skilled global citizens." And the University of South Florida's Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) for the next five years is the Global Citizens Project, a university-wide initiative focused on enhancing the global knowledge, skills and engagement of USF students. Dr. Davis-Salazar, responsible for implementing the plan explained: The number one goal of USF's (2013-2018) Strategic Plan is to produce well-educated global citizens...The program we are developing, called the Global Citizens Project, will help students develop skills that will allow them to navigate our increasingly interconnected world. ULIM also seeks to "prepare students for the labor

market, for further competence building throughout their lives, and for active citizenship.”

The USF-ULIM Joint Course was designed with the goal of helping to prepare our students in Florida and in Moldova to become “global citizens.” While “global citizenship” may be difficult to define, our findings suggest that this type of joint course did instill values and intercultural skills necessary to develop “global citizens” (Hendershot & Sperandio, 2009, p. 52).

Participation in the Joint Course revealed similarities between Moldova and Florida, in that there is a critical need to encourage an increase in civic engagement participation rates in young people in both places. In Moldova, building a strong civil society is vital to its political stabilization. As demonstrated in the recent parliamentary elections, the stakes in Moldova are quite high.

The results of the experience of the American students who traveled to Moldova was unanimous: travel abroad and working in conjunction with university students in Chişinău opened their eyes to cultural differences and daily life in another part of the world, and an understanding of global connectedness in a way that would not have been possible in a course which did not include international travel. Indeed, several of the students described the course as “life-changing” in their anonymous student surveys.

My study abroad trip to Chişinău, Moldova this past spring break was a life-changing and culturally enriching experience. (Student A)

By traveling to Moldova and interacting with the people, I have gained the confidence to interact with different cultures and have also learned a lot about myself. (Student B)

The benefit of international travel and study abroad was enhanced in the Joint Course by the civic engagement component and the opportunity and the integration of the course to work with and learn from Moldovan colleagues.

This class has had a lasting impact on the USF and on the ULIM participants. For example, Jared, a USF undergraduate at the time of the course and now in the Master’s program for International Relations at USF, received an internship with the U.S. Embassy in Chişinău, returning to Moldova to work in the office of political and economic affairs. He later interned at the U.S. Consulate in St. Petersburg, and he is now working at the Department of State in Washington, D.C. Marissa, also an undergraduate at the time of the course, is currently completing the Master’s of Liberal Arts program at USFSP, and she plans to write her thesis on Russian influence on conflict resolution in Eastern European separatist states, including Abkhazia and South Ossetia, Crimea, and Transnistria. Her experiences and research conducted while in Moldova will contribute to her thesis. Lauren, a USF graduate student at the time of the joint course, used her experiences and research from the course to augment a chapter in her thesis, which was written about rule of law initiatives in Serbia. Indeed, in one of the anonymous surveys, a student commented that the course was instrumental in his deciding his career path:

I now know for sure that I want to pursue a career in the Foreign Service, and having this experience will undoubtedly help me with that. (McLauchlan’s blog)

The ULIM students benefitted from the Joint Course format as well. The benefit was not so much that they were re-learning the history, politics and culture of Moldova as it was that they were able to consider well-versed topics from a different angle, with the help of ‘someone else’s eyes’ in a comparative perspective. The ULIM students especially

enjoyed the interactive communication, the meetings with experts and “learning by doing” during the volunteer activities. The emphasis on civic engagement in the course curriculum helped the Moldovan students to understand that knowledge from books is not enough: they must be actively involved in the community life in order to understand its needs for good policy formation. The role of civil society in strengthening democracy was also explored. This kind of service learning pedagogy is still a relatively new idea in Moldova.

Moreover, the instructors maintain a Facebook group for the Moldovan and the American students in the course, and we regularly share news about current events in Moldova (and Ukraine). Students have been able to stay connected and to continue the dialogue.

While “global citizenship” may not be easily defined and may be perceived differently in different national contexts, in our increasingly connected world, we recognize the need to develop “global citizens” at the university. International service learning opportunities and courses that connect students and professors for U.S. and host institutions both inside and outside the classroom provide a vehicle for preparing “global citizens.”

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Annex 1. Research poster presented at Fulbright Conference in Washington, DC, October 2013

Cultivating Global Citizenship in Higher Education

Civic Engagement & Service Learning in Joint Study Abroad Courses
Dr. Judithanne Scourfield McLauchlan, Ms. Larisa Pattis, & Ms. Royale Heart-Oakes



United States of America

American Resource Center
Civil Society Panel



Orphanage Chisinau Lion's Club Chisinau



Republic of Moldova

Domestic Violence Center
Casa Marioarei



Titus Center Telenesti

"This experience has inspired me to want to give more to my community here at home." Patricia



Service Learning Assignment

While in Moldova, students completed service projects and had the opportunity to meet with NGOs working to strengthen civil society. In addition to their direct service, students learned from agency staff who answered questions about social issues and about the formation of social policy in Moldova.



ULIM Library Donations

"I found that it was a perfect chance to learn a lot about the culture through that community interaction." Kendel



Students' Research Publications at ULIM

"I have gained the confidence to interact with different cultures and have also learned a lot about myself." Sebastian



Telenesti, dinner Peace Corps Volunteer

"It was so amazing to see so many different people for all walks of life trying to make a difference in this relatively new country." Royale



Findings

"It is important for nations to reconcile differences"

Statement	USFSP Pre	USFSP Post
"Democracy requires citizens to be knowledgeable about their government"	2%	20%

1= Strongly Disagree 5= Strongly Agree



Students' Research Publications at ULIM

"Our experiences in Moldova gave us a wider and more extensive appreciation for the issues this small country faces, and provided some insight into the long road ahead for Moldovan civil society to improve its conditions." Marissa



USFSP-ULIM Videoconferences

Sincere thanks to the USFSP Bishop Center for the generous support.



For More Info: www1.usfsp.edu/jsm2
www.jainmoldova.blogspot.com