

Volunteer Tourism: An Exploration of Socially Responsible Tourism Practices

by

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Author's Declaration

I hereby declare that I am the sole author of this thesis. This is a true copy of the thesis, including any required final revisions, as accepted by my examiners.

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ABSTRACT

This study explored the practices of commercial volunteer tourism operators in order to determine their perspectives on the role certification may play as a strategy for socially responsible volunteer tourism. It was guided by two objectives: 1) To determine the current perceptions of volunteer tourism stakeholders regarding social responsibility in the volunteer tourism sector, 2) To consider additional measures (e.g., certification) as tools to enhance socially responsible tourism practices.

The study was conducted in two phases. Research during phase one provided a background understanding of the issues related to the volunteer tourism sector. I specifically sought to understand issues surrounding the social responsibility of operators within the sector and methods that could possibly be utilized to improve the sector, such as certification. This was achieved through an assessment of the perceptions of key informants within the volunteer tourism sector, which were gathered through semi-structured interviews. Phase two involved case study analysis, whereby the practices of two large commercial volunteer tourism organizations, Projects Abroad and ME to WE, were examined. Data for phase two were gathered through semi-structured interviews conducted with key players (employees) within the organizations, as well as each organization's website and publication materials. Cross-case analysis of data gathered from both organizations revealed two major themes: (1) operating towards making a difference and (2) creating social responsibility within the volunteer tourism sector.

Combining the results of phase one (background understanding of the volunteer tourism sector and certification) and phase two (analysis of the practices of two volunteer tourism

organizations) allowed for the development of an in-depth understanding of the role social responsibility plays within the volunteer tourism sector. This study has shown that the operations of volunteer tourism organizations are an important component of the tensions present within the sector. This study has revealed the perspectives of volunteer tourism operators and other stakeholders within the sector, a cohort whose perspectives have not been studied in much depth in past research. Furthermore, it identifies the opportunity and need to better align volunteer tourism operators with more social responsibility within the sector. This study has illustrated that the socially responsible practices that are implemented at an operational level could aid in understanding the actual contribution that an organization will make within the sector. The majority of the participants from phase one and phase two of this research identify that they would subscribe to a certification as a responsible tourism implementation strategy. Finally, it is proposed that a new approach and definition for volunteer tourism should be considered within the literature: **Socially Responsible Volunteer Tourism.**

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation to my daughter Soraya. I hope that you find inspiration from my years of perseverance in all that you do. Never give up or stop believing in yourself. Always pursue what you are passionate about and don't let anyone get in the way of achieving your dreams.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

1.1 Introduction

Volunteer tourism has been identified as a way to make positive and meaningful impacts within destinations. However, currently within the tourism industry, and beyond, there has been concerns have been raised about the actual efficacy of volunteer tourism operators within a destination. These concerns have led to discussions around what can be done to improve the sector. This study explores the practices of volunteer tourism operators and assesses the role of certification as a strategy for socially responsible volunteer tourism.

Over the past 50 years tourist arrivals within countries have grown exponentially (UNWTO, 2006^a; UNWTO, 2015^b). With the increasing size of the middle class, traveling to exotic countries is within the reach of some individuals (Pezzini, 2012). This has brought attention to the issues and impacts of international travel. The evolution of the tourism industry has created an emergence of various "niche" forms of tourism, some of which are touted as socially responsible and sustainable alternatives to the traditional mass forms of tourism (Medlik, 2003). Volunteer tourism has emerged under the umbrella of sustainable tourism as a means for socially responsible individuals to participate in tourism. Volunteer tourism involves travellers contributing their time and income to a project at a travel destination that could fall under various forms of tourism such as medical tourism, event tourism, wildlife tourism, or ecotourism (Wearing, 2001). This emerging market allows travellers to spend some, or all, of their time volunteering at a project within a destination while on vacation, usually for a period of five weeks or less (Campbell & Smith, 2006; Gray & Campbell, 2007; Harlow & Pomfret, 2007; Wearing, 2001). Motivations driving travelers to volunteer while on vacation include cultural

immersion, giving back and making a difference to those less privileged, gaining friendships with individuals who hold the same interests and seeking educational and bonding opportunities with their children (Bakker & Lamoureux, 2008; Carter, 2008; Lo & Lee, 2011, Stoddart & Roggeron, 2004). Volunteer tourism has the ability to generate funds and assist social or ecological projects, which may have limited or no financial support from government agencies, and do not normally profit from tourism (Galley & Clifton, 2004; Fitzpatrick, 2007).

Due to exponential growth (Butcher & Smith 2010; Gray & Campbell, 2007; Harlow & Pomfret, 2007; Tomazos & Butler, 2009; TRAM, 2008), the volunteer tourism sector is becoming a more commercialized experience. Traditionally a sector dominated by non-profits trying to sustain themselves, volunteer tourism is evolving into a sector of large commercial organizations. Large tour operators, travel companies, hotel chains, and entrepreneurs are all trying to capitalize on this emerging sector. Critics question the legitimacy and sustainability of volunteer tourism projects, worrying that many projects are created in communities without local consultation. However, at the time of this research, there was no literature available analyzing the operations of these large organizations and their actual contribution to host communities (Wearing & McGehee, 2013). Within the volunteer tourism sector there are limited guidelines, and no specific regulations in place, to monitor the socially responsible claims that these organizations make. Hence, there are minimal ways for consumers to determine whether their money or work is benefitting the environment or the local communities of the places that they volunteer. Due to the increasing size and popularity of volunteer tourism, and the pervading effects it has on many aspects of the local culture and the environment of a destination, it is important to explore the potential of creating more responsible business practices and services.

1.2 Purpose Statement

The purpose of this study was to explore the practices of volunteer tourism operators and assess the role of certification as a strategy for socially responsible volunteer tourism.

1.3 Structure of the Study

This study was conducted in two phases. Phase one consisted of determining the perceptions of volunteer tourism stakeholders. Phase two involved two case studies, which allowed for the development of a more in-depth understanding of the operations of two commercial volunteer tourism organizations, as well as determining perceptions of certification as a tool to increase social responsibility within the sector. The following objectives guided this study:

- 1) To determine the current perceptions of volunteer tourism stakeholders regarding social responsibility in the volunteer tourism sector.
- 2) To consider additional measures (e.g., certification) as tools to enhance socially responsible tourism practices.

1.4 Significance of Study

This study offers insight into the specific practices of commercial volunteer tourism organizations, an area that is relatively unexplored in tourism studies. It also assesses the perspectives of members of these organizations, as well as key informants from the volunteer tourism sector, regarding socially responsible implementation strategies utilized with tourism, such as certification. Finally, it identifies the need to create a new definition that aids in clearly identifying expected practices within the sector. that defines the volunteer tourism sector.

1.5 Outline of the Thesis

The following section provides a brief outline of the Chapters in this thesis:

Chapter Two contains the literature review, which will provide a critical review of the main concepts that underlie this study. Specifically it identifies key concepts relevant to volunteer tourism, including notions of corporate social responsibility in commercial businesses, and implementation strategies utilized for socially responsible tourism. It also highlights the gaps within the literature on volunteer tourism, operations of commercial volunteer tourism organizations, and volunteer tourism certification.

Chapter Three presents the steps and procedures used to obtain data in this two phase study. It explains the constructionist epistemology that guided the research process. It outlines the main steps in both phases of the research including the key informant interviews, which were conducted in phase one. It also discusses the research conducted in phase two, which consisted of two case studies of large commercial volunteer tourism organizations that have been in operation for over 10 years. Utilizing a case study approach was helpful in exploring the operations of commercial volunteer tourism organizations and identifying perceptions of the role certification may play within the sector.

Chapter Four presents the results of the interviews conducted with key informants in phase one of this study. The purpose of these interviews was to determine participants' perceptions of certification for the volunteer tourism sector. This chapter provides a discussion of the four themes that emerged from the interview data: needing more sustainable practices within the sector; involving stakeholders is essential for sustainability; barriers to implementing certification; and implementing certification will aid sustainability.

Chapter Five presents the case study of Projects Abroad. It provides a background of the organization from information gathered from the organizations website and internal documents. It also provides a discussion of the three key themes that were derived from the interviews conducted with employees of the organization. These three key themes are: creating a meaningful experience; operating towards sustainability; and creating a better volunteer tourism sector.

Chapter Six presents the case study of ME to WE. It provides a background of the organization from information gathered from the organizations website and internal documents. It also provides a discussion of the two major themes that were derived from the interviews conducted with employees of the organization. These two themes are: creating a transformational experience; and improving the volunteer tourism sector.

Chapter Seven presents a synthesis of the findings from the analysis of both cases. The cross-case synthesis provided deeper insights as it compared and contrasted the operational aspects of both Projects Abroad and ME to WE. Two major themes emerged from this cross-case synthesis of these operators: operating towards making a difference; and creating social responsibility within the volunteer tourism sector.

Chapter Eight provides a dialogue of the major results of this study. It offers a critical analysis and reflection of the literature within volunteer tourism, responsible tourism, and corporate social responsibility and discusses how these concepts relate to the findings of this study. Furthermore, it proposes how the commercial volunteer tourism organizations reviewed within this study could be explored through a corporate social entrepreneurship lens. Finally, it proposes suggestions for creating more social responsibility within the sector, as well as

identifies the need to create a new operational definition, socially responsible volunteer tourism, for the volunteer tourism sector. Chapter Nine presents the concluding remarks and areas of further research for this study.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

A literature review was undertaken to develop a critical understanding of the important concepts that underpin the study of volunteer tourism, the role of social responsibility in the operations of organizations, as well as strategies used to implement responsible tourism within the industry. This chapter is subdivided into several sections each providing a discussion of the topics most salient to this study, as well as a critical review of their use within the industry. The first section situates the research within broader areas of tourism research. The literature in this area is very extensive, hence for the purpose of this study only the most relevant topics were reviewed. These include: sustainable tourism, alternative forms of tourism, and volunteer tourism.

Building on this foundation, I reviewed the literature on social responsibility to understand the principles espoused within the discourse of the operation of large commercial corporations. This section gives a brief overview of civic responsibility to provide an understanding of its role in informing the practices of socially responsible initiatives. This is followed by a discussion on corporate social responsibility and the theories shaping this discourse. The discussion of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) provides a theoretical overview of the role and implementation strategies utilized to inform the practice of social responsibility within the operations of commercial businesses. Within the review of CSR, the concept of Corporate Social Entrepreneurship (CSE) will be introduced. CSE is an emerging area within the literature on CSR that provides a new theoretical classification of corporations that congruently focus on both the social and financial operations of a corporation. The final section in this chapter discusses responsible tourism implementation strategies. It provides an

overview of general strategies utilized within the tourism industry, such as ecolabels, certification, and accreditation, and discusses the use of such strategies within volunteer tourism. Understanding these strategies played an important role within this study as it allowed for an understanding of their efficacy in implementation and whether such practices can be utilized within the operations of large commercial volunteer tourism operators. The review will conclude with a critical discussion of how all these concepts interrelate and the significance of this study within the literature on volunteer tourism.

2.2 Sustainable Tourism

Over the past few decades the impact that tourism can have on a destination has been the focus of academic inquiry. The concept of sustainable tourism emerged in the 1990s in response to the growing global concern for environmental deterioration and the depletion of resources. The creation of Agenda 21 for the Travel and Tourism Industry, on June 14 1992, by the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC) and the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) is considered to be one of the most influential documents outlining sustainable tourism development for the industry (Kalisch, 2002). UNEP¹ and UNWTO (2005) identify that sustainable tourism development should:

- 1) Make optimal use of environmental resources that constitute a key element in tourism development, maintaining essential ecological processes and helping to conserve natural heritage and biodiversity.

¹ United Nations Environment Programme

2) Respect the socio-cultural authenticity of host communities, conserve their built and living cultural heritage and traditional values, and contribute to inter-cultural understanding and tolerance.

3) Ensure viable, long-term economic operations, providing socio-economic benefits to all stakeholders that are fairly distributed, including stable employment and income-earning opportunities and social services to host communities, and contributing to poverty alleviation (UNEP & UNWTO, 2005, p. 11-12).

UNEP and UNWTO (2005) also identify that "sustainable tourism should also maintain a high level of tourist satisfaction and ensure a meaningful experience to the tourists, raising their awareness about sustainability issues and promoting sustainable tourism practices amongst them" (p.12). Sustainable tourism development is posited as a way to reduce the negative aspects of tourism (Sharpley, 2009) within both emerging and developed countries (Mitchell & Hall, 2005; Swarbrooke & Horner, 2004). Although sustainable tourism has been viewed as a way for improving tourism practices, the extent of its impact since its inception over the past few decades is still unclear (Cohen & Cohen, 2012; Holden, 2009).

The concept of sustainable tourism has been a substantial area of inquiry within the tourism literature (Bramwell & Lane 1993; Butler 1993; Duffy 2002; Johnson 2002; Reid 1999; West & Carrier 2004). The early literature on sustainable tourism position the approach as a favourable alternative to traditional mass forms of tourism (Butler, 1993; Bramwell & Lane, 1993; Weaver, 1995). More recently, scholarly discussion has evolved surrounding the synthesis of the use of sustainable tourism initiatives within mass tourism and alternative tourism enterprises (Weaver, 2014). Weaver (2014) postulates the use of more ethically focused

operations and initiatives, such as corporate social responsibility, within mass tourism enterprises that also integrate alternative tourism products, and creates a necessity of expanding the definition of traditional mass tourism to one that is termed "enlightened mass tourism" (p. 137). Such conceptualizations are important to highlight when studying large commercial alternative tourism organizations that utilize sustainable development practices. The next section will provide a background of alternative forms of tourism that specifically relate to the study of volunteer tourism.

2.3 Alternative Forms of Tourism

Alternative forms of tourism emerged from the concept of sustainable tourism, with the specific intention of minimizing the negative aspects of tourism and creating more positive social, cultural, and environmental impacts. Ideologically, alternative forms of tourism are considered to be a more socially responsible form of tourism. This is due to the smaller scale of operations which are ideally developed by local people, preserving their cultures and traditions, and ensuring the conservation and preservation of the environment (Medlik, 2003). Various forms of alternative tourism have emerged that are all well researched within the tourism literature. Some forms of alternative tourism overlap with others, especially in the case of volunteer tourism. As such, due to space constraints of this study, and its purpose, only the most relevant concepts will be discussed. These forms of alternative tourism were outlined within this study as they are considered to be the most pertinent concepts that may pertain to the study of volunteer tourism (Gray & Campbell, 2007; Butcher & Smith 2010, Theerappapisit, 2009). A brief synopsis of the key tenets of the following forms of alternative tourism: Ecotourism, Community Based Tourism, Responsible Tourism, and Pro-poor Tourism, is described in Table 1. It is important to acknowledge that each of the alternative forms of tourism listed in Table 1

have been defined in many ways. However, the purpose of the table is to provide a general overview of these terms and thus the literature was combined.

Table 1: Summary of Selected Forms of Alternative Tourism.

Alternative Forms of Tourism	Key Tenets	Distinguishing Features	Source
Ecotourism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nature based • Involves preservation and conservation • Includes environmental education • Espouses sustainability principles • Identifies distribution of benefits • Promotes ethics/responsibility 	Focuses on preservation of the environment while providing benefits for the local community.	Donohoe & Needham, 2006; Fennell, 2001 ^b ; Stacey & Needham, 1993.
Community Based Tourism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aids in conservation • Provides job opportunities for local people • Economic generation • Increases livelihood and social welfare • Reduces poverty • Promotes community control and stakeholder involvement 	Focuses on providing economic and social benefits for the local community	Bourdreaux & Nelson, 2011; Bramwell, 2010; Choi & Murray, 2010; Harrison & Schipani, 2007; Pearce, 1992; Scherl et al., 2004; Shibia, 2010; Spenceley & Goodwin, 2008.

Table 1 (continued)

Alternative Forms of Tourism	Key Tenets	Distinguishing Features	Source
Responsible Tourism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tourism product and brand • Broadly coined as CSR • Minimizes negative economic, environmental and social impacts • Greater economic benefits for local people • Enhances the well-being of host communities • Improves working conditions and access to the industry • Contributes to the conservation of natural and cultural heritage • Culturally sensitive, engenders respect between tourists and hosts • All stakeholder collaboration • The term "responsible tourism" is used interchangeably in other forms of tourism 	<p>An approach to the management of tourism. Specifically focuses on stakeholder collaboration for the utilization and conservation of natural and cultural aspects of a destination</p>	<p>Duffy, 2008; Higgins-Desboilles, 2008; International Centre for Responsible Tourism (ICRT), 2014; Sharpley, 2013; Spenceley, 2008; Russell & Wallace, 2004; Schwartz, Tapper, & Font, 2008; The International Ecotourism Society, 2014</p>
Pro-poor Tourism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Form of Responsible Tourism • Strategy to alleviate poverty in developing countries worldwide • Not a product but an approach to tourism within communities • Viewed as an alternative to community based tourism 	<p>An approach focusing on the alleviation of poverty through the empowerment of communities.</p>	<p>Bennett, Roe, & Ashley, 1999; Briedenhann, 2011; Chok & Macbeth, 2007; Hall, 2007</p>

Table 1 (continued)

Alternative Forms of Tourism	Key Tenets	Distinguishing Features	Source
Pro-poor Tourism (cont'd)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Based on the belief that tourism should and can contribute to the economic growth of a country and poverty reduction • Focus on maximizing local employment and services • Expansion of local linkages • Development of infrastructure that benefits the poor 	An approach focusing on the alleviation of poverty through the empowerment of communities.	Meyer, 2010; Muckosy, 2008; Scheyvens, 2007, 2009; Spenceley, 2008; UNWTO, 2015 ^b

It can be noted that there are both similarities and differences to the forms of alternative tourism discussed in Table 1. The analogous nature of these forms can be likened to the inherent utilization of sustainable tourism ideologies within their practices. It is also evident that although the alternative forms of tourism introduced above categorize themselves as different entities, there are several overlapping similarities, which make it hard to distinguish how they differ in scope, especially to individuals not familiar with all the types. Furthermore, there are various issues presented within the literature about each of the forms discussed and whether they truly adhere to the principles of sustainable development. Such discussions are valid, though not directly relevant to this study of volunteer tourism operators (see Coles & Morgan, 2010; Goodwin & Santilli, 2009; Hall & Brown, 2006; Harrison, 2008; King and Dinkoksung, 2014; Meyer, 2010; Milhalic, 2014; Sharpley, 2013; Spenceley, 2008). Volunteer tourism is also considered to be a form of alternative tourism (Halpenny & Cassie, 2003; Wearing, 2004) and can occur within any aspect of the previously mentioned alternative forms of tourism, but also as

its own entity. Due to the purpose of this study, the next section will provide an in-depth discussion of volunteer tourism.

2.4 Volunteer Tourism

Although volunteer tourism is an important and emerging aspect of tourism, the literature on volunteer tourism is still growing. Studies have focused primarily on the volunteer tourist and their motives, values, and behaviours (Benson & Seibert, 2009; Brown, 2005; Callanan and Thomas, 2005; Campbell & Smith, 2006; Chen & Chen, 2011; Coghlan & Fennell, 2009; Grimm & Needham, 2012a, 2012b; Halpenny & Cassie, 2003; Scheyvens, 2011; Sin, 2010; Stoddart & Rogerson, 2004; Tomazos & Butler, 2010; Wearing, 2001). There is also literature that examines the impact that volunteer tourism has on local communities (Clifton & Benson, 2006; Higgens-Desboilles, 2003; Lupoli & Morse, 2015; McIntosh & Zahra, 2007; McGehee & Andereck, 2004; Singh, 2004), the nature of volunteering in developing countries (Broad, 2003; Simpson, 2004), the role of NGO's in volunteer tourism and community development (Lyons & Wearing, 2008; Wearing, 2004,) and perceptions of various stakeholders towards volunteer tourism (Gray & Campbell, 2007; Rattan, 2009). Much of the research on the impact of volunteer tourism on communities focuses on the relationship between the host community and the volunteer tourist. The literature in all these areas is growing, however, within this paper only the most pertinent areas to this study will be discussed.

The following section will provide an overview of volunteer tourism. It will specifically provide a discussion of the scope of volunteer tourism, definitions of volunteer tourism, motivations of volunteer tourists, volunteer tourism and the community, negative impacts of volunteer tourism, monitoring of best practice within volunteer tourism and gaps in the literature.

2.4.1 Scope of Volunteer Tourism

Travelling for the purpose of volunteering has been identified as early as 1915 (Wearing, 2001). The emergence of organizations such as Volunteer Service Overseas (1958) and the U.S. Peace Corps (1961) are argued to be the first organizations that created momentum within the sector. The appeal of volunteering during a vacation, known as volunteer tourism, has increased significantly since the 1970s (Wearing, 2004). Determining the size and growth rate of this market is complicated; there is no definitive number of the actual size of the total volunteer tourism market or the number of operators (Benson & Wearing, 2012). However, a review of the literature from 2003 to 2012 shows a marked increase in volunteer tourism organizations and activities that suggests this tourism sector is growing. A study on gap-year volunteering, found that there were around 800 organizations in 200 countries that offered volunteer tourism placements (Jones, 2005). Mintel (2005) valued the gap-year market at £5 billion in 2005, predicting it to rise to £20 billion by 2010 (The Guardian 14 August, 2007). TRAM's (2008) survey of 324 volunteer tourism operators estimated that the total expenditure generated by volunteer tourism was between US\$1.66-\$2.66 billion "with a total of 1.6 million volunteer tourists per year" worldwide (p. 5). Tomazos and Butler(2009) reported the growth in the number of websites devoted to volunteer tourism. In 2003, they determined that the number of volunteer tourism projects found in the top 10 countries to be 223, while in 2007 this number increased to 1,741. Wearing and McGehee (2013) also discuss the growth of the volunteer tourism based on a review of the term in which it was found that "a Google search of the words 'volunteer tourism' on April 17th 2008 returned 230,000 hits; that same search on April 17th 2012, just four years later, returned 4,850,000 hits" (Voluntourism.org, 2008, cited in Wearing and McGehee, 2013). Given the growth of volunteer tourism noted above (Butcher & Smith

2010; Gray & Campbell, 2007; Harlow & Pomfret, 2007; Tomazos & Butler, 2009; TRAM, 2008), further investigation into these developments is warranted.

Volunteer tourism can occur in any setting, but appears to be focused mainly in areas of the world that are less developed. This may be due to its ability to bring funds and assistance to social or ecological projects, which may have limited or no financial support from government agencies and do not normally profit from tourism (Galley & Clifton, 2004; Fitzpatrick, 2007). Volunteer tourism has also begun to play an integral role in the sustainability and conservation of wildlife and communities in some tourism destinations as it brings about awareness of issues (Rattan, Eagles, & Mair, 2012; Wearing, 2001). The duration of volunteer tourism trips tend to be short-term, and usually less than four weeks (Callanan & Thomas, 2005). Novelli's (2005) study ranked India as the top destination for the total number of volunteer tourism projects. Tomazos and Butler's (2009) study showed that the top five countries that provide volunteer opportunities are China, India, United States of America, Indonesia and Brazil.

The growth in volunteer tourism has created a shift in the types of volunteer tourism organizations, from those who were traditionally based on a non-profit model, to those more commercially based (Wearing & McGehee, 2013). It has been argued that the growth of these commercial types of organizations has changed the face of volunteer tourism (Wearing & McGehee, 2013). In their review of the volunteer tourism literature, Wearing and McGehee (2013) note that there is a lack of scholarly literature on commercial volunteer tourism operators. Lyons, Hanley, and Wearing (2012) also discuss this lack of literature, stating:

[...] there is a dearth of research on the fast-growing supply of commercial volunteer tourism products. There is virtually no empirical data that describes the practices of impacts of commercial volunteer tourism activities outside of the anecdotal and critical/theoretical work that posits NGO-based volunteer tourism as "all good" and corporate and commercial interests as "all bad" (p. 374).

While determining growth of the sector is important, understanding the changing face of the industry and especially the impacts of volunteer tourism operators is equally important. It is argued that the increased number of commercial volunteer tourism operators that are motivated by profits have a different impact on the communities they are situated in (Wearing & McGehee, 2013). This can lead to operators placing more of a focus on profits as they focus their products on the demand and desires of their customers, rather than the actual needs of a destination and its people (Wearing & McGehee, 2013; Wearing, McDonald, & Ponting, 2005; Wearing & Ponting, 2006). Volunteer tourism organizations have been identified as important gatekeepers between the tourists and the community projects they are created in (McGehee & Andereck, 2008). As such, Benson and Blackman (2011) discuss the importance of intertwining the design of such projects with the host community's needs. Research into the management of the sector is growing (Atkins, 2012; McGehee, 2012; Raymond & Hall, 2008), however, it is argued that more research still needs to be done (Wearing & McGehee, 2013). As such, understanding the operations of commercial volunteer tourism organizations could provide insights on how to manage the sector better. The next section will assess key definitions of volunteer tourism presented in the literature.

2.4.2 Definitions of Volunteer Tourism

The term volunteer tourism applies to “those tourists who, for various reasons, volunteer in an organized way to undertake holidays that might involve aiding or alleviating material poverty of some groups in society, the restoration of certain environments or research into aspects of society and environment” (Wearing, 2001, p. 1). Although seminal, authors such as Benson (2011) and Lyons and Wearing (2008) have argued that this definition is too narrow in its focus and several other definitions have since emerged. McGehee and Santos (2005, p. 760)

define volunteer tourism as “utilizing discretionary time and income to travel out of the sphere of regular activity to assist others in need”. Scheyvens (2002) identifies volunteer tourism as a form of “justice tourism” as it “involves individuals from Western countries paying to come to the Third World to assist with development or conservation work, as they desire to achieve something more meaningful than a pleasure filled, self-indulgent holiday” (p. 202). Uriely, Reichel, and Ron (2003), define volunteer tourism more broadly as an “expression of what is recognized in tourism literature as the ‘other’ dimension of postmodern tourism, which emphasizes the growing appeal of concepts such as ‘alternative,’ ‘real,’ ‘ecological,’ and ‘responsible’ forms of tourism” (p. 61). Singh and Singh (2004, p.184) refer to volunteer tourism as a "more conscientized practice of righteous tourism - one that comes closest to utopia and in its best form upholds the highest ideals intrinsically interwoven in the tourism phenomenon". Chen and Chen's (2011) study of motivations of volunteer tourists notes that volunteer tourism is “clearly a tourism activity incorporating volunteer services that is concerned about environmental, cultural, or humanitarian issues and intends to benefit not only tourists but also locals” (p 436). Wearing (2001) suggests that volunteer tourism can be considered a form of alternative tourism as it falls under its cultural, educational, scientific, adventure, and agritourism categories. It is evident that within some of these definitions emphasis is placed mainly on the volunteer and their role in the experience. Singh and Singh (2004) and Chen and Chen's (2011) definitions refer to the practice of this form of tourism and the ideals that are associated with it. Chen and Chen's (2011) definition is the only one that addresses that volunteer tourism provides benefits for both locals and tourists.

While the definitions discussed above provide a description of volunteer tourism they are limited to assessments of the impacts of volunteer tourism, and the types of projects and

activities that take place within this sector. Volunteer tourism is centered on the premise of alleviating social and environmental issues within communities, with a focus on improving destinations. However, under the current definitions there is an evident gap in regard to evaluating actual practices and perceptions of volunteer tourism organizations. Hence, determining the operations of volunteer tourism operators and what factors should encompass volunteer tourism organizations could aid in identifying best practice for the sector. The following section will discuss the motivations of volunteer tourists.

2.4.3 Motivations of Volunteer Tourists

Individuals are now travelling to a destination for relaxation, as well as to volunteer their time and services to a local project (Campbell & Smith, 2006; Gray & Campbell, 2007; Harlow & Pomfret, 2007; Wearing, 2001). Some tourists now feel more accountable for their actions at the places they visit and seek to improve the environmental and cultural aspects of their host country (Butcher, 2003). There is a large range in the types of projects that volunteers can be involved in. These can include local community service such as teaching; providing medical care or building homes and schools; to conservation of the natural environment and wildlife which can include activities that involve caring for animals (Rogers, 2007). These activities allow the volunteer tourist to have more enhanced experiences with local communities, closer interactions with wildlife and to make new acquaintances (Brightsmith, Stronza, & Holle, 2008). In many instances volunteer tourists pay more to volunteer at a specific destination than they would if they just visited the same destination on a non-volunteering holiday (Wearing, 2001).

Studies of volunteer motivations indicate that volunteer tourists are motivated to volunteer based on several factors including their desire to give back to the communities they are visiting and help those less fortunate, interacting with the local people, making new connections,

family bonding experiences, cultural immersion and escaping daily routines (Bakker & Lamoureux, 2008; Carter, 2008; Lo & Lee, 2011; Stoddart & Roggerson, 2004). Understanding the motivations pushing an individual to volunteer while on holiday is essential in the recruitment and retention of volunteers. The motivations of a volunteer to participate in a volunteering activity have been studied widely. Research suggests people are motivated to volunteer because they have a desire to help others and/or to satisfy their own social and psychological goals (Carpenter & Knowles Myers, 2010; Clary, Snyder, & Stukas, 1996; Cnaan, Handy, & Wadsworth, 1996; Proteau & Wolff, 2008; Smith, 1994; Ziemek, 2006). Furthermore, some researchers argue that an individual's inclination towards certain personality traits, such as empathy or pro-social, also plays an important role in their motivations (Carpenter & Knowles Myers, 2010; Davis, Mitchell, & Meyer, 1999; Penner, 2002; Ziemek, 2006). Snyder & Omoto (2008) discuss determining a volunteers motivations to participate can be based on a functionalist perspective. This perspective seeks to determine what the volunteer attains from the experience which motivates them to participate (Snyder & Omoto, 2008). Clary et al. (1998) created a comprehensive assessment tool called the Volunteer Functions Inventory (VFI), a 30 item survey to assess the motivations underlying volunteerism. Specifically, they describe six motivational functions: values, career, understanding, esteem enhancement, protective, and social. These motivational functions can provide opportunities for individuals to: (1) express altruistic/humanitarian concerns based on their values, (2) self-development and build on the knowledge and skill that they have, (3) engage with friends and/or pursue activities that are favorably viewed by others in the community, (4) prepare for a new career or improving one's career skills, (5) reduce one's guilt of being more fortunate than others and/or with one's own personal problems, and (6) enhance one's personal growth and self-esteem. This functional

approach seeks to determine how people decide to volunteer, how it is initiated, motivations for a volunteer experience and what keeps them volunteering for the long term (Snyder & Omoto, 2008). Accordingly, an individual's personal values and experiences are potential push factors encouraging participation in volunteer experiences (Manino, Snyder, & Omoto, 2011).

Research suggests these factors may play an important role in understanding why an individual participates in volunteer tourism. Brown (2005) examined the main motivators for tourists to volunteer while on vacation. He identified that cultural immersion, giving back and making a difference to those less privileged, gaining friendships with individuals who hold the same interests and seeking educational and bonding opportunities for children were the main motivators for tourists to volunteer on vacation. Brown's (2005) study revealed the motivations of volunteer tourists are not mainly altruistic and tend to overlap with the motivations of the general traveller. Broad's (2003) study had similar findings as it was shown that less than two-thirds of the participants who volunteered did so with an altruistic motive. Broad's research also illustrated that individuals, when exposed to a different culture, had a changed perspective of the world, became more open-minded, more relaxed and content with themselves and were less selfish during the course of their volunteering.

Within the volunteer tourism literature there are emerging studies that document the impact that a trip has on a volunteer once they return home (Alexander, 2009; Bailey & Russell, 2010; Broad, 2003; Christofi & Thompson, 2007; Coghlan & Gooch, 2011; Grabowski & Wearing, 2011; Lepp, 2008; McGehee, 2002; McGehee & Santos, 2005; Zahra, 2011).

Researchers have shown how, post-trip, volunteers had increased consciousness, which caused changes in their behaviours in regard to purchasing, their relationships with family and friends, and involvement with social movement organizations when back home (McGehee, 2002;

McGehee & Norman, 2002; McGehee & Santos, 2005; Wearing & McGehee, 2013). Several studies also showed that post-trip volunteers experienced increased personal growth (Lepp, 2008) and development of their "self" due to the experiences that they had and personal reflections that resulted from it (Matthews, 2008; Sin, 2009; Wearing, 2002). Other studies (Alexander, 2009; Grabowski & Wearing, 2011) have found that volunteer tourism experience caused significant changes in a "volunteers trust, assertiveness and artistic interest" (Wearing & McGehee, 2013, p. 126).

Volunteers are motivated for various reasons both altruistic and non-altruistic. Understanding the motivations of volunteers and facilitating an environment that meets the needs of the volunteers can be considered an important aspect for volunteer tourism organizations. Hence, understanding the operations of large volunteer tourism organizations and their standards for facilitating programs can provide insights in terms of how they address, or do not address, these needs. The next section will provide a discussion of volunteer tourism and the community.

2.4.4 Volunteer Tourism and the Community

Though researchers have noted the benefits that volunteer tourism provides communities, the actual impacts that a business has upon the community is relatively under researched, (Clifton & Benson, 2006; Lupoli & Morse, 2015; Higgens-Desboilles, 2008; McIntosh & Zahra, 2007; McGehee & Andereck, 2009; Rattan, 2009; Raymond & Hall, 2008, Singh, 2004) and does not usually include the perceptions of communities (Fee & Mdee 2011; Lyons et al., 2012; Mdee & Emmott 2008; Woosnam & Lee 2011). Determining what these impacts are, social and economic, is important in assessing the efficacy of the volunteer tourism organization and its projects. Studies of volunteer tourism in host communities tend to focus on the perceived positive benefits it can have at a destination. For example, in their study on host /guest relations,

McIntosh and Zahra (2007) conducted in-depth interviews with volunteer tourists and the Maori people of New Zealand to determine their perspectives on volunteer tourism activities. Their findings showed that the interaction and cultural experiences that both groups had with each other were professed to be jointly beneficial for all involved (McIntosh & Zahra, 2007). Broad's (2003) study of volunteers and the Gibbon Rehabilitation Project (GRP) in Thailand discussed the informal cultural immersion of volunteers within the community and their perceived benefits. Heuman (2005) examined the host-guest relationship of tourists participating in working holidays in the Caribbean Territory of Dominica. His research found that working holidays can mimic traditional forms of hospitality and change the dynamics of interaction. He identifies this dynamic as being more guest-local, in which locals seek to protect tourists, and there is a reciprocal exchange of gifts; there is an element of obedience of tourists to the expectations of locals; and there is a performance of deference that accompanies interaction (Heuman, 2005). McGehee and Andereck (2009) studied volunteer tourism impacts in Tijuana, Mexico and examined residents' attitudes towards volunteer tourism within their community. The authors applied social exchange theory to their research and found that residents perceived benefits and support for projects is related to how they personally benefit from volunteer tourism (McGehee & Andereck, 2009). Their study addresses the specific and direct impacts that volunteer tourism has on the community. The authors argue that their results show the need for community stakeholder involvement when creating volunteer tourism opportunities. As such, ascertaining the perspectives of the main stakeholders involved in such projects (the volunteer tourism organization, the community, and the tourist) will allow for a more holistic approach to the development of projects.

Understanding the role volunteer tourism plays in communities highlights the importance of understanding operator involvement within the sector. Determining the role that commercial volunteer tourism operators play within communities, and their practices to engage the community, allows for a better understanding of the impacts they may have. The next section will provide a discussion about the potential negative impacts of volunteer tourism.

2.4.5 Negative Impacts of Volunteer Tourism

Although volunteer tourism has been propagated as a positive experience in which both communities and volunteers alike benefit, many scholars and critics warn that a more cautionary perspective should be taken (Brown, 2005; Caton & Santos, 2009; Conran, 2011; Guttentag, 2009; Palacios, 2010; Sin, 2009; Therapappisit, 2009; Vrasti, 2013). One argument is that a tourist's selfless intention to improve the destinations they visit is actually a self-serving means of improving their own personal lives (Duffy, 2002; Munt, 1994). Volunteer tourism can be considered an alternative form of consumption, compared to traditional forms of consumption in mass tourism (Bryant & Goodman, 2004). Gray and Campbell (2007) further explain "the volunteer ecotourist seeks to build identity through consumption; her desire for authentic interaction with other cultures (and natures), however sincere, is obscured by the [commoditization] of the interaction" (p 466). Commoditization or commodification is a term that helps to capture a change in relationships – tourism or otherwise. Commoditization is believed to misrepresent and alter the authenticity of local cultural products. It changes the meanings of rituals and customs, which in turn forms a new culture that is distinctly different from the original one (Ryan, 1996). Coren and Gray (2012) argue that the rapid growth and commercialization occurring within volunteer tourism, a sector that has traditionally flourished by being separate from the more traditional (mass) forms of tourism, has led many critics to

argue that it epitomizes the very commodification process it once claimed to be separate from. The emergence of private companies and large tour operators trying to capitalize, and increase profit shares within this growing niche market, has led to an increase in the commoditization of volunteer tourism, which scholars argue decrease its actual efficacy and reputation within destinations (Fitzpatrick, 2007, Lyons & Wearing, 2008). The Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) released a documentary entitled "Volunteers Unleashed", which discussed the role of volunteer tourism in communities. In the documentary the commentator spoke about how volunteer tourism operators appear to cater more towards volunteers' needs, than to the needs of the local community (Canadian Broadcasting Company - Doc Zone, 2015). It was suggested that projects are being created without the consultation and involvement of local stakeholders and are mainly focused on attracting volunteers and their motivations for visiting a project without regard for the actual needs of the communities (Broad & Jenkins, 2008; Lepp, 2008).

Some critics of the sector (Callanan & Thomas, 2005; Guttentag, 2009; Simpson, 2004; Sin, 2009; Ver Beek, 2006) also question whether volunteers are truly helping the areas they visit, aside from their financial contributions. Many organizations send volunteers who do not have useful skills or qualifications (Ellis, 2003; Foster-Smith & Evans, 2003), are there usually less than a month, and can become a hindrance (Simpson, 2004; Callanan & Thomas, 2005). They are untrained, which can have a negative effect and impede the end result (Guttentag, 2009). Lack of cultural debriefing can lead to problems between the volunteers and local people due to cross-cultural misunderstandings (Sin, 2009), and highlight socio-economic inequalities (Clifton & Benson, 2006; Sin, 2009). This may lead to feelings of discontent and inferiority within the hosting community (Wall & Mathieson, 2006). Guttentag (2009) argues volunteer

tourism can result in decreased employment opportunities for the local community. Much of the work volunteer tourists participate in can be performed by a local person, who may be more skilled than the volunteer (Ver Beek, 2006). Furthermore, volunteers are essentially working for free and are paying steep fees to conduct this work at these sites. This has been argued as creating an unfair situation in which local labourers cannot compete with such practices (Guttentag, 2009; Sin, 2009; Ver Beek, 2006). Volunteer tourism can also potentially increase a community's dependency for external aid by creating unrealistic expectations about gift giving (Sin, 2009) and reliance on others to solve their problems (Guttentag, 2009). Sin (2009) states this can create tensions and jealousy within the community because projects being created may benefit one group of the community more than another.

All forms of tourism, whether mass or alternative, can strive to be sustainable, however, the use of environmentally unfriendly methods of transportation created a juxtaposition in the final purpose of a volunteer tourism site. Mustonen (2007) argues that volunteer tourists may travel to a destination with the purpose of helping a community or conserving a species but many do not realize the negative effect they are having on the environment while getting there. He further proposes these effects may outweigh the work that volunteers do in a country.

2.4.6 Monitoring of Best Practice within Volunteer Tourism

Within the volunteer tourism literature there is limited research on methods to monitor, evaluate, and improve the activities within the sector. Rattan (2015) provides a background and offers insights on the use of ecolabels and certifications within the tourism industry and their applicability to the volunteer tourism sector. Barbueri, Santos, and Katsube (2012) suggest a volunteer and community-focused evaluation approach in which these stakeholders can provide feedback on their interactions and experiences at their projects. Taplin, Dredge, and Scherrer

(2014) present a qualitative analytical framework to aid in monitoring and evaluating the volunteer tourism sector. The International Ecotourism Society and Planeterra created the *International Ecotourism Society Volunteer Tourism Guidelines for Tour Operators* in 2012 with consultation from volunteer tourism operators (The International Ecotourism Society, 2012). These guidelines utilized best practices from organizations offering volunteer tourism within their businesses. They are meant to serve as a reference of best practice for commercial tour operators, though they are not monitored or enforced. Fee and Mdee's (2011) and Mdee and Emmott's (2008) research on accreditation and the development of fair trade labelling in volunteer tourism look at the potential of creating a regulation for this growing tourism sector. The Fair Trade Tourism (2015) label includes volunteer tourism as a part of their certification scheme, however, dissemination of this initiative is mainly in South Africa, Mozambique and Madagascar. A more in-depth discussion of these initiatives can be found within this thesis in Section 2.9 on Responsible Tourism Implementation Strategies.

2.4.7 Gaps in the Literature

While research discussed in this review illustrates important developments in terms of knowledge about the various aspects of volunteer tourism, there is a gap with regard to understanding the current practices of commercial volunteer tourism operators and the role that certification may play. The face of volunteer tourism is changing due to the emergence of various types of organizations, especially ones that are more commercially focused. This tourism sector is growing and there are large variations in the types of experiences being offered to tourists. There are some guidelines, but no regulations in place to monitor the operations of volunteer tourism sector operators. Hence, it is difficult for consumers to determine whether the money they are spending or the work they are doing at a destination is benefitting the

environment or the local communities. Many tour operators can offer experiences that appear to be sustainable at first glance, but are really not benefitting anyone except the operators and the tourists themselves. Due to the increasing size and popularity of volunteer tourism, and the pervading effects it has on all aspects of the local culture and environment, it is important to understand the perspectives of volunteer tourism operators and to consider new ways of implementing best practices within the sector. It is also apparent there are gaps in terms of understanding the role of socially responsible practices for operators within the sector.

To better understand factors that could play a role in the operations of commercial volunteer tourism providers, a review of the social responsibility literature is also an important component for grounding this research. The next section will provide an overview of Social Responsibility.

2.5 Social Responsibility

Social responsibility is an important concept in the study of volunteer tourism. It can be identified as the underlying driver for the purpose and operations of many volunteer tourism organizations. The concept of social responsibility has been in existence for generations (see Chisholm, 1949) and has been studied across all disciplines. The movement within society towards expectations of socially responsible behaviour from individuals and corporations has gained momentum. Benabou and Tirole (2010) argue that there are several factors that have contributed to this trend:

- (i) social responsibility is likely to be a normal good (i.e. its demand increases as awareness increases);

- (ii) information about companies' practices throughout the world has become much more accessible and quick to travel;
- (iii) the scope of environmental and social externalities exerted by multinationals in less developed, more laxly regulated countries is likely to have expanded in pace with globalization; and
- (iv) the long-run cost of atmospheric pollution (e.g. global warming), or at least the public's awareness of it, has risen significantly (p. 2).

Social responsibility is generally defined as a duty or obligation that an individual, or organization, is expected to participate in for the benefit and welfare of an individual or society as a whole (Berman, 1997; Galloway, 2006; Li, Zhang, Li, Zu, Zhao, & Zhao, 2011; Kohlberg & Candee, 1984; Rossi, 2005). This responsibility has been identified as either being passive, (i.e. not engaging in harmful acts) or active, which include activities that can help to advance social goals (Li et al., 2011). Whether at an individual or corporate level, socially responsible behaviours consist of philanthropic or pro-social activities for the purpose of helping others. At the individual level, behaving in a socially responsible manner could include donating money, volunteering time, consuming responsible products, or giving blood. At the corporate level, social responsibility may include the donation of time, resources, and implementing best practices for the greater good while furthering the best interests of the corporation and its stakeholders. The following sections discuss the types of social responsibility initiatives typically carried out at an individual and corporate level. Providing a discussion about these theoretical constructs is important in order to create an understanding of the societal ideals that underpin volunteer tourism.

2.5.1 Civic Responsibility

The literature on civic responsibility is extensive, and for the purposes of this research project, will only be briefly discussed. Scholars have argued an essential aspect of the proper functioning of a democratic society is for citizens to partake in civic responsibility (Santinello, Cristini, Vieno, & Scacchi, 2012; Flanagan & Sherrod, 1998; Prince, 2002). Da Silva, Sanson, Smart, and Toumbourou (2004, p. 230) define civic responsibility as “attitudes and behaviours that are beneficial to society, particularly pro-social community and political attitudes and behaviours”. The study of civic responsibility occurs in various fields, but is predominant in the literature on education and childhood development. This is due to the importance given to understanding how to shape or create ‘good citizens’ within democratic societies. It is believed that an individual's experiences in their early life, with peer groups, family, schooling and social contexts, will define their civic responsibility in adulthood (Serpell, Mumba, & Chansa-Kabali, 2011). Thornton and Jaeger (2006) identify five dimensions of civic responsibility based on their analysis of scholarship within the field:

1. Knowledge and support of democratic values, systems, and processes;
2. Desire to act beneficially in community and for its members;
3. Use of knowledge and skills for societal benefit;
4. Appreciation for, and interest in those unlike self; and
5. Personal accountability (Association of American Colleges & Universities, 2002; Astin & Sax, 1998; Bowen, 1997; Colby, Ehrlich, Beaumont, & Stephens, 2003; Guarasci & Cornwell, 1997; Patrick, 1991).

Civic responsibility involves citizens working together to promote the health and well-being of a community and wider society (Youniss, Bales, Christmas-Best, Diversi, McLaughlin, & Silbereisen, 2002) through social, civil, and political involvement. The concept of civic responsibility is intertwined with the discourse on volunteer tourism. Volunteer tourists feel accountable to the destinations they visit and are motivated to provide financial and physical aid to promote the well-being of the community. Hence, providing a discussion of civic responsibility is deemed to be important when studying the operations of volunteer tourism businesses as it provides an understanding of why volunteers choose to volunteer and what their expectations may be of the projects they participate in.

The following section provides a discussion about social responsibility at the corporate level. Within this study, Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) is an important concept to understand as it relates to the social responsibility initiatives that underpin large commercial volunteer tourism organizations. Specifically this section provides a background on CSR and the theoretical constructs that make up this area of research. It also provides a discussion about the use of CSR in tourism and present a new emerging aspect within CSR, that of Corporate Social Entrepreneurship (CSE).

2.5.2 Corporate Social Responsibility

The study of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) within the academic literature became more widespread in the twentieth century and even more predominant within the past 50 years. CSR is a concept that has evolved throughout the years, yet there is no single universal definition that is agreed upon in the literature as (Valor, 2005). In the 1950s, CSR was first introduced and referred to as Social Responsibility (SR) in Howard Bowen's (1953) landmark book entitled *Social Responsibilities of the Businessman*. During this period the prominence and

influence of the 'corporation' had not yet been documented (Carroll, 1999). Bowen (1953) was considered by some as the founding father of CSR. He argued that social responsibility "refers to the obligations of businessmen to pursue those policies, to make those decisions, or to follow those lines of action which are desirable in terms of the objectives and values of our society" (p. 6). Carroll (1999) argues Bowen's (1953) work was based on the notion that businesses were a central force in society and their power had an impact on the lives of individuals. The definitions of corporate social responsibility have changed and are varied depending on the context. Carroll (1979) suggests "the social responsibility of business encompasses the economic, legal, ethical, and discretionary expectations that society has of governments" (p. 500). Frederick (1986) argues "the fundamental idea of corporate social responsibility is that business corporations have an obligation to work for social betterment" (p.15). Johnson and Scholes (2002) note "corporate social responsibility is concerned with the ways in which an organization exceeds the minimum obligations to stakeholders specified through regulation and corporate governance" (p. 247). As Votaw (1972) reasoned thirty years ago;

Corporate social responsibility means something, but not always the same thing to everybody. To some it conveys the idea of legal responsibility or liability; to others, it means socially responsible behaviour in the ethical sense; to still others, the meaning transmitted is that of 'responsible for' in a causal mode; many simply equate it with a charitable contribution; some take it to mean socially conscious; many of those who embrace it most fervently see it as a mere synonym for legitimacy in the context of belonging or being proper or valid; a few see a sort of fiduciary duty imposing higher standards of behaviour on businessmen than on citizens at large (Votaw, 1972, p. 25).

Regardless of which of the various definitions are used, the basic premise of corporate social responsibility is that society and businesses are linked to each other, which is also evident in the study of tourism. Since they are not considered as distinctive entities there are certain behaviours and outcomes that society expects from businesses within their communities (Wood,

1991). Furthermore, although the core principles of CSR remain the same, (i.e. the corporation is accountable for their actions within society) its strategies may be practiced in different ways.

CSR is a voluntary initiative and Van Marrewijk (2003) suggests that there are three approaches that can be applied to corporate social responsibility: the shareholder's approach, stakeholder approach, and societal approach. The shareholder approach is viewed as the classic approach to CSR in which the primary responsibility of the business is to create profits (Quazi & O'Brien, 2000). In this approach the business is only accountable to its shareholders and in maximizing its profits. Socially responsible activities are viewed as a priority for the government, not industry, and participation in CSR activities by businesses only occurs if it creates value for the owners (Van Marrewijk, 2003).

The stakeholder approach began to gain prominence during the 1980's (Freeman, 1984). In this approach the organization is not only accountable to shareholders, but also to its stakeholders, which include governments, competitors, consumer and environmental advocates, the media, owners, customers, suppliers and employees (Freeman, 1984; Wood, 1991). These stakeholders are individuals whose interests have an influence and depend on the organizations attainment of set out objectives. Assessing and responding to stakeholder needs is an essential aspect of this approach (Hirschland, 2006).

The societal approach takes a broader view of CSR in which organizations are an important part of, and responsible to, society as a whole. Under this type of approach the corporation is responsible for meeting the needs of society, to a level that society deems as satisfactory (Van Marrewijk, 2003). Van Marrewijk (2003) argues that this approach "especially appears to be a (strategic) response to changing circumstances and new corporate challenges that

had not previously occurred. It requires organizations to fundamentally rethink their position and act in terms of the complex societal context of which they are a part of” (p. 97). Banerjee (2008, p.62) conducted an examination of the extensive literature over the past 50 years on corporate social responsibility and surmised the following rationale and assumptions within the discourse:

- 1) Corporations should think beyond making money and pay attention to social and environmental issues.
- 2) Corporations should behave in an ethical manner and demonstrate the highest level of integrity and transparency in all their operations.
- 3) Corporations should be involved with the community they operate in terms of enhancing social welfare and providing community support through philanthropy or other means (p. 62).

Although CSR has been posited as a way to create positive impacts from the operations of corporations within society, there are also several criticisms. Blowfield and Frynas (2005) broadly discuss that there are two schools of thought that guide the criticism of CSR: "CSR is bad capitalism" and "weak CSR is bad development" (p. 503). The schools of thought that discuss CSR being "bad capitalism" are espoused in traditional business management theory and echo Milton Friedman's (1988) argument that there is "only one social responsibility of business: to use its resources and engage in activities designed to increase its profits" (p.133). Based on this view, it is argued that CSR is misguiding the purposes of businesses to maximize profits for shareholders by emphasizing the importance of social and economic objectives, which the business lacks expertise to do (Blowfield & Frynas, 2005). Margolis and Walsh (2003) argue within the literature on CSR that social objectives achieved by the corporation provide positive

financial returns for the corporation, and hence supports the notion of creating profit maximization. Blowfield and Frynas (2005) discuss the school of thought associated with "weak CSR is bad for development" argues that "companies should take responsibility for the broader impacts of business activity, but that current CSR practice is simply inadequate for this purpose" (p. 505). This concept arises from business behaviour critics and civil society organizations. It is argued that social programs organized by corporations are lacking (Frynas, 2005) and should be monitored by government. This is specific to the corporate codes of conduct that are set up as they lack "precision and "uniformity across firms", and there are no penalties for non-compliance to these codes (Blowfield & Frynas, 2003, p. 506). However, within this school of thought, it is believed that there are ways for organizations to reform their CSR initiatives to have a more positive impact within society (Wadell, 2000; Wawryk, 2003).

Large commercial volunteer tourism organizations are run as corporations and have various stakeholders of their operations. Given the socially responsibly tone that infuses the volunteer tourism sector, there is a direct connection between the concepts within CSR and a need to better understand how volunteer tourism organizations, especially commercial organizations, operate. As such, understanding the theories that espouse corporate social responsibility can help to situate the volunteer tourism commercial organization in the sphere of business operations. The following section will discuss the theories of corporate social responsibility.

2.6 Theories of Corporate Social Responsibility

Several theories have emerged in the literature outlining the practice and responsibilities of corporations utilizing CSR. One of the most well-known theoretical frameworks for CSR is Carroll's (1991) pyramid of corporate social responsibility. This framework (Figure 1) depicts a

four-level hierarchy consisting of economic, legal, ethical, and philanthropic levels a business should ascribe to when utilizing CSR.

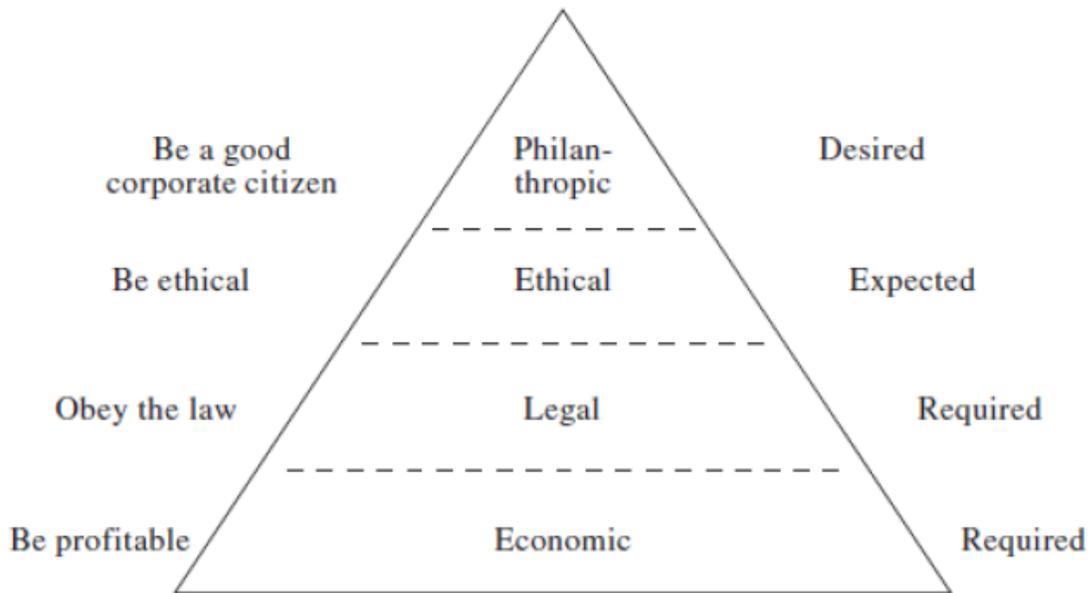


Figure 1: Carroll's Pyramid of Corporate Social Responsibility

(Schwartz & Carroll, 2003, p.504).

Schwartz and Carroll (2003) argue this model is inaccurate as it situates philanthropy as the main valued goal of CSR, while economic pursuits are the least valued. The authors also argue that it does not show the overlapping concepts present in all of the CSR domains.

Garriga and Mele (2004) suggest that there are four different groups of theories that can be identified within CSR: instrumental, political, integrative and ethical. Instrumental CSR theories can be likened to shareholder theory as the main assumption underlying this approach is the corporation is deemed to be an instrument for wealth creation. Within this framework, CSR is mainly considered as a strategic tool to further promote profits for a business. Stakeholder interests are also accounted for as it is recognized that the satisfaction of their interests can

increase value for shareholders (Garriga & Mele, 2004). Furthermore, philanthropic endeavours are embarked upon by the corporation as long as they increase the bottom line. A positive correlation has been shown between increases in a corporation's wealth and activities used to increase the betterment of society (Du, Bhattacharya, & Sen, 2007; Sen, Bhattacharya, & Korschun, 2006; Webley & Moore, 2003).

Political CSR theories and approaches to corporate social responsibility focus on how business and society are interconnected. They specifically address the role of power and what responsibilities business has within society. The two major sub-theories identified by political CSR theories are corporate constitutionalism and corporate citizenship (Garriga & Mele, 2004). Corporate constitutionalism theories explore the social impacts of the power role that businesses have within society. Within this theory, it is argued that businesses are social institutions that should use their power responsibly (Davis, 1960). Corporate citizenship is a theory that has gained more popularity within the CSR literature starting in the late 1990s and early 21st century (Andriof & McIntosh, 2001). The main premise of this theory emphasises the role businesses and managers should have towards the community, with respect to the rights, responsibilities and partnerships they have within society (Garriga & Mele, 2004). Corporate citizenship is a new way to conceptualize social responsibility and the role of business within a community, and on a global scale its notions overlap with other theories that emphasise the responsibility of business within society (Carroll, 1999). Matten, Crane, and Chapple (2003) argue the corporation is responsible for social investment within communities where the government is inadequate in the protection of 'citizenship'. They suggest this stems from the power that many corporations possess which can supersede the power the government may have.

Integration CSR theories are based on the premise that businesses depend on society for its existence, continuity and growth (Garriga & Mele, 2004). These theories address the interaction society has with businesses and considers how they should integrate these demands and social values within their daily operations. Garriga and Mele (2004) identify several sub-theories within integration CSR theory which include: issues management, the principle of public responsibility, stakeholder management, and corporate social performance. Issues management was first coined as social responsiveness and began gaining prominence in the 1970's (Sethi, 1975). This approach emphasises the importance of determining the gap between societies expectations of a corporation's performance versus the actual performance of the corporation. Wartick and Rude (1986) defined issues management as "the processes by which the corporation can identify, evaluate and respond to those social and political issues which may impact significantly on it" (p. 124). Jones (1980) argued that the process used in dealing with CSR issues should be fair, taking into account all interests, and is a more relevant approach than simply stating principles. The research within this theory has been greatly influenced by the strategy field as it involves the formalization of early detection and monitoring of potential societal and political issues that may arise between society and the corporation (Garriga & Mele, 2004).

The principle of public responsibility argues for the importance of public policy and process and in determining the managerial behaviour and social responsibility of a corporation. As Preston and Post (1981) discuss, "public policy includes not only the literal text of law and regulation but also the broad pattern of social direction reflected in the public opinion, emerging issues, formal legal requirements, and the enforcement or implementation of practices" (p. 57). Furthermore, they argue that in cases where there is no public policy available, the corporation

should aid in creating responsible policies. This theory stipulates that if a business adheres to the guidelines and rules, set out by laws and public policy, then they have adequately responded to the responsibilities expected of them by society (Preston & Post, 1981).

Stakeholder management theory argues for the involvement of individuals who have a stake in the corporation with managerial decision making. Emshoff and Freeman (1978) argue that stakeholder management has two main principles: 1) to achieve maximum cooperation between all involved groups; and 2) managing stakeholder relations by making an effort to deal with the issues that affect multiple groups. Stakeholder management practice today involves taking into account a broader group of stakeholders, such as NGO's, communities, media, and governments, who are placing demands on the corporations for responsible social practices (Freeman, 1984; Garriga & Mele, 2004).

The notion of corporate social performance (CSP) was first introduced by Carroll (1979). He rejected a concise definition of CSP and argued that it was composed of a three dimensional model which addresses that: 1) a firm's social responsibilities be assessed; 2) the social issues it must address be identified; and 3) a response philosophy can be chosen (p. 505). Wartick and Cochran (1985) further built upon Carroll's work and defined the CSP model as "the underlying interaction among the principles of social responsibility, the process of social responsiveness, and the policies developed to address social issues" (p. 758). Wood (1991) further built upon this model and suggested principles of CSR, which consisted of value content that can be operationalized in policy form.

Ethical CSR theories focus on the ethical relationship that exists between business and society. Garriga and Mele (2004) note that ethical theories can be categorized into four areas:

normative stakeholder theory, universal rights, sustainable development, and the common good approach. Normative stakeholder theory, first conceptualized by Freeman in 1984, is similar to stakeholder management theory in that it emphasises the engagement of stakeholders for best practice within the business. It differs from the stakeholder management theory in that it is grounded in the use of core normative ethical principles, which act as a guide during engagement with stakeholders (Freeman, 1984).

Universal rights frameworks, especially human rights, have been used as an approach to corporate social responsibility. Initiatives such as the UN Global Compact have created corporate social responsibility principles that are applicable globally to human rights, labour and environmental issues. Garriga and Mele (2004) explain that “although for some people universal rights are a question of mere consensus, they have a theoretical grounding, and some moral philosophy theories give them support” (p. 61).

Sustainable development is a value-based approach that focuses on maintaining and balancing the social, cultural, environmental and economic aspects of a region over a long period of time. Achieving corporate sustainability requires individual businesses to customize their approach to meet CSR objectives while allowing them to be aligned with the organization’s goals and operational strategies (Van Marrewjik & Were, 2003). Within this realm the ‘triple bottom line’ approach is utilized in which organizations focus on three elements: people, planet, and profit (Elkington, 1997; Wijffels, 2001).

Finally, the common good approach, rooted in deep philosophical origins, argues that business must contribute to the common good and well-being of society both in the present and the future (Fort, 1999). This can be achieved through the generation of wealth, provision of

goods and services in a fair way, contribution to social wellbeing and peaceful and friendly conditions (Mele, 2002). Garriga and Mele (2004) argue that although this approach shares similarity with both the sustainable development and stakeholder approach, its philosophical base is different and based on the knowledge of human nature and its fulfillment.

A discussion of these theories is deemed to be essential in understanding the underlying philosophical assumptions that guide the concept of CSR and how relates to volunteer tourism operators. Determining the extent that commercial volunteer tourism organizations may employ CSR initiatives will allow for a better understanding of their operations and commitment to social responsibility. However, what distinguishes some commercial volunteer tourism operators from traditional corporations is the emphasis on the social initiatives that are ingrained within the organization from the beginning. Within the CSR literature, a theoretical construct has emerged that identifies organizations that are focused on both the economic and social aspects of operations within their corporations, Corporate Social Entrepreneurship (CSE), which will be discussed in the following section.

2.7 Corporate Social Entrepreneurship

Corporate Social Entrepreneurship (CSE) is a term recently coined by Austin, Leonard, Reficco, and Wei-Skillern (2005). Austin et al. (2005) theorize that CSE is built upon the theories of entrepreneurship. To provide a better understanding of what CSE entails, and to understand how it could be applicable to commercial volunteer tourism organizations, I provide a brief discussion of its main components. Namely, I introduce the notions of entrepreneurship and intrapreneurship; corporate entrepreneurship, and social entrepreneurship, and consider how they differ.

2.7.1 Entrepreneurship and Intrapreneurship

Although the concept of entrepreneurship has been identified as more than 250 years old, the literature about this concept has only grown in the last two decades and has identified the economic and social importance of this field (Carlsson et al., 2013; Busenitz, Plummer, Klotz, Shahzad, & Rhoads, 2014). Carlsson et al. (2013, p. 914) discuss:

Entrepreneurship refers primarily to an economic function that is carried out by individuals, entrepreneurs, acting independently or within organizations, to perceive and create new opportunities and to introduce their ideas into the market, under uncertainty, by making decisions about location, product design, resource use, institutions, and reward systems. The entrepreneurial activity and the entrepreneurial ventures are influenced by the socioeconomic environment and result ultimately in economic growth and human welfare.

Entrepreneurs predominantly focus on creating a new business. In contrast, intrapreneurs work within existing businesses and focus on creating new areas of opportunity for the business within the marketplace. This can lead to developing new technologies, products or markets for the business (Covin & Miles, 2007; Gapp & Fisher, 2007; Kuratko, Ireland, Covin, & Hornsby, 2005; Menzel, Aalito, & Ulijn., 2007; Srivastava & Lee, 2005). Molina and Callahan (2009) identify three main difference between entrepreneurs and intrapreneurs. The first is that intrapreneurs make their risky decisions using the corporations resources, whereas entrepreneurs utilize their own resources. Second, intrapreneurship occurs among employees within the organization, whereas entrepreneurship tends to be more externally focused. Lastly, intrapreneurs work within the constraints of an organizations "policies, procedures, languages and bureaucracy" (Molina & Callahan, 2009, p. 389). Contrarily, entrepreneurs prefer to create implicit knowledge "in new organizations instead of using procedures of mechanisms from other companies" (Molina & Callahan, 2009, p. 389). Understanding the roles of these individuals is important in determining their place and influence within both corporate and social entrepreneurship. The next section will discuss Corporate Entrepreneurship (CE).

2.7.2 Corporate Entrepreneurship

Corporate Entrepreneurship (CE) refers to different types of entrepreneurial behaviour in existing large organizations (corporations), aimed at achieving competitive advantage at all levels: corporate, divisional, business unit, business functions and project teams (Burns, 2011, pp. 471). Specifically, CE facilitates the ability of a company to reinvent or rejuvenate itself, and create new products and strategies to evolve in an ever changing marketplace. Such innovation within an organization is crucial to creating long-term sustainability and competitive superiority within the industry or market they are in (Covin & Miles, 1999). Ireland, Covin, and Kurtako (2009) conceptualized corporate entrepreneurship strategy as "a vision directed, organization-wide reliance on entrepreneurial behavior that purposefully and continuously rejuvenates the organization and shapes the scope of its operations through the recognition and exploitation of entrepreneurial opportunity" (p. 21). Organizations that utilize CE are viewed to be flexible and open to new opportunities as they come up (Kuratko, Goldsby, & Hornsby, 2012) and provide opportunities for their employees to pursue such initiatives (Kurtako, 2014). Leaders of CE move away from traditional practices and create new processes, products and services, value chains, business models and all functions of management (Govindarajan & Trimble, 2005). Corporate Entrepreneurship focuses mainly on wealth and value creation for the company, and not social aspects. The next section will discuss Social Entrepreneurship (SE).

2.7.2 Social Entrepreneurship

Social Entrepreneurship (SE) has been identified to have a long history (Banks, 1972; Dees, Emerson, & Economy, 2001; Zahra, Gedajlovic, Neubaum, & Shulman, 2009) but has only recently been studied in more depth within the business literature (Mair & Marti, 2006; Peredo & McLean, 2006; Neck, Brush, & Allen, 2009). Social entrepreneurs focus on providing

and creating social value and less focus on wealth creation (Certo & Millera, 2008). As Certo and Millera (2008) discuss, the focus is on fulfilling "basic and longstanding needs such as providing food, water, shelter, education and medical services to those members of society who are in need" (p. 267). These entrepreneurs play an important role in improving adverse social conditions, especially in emerging and underdeveloped economies where there is a lack of support and resources from government agencies and even NGO's (Prahalad, 2009; Zahra et al., 2009). They can also play an important role in developed countries, where spending cuts by government on social services, such as education and community development, creates a need for social projects to be supported by other entities, such as the entrepreneur (Lassprogata & Cotton, 2003; Zahra et al., 2009). Social entrepreneurship occurs in community, voluntary and public organizations, as well as private firms working for social rather than for-profit objectives (Shaw & Carter, 2007).

There are varying definitions of SE, which range from broad to narrow in their scope (Austin, Stevenson, & Wei-Skillern, 2006). Austin, Stevenson, and Wei-Skillern (2006) broadly define social entrepreneurship as an "innovative, social value creating activity that can occur within or across the non-profit, business, or government sectors" (pg 2). Zahra et al. (2009) analyze the definitions of twenty authors within the social entrepreneurship literature, entrepreneurship centers, and leading business schools which show the variations and complexities of the term. Table 2 taken from Zahra et al. (2009, p. 521), provides a summary of the definitions of social entrepreneurship and social entrepreneurs.

Table 2: Summary of Definitions of Social Entrepreneurship and Social Entrepreneurs

Source	Definition
Leadbetter (1997)	The use of entrepreneurial behavior for social ends rather than for profit objectives, or alternatively, that the profits generated from market activities are used for the benefit of a specific disadvantage group
Thake and Zadek (1997)	Social entrepreneurs are driven by a desire for social justice. They seek a direct link between their actions and an improvement in the quality of life for the people with whom they work and those they seek to serve. They aim to produce solutions which are sustainable financially, organizationally, socially and environmentally
Dees (1998)	Play the role of change agents in the social sector by: 1) Adopting a mission to create and sustain social value (not just private value), 2) Recognizing and relentlessly pursuing new opportunities to serve that mission, 3) Engaging in a process of continuous innovation, adaptation and learning, 4) Acting boldly without being limited by resources currently in hand, and 5) Exhibiting a heightened accountability to the constituencies served and for the outcomes created.
Reis (1999) (Kellogg Foundation)	Social entrepreneurs create social value through innovation and leveraging financial resources...for social, economic, and community development.
Fowler (2000)	Social entrepreneurship is the creation of viable socio-economic structures, relations, institutions, organizations and practices that yield and sustain social benefits.
Brinkerhoff (2001)	Individuals constantly looking for new ways to serve their constituencies and add value to existing services.
Mort et al (2002)	A multidimensional construct involving the expression of entrepreneurially virtuous behavior to achieve the social mission...the ability to recognize social value creating opportunities and key decision-making characteristics of innovation, proactiveness and risk-taking.
Drayton (2002)	A major change agent, one whose core values center on identifying, addressing, and solving societal problems.
Alford et al. (2004)	Creates innovative solutions to immediate social problems and mobilizes the ideas, capacities, resources and social arrangements required for social transformation.
Harding (2004)	Entrepreneurs motivated by social objectives to instigate some form of new activity or venture.
Shaw (2004)	The work of community, voluntary and public organizations as well as private firms working for social rather than only profit objectives.
Said School (2005)	A professional, innovative and sustainable approach to systematic change that resolves social market failures and grasps opportunities.

Table 2 (continued)

Source	Definition
Fuqua School (2005)	The art of simultaneously pursuing both a financial and a social return on investment (the double bottom line).
Schwab Foundation (2005)	Applying practical, innovative and sustainable approaches to benefit society in general, with an emphasis on those who are marginalized and poor.
NYU Stern (2005)	The process of using entrepreneurial and business skills to create innovative approaches to social problems. "These non-profit and for-profit ventures pursue the double bottom line of social impact and financial self-sustainability or profitability".
MacMillan (2005) (Wharton Center)	Process whereby the creation of new business enterprise leads to social wealth enhancement so that both society and the entrepreneur benefit.
Tan et al. (2005)	Making profits by innovation in the face of risk with the involvement of a segment of society and where all or part of the benefits accrue to the same segment of society.
Mair and Marti (2006a)	...a process of creating value by combining resources in new ways...intended primarily to explore and exploit opportunities to create social value by stimulating social change or meeting social needs.
Peredo and McLean (2006)	Social entrepreneurship is exercised where some person or group...aim(s) at creating social value...shows a capacity to recognize and take advantage of opportunities...employ innovation...accept an above average degree of risk...and are unusually resourceful...in pursuing their social venture.
Martin and Osberg (2007)	Social entrepreneurship is the: 1) identification of a stable yet unjust equilibrium which excludes, marginalizes or causes suffering to a group which lacks the means to transform the equilibrium; 2) identification of an opportunity and developing a new social value proposition to challenge the equilibrium; and 3) forging a new, stable equilibrium to alleviate the suffering of the targeted group through imitation and creation of a stable ecosystem around the equilibrium to ensure a better future for the group and society.

(Zahra et al., 2009).

From the above illustration it is evident that there is variation amongst the definitions depending on the originating sources. Some authors place the attainment of social and economic wealth on the same level, while others suggest that the focus of the social entrepreneur should be more on achieving social objectives. Zahra et al. (2009) point out that these types of definitions focus

more on the creation of "social wealth", "total wealth", "social justice" or the "resolution of certain social problems" (p. 521). It appears that the commonality of all of these definitions is on the ability of SE to contribute to the creation of social change rather than on the sole focus of profit maximization.

Santos (2012, p. 341-347) presents a theory of social entrepreneurship that has four building blocks:

- (1) Social entrepreneurship involves addressing neglected problems in a society and creating positive externalities. These problems are usually ignored by the private sector and the government and, when addressed, they create value and benefit society.
- (2) Social entrepreneurship focuses on positive externalities whose benefits are both localised and favour less powerful segments of the population.
- (3) Social entrepreneurs aim to offer sustainable solutions to social problems. Sustainable solutions are methods that either permanently remove the key causes of the problem or develop a system to solve the problem on an ongoing basis.
- (4) Social entrepreneurs develop solutions based on empowerment logic. They endeavour to empower actors and entities (e.g. beneficiaries, users or partners) beyond organizational boundaries. Empowerment is the "process of increasing the assets and capabilities of individuals or groups to make purposive choices and to transform those choices into desired actions and outcomes" (World Bank, 2009).

As identified above, the main premises of social entrepreneurship is on creating solutions to problems, creating value for local communities, provides sustainable solutions to issues, and

empowering stakeholders. Social entrepreneurship focuses more on creating social value and less on the attainment of profits for an organization. The differences between SE and CE will be discussed in the next section.

2.7.3 Differences between Corporate Entrepreneurship and Social Entrepreneurship

It is important to note that CE and SE are two different constructs that can be viewed as a continuum between purely economic and purely social purposes (Hansmann 1987; Austin et al., 2006; Perrini & Vurro, 2006). Santos (2012) describes this difference as related to social value creation, at the societal level, and value capturing at the organization level. Social value creation occurs:

When the aggregate utility of society's members increases after accounting for the opportunity cost of all the resources used in that activity. Value capture from an activity happens when the focal actor is able to appropriate a portion of the value created by the activity after accounting for the cost of resources that he/she mobilized (Santos, 2012, p. 337).

Commercial organizations that succeed in value capture (generating profit) must also offer social value creation to ensure its long-term sustainability. Although it is identified that these dimensions are not "perfectly correlated", balancing these elements are identified as an important component in the reputation of the commercial company with their stakeholders (Santos, 2012, p. 337), and is a premise of CSR. SE organizations seek to maximize their social value creation while only utilizing value capture to ensure their continuity and not focus on profit maximization (Santos, 2012). The overlap of organizations that offer both CE and SE leads to the discussion of CSE, which will be explained in the next section.

2.7.4 Corporate Social Entrepreneurship

Creating an understanding of the theories espoused by scholars investigating CE and SE allows for the discussion of the term Corporate Social Entrepreneurship (CSE). CSE is built

upon these two concepts and is defined as the "process of extending the firm's domain of competence and corresponding opportunity set through innovative leveraging of resources, both within and outside its direct control, aimed at the simultaneous creation of economic and social value." (Austin, Leonard, Reficco, & Wei-Skillern 2006, np). As such it is suggested that CSE can be considered as corporate entrepreneurship that creates social value and tries to solve social issues (Kurtako, Hornsby, & McMullen, 2011). Through their analysis of the literature on CE and SE, Zaefrian, Tasavori, and Ghauri (2015, p. 327) created a conceptual model of CSE (Figure 2).

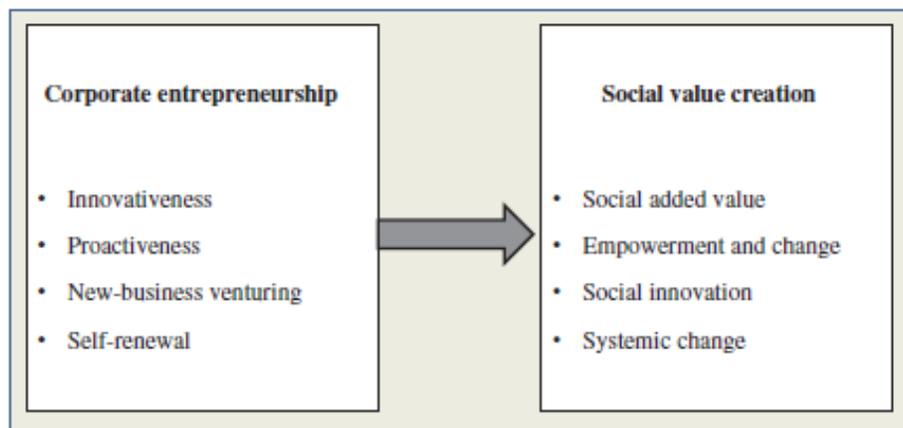


Figure 2: Conceptual Model of CSE

(Zaefrian, Tasavori, & Ghauri, 2015).

The authors postulate that when an organization engages in any type of corporate entrepreneurship (innovativeness, proactiveness, new-business venturing, or self-renewal) to solve a social problem and create social value (social added value, empowerment and change, social innovation, or systematic change) they can be considered corporate social entrepreneurs. Zaefrian et al. (2015) suggest that there are various enablers of CSE. Specifically, organizations that are successful in developing CSE must embody organizational characteristics, which

include: organizational values, open communication, organizational support, and alliances and partnerships that a company has (Zaefrian et al, 2015). Organizational values enhance the innovativeness of the operations of a firm (Kanter, 1984) and govern the behaviour of employees (Zahra, 1991), which can help create new ideas and solutions to problems (Wong, 2005). In CSE, social value is imparted by the vision of the firm's leaders (Ibrahim, Howard, & Angelidis, 2003) and creates the expectations of acceptable behaviour, attitudes, and ethical conduct of its employees (Grojean, Resick, Dickson, & Smith, 2004). This emphasis on the values and social mission of a CSE organization is considered essential to the operations of the organization (Austin, Leonard, Reficco, & Wei-Skillern, 2008).

Open communication is an important component in encouraging the flow of information and social innovativeness within a corporate entrepreneurial environment (Bowen, 2004, Zaefraian et al, 2015). Managers should emphasize the importance of new ideas for solving social issues within all aspects of the corporation, to promote CSE (Zaefrian et al., 2015). Facilitating an environment for open communication allows for interdisciplinary cooperation of skill levels within the organization and allows the company to pursue its corporate entrepreneurial goals (Kanter, 1986). Zahra (1991) notes the higher quality and quantity of communication the more success a company will have in achieving its CE and CSE goals.

Organizational support is identified as another important aspect to incorporating CSE within a corporation (Zaefraian et al, 2015). Researchers have shown this support consists of creating an environment within the corporation to initiate CE. Corporations create support through: management involvement, support and commitment (MacMillan, 1985); training and empowerment of staff (Demirbag, Koh, Tatoglu, & Zaim, 2006); autonomy at work, time

availability and loose inter-organizational boundaries. Such characteristics are deemed to be an important aspect in initiating CE, and thereby CSE (Zaefraian et al, 2015).

The final enabler of CSE that Zaefraian et al. (2015) discuss is the number of alliances/partnerships with social sector organizations. Specifically the more alliances an organization has, and its collaboration and relationships with other companies, the better its CE is (Antoncic & Hisrich, 2004). Zaefraian et al.(2015) suggest that this is also positively associated with CSE as organizations who have external partnerships with NGO's, or the community, will be more aware of social issues and problems, which can help in the development of new products and services (Keinert, 2008).

As a result of their examination of the extant CE literature, Zaefarian et al. (2015) suggest four propositions regarding CSE:

- 1) Social values in an organization encourage the engagement of CSE;
- 2) Open communication in an organization facilitates the embracing of CSE;
- 3) Organizational support facilitates engagement in CSE; and
- 4) The number of partnerships with social-sector organizations is positively related to the development of CSE (pp.328-329).

CSE is not considered to be another form of CSR but can be used as a way to enhance and build upon the work of companies who engage in CSR (Austin & Reficco, 2009). Austin and Reficco (2009) discuss the purpose of CSE is to create a transformation in the ways companies operate through five key central processes: creating an *enabling environment*, *fostering corporate social intrapreneurs*, *amplifying corporate purpose and values*, *value*

creation and the double return, and co-generating value. Table 3 summarizes these five key processes for CSE as identified by Austin and Reficco (2009).

Table 3: Five Key Processes of CSE

Key Central Processes	Summary
<i>Enabling Environment</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Cultivate entrepreneurial mindset for organization; think outside of the box. - Performance indicators for economic and social value. - Create internal synergies, cross-functional teams to bring all relevant stakeholders to the table. - Management teams whose primary responsibility is creating social value.
<i>The Corporate Social Intrapreneur</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Role of social and corporate entrepreneur permanently coexist and are not separate. - Individuals focused on creating internal organizational transformation, moves organization into advance state of CSR. - Characteristics: good communicators, creator of innovative solutions, catalyst for change, coordinators of interests, support others success, cost conscious and mindful of the bottom line.
<i>Corporate Purpose and Values</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Values key focus of CSE company - Fulfilling social responsibilities essential component of a company's mission and values. - See themselves as trustworthy, moral agents, capable of generating trust based on sustained ethical behavior and innovative solutions to social problems. - Seek to lead through example, to exceed expectations, and to set new standards.

(Table 3 continued)

Key Central Processes	Summary
<i>Value Creation and The Double Return</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - CSE focuses on ensuring that the corporations migrates from one of maximizing returns to investors to optimizing returns to stakeholders. - This purpose means that the company is producing both economic and social value, i.e. double or triple bottom line (if environmental value is separate category). - Social value creation is not treated as something separate but is imbedded in a larger and transparent accountability system that reports performance to the internal and external stakeholder. - It is believed that serving such a broad group of individuals will make the company more sustainable.
<i>Co-generating Value</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Collaborating with other organizations – businesses, civil society, or governmental is important to value generating strategies. - Combines core competencies of various organizations which enables innovative solutions to long-standing social and economic problems. - Aligning of company agendas with those of external groups to create social value becomes an institutional habit, engrained in the company’s culture, and carried out through CSE.

(Austin & Reficco, 2009, p. 4).

The five key processes outlined in Table 3 present the main components of a corporation's transformation from CSR to CSE within their operations. Creating an *enabling environment* involves support from the highest level of employees within the corporation and creates "internal synergies in their decision-making process" (Austin & Reficco, 2009, p. 3). Austin and Reficco (2009) discuss that both social and economic value indicators must be employed to ensure that there is commitment by the corporation towards social value creation. The second key process, the *corporate social intrapreneur*, identifies that the responsibilities of both the corporate and social entrepreneur are intertwined and play an important role as "organizational change agents"

in moving the organization from CSR towards CSE (Austin & Reficco, 2009, p. 3). The third key process, *corporate purpose and values*, emphasizes the importance of values as a focal point for CSE organizations. Values are imbued within a company's mission statement that are the "cornerstone" of an organizations identity (Austin & Reficco, 2009, p. 4). Austin and Reficco (2009) discuss the goal of a CSE organization "is not just to comply with the law, or to be responsive to key stakeholders: they seek to lead through example, to exceed expectations, and to set new standards" (p. 4). The fourth key process, *value creation and the double return*, identifies that CSE organizations must optimize the social and economic returns to all stakeholders that are affected by the company, which will in turn make the corporation more sustainable. Austin and Reficco (2009) explain this "blended value" ensures that the social value creation by corporations is not treated separately by the organization and must be accountable and transparent to all stakeholders (p. 4). *Co-generating value* is the fifth key process identified for CSE. Within this process, emphasis is placed on building strategic alliances with all types of organizations from various public sector and private firms. Austin and Reficco (2009) identify the importance of such alliances for achieving CSE.

Although it has taken time to implement, well managed companies now adopt CSR practices and certifications within their industries. The costs associated with this acceptance have been recognized as a reality of doing business in the marketplace. For an organization implementing CSR, taking the next step into CSE would involve considerable internal transformation, which could meet a variety of obstacles and resistance. However, organizations such as the Timberland Company and Starbucks Coffee have successfully applied CSE principles within their organizations (Austin & Reficco, 2009). CSE, as set out by these authors, could be applied to some large volunteer tourism organizations due to the social focus of the

work they do. To determine its application an analysis and comparison of a volunteer tourism organization's operations to the five key CSE processes would need to be done. The following section will provide a discussion of CSR initiatives within tourism.

2.8 Corporate Social Responsibility Initiatives within Tourism

The impacts that many tourism businesses have on society and the environment are similar to the impacts that corporations have within other industry sectors. The difference between the tourism industry and other industry sectors is that tourism consumption occurs within the host community. In other industry sectors products are constructed in one place and are consumed somewhere else. Nevertheless, it can be argued that the concepts underlying sustainable development and CSR are practices that can be related to each other. This is evident when looking at CSR principles within an ethical framework in which the focus of a corporation revolves around the ethical relationship that exists between business and society (Garriga & Mele, 2004). Within the tourism literature, there are limited instances of authors providing alternative definitions of CSR (Bohdanowicz & Zientara, 2009; Lynes & Andrachuk, 2008; Tepelus, 2008) that deter away from the CSR literature. Utting (2005) argues that this result is not surprising as the uptake of CSR by other industry sectors is still fairly low, which may be due to its predominantly voluntary nature.

The trend for more environmentally and socially sustainable practices is becoming more apparent within the hospitality and tourism industry (Kolk & van Tulder, 2010), yet the literature on CSR within tourism is mainly focused on tour operators (Dodds & Kuehnel, 2010; Frey & George, 2010; Van de Mosselaer, Van der Duim, & Van Wijk, 2012; Van Wijk & Persoon, 2006) accommodations and casinos (Holcomb, Upchurch, & Okumus, 2007; Kucukusta, Mak, & Chan, 2013; Lee & Heo, 2009; McGehee, Wattanakamolchai, Perdue, & Calvert, 2009), airlines

(Coles, Fenclova, & Dinan, 2013; Cowper-Smith & de Grosbois, 2011; Hooper & Greenall, 2005; Lynes & Dredge, 2006; Kang, Lee, & Huh, 2010; Lee & Park, 2010; Lee, Seo, & Sharma, 2013; Lynes & Andrachuk, 2008), pub operations (Jones, Comfort & Hillier, 2006), and the travel industry as a whole (Coles, Fenclova, & Dinan, 2013). Within this review only the literature on CSR within accommodations and tour operators will be discussed.

Within the accommodations sector, most of the major hotel chains, such as Fairmont Hotels and Resorts, Shangri-La Hotels and Resorts, Hilton Worldwide, Marriott International, Ramada International Hotels and Resorts, and Sheraton have been participating in environmentally and socially responsible initiatives within the last decade (FRHI Hotels and Resorts, 2015; Kasim, 2006; Kucukusta, Mak, & Chan, 2013; Shangri-La International Hotel Management Ltd, 2014). Holcomb, Upchurch and Okumus, (2007) conducted a study on the websites of the top ten hotel groups worldwide which showed that six of these companies had a diversity policy regarding suppliers, business partners and employees. Four of the hotels discussed have some form of social responsibility within their mission statements. However, of all the hotels analyzed only one company conducted both internal (board review) and external (independent) CSR audits. This same company was also the only one to have written guidelines on sustainable development of new hotel projects (Holcomb et al., 2007). The size and location of a hotel property has also been shown to have an effect on participation in CSR practices and contributions. McGehee, Wattanakamolchai, Perdue, and Calvert's (2009) study on CSR within the US lodging industry showed that contribution towards social initiatives had a positive correlation with the average room rate and property size, as well as its standing within the industry.

CSR initiatives may have a positive impact on a hotel's overall success (Garcia-Rodriguez & del Mar Armas Cruz, 2007; Kang, Lee, & Huh, 2010; Lee & Park, 2009). The presence of such policies increases brand image (Kucukusta, Mak, & Chan, 2013), customer satisfaction, and loyalty (Lee & Heo, 2009). Tourists are paying more attention to the CSR claims of the places that they are patronizing (Sparks, Perkins & Buckley, 2013) and research indicates they are willing to pay more for such initiatives, especially in cases of environmental management and green practices (Adlwarth, 2010; Choi, Parsa, Sigala, & Putrevu, 2009; Parsa, Lord, Putrevu, & Kreeger, 2014; Svensson, Rodwell, & Attrill, 2008). This change in consumer preference towards green labelling has significantly evolved over the past 10 years (Whitson, Ozkaya, & Roxas, 2014). Furthermore, a positive link has been shown between CSR initiatives and employee loyalty, morale and retention (Lee & Heo, 2009; Lee & Park, 2010; McGehee et al., 2009). Bohdanowicz and Zientara's (2008) study of hotels shows the link between CSR practices and the retention of employees within the hospitality sector. They identify that companies that have a well-developed CSR policy and participate in traditional CSR initiatives, such as donations and volunteerism, are more likely to attract and retain talented and dedicated employees.

Research on CSR initiatives within the tourism operator sector is not as extensive as the hotel sector. Kalisch (2002) notes that for CSR to be truly effective corporations must be committed to meeting and implementing the sustainability goals set out at all levels within their organization and daily operations. She argues that many foreign tour operators feel it is the responsibility of the local communities, host governments and customers to implement such practices. Furthermore, she suggests that clearly defining roles and guidelines of the various stakeholders will help to improve implementation and participation in CSR practices (Kalisch,

2002). Van Wijk and Persoon's (2006) study of 42 tour operators found that reporting of sustainability practices within this sector is limited and is influenced by the size of an operation. Large tour operators were shown to report more on their sustainability initiatives than small and medium sized businesses. Furthermore, they found that operators who specifically conduct business online appeared to be less concerned with sustainability initiatives and reporting and more concerned with pricing, than traditional operators. However, Dodds and Kuehnel's (2010) study of Canadian tour operators concluded that tour operator awareness of the economic, environmental, and social impacts of mass tourism, to destinations such as Mexico and the Caribbean, is increasing. The authors noted that action by operators to reduce any negative impacts is slow due to concerns regarding commercial viability within such a competitive sector. Furthermore, they argue consumer awareness of responsible tourism issues has yet to make an impact on the way tour operators select a destination.

In their study of 244 South African tourism businesses, Frey and George (2010) found that, despite their positive attitudes towards sustainability, operators were not investing the time or money needed to change their business operations towards more responsible management practices. The authors argue that this can be attributed to perceived costs of implementation, lack of government support of initiatives, and the competitiveness of the industry. Van de Mosselaer et al. (2012) argue tour operators should not solely be held accountable for an entire destination's sustainability as they do not have room within their profit margins to do so. They also argue that there are various suppliers within the destination and it may not be possible to keep track of the operations of each one. Finally, they also suggest there are many external factors that can have an effect on any tourism product which are beyond the control of the operator, such as drought or political instability. Although they cite these reasons, the authors

still advocate for operators to contribute to sustainable destination development (Van de Mosselaer, et al., 2012).

From the literature reviewed, it is clear that the practice of CSR within tourism organizations is not as widespread as in other industries. Furthermore, the research on the application of CSE on businesses is not extensive, and does not appear to be applied within the tourism and volunteer tourism literature. Moreover, it is evident that research within this area is warranted and my research aims to contribute to this topic by presenting an analysis of large volunteer tourism operations and identifying the possible use of such initiatives within this sector.

The next section will discuss responsible tourism implementation strategies and their use within tourism and volunteer tourism. Determining what these strategies are, and their dissemination within the sector and industry, will lend to an understanding of the efficacy of these schemes. It will also provide an understanding of potential tools that could be used in creating best practices within commercial volunteer tourism organizations.

2.9 Responsible Tourism Implementation Strategies

The variety and complexity of the definition of sustainable tourism and ecotourism, as well as the types of products offered within the tourism industry, has made it more difficult to monitor the ‘green claims’ that many destinations and operators assert (Font, 2001). Honey (2002) discusses that over the years there have been several worldwide initiatives by:

industry associations, travel magazines and guidebooks, environmental and community based NGO’s, government institutions, and the World Tourism Organization (WTO) and United Nations Environmental Programs (UNEP) [...] to set standards and give awards for environmentally and socially responsible practices (p. 380).

According to Honey (2002), the purpose of these various industry initiatives is to create a more environmentally friendly tourism product and experience that: (1) set standards within the industry; (2) promote responsible practices for the use of the social, cultural, and environmental aspects of a destination; and (3) provide information to travelers on sustainable choices. These initiatives include the development of ecolabels, certification, and accreditation of tourism products, activities and destinations.

The concept of certification as a means to promote sustainability within mass and alternative tourism is not new. Such discussions prevail the sustainable tourism and ecotourism literature (Buckley 2001; Font & Bendell, 2002; Font, 2001; Font 2002; Honey, 2002; Honey & Stewart, 2002; Maccarrone-Eaglen & Font, 2002). Tourism certification and ecolabelling initiatives have gained momentum in the accommodations sector (Millar, 2009; Peiró-Signes, Segarra-Oña, Verma, Mondéjar-Jiménez, & Vargas-Vargas, 2013; Svensson, Rodwell, & Attrill, 2008) and there is a movement towards utilizing such programs in other sectors such as protected areas (Puhakka, Sarkki, Cottrell, & Siikamäki, 2009), golf courses (Minoli & Smith, 2011) beaches (Creo & Fraboni, 2011), guides (Huang & Weiler, 2010), tour operators, tour boats and handicrafts (Crabtree & Black, 2000; Honey & Stewart, 2002; Stewart, 2002). The following sections will provide a discussion on research related to these various implementation strategies.

2.9.1 Ecolabels

Buckley (2002) defines a label as simply “a description of something, associated with it in some way so that a potential purchaser or user can obtain information from it rather than the object itself” (p. 184). Labels are comprised of various formats: verbal, text, image, and can contain information from the owner or a third party certification agency. An ecolabel is a label whose content usually refers to the natural and/or social environment (Buckley, 2002). An

ecolabel is a “symbol awarded by a certifier to an organization. It represents the commitment or the achievement of that company to behave and supply products according to certain standards” (Maccarrone-Eaglen & Font, 2002, p. 2). D’Souza (2004) explains that organizations who award and endorse ecolabels have three primary functions: standard setting, certification, and marketing. Standard setting involves setting guidelines that a product must comply with in order to qualify for the label. Certification is the process to ensure that the agency involved meets those standards, while marketing is used to create consumer awareness and trust in a product or operation. Within various industry sectors, ecolabels have come to hold very specific meanings. For example, within the international trade sector ecolabels refer specifically to the environmental performance in the production of a tradable product (Buckley, 2002). Awarding of a label is based on objective criteria and does not involve any form of competitive ranking. The Ecolabel Index, an independent directory of global ecolabelling schemes, estimates that there are approximately 458 ecolabels, in 197 countries, and 25 industry sectors (Big Room Inc, 2014). Of these labels, 128 are applicable to the tourism industry (Gossling & Buckley, 2014).

A tourism ecolabel can be defined as “any form of certification giving assurance that the tourist operation or activity is conducted according to a known standard that enhances the environment or at least minimizes environmental impact” (Fairweather, Maslin, & Simmons, 2005, p. 83). In tourism, ecolabels are used as domestic and international marketing tools to help inform environmentally aware consumers in their travel choices (Buckley, 2002). D’Souza, Taghian, and Lamb (2006) discuss three factors that determine consumer understanding of labels: (1) the accurate and clear meaning of these labels; (2) the knowledge of these labels; and (3) the perception of businesses with respect to the environment (pg 164). Buckley (2001) identifies that ecolabels fall under two main categories consisting of environmental performance

labels for tourism providers and environmental quality labels for tourism destinations. Private organizations award ecolabels and create a demand for them in the market place through extensive marketing. Ecolabels are a tool used by businesses to promote their products and differentiate them from competitors (Font, 2001). The WTO (2003) reported that 75% of ecolabels are issued by private organizations worldwide. Font and Bendell (2002) found that the majority of tourism ecolabels were awarded to the accommodation sector (68%) followed by destinations (18%), tour operators (7%), sport and leisure facilities (5%), and transport (2%). They suggest that the accommodation sector has the highest number of ecolabels as it contains standards that are easily measurable. Understanding the role of ecolabels within responsible tourism implementation strategies is important to the study of certification. The next section will provide a discussion on certifications.

2.9.2 Certification

Certification programs are the administrative units for awarding and regulating ecolabelling schemes. Certification “refers to a procedure that audits and gives written assurance that a facility, product, process, service, or management system meets specific standards” (Honey, 2002, p. 4). In 2002, there were an estimated 7,000 certified tourism products worldwide, with more than 85%, being implemented in Europe (Font, 2002). Font (2002) describes the majority of certification programs, about two-thirds of which are implemented by Non-Government Organisations (NGOs), private tourism associations and consultancies. The remaining one-third are governed by government agencies. Certification programs vary depending on their geographical location. For example, programs created in the developing world focus on sustainability issues related to the environment and community, whereas, programmes in Europe tend to focus mainly on environmental issues (Font, 2002). Within the

tourism industry certification is usually a voluntary initiative within the tourism industry, but in related industries such as construction, food handling and safety, certifications are mandatory government programs (Honey & Stewart, 2002).

Certification programs can be characterized into two methods: process-based and performance-based. Process-based certification programs are all variations of environmental management systems (EMS) such as ISO 14001 (Honey & Stewart, 2002). These programs require companies to implement internal management systems where they follow a cycle of identify, measure, act, and review. This cycle aids in monitoring and improving procedures (Font, 2002; Toth, 2002). Process-based certification programs are self-regulated and ecolabels are awarded if the organization's internal goals are met. Supporters of process-based certification programs assert that its main advantage is its applicability across industries and various sectors (Honey & Stewart, 2002). Some of the disadvantages of this type of program include: less applicability to small businesses; no common standards to compare companies; expensive to monitor; ecolabels can be awarded to less sustainable companies; it is too broad and may neglect the environmental and conservation issues important to communities and tourists (Honey & Stewart, 2002).

Honey and Stewart (2002) explain that performance-based certification requires companies to meet externally-based environmental and social benchmarks, thresholds, and criteria, which are applicable to all tourism agencies applying for certification. The criteria used for ecotourism certification encompass various areas present at a destination including: the environment, culture, quality, social accountability, economic, and destination resource protection (Font & Bendell, 2002). These standards are measurable, such as setting a goal for the amount of water a client consumes per night (Font, 2002; Toth, 2002). According to Honey

(2008) performance-based certification is used widely throughout the tourism industry because it involves a large range of stakeholders, has low costs, is more applicable to small and medium sized businesses, has the ability to measure performance inside and outside of the business, and its ease of monitoring and comparison across industry businesses. Honey and Stewart (2002) suggest that one of the primary drawbacks to this method is that many “standards and criteria are qualitative, subjective, and imprecise and therefore difficult to measure. Many sustainability targets are undefined. There is no agreed upon methodology for measuring carrying capacity or weighing the benefits and negative impacts for host communities” (p. 57). The benefits of combining both process-based and performance-based certification methodologies have become more apparent in the tourism industry. An increasing number of certification agencies are implementing a hybrid version of these methodologies to help ensure “sound management processes within an actual performance-based framework” (Sallows & Font, 2004, pg 95).

Sallows and Font (2004) note that some certification programmes utilize a stepped, instead of a single level, process, which involves phased participation within a program (for example bronze, silver, gold, platinum). It is argued that this type of certification encourages businesses to become involved with a certification program as it is more tangible for them to start at a lower level and proceed to improve their operations over time (Sallows & Font, 2004). In some cases, a company may decide not to advance its operations to the next level, thereby causing the perceived quality of the certification program to deteriorate. As Sallows and Font (2004) argue, this can lead to a domino effect as other tour operators enrolled in the program may also choose to not participate in achieving advanced certification levels and incur the associated higher costs.

Honey and Stewart (2002) contend that tourism certification programs can be characterized into three types: conventional tourism, sustainable tourism, and ecotourism markets. Conventional tourism certification encompasses traditional forms of mass tourism, such as airlines, car rental agencies, hotel chains, cruises and the packaged tours market which traditionally have a high volume of tourists and do not follow ecotourism practices and principles (Honey, 2008). Programs within this industry historically focused on issues related to health, safety, and quality of products and services. However, in recent years management programs have been developed to improve environmental efficiency and monitoring within these businesses (Honey, 2008). The main purpose of these programs is to adopt environmentally friendly procedures that help to reduce operating costs of the immediate facility. Some examples of these type of programs utilized within the tourism industry include ECOTEL (HVS Eco Services, 2009), Earth Check (EarthCheck, 2010), and ISO 14001 (2010). ISO 14001 are standards developed by the International Organization for Standardization. ISO 14001 outlines guidelines for a general EMS (Environmental Management System) framework for companies to use towards controlling their environmental impact, improving their environmental performance, providing a systematic approach to setting and achieving environmental objectives and targets (International Organization for Standardization, 2010).

Sustainable tourism certification programs involve both internal (which relate to business) and external (which relate to community and environment) socio-cultural and economic equity issues, with the main premise of reducing harm. It is performance-based, and is considered to be a more holistic approach than conventional tourism certification, since it involves the creation and implementation of management systems to create more efficient procedures specifically created for individual and site specific businesses (Honey, 2008).

Sustainable tourism certification utilizes third-party auditing systems and encourages stakeholder involvement and consultation in certification. The main feature of this type of certification is its ability to be tailored to distinct geographical regions and sectors within the tourism industry (Honey & Stewart, 2002). Sustainable tourism certification is viewed by some as the best option for developing a sustainable global standards and certification programme, due to its flexibility and ability to cater to various-sized tourism businesses in both mass and niche tourism markets, such as nature-based, cultural and historic tourism (Font & Harris, 2004; Honey & Rome, 2001; Solimar International, Bien, Russillo, Seek, & Luna Kelsner, 2007).

Ecotourism certification programs usually involve businesses that advertise their products and services under the category of ecotourism. These businesses tend to be located near or within natural areas and are usually concerned with protecting and improving ecologically fragile environments and ecosystems. Ideally, they strive to have zero impact in the region they are situated in. The Center on Ecotourism and Sustainable Development (CESD) (2007) estimates that there are 80 'green' tourism certification programs that exist, or are under development, worldwide. The majority of these programs are found in Europe, but they are increasing in popularity in Latin America, Asia and Africa (Font, 2001). Honey and Stewart (2002) explain that “ecotourism certification includes individual or site specific businesses, services, and products; involves a variety of stakeholders; and has standards tailored to the conditions of a particular country, state, or region” (p. 63). Ecotourism certification programs go beyond the basic green principles used in conventional tourism (i.e. conserving the environment for financial rewards), and proactively try to establish practices to preserve the environment as well as providing benefits for the local community. This type of certification is ideally suited for small and medium sized businesses (Honey & Stewart, 2002). However, there has been a push since

the Mohonk Agreement (2000) to incorporate ecotourism certification under the umbrella of sustainable tourism certification when creating a global model for certification (Honey, 2008). This would cater to the uniqueness of the ecotourism site while also incorporating a more complete and inflexible approach to tourism management and standards at a destination (Crabtree, O'Reilly, & Worboys, 2002; Solimar International et al., 2007).

Providing a background on the literature relevant to the issue of certification provides an understanding of the composition and uses of these schemes within the tourism industry. This is especially pertinent when studying ways of creating social responsibility of operators within the volunteer tourism sector. The next section will provide a discussion of accreditation schemes within tourism.

2.9.3 Accreditation

Honey (2002) defines accreditation as the “process of qualifying and endorsing entities that perform certification of companies, products, or services” (p. 325). This definition of accreditation is predominant in North America, Europe, and Latin America. In other countries, such as Australia and New Zealand, accreditation is referred to as certification, which can cause some confusion when reviewing the literature. For the purpose of this paper, accreditation will be referred to as the authoritative body that certifies the certifiers (Honey, 2008; Honey & Rome, 2001; MacLaren, 2001). Toth (2000) reports that there are 1500 accreditation organizations worldwide, that accredit 140,000 certification agencies, which are only licensed within their specific country. One of the major benefits of accreditation for a tourism operation is that it allows for a wider recognition of smaller ecolabels in the international tourism market. It is believed that an internationally accredited logo will create stronger brand awareness and have more influence on the consumer (Font & Harris, 2004). A major issue surrounding accreditation

is whether the tourism industry will be able to generate and provide the monetary costs associated with its implementation and maintenance. Font and Harris (2004) argue that many of the ecolabel costs are supplemented by regional governments who may not be as willing to support these initiatives when they no longer have control over its implementation. These costs will then be passed on to the consumer and certifier who, as Font (2001) argues, may not be willing to take them on. As well, issues arise as to whether smaller ecolabels and certification schemes will be willing and able to comply with potentially more stringent criteria they would need to meet to be accredited.

The Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC) is an initiative that is dedicated to promoting sustainable tourism practices around the world (Global Sustainable Tourism Council, 2011). It is a global membership council whose purpose is to develop an accreditation standard for sustainable tourism certification programs. The GSTC is an initiative between the UN Foundation, United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) and the Rainforest Alliance (RA) as well as other industry people and academics (Global Sustainable Tourism Council, 2015). The goal of this council is to try to adopt a common understanding as well as universal principles and criteria for sustainable tourism.

The following section will provide a discussion of guidelines and certifications that have been created for the volunteer tourism. These schemes are currently utilized by some operators but are limited in their scope.

2.9.4 Volunteer Tourism Associations, Guidelines and Certifications

The volunteer tourism industry is unregulated (Fee & Mdee, 2011) and there is no universal method to determine whether volunteer tourism sites or operators are following any specific rules or guidelines for best practice. There are currently several initiatives that attempt to provide sustainable guidelines for the volunteer tourism industry: American Gap Association, Fair Trade Tourism Volunteer Tourism Certification, International Volunteer Programs Association, Tourism Concern, the International Ecotourism Society Volunteer Tourism Guidelines for Tour Operators, and VOFAIR. For the purposes of this research, is it useful to discuss each in turn.

2.9.4.1 American Gap Association (AGA)

The American Gap Association (AGA), founded in 2012, is an American non-profit organization recognized by the US Department of Justice and the Federal Trade Commission. Its purpose is to set standards for organizations that offer volunteer placements for students who want to take time off after completing high school, prior to attending a post-secondary institution, or a Gap Year. AGA accredited organizations are committed to "the highest standards in safety, quality, and integrity" (American Gap Association, 2016). There are five categories of standards that AGA offers for organizations. The AGA (2016) website outlines the categories as follows:

- 1) *Philosophy & Integrity*: Every AGA applicant must pass this certification. Their materials reflect the actuality of their programs, the staff (both office and non-office) function with an academic and ethical standard that is beyond reproach, and that they are honest in every communication. Integrity of pedagogy, financial responsibility, marketing, recruitment, clarity of program rules, documentation standards, admissions processes, student supervision, student

insurance, staff training, labor rights and education (for staff and students), student-privacy (FERPA), mandatory incident reporting, abidance of all local laws, and cross-cultural awareness(American Gap Association, 2016).

2) *Backcountry / Developing Country Safety*: Defined as 1st-world medical care within 2 hours in developing countries, specify additional provisions for supervisory staff that include medical training standards, communication requirements, and a well stocked and sufficient medical kit. For those organizations that function overseas, additional provisions including State Department Registration, and membership in the Overseas Security Advisory Council (OSAC) (or equivalent if based overseas), will be mandatory (American Gap Association, 2016).

3) *Service-Learning*: A high degree of planning for community inclusion, project longevity, and potential positive and negative impacts must take place. Typical activities that might count as volunteering would be teaching, construction projects, or environmental projects. AGA has partnered with Global Service Learning in the development and implementation of their Fair Trade Learning standards (American Gap Association, 2016).

4) *Independent Student Placements*: This is intended to cover organizations that have as a component to their program a more independent approach. Organizations that will require an application for this certification will have fewer direct supervision mandates for their staff, and more emphasis on adequate preparation for the student. Regular communication will be required and an adequate safety net to ensure proper student-vetting, as well as a proper internship and ground-supervisor vetting.

5) *Partnerships*: Applicable to organizations that use expert partner-organizations to add to their students' experience. If an AGA Accredited Organization incorporates such partnerships, simple

checks will be required to insure that there's a clear and documentable understanding responsibilities (e.g., equipment, medical staff, insurance), and to ensure that AGA's Standards are continued throughout whatever partnerships are created. Encouragements for locally owned, financially responsible, culturally sensitive, environmentally conscious partnerships are a hallmark of this certification. Activities include, but are not limited to, outsourcing of activities such as home stays, language classes, SCUBA classes, treks, transportation companies, or adventure activity organizations would require the Partnerships Certification (American Gap Association, 2016).

From this list each organization must apply for the areas they would like to be accredited for and pass a review. Every organization must follow a specific pathway to become accredited. First, they fill out an engagement letter which outlines the process, explains the judicial enforcement of AGA standards, and explains the cost. The applicant has up to 6 months to complete the online document. Once submitted, the organization is considered to be "in process" in which a review will be conducted which is identified as taking 3-5 weeks. After this time either further questions would be asked or the accreditation would be awarded (American Gap Association, 2016). AGA accredited organizations are reviewed after the first two years, and then every four years. Each organization must pay an annual fee which is based on the number of volunteers sent per year. Currently online the AGA has 10 accredited organizations listed, although they state that there are more but the site has not been updated yet. (American Gap Association, 2016). It is important to note that these organizations offer volunteer opportunities that range from one week to one year. Not all of the accredited organizations listed solely offer gap year trips, as many also offer volunteer tourism trips as well. More information about the AGA can be found at: <http://www.americangap.org/index.php>.

2.9.4.2 *Fair Trade Tourism Volunteer Tourism Certification*

Fair Trade Tourism (FTT) was initially established as a pilot project under the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) South Africa in 2001. Following the pilot study the certification was known as Fair Trade Tourism in South Africa, and then became FTT in 2012 to broaden its scope to other southern African businesses. As of 2004, it operates as a non-profit organization which focuses on promoting sustainable and responsible tourism in South Africa and beyond (Fair Trade Tourism, 2014). It promotes sustainable tourism with travellers by increasing their awareness about responsible tourism and how they impact the destinations that they choose. FTT also provides the means for businesses to become more sustainable through their certification program (Seif & Spenceley, 2007). This program certifies a wide range of tourism operations including guesthouses, safari lodges, backpacker lodges, hotels, cultural tours and eco-adventure activities. It has certified almost 70 of these types of operations throughout South Africa and "many of these products are small, emerging, and community-based businesses that are wholly or partially owned by rural black communities disenfranchised by apartheid" (Fair Trade Tourism, 2014). By undertaking the certification process, businesses make a commitment to implement more sustainable practices within their establishments. This is achieved through the implementation of fair wages and working conditions, fair purchasing and operations, equitable distribution of benefits and respect for human rights, culture and the environment (Fair Trade Tourism, 2014). Boluk's (2011^a) study on FTT certified businesses found that such businesses were effective in their utilization of practices which included "the poor in tourism decision-making, creating employment opportunities and stimulating entrepreneurship, and providing skillful opportunities" (p. 248).

For the traveller, the goal of the FTT label is to provide assurance that the certified tourism business is operating in a responsible and ethical manner both environmentally and socially. FTT also provides responsible tourism itineraries for travellers, called Fair Trade Holidays, which are created by their certified tour operators (Fair Trade Tourism, 2014). A set amount of the monies earned from these Fair Trade Holidays is donated by the operators to the Fair Trade Development Fund. This fund is managed as a separate legal entity and provides assistance opportunity for FTT certified businesses that many need to utilize the funds for their development. Fair Trade Tourism is a GSTC Recognized Certification (Fair Trade Tourism, 2014). Fair Trade Tourism Certification is available for accommodations, activities, facilities, food services, attractions and volunteer programmes. There are several different categories that a business can participate in under the FTT system. The FTT defines a tourism business as a business that is providing more than fifty percent of its revenue earned from the sale of tourism products or services (Fair Trade Tourism, 2014). As Boluk (2011^a) discusses, the FTT certification is a three-step process which involves: a self-assessment of eligibility by the applicant, a formal assessment by FTT, and adjudication which involves third party assessment. Once certified, tourism businesses are audited online annually and an onsite audit is conducted every 3 years. This audit consists of an evaluation and verification of compliance of the tourism business to the Fair Trade Tourism Criteria (Fair Trade Tourism, 2014). The certified business is charged a yearly fee, as well as an external auditor fee, dependant on its size, to utilize the FTT label. Furthermore, each certified business will also receive business development support, market access and marketing platform access (Fair Trade Tourism, 2014).

2.9.4.3 *International Volunteer Programs Association (IVPA)*

The International Volunteer Programs Association (IVPA) was developed in 1996 to raise the standards of volunteer programs. It is a non-profit association which is composed of volunteer sending organizations. Members of this organization adhere to 35 principles and practices whose purpose are to "ensure program quality and appropriate volunteer behaviour in international and intercultural settings" (International Volunteer Programs Association, 2015). The standards list outlines practices that their members must follow in the following areas: Pre-Program; Program; Post-Program; and Organizational. A more in-depth list of what these practices can be found at: <http://volunteerinternational.org/why-standards-2/>. Currently on their website the IVPA lists 8 organizations that are members of the organization. Membership to the IVPA is based on "general adherence to and acceptance of Principles and Practices" (International Volunteer Programs Association, 2015). IVPA states on their website that "the criteria stated in the Principles and Practices document are not intended to be either exhaustive or restrictive, although member organizations are expected to meet the standards of organizational responsibility stated in the qualifications for membership" (International Volunteer Programs Association, 2015). There is no information given on their site as to how it is determined whether the criteria being stated is met, nor whether there are any association fees for members.

2.9.4.4 *Tourism Concern's GIVS Volunteering Standards Group*

Tourism Concern, founded in 1989, is an independent, non-industry based organization from the United Kingdom. From their website they identify their vision as "a world free from exploitation in which all parties involved in tourism benefit equally and in which relationships between industry, tourists and host communities are based on trust and respect" (Tourism Concern, 2013). Tourism Concern's principles embody independence from the tourism industry;

listening to the perspectives and opinions of communities and partners within a destination; sharing their values and vision with the organizations that it works with; including everyone in the decision making process, especially those that it would have an effect on; and the utilization of ethical practices such as green policies and promotion of fair trade products (Tourism Concern, 2013).

The GIVS Volunteering Standards Group developed by Tourism Concern is a membership group which consists of a variety of volunteer tourism organizations worldwide. Members of the GIVS Standards Group are interested in ensuring the sustainable and responsible practices of volunteering organizations within the countries that they are located within. The aim of the GIVS is "to promote best practice in international volunteering, to maximise the beneficial developmental impacts in the communities where volunteering takes place, minimise the negative impacts, and to ensure volunteers have a worthwhile experience" (Tourism Concern, 2013).

To gain membership in the GIVS Group the applicant fills out a form and is assessed under the GIVS Standard by a consultant. According to their website, this process is estimated to take half a day and it is explicitly stated that this assessment is not an audit of the organization (Tourism Concern, 2013). There is no mention of what this standard is on the organizations' website.

2.9.4.5 The International Voluntourism Guidelines for Commercial Tour Operators

The International Voluntourism Guidelines for Commercial Tour Operators is a set of criterion created through the collaboration of The International Ecotourism Society (TIES), Planeterra Foundation, and an international advisory committee consisting of academics and

industry operators. The International Voluntourism Guidelines for Commercial Tour Operators is a voluntary initiative for operators which they can apply to their businesses (The International Ecotourism Society, 2012). Utilizing examples of best practice from organizations offering volunteer tourism within their businesses, the guidelines address the following topics:

1. Sustainable Management:
 - i. Reality Check - Knowledge and local presence
 - ii. Marketing and Messaging
 - iii. Selecting and Working with Volunteers

2. Measuring, Monitoring & Reporting:
 - i. Defining Success & Measuring Impact
 - ii. Transparency in Financial Reporting
 - iii. Non-Financial Reporting

3. Maximizing Benefits & Minimizing Negative Footprint:
 - i. Benefits for Communities and Local Engagement
 - ii. Managing Social and Economic Impacts
 - iii. Supporting Biodiversity Conservation and Heritage Preservation

4. Useful Tools and Resources:
 - i. Key Tools and Resources for Voluntourism Providers
 - ii. Codes of Conduct and Ethical Principles Related to Community Well-Being

- iii. Managing the Environmental Impact of Voluntourism Operations (The International Ecotourism Society, 2012).

The full document of The International Voluntourism Guidelines for Commercial Tour Operators can be found at: www.ecotourism.org/voluntourism-guidelines. At the present time there is no information available regarding the number of commercial volunteer tourism tour operators that have utilized these guidelines within their operations.

2.9.4.6 *VOFAIR*

VOFAIR, short for volunteering fairly, is a certification that was developed in 2012, to certify the projects of grassroots organizations that utilize international volunteering within their projects (Adieu-Arche-B Marketing, 2015). Its purpose is to create awareness for consumers about fair, ethical and purposeful projects within the volunteer tourism industry (VOFAIR, 2015). It promotes small organizations and aids them in improving their transparency and operations for their volunteers.

VOFAIR has developed a project verification system in which it identifies six principles that a fair voluntary project requires to be verified:

1. The project brings positive change to the world.
2. The volunteer does not cause damage to the environment or to beneficiaries of the project, nor are they exposed to unnecessary health and safety risks.
3. All charges to the volunteer are priced fairly and explained to the volunteer by the organization.

4. Appropriate volunteer recruitment process is assured. This may involve interviews, training, and requiring past experience.
5. The host organization is open to improvement in the case that VOFAIR decides it does not meet the criteria explained in detail in the full document.
6. The host organization has never and does not currently break the law in any way (VOFAIR, 2015).

This certification consists of a three-step process. The first step consists of VOFAIR sending a survey to the interested organization which asks questions about the operations. VOFAIR then also sends a similar survey to past volunteers and beneficiaries of the organization to ask about the project and experiences. VOFAIR states that if answers are similar in both surveys it is most likely the organization applying will be certified (VOFAIR, 2015). The second step involves the VOFAIR team visiting the site and determining whether the information gathered from the surveys is accurate. The third, and final step, consists of the project being awarded the certification and logo. The certification is valid for one year, assuming all criteria are being met, and the project can use the logo and will be listed on the VOFAIR website. Currently VOFAIR has seventeen certified projects listed on their website. These projects are all from South America. (VOFAIR, 2015).

Providing a background and discussion of the various types of guidelines and certification schemes allows for an understanding of the current responsible tourism implementation strategies available within the volunteer tourism sector. It is evident that the dissemination of such schemes within the volunteer tourism sector is not widespread.

Understanding this provides a background for the research. In the next I discuss the strengths

and weaknesses of utilizing certification within the tourism industry in order to provide a better understanding of the potential factors that play a role in its dissemination within the volunteer tourism sector.

2.9.5 Strengths of Certification Schemes

Certification programs have the ability to ensure businesses are accountable to their stakeholders, as well as meeting and balancing their interests (Honey & Stewart, 2002). They are deemed to be an effective tool for regulating tourism initiatives and have the potential to reduce negative social and environmental impacts associated with tourism (Center for Responsible Travel, 2009). Certifications provide benefits for businesses, consumers, governments, local communities and the environment (Center for Responsible Travel, 2009).

For businesses, certification can help improve their efficiency, reduce operating costs, access to technology and experts within the field, and provide marketing advantages (WTO, 2003). Many hotels, operators and suppliers are now recognizing that engaging in more socially responsible practices, as set out by certifications, gives them a socio-economic competitive advantage and that consumers are responding favourably to such initiatives (Blackman, Naranjo, Robalino, Alpizar, & Rivera, 2013; Mohr & Webb, 2005). These businesses are able to tap into the growing sector of environmentally conscious travellers (Bergin-Seers & Mair, 2009) and receive the benefits associated with it, such as charging more for their product or services, differentiation of products and customer awareness of their initiatives, higher customer satisfaction and brand loyalty (Chafe, 2007; Kassinis & Soteriou 2003; Peiró-Signes et al., 2013; Schubert, Kandampully, Solnet, & Kralj, 2010). By showing their commitment to the voluntary environmental and socio-cultural requirements set out by a certification scheme the tourism

business is able to improve their public image and market themselves more effectively with local communities, government agencies, financial partners and consumers.

Scholars argue the benefits consumers attain from certification include better quality of services, awareness of business practices, education about issues, allows them to have confidence in their product, and provides the option to make environmentally and socially responsible choices in their travel plans (Lee & Moscardo, 2005; Marchoo, Butcher, & Watkins, 2014). Chafe (2007) explains tourists invest a good portion of their expendable income on taking a vacation and expect a good return on investment from the places they visit. The presence of an ecolabel/certification scheme, especially within the accommodation sector, has been shown to be beneficial and further provides the tourist with the option of making more sustainable and informed choices when choosing accommodations, tour operator, travel agency or tourism service provider (Millar 2009; Schubert et al., 2010). Puahakka and Siikamaki (2012) found that travelers are willing to pay slightly more for an eco-certified product, but it does not have a major deciding role in their travel decisions or behaviours. There is also evidence that consumers are paying more attention to the corporate social responsibility claims of the places that they are patronizing (Sparks, Perkins & Buckley, 2013) and are willing to pay more for such initiatives (Choi, Parsa, Sigala, Putrevu, 2009; Parsa, Lord, Putrevu, & Kreeger, 2014, Svensson, Rodwell, & Attrill, 2008). This consumer view has significantly evolved in the past 10 years (Whitson, Ozkaya, & Roxas, 2014).

For the government, certification allows them to increase both the credibility of the destination as well as industry standards for the environment, safety and health (Center for Responsible Travel, 2009). It further provides social stability through aiding in the reduction of poverty by providing economic benefits to local communities (Boluk, 2011^a). Certification also

helps to ensure that the local communities receive economic and social benefits from tourism that can be sustained over the long term (Center for Responsible Travel, 2009). Honey and Stewart (2002) discuss certifications and ecolabels help to raise industry standards and can be utilized as a tool for the local community to help reduce the negative impacts caused by tourism. The authors further explain these tools can aid in the allocation of revenue earned within the community while further allowing for the measurement and minimization of impacts on the socio-cultural and environmental aspects of a region. In host countries certification can promote the image of the destination while ensuring compliance with governmental standards, thereby, also allowing for an elevated status with international funding agencies (Honey & Stewart, 2002). The World Tourism Organization (2003) identifies that "certification is beneficial for governments as it allows a more flexible approach to monitoring the tourism industry. It can be considered as an effective alternative for governments since it is less time consuming and easier for government agencies to implement" (p.2).

It is appears there are several strengths to implementing a certification within the operations of a business. However, there are all also several issues present within such schemes, and the next section will provide a discussion of the weaknesses of certification schemes.

2.9.6 Weaknesses of Certification Schemes

Ecolabels and certifications are promoted as way to help guide consumers in the choices they make while on vacation and are positioned as mainly based on consumer preferences and demand for such products (Buckley, 2002; Wood & Halpenny, 2001). However there is evidence to the contrary, as the recognition and dissemination of these programs have been shown to be limited in their scope with consumers (Chafe, 2005; Fairweather, Maslin, & Simmons, 2005; Hamele, 2002; Kangas 2007; Reiser & Simmons, 2005). The vast number of

labels within the marketplace has created confusion amongst consumers regarding their meaning and distinction from each other (Miller, 2001). As Honey (2002) argues, one of the main challenges the tourism industry is facing is how to promote consumer awareness, and decrease confusion, by merging existing programs as well as creating new programs that have universal principals and standards (Honey & Stewart, 2002). Moreover, the occurrence of 'greenwashing' by organizations who don't really improve their operations (Font, 2001; Kuehnel, 2011; Smith & Font, 2014), has also created distrust amongst consumers of experiences or products claiming to be 'eco-friendly' or 'green' (D'Souza, 2004; Ellison, 2008). This leads to a lack of confidence in the ecolabelling or certification schemes by consumers. Furthermore, while there are studies that have shown the willingness for consumers to pay for certification schemes, there are very few that follow-up on whether this willingness actually occurs in practice (Font, & Epler Wood, 2007; Dalton, Lockington, & Baldock, 2008; Needham, 2011; Thogersen, Haugaard, & Olsen, 2010).

In developed countries, certification and ecolabelling schemes are mainly run by governmental organizations that focus on savings through water and energy conservation. In developing countries, they are implemented by NGO's who focus on both environmental and social concerns (Font & Sallows, 2002). However, many of these certification practices are also implemented by transnational corporations and businesses from developed countries that tend to facilitate and dominate the process of program creation. These programs have been heavily criticized as they tend to be more advantageous for the private sector than for the developing country where they are situated (Sasidharan & Font, 2001; Sasidharan, Sirakaya, & Kerstetter, 2002), have traditionally ignored socio-cultural issues and mainly focused on the environment (Font & Harris, 2004; Tepelus & Córdoba, 2005). For small and medium sized enterprises

(SME), community based enterprises (CBE) and indigenous groups, certifications schemes can be viewed as a disadvantage, not practical or attainable, and there are several barriers to their implementation for these stakeholders (Medina, 2005; Mycoo, 2006; Rivera & deLeon, 2005). Bien and Russillo (2006) discuss several obstacles and barriers that these groups face. which can make certification an impractical option. Specifically, the

lack of knowledge about certifications and their benefits and responsibilities; lack of access to clean technologies, difficult and costly criteria and indicators for small operators, and capacity issues; lack of funding for the costs associated with certification, costs to become compliant to certification standards, and lack of access to traditional financing instruments and business management capacity constraints (Bien & Russillo, 2006, p. 7).

Furthermore, Medina (2005) suggests, “resulting standards may be too low to provide adequate protection for the environment and too high for small and medium sized enterprises in developing countries to meet” (p. 282). Bien and Russillo (2006) state this is specifically related to the process of certification and the structure of small businesses. In terms of the process, they identify that certification and sustainable development projects are often created without the consultation of the community members. There is also a lack of support systems to aid in the technical aspects of certification implementation. Furthermore, the benefits of certification and distribution of power are not equal amongst all stakeholders. Bien and Russillo (2006) identify for all these businesses there are issues specifically related to the capacity limitations of their management systems, implementing change, and ensuring that they can meet the high quality expectations that are sought out by international markets. More specifically, Buultjensa, Gale, and White's (2012) study on Australian indigenous groups notes that the principles of ecotourism, and many ecotourism certifications, outline the non-consumptive use of natural resources. This non-consumptive view goes against many of the fundamental socio-cultural beliefs and practices of indigenous communities living within these ecotourism areas. Many of

their beliefs are intrinsically tied to the environment and their traditional use of the land, which is achieved through activities such as hunting and fishing (Fennell, 2008). Poirier (2007) discusses the colonial and Western centric underpinnings of certifications and their definition of nature may be inconsistent with indigenous beliefs. This in turn lends to the lack of support of such initiatives by indigenous groups, as they would impede such communities from participating in their traditional activities (Poirier, 2007). Font and Sallows (2002) argue that the creation of international environmental and social standards can be viewed by countries in the south as another way for the north to limit their economic and social development thereby emphasizing the evident inequities between the north and south. Boluk (2011^b) argues that the ethical implications of imparting certification schemes in the developing should be considered as they appear to reiterate some of the values inherent within colonial discourses. She specifically connects this as "discourses regarding a civilizing mission and cultural re-production, having an influence on identities, imparting new forms of individualism, developing regimes on values, developing new means of wealth and placing increased value on money" (Boluk, 2011^b). Hence there is a need for the development of certification and accreditation schemes that utilize a stakeholder approach which accounts for the various obstacles of implementation within the developing world.

The proliferation of over 100 ecolabel and certification schemes worldwide (Font, 2002; Gossling & Buckley, 2014; Honey & Rome, 2001) has caused much concern for the criteria and standards utilized within each scheme. Font (2002) identifies that an issue with industry certification is the lack of monitoring of the certified businesses. Monitoring of businesses is costly, and in many cases tourism businesses are certified but there is little or no follow-up to determine whether these standards have been upheld or if improvements have been made (Font,

2002). Furthermore, Font (2002) suggests that reputable, independent, not-for-profit organizations take on the responsibilities involved in monitoring, however, providing financial capital to make them self-sustaining has proven difficult to facilitate. The type of monitoring that is utilized differs from one certification to the next but usually consists of either first-party verification (self-evaluation), second-party verification (certifying agency evaluation), or third-party verification (independent auditor) (Font, 2002). A suggested solution is to develop cost-effective programs that minimize the use of expensive external experts and consultants, and instead utilize local universities and other resources (Honey & Stewart, 2002). Black and Crabtree (2007) discuss regular assessment and auditing of certified businesses will aid in ensuring the legitimacy, transparency and quality of the certification.

Discussing the strengths and weaknesses of certification schemes shows the complexity of such schemes within the tourism industry. For the operator, certification can be a way to increase best practices and improve operations. However, the economic, social, and political constraints leads to the questioning of its actual efficacy within the industry. The limited strategies available for implementing responsible tourism may reinforce the popularity of certification, due to the potential it has in creating more sustainable practices. Such strategies are important to consider when determining ways of improving the operations of businesses within the volunteer tourism sector.

2.10 Summary of Chapter

The emergence of large commercial volunteer tourism organizations shows the necessity within the sector to research the operations of such organizations. As identified in the literature review, volunteer tourism focuses on facilitating a means to aid projects, environmental or social, at destinations through the provision of voluntary and/or monetary assistance. As such,

providing an overview of the literature on corporations and corporate ethics allows for a better understanding of how this could pertain to commercial volunteer tourism operators. It also helps to build a potential typology of such organizations within the sector, which is currently lacking in the literature. Volunteer tourism organizations are supposed to espouse the theories of social responsibility in their practices. This of course is dependent on the type of volunteer tourism organization and whether they are truly subscribing to the ideal of "making a difference". Within commercial volunteer tourism organizations the merging of both social and corporate aspects has created a new classification of operator, one that is not based on the traditional not-for-profit model within which some volunteer tourism organizations operate. Hence the notion of Corporate Social Entrepreneurship (CSE) may be applicable to the categorization and operation of some commercial volunteer tourism operators.

Furthermore, it has also been discussed that organizations who practice socially responsible initiatives may potentially view responsible tourism implementation strategies, such as certification, as one aspect to facilitate sustainability and accountability within their organizations. It is evident that more research is still needed to examine the use of certification within the sector and to determine operator perspectives of such initiatives. Thus, an in-depth look at the actual operations of commercial volunteer tourism organizations and their perceptions regarding volunteer tourism practices and certification was deemed necessary. The following chapter will introduce the research by providing a discussion of the study design, including epistemology and methodological approaches. .

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODS

3.0 Introduction

In this chapter I outline the steps taken for this two phase project. As a reminder, the following objectives guided this study: 1) To determine the current perceptions of volunteer tourism stakeholders regarding social responsibility in the volunteer tourism sector. 2) To consider additional measures (e.g., certification) as tools to enhance socially responsible tourism practices. Phase one consisted of determining the perceptions of key volunteer tourism stakeholders. Specifically this phase sought expert opinions about the volunteer tourism sector and explored the potential of certification to improve the sector. Phase two involved two case studies, which allowed for the development of a more in-depth understanding of the operations of two commercial volunteer tourism organizations, and for determining perceptions of certification as a tool to increase social responsibility within the sector. The results of this study are based on the analysis of both phase one and phase two. This chapter describes the research design.

3.1 Epistemology and Methodology

Research is conducted when the researcher seeks to understand or determine answers to a specific problem. Embarking on this journey of knowledge acquisition is dependent on the researcher and the problem that is being understood. As such, the choice of methods and collection and analysis of data are reliant on various factors. Traditionally, research can be categorized into are either quantitative or qualitative approaches. Quantitative approaches to research focus on testing theories through verifying, or falsifying, a hypothesis stated as "propositions that can be easily converted into precise mathematical formulas expressing

functional relationships" (Guba and Lincoln, 1994, p. 106). Quantitative approaches to research focus on deduction, identifying and protecting against bias, controlling for alternative explanations, generalizing findings and replicating the results in future research (Creswell, 2009). Qualitative approaches to research are inductive and focus on understanding the meaning individuals or groups have within a particular social problem or situation (Creswell, 2009). Creswell (2009) describes how qualitative research involves "emerging questions and procedures, data typically collected in the participant's setting, data analysis inductively building from particulars to general themes, and the researcher making interpretations of the meaning of the data" (p. 22). Qualitative data allows for the determination of "informal and unstructured linkages and processes in organizations" (Marshall & Rossman, 1989, p. 46). Furthermore, it creates an understanding of the "complex interactions, tacit processes, and often hidden beliefs and values" that can play a role in the both certification implementation and the practices of volunteer tourism operators (Marshall & Rossman, 1989, p. 14). Finally, qualitative inquiry is useful for determining and understanding a central phenomenon (Creswell, 2009).

Determining what approach to use is dependent on the philosophical ideologies that guide the researcher to choose a particular path of inquiry. Theoretical perspective, as discussed by Crotty (1998) is the "philosophical stance that lies behind our chosen methodology...it provides a context for the process and grounds its logic and criteria" (p. 7). This theoretical perspective consists of ideologies, which have been referred to as *worldviews* Creswell (2009), *paradigms* (Lincoln & Guba, 2000), *broadly conceived research methodologies* (Neumann, 2000), or *epistemologies and ontologies* (Crotty, 1998). Goodson and Phillimore (2004) describe ontology as, "the study of being, and raises questions about the nature of reality while referring to the

claims or assumptions that a particular approach to social inquiry makes about the nature of social reality" (p. 34).

Epistemology raises the question of how we know what we know. As Maynard (1994) suggests, "epistemology is concerned with providing a philosophical grounding for deciding what kinds of knowledge are possible and how we can ensure that they are both adequate and legitimate" (p. 10). There are various epistemological perspectives that play a role in the choices a researcher makes. Crotty (1998) refers to three types of epistemology: objectivism, constructionism and subjectivism. Objectivism views reality and knowledge to be independent of the mind and consciousness. Specifically each object as its own intrinsic meaning which can be discovered by the researcher only if it is undertaken in an objective way (Crotty, 1998). Constructionism argues that there is no human knowledge or objective truth waiting to be discovered. Meanings or truth about a phenomena exist based on the construction and understanding of knowledge based on the person who is perceiving it. It is argued that such understandings can differ even within the same "phenomenon" due to the experience and perceptions constructed from one person to another (Crotty, 1998, p. 8-9). Subjectivism maintains the meaning of an object is imposed by people's minds without the contribution of the world, there is no truth or meaning independent of the mind (Crotty, 1998). An individual's theoretical perspective reflects the assumptions that they make and then bring to their research. Methodology is the strategy or plan of action that is utilized by the researcher that links methods to outcomes (Creswell, 2003). As such although a researcher chooses to utilize certain methods or methodologies to undertake to answer their research questions, more importantly, it is essential to understand that the justification of such methods is underpinned through the identification of the reality of the assumptions the researcher makes in the understanding of human knowledge. As a researcher I

am drawn to the ideology within constructionism as I believe that the experiences that an individual has helps shape their views, beliefs, and understanding of a subject and such interpretations will differ from one individual to another. As such determining the perspectives of volunteer tourism operators towards social responsibility and how that is translated within operations allows for a better understanding of their operational culture.

Given the gaps in knowledge about the issues facing volunteer tourism operators and the need to explore and assess the opportunities and challenges presented by certification, a constructionist stance is warranted. As Crotty notes, a constructionist view holds that "all knowledge, and therefore all meaningful reality as such, is contingent upon human practices, being constructed in and out of interaction between human beings and their world, and developed and transmitted within an essentially social context" (Crotty, 1998, p. 42). Within this view it is argued knowledge about a phenomena cannot occur unless certain factors such as the "why, how, and to whom is understood" (Palys, 1997). In the case of volunteer tourism, which is based on the premise of sustainability, it is important to recognize the individual, social and cultural dynamics that play a role in its inception. Hence, determining the perspectives of volunteer tourism businesses and their view on socially responsible practices can generate an understanding around some of the issues in the sector. It may also offer insights into how these issue could be rectified.

Further, utilizing qualitative methods and case study methodology allows for the generation of an in-depth understanding of events and experiences. Case studies are commonly utilized in numerous fields of study such as anthropology, education, business, community planning, psychology, nursing, political science, sociology and tourism (Yin, 2014). As Creswell (2002) identifies, case studies are useful for research "in which the researcher explores

an in depth program, an event, an activity, a process, or one or more individuals [and] the cases are bounded by time and activity" (p. 15). Case studies can be conducted as either single cases or multiple cases. Yin, a leading proponent of case study research, recommends utilizing an approach with two or more cases. He suggests the "analytical conclusions independently arising from two cases [...] will be more powerful than those coming from a single case alone" (Yin, 2014, p.64). Researchers conducting multiple case studies, consisting of two or three cases, can obtain rich data using interviews and secondary data to achieve an understanding of the phenomenon (Rowley, 2012; Yin, 2014). Yin (2014) suggests a multiple case study is an appropriate design if participants are representatives of the same group in the phenomenon under study. Within this study the large volunteer tourism operators that were examined are representative of the same group and were compared. Some disadvantages that have been identified in using case study methodology are lack of rigour, small numbers which limit scientific generalizations, and finally too long and too difficult in terms of producing large amounts of documentation (Yin, 2014). However, while these disadvantages are important for consideration it is still important to acknowledge the value of case study research when "there is a desire to understand complex social phenomena...[as] case studies allows investigators to focus on a 'case' and retain a holistic and real world perspective" (Yin, 2014, p. 4). The next section presents the research methods utilized for both phases of this research.

3.2 Research Methods: Two Phases

3.2.1 Phase One - Methods

Phase one of this study consisted of conducting semi-structured interviews with industry representatives from various areas of the volunteer tourism sector. These interviews sought to determine the current perceptions of volunteer tourism stakeholders about social responsibility in

the volunteer tourism sector. While there are multiple stakeholders of volunteer tourism the interviews were only conducted with a subsection of them. Participants for this first round of data collection consisted of individuals who were volunteer tourism operators, scholars of volunteer tourism, individuals responsible for creating guidelines that directly affect the volunteer tourism sector, and /or involved with overall tourism certification. Table 4 provides a description of these participants albeit in accordance with guidelines from the University of Waterloo's Office of Research Ethics

Table 4: Stakeholders Interviewed in Phase one

<i>Organization</i>	<i>Pseudonyms</i>	<i>Position</i>	<i>Years of Experience</i>
Tourism Operator from South America	Operator 1	Director/Confounder	20
Tourism Operator from India	Operator 2	CEO/Founder	22
Tourism Operator from Kenya	Operator 3	President/Chairman	20
Tourism Operator from Kenya	Operator 4	CEO	23
Tourism Operator from South America	Operator 5	Founder	12
Tourism Operator from United States of America	Operator 6	Founder/Director	9
Tourism Operator from Canada	Operator 7	Program/Operations Manager	7
Tourism Operator from South Africa	Operator 8	Owner	18
Scholar from United Kingdom	Scholar 1	Principal Lecturer	17
Scholar from United States of America	Scholar 2	Professor	16
Scholar from Australia	Scholar 3	Associate Professor	28
Scholar from United Kingdom	Scholar 4	Reader	15
Tourism Membership Organization from United States of America	Policy 1	Director of Communications	5
Tourism Accreditation Body	Policy 2	Chair of Board	4
Volunteer Tourism Consultant	Policy 3	Owner	6

Fifteen key informants from the volunteer tourism sector were interviewed and these stakeholders consisted of 3 policy makers, 4 academics, and 8 volunteer tourism operators. It is important to mention that some academics and policy makers had overlapping roles. Some were

also operators as they have vested business interests in the volunteer tourism sector. Furthermore, one of the policy makers is an academic and an operator. Participants had been involved with the volunteer tourism sector in some capacity between 4 and 28 years. As such, participants' had a broad knowledge of the sector as whole.

The advantage of conducting semi-structured interviews is in the ability of the interviewer to clarify questions and probe for answers (Babbie, 1990). Interview questions were pilot tested on colleagues from the Faculty of Applied Health Sciences at the University of Waterloo. Some of the interviews were conducted with volunteer tourism industry stakeholders at the Ecotourism and Sustainable Tourism Conference (ESTC) from September 17 - 19, 2012. This conference was chosen due to its geographical location, cost, and the attendance of a variety of scholars and industry representatives worldwide. Prior to the conference, emails were sent out to various conference presenters at the ESTC 2012 asking for their participation (Appendix A). Upon their agreement, 5 interviews were conducted face-to-face during the conference. Additional participants were recruited through snowball sampling, identifying volunteer tourism scholars publishing in peer reviewed journals, and through personal connections with people involved with volunteer tourism. The last 10 interviews were conducted using Skype. The consent form, which outlines the steps of this first part of the study and ethical guidelines, can be found in Appendix B.

After agreeing to participate in the interview, participants were sent a letter of introduction relating to what the study entailed (Appendix B), a study consent form (Appendix C), and the interview questions (Appendix D). Consent forms were signed and given back during face-to-face interviews, or signed, scanned and emailed back prior to interview commencement. Participants were asked 10 questions which addressed the following topics: the

volunteer tourism sector; sustainable tourism and what that means to them; identification of the stakeholders of volunteer tourism; and thoughts about certification and implementing a certification for volunteer tourism. The questions (Appendix D) were designed to answer the first stage of research questions that were utilized within this study.

The length of these first round interviews ranged from 40 minutes to 80 minutes. After the interview a thank you letter was sent to each participant (Appendix E). Once the interviews were transcribed, the transcriptions were sent to participants for their review and to elicit any changes or additions. One interviewee changed the contents of their transcript, while the others acknowledged that the transcripts were acceptable

Interview data were analyzed using traditional qualitative coding methods in an effort to extract themes. By clustering similar topics together, I was able to list and identify the “main topics, unique topics and leftovers” (Creswell, 2003, p. 192). I read the interviews to discover the general ideas and tried to allocate one or two descriptive words, which gave me a brief picture of what was being said (open coding). Once these topics were identified, I conducted constant comparison and then proceeded to categorize them into codes through line-by-line coding (Charmaz, 2006). This step involved reading each line of the text and providing a code that corresponded with the ideas presented there. I conducted this coding in Microsoft Word and used the Comments feature to label each line with a code. Figure 3 below provides an example of this.

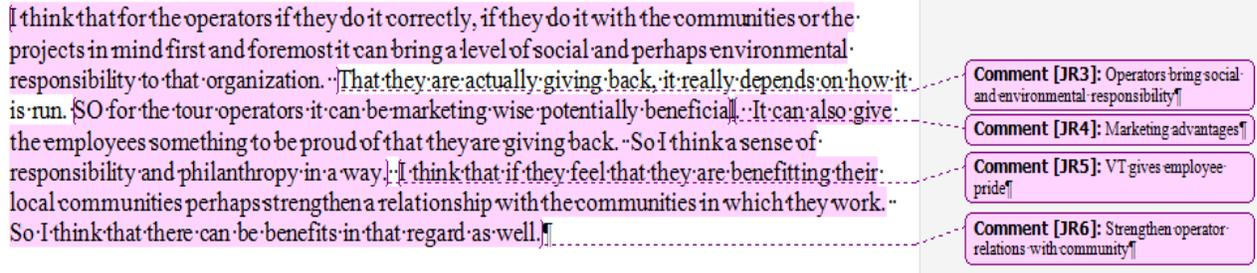


Figure 3: Example of Line by Line Coding

I copied all codes and pasted them into separate word documents; each document listed the codes for each interview. All codes listed in the documents were assigned a number, which corresponded with which interview and on what line it could be found on. For example, the code P-3-11-17 represents the third person interviewed who is specific to policy (P-3), eleventh interview conducted, and seventeenth line within the document. Figure 4 shows an example of this.

- Code/Guidelines-Sustainable**
- P-3-11-17 → Guidelines helpful for a new company
 - S-1-1-60 → Guideline can't do any harm
 - S-1-1-61 → engaging some people is better than no one
 - P-1-2-46 → Increasing issues awareness within VT will help improve it
 - P-1-2-47 → Awareness of VT issues
 - P-1-2-48 → Increasing awareness will improve whole sector
 - P-1-2-49 → Shared understanding to create SVT no one right way
 - O-6-12-15 → Guidelines would make it more sustainable
 - O-2-4-19 → It will make it more responsible
 - P-2-6-34 → Implementing guidelines will make it sustainable
 - O-7-13-26 → Guidelines will make the VT industry more sustainable
 - S-2-8-19 → Don't think that it would hurt

Figure 4: Example of Coding

From here, I further re-analyzed the codes that I created and looked for the most descriptive words for the topic, and grouped them into 5 to 7 categories (as Creswell, 2003, suggests). To ensure that I did not have too many, I reanalyzed the categories to try and group similar concepts together. Underneath each category, I placed all the correlating codes and went through each code to remove any redundancies. This occurred until I narrowed down four main themes from the data. Throughout this process, I kept memos that detailed any observations or connections that I detected when conducting the coding. This method allowed me to develop and discover ideas in the data and helped me keep track of them (Charmaz, 2006; Creswell, 2003). I also created a flow chart diagram to identify any connections between concepts. Throughout the coding process I tried to ensure that I did not place the data into any preconceived codes or categories (Charmaz, 2006; Creswell, 2003). The next section will discuss the methods utilized in phase two of this study to ascertain the perspectives of commercial volunteer tourism operators.

3.2.2 Phase Two - Methods

In phase two of the study, case study methodology was employed. This allowed for the attainment of deeper insights into the practices of volunteer tourism operators, as well as offer a more contextualised understanding of volunteer tourism and the role certification might play as a strategy for responsible tourism implementation. Hence, within phase two, I sought out operators who only focused on volunteer tourism, had been operating for a relatively long period of time (i.e., 10 or more years), who had an office in Canada and/or the USA, and who were considered to be large operators. Large operators were chosen as they were deemed to have a more pervasive and larger impact within the sector so understanding their opinions were

identified as being important in determining ways to improve the sector. The organizations that were identified as possible candidates for phase two of this study are shown in Table 5.

Table 5: Potential Candidates for Case Study

Organization	Inception Date	Number of Employees	Total Number of Volunteers Sent
Projects Abroad	1992	568	100,000 (Projects Abroad Canada, 2015)
Cross Cultural Solutions	1994	250+	35,000 (Cross Cultural Solutions, 2015)
Global Volunteers International (GVI)	1998	150+	24,000 (GVI, 2014)
International Student Volunteers	2002	200+	35,000 + (International Student Volunteers, 2014)
ME to WE	2002	140	25,000 + (ME to WE, 2015)

Ethics protocols for the second phase of this study were followed and approval to conduct research was obtained from the University of Waterloo's Office of Research Ethics. All prospective organizations were contacted repeatedly through email and/or telephone to determine whether they would participate in the study. Appendix G provides an example of the recruitment email used. Projects Abroad, Cross Cultural Solutions, and ME to WE all agreed to participate, ISV did not respond, and GVI stated that they would not participate due to time constraints. However, Cross Cultural Solutions had to withdraw their participation due to the time of year and the busyness of staff at their office.

From Projects Abroad, interviews conducted with employees working in the operations and sales and marketing departments from both Canada and United Kingdom offices. Emails were sent out to both offices and interviews were granted within 2-6 weeks. Interviews from the operations department were conducted with the uppermost management in the UK office, via telephone. Interviews from the sales and marketing department were conducted with the uppermost management in the Canada office, via in-person interviews. All the individuals interviewed had worked from 2-24 years within the organization.

In the case of ME to WE, attaining access was definitely more of a process. First, I was introduced to management within the organization through a mutual friend both in person and via email. Several weeks later a time was set up for me to be interviewed by several employees from the ME to WE organization. This interview was approximately 30 minutes and I was asked questions related to my background and views on volunteer tourism. I also sent the organization several of the publications that I had written on the topic. Finally, almost a month later the organization agreed to conduct interviews with me. As background, ME to WE had recently received negative publicity from a media source who had apparently misled them about what their actual research intentions were and I can assume this had an impact on their willingness to speak with me. Participants for my study attained were from upper management and operations and had worked from 5-12 years within the organization. All individuals that participated in the interviews were knowledgeable and had considerable experience with the operations of their organization. This experience allowed them to provide insightful comments about the sector and the role of their organization within it.

I attempted to conduct as many interviews as possible from each organization, and , I was given the opportunity to conduct interviews with four people from Projects Abroad and four

people from ME to WE. These individuals were all well versed with regard to the operations of their organization. After agreeing to participate in the interview, participants were sent a letter of introduction outlining what the study entailed (Appendix H), a study consent form (Appendix I), and the interview questions (Appendix J). Consent forms were signed and given back during face-to-face interviews, or signed, scanned or photographed, and emailed back prior to interview commencement. Participants were asked 16 questions. The questions were developed based on the findings from phase one interviews and were shaped to encourage participants to provide insights into their operations and determine the perspectives of implementation strategies for socially responsible tourism, particularly certification.

Interviews were conducted either face-to-face or over the phone. Participants were asked questions about their background information, organization details, and ways to strengthen the volunteer tourism sector in order to determine their perspectives on these key areas. Interview questions were pilot tested with colleagues from the Faculty of Applied Health Sciences at the University of Waterloo. The length of interviews ranged from 40 minutes to 80 minutes, and transcripts of the interviews ranged from 10-22 pages. After the interview a thank you letter was sent to each participant (Appendix K). Once the interviews were transcribed, the transcription of the interview was sent to participants for their review and to ask about any changes or additions that they would like to make. Projects Abroad accepted the interview transcripts as presented. However, every participant from ME to WE edited the details of their transcripts. These edits included grammatical and spelling errors, the content of their responses to their interviews, and clarification of the ideas they discussed during the interview. Participants were assigned a pseudonym to guard their confidentiality (Table 6).

Table 6: Information About Participants - Phase Two

Transcript	Organization	Pseudonym	Department
1	Projects Abroad	Liam	Operations
2	Projects Abroad	Emma	Sales & Marketing
3	Projects Abroad	Noah	Operations
4	Projects Abroad	Olivia	Sales & Marketing
5	ME to WE	Sophia	Client Experience & Global Trip Operations
6	ME to WE	Ava	School & Youth Engagement
7	ME to WE	Mia	ME to WE Trips
8	ME to WE	Ethan	ME to WE Operations

Interview data were analyzed using traditional qualitative coding methods in an effort to extract themes. To determine the themes from these interviews, I utilized the same approach as phase one. First, I read the interviews to discover the general ideas and tried to allocate one or two descriptive words, which gave me a brief picture of what was being said (open coding). Once these topics were identified, I conducted constant comparison and then proceeded to categorize them into codes through line-by-line coding (Charmaz, 2006). This step involved reading each line of the text and providing a code that corresponded with the ideas presented. As with the interview data analysis in phase one, I conducted this coding in Microsoft Word and used the Comments feature to label each line with a code. Figure 5 below provides an example of this.

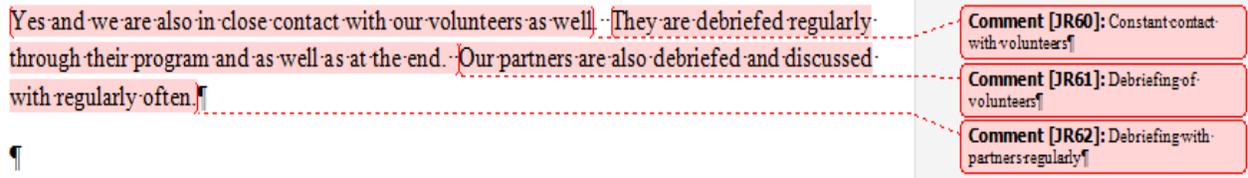


Figure 5: Example of Line by Line Coding

I copied all the codes that I created and pasted them into separate word documents; each document listed the codes for each interview. All the codes listed in the documents were assigned a number, which corresponded with which interview and on what line it could be found on. For example, the code 5-56 represents the fifth person interviewed and fifty-sixth line in the document. Interviews conducted with Projects Abroad started with numbers in the range of 1-4 and interviews conducted with ME to WE ranged from 5-8. Figure 6 shows an example of this:

Organization Responsible for Sustainability

5-56 → Company running program is responsible for sustainability

5-57 → No way to put responsibility on someone else.

5-58 → Duty for companies to make sure they are having positive impacts on communities they
→ work with

6-49 → Sustainability is the responsibility of organizations and facilitating partners

7-56 → Organization responsibility to ensure sustainability

8-69 → Responsibility of sustainability travel provider and creators of programs

Figure 6: Example of Coding

From here, I further re-analyzed the codes that I created and looked for the most descriptive words for the topic and grouped them into categories. To ensure that I did not have too many categories, I re-analyzed them to try and group similar concepts together. Underneath each category, I placed all the correlating codes and went through each code to remove any

redundancies. This occurred until I narrowed down the themes from the data. Throughout this process, I kept memos which discussed any connections or observations that I found when coding the interviews. Throughout the coding process I tried to ensure that I did not place the data into any preconceived codes or categories (Charmaz, 2006; Creswell, 2003).

3.3 Cross-Case Synthesis for Phase Two

To analyze and compare the results from the case studies conducted for the second phase, I utilized cross-case synthesis and analysis. Yin (2014) identifies cross-case synthesis as a technique that can be used when analyzing the results from multiple case studies. To analyze the data from both case studies I took the following steps:

- 1) I summarized all themes and sub-themes from each case study and put them in a table.
- 2) I then printed them out and compared the two to determine if there were any similarities or differences among themes.
- 3) I identified with a checkmark (the ones that were similar and wrote the corresponding page number (from each summary) for reference.
- 4) I identified different themes with the letter 'D'.
- 5) I then reviewed all the similarities and differences and determined the themes across both cases.
- 6) Finally, I wrote up the findings based on the results from the tables that were generated.

The analysis from the tables created for Projects Abroad can be found in Appendix L and for ME to WE in Appendix M.

3.4 Bringing the Phases Together

The interviews conducted during phase one were a stepping stone in terms of helping me to determine what direction to take for phase two of this exploratory study. After analyzing all the data in both phases several major themes had emerged. These themes were then placed in a table (see Table 9 in section 8.2) so that I could analyze and determine what the data were saying in their entirety. Looking at the data in this manner allowed me to make stronger, well supported conclusions to explore the practices of volunteer tourism operators and assess the role of certification as a strategy for socially responsible volunteer tourism.

3.5 Personal Reflections

The idea for this research stems from my experience within the volunteer tourism sector. While I was conducting research for my Master's Thesis at the Elephant Nature Park in 2009, I had the opportunity to talk to volunteers regularly. One of the things that stood out during these conversations was the experiences of volunteer tourists and their suspicion regarding the legitimacy of some of the organizations that they had volunteered with in the past. Questions were raised including: where the money was going? Was the work that volunteers were doing actually useful and providing benefits for the local people? Was the volunteer tourism organization really making a difference in the destination? These questions all led me to think about the accountability of volunteer tourism organizations and the impact of the projects they are involved with. I decided to pursue an investigation into the methods used within tourism that are setup to make organizations more accountable to their stakeholders. While it does present some issues, certification appeared to be a way that could aid in creating accountability for volunteer tourism operators. As such, I decided to determine what operators' views were and to

consider whether it would be possible to create a certification process for volunteer tourism operators.

I understand that by being so close to the subject matter and its content, I would have some pre-conceived notions within this study. I began this study with the view that volunteer tourism can have transformational and positive benefits at a destination, however, there is a vast discrepancy in the quality and intention of providers. I believe that something needs to be done to improve the sector to ensure that it is transparent, accountable, and socially responsible, in line with its promises. As such, I had to make an effort to try and not present my thoughts about these issues during the interview process and to be aware of, and transparent about, the fact that these are the values I bring to this research. During the interview process I also actively refrained from discussing my own opinions on the subject matter with participants, even when they asked me directly. In addition, the second phase of the research was designed with open questions starting with “what”, “how”, or “why” and this made room for participants to share their thoughts as they wished, and to express their own opinions and experiences.

3.6 Strategies for Verifying Findings

Validity is a goal in both quantitative and qualitative research. It is used to determine “whether the findings are accurate from the standpoint of the researcher, the participant, or the reader of an account [...] terms that speak to this idea are trustworthiness, authenticity, and credibility” (Creswell & Miller, 2000, p. 35). The strategies used to validate the findings from my study were: clarification of researcher bias, member checking, presenting contrary views of participants, and peer-debriefing.

Issues of bias within research are addressed by qualitative researchers through an engagement with transparency and reflexivity. The brief discussion presented above regarding my value-orientation to the project, as well as my efforts not to shape the participants' responses is part of this process and lends credibility to the findings. Member checking involves sending the transcribed interviews to participants to confirm what was written is correct and ask if they would like to add anything to it. Presenting negative or discrepant information from interviewees that contradicts the themes that were created increases the credibility of the findings for the reader (Creswell, 2003).

The next chapter will present the findings of phase one of this study that are deemed to be the most pertinent results, which informed the creation of phase two. Specifically, I briefly discuss the main themes that emerged from the analysis of the interviews conducted with key informants from the volunteer tourism sector.

CHAPTER FOUR: FIRST PHASE OF STUDY

4.1 Introduction

This chapter provides a discussion of the findings from the first phase of this study. As discussed in the methods section, the objective of this first phase was to determine the current perceptions of volunteer tourism stakeholders about social responsibility within the volunteer tourism sector. This chapter provides the results of the analysis of interviews with 15 key informants from the volunteer tourism sector. . Through analysis of the interview transcripts, four themes emerged from the data. These themes are: 1) Needing more responsible practices within the sector; 2) Involving stakeholders is essential; 3) Barriers to implementing certification; and 4) Implementing certification will aid sustainability. These themes offer insights into the various stakeholders' perceptions of social responsibility within the sector.

4.2 Needing More Responsible Practices within Sector

From the interviews, it was identified there was a need for more responsible practices within the volunteer tourism sector. It is argued the volunteer tourism sector is not as sustainable as it should be and sustainability varies depending on the organization and location. This lack of sustainability is argued to be caused by an increase of mass tourism within the sector and a focus that is driven by achieving a profitable bottom line. As Scholar 1 discussed:

Do I think that we have a sustainable tourism sector? No I don't, I think that there are pockets of it. I still think that because predominantly mass tourism rules and I still think that we have an economic driver around the concept of tourism.

It is also suggested the majority of volunteer tourism activities are not sustainable. The current practices of many volunteer tourism operations were 15 to 20 years behind other tourism fields in their corporate social responsibility practices. Moreover, it was identified that many of the

tour operators are operating at a high level of community interaction, but do not have any operational policies that address sustainability, and therefore, it is not sustainable. Operator 8 explained:

Currently I would say that the majority of VT is not sustainable. It is like 15-20 years behind where other mainstream tourism activities are. So if you look at codes of practice or if you look at how the big sending organizations are adapting themselves they operate at a fairly high level of community. They don't have any kind of policies that are sustainable tourism. So currently it is quite a mess.

Participants indicated that the current state of the sector can be viewed as unsustainable due to the growth of volunteers and operators engaged in voluntourism, and lack of best practices utilized. It is revealed the current trend may lead to voluntourism being insignificant within the communities it is positioned in. Policy 2 argued:

So voluntourism as it is[...]I mean that I think we can say that as an industry or people who are engaged with tourism the voluntourism as is knowing that there are unsustainable practices is not sustainable because if voluntourism continues...if our industry continues to experience the growth of volunteers or the increase in the number of companies that are engaged in what they say is voluntourism and in whatever way they practice it then the future of this sector is not sustainable because then eventually than you are going to run out of meaningful ways to make a difference with voluntourism.

The lack of regulation within this sector lends to questioning of how much a volunteer tourism project is actually helping the destination, Scholar 3 explained:

For the destinations my main concern is because there are no regulations out there what so ever, it is very hard for you to know how much the project that you are doing or going to do is going to help the destination itself.

Operator 3 discussed the act of volunteering at a destination does not guarantee that the activity is sustainable. There appears to be a focus on the volunteer and the benefits they are receiving

rather than whether the volunteering experience is actually making a difference in the community. Operator 3 stated:

It will only be sustainable if it does those things...if it connects to people. And people feel that it is adding value to their lives. Otherwise by virtue of the fact that you are volunteering doesn't mean that it sustainable it is what you do , what you actually engage in as a volunteer that will make a difference and will decide whether voluntourism is sustainable. So not all voluntourism is sustainable. It is not synonymous with sustainability. At the moment the focus is more on the student/volunteer benefits than on the destination benefits. If you look at a lot of volunteer programs they talk about how they transform the traveler it doesn't talk about how it transforms the destination. The focus should shift and that would help voluntourism.

Furthermore, although tour operators focus on volunteers and their needs, there appears to be a lack of socio-cultural training and background information given to volunteers before they reach their destination. This can have a negative effect on the experiences of the volunteer tourist and the host community, as Operator 5 pointed out:

Many tour operators for example do not send any volunteer information in advance. This is a hole in the information because you can't take information about the client. But if we are talking about the volunteer program we need to know an idea about this person, what they think about...what they are going to do here. Yeah, it is not just accommodation, in our case volunteer is going to a shantytown. We need to know if they understand what a shantytown is and if they feel afraid, or whatever. If the operator sends this information beforehand the experience is successful.

More specifically the lack of best practices implemented within a volunteer tourism business can lead to negative and unsustainable community impacts. Volunteers may be placed into operations without any thought of the actual needs of the area or impacts that their presence may have on the community. Operator 2 suggested this in turn also leads to a creation of unnecessary demand and community members becoming more apathetic as they become dependent on volunteers:

It's not really[...] the way it [volunteer tourism] is organized right now it is not sustainable at all. The reason being exactly like the story I said sending interim volunteers into an area where the source market has no sense what so ever about what is needed, that is unsustainable. Creates unnecessary demands, unnecessary situations and yeah it kills the local urge to do something on their own.

It can be argued volunteer tourism creates dependency for communities if responsible practices are not put in place. For example, as Policy 3 discussed, in times of political unrest, volunteer tourism can have an adverse effect both on the community and on the tourism operation that solely relies on the work and money brought in by volunteer tourism. Policy 3 explained:

For example, in 2008 in Kenya there was a riot and all hell broke loose, everybody was trying to kill each other. You know Kenya is a super popular destination and for volunteer [tourism]. So there was a lot of volunteers there, everyone pulled out their volunteers as soon as they could and it took a year or two to sell Kenya again to send volunteers there. So for those projects that were getting money for every single volunteer that arrived and that were used to getting a volunteer a week, or five volunteers a week that was their main source of income to feed the kids at the orphanage, to teachers in their school, to build buildings [...] whatever trip you want to use as an example. You know all of sudden they were all shit out of luck they were relying on that income and all of a sudden they didn't have it anymore. So a lot of volunteer companies don't give money to the projects but then they get criticized by the volunteers for making a lot of money and being colonialists. I think sometimes volunteer tourism creates aid or alliance and then because they are unstable economies when things happen then they are really in trouble.

Participants discussed tour operators are charging large sums of money to the volunteer tourist and do not pass any of the financial benefits to the community or destination they are engaging with, because they claim that bringing the volunteers to the site is enough. Furthermore, in some cases they do not spend money within the community through home stays or food expenditures, thereby allowing only a select few, or in some cases none at all, within the community to recognize the benefits of tourism in their region. Operator 1 discussed:

I have seen a couple of cases where some of these students companies will have charged them thousands of dollars for their trip and have contacted me and asked me

to set them up and then basically want to go for free. They don't want to give anything to the local group and that by providing volunteer help should be enough. [The tour operator will argue that] Oh we will bring our own food, we will camp and cook for ourselves and be totally self contained you know, and that is not ok.

Policy 1 pointed out that even though more people are becoming aware of the negative consequences of volunteer tourism, creating awareness about the issues surrounding volunteer tourism is essential for improving the whole sector. Due to diversity within the sector, creating a shared understanding about these impacts with volunteer tourism providers and travelers can help the sector as whole. This will allow for more conversations on best practice and aid in creating sustainability. Policy 1 discussed:

I think a lot more people are aware of the negative consequences or the damage that it actually causes. And in the same way I think that many aspects of voluntourism where there are those challenges I think that through increasing awareness among operators and voluntourism providers as well as among travelers that we improve as a whole sector. I think that the more we have a shared understanding of how we can do this in a more sustainable way, a more responsible way and I don't think that there is one right way of doing voluntourism just because it is such a diverse field as with any tourism is.

From the interviews it became clear that there was speculation about the positive impacts the volunteer tourism sector is having within the communities, due to unsustainable practices. Participants identified this is in part due to the increase in the number of travelers and tour operators within volunteer tourism, which has caused concern about the sustainability of the sector as a whole. It was argued that some operators within the sector appear to be mainly focusing on their profits and not providing actual benefits for the communities that they are located in. This lack of social responsibility leads to the questioning of how much a volunteer tourism project is actually helping the community. Participants argued that there appeared to be a lack of best practices implemented within some volunteer tourism businesses. It was identified

that some projects are being created without the consultation of the local community's needs and focus mainly on the volunteers' experiences and their benefits. Participants suggested that volunteers are being brought into places without any socio- cultural training or consideration of what impact their presence may have on the community they visit. There is concern that volunteer tourism can cause dependency on foreign aid and economic resources for the host communities, which can have detrimental long term effects. As such it was argued that there is need for more responsible practices within the sector. The following section will discuss the next theme derived from the interview analysis: involving stakeholders is essential for sustainability.

4.3 Involving Stakeholders is Essential for Sustainability

Stakeholder involvement has been a long-standing sentiment throughout the tourism literature for successful sustainable tourism endeavours. When asked who should be responsible for ensuring sustainability within the volunteer tourism, the answer varied amongst interviewees as to whether it was the tour operators, governments, volunteer tourist, or community's responsibility. One of the most resounding responses amongst half of the interviewees, was that sustainability within the volunteer tourism sector is the responsibility of the tour operator. It is reasoned that the tour operator and supplier are jointly responsible for the delivery of the program and controls recruitment of the volunteers. Operator 6 discussed:

I think it has got to be those that are actually recruiting and actually delivering the programs. So I think that there are a variety of different structures out there where maybe one person, one entity, recruits and maybe another entity delivers the programs. I think that it is the responsibility of both of them to look at sustainability.

Participants noted the tour operator sources an experience, supplier and product to sell to its clients. Many interviewees argued that because tour operators have control over what they

choose to use it is their responsibility to ensure that the product that they do sell is sustainable. They are the starting point for all travelers utilizing their services so they should educate them about the place they are visiting and what is appropriate. Policy 3 explained:

I would say it would come down to the tour operator right? I think that without the tour operators there wouldn't be selling this product to begin with. So if you are going to sell a product then I think that you have to make sure it is responsible. They have all the initial points of contact with the client and the traveler so there is a point in the cycle where you can make sure you are getting the right person or educate them about what to do in country, I mean that all falls on the tour operator to me.

Policy 2 suggested it is the operators' and private sectors' responsibility as they create, run, and staff the volunteer programs and have a vested interest in its success:

The tour operator obviously has costs associated with running a program and getting people to a site and all of that. So they are in it to certainly support their business, but again I don't know if regulation necessarily does all that much and I think the private sector needs to take responsibility where it's doing it.

Furthermore, it is suggested operators should educate their customers about what types of things they should look for, or ask about, at the places they visit. It is believed that this will eventually create a demand for more responsible volunteer tourism operators, and make it more difficult for unsustainable ones. Certification is identified as way to aid in this process. Operator 1 discussed:

I think that the more travelers can be educated on these kinds of things and how to look with a discerning eye and do their research and things like that. Then it will get harder and harder for the ones that don't do it right to survive and hopefully they can weed it out as the travelers and the volunteers get more informed. You know I think that certification program can be a part of that process[...] a part of that education.

Operator 3 also discussed it is the tour operator's responsibility to make a difference within the communities they engage with through volunteer tourism by engaging with local people and understanding the needs of the destination. It is suggested volunteer tourism should

not only be considered as a means to increase their volume of clients, or how fulfilled travelers are, but a way to make a tangible difference within the community. Operator 3 stated:

Those who are organizing [...]the tour operators should not use this to increase the volume of their travel just to add another segment to their travel. It should really be to make a difference in the destination and that means that they have to work and understand those destinations. It always happens the other way around...we organize the tours and we want to understand the volunteers and the operators are more concerned about how fulfilled their travelers are...the volunteer group was and the reports that they write back about how their lives have been transformed and not about the destination.

Furthermore, it is believed that it is the operators' responsibility to seek out good local partner and suppliers. As such, going directly to the source, and not through external intermediaries, is seen as way to really help locals gain benefits from tourism. Operator 5 discussed:

The most important is that operators understand they need to make an effort and look for the good local partners, not the intermediaries. This is really important! In all the countries and all the places it is about good local partners, the people that are really helping locals. They have plans that maybe don't agree with[...] I don't know, fortunately they think of the locals. But it is important that the tour operator looks for these people and not for the prices or whatever.

As a provider of volunteer tourism offerings, Policy 1 identified it is the tour operators' responsibility to work together with the local project managers, NGO's and local communities to aid in ensuring sustainability of the products and services being offered. This allows for the responsibility of sustainability to be shared amongst all stakeholders. Policy one explained:

I think that obviously you are not doing it all by yourself you are working with the local project managers, local NGO's maybe and you should be working together with the local community members. So in a way that responsibility is making sure that everything is sustainable is shared by all these different players are involved in volunteer tourism.

Although tour operators were identified as the main group responsible for ensuring sustainability within the volunteer tourism sector, some respondents argued it should be a joint effort of either all, or some combination, of the stakeholders involved in ensuring the sustainability and viability of this tourism sector. Utilizing an integrated approach is identified as a way to help enrich the experience for those involved, such as the tourist, as they will feel like they are really making a difference. Tour operators should try to make a difference, whether it is environmental or social, in the destinations they operate in and make an effort to understand the destination. Local government agencies should be involved in assisting with creating a self-reliant community where individual members take on ownership and not wait for outsiders to solve their problems. Operator 4 suggested:

I think it should be an integrated approach...Umm those who are involved should be in it not to just enrich their experience and their world knowledge but to really feel that they are really contributing and making a difference. Those who are organizing...the tour operators should not use this to increase the volume of their travel just to add another segment to their travel. It should really be to make a difference in the destination and that means that they have to work and understand those destinations. It always happens the other way around...we organize the tours and we want to understand the volunteers and the operators are more concerned about how fulfilled their travelers are...the volunteer group was and the reports that they write back about how their lives have been transformed and not about the destination. And governments should step in so we can avoid what I said earlier on, which is communities or people sitting behind waiting for someone to come and paint their wall. I think everyone has a role to play.

Scholar 1 discussed the importance for all parties (government, community, volunteers, and operators) to work together to ensure sustainability. Most host communities are not aware of what best practice tools they can use towards sustainability so creating partnerships and working together can create awareness and change about issues. Scholar 1 discussed:

Actually, I think for me it is like health and safety at work, it is everybody's responsibility. So for me I think it is that. So governments need to be involved in that. Organizations need to be involved in that. People who engage in that marketplace, so the volunteers, need to do that. I mean one of the problems with host communities is even though host communities are not aware of what the best environmental practices are themselves in some of the developing countries. So you know part of that is trying to teach them, but then of course you get those conversations around neocolonialism and imperialism and those sorts of things. So there is a delicate balance going on amongst those conversations but I definitely think sustainability should be a responsibility of everyone.

Every stakeholder has a different understanding of how to operate and it is the responsibility of all parties and sectors to be involved in sustainability, Operator 5 explained:

Each person understands something but only with the efforts of all, we will achieve sustainable tourism. Each sector can help so the rest are conscious and this is responsibility of the operators and governments towards their people and clients.

Scholar 3 concurred with this idea of encouraging all stakeholders to be involved and also specifically identified that the government should be working towards creating national strategies for sustainability within volunteer tourism in their country. Furthermore, she argued it is also the tourist's responsibility to be aware and informed of where and what they are participating in:

All of them....I think the only way sustainability works is that everyone accepts responsibility for how it operates. I am a firm believer that the government should be working towards national volunteer tourism strategies at the moment in any country that it is occurring so that there is a national level. And I firmly believe that tourists should get themselves well informed about where they are going and the projects, and the areas and the cultures that they are going to.

Participants noted that community involvement in tourism planning is important and community members should have more of a say in what is occurring at the destination. It is also the tour operator's responsibility to identify the need and necessity of their volunteer tourism product at the destination. Furthermore, it is suggested that if government was more involved in capacity

and skill building within their countries perhaps there would be no need for external volunteers.

Operator 2 specified:

There are multiple stakeholders. Community at the end of the day has to have a larger say in everything that is happening in the sector. But at the same time tour operators for example, they have a role in the sense of identifying if there is a need. One is ok you need to do business...but you can do business in different ways...so providing the correct amount of information to the travelers, to the travel agents makes a huge difference for interacting . And then government for example, definitely they have a role depending on the scale of volunteers who are coming in. Probably, if it is going into an area if government was actually investing that amount of money in a certain amount of capacity building probably you don't need these volunteers because that capacity could give them the skills to say no to these volunteers who are actually coming in from outside.

Although most of the participants acknowledged the importance of tourism operators and all stakeholder involvement as essential for sustainability other participants also voiced that community involvement, governments and tourist were separately responsible. In order for volunteer tourism to have positive results at a destination it is argued projects should be locally based and community led and driven. Scholar 2 discussed:

It has got to be not just community participation but community led and driven. And it has to have locally based organizations that are part of it and you have to have a strong direction from the local community or all the negative things will come to pass.

For instance, it was identified community involvement in assisting, creating and evaluating volunteer tourism projects appears to be lacking within the sector. Some projects are created and brought into communities without the consultation of local people, i.e. "short-cutting" the process. Community involvement has been identified as a way to ensure sustainability within volunteer tourism. It is argued creating partnerships allows for the benefits of tourism to be realized by the community and provides a more authentic experience for the

volunteer tourist. Furthermore, monitoring of the initiatives that are in place to determine whether they are actually having a beneficial impact is also important for sustainability. Scholar 4 discussed:

Volunteer Tourism, I think to make it more sustainable more engagement with communities over longer periods of time. So where you go through a process with that community of developing projects and having those projects run, and evaluating those projects. What you are finding at the moment is that the front and back end of that, the creating and evaluating of the projects is getting shortcutted. There is not enough work going on in those areas and if you can get that working properly I think it will be more sustainable. Those projects in those communities will have more sustainability in the future. But what you are finding now is just the focus of getting in there and doing something without the proper mechanisms being put in place to ensure that there are benefits. And I think that will shortcut the sustainability issue because in the end those communities will be disadvantaged and I don't think that the experiences for the volunteer will be acceptable if you don't do that. If it is not a genuine project, volunteer tourists tend to react really negatively.

It is also suggested by participants that some of the responsibility of sustainability falls on the tourists. They have the ability to ask probing questions about the places they visit as well as the tour operators. Operator 6 discussed:

Definitely, tourist should do their due diligence and to be...ummm...true to themselves and what they are really looking to accomplish and asking the hard questions of the people they plan to go with.

Policy 1 further explained the tourist is the main source of funding for projects and therefore the tourist has a powerful position within the sector. Tourists will influence what is occurring at a destination based on the travel choices they make and therefore what occurs at the volunteer tourism site they visit. As Policy 1 stated:

I think that the tourist's role has the opportunity to influence maybe more so than anyone else because it is the same in any type of tourism they do have the opportunity to influence how things are done...umm...because they are the ones

that are funding it in the end. They are the ones that pay the bills.... I think that they are definitely responsible for what they do and how they do when they participate in volunteer tourism.

It is also argued, however, the responsibility of sustainability within a destination cannot solely fall on the tourist as they are not educated about all the various aspects involved within tourism. As such, it was identified that destination sustainability should mainly be the focus of the inbound government and tour operator. It is the government and tour operators' responsibility to ensure the projects have value, are sustainable, and have no negative impacts on the destination. It is also their responsibility to educate the traveler to understand the importance of becoming more responsible in their travel decisions. Operator 7 discussed:

I think that it is a combination; I don't think the responsibility can fall on any of the tourist. You don't know what you don't know and if you are buying a product from a travel company you would hope that whatever you are buying would not lead you to have any negative impacts without your knowledge right. So I think it is important that government and the private sector actually work to ensure that their products or their volunteer projects are have value or are sustainable with no negative impacts and ...that part of their responsibility is to educate the traveler so that they can be a more responsible traveler. But I don't think that it is on the onus of the tourists themselves to make sure they are educated about every possible thing before they go and be the most responsible traveler.

Others argued the main responsibility of sustainability should start at the government level. It is suggested that government involvement in social issues would aid in the number of volunteers needed, or not needed, within a destination. Operator 4 suggested:

And then government for example, definitely they have a role depending on the scale of volunteers who are coming in. Probably, if it is going into an area if government was actually investing that amount of money in a certain amount of capacity building probably you don't need these volunteers because that capacity could give them the skills to say no to these volunteers who are actually coming in from outside.

More specifically, the government should enforce certain restrictions, through legislation, on the type of work volunteers can do within their country. It is suggested that government should aid in monitoring the types of volunteers allowed, specifically through legislation, to perform specific duties within a project. For example, an 18 year old who does not have any teaching certification should not be allowed to teach in schools in a developing country because they are not qualified to do so. Government involvement is believed to be an essential aspect to bringing about change within the sector. The issue that arises is the lack of capacity and resources within government agencies to embark on such changes. Operator 8 explained:

How do we bring about change within a sector? Part of it can be around government and they can provide incentive and provide legislation. What I don't understand is that in the developed world there are very strict rules as to what is acceptable. So for example in many parts of the developed world you can't work with children unless you have been screened somewhere....and yet when people come to the developing world we must except that they don't want to screen people. We have 18 year olds teaching in schools in Africa, why are they teaching in schools? They are not teachers....are they allowed to teach in the countries where they come from...the answer is no. So if we can apply the practices that are in the developed world to what is happening here in volunteer tourism then we will go somewhere.

From the interviews it became evident that stakeholder involvement in planning volunteer tourism projects at a destination was as an essential aspect for encouraging sustainability of projects and their effects on the community. Participants identified that the main stakeholders of volunteer tourism are tour operators, NGO's, government agencies, volunteer tourists, and community members. It was agreed by most of the respondents that sustainability within the volunteer tourism sector should be the main responsibility of the tour operator. This resonated strongly amongst participants and many argued this was due to the level of control tour operators have over the projects they create for volunteers. Specifically, this related to their control in the

suppliers they use, the experiences they offer, the interactions and partnerships they have with the community, and the ability to educate their clients about the places they visit. Furthermore, it was argued that it is the tour operators' responsibility to work together with local project managers, NGO's and local communities to aid in ensuring the sustainability of the products and services they are offering. While tour operators were clearly identified by participants as the main group that should be held accountable, involvement of all stakeholders was deemed as the next most important aspect for creating sustainability within the sector. Specifically, it was identified by participants that members of the community should be more involved in the types of projects being created; tourists' should ask more questions and be more aware of the types of destinations that they choose; and the government should be more involved in placing restrictions on the work that tourists can do while on vacation. It was concluded by participants that involving and consulting stakeholders in volunteer tourism projects allows for the responsibility of sustainability to be shared amongst all stakeholders. The next section will discuss the third theme identified within the analysis of interviews with key informants.

4.4 Barriers to Consider When Implementing a Certification

From the interviews, there were several potential barriers and weaknesses suggested by interview participants that may need to be overcome when implementing a certification for volunteer tourism. One of the main potential barriers identified was the higher costs for businesses in participating in a certification scheme. Operator 6 further explained certifications are expensive and this in turn can isolate small operators and non-profits from participating. He stated:

I am not convinced that it is going to be an effective tool. The reason being that having seen some different certification programs whether they be relate to fair trade to or organic certifications it seem that they are expensive to get involved with. And that is what I would say is a weakness in the certification scheme, because only a portion of the people or the operators involved or non-profits could afford to be part of them.

Furthermore, it was argued that NGO's and tour operators that were only making small profits may be inclined to follow the criteria on their own initiative, but may not take the extra step to be certified as they cannot afford it. Larger corporations and tour operators are seen as more likely to become certified due to their financial situation. Scholar 2 discussed:

There is always the financial issue, if it is too expensive than people won't necessarily want to be involved and it also ...often times people will look at the criteria and follow them but they won't make that extra step of being certified just because of the expense. So I think that is always the number one barrier, especially when you are talking about the NGO market and the folks that are not necessarily the for profit tour operators. You know you can see the glitzy Ritz Carlton's jumping on the band wagon and getting there....ummmm.....you can see them investing in it because they have the money.

It was also identified that within the sector there is perhaps a lack of certification awareness by consumers. This is presented as a barrier as it is believed that utilizing certification may not provide any benefits for attracting consumers to businesses. Operator 7 explained:

I think that certification is really only as effective as the level of awareness among consumers who are going to purchase that product. Because if people don't know that it exists, or they don't care, and even if an organization is certified it is not going to be....or not certified.....it is not going to make a difference to the consumer.

Operator 5 further elaborated that certification is only good if the customer is aware of it.

Furthermore, this awareness affects the validity and transparency of the operations which can be corroborated for its legitimacy by the tourist. She said:

Another important thing is that certifications are good as long as users (tourists, volunteers) know them. A simple logo does not mean that a company is “responsible”. This logo must be accompanied by rules that the company can follow and that clients can corroborate their legitimacy.

Operator 1 explained in the case of volunteer tourism, where in many cases there are low profit margins for operators, the implementation of an expensive certification may not be appealing to operators if they feel their consumers are not aware of it. For the tour operator it is essential that they feel that they are receiving any return on their investment when participating in a certification. Hence, high visibility and strong marketing efforts are important for ensuring the uptake of volunteer tourism certification. He stated:

And then when you get into volunteer tourism, especially ones that are run by non-profits I am sure that is something that you have to think about.....the cost. ...and I think for tourism companies to be convinced of its value a lot of them want to see what kind of ROI they are going to get . So I think one of the things of certification....I think they are starting to....in terms of the tourism certification programs....to think about ways to market the certification....But I think that is key for any certification program is that the visibility of it, the marketing of it, so people know what it is and search it out...you know that has been the key to organic certification.

Implementing a volunteer tourism certification is deemed to be better than none at all. This is based on the idea that having some sector engagement with a certification is still more beneficial. However, Scholar 1 cautions that historically some certifications have not been as successful as expected:

I don't think it can do any harm. I think that it is better to implement them and put them in and even though you don't engage everybody you might engage some people and therefore I think it is better to do than no to do it. Do I see it as something that will totally work, well experience tells me from other codes of conduct and other practices around whether you call it certification, codes of conduct, guidelines, accreditation, because people use those terms sometimes interchangeably even though they are different. I think many of those have not worked in the past as much as it would have been liked to.

This view of being ineffective relates specifically to some of the current tourism certifications and their short falls regarding implementation and monitoring. The efficacy of some of the certifications currently in place within the tourism industry is being questioned and it is suggested that this may inhibit sector uptake. Policy 2 discussed:

I think like anything, when done poorly, the weaknesses can mean nothing more than a sheet of paper for an entity that is certified. I know plenty of programs out there that you sign up, you fill in a form, you submit and you are certified. Those are not productive; they don't strive to meet the result that we are all looking for.

It is also argued that there is currently a plethora of tourism certifications and those in existence are more like laundry list of things to do than an effective means of industry regulation. There needs to be more tangible and attainable goals implemented within the certification that operators can implement within their business. It was also pointed out that this can lead to the volunteer tourism sector questioning the creation of another certification. Operator 2 explained:

There are already so many certifications...the first question that is going to come from the industry is why another certificate why don't we just fit into something that is already there. Like for example GSTC has compiled everything and put up a long list...so people will ask why don't we just follow that? But then the problem with the whole GSTC thing is that it is a laundry list. You can't make a difference through a laundry list...you know you need to be targeted, you need to be specific...you need to say that ok this year I am going to invest my money into alternative energy so I am going to work on my operation so that it works.

It is argued that tourists will relate to things that are tangible and directly have an effect on them. Standards need to be customer driven and created in a way that tourists can directly recognize and identify with. Some certifications within the industry are written in a way that may not be easy for non-academics to understand or relate to. Scholar 4 pointed out that many certifications are too theoretical which may lend to their ineffectiveness and use within the tourism industry. Scholar 4 discussed:

Certification as a tool is only going to work when you have an industry where the results of the certificate matter to the visitor. Why does the European Blue Flag for Beaches work? It works because it is basically saying to customers if you go to a beach that has the blue flag the beach is not polluted. If it doesn't have a blue flag more importantly it is a polluted beach and you will end up being sick. The tourist doesn't necessarily care about the environmental sustainability of the beach or the biodiversity indicators, they care whether their children while they are swimming in the beach, or playing in the sand, are going to find dog poo or is going to be[...] slew liquid waste or solid waste thrown away nearby and therefore you drink from that water and you will have diarrhea or worse. So what we haven't done with sustainability standards...ever... is created standards that are customer driven. We have created standards that are written by anthropologists, sociologists, biologists and so on[...] which sound great if what we are doing is an academic exercise. But they are not particularly useful when we are doing an exercise that has to be communicated to consumers in the way that they can understand it.

Finally, although there are some potential challenges to implementing a certification, Operator 8 questioned the lack of alternatives within the sector:

Certification can be a tool, but again it depends on the delivery of the detail, how it is being implemented. What is the credibility of that certification, and more importantly how accessible is that certification. Because if it costs too much than it excludes small operators. But a good certification does cost [...]because it takes a while. One of the weaknesses in certification is that there are so many, and the cost is an issue and is a challenge. There are a lot of people who are critical of certification, but my question is to them is what are the alternatives?

In this section, participants identified several potential barriers and weaknesses that would need to be considered when implementing a certification for volunteer tourism. Higher costs for businesses that are participating in a certification scheme were voiced as one possible barrier to implementation. This was considered to be more of an issue for small operators and non-profits that may not be able to afford to subscribe to a certification, but may be willing to follow the criteria outlined. Relatedly, participants noted that larger corporations and tour operators are deemed more likely to participate in a certification due to their financial situation.

As well, participants discussed the number of certifications in the industry and argued that a reputation for not being effective could play a role in uptake of volunteer tourism certification. Lack of certification awareness by consumers was also discussed as a hindrance. Participants explained operators may not be willing to participate in a certification if they feel their customers don't recognize the benefits of a certified business. As such it was suggested that high visibility and strong marketing efforts are key to ensuring the uptake of volunteer tourism certification. Participants suggested that presenting a certification scheme in an easy to follow format with attainable and tangible indicators could be a way to aid in implementation. It was also discussed that tourists would more likely seek out sustainable practices if they could tangibly see the importance of it. It was argued that this visibility could potentially reinforce the demand for such initiatives for the operator. Although it was identified that historically some certifications have not been as successful as expected, it was still thought that implementing a volunteer tourism certification is better than not having one at all. Under the current trajectory of unsustainable business practices within the volunteer tourism sector, participants argued that although there are some potential challenges to implementing a certification the lack of alternatives within the sector suggest that it should still be considered. The next section will discuss the final theme derived from the analysis, implementing a certification will aid in sustainability.

4.5 Implementing a Certification Will Aid in Sustainability

Although within the interviews there were various factors discussed as impeding certification implementation, creating a certification program is viewed by participants as a way to help move the volunteer tourism sector towards more sustainable practices. In fact, 11 of the 15 respondents identified certification as a way to monitor and improve practices within the

sector. Policy 2 suggested certification raises the acceptable level of operations for businesses, especially if there is monitoring by a third party not directly involved in operations. She suggests that it can be a "gold star" for operations, as it raises the bar in terms of expectations of the business and the volunteer tourism sector. Furthermore, it has the potential to positively change how things are done within in the sector and is something that tourism businesses should strive towards. She states:

I do yeah; I think it helps raise the bar. I don't think that it is the only way to go, but I think on the spectrum of things it is sort of the gold star. Especially when it has all the right pieces in place to verify and establish a third party review of what is going on. I think it has great potential to change how we do things and ultimately to create a venue for positive change in the tourism industry itself. I see it as the gold star; I don't see it as the necessity for every single entity to immediately engage in to be sustainable. But on the spectrum of things it's something I believe we should all strive for. I think it provides clarity in the industry and it raises the bar for the industry to get on board with what they should be on board with because out of any industry that exists out there tourism is place dependant.

Operator 3 suggested that certification creates more accountability for operators and aids in providing best practice examples. Sustainability must be the focus, strategy and objective embodied by a company, and certification can aid it in transforming to this. He stated:

Certification would help transform it to another level. People will feel like they are more accountable. But whether it ends up being sustainable is more about a company's policies. So if we don't have sustainability as a company's strategies in the first place we are not going to implement piecemeal because we are doing voluntourism. Sustainability...the thread has to run through the company, and company strategy and company focus, and objectives. So having it as a certification itself will help to transform voluntourism to become a sustainable segment.

Scholar 1 further discussed certification may aid in dealing with the quality and offerings of broker organizations located in the poorer destinations. She explained:

What we do need to do is look at the really poor parts of marketplace and try to control those. For me for example, broker organizations are a real nightmare and so you know it would be good if there was some way we could control the quality I suppose of those organizations, I don't know how we would do that, certification might work, but you know those are the things that we need to look at.

Certification provides benchmarks that operators can utilize as guidelines for their businesses to aid in sustainability. It allows them to strive towards specific goals and realize and implement strategies that they may not have considered prior to the certification. Operator 1 explained:

I think giving benchmarks to strive towards [...] you know at the very least it encourages the ones that have the right mind set to think more deeply about their operations [...] you know through the different aspects of their operation. They may be doing their best and doing a very good job but they may not have thought of you know certain things and so these kinds of thing that give goals and you know things to strive for than[...] yeah [...] I think definitely

Furthermore, creating a certification for volunteer tourism will provide operators with a tool for training their employees as well as provide a template which will aid in their operation's ability to meet sustainable practices. Scholar 4 argued that providing attainable operations lists for operators will allow them to move towards sustainability, and stated:

I think you need indicators or particularly management tools that are very practical and that allow them (operator) to basically have a whole battery of things that they can do. They can search within that list according to their skills, according to their budget, according to their payback period that is required. And basically allow them to tick things off and when they tick certain things off the tool itself is intelligent enough and recommends to them from the types of things you have chosen to do so far we recommend that the next easiest thing for you to do is X."

Scholar 3, further discussed certification not only provides guidelines for the business but it also provides positive affirmation for operators. It showcases to the rest of the world, the

operators who are utilizing best practices and have implemented sustainable policies within their businesses. He stated:

Well certification [...] the good (aspect) is that it gives them guidelines and a good sense of boundaries to operate within. So it gives them some idea of what is acceptable within that area of the industry and that can be a good thing. It gives the better operators, the ones that are really keen, some affirmation that what they are doing they are doing it well. It enables the evaluation of the industry itself to say that here are some best practice operators that we can show to the rest of the world.

A volunteer tourism certification will provide an outward verification for the operations of an organization. It also aids in creating a tangible transparency of operations for customers.

Operator 7 discussed:

I think that certification [...] the idea of certification is good because you would hope that if it is evenly distributed if every organization had to work towards certification and if you didn't have it you weren't considered a company that should be purchased from. Like having the green pass sticker on a restaurant, you are not going to go to it if you think that maybe they didn't pass.

Policy 2 concurred, and discussed how certification is an aid that can be used by the public as a way to identify which operators are utilizing sustainable practices. She stated:

You know I think we are pretty good on tour operations and hotels, but there are, as you know, so many other sectors out there and we are not there yet we do not have criteria for every single one. So I think ultimately a certification program for volunteer tourism could help verify and clear up to the public eye that this particular organization is doing a bang up job at meeting the guidelines that are established by the industry themselves.

Participants identified certification will help to create more transparency with business practices. It helps to create awareness within the tour operator and encourages them to reflect on their current business model. It is argued that it creates more accountability for their operations they never know when a client may ask a question about their operations. However, lack of

monitoring, of a certification is identified as a weakness of many certifications. Operator 3 suggested:

The one strength of certification is that it creates awareness and I also believe that it reaches also the conscious of the operators and so that it makes them feel guilty and reduce the bad things they do. They don't know who knows about it and when the question is going to pop up from their client. So yeah it keeps them on their toes and yeah we don't know we might be asked this and will have to do something about it. So many of them will gloss over it and try to do some of the things in their certification program but again the weakness is who monitors.

Scholar 2 discussed certification has the potential to help but only if it is developed correctly and there are enough stakeholders involved in determining what the certification should be. Furthermore, the certification should facilitate regular assessments of the business being certified, and not be a one off occurrence with no monitoring attached to it. Scholar 2 explained:

I think if it is done correctly there is definitely potential there for certification to be able to help. [It is dependent on] whether or not the certification is developed correctly and if there are enough people who are both practitioners and part of the local communities who are involved in determining what the certifications are . If they include things like you know regular updates and regular assessments to maintain that certifications and it is not just a one shot deal. Again all the things that we learned from ecotourism that we need to be pretty aware of the differences from one place to another as to what makes for a good certification. Their transparency both financially and sort of socio-culturally what else they are doing, their activities are transparent to people.

Operator 5 also discussed a volunteer tourism certification can work but it is must contain substance and be legitimate in its proceedings. Furthermore, she argued it would take time and stakeholder involvement during its creation to ensure its credibility. She stated:

Yes, I totally agree with certifications when they are not empty, when they say what they are certifying. Of course all the people who are behind this certification will be strong in the things that they are doing. For this reason I think that certification must be built with time, with exchange and with information defining words and I think it is good. Maybe this will help.

Finally, Operator 4 explained certification is an effective tool if driven by the sector and they feel that they are receiving benefits from it. Industry uptake is the key to any certifications success.

He stated:

I think it will be an effective tool if you can make it in a way that it is driven by the industry. That it so clear benefits linked to the industry. I am not an industry person but industry will always say that it is all good but they will hide behind 'I have a business to run' and this is costing too much. We don't have the capacity, we don't know how to do it. The only way certification becomes efficient and important is that it reaches a critical mass. If it doesn't reach a critical mass it's those who are already doing good, you know, and they don't need certification because they are doing it.

During the interviews, it became apparent that although participants identified that there were several possible barriers to certification a large majority of participants were in favour of the creation of a volunteer tourism certification for the sector. Volunteer tourism certification was identified as a way to increase sustainability of operators within the sector. Participants discussed that it could be a way to make operators more accountable for their actions and increase the quality and experience of the volunteer tourism product being offered, especially in developing communities. From the interviews it was identified that certification could play a role in setting standards for best practice and provides benchmarks that operators could utilize as guidelines to aid in creating sustainable practices within their operations. Participants identified that certification would increase employee training and customer relations within volunteer tourism organizations. Certification was also identified as a means to provide transparency and verification to the outside world about a business's sustainable practices. Implementing a properly developed certification process that allows for accountability through the use of monitoring initiatives was identified by participants as an important aspect in ensuring the credibility of a certification. Participants concluded that volunteer tourism certification may

work if implemented correctly and developed through the aid and support of all the stakeholders involved within the sector.

4.6 Conclusion

From the analysis of interviews it was identified that there is a clearly expressed need for more responsible practices and stakeholder involvement within the volunteer tourism sector. Implementing a certification process for the sector was identified as one way to encourage best practices, however, concern was raised about issues surrounding implementation. As such further research was conducted to gather perspectives from operators. Specifically, gaining insights from employees from other volunteer tourism organizations about whether and how they utilize socially responsible initiatives within their operations and practices. Phase two, which involved case study analyses of two large commercial volunteer tourism organizations: Projects Abroad and ME to WE was then conducted. The following three chapters provide the results of the second phase of this research.

CHAPTER FIVE: CASE STUDY OF PROJECTS ABROAD

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the case study of Projects Abroad. First, I set the stage for the discussion by introducing the organization, outlining the history, current operations, and the types of volunteer projects they offer, as well as their fees. Research was attained about the organization through interviews with employees and by conducting a review of the organization's website and its publications. This background work, presented below, provides the foundation for the second part of the chapter, which includes the outcome of the analysis of the interviews conducted with four members of the organization. The chapter ends with a discussion of the major findings from the case study.

5.2 Background

Projects Abroad (PA) was created in 1992 by Dr. Peter Slowe, a former Geography professor in the United Kingdom. Dr. Slowe was approached in the early 1990's by some students who wanted to have a break from their studies and were looking for opportunities to volunteer abroad (Projects Abroad Canada, 2015). He decided to help them in their search and soon discovered that it was difficult to find such trips. Utilizing his academic contacts, Peter decided to create an opportunity for his students to teach English at schools in Romania. For the next five years, PA consisted of two part-time staff that would send university students to Eastern Europe to teach English. With the popularity of these types of trips growing, PA began to expand worldwide (Projects Abroad Canada, 2015).

PA is a global for-profit business that has been operating for 20 years. The head office is in the United Kingdom and they have recruitment offices all over the world from Tokyo to Toronto and Adelaide to New York City (Projects Abroad UK, 2015). Projects Abroad also has an office at each of their 30 volunteer project destinations. Volunteer projects are located in Africa, Asia, Eastern Europe, South Pacific, Latin America and the Caribbean. PA employs over 500 trained staff at various destinations (Projects Abroad Canada, 2015). It also has a Board of Directors, and Figure 7 provides an organizational chart of the departments within PA. This chart was created based on information provided by the organization, as no chart was provided.

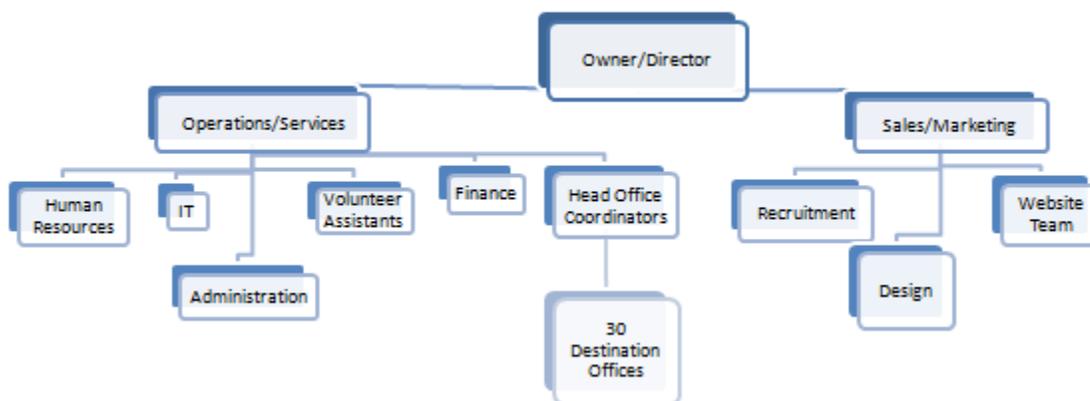


Figure 7: Organizational Chart of Projects Abroad

As was shared during the interviews with key players from the organization, over the past 20 years PA has sent approximately 170,000 volunteers to their projects worldwide. In 2015, the organization sent just under 10,000 volunteers around the world, approximately 20 percent from Britain, 20 percent from France, 20 percent from the US and the rest from other European countries, Japan and a few other countries. The average age of volunteers is between 18-25

years old. Of these projects approximately 25-50 percent are created by PA and 50-75 percent are pre-established projects within the destination.

5.2.1 Mission and Values

The mission of Projects Abroad is:

To encourage young people to volunteer for worthwhile work in developing countries. We expect that doing this kind of voluntary work will in time become the norm. As more and more people join us, we aim to create a multi-national community with a passion to serve, to learn, to understand, to teach, to inspire, and to be inspired (Projects Abroad Canada, 2015).

PA also outlines a set of values that govern their operations including:

CONTRIBUTION: We believe in helping where help is needed, even in far-away places, whether it is needed by an individual, an organization, an environmental project, or an entire community; we respond to need as effectively as we can with our abilities and our resources.

COMPANY: We believe that the most efficient way to organize people and resources for our activities is through a for-profit company; it allows for the pooling of resources and the dispersal of risk, and it encourages innovation.

COMMUNITY: We believe that our colleagues, our volunteers, and our partners, who make up our multi-national community, determine our success. We recognize that each individual has a unique ability to contribute, which we must nurture.

CULTURE: We believe in the value of cultural exchange between young people from different communities; such exchange helps to create a world with greater mutual respect and understanding (Projects Abroad Canada, 2015).

Each volunteer project that PA has within a destination also has 8-9 stated goals that the community can possibly ascribe to. These goals are chosen by PA staff and community members at individual projects. Though not all goals are met at a project at one time, they are based on what the community and PA decide for the project. The main types of projects that PA offers consist of *Care Programs*, *Medical Programs*, and *Teaching Programs*. The missions of these three projects are listed below:

1. *Care Program* - to provide sustainable educational support, care and protection to disadvantaged children and vulnerable groups to enhance their physical, social, emotional and cognitive development.
2. *Medical Program* - to enable an exchange of medical knowledge and facilitate a greater understanding of global healthcare practices. By empowering local communities, we aim to improve standards of health through awareness, prevention and treatment.
3. *Teaching Program* - provide sustainable educational support within disadvantaged schools and communities to reduce inequality in education. Through our volunteers, we aim to empower underprivileged students by improving their future prospects and equipping them with the skills needed to actively engage in a multi-national community (Projects Abroad UK, 2015).

A list of the goals of these three programs can be found online. Each program also has a management plan, which outlines how the project will be run along with the goals of the

program. Examples of management plans and list of goals can be found at : www.projects-abroad.ca.

In addition, PA is also a member and partner of various membership organizations that are involved with setting best practices and principles for their members involved in volunteering. These include the International Volunteer Programs Association (IVPA) (2015), The Year Out Group (2015), and the British Foreign Commonwealth Office Know Before You Go Campaign (Gov.uk, 2015; Projects Abroad Canada, 2015). PA also measures their impacts at destinations to determine how they are meeting their mission and values, which will be discussed in the next section.

5.2.2 Self - Identified Impacts:

On their website, PA states that it is committed to responsible travel whether in the office or at their projects. To demonstrate this their website outlines three types of impacts: 1) human, 2) environmental, 3) cultural exchange and supporting local business. The website also outlines the external organizations that they are involved with to illustrate their broader societal support. The following sections will discuss each of their stated impacts.

5.2.2.1 Human Impact

The human impact is specific to PA's volunteers, host families, partner organizations and staff. For volunteers, PA outlines the importance of staff support and guidance for the volunteers to ensure that their experience is memorable and hassle-free. PA identifies this as their primary responsibility to the volunteer. For the host families, PA works with local communities to place volunteers ensuring the host family has regular income. For the volunteer it provides experiences with the potential to have a long-term effect on their perceptions and attitudes. For

partner organizations, PA identifies two principles that guide their relationships. First, PA tries to ensure that volunteering does not replace local employment. Second, PA ensures that the local partner organization does not incur any costs (Projects Abroad Canada, 2015).

PA also raises money for their projects through their associated charity the Reconstruction Project. Money raised through this charity is described as directly benefitting selected projects that PA sends their volunteers to (Projects Abroad Canada, 2015). They also support the Tore Eikeland Foundation, a scholarship program for students from Osteroy, Norway which aims to make sustainable impacts within rural communities in Africa which is in line with Tore's values (Tore Eikeland Foundation, 2015; Projects Abroad Canada, 2015). PA states this is achieved through creating Tore Villages, a development model which "focuses on alleviating poverty through a holistic approach to ensure that there is a sustainable impact while focusing our resources in one community at a time" (Projects Abroad Canada, 2015).

5.2.2.2 Environmental Impact

Projects Abroad Canada (2015) recognizes the environmental impacts of tourism. In their documentation they state that "the time invested into traveling by their volunteers cannot be likened to that of a luxury traveler who stays at a resort". The PA website states "without volunteers, there would be no PA. It is thanks to these ten thousand volunteers who work in a developing country every year that we are able to continue functioning" (Projects Abroad Canada, 2015). For their own staff, PA offsets the carbon emissions incurred from traveling from one location to the next by contributing to a carbon offsetting organization.. In addition to offsetting emissions, they also describe efforts to reduce their footprint by planting trees and other Conservation and Environmental Projects, which are discussed in more detail below (Projects Abroad Canada, 2015). Furthermore, they have created the Global Shark Campaign,

which creates awareness and provides research and data to contribute to the conservation of all shark species. The project headquarters is in Fiji, but PA is also utilizing their marine conservation projects in Thailand and Cambodia to aid in this cause (Projects Abroad Canada, 2015).

5.2.2.3 Cultural Exchange and Supporting Local Businesses

Projects Abroad Canada (2015) identifies several impacts in terms of cultural exchange. On their website PA states "volunteers on all of our projects are encouraged to learn some of the local language. [...] Speaking even a little of the local tongue goes a long way to integrating further with the people and communities with which volunteers are working" (Projects Abroad Canada, 2015). PA offers language courses to their volunteers to facilitate this. The second component of cultural exchange occurs during the introduction into the project on the first day of volunteering. This includes explaining issues of cultural diversity, outlining the norms of the country and appropriate ways to behave. Finally, PA notes that living with the host family allows volunteers to immerse themselves in the local customs and experience what it is like to live in that country. In terms of their impact of supporting local businesses, PA identifies that their contribution to the local economy occurs on a weekly basis, at the destination, through their support of local transportation, markets, teachers, etc. (Projects Abroad Canada, 2015).

This section has outlined the best practices and guidelines that PA uses in its operations. The missions, goals, and impacts that PA outlines in public documents and on its website illustrates their commitment to practicing responsible travel within their organization. The purpose of providing this information is to create an understanding of PA's operational standards and provides part of the backdrop to the analysis of interviews with participants. In the next section, I discuss PA's volunteer tourism projects.

5.2.3 Volunteer Projects

Projects Abroad offers seven types of volunteer experiences. The options for projects depends on the volunteer’s preference and the location of the projects. The length of time spent at a project varies and is also dependent on the project type. Projects Abroad Canada (2015) states "most projects have a minimum duration of 4 weeks, but some are available for shorter durations". Figure 8 shows the types of projects that are offered by Projects Abroad Canada (2015) as well as the age range, duration, start dates and staff support for each type of project.

WHICH PROJECT IS BEST FOR ME?							
							
AGE RANGE	Anyone (16+)	Anyone (16+)	Teens (16-19)	University Age (18-22)	Gap Year (18-19)	Professionals (30+)	Anyone (50+)
DURATION	Flexible	Flexible	2-4 Weeks	1 Week	8 Months	Flexible	2 Weeks
START DATES	Flexible	Flexible	Fixed - Summer/ Winter/ Spring	Fixed - Spring	Fixed - Fall	Flexible	Fixed - Spring and Fall
STAFF SUPPORT	Weekly	Weekly	Constant	Daily	Weekly	Weekly	Daily

Figure 8: Which Project is Best for Me?

(Projects Abroad Canada, 2015).

To provide a concise description for this case, the following section provides details about two types of projects that PA offers: Volunteer Abroad and Intern Abroad. These two types of projects provide a sufficient depiction of the types of projects PA offers. For information on the other types of volunteer projects that PA offers visit www.projects-abroad.ca.

5.2.3.1 *Volunteer Abroad*

Volunteer Abroad projects fall under eight themes: Care Volunteer, Teaching Volunteer, Conservation and Environment Volunteer, Sports Volunteer, Archaeology Volunteer, Building Volunteer, Agriculture and Farming Volunteer, and Creative and Performing Arts Volunteer. *Care volunteers* work in schools, orphanages, care centers and special needs clinics. Teaching volunteers work with local teachers at schools, usually teaching English, and do not require any previous teaching experience. *Conservation and Environment volunteers* work on projects that focus on the preservation of endangered ecosystems around the world. *Sports volunteers* are geared to individuals who have a background playing or coaching sports. *Archaeology volunteers* work in the field with archeologists and learn about the history of a place. They do not require any previous experience. *Building volunteers* aid in building basic infrastructures such as homes, libraries and schools. *Agriculture and Farming volunteers* aid in planting of crops for schools and communities for their long term sustainability. Finally, *Creative and Performing Arts volunteers* share their skills and background in fine arts, dance and music with the local communities. The minimum age for volunteers is 16+. The duration and start date of volunteering is flexible and each volunteer is supported by staff on a weekly basis (Projects Abroad Canada, 2015). It is important to present this information within the case study to provide an understanding of the types of volunteer tourism that PA provides for its clientele and how they operate each trip.

5.2.3.2 *Intern Abroad*

Projects Abroad offers interning opportunities in 25 countries worldwide. Interning is a way for applicants to gain valuable skills and work experience. Internships can be started at any time during the year, and most places do not require previous experience or skill set. Projects

Abroad offers eight types of internships in Medicine & Healthcare, Law & Human Rights, Journalism, Microfinance, International Development, Business Intern, Veterinary Medicine & Animal Care (Projects Abroad Canada, 2015). Students applying for internships must be at least 16+ years old. The duration and start time of internships are flexible and interns are supported by staff on a weekly basis (Projects Abroad Canada, 2015).

5.2.3.3 Program Fees for Volunteer Abroad and Intern Abroad

The fees for volunteer abroad and intern abroad are the same, but are dependent on the destination, duration of stay and type of activity. Prices for trips include: accommodation, food, airport pick-up and drop-off, travel insurance, medical insurance, in-country induction with a staff member upon arrival, support and 24-hour back-up from both local and US/Canada staff, personalized MyProjectsAbroad page, pre-departure support from Volunteer Advisor by email and phone, and visa support (if applicable) (Projects Abroad Canada, 2015). MyProjectsAbroad, www.myprojectsabroad.org, is a password locked website devoted to the volunteer with information that they would need when travelling to and while at their destination. Volunteers are given the password for their page upon registering for a trip. The page includes information on emergency and local contact details, project profile, accommodation profile, packing lists and visas, financial management, insurance details and flight arrangements (Projects Abroad Canada, 2015). An extensive country guide is also given to volunteers to read prior to departure, and Appendix Q provides the table of contents of what is included in the country guide for Nepal as provided by an interview participant from PA.

Prices for projects are dependent on the destination, duration of stay, and type of volunteer activity. For example the price range for a one week volunteer trip is approximately \$2200-\$3800 CDN. Figure 9 provides a glimpse of the pricing set out by PA for their care

projects. The price list for trips is quite extensive and a more thorough price list for trips can be found at: www.projects-abroad.ca. This price does not include flights to and from the destination. (Projects Abroad Canada, 2015).

Care	1 Week	2 Weeks	3 Weeks	4 Weeks	5 Weeks	6 Weeks	7 Weeks	8 Weeks	9 Weeks	10 Weeks	11 Weeks	12 Weeks	Extra Week	In-Country Extensions per week
Canine Therapy														
Argentina	n/a	n/a	n/a	\$3,630	\$3,950	\$4,270	\$4,590	\$4,910	\$5,230	\$5,550	\$5,870	\$6,190	\$320	\$370
Bolivia	n/a	n/a	n/a	\$3,430	\$3,750	\$4,070	\$4,390	\$4,710	\$5,030	\$5,350	\$5,670	\$5,990	\$320	\$370
Child Rights Initiative														
Jamaica	\$2,945	\$3,315	\$3,685	\$4,055	\$4,425	\$4,795	\$5,165	\$5,535	\$5,905	\$6,275	\$6,645	\$7,015	\$370	\$470
Equine Therapy														
Argentina	n/a	\$3,090	\$3,460	\$3,830	\$4,200	\$4,570	\$4,940	\$5,310	\$5,680	\$6,050	\$6,420	\$6,790	\$370	\$470
Bolivia	n/a	\$2,790	\$3,110	\$3,430	\$3,750	\$4,070	\$4,390	\$4,710	\$5,030	\$5,350	\$5,670	\$5,990	\$320	\$370
General Care Projects														
Argentina	\$2,470	\$2,790	\$3,110	\$3,430	\$3,750	\$4,070	\$4,390	\$4,710	\$5,030	\$5,350	\$5,670	\$5,990	\$320	\$370
Belize	n/a	\$2,990	\$3,310	\$3,630	\$3,950	\$4,270	\$4,590	\$4,910	\$5,230	\$5,550	\$5,870	\$6,190	\$320	\$370
Bolivia	n/a	\$2,565	\$2,885	\$3,205	\$3,525	\$3,845	\$4,165	\$4,485	\$4,805	\$5,125	\$5,445	\$5,765	\$320	\$370
Cambodia	n/a	\$2,465	\$2,735	\$3,005	\$3,275	\$3,545	\$3,815	\$4,085	\$4,355	\$4,625	\$4,895	\$5,165	\$270	\$320
China	n/a	n/a	\$3,310	\$3,630	\$3,950	\$4,270	\$4,590	\$4,910	\$5,230	\$5,550	\$5,870	\$6,190	\$320	\$370
Costa Rica	n/a	n/a	n/a	\$3,630	\$3,950	\$4,270	\$4,590	\$4,910	\$5,230	\$5,550	\$5,870	\$6,190	\$320	\$370
Ecuador	n/a	n/a	n/a	\$3,005	\$3,275	\$3,545	\$3,815	\$4,085	\$4,355	\$4,625	\$4,895	\$5,165	\$270	\$320
Ethiopia	n/a	\$2,565	\$2,885	\$3,205	\$3,525	\$3,845	\$4,165	\$4,485	\$4,805	\$5,125	\$5,445	\$5,765	\$320	\$370
Fiji	\$2,470	\$2,790	\$3,110	\$3,430	\$3,750	\$4,070	\$4,390	\$4,710	\$5,030	\$5,350	\$5,670	\$5,990	\$320	\$370
Ghana	\$2,470	\$2,790	\$3,110	\$3,430	\$3,750	\$4,070	\$4,390	\$4,710	\$5,030	\$5,350	\$5,670	\$5,990	\$320	\$370
India	n/a	\$2,465	\$2,735	\$3,005	\$3,275	\$3,545	\$3,815	\$4,085	\$4,355	\$4,625	\$4,895	\$5,165	\$270	\$320

Figure 9: Projects Abroad Price List for Care Projects

(Projects Abroad Canada, 2015).

As discussed on their website, Projects Abroad does not receive any external funding or support from the government, other agencies, or partner organizations, thus the money that is paid for trips directly funds the projects and volunteer support during the trip. PA help volunteers attain funds for their trips by outlining a fundraising guide on their website. This guide provides insights and ideas for volunteers to raise the money they would need for their trip. In an effort to be transparent about the monies received, Projects Abroad Canada (2015) provides a pie chart on their website (Figure 10) which outlines the allocation of money.

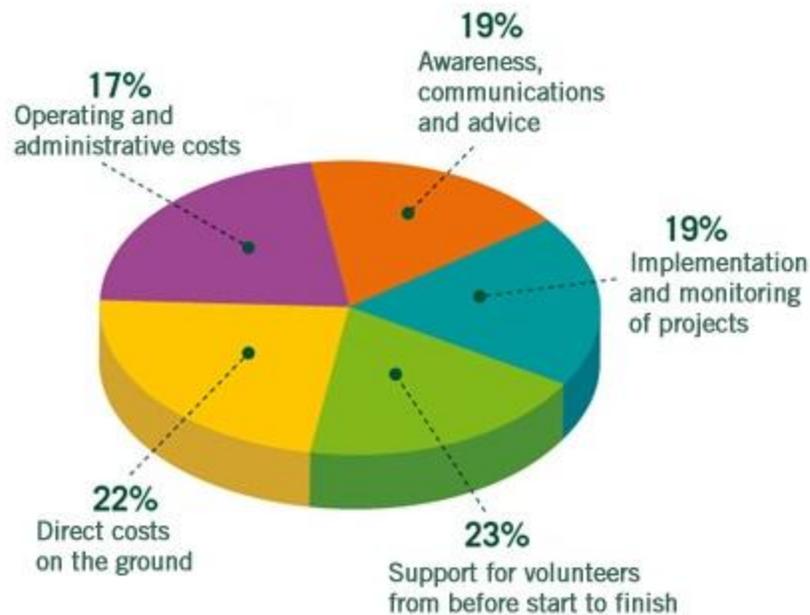


Figure 10: Allocation of Monies Received

(Projects Abroad Canada, 2015).

The pie chart above is an estimation of the allocation of monies earned to average trip expenditure. On their website PA outlines that this cost allocation would vary depending on the trip and location of project. The largest portion of spending (23%), is allocated towards volunteer support. This support involves employing over 500 permanent staff in the countries of origin and countries of operation. For example, from the interviews it was stated " we employ 93 staff members for just the pre-departure. They make sure volunteers have proper flights, got their proper visa information, that they have got all their pre departure information, so they can prepare for different countries". The next highest financial allocation (22%) goes towards direct costs on the ground, which include accommodation, meals, transportation, and volunteer workshops. Next, (19%), goes towards the implementation and monitoring of projects, which includes scouting and creating new opportunities, investing in set up, monitoring of projects.

This same percentage (19%) is also assigned to awareness, communications, and advice for volunteers. The final allocation (17%), is used for organization and administration of trips (Projects Abroad Canada, 2015). This chart shows that costs are almost evenly distributed amongst all areas. While it does not provide a specific breakdown as to exactly what each percentage contains, the pie chart provides a preliminary look at how money is assigned within the company. In conversation with a participant from PA, it was acknowledged that this pie chart could be more specific and include more details about the allocation of their expenses.

The next section will discuss PA's Childcare Policy that is implemented for all volunteer programs involving children. This policy shows the importance the organization places on being socially responsible for the volunteers they send to their projects and is a good example of their operational procedures.

5.2.3.4 *Projects Abroad Childcare Policy*

The *Care Projects* created by Projects Abroad involve volunteers working closely with vulnerable children. *Care Projects* take place in orphanages, kindergartens, day care centers and special needs homes. The website identifies that children from these facilities come from a variety of situations including abandonment, living on the streets, or being malnourished. Even children in the orphanages may have one living parent who may be unable to take care of them. Projects Abroad encourages its volunteers working at *Care Projects* to stay as long as they can at the project because, as stated from the interviews, "a longer project is a more worthwhile project". Some of the *Care Projects* they offer require a minimum duration of 4 weeks. This duration is set by the local staff, in consultation with the local partners, with a focus on "worthwhileness". Project placements are based on the needs of the project and their mission "is to provide sustainable educational support, care, and protection to disadvantaged children and

vulnerable groups to enhance their physical, social, emotional, and cognitive development" (Projects Abroad Canada, 2015). Projects Abroad creates a management plan, based on the needs of the destination, for each Care Program. This plan outlines the goals and actions that are adapted by a project over the course of the year. This allows them to review the impacts they had on the project over the year and create new goals for the next year.

To ensure the safety and well-being of children, volunteers, partners, and host communities Projects Abroad institutes a policy for all involved in a Care project. Specifically, Care volunteers must:

- Submit to a background check if they are aged 21+ (or 18 and over in Bolivia, Cambodia, Costa Rica, Fiji, and Romania).
- Give a professional or academic reference.
- Follow the Child Protection Policy document, which will be covered by a member of staff as part of the induction process.
- Participate in workshops and feedback sessions throughout their project.
- Report any cases or suspected cases of child abuse to Projects Abroad and a locally registered NGO specifically focused on stopping child abuse (designated by Projects Abroad for each country).
- Never take children out of the placement alone or without the advance permission from the placement supervisor and Projects Abroad staff.
- Fill out a feedback form immediately prior to their return home.

This list documents the operational policies PA has in place for volunteers and shows the awareness and sensitivity they have for issues that could arise from working with vulnerable groups like children. This indicates they have recognized their responsibility in ensuring the

safety of children at the projects they send volunteers to. Care Partner Organizations must also follow the policies set up for them by Projects Abroad. This consists of:

- Legally registered to operate in their intended use;
- Sign an agreement with Projects Abroad which covers many topics such as communication and health & safety; and
- Allow Projects Abroad staff access to the facility for monitoring purposes (Projects Abroad Canada, 2015).

These policies for Care Partner Organizations show that PA requires their views of social responsibility also be adopted by the projects they work with. This allows PA to have more control of the operations and products they present to their volunteers.

5.2.4 Operational Insights of Projects Abroad

It is can be seen from the information presented in this section that Projects Abroad is committed to having a positive impact on their volunteers and their destinations. For volunteers they provide pre-trip, during, and post-trip support from their staff members in the volunteer's originating cities and at the destination. For communities, they try to achieve this through creating best practices and management plans for their projects. The missions and goals that PA has set out allows them to monitor their achievements at projects. This background discussion provides the backdrop to the interviews conducted with employees of Projects Abroad, which will be discussed in the following section. These interviews allow for a more in-depth understanding of the operational aspects of Projects Abroad, and gives insights about the volunteer tourism sector more broadly and the role of certification from key players within the organization.

5.3 An Exploration of the Operations of Projects Abroad

The following section presents results of the analysis of four in-depth interviews conducted with key players from Projects Abroad. Participants worked on either the operations side of the organization or marketing and communications. All participants had previous overseas volunteer tourism experience. As was outlined in the methods chapter, interviews were conducted with these individuals in order to develop a more in-depth assessment of operations, the state of the industry, and perceptions of certification. Analysis of interview transcripts led to the development of three key themes: 1) Creating a meaningful volunteer experience; 2) Operating towards sustainability; and 3) Creating a better volunteer tourism sector. These themes offer insight into the organization's practice of volunteer tourism and broader areas of assessment including the state of the industry and the role certification might play in addressing challenges and opportunities.

5.3.1 Creating a meaningful volunteer experience

The conversations I had with participants made it immediately evident that the volunteer's experience was of the utmost priority for Projects Abroad, which they identify distinguishes themselves from other volunteer tourism organizations. Under this main theme three sub themes were also identified as part of creating a meaningful experience. These sub-theme are: 1) Pre-trip Preparation; 2) Destination Preparation; and 3) Volunteer Interactions. Each sub-theme is discussed next.

5.3.1.1 Pre-trip Preparation

One of the ways identified for creating a meaningful volunteer experience is in the flexibility of the starting time a volunteer can join a project. Volunteers are also able to choose

how long they wish to stay at a project. This was identified as being a unique and distinguishing feature of PA. As Emma suggested:

You can choose which start date because a lot times people's vacations are different, or their school schedules don't allow them to go at certain times. Other organizations will say you have to start the first Monday of the month, or the second Monday, so it is very restrictive. Whereas with us it is flexible as to when, if someone wants to go on a specific day they can go easily on that day[...] Volunteers can decide how long they want to go for and the project length varies. I would say on average most of our projects are at a minimum of two or four weeks and it is usually longer for our teaching projects and our care projects because those are the ones that require human interactions.

Emma further explained that volunteers choose the country of placement based on their interest or preferences. The PA staff provide assistance in helping to narrow down their choices:

Volunteers actually choose which locations they want to go to and they will talk to us sometimes looking for advice where to go. So a lot of times they will say Africa [...] and then we will have to break it down and say that there are multiple countries in Africa. But then by talking to them to see what their interests are because not all of our projects are at all of our destinations. So we narrow it down by their interest. If they had an interest in beaches or nice weather or they want to be somewhere completely rural, and not in the city, that is how I can further recommend countries. But it is up to the volunteer where they want to go.

The organization also seeks to understand the volunteer and to determine their ability to participate, and to assess the availability of the project of their choice. Because of this, pre-trip screening of all volunteers is essential. Volunteers must be approved prior to booking a trip. As Olivia explained:

We have a lot of information that we get from volunteers so we can get to know their preferences, their skills, their qualifications so we can lay a placement in a suitable and appropriate project.

Olivia further explained this pre-trip profile is also essential for some specific projects as there are certain requirements that must be met prior to the volunteer's placement:

When a volunteer submits their application we get back to them within 10 business days as to whether they are accepted or not because we check 2 references to see if they are suitable.[...] We also go over their application[to determine their eligibility to participate] maybe they have some sort of criminal record and they applied for a care project. So we can not necessarily accept them because a lot of our care placements require criminal background checks. That is what I mean by approved. Also to see if their dates are dates we have the projects available for.

An open line of communication for volunteers prior to the trip is also deemed as important for the volunteer experience. Specifically, this is done by a Volunteer Advisor (VA) who calls or emails volunteers. It allows the VA to appease any anxiety or trepidations that the volunteer may have about their trip. The purpose is to give the volunteer assurance about their trip prior to departing. Olivia described this role in the following way:

Then the volunteer advisor would give a couple of calls to the volunteer and answering their emails. That would be pre-departure information. We do get calls sometimes too [...] sometimes people are just anxious about going abroad so then all of us in the office have traveled a lot so we can give general information about going abroad.

Emma further explained:

Then the VA [Volunteer Advisor] is also there to address any other questions that they might have. Because they are also trying to plan a lot of their weekend trips. Because for them it is also an opportunity to travel. So they have a lot of travel related questions that they ask the VA.

Providing volunteers with extensive information prior to their trip was considered to be an important aspect of creating and supporting the volunteer experience. This is done through employing staff in the 20 recruiting countries where PA is located. As Noah described:

We have a lot of preparation. I have just been reviewing just now actually, we employ 93 staff members for just the pre-departure. They make sure volunteers have proper flights, got their proper visa information, that they have got all their pre departure information, so they can prepare for different countries [...] Yeah, it is quite complicated. We have volunteers from [...] well we have recruitment

offices from 20 countries, but we recruit volunteers from more than that. So you have lot of different nationalities, lots of different languages spoken, and we try to tailor a project, experience and service to volunteer. So it is quite labour intensive.

This information is primarily disseminated through the MyProjectsAbroad webpage (<http://www.myprojectsabroad.org/>) which is customized for volunteers based on the project and destination they have chosen. The webpage contains information about the country, what to pack, information about the host family, information about the project and what they can bring, travel specific information, and ways to connect with other volunteers. Emma explained:

The VA provides them with their own personalized web page which is called My Projects Abroad page. On this page we put in information [...] such as a country guide so that they learn more about the country and what kind of clothes they should wear [...] some key phrases in the local language, what the weather is like and emergency contact information of our local staff members. [...] and also information on their host family so they get an idea of [...] let's say maybe they have a job or 2 kids. Maybe if they want to bring a gift or something they have that kind of information. They just feel more comfortable knowing what they family is like before going there, and then they also get information about the project itself [...] So we provide this personalized website that has everything. So like their visa instructions on how to apply for the visa for that country. It's just kind of like their bible that website.

Volunteers do not receive any training pre-trip due to the costs (which would be absorbed by the volunteer, not the organization). As Liam discussed:

We don't give people training in advance that would involve huge extra costs for them. People are already spending a lot of money on this, I think it would be unreasonable.

The next section will discuss the second sub-theme, Destination Preparation.

5.3.1.2 Destination Preparation

The second sub-theme derived from the analysis of the interviews was destination preparation. This theme captures what the organization does at a destination in order to further create a meaningful experience for volunteers. Once at the destination volunteers are given a one day training and orientation session. This "induction" is conducted by the volunteer coordinator, and provides specific information about the project at the destination. Olivia explained:

When they get to the destination they have what we call an induction so that would be more[...]our coordinators would show them around and provide more specific information when they are in country. The volunteer coordinators are abroad, they are not here.

Specifically, Emma noted that this orientation for the volunteer discusses transportation within the destination, project specific orientation, and orientation around the city where the project is located:

It is a full day, and in this day they also go through [...] so one of our staff members would go through with them how to walk, or take the bus, from their host family to the project site; and then introduce them to the supervisor, and then talk to the supervisor about what is going on. So for instance if it is a teaching project they will even go through what lessons have been taught already and then what lessons need to be taught in the next few weeks. Then they also get just an orientation session around the city. So they get taken to the local bank to take out money. Or if they want to exchange money what are some good places. Where can they get a local SIM card or some local cafes to get Wi-Fi. So they get that kind of an orientation on top of their project orientation too.

Safety of their volunteers is also identified as a priority for creating a meaningful experience for volunteers. As such, PA only chooses destinations that they have determined to be safe. Liam and Olivia discussed:

As far as actually choosing the places, they have to be safe, I mean we are not going to send people to Iraq. [Liam]

Obviously I know that some of the things that are important are the safety. So we only choose countries or destinations that are stable for our volunteers. Then we need to have enough connections there and projects that we can send our volunteers to. [Olivia]

5.3.1.3 Volunteer Interactions

Volunteer Interactions with communities and volunteers is the final sub-theme building our understanding of the ways PA seeks to create a meaningful experience for volunteers.

Although the pre-trip and during trip orientation sessions are identified as essential components of creating a meaningful experience for volunteers, one of the most meaningful aspects identified are the interactions between the volunteer and the community. PA view themselves as a “middle person” that links people from the developed world to the developing world through their programs. For example, Noah stated:

The core of our organization is matching skills, preferences and wishes of our volunteers to the needs of the many communities that we work with in the developing world. We are in effect just a middle person and we are linking up different people, different types of groups which wouldn't link up otherwise.

PA identifies these interactions as having immediate value for the volunteer but also creating a long lasting impact. Liam discussed:

we believe very strongly in the long term value of cultural exchange between young people [...] the now almost 100,000 young people who have been with us, mostly from bourgeoisie families who will get good jobs in government, banks, businesses and whatever, will come with a very different attitude which they will really have in their hearts a little bit of the developing world. They know that the people are actually like them, and not just a series of problems. I think that in the long term they will save the world. But given that we have taken a 100,000 people and they have an effect on half a million people, this is going to have some impact I think on the next generation.

Emma further described how creating opportunities for the volunteers to stay with a family further immerses them with the local culture, allowing them to have firsthand experiences. This in turn creates as an awareness about the struggles in other countries:

It's to give them an opportunity to see what the world is like outside of Canada. To give them an opportunity to immerse in the culture by also having the chance to stay with a local family where they are volunteering and also see the struggles in other countries [...] [and] give them the opportunity to be also grateful for what they have here. So I would say it's more so to give them that chance to expose themselves to another country, to the people there and see what work needs to be done abroad and then [...] we also want them to come back all the time to experience our different projects as well.

Although community interaction is identified as an important aspect, networking with other volunteers from around the world is also identified as important. These two aspects in conjunction with providing meaningful and worthwhile work are a focus PA has for volunteers on their trips. Emma said:

We want to just have as many volunteers from all parts of the world actually come to those different projects. Because not only do we want our volunteers to feel like they have done something to help the local community. We also want them to have an opportunity to network with other people from other countries too. So, I don't think that is the focus but it is a blend of actually doing meaningful and worthwhile work, while also having a chance to meet both local people and network with people from other countries.

Creating meaningful experiences for volunteers is a main element of Projects Abroad's volunteer tourism practices. Pre-trip preparation helps to ensure that volunteers are able to participate in projects, have access to support systems, and can obtain knowledge about their destination. Destination preparation involves an induction process and ensures volunteer safety. Finally, volunteer interactions with the community and other volunteers are deemed essential to the volunteer experience. All these components were identified within the interviews as creating a

meaningful volunteer experience and provides insight into the operations of the organization. The next section will discuss the second theme: operating towards sustainability.

5.3.2 Operating towards sustainability

Analysis of the interviews with participants led to the realisation that operating towards sustainability is also a key element of PA's operations and volunteer tourism practices. This theme can be best understood as a combination of several aspects, or sub-themes: 1) Selecting Partnerships; 2) Hiring their Own Staff; and 3) Organizational Responsibility. As is discussed below, these sub-themes lend insight into the overall theme of operating towards sustainability.

5.3.2.1 Selecting partnerships

PA initiates their projects based on circumstances or issues occurring at a destination, such as a natural disaster. Projects are also created based on outreach with NGO's in a specific country. These organizations must be well established and be able to accommodate volunteers. Emma described the selection process:

So sometimes it is a natural disaster, and then a lot of time there will be NGO's in those countries who reach out to us and say we need some volunteers but we need a bigger organization that has a platform [able to accommodate] volunteers [that are sent there]. So when we get more interest from a particular country, like Uganda they had a lot of [...] organizations contacting us and saying that we have a lot of placements. So when we see an accumulation of a lot of organizations reaching out to us then we look into starting the projects there, so having a staff member there.

Due to the flexibility in start times and length of volunteering, PA has created a portfolio of destination organizations some of whom they have had a "long, long relationship" with. As Noah explained:

If you name any other of our 30 destinations we have been in the same location. So what you see are volunteers going for an average of 5 weeks, sometimes they go longer or sometimes they go shorter, but we have a portfolio of placements that we work with and have a long, long relationship with them.

PA tries to establish partnerships for a "reasonable period of time". This allows them to measure the impacts they are having at the project. Liam discussed:

For example we have a nature reserve in the Peruvian Amazon which has done absolute wonders in terms of wildlife preservation and animal release. In southern Peru they have discovered new bird species. It is a wonderful place, we work a lot with the local communities and so on and so forth. We try to work with any particular partner for a reasonable period of time so you can definitely measure achievements or changes.

Striving to create partnerships that last for a longer period of time allows PA to help projects achieve the goals they set out to reach. This can lead to creating significant change and long-term sustainability for the project at the destination.

5.3.2.2 Hiring their Own Staff

During the interviews it became evident PA believed what distinguished them from other volunteer tourism organizations was having an office and their own staff at every destination. This was believed to allow them to have more control over the quality of the experiences they offer, as they follow a specific training procedure, and is important in operating towards sustainability. Liam explained:

We work, and perhaps even more importantly, we only work through our own trained staff in operations. So we can completely control who is working for us and who the volunteer will deal with, at least as far as our organization is concerned who the volunteer is going to be in touch with in a destination. They have to follow a certain procedure in induction and preparation.

Emma explained the hiring of their own staff, and offices, at the destination allows PA to have constant interactions between offices and allows for fluid communication. Emma discussed:

When a volunteer signs up with us they talk to us, we are from Projects Abroad. When they get there, there is a staff member from Projects Abroad. We have an easy way of checking in with our local staff members. Whereas, if it is two different organizations there might not be [...] even like that head umbrella who overlooks things [...] it is just fluid, the communication.

Although PA hires staff from around the world, the majority come from the country that the office is created in. Liam explained:

We have a few roving people, roving Americans, roving Canadians, but only a handful. The majority of the people are from the country where they are working.

Local staff play an active and important role in determining new projects for Projects Abroad. They evaluate projects and form local partnerships. They also help to determine when projects should end. As Olivia stated:

Sometimes we start new projects, or sometimes projects end because there are no partnerships. Or there is no more need. But that would be our local staff that would evaluate the situation, and even form new partnerships, and you know, keep things going on.

Experienced staff members are sent to a project to assist in determining a new project's viability. The staff members are usually from the country where the project is located, or they are from a neighbouring country. Determining a project's viability is achieved through site visitations, speaking to the people there, making contact with government agencies, and writing up a proposal outlining their findings and assessing whether there is a need for volunteers. As Noah and Olivia discussed:

We send experienced staff members. We try to do it from neighbouring countries where our staff members already are. So if we were to set up in Bangladesh, it would be our staff from India because the culture is quite similar. So we will send them there, and they will make contacts and speak to people and they will do visits. They will write reports for us, and they will speak to the ministry of education, or social services. Then they will come up with a

proposal to see if it is going to be valuable if there is a need for our volunteers there. [Noah]

Yeah so we have partnerships with local schools. Normally we send someone, or we have a contact person there.....I went to Ghana in July and I was amazed at the connections that the local people who work for Projects Abroad have. They know people in the schools and in the community and they can organize a lot of stuff. So that is kind of how it is done. [Olivia]

Hiring staff from the destinations they work in is identified as an important aspect to operating toward sustainability. PA believes this distinguishes them from other volunteer tourism organizations as it allows them have full control of the entire experience and product that volunteers participate in.

5.3.2.3 *Organizational Responsibility*

The next sub-theme that was identified under operating towards sustainability was organizational responsibility. Projects Abroad recognizes that within a destination they play an important role in ensuring sustainability of their operations at their destinations. Participants described how volunteer tourism operators are responsible for the projects they work with and must ensure that communities are not abandoned. They are also responsible for ensuring that projects are worthwhile. As Liam stated:

We are responsible for the projects that we do. We are the people responsible that the projects are worthwhile, [in the] long term [...] which is what sustainable really means. We have to be the people that are leaning on that, because we are the people bringing in the volunteers. Of course we have to respond at every turn to what local people want. But we can't blame them [...] we would take the blame if the project turn out that it has to be abandoned [...] But we would always try to have sustainable projects socially and environmentally wherever possible.

Participants felt strongly that it is the responsibility of any organization to work with, and develop, good partnerships and relationships within projects. Noah also identified that it is their

responsibility to create meaningful work and experiences for them. The meaningful work they create for volunteers should be part of PA's, and their partner organizations, movement towards achieving their goals. Noah explained if a volunteer tourism operator does not create this type of work they are not meeting their obligations to the volunteer and to the community they are situated in. He discussed:

The organization [...] needs to understand where the need is, they need to work with the project partners and develop good relationships with them. Volunteers, they don't know this stuff. They pay a large amount of money to us in order for us to make sure what we are doing is worthwhile, and what we are doing is part of something bigger or important. A greater goal. So it is up to the organization to do that, and if they don't do it they are not doing their jobs properly.

Olivia further argued it is not one person's responsibility, but the entire organization's responsibility to ensure sustainability at destination:

I mean obviously that is kind of the role of our local offices - our director, to make sure that everything that we do is sustainable. Also our operations manager and our people who working at the UK office they visit our destinations frequently [...] I wouldn't say that there is one person who is responsible I think that it is the organization too. We don't want to go to communities and do more harm, we want to help the communities. So it is all of us I guess.

It is identified within the interviews that part of organizational responsibility is creating goals. PA creates a management plan, to determine the impacts they are having within a destination. This management plan includes the mission and goals of the project and is implemented with every organization PA works with. Noah explained:

We then have management plans with objectives so the Care Project in Kenya we have nine objectives that we are working towards, nine goals [...] and we have project missions [...] our priority goals in Kenya are to increase literacy, to improve early childhood development, to [...] we have a hygiene one as well. So

all volunteers go there and contribute to that. For medical, we have other goals, and for teaching we have other goals, and for conservation we have other goals.

Noah also further explained within a destination there are certain priority goals that are chosen.

The total number of goals that are set out to be achieved is up to the discretion of the community running the project, and they are advised by PA to not choose more than five goals. He said:

In our destinations we can choose the priority goals to work on. Most destinations choose between [...] they can just choose one, that is up to them, we don't want them to choose any more than five goals because it can dilute the whole objective. So between one to five priority goals they work on.

As participants made clear, creating achievable goals helps to ensure the work created for volunteers are in unison with the end result, as determined by the partner organization and PA.

Noah stated:

So our volunteers come in with a specific job, their role and [...] it would be fruitless if volunteers come in and have a lots of individual volunteers not at all working towards the same goal. We have goals which everyone is working towards, and [...] you know it is very important, and everyone is an individual, and everyone is special in their own way, however, our volunteers [...] if you look at them over a course of a decade they are just a small little part of a bigger movement. It is up to Projects Abroad as a responsible organization to make sure that these volunteers are overall working towards the right goals.

Measuring goals is also an essential element of the broader theme of organizational responsibility. From the analysis of interviews it became evident that measuring goals is an important aspect of PA's operations. This allows PA to make genuine claims about their impacts and was identified by participants as being good for their reputation. PA takes a serious approach to measuring their impacts as they believe it aids in attracting people to the organization. As Liam described:

Overall we take measuring our achievements very seriously because people want to participate in an organization which has real achievements on the

ground in poor countries, indeed anywhere, amongst poor communities. If we are able to demonstrate it, that is good for us anyway. So it is always our aim to do that. We don't want to be unrealistic, and we don't want to make false claims but we make genuine claims and we measure things that are measurable.

When achieving goals some aspects are easier to measure than others. For instance, Liam described how in cases of environmental management it is easier to determine impacts.

Childcare centers also have easier to measure impacts and are based on various factors such as accessibility to programs. Measurements are made and agreed upon in conjunction with the projects:

We keep some specific records, such as at the nature reserve in Peru, or the nature reserve in Thailand or Cambodia. We have specific measures of types of fish or coral. Obviously in Peru, fresh water turtles nesting each year. Different types of vegetation growth and trees planted. Those are things that you can easily measure and you know that you are having some impact. Then there are our childcare centers we have learned enough about the people that we can agree with the childcare center's fairly obvious measure. Kids that are able to participate in various educational things for example and who weren't able to at the beginning of the summer, but were able to 6 months later. We definitely do have Care management systems measures [that determine] those thing absolutely specifically. Then there are a number of variables that are agreed upon by the institution.

However, within some other projects it is more difficult to measure impacts. Within schools, for instance, it is more difficult as the programs are being measured by people outside of PA, like school officials. This is also the case with Human Rights programs due to the variance of cases and their potential outcomes. As Liam explained:

Other things are much more difficult to measure. If we are helping out the school with English classes you can sometimes see an improvement, but it depends [...] Well I think in schools it is very difficult, because schools you have to be careful because they are run by other people, they are not run by us. Things like human rights projects we can only look at the number of cases that

we have dealt with and what the outcomes have been. But of course cases vary so widely that it is difficult to measure it any meaningful way

One of the difficult aspects for ensuring the continuity of work at the projects they work with is the lack of certainty with regards to the number of volunteers they will get. As such there are usually no hard deadlines set for exactly when goals have to be met. Emma explained:

So we set general goals as to what we are trying to accomplish and then we just measure how long it took to. We don't have timelines for let's say when we want to have those classrooms built in Nepal. Because we also can't control how many volunteers we are going to get. So that is I think the struggle. We can't predict how many volunteers we can get to actually get the work done because we can assume we have 5 volunteers a week but that might not [...] and this is how many hours of work or things that they can get done. We just can't assume that. So I would just say as it progresses our staff members update us on the accomplishments.

Olivia noted, however, that yearly reviews are conducted by PA, at all projects, to determine their status in terms of achieving their goals. These reviews help the organization determine the progress of the project and determine its viability:

Yeah...so we have yearly reviews obviously and I think in the management plans [it] outlines what has been done and what has been successful. What hasn't been successful. But really the role of, for example the operations manager and the country director, are to evaluate the ongoing projects. If something doesn't [...] we don't continue a project that we don't see is working there. Even then we try to make some changes and things like that.

Noah also explained goals may not change a lot at the yearly review. But this review helps PA, in consultation with the community and staff, to determine what should be removed and what should be added to the goals. He said:

We review them once a year. But there are usually very few changes. We may drop a goal just because none of our destination choose that for one of their priority goals so there is no point forcing it to go on longer if it is not relevant. So we drop them [...] we have added some goals as well. I think we added a

teaching one last year, just because this was the feedback from the community and from the staff overseas.

Finally, determining whether their partner organizations are happy with the work they are doing is important for meeting the goals of PA. This helps to ensure there is an open channel for communication and the sustainability of their work. As Liam discussed:

Our partners are generally favourable of what we do. It is not universal, it is not a 100% but it is very high in the success rate. So we talk to our partners, and anyway if they didn't feel that we were useful they wouldn't work with us I guess. They don't have to, but the fact that they do year after year after year has to be in itself encouraging.

Operating towards sustainability is the second major theme derived from the interviews. Selecting partnerships based on the interest of the community and for long term durations is an important aspect of PA's operations. Hiring their own staff, comprised of local people at the destination, is also deemed to be important for operating towards sustainability. Taking responsibility as an organization, through setting goals and measuring achievements, for work that is being done at a destination is also deemed essential to sustainability. All these components were identified within the interviews as operating towards sustainability and provide further insight into the operations of the organization. The next section will discuss the third theme: creating a better volunteer tourism sector.

5.3.3 Creating a Better Volunteer Tourism Sector

The final theme derived from the interview analysis was creating a better volunteer tourism sector. Four sub-themes make up this theme: 1) Creating Valuable Change; 2) Facing tensions; 3) Improving the sector; and 4) Certification Considerations. The following sections will discuss these sub-themes and conclude discussing their relation to the overall theme of creating a better volunteer tourism sector.

5.3.3.1 Creating Valuable Change

Participants working with PA shared a belief that volunteer tourism creates a valuable change in destinations. This belief stemmed from their knowledge of the sector and their experience with PA. As Liam discussed:

Yes without a doubt [volunteer tourism makes a difference]. I can't exaggerate, I mean there are huge forces going on with North and South, we are only a tiny part of those. But if we couldn't make a difference to the lives of some children or the conservation of some forms of wildlife, or whatever, then we might as well pack up and I might as well go play golf.

Emma identified how volunteer tourism brings in help for free. She suggest that many of these places would not otherwise receive aid, and described how things are accomplished at a quicker rate. Her opinion is also based on the belief that local people will not help unless in situations of emergency. She explained:

Yes, because [...] I don't think local people understand the value of volunteering. I remember when I volunteered in Tanzania people were always confused about it...like why are you coming here to help on your own? They just questioned it because it is so foreign to them. They would never think of volunteering within their own community. I think the only time they would volunteer to help is if there is a disaster and it just more so a basic instinct to want to help others because you see them struggling. But otherwise, the local people wouldn't volunteer within their community. If anything they would want to get paid to do this. So that is why I think that volunteer tourism makes a difference because you get more help for free, to these local people, and you can get the work done quicker whatever they need to progress in their community.

Noah believed the valuable changes that volunteer tourism can make are dependent on how well the project is run and legitimacy of the organization providing the experience. He also described how the difference made by volunteer tourism is not solely based on the efforts of one individual going to a project for five weeks. The difference is created from the culmination of volunteers

over a period of time and with an organization, like PA, which monitors and sets goals they want to achieve for each project. He stated:

I don't think it always does. I think that when it is done well [it does]. Anyone can go and volunteer, and people might want to make a difference by going for 5 weeks. They will make more of a difference to themselves when they go for 5 weeks. They will have an eye opening experience, they will meet amazing friends, and it will be a real cultural exchange. However, for volunteering to be effective within development work you need to do it over a much longer space of time and you need an organization who is prodding, manipulating, and kind of goes making sure that it is all joined together, and that there is consistency there. So when you have an organization, and I believe that Projects Abroad is an organization that does that because we have goals, we have missions, we have tasks for our volunteers to do, which are directly linked to our goals. I believe that does help.

Based on her personal experiences at a Projects Abroad project, Olivia had felt that volunteer tourism creates valuable change. She believed the communities really wanted to work with them and were very welcoming of PA's presence. She also saw there was a need for aid in the communities, even if it was from volunteers with no previous experience. She believed the more organized a volunteer organization and project is, the better the outcome for the community:

I know that there is a lot of controversy sending volunteers there. But what I saw in Ghana was that [...] and I asked a lot of the locals how do the communities feel when we bring volunteers there? [...] They said that they always teach in school to welcome foreigners. So everybody was really welcoming and I felt like the communities wanted to work with us. So and that being said there was definitely a need in the communities, whether it was building a school or even doing the medical work. Even with the volunteers that had no previous experience. I would say yes, that is my experience. So, I think it makes a difference, I think the more organized it is, the more you can do in the community [...] I would have never started working here if I didn't think that we are helping in the communities.

5.3.3.2 *Facing Tensions*

Although participants clearly believed volunteer tourism makes a difference, concerns were raised about the increasing size of the sector. Specifically, it is discussed that good companies, like PA, should have increasing numbers of volunteers because they offer something “wonderful” for both the destination and the volunteer. However, it was also argued some organizations should not be allowed to increase their size within the volunteer tourism sector due to perceived lack of really wanting to make a difference. Liam argued:

I mean I think I would like our numbers of people to increase from 10,000 to 100,000 a year because I think that we offer something wonderful both for the destination and for the self-improvement of the volunteers and interns themselves. So I think....but I wouldn't like that to happen even with the organizations that compete with us because I don't think that some of them take care of the volunteers, and above all, don't take care of its partners. I am not sure that I would like the organizations that are run by TUI Group, which is I to I, Real Gap, Welsh Challenge. I don't think that those three organizations should expand. I think that being partners with a package holiday company and classing yourself in the adventure holiday division I don't think is what it is about at all. I don't care if they do better or worse. I want really good organizations to do well.

Participants also expressed a concern for the reputation the industry is currently getting due to organizations who are not really interested in the projects where they send volunteers. It was also believed they do not create any long term commitments. This reputation is also creating some issues for PA as participants expressed concern that some people may view them in that light.

As Noah discussed:

I believe that volunteering gets a bad name because you have lots of organizations who don't even know the partners or the projects that they send volunteers to. They find them on the internet and say right ok you can go to that school, and if you have one volunteer at a school for five weeks and you never have another volunteer there for maybe two years, of course they are not going to do that good [...] I think organizations like them [...] I would not ever say that

volunteering is good. We are having a little bit of that problem where people see Projects Abroad as that, which we are anything but that.

The perceived unsustainable practices occurring within the volunteer tourism sector and the current stigma of such organizations within the mainstream media, has created a dislike and disassociation for the categorization. Participants noted PA takes the work they do at project sites seriously. Specifically volunteers participating in their projects are expected to follow their "disciplined" terms and conditions, and are expected to take their roles at projects seriously. Participants expressed concern that organizations who are not as disciplined are creating the problems. Noah argued based on the stigma associated with volunteer tourism, he does not view PA as "voluntourism". He explained:

I hate this term voluntourism, it is not. When volunteers come with us we discipline, we ask volunteers to leave the projects within our terms and conditions that we can do this. If they are not turning up to work every day, if they turn up smelling of alcohol and not taking their project seriously we give them a warning, and if it continues we will throw them off the project and make sure, of course, that they get safely back home. Because it is not tourism, they can on the weekends go and explore around, but why they pay a large amount of money is not to go and lie on the beach the whole time. They go in order to contribute to work on a project.

The next section will discuss the theme improving the sector, which is the third sub theme of creating a better volunteer tourism sector.

5.3.3.3 Improving the Sector

Improving the sector is the third sub-theme of creating a better volunteer tourism sector. Participants expressed a belief that things need to be done to change the reputation of the industry. They argued other organizations must be more serious about the work that they do. Specifically, participants noted expectations should be set about the type of work volunteers will participate in and that volunteers are not just on a holiday. For example, Noah suggested:

So what should happen is organizations should be serious with the volunteers. They should say if you come with us [...] ok you are going to have a good time, but you are going to have a good time because you are having a great time at your project and you will be working. You are going to be spending your evenings with your host families. You are going to be learning about a new culture. You are going to be learning so much. It is when that doesn't happen and people just go on a holiday then it becomes more of the tourism rather than the volunteering and that is not good.

Emma believed creating more awareness about the meaningful impacts that volunteer tourism can make is a good way improve perceptions of the sector. Specifically, providing “more statistics” about positive impacts would help to improve the reputation. She put it like this:

I would say just throwing more statistics as to the meaningful impacts that the volunteers can accomplish when going abroad. I think that right now it is all about having those photos in Africa with children and helping them. But I think that there are those skeptical people that say what did you accomplish by going there? Like taking photos with them, and just playing around with them. Did you actually help with their education? I think that it is important [...] the volunteer tourism industry is getting a kind of bad reputation in that sense because people just have this vision of going and just helping children in Africa, more so, or India. That is what I get a lot. Then it is just explaining that no....there is more to it than that. Especially with our organization...there is teaching English, there is conservation work that we do, there is building work. But the first one that comes to mind is always the whole going to play with children abroad. So I think that to enhance the sector we just need to show and prove what kind of meaningful work has been accomplished and then also to show the other categories of volunteer work. To also give specifically the childcare aspect a more better image with statistics as to what has been accomplished.

5.3.3.4 Certification Considerations

As part of the broader purpose of this research, participants were asked about the role certification would play in improving the volunteer sector. Participants from PA received this idea with mixed reviews, although concern from potential volunteers seemed apparent and was reiterated by several participants. As such, it was recognized that something more may be

needed to help those interested in volunteering navigate the various organizations making very similar promises. Emma discussed how potential volunteers ask PA about their corporation number to verify who they are. She argued certifying an organization to confirm its legitimacy could be a potential benefit of certification. She suggested:

I have been asked this question often because people are concerned and they even want to visit the office to see whether we are really an organization. They ask us if we have a corporation number so that is how they verify that we are real. So it would be nice to have some kind of certification proving that we are a real organization [...] Like we do operate in all these different countries and we send this many volunteers. A lot of time they base what they think of the organization from the website. But our website is not anything sketchy looking. I have come across other websites that do concern me, but they are more grassroots organizations. So if there was a certification to support them I would think that would be very useful to prove to a volunteer or someone interested that ok yes I know that this sounds really cheap. It could be too good to be true, but it sounds like certification can make it seem like more of a legitimate organization.

Olivia also pointed out how certification could be beneficial for proving an organization's legitimacy. She noted:

I mean we get a lot of questions like: Are you a legit organization? Can I come to your office? We can give so much information on the website, but how can people know. Some of the things that we do for example is that we give contact information for our previous volunteers so that they can talk to someone. I can speak about our projects but that is not the same as when they talk to past volunteers. So there are questions that people ask us. Can I verify that you are registered in Canada? Yes they can, or things like that. So I think that definitely that could be useful, but I am just trying to think how it would be done.

Although certification is identified as a potential way to increase legitimacy of organizations, participants expressed concern about the difficulty of applying such schemes in developing countries. Concern was also raised about the applicability, as projects vary. Olivia explained:

I think it sounds great, but I think it would be difficult. In developing countries things don't work like in Western countries. It is just different, the mentality of things too. I think here we are very much like things need to be put in different categories, needs to be certified, needs to be this and that. That is not really the mentality in developing countries about running things in general. Just the fact that here you need to be so efficient all the time. It is not the mentality in a lot of African countries for example. So I think that is something to keep in mind, I think it would be difficult. I am just wondering if there are specific things that you would have to fulfill. But projects are so different [...] yeah I don't know. It would be interesting to see. I think it is a good idea.

The above quotation demonstrates that Olivia was in support of some approach to validate that indeed PA is a legitimate and trustworthy organization. The accessibility and costs of certification and implementation were also discussed as a potential concern. Specifically, participants worried it might not be affordable for small volunteer organizations. As Emma discussed:

But I am not sure if the certification would be costly. Or maybe that grassroots organization just wouldn't be able to afford it. So I would support it, I just don't know if people will pay attention. This certification would need to have a good website as well.

Participants also noted certification for the volunteer tourism sector would have to be accountable and regulated. Creating a “heavy standard” was viewed as a way to potentially reduce the number of volunteer tourism organizations. Specifically, this would apply to operators who do not focus on community partnerships as it would make it difficult for them to recruit volunteers. Noah explained:

The ones that are out just now, we all kind of self-regulate it, and it is ok. But I don't think that really [...] brings up the standard too much. I think that something that is a bit more meaty, or heavy, possibly would. I think what we were speaking about before for other organizations, other companies, who don't necessarily have the community work, the project work as the primary focus, That could even cut them out. Make it difficult for them to recruit volunteers....if a heavy standard was involved [...] However, you know without the weight

behind it, you have other organizations that don't. They can self-regulate themselves as much as they want it is not going to make them that much better or come up to some sort of standard. Because what are the penalties if we don't. There are no penalties involved. There are no inspections that happen, there is nothing like that. If you don't run an organization well yourself there is no one there telling you to do it better.

However, participants also expressed concern regarding how to create a standard that would have some accountability within the sector especially due to the international focus of the sector.

Creating a certification that is government initiated was deemed to be difficult due to the international components of projects. As such a certification for the volunteer tourism sector would have to be an international standard. Liam argued:

It is difficult to be government focused. We recruit volunteers in over 20 destinations, so what government would it be? So it would need to be some sort of international standard. I can't see it happening for quite a long time. I am not too sure if would be one just for the travel industry. I don't know [...] I am not too sure about that. I can't see it happening, but I think that self-regulating is only good if the companies and organizations want to do that [...] So yes we would sign up to something like that if that was the case. Because we do think [...] we are up there already, we have some work to do for sure in order to fulfill the criteria. But I think that by having an international body with some sort of a weight behind it you could then....with some of the lesser organizations who are not doing good work would kind of drop out of it because they would not be able to get up to that kind of criteria.

In terms of subscribing to a certification 3 out of 4 members of the staff interviewed from PA identified they would be interested in subscribing to such a scheme, depending on how the issues discussed in the above sections are resolved. Interestingly, Liam offered a dissenting opinion as he believed the organization was currently working well and did not need certification to justify their current operations:

You know we know what we do is right, and when we are wrong we put it right. Saying that we know what we do is right is perhaps a little bit pig headed, but we don't need a certificate in that way. We keep within the law.

However, Liam did note he would be open to a scheme that utilized a more, “popular kind of approach” based on the opinions of their past volunteers. He noted this type of approach would be better than one that is government-based and top down:

Well there are things like Trip Advisor, Go Abroad, [...] there are two or three organizations like Trip Advisor where people can rate you from 1 to 5 stars. I think that we are 93% on that which is pretty good. That is not a bad idea, I am all in favour in people judging us. Sometimes people get carried away with criticism or go over the top with praise. But people are people and that is fine, I would rather have a popular kind of approach rather than a governmental top down one. I think that would just be dreadful.

Creating a better volunteer tourism sector is the final theme emanating from the analysis of the interviews. Participants believed volunteer tourism made a difference in the places it occurs. Specifically they based this on their experience of working with PA. Several challenges were identified about the industry such as its current negative reputation, which was believed to be due to bad operators. Improving the sector through open communication, collaboration with other operators, and publishing positive statistics were viewed as ways to better the sector. Utilizing certification as a way to improve the sector was received with mixed reviews. Concern was raised about implementation, accessibility and costs of such an endeavour. All these components were identified as ways to creating a better volunteer tourism sector.

5.4 Projects Abroad: Creating Responsible and Meaningful Experiences

The presentation of background details, as well as the analysis of interview data provided valuable insights into the current practices of Projects Abroad as well as to help build our understanding of the state of the volunteer tourism industry. Clearly, PA is focused on creating meaningful experiences for their volunteers, developing operational procedures that are sustainable and working to improve the volunteer tourism industry more broadly. They achieve

this through the support system they have created for volunteers prior to taking their trip and during the trip. Creating opportunities for volunteers to experience the local culture and lifestyle of a community, as well as to network with other volunteers from around the world, was also identified as an essential aspect to creating a meaningful experience for their volunteers. As such based on the responses from participants, creating a meaningful experience can be defined as: *The creation of an experience that is memorable and has internal value for their volunteers.*

To facilitate these experiences PA is focused on ensuring their operations can sustain themselves over the long term. Operating towards sustainability was identified as another important aspect of their operations. This involves having an office at all their destinations, hiring and training local staff, creating long term partnerships with the communities they work in, and developing and measuring goals. Measuring the impacts they have at a destination is important to PA. Specifically, it is believed that showing they are making a difference at their projects will aid them in attracting volunteers to their organization, which in turn will allow them to get more work done. PA believes volunteer tourism creates valuable change at a destination, however, this is dependent on the volunteer tourism organization and their practices. It is identified that one of the main challenges within the sector is the bad reputation currently being associated with it. This is argued to be due to the growth of the sector and the increase of volunteer tourism operators who are not really interested in the projects they send their volunteers to. Participants identified ways to improve the sector could consist of positive marketing about impacts, collaboration between organizations, and certification. Furthermore, though the majority of participants identified they would subscribe to a certification for volunteer tourism, utilizing certification as a tool to aid in the current sector issues was received with mixed reviews.. Concerns were raised about the application of such a scheme to projects due to

their differences and international focus, the accessibility and costs of certification, who would oversee its implementation, and awareness of consumers of such schemes.

This case study of PA provided valuable insights into the operations of the volunteer tourism organization. It showed how volunteer tourism is being practiced at the organizational level, as well as the opportunities and challenges faced by volunteer tourism organizations. The discussion of challenges also brings into light the tensions they are facing within the sector. PA regards themselves as a socially responsible organization but the current reputation of the sector appears to have a secondary effect on the organization's legitimacy from the perspective of potential volunteers. This may also be why one of the participants claimed that he did not view PA as volunteer tourism. Increasing public awareness about the legitimacy of their practices is one of the arguments that was identified for adopting a certification process for volunteer tourism organizations. The next Chapter will present the case study of the volunteer tourism operator ME to WE.

CHAPTER SIX: CASE STUDY OF ME TO WE

6.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the case study of the second volunteer tourism organization analyzed for this study. First, I will set the stage for the discussion by introducing the organization, outlining the history, current operations, and the types of volunteer projects they offer, as well as their fees. It is important to note that although the purpose of this case study is to look at the operations of ME to WE, this cannot be achieved without providing a background on their partner charity organization: Free the Children. This allows for the development of a more holistic picture of the purpose of ME to WE and their operations. Background information about the organization was attained through conducting a review of the organization's website and publications produced by the organization. This background provides the foundation for the second part of the chapter, which includes the outcome of the analysis of the interviews conducted with four members of the organization. The Chapter will end by providing a discussion of the themes that were created through analysis of interviews conducted with the organization.

6.2 Background

ME to WE (M2W) was created based on the work of two Canadian brothers, Marc and Craig Kielburger, and their international travel experiences. Marc volunteered with leprosy patients in the slums of Jamaica at the age of 13. Later in life Marc volunteered in Bangkok, Thailand, teaching English to street children and helping out at a free AIDS hospice. Craig, at age 12, went to meet child labourers of factories and kilns, and street children. These trips in

their early years helped to shape the beginning of Free the Children (FTC), a charity created by the Kielburgers, in which the brothers took young travellers to build school in India, Nicaragua and Kenya (ME to WE, 2015). They started these trips as they could not find other organizations who were willing to allow youth under 18 to volunteer internationally.

In 1999, they started a small company called Leaders Today, which ran leadership camps and volunteer trips, and was the precursor to M2W (ME to WE, 2015). As outlined on their website, Free the Children continued to grow, but the brothers struggled to find a sustainable income source for their projects. They realized that they needed to create a model that would fund the work of Free the Children over the long term. Improving the model first formed by Leaders Today, M2W was created, in 2008. Under the mentorship of Jeff Skoll, ebay's first president, M2W grew quickly into a social enterprise that "offered life-changing experiences and sustainable products" (ME to WE, 2015). The organization website outlines at that time in Canada, the social enterprise model was fairly new and M2W went to great lengths, and consultation with some of Canada's top legal minds, to create the organization.

6.2.1 Free the Children

Free the Children (FTC) is an international charity and educational partner that collaborates with both domestic and international programs. FTC utilizes an "international development model [which] is built on the belief that every community has the potential to lift itself out of poverty forever" (Free the Children, 2015). On a global scale, FTC partners with communities in Africa, Asia and Latin America through their Adopt a Village development program. The Adopt a Village is a program created by FTC to give children all over the world access to education, regardless of gender. Adopt a Village is an international development model based on an asset based community development approach. This type of approach

focuses on the strengths of a community for development, such as talent, skills and assets, instead of its weaknesses (Free the Children, 2015). The organization outlines five pillars that they recognize as important for sustainable development: 1) Education; 2) Water and Sanitation; 3) Health, Agricultural and Food Security; and 4) Alternative Income and Livelihood. *Education* is identified as the best way to set up a child for success and end poverty (Free the Children, 2015). *Clean Water and Sanitation* allows for the prevention of waterborne illnesses which can hinder school attendance. In countries where girls are the main retrievers of water, FTC helps communities create well and hand pumps, to free up their time so they can attend school. *Health* allows for healthy parents and children. Providing access to healthcare, teaching disease prevention and healthy living increases the community health, which allows the children to attend school. FTC partners with communities to aid in developing health initiatives such as vaccination programs and clinics (Free the Children, 2015). *Agriculture and Food Security* allows for children to be fed, and not malnourished or sick so that they can attend and participate in school. Free the Children works with communities to create programs that promote food security and improved agriculture. This ensures communities have better access to healthy food, and food to sell, improving economic outcomes as well (Free the Children, 2015). *Alternative Income and Livelihood* is identified as important as children can only attend school if their parents have the financial means to provide for their health care and education. FTC facilitates this through helping families generate income and accrue savings through teaching a skill to the parents, most often mothers (Free the Children, 2015). For more information on the Adopt a Village model please visit: <http://www.freethechildren.com/international-programming>.

To verify the effectiveness of their Adopt a Village community development model, Free the Children had a third party, Mission Measurement, LLC, conduct a study of the model from

From 2011-2012. Mission Measurement is an organization that provides social sector data insights by "measuring, predicting and maximizing the return on investment in social outcomes" (Mission Measurement, 2015). Mission measurement undertook a study, over a four month period, to determine effectiveness, sustainability and cost effectiveness of the Adopt a Village model (Mission Measurement, 2012). To summarize, the results from the study found "the model was effective, sustainable, and cost effective" (Mission Measurement, 2012; p. 2). To monitor the impact of their initiatives FTC assesses their projects on a regular basis to determine their effectiveness. More information on their impacts and impact reports can be found: <http://www.freethechildren.com/international-programming/our-impacts>. Since its inception, FTC has also received numerous humanitarian, citizenship, leadership, excellence and corporate culture awards for the work that they have done. For more information on FTC and its inception please refer to Marc Kielburger's book "Free the Children"(1999). The next section will provide a background of ME to WE.

6.2.2 ME to WE

ME to WE (M2W) is a registered for profit business that identifies themselves as a "social enterprise". The main purpose of M2W is to fund the work that FTC performs in developing countries around the world. As such, fifty percent of all revenue earned by M2W goes back to FTC. As identified through email correspondence with the organization, M2W currently employs 140 people and is based in Toronto, Ontario, Canada. M2W currently has a board of directors and advisory board who jointly oversee the activities of the organization. An organizational chart was requested by the researcher from the organization, however none was given. It was identified, however, that M2W has the following positions within the organization: CEO, Chief Operations Officer, Deputy Operations Officer, Global Head, Director, Associate

Director, Manager, and Coordinator. As well, to organize and facilitate their volunteer trips they also employ people to work in their: Engagement teams, Coordination teams, Trip Operations team, and Quality & Program Development team. Though requested, there was insufficient information provided in order to create an organizational chart for this paper.

M2W generates revenue by offering various products. These include international volunteer trips, clothing and accessories, leadership training programs and materials, inspirational speakers' bureau, and books. In the interest of space and for the purposes of this study, only the volunteer trips will be discussed. For further interest, a synopsis of the other products and services can be found in Appendix O.

M2W has been recognized for the work it does through its model of social entrepreneurship in both Canada and the US from the Mars Institute (Toronto) and the Skoll Foundation (California) (ME to WE, 2015). Both organizations are involved with invoking and supporting social change and social entrepreneurship. In 2008, M2W was awarded the Ernst & Young Social Entrepreneur of the Year Award, which recognized their implementation of triple bottom line business practices (ey.com, 2015). In 2015, they achieved B Corporation certification for their social and environmental performance, accountability and transparency (ME to WE, 2015). B Corporation is a certification for "people using business as a force for good" (B Corporation, 2015). The following section will outline the mission and goals of M2W.

6.2.2.1 Mission and Goals

As stated on their website, the mission of M2W states that it is a social enterprise that:

- Inspires and enables people to become leaders and agents of change.

- Offers unique volunteer trips that allow young people and adults to participate in health, education and economic development projects abroad.
- Empowers people to change the world with their everyday choices by offering consumer products that give back. Every ME to WE product sold contributes to lasting change in a community overseas through its innovative Track Your Impact model (ME to WE, 2015).

M2W's mission utilizes a triple bottom line approach in which it strives to be good for the traveler, good for Free the Children, and good for the world. M2W's vision is to "empower people to transform local and global communities by shifting from 'me' thinking to 'we' acting" (ME to WE, 2015). They believe that this can be achieved through the choices that consumers make in the types of services and products they purchase (ME to WE, 2015). The next section will outline the self-identified impacts that M2W has achieved.

6.2.2.2 *Self-identified Impacts*

M2W strives to make sustainable impacts on a local and global level. They describe their achievements to date this way:

- Since 2009, donated more than \$8.5 million to Free The Children in cash and donations.
- In 2014, inspired more than 130,000 youth through ME to WE leadership programs.
- In 2014, joined by thousands of travelers on ME to WE volunteer trips overseas.
- To date, more than 1,400 mamas (women from the local communities who are stay at home moms) in Kenya are employed through ME to WE Artisans.
- 721,503 life-changing impacts have been provided to Free The Children for its development work in communities overseas—from communities provided access to clean water, to children provided the resources to succeed in school (ME to WE, 2015).

To quantify what the actual impacts they had on travelers, in 2014, M2W hired an independent third-party research consulting firm. The company Mission Measurement, a U.S.-based social-impact consulting firm found that trip participants were even more motivated to make change when they returned home. Specifically Mission Measurement found that:

- 95% of ME to WE Trip participants report feeling a strong sense of responsibility for the well-being of people in developing countries when they return home.
- 66% of participants felt they have experienced ‘transformative’ growth in their development as a leader.
- 85% of participants are involved in volunteering in their communities after returning from a ME to WE Trip.
- 93% of participants intend to play a leadership role in social justice activities in their community (ME to WE, 2015).

This section presented the missions, goals and impacts that M2W outlines as part of their operating standard shows their commitment to creating social change through their organization. The purpose of providing this information is to create an understanding and background of M2W's operational standards. The next section outlines M2W's volunteer tourism projects.

6.2.2.3 Volunteer Tourism Projects

M2W trips are identified as volunteer travel programs, which allow youth, adults, and the corporate employees to volunteer worldwide. M2W has been organizing trips for over 10 years to Ecuador, India, Kenya, Tanzania, The Amazon, Ghana, Rural China, Nicaragua and Arizona. M2W fosters the philosophy that:

Meaningful travel is about being a part of something larger than yourself. It's about being immersed in a new culture, fostering genuine connections and seeing the world through a new lens. It's about embarking on an unforgettable journey and creating a lasting legacy. Leave more than a footprint behind—leave a positive impact" (ME to WE, 2015).

According to their materials, the experience created by M2W for the volunteers is centred on four pillars: school building, cultural immersion, community education, and adventure². Within each project the jobs done by volunteers are created by both M2W and FTC staff. As identified during the interviews with participants from M2W, the organization has sent approximately 25,000 volunteers overseas since 2002

M2W offers various types of trips: Youth Volunteer Trips, University & College Volunteer Trips, School Volunteer Trips, Adult and Family Volunteer Trips, and Corporate Volunteer Trips. The costs and itinerary for each trip varies and depends on the type of trip selected. Each type of trip is offered in a pre-chosen country or countries. Table 7 presents a summary of these types of trips.

² The main purpose of each trip is to support the five pillars set out by Free the Children, create global awareness, and empower people to change.

Table 7: Types of Volunteer Trips, ME to WE

Type of Trip	Number of Days (approximate)	Description
Youth Volunteer	15-20 days	- for students under eighteen years old.
University & College Volunteer	15-20 days	- for post-secondary students
School Volunteer	vary	- customized to school requirements
Adult and Family Volunteer	9 days	- for adults and families
Corporate Volunteer	8-14 days	- customized to company requirements.

(ME to WE, 2015).

On their website, ME to WE (2015) states that participants of their trips will experience:

- Direct involvement in Free The Children’s sustainable development projects.
- Leadership training.
- Community interaction and cultural education: Participants get the opportunity to see and experience the communities that Free The Children partners with and meet local citizens.
- Visits to historic landmarks and cultural sites.
- Hands-on volunteering, which allows participants to give back in a meaningful way.
- For young people: certification of participants’ volunteer work for resumes, post-secondary applications, graduation requirements, course credits, etc.

- Social issues education: Guest speakers, facilitators and in-country staff share their knowledge of the country and the issues it faces.
- Renewed sense of community: Nurturing a sense of empathy, compassion and a full understanding of the power of community to change the world.
- Action planning: All participants learn how to set goals and build personalized action plans for making change happen when they return home.

To help with accruing money for their trips, M2W offers advice, coaching, and financial aid for their participants (ME to WE, 2015).

The price for *Youth Volunteer Trips, University and College Volunteer Trips* includes round-trip airfare (organized by ME to WE), accommodations while on the ground, three meals daily, bottled and/or purified water, entrance fees to activities, language lessons, volunteer placement activities, and leaderships training (including comprehensive action planning). All trip types have a trip facilitator who is available to volunteers 24 hours a day. The trip fee does not include travel medical insurance, passport and visa fees, or additional baggage fees (ME to WE, 2015). Departure trip days are pre-determined and volunteers book their travel based on those dates. When booking a trip each volunteer is given a trip kit which includes information on their destination and project which they can access from the M2W Trips Portal. Volunteers are also invited to attend in-person or through webinar presentations throughout their volunteer experience. These presentations consist of information about the project they will be working on, trip itinerary, and questions about the destination including country and community information, safety, and climate.

For *Adults and Family Volunteer Trips* each price, although they may slightly vary, includes accommodation, all meals and drinks indicated in itinerary, all activities outlined by itinerary, ground transportation, and entrance fees outlined. Each trip also has a facilitator who is available to volunteers 24 hours a day. Not included in trip price is airfare, gratuities, travel insurance (health, trip cancellation, interruption), and entry visas. When booking a trip each volunteer is given a trip kit which includes information on their destination and project (ME to WE, 2015). Table 8 provides a breakdown of the type of trip offered, the average cost per person, the destination countries and departure dates for trips in 2016.

Table 8: Cost for ME to WE Trips in 2016

Type of Trip	Average Cost Per Person	Countries Offered	Departure Dates
Youth Trip	\$3900 - \$5500 CDN	Amazon, China, Ecuador, India, Nicaragua, Kenya Tanzania	May-August
University & College	\$3900 - \$5500 CDN	Amazon, Ecuador, India, Kenya Tanzania	May-June
School Trips	Based on individual planning with School and ME to WE		
Adult and Family	\$3,295 +- \$4,395 + USD	Kenya, India, Ecuador	Not Specified
Corporate	\$3,295 + - \$4,395 + USD	Kenya, India, Ecuador	Not Specified

(ME to WE, 2015).

The safety of their travellers is identified in M2W materials as one of the main priorities on M2W trips. Since 2002, over 25,000 youth and adults have travelled with M2W across the world. As such, the organization employs rigorous pre-trip and during trip protocols. Pre-trip safety includes monitoring and abiding by the Canadian Department of Foreign Affairs travel advisories before and during travel. Canadian and American participants are registered with their embassies prior to departure, and all other nationalities are also encouraged to register with their embassies. Copies of all passports, medical and travel insurance, emergency contact information, and dietary and medical requirements are collected well in advance of the trip (ME to WE, 2015). On their website M2W states "facilitators of trips are certified, trained, highly educated and well-travelled individuals[...] trained in first aid, and carry a first-aid kit at all times" (ME to WE, 2015). Twenty-four hour emergency communication is also available. As well, M2W states "local hospitals with Western medical standards are aware of the trips and prepared to handle minor or major medical situations" (ME to WE, 2015). Safety protocols during a trip, includes 24-hour security system at accommodations. Transportation is run by "trusted transportation providers" and all travel is arranged by M2W. M2W also ensures "all meals are prepared by Me to We trained cooks, who are knowledgeable of our food preparation standards, and use only filtered water in their preparation. Participants have access to filtered or bottled water at all times" (ME to WE, 2015). As well, M2W states that "during all building activities, participants are given thorough instructions on the use of equipment and wear protective gear at all times" (ME to WE, 2015).

6.2.3 Operational Insights of ME to WE

This background on M2W provides insights into the operations of the organization. It shows the connection that M2W has with FTC and how this relationship has an influence on the

mission and goals of M2W. Facilitating a platform to allow for social change is a clearly-stated priority for the organization. Creating meaningful travel experiences that have long-term impact and legacy on both the volunteers and the communities they work with is identified by the organization as an important aspect. Ensuring that volunteers are prepared and safe during their trips is also identified as a priority. The indicators set out by FTC allows M2W to measure the impact they have at the destinations where they send volunteers. This background provides the backdrop to the analysis of interviews conducted with employees of M2W. These interviews allowed for a more in-depth exploration and understanding of the operational aspects of M2W, as well as offered insights into their views of the volunteer tourism sector, and their opinions about the role of certification. The next sections present the findings from the analysis of the interviews.

6.3 An Exploration of the Operations of ME to WE

The following section presents the results of the analysis of the in-depth interviews conducted with four key players from M2W's Canadian head office. As was outlined in the methods section, interviews were conducted with key players in order to develop a more in-depth assessment of operations and perceptions of certification. Three of the individuals interviewed had previous volunteer tourism experience overseas, and one had extensive experience in the tourism industry planning trips for school children. Participants' experience varied from a one-time excursion to multiple trips. Analysis of the interview transcripts allowed for the development of two key themes: 1) Creating a transformational experience, 2) Improving the volunteer tourism sector.

6.3.1 Creating Transformational Experiences

Throughout the interviews, discussions revolved around creating change. M2W identifies itself as a socially-conscious organization, which focuses not just on the immediate impacts but also on the long-term impacts on the volunteers and the communities they work with. Analysis of the interviews clearly indicated the prominence of the role of creating a transformational experiences for M2W. Under this main theme two sub-themes were identified: 1) Creating a transformational experience for the volunteer and 2) Creating a transformational experience for the community.

6.3.1.2 *Creating a Transformational Experience for the Volunteer*

The conversations I had with M2W participants made it immediately evident that volunteer's experience was a priority. M2W utilizes pre-trip preparation to ensure that they are creating meaningful experience for volunteers. Through the interviews it became evident that M2W operates in a manner centered on creating memorable and impactful personal experience. This is achieved through several ways. The first involves ensuring that volunteers are well informed pre-trip. Volunteers are assessed prior to signing up for a trip to make sure they are mentally and physically "capable" to participate in the project they are going to visit. This is done to help ensure the volunteer will be able to give the support and help the community will need at the project. Ava explained:

We do want to make sure, like I mentioned, that the people participating are the right people for this and we realize it may not be the right experience for everyone at a certain time but we do want to make sure it is a successful experience for people so we do mental health and physical health screening and capabilities to make sure that the people who are going are people supported in a way that is actually going to help better the community and some of the project they'll be working on.

Sophia further explained the pre-trip screening also ensures that volunteers can be supported in the setting they are going, for example in the case of specific dietary needs, so they can plan and support them. As she discussed:

Just to make sure that we're capable of supporting the people we send overseas because we're different than most companies where we actually go into rural areas, so we have to make sure that if someone has a you know, unique dietary need, that we actually can plan and prepare for that cause it's not as simple as being in an, in an urban setting and going out and grabbing extra food. So we do a big screening process to, to make sure that we're prepared for the groups we send overseas and that they're fit for the experience.

Once a volunteer is cleared for participation, M2W then provides extensive pre-trip support for both the volunteers, and their parents. The purpose of this preparation is to prepare and help build the experience that volunteers will have at a project. This preparation is supported by a full team of staff and each volunteer works with a trip coordinator. In some cases pre-trip preparation can take up to a year. As Sophia explained:

We have our full team who does all the our support in the pre-trip which can sometimes be as long as a year before they travel and each client works with a trip coordinator, and the trip coordinator there is there to answer the 101 questions that come up between the day they sign up for the program and when they return home from the trip.

Pre-trip preparation consists of information on logistical aspects about visas, immunizations, and what to pack. It also consists of preparing the volunteer for cultural differences and specifics about the projects, such as safety. Mia explained:

So it's everything from very logistical things, like "here's what you need to do prior: you need to get a Visa, you need to go and get immunization", "here's what you need to pack", and the logistical piece of it. But, it is also a preparation for some of the physical things they are going to encounter on the trip and some of the pieces of adjusting to a community different from their own and details about projects and safety related to the projects and building, those kinds of things.

Pre-trip preparation also provides a daily itinerary of the location, stories about the community, and a list of resources for parents and teachers to help the volunteer understand what they will be involved with. As Ava explained:

All of our participants from ME to WE are given detailed overview of what the experience is going to look like, from the day-to-day itinerary to the communities that they'll be visiting and their stories, impacts made, what are their hopes and dreams but also a list of resources that we strongly encourage not the individuals but their parents, their teacher, to get involved in to help educate themselves to get a better sense of where they're headed.

Ethan explained volunteers are also given a detailed overview about the communities they are going to work in. This overview describes challenges the community faces and specific details about the projects they will be working on including the impacts they hope to make. Volunteers are also provided with a list of resources they are encouraged to review to help them better understand the destination that they are going to visit. As Ethan described:

Participants are given a detailed overview of the community that they're going to work in. We provide a development overview of the community so the group understands the challenges that a community faces and what are the interventions or the projects that are being brought in partnership with the communities to shift and change some of those challenges that they're facing. We also give them reading lists, resources, films that we'd recommend that they engage in to get a better sense of the destination that they're walking into.

Volunteers do not receive any formal training and programs are designed to be based on the skill level that is expected by the age group of the volunteer participating. Ethan explained:

We're not, training volunteers to take on tasks that are outside of their capabilities. Within the development model, we're defining projects and activities that are appropriate for their skill set. A middle-schooler will be connected to work that is appropriate for a general labour level, and skill level that they can participate in and be effective.

From the interviews it was clear that M2W was particular about the types of individuals (staff) they hire to lead trips. As Ethan discussed:

It's also worth noting that, as an organization, a major part of our pre-trip work is ensuring we have highly qualified people running the programs. The staff that we're sending over to facilitate our trips are university graduates that are also highly trained, that usually come with travel experience. The majority of our facilitators qualified teachers. Regardless, of their education, we do approximately 14 days of certification where facilitators are trained on leadership modules, risk management, and medical and first aid training.

As they are engaged with volunteers pre-trip, during, and post-trip, facilitators play a key role in the volunteer's experience. Participants clearly expressed their belief that staff are key factors in creating a transformational experience for the volunteers. As Ava discussed:

I think the one piece, from the ME to WE perspective, that really helps the volunteers; whether it's preparing them beforehand or supporting them throughout their psychological journey of an experience like that is our ME to WE facilitators[...]They are really there to help the individuals make meaning out of the experience, to help facilitate interactions with the community members and really understand, yes you are going to help a school but you're not just going to lay brick-by-brick [...] who are the lives that are going to be impacted by this? What does this brick mean to the community members? What are the issues they are facing in the first place that you even need to be here? Or wanted to be here? So, that's where our facilitators who are extremely trained and highly qualified play a key role in ensuring the quality of the experience before, during and after.

Participants also described how there is an “in country team” who work on a continued basis with the communities. These individuals are well-versed in the local culture and have knowledge about the project and destination, which allows for integration into the community.

As Mia explained:

Then we have our country team, who work alongside with the communities there and have the local knowledge so that there is definitely that local piece for anyone who is traveling to those destinations so that there is an integration into the community as opposed to it being kind of like a 'bus stop' along the way.

M2W manages the experiences volunteers have in order to create a transformational experience.

Participants described how “conversations” occur throughout the trips to create awareness

among volunteers about the experiences they are having. The purpose of these conversations is to understand and realize what is occurring within the communities as they are visiting and to help them to reflect about the differences between their current destination and back home. Mia explained:

Throughout the trip there are conversations about things they are doing and things they are seeing every day. So, you know, it could be they went into a market and they had an experience at the market, and they can come back and say what did you notice about the market? How much did things cost? And based on how much people make- you know, kind of the income piece of it (as an example). And then they will have conversations about that and then its making the connection to home, so those are always the pieces that are really important so that they understand the depth of what's happening within a community- not just going to a market and buying a trinket to take home but what's actually happening within that market, how it affects and supports the community and then, how is that different from home?

Mia further explained that initiating these conversations helps the volunteer relate to the current situations that are occurring in their destination as well as build a connection to the community.

She states:

The facilitator is able to say how does this translate back to you guys when you turn on your tap at home in Toronto? And what does that mean for you? As a result, the participants are able to relate what they are experiencing back to their own communities as well as creating the local connections where we get the genuine connection to the community about the issues the community tackles and their desired solutions.

The program M2W has created for its volunteers was identified by participants as being “more than just volunteer travel”. The organization focuses on leadership development for their volunteers so they can learn skills they can use to become a leader and take action when they return home. As well, there is a focus on creating "genuine interactions" with the community so that volunteers can learn from the people who are implementing and leading development within the community. As Sophia discussed:

Our program has, it's so much more than just volunteer travel, we really look at a couple core components of what we do and so we focus on leadership development for the individual and you know having them learn skills and develop themselves as a leader so that when they come home they're ready to take action. We focus on connecting with the community, having strong interaction, but they're really genuine interactions with the community members when they're there. So they're not learning about the development model just from our staff who are implementing it, they're actually learning it from the people who are a part of the community and are leading it in their community.

Ethan also explained that he believes that M2W is "vastly different" than other forms of volunteer tourism due to the origins of the organization. He stated:

I think we are vastly different so, so one is, think about the emphasis on why we started on volunteer travel [...] we wanted to create greater access to that experience and [our] end goal, if you were to go way back in time was empowering youth to change the world and empowering youth overseas to break the cycle of poverty

M2W's program also focused on what they call "action planning". Action planning, involves a discussion with volunteers about what is important to them and what they are passionate about. It helps them to think about how to translate that passion into something that can make a difference and take action when they return home. M2W also provides a support system for volunteers when they return and help them to learn more about their interests. Mia explained:

Action planning, it's really a way for people and most specifically kids to really look at what's important to them? What is their passion? What fueled them to really be passionate about something? What is that thing that's important to you? Because you don't necessarily have to create something that's not important to you but a lot of the time what happens is people start to hone in on things that they are very passionate about and then they are facilitated through a process of how they plan to take action when they come home and that can range from any number of things but it's to really have them mindful about it and then we create support when they return as well and in a lot of cases they want to learn more about.

Action planning is discussed pre-trip, during, and post trip, however, most of the tangible plans are said to be developed during the trip. Action plans help identify the talents or skills a

volunteer may have and how to use them to create a difference when they are back home. As Sophia discussed:

We look at action planning [...] we talk about it throughout the trip with the group but really its talking to our participants about finding an issue that they're passionate about and figuring out what gifts or talents or skills they have and how to pair those together to take action to create a difference when they come back home. [...] it's those kinds of things that we do with our participants when they're on the trip that help to turn the experience they're in a help them process the experience they're in and focus on long-term action and long-term activism. So we do some of the prep work in conversation in pre-trip around that being a major portion so that they're prepared for it when they get there, but a lot of the tangibles really come from when they're on the ground and when they're on the trip.

Facilitators also play a role post-trip as they facilitate a discussion with volunteers about all they had experienced during their trips. This discussion is centered around the experiences the volunteers had at the project and the possible impacts they had on the communities. These conversations revolve around the impacts the trip may have had on the volunteer, whether it created any change within them, and how this may impact them as they move forward in their lives. Mia explained:

I think the piece that is equally important is how we ensure when people return from their trip that they're being "re-integrated"- perhaps is the word we could use- where you know, part of their experience on the ground that they work with their facilitators is you know, what are you seeing? What are you learning? How do you think you are having an impact? How is this impacting the communities? How does this change your view on things? So, really trying to internalize the things that they're doing, the things that they're seeing and the impact it is having on the people they are working with as well as them as a person. And then what are you gonna do with this information when you get back? So, are you going to? How are you going to share your experience and how are you going to change- well, not necessarily how you do things- but how is your perspective changing? And how will that impact decisions that you make moving forward.

Ava argued it is the responsibility of the organization, alongside the schools and their partners, to create knowledge, understanding and support for the experiences that volunteers have at the projects that they visit. She explained:

At the end of the day, I really feel like this is the first time you are, as a young person, traveling without your family, going to a foreign place and volunteering -it's hard to know what you don't know. I really see that we have a responsibility, along with our schools and our partners, to help create a sense of understanding (as much as you possibly can) and support network going that the experience.

The experiences volunteers have on a trip are recognized by participants as creating a new perspective, awareness, and way of thinking for the volunteer. In cases with young volunteers, M2W helps to prepare the parents and guardians, by sending out materials and encouraging open dialogue about the possible changes that may have occurred. This is to help their child reintegrate back into their daily lives, as well as prepare the parent for understanding these changes. Sophia discussed:

The kids will come back having opened up their eyes to a whole new perspective, a new way of thinking, and their parent is expecting them to come back, you know, somewhat different but they don't know how different when they arrive back home to them. And the parents sometimes don't know how to relate to it, they don't know how to support them best, so while groups are actually in country, so while a trip is happening we send out materials to parents to get them to prompt them to get ready for some of that potential reverse culture shock, and we, we keep a dialogue with them if there's anything coming up and if there's any challenges when a participant gets home.

As participants discussed during the interviews, M2W focuses on providing “socially-conscious” and “quality products” and experiences for their consumers, which have minimal negative environmental or consumer impacts. It also focuses on having positive impacts on their partner organization FTC, and the projects they are working on with communities. Ava discussed:

What unites us is the core of what we do is we are a socially-conscious organization that prides our self on being triple bottom line oriented that is- you know- really around the impact-base not just around immediate outcomes but long-term impacts [...]One of the components is being able to provide quality products and experiences for the consumers that, you know, we want better choices for a better world. We are providing socially-conscious products and experiences for consumers in a way that are manufactured to not have negative environmental impacts or consumer impacts within the world and were also measured by the impact that we have on Free The Children.

Creating a transformational experience for the volunteer is in line with the goals M2W identifies as the main purpose of the organization. Participants described wanting to help empower people who want to live a socially-conscious lifestyle and create a better world. Ethan explained:

Our goal is to make transformative experiences, empowering experiences for the consumer. So we're, if you want to live a social conscious lifestyle and if you're interested in wanting to create a better world, we want to empower you to do that.

Thus, creating a transformational experience for the volunteer was clearly identified as an important part of the operations of M2W. M2W identified that they are more than just volunteer tourism due to their commitment to creating change within destinations. Pre-trip preparation helps to ensure volunteers are able to participate in projects, are given important logistical information for their trip, knowledge about their destination and the project that they will participate in. Staff training helps to ensure the quality of the volunteer experience. Finally M2W works to manage the volunteer experience by creating a forum for dialogue and support about the possible impacts a volunteer has, and can have during and after their trip. All these themes build our understanding of what M2W views as its role in creating a transformational experience for the volunteer through their operations. The next section presents the second sub-theme, creating a transformational experience for the community.

6.3.1.3 *Creating a Transformational Experience for the Community*

Creating a transformational experience for the community is the second sub-theme identified during data analysis. As discussed in the background section of this chapter, M2W's primary purpose is to support the work of their partner organization, FTC. Ethan noted empowering communities and breaking the cycle of poverty is one of the main goals of M2W. He stated:

One of our main goals is empowering the communities that we work with, creating a model that is ultimately going help fund and support the ability for them to break the cycle of poverty.

Sophia argued their partnership with FTC and the development model they work with is what distinguishes them from other volunteer tourism organizations. Specifically, because their first priority is advancing the work of FTC, which focuses on the community. She stated:

Because of our model of working in partnership with Free the Children I see ourselves as dramatically different than others that are out, that are out in the field. I think because we start with the model that starts with development, it has influenced and changed the way that we, that we measure ourselves and that we, where we focus our successes. So because we focus on development first sort of through history that Free the Children is always the first one in a community or in a country and then ME to WE follows. It's always starting with the right intention in mind and I think that can be very different than how other people model themselves.

Ethan also distinguished M2W from other volunteer tourism organizations. Specifically he felt they are charitable and development-driven with a focus on empowering communities and helping them to get out of poverty. Ethan discussed:

We're measuring ourselves in these three ways and we aim to design trips from a content perspective and an experience perspective that is going to be as powerful and transformative as possible for you—the consumer, but also for the communities that we work with. If we are creating experiences that are good for the world, in this particular case it needs to be great for the communities that we work with. In the travel industry you're seeing more volunteer organizations

that are profit driven. We, to some extent, are charitable driven and development driven. It's about working with the community to help them break the cycle of poverty and be an arm of empowerment. And it's about communities raising themselves out of poverty.

Projects that M2W sends volunteers to are created by FTC, in consultation with local government organizations and community leaders. Sophia explained:

We have our staff on the ground, we have our Free the Children staff in the office there who are working with you know like the ministry of education to figure out the needs. So they'll work with the local government organizations, and then they'll work with the community leaders, and it's all run through Free the Children.

As such, participants explained how their volunteer trips are based on projects that were pre-determined by the communities and FTC. The timeline for a project is usually from 5-8 years, and volunteer opportunities are based on what is deemed necessary during the course of the project, and not volunteer's preferences. As Ava discussed:

Working with the community, more a senior administration leaders of the community to understand what that construction plan or that project plan will look like. It could last anywhere from 5-8 years and ME to WE volunteers will come in and volunteer on pre-determined projects. So, it is not something a volunteer will say like, 'we want to go, we want to build a school, we want to build a water well!' well, actually we will notify you, or Free The Children and the communities will notify ME to WE who will notify you before your trip on what the actual area of development opportunity is for you to contribute in a meaningful way- to promote the self-sufficiency of these communities.

Mia discussed that M2W focuses on creating sustainable community development that matches the needs of the community, not just a "hand out". This is part of a collaborative approach in which trips are meant to enhance the community's development. She stated:

I would say it's about the sustainability piece- it's not meant to be a handout- it's meant to be a partnership that creates a sustainable community and meets the needs of the community and the multi-pillar approach makes sure that there is a collaborative approach as opposed to a company is looking to sell more trips and therefore is a profit driven model. This is more about the community and the

development and how trips can enhance that- as opposed to the other way around.

Sophia further discussed they focus on building community ownership, with the goal of promoting self-sufficiency within a 5 year period. This number can decrease or increase depending on the community's ability to adapt, as well as the environmental and economic potential of the community. She stated:

So all of Free the Children programs are based on a model that is driven by community members to promote self-sufficiency. So the goal of it is that we will work our way out of a community and the typical partnership with a community is around 5 years is the plan that usually gets designed and sometimes that can take a little bit longer or sometimes it can actually be a little bit shorter depending on how quickly you know they adopt certain things, different political or environmental scenarios that are in the community, things like we've seen drought for example change some of that length of time.

Community participation in the project is a mandatory component. Participants made clear the project would fail if communities don't feel ownership. As such, community members are involved in providing the physical labour that may be required and even responsible for paying a small percentage of the costs involved in the project creation. As Ethan discussed:

Community participation is also a mandatory component of the partnership with communities. Projects fail if the local community does not feel ownership over the outcome of the project. In all projects, communities are supporting in some way. At times this is in the form of the physical labour or they might even be responsible for paying for 5% of the land, so there's actual, there's actual buy-in to the creation of this or whatever the projects are.

M2W participants explained projects are created on land that is communally-owned, so there are no issues about the ownership or land use in the future. He stated:

We won't build a school on land that we own [ME to WE], cause that doesn't make sense, and we won't build school, a school on a land that a singular person owns.

Creating a transformational experience for the community is identified as an important part of the operations of ME to WE. This is facilitated through their partnership with Free the Children. Specifically, the development model that FTC utilizes is community driven and aims to empower communities. Thus, the work M2W does is described as facilitating and funding this sustainable development philosophy. Further, participants expressed this is specifically what distinguishes them from other volunteer tourism operators. Mia described how the M2W experience impacts all the individuals directly and indirectly involved:

I think it's impactful for the person who is doing the traveling, but the part that is most important as well is it's impactful for the community that they are going to, and the community that they're learning from and the community they're helping to support and then the impact back to their community, their family, their school.

As such, the major theme of creating a transformational experience (for both volunteers and the community) also reflects the goals and missions outlined in the background section. The analysis provided in this section offered a more in-depth look at how those goals and missions are adopted by those working for M2W at the ground level, and offers insight into the operations of the organization. The next section will present the second major theme derived from the interview analysis.

6.3.2 Improving the Volunteer Tourism Sector

A paramount issue for participants was improving the volunteer tourism sector, and was the second major theme derived from the analysis of interviews. Under this main theme four sub-themes were identified as part of improving the volunteer tourism sector: 1) Creating meaningful change; 2) Role of the Operator; 3) Tensions within the Sector; and 4) Suggested Improvements.

6.3.2.1 *Creating Meaningful Change*

All M2W participants believed volunteer tourism can create meaningful change, however, there were several caveats expressed about this idea. The main belief that volunteer tourism made a difference mainly stemmed from the positive work that M2W believes it accomplishes at destinations. Specifically, participants reflected on the partnership with M2W and FTC and the model they use when working with communities, but also through the impact measurements that are set out by the organizations. Sophia explained:

I think that we have seen a lot of positive impact in the areas that we work. I think that we can see this in a variety of ways and if you sort of go back to how I mentioned that we look at what we do as transforming lives both internationally and domestically. So working with the communities we work in, and then also working with the travelers that we send, I think it's really apparent. So if you look at it on those 2 levels I think that there's, that the way that volunteer tourism can make a difference is if they're partnered with a strong implementer on the ground [...] We know that the work that they're doing does make an impact and we can see that and measure that through Free the Children. So I think that is sort of how we see the change coming through.

Ava further discussed her belief that volunteer tourism can create meaningful change is based on her experience working with M2W. She also emphasized this is due to the partnerships and models set up by FTC, and the operations of M2W. She believed these sustainability partnerships are what make an impact and argues they do not create dependency. Ava explained:

Yes I do think it has the potential to make an impact. I can only really speak on behalf of the impacts that I have been able to be a part of, and you know, either see first-hand or work with travelers with ME to WE and Free The Children over the past 5 years to say the work that ME to WE traveler volunteers are doing is making an impact. The one main reason that I truly believe that is because of the partnership with Free The Children. It is by no means where volunteers are going in saying, 'we are bring a bunch of supplies and we want to build this', it is very much dictated and the tone is set by the communities and consultation with Free The Children. So, it's that sustainable partnership that has really started to make an impact and there is no sense of dependency.

Ethan also stated volunteer tourism can create meaningful change if it follows the right model for development. He further noted this is not true of all volunteer tourism operations and whether volunteer tourism can make a difference depends on the provider. Like Sophia and Ava, his view that volunteer tourism can create meaningful change is based on his experience working with M2W and their participation in a holistic model of development, which guides their volunteer tourism trips. He states:

[Volunteer tourism] requires the right development model to support it. If you were to ask me “are all volunteer trips making a difference?” the answer is no. And if you were to ask me “are the majority of volunteer trip providers doing a good job?” I couldn’t answer in a meaningful way. But if you were to ask me how, “how do I know that ME to WE volunteer trips make a meaningful impact?” I would say, yes we are and it is because we are working within a holistic development model and it has impacts on multiple levels. It creates impacts on through providing meaningful labour to progress the projects.

Mia also explained that volunteer tourism can create meaningful change but is dependent on how it originates and if it utilizes a strong development model. She stated:

I think it can. I don’t think it necessarily always does. Part of it can depend on how it originates- let’s put it that way. If volunteer tourism originates in genuine community need and the need can be fulfilled alongside the community to attain long-term sustainable growth, volunteer tourism can absolutely support that model. There is a lot of potential to make a really strong difference if there is an international development model partner working in countries in a sustainable way and travel is able to support that- as opposed to the other way around where a tourism need is identified and the volunteer portion is an afterthought.

6.3.2.2 Role of the Operator

The second component of improving the Volunteer Tourism sector is the Role of the Operator. Sophia described how the responsibility of creating sustainability at a destination falls on the volunteer tourism operators. Specifically she argued it is the duty of the people who are working with communities internationally to ensure they are having positive impacts in the

places they are involved with. She further discussed this responsibility lies with the people running the program and it is not easy to put it on someone else. Sophia stated:

I think that it comes down to the [operators] that are running the program. I think they're the ones who should be accountable for ensuring it, and I just don't think that there's an easy way to put that responsibility onto anyone else.... I think that if organizations are working internationally and are working in these communities it's their duty to make sure that the impacts they're having are positive, and that their impacts are, are benefitting the people that they're working with.

Mia concurred:

I think that as an organization, it's ultimately the organization's responsibility and the people that they're involved with- their responsibility. So, it is up to the tour operator to ensure that there is sustainability in the programs they're offering.

Ava discussed it is not only the tour operators' responsibility but also the destination partner's/organization's responsibility for creating programs to ensure sustainability. She argued:

Well, I think it's quite simple- it's a mutual responsibility of the organization that is sending volunteers abroad and, there's also a responsibility in terms of the partners helping to implement and create the sustainability of these programs within the communities so that, in this case it would be Free The Children, and the communities that we partner with.

Ethan also agreed:

I don't think you can put the responsibility on anybody other than the travel provider and the partners that are implementing the development programs on the ground.

The next sections will provide a discussion of the third sub-theme; tensions within the sector as outlined by participants.

6.3.2.3 *Tensions within the Sector*

The third element of the theme of improving the volunteer tourism sector captures the issues of tensions. Although volunteer tourism was generally considered by participants as

having positive impacts, albeit depending on the development model used, they also noted several issues which created uncertainty within the sector. One of the main issues with volunteer tourism is the vast differences between projects and operators, some who are relying on poor development models. As well, there is no standard experience or operations amongst the various operators. Ethan explained:

Unfortunately, there are many groups who are running volunteer trips supporting poor development models. The volunteer travel industry is all over the map. You can go do everything from watching turtle eggs hatch on a beach to being a doctor doing meaningful work placed in a hospital for 2 years. And the challenge right now in the industry is that it's so fundamentally different and you don't know what you'll get.... it's a convoluted industry to navigate.

Mia further discussed how the vast differences within volunteer tourism are challenging for the consumer and is leading to uncertainty about the sector. She stated:

With volunteer travel because there are so many different types of travel (you can go somewhere and sleep on a church floor and be involved with a church program and be there for 5 years or you can be involved for 2 weeks on a specific project. It can be vastly, vastly different. It can involve elephants in Thailand or it can be working on a water project in Ecuador. You know, there are so many different pieces involved so it's really hard to differentiate those things. And so in a lot of cases, you don't know what you're getting till you get there. I think that in a lot of cases people find that for a trip they don't necessarily know what they are getting into until they get there. I think that those are some of the pieces that make it a challenging industry.

Participants also expressed concern there was no "common language" or regulations within the volunteer tourism sector, which could help the traveler navigate and decipher the organizations striving to make a positive impact from those who do not have positive intentions. Hence, without doing extensive research there is no way for the traveler to discern if they are actually making a decision that fits their values and their intentional behaviour. Participants noted travelers may become disheartened with the sector, not realizing there may have been other better options for them to do meaningful work. As Sophia explained:

I think one of the challenges we have are there aren't regulations, there isn't common language, there isn't a common understanding of people, of what volunteer tourism means. With volunteer travel, there's no set certification, there's no set language we're using, I could sign up for a volunteer trip with one organization and it might only be 4 hours of volunteer work and another could have 20 hours but it's really hard to tell from the outset without doing an enormous amount of research and really being intentional with, with the decisions you're making to make sure it fits with your values. And so it makes comparing options really difficult and it does make making the right decision difficult. And I mentioned it before, I think, travelers have all of the best intentions, and I think sometimes they end up on a trip where they're not supporting sustainable development and then they come back disheartened about the entire sector, when there are actually a lot of companies doing really meaningful work.

Ava suggested that perhaps having a “common language” could aid the traveler in differentiating experiences, and determining what the impact would be. She discussed:

So I think being able to have a common language that helps to understand the travelers, the industry- the world, in particular... what's the differentiation between the different experiences? It will help people better understand the right experience, or what they're looking for out of this but also what the impact is going to be.

Ethan concurred with Ava and states:

That's one significant challenge for the consumer. There's no common knowledge right now that helps people understand the depth and the differentiation between the product offerings within the industry. And the value proposition is not always clear. Wanting to go and do good starts from a place of authenticity and integrity. As a consumer, you'd expect the same from the experience and the tour provider but not everybody's living up to that expectation. A consumer can go overseas expecting to do meaningful work, but you're not a development specialist.

6.3.2.4 Suggested Improvements

The final element of Improving the Volunteer Tourism sector was suggested improvements. Participants suggested creating a rubric with a common language might be a

possible solution to the issues within the sector. Specifically, it was discussed a monitoring or ratings group could be created that looked at the development model of the volunteer tourism organizations. Ethan suggested:

There are some solutions that you can look at this. You could look at creating a watch dog or ratings group like Charity Navigator. A common language would need to be created along with a rubric that looks at development model. You'd also need to extend the rubric to quality of interaction with the community, and value for the consumer. But then you're also, you can check the box on a lot of these things that consumers are looking for such as quality of accommodations, quality of food, safety and risk management.

Sophia specifically suggested that certification, education about issues, and a common language may be helpful for the sector. As discussed in the Background section, M2W was recently certified as a B Corp and Sophia noted that it has created an awareness for herself personally about her purchasing decisions. As such, she identified perhaps creating something that allows for more knowledge and awareness for consumers about their purchasing decisions would help the sector. She explained:

So I think that some of those things whether it's creating certification, finding a common language, just educating, making it easier to educate people around the language that we're using, I think would be helpful. And one of the interesting things that's top of mind for us is that ME to WE just became certified as a B Corp, certified B Corporation in Canada, and I didn't know about, a great example, I didn't know about certified B Corporations until I was going through the process, and now I look at it and I see these companies, and I go on and do research about which companies I should be buying things from and I think if we're not aware then others are certainly not aware. So I think it's just some more general knowledge and awareness and creating sort of a framework for people to sort of feel confident that they're making the right decision and the decision they intend to make would be valuable.

Ava suggested within volunteer travel it is important to have something that creates structure within the sector whether it is an accreditation or association, to hold it to higher standards. She argued creating these things is important to help achieve a collective end:

I think it's important to have structure around something like this especially in volunteer travel when its involving lives and individuals livelihoods whether it be the communities that we are volunteering in or the individuals that are participating in an experience like that. It is really important to have some sort of accreditation and maybe an association- and it could be a self-governing body- that attempts to hold different segments of the industry to higher standards. I do really think that's important- whether it's an external governing body, a self-governing body or it's kind of like a rubric, or a score card, or accreditation-It is important that it is one that a means to help achieve a collective end, instead of a means of doing the opposite of what we want to achieve.

Mia argued there is an obligation in any industry to try and hold the industry to a standard. She discussed organizations are sometimes able to gain credibility by being part of standards organization. However, these organizations should have standards to which they can be accountable. She argued standards organizations are not credible if organizations can just “buy into” them. She explained:

I would suggest that, in any industry, you have an obligation to try and hold the industry to a certain standard [...] Organizations are sometimes able to gain credibility by being a part of a particular organization or achieving a certain accomplishment. However, I think that if that association is, in fact, not necessarily profit-based but looking to ensure that customers/travelers are being looked after that travelers aren't being taken advantage of when someone signs up for a trip that they are going be looked after to the best of the tour operators abilities. And that there are safety measures in place. I think if there are those pieces of it it's great. However, there are associations, that you can buy your way into them. So, if you're buying your way into it then there isn't the higher standard there. It's a financial standard. And I think that financial standard can be good if there protecting a traveler but financial standards can be challenging if they are simply a matter of buying into an association and getting the accreditation based on that.

Ethan noted he would be open to subscribing to a certification scheme that is of high quality. He stated the most important aspect would be how accessible it is for others, especially because some organizations may not be able to subscribe to them. Specifically he discussed how other

schemes can be expensive and for a certification scheme to work it would have to be one that a lot of people subscribe to, so consumers can evaluate the possible options.

I think it's really interesting and I would definitely be open to it. It's about doing it with a high level of quality, but it's also about accessibility. You look at certifications like fair trade, organizations pay tens of thousands of dollars to have that certification on an annual basis, and there were ripples coming through the volunteer industry right now because you have for profit groups coming in but a lot of these for profit groups are not actually making that much money. So it's this question of certification makes a lot of sense to me, but in order for this to work, you have to make it accessible so that groups are actually participating and therefore you're going to get enough people to allow consumers to have an evaluation of the group.

Improving the volunteer tourism sector was identified as the second major theme emanating from the analysis of the interviews with participants from M2W. All participants believed volunteer tourism makes a difference depending on the development model used by the operator and its partner. It was also discussed the responsibility and role of the volunteer tourism operator, and projects, are important in creating sustainability at a destination. Several tensions were also identified within the sector such as differences between projects, no way for consumers to discern quality of projects prior to trips, lack of a common language, and lack of governing agencies. All M2W participants identified a willingness to subscribe to a certification scheme for the volunteer tourism industry, however, several factors, as noted above, would have to be considered prior to implementation. Creating a common rubric, whether it is certification or otherwise, is identified as a way to improve the sector. These factors are revisited in the discussion and concluding sections of this thesis.

6.4 ME to WE: Empowering Change through Social Responsibility

The presentation of the background analysis, as well as the interviews conducted with participants from M2W provided valuable insights into the operations of the organization. As

well ideas about the tensions faced by the volunteer tourism and steps that might help with addressing those tensions. Clearly, M2W is focused on creating transformational experiences for their volunteers and communities they work with, thus improving the volunteer tourism sector through their operations. This is why they identify themselves as more than just volunteer tourism. Throughout the interviews, discussion evolved around creating change through the work that M2W does. M2W self-identifies as a socially-conscious organization that provides products and experiences in line with their philosophy of creating long term impacts in everything they do. Specifically, they identify they want to help empower people to live a socially conscious lifestyle and create a better world; empower the communities they work with to help them break the cycle of poverty; and generate revenue and grow the organization so that it can in turn help the projects that FTC is involved in. Creating a transformational experience is in line with the goals M2W identifies as the main purpose of the organization. For the volunteer, M2W operates in a manner centered on creating a memorable and impactful personal experience. This is achieved through the provision of pre-trip preparation and hiring of educated and experienced staff. It was also identified that M2W manages the experiences their volunteers have throughout their trip from beginning to end. Facilitating 'action planning' with volunteers affords them the opportunity to make a difference in the cause the volunteer is passionate about. For the community, creating a transformational experience was identified as another important aspect of M2W's operations. Specifically, this entails creating collaborative partnerships with communities, and empowering them to break the cycle of poverty. As such, M2W discusses that their partnership with FTC, and the development model they work with is what distinguishes them from other volunteer tourism organizations. Therefore, based on participants' responses,

creating a transformational experience can be defined as: *an experience that creates significant and permanent change, both internally and externally, for the individuals or groups involved.*

Improving the volunteer tourism sector was deemed as an important aspect within the interviews. Participants clearly believed volunteer tourism creates meaningful change within a destination based on their experiences working with ME to WE. It was identified that the difference volunteer tourism can make is dependent on the model used for development by the operators and their partners. It was agreed the responsibility of creating sustainability at a destination falls on the volunteer tourism operators and destination partner organization creating the opportunities for volunteers. Several issues were also identified within the sector such as operators supporting poor development models, lack of operating standards within the sector, and the challenges of identifying good projects by the volunteer tourist. It is suggested that perhaps creating a common language, educating consumers, creating regulations or implementing a certification may help the current issues within the sector. The creation of some sort of structured sector association or certification is identified as having the potential of holding the sector to a higher standard. It was identified that implementation of any standards organization would have to be proven to be credible and accessible to all organizations that would subscribe to it within the volunteer tourism sector. All participants identified they would be willing to subscribe to a certification scheme for the volunteer tourism industry, however, several of the factors that had been discussed, throughout the findings, would have to be considered prior to any implementation.

This case study of ME to WE presented important insights on the operations of the volunteer tourism organization. Specifically it illustrated how the organization views volunteer tourism, and the tensions and challenges they may face or have witnessed within the sector.

M2W identifies itself as a "social enterprise" that inspires and empowers people to create change in the world. It's adoption of a triple bottom line approach in which it strives to be good for the traveler, good for Free the Children, and good for the world is evident within their business practices. This type of philosophy may explain why within the interviews participants identified that M2W is more than just volunteer tourism.

The next Chapter will present the cross-case synthesis of Projects Abroad and ME to WE. This chapter will provide a discussion contrasting and comparing the operations of both organizations and create an insightful analysis about these commercial volunteer tourism organizations.

CHAPTER SEVEN: CROSS-CASE SYNTHESIS

7.1 Introduction

As discussed in Chapter 3, a cross-case analysis and synthesis was utilized to determine the similarities and differences of the current practices of both Project Abroad (PA) and ME to WE (M2W). This analysis synthesizes the findings from both case studies to provide an overall picture of the operations of both organizations (Appendix L and Appendix M). This analysis also considered the background materials that were presented for both cases. Two major themes were developed from the cross-case analysis: 1) Operating towards making a difference, and 2) Creating social responsibility within the volunteer tourism sector. After presenting these themes, I provide a discussion of these findings in order to set the stage for the discussion and concluding chapters of the thesis.

7.2 Operating Towards Making a Difference

Both organizations engaged in specific operations related to operating towards making a difference within their volunteer tourism projects. Two sub-themes were identified within this major theme: 1) Preparing the Volunteer; and 2) Creating social impacts for the volunteer and community. After introducing each theme, I discuss similarities and differences between the cases.

7.2.1 Preparing the Volunteer

Both organizations conducted a significant amount of preparation for the trips they offered. Prior to going on a trip, both organizations did an assessment of the individual who wished to go on a volunteer trip with them. This assessment was identified as an aid in

determining whether the prospective volunteer would be able to participate in a project. The rationale for this ‘background check’ was described differently by both organizations. PA emphasized the importance of determining the background of the applicant, specifically whether they had a criminal record, due to the requirements of some of their projects. They also explained it is a way to get to know the preferences, skills, and qualifications of potential volunteers so they can advise them about a suitable project. M2W explained their background check was to determine the mental and physical health and capabilities of potential volunteers. They also explained it allowed them to determine whether it was possible to support the volunteer in any needs they may have, dietary or other.

Both organizations offer extensive pre-departure support information to their volunteers. This consists of providing background information about the destination (i.e. safety, accommodation, transportation) as well as logistical aspects for their trip, such as attaining visas and trip insurance. PA's pre-departure information is provided to the volunteer in the form of a webpage called MyProjectsAbroad, which outlines all these aspects. This information is extensive and includes discussions of cultural norms (e.g. dress) in the destination country. M2W's pre-departure information is also extensive and can be accessed through the ME to WE Trips Portal. Neither organization provides any formalized pre-trip training for their volunteers. Interview participants from PA stated that this would be too costly and M2W suggested that the skill level required of volunteers on trips does not require training. Furthermore, neither organization requires that their volunteer have any pre-defined qualifications unless they participate in a specialized trip where qualifications are required. What differs between the two organizations’ pre-trip information is that prior to the trip M2W gives a daily itinerary of a project, and provides an overview about the community including personal stories and

challenges the volunteer may face when at the project. This creates a more in-depth understanding for the volunteer about the differences that are present within the destination from their country of origin. PA also provides a more detailed and extensive handbook about the destination. It appears that M2W creates more focus on the social and cultural aspects of the project to create a connection and awareness of issues within the destination, whereas, PA focuses more on providing a thorough descriptive understanding of the destination and logistics involved with taking the trip.

Both organizations hire a "volunteer advisor" or "facilitator" to provide guidance for volunteers. These individuals are in contact with volunteers prior to their trip, during their trip, and post trip. Members of both organizations also emphasized that volunteers are meant to have an open line of communication with these individuals. At the destination, PA's volunteer advisor provides an induction training for volunteers about the project, the destination, and transportation. Afterwards, the amount of contact a volunteer advisor has with a volunteer is dependent on the type of volunteer and the project. M2W's facilitators are identified as playing an ongoing role in shaping the volunteer's experience. Specifically, they are involved in creating dialogue and awareness about what the volunteer is experiencing and seeing at the projects, through Action Planning. This notion of Action Planning is discussed in more detail in the Impacts section below. It is evident that while both organizations have hired staff to guide volunteers, M2W's facilitators appear to play a more involved and prominent role in shaping the volunteer's experience, especially in the youth programs they offer. According to interview participants this level of engagement allows them to actively create transformations within their volunteers.

It is evident that both organizations focus on ensuring that the volunteers are well informed about the location that they will be going to. They also provide continuous support for their volunteers. This prepares volunteers for the experiences that the organization creates for them. Preparing volunteers can help ease the culture shock they may experience when arriving at the destination. Furthermore, providing information in advance about the projects allows the organizations to set expectations of the volunteer upon arrival at the destination. This builds the broader theme of operating towards making a difference because volunteers are the major component of the work that is being done at projects, and this preparation helps to ensure that things run smoothly when they are on site.

7.2.2 Creating Positive Impacts for the Volunteer and Community

The choices made about the projects they offer differ amongst the organizations. PA chooses their projects based on current issues at a destination (e.g. a Tsunami) or are approached by organizations within a destination. PA has a portfolio of organizations they work with, offering an array of volunteer opportunities. These organizations are selected based on the advice of the local staff who conduct investigations and create a proposal about the destination. PA primarily hires local staff and has an office at each destination. Interview participants from PA explained it is important for them to develop good local partnerships in order to create meaningful work for their volunteers. Alternatively, M2W chooses to send volunteers to projects that are created by their partner organization, FTC. Hence, they are not actively seeking out other volunteer projects. M2W sends a staff member to projects during a trip, however, the offices at the destination belong to FTC.

For both organizations, providing an impactful experience for the volunteer through their projects is important. They achieve this through the work they create for volunteers at projects,

as well as through the interaction they have with members of host communities. Both organizations also stress the importance of creating a connection with the community. PA creates this through ensuring that volunteers have meaningful work to do at projects. They also facilitate home stays with local community members so volunteers can have firsthand experience of their lifestyle. M2W does not offer home stays for their volunteers, instead, they engage volunteers to make community connections through the work they do at project locations. M2W facilitators also take an active role in the volunteer's experience by engaging in conversations about the destination and the community, and exploring what the volunteer is experiencing at the project. In particular, for M2W, 'action planning' is utilized by the facilitator to help the volunteer, based on their experiences at the projects, to translate any of their passions into making a difference. Action planning is one of the differences between PA and M2W. Although, PA focuses on providing an impactful experience for their volunteer, M2W takes it one step further by facilitating and creating a support system for their volunteers continue to make a difference after the trip is over.

For the community, while members of both organizations state they are helping the communities, the models they utilize are different. PA contributes back to the community through the projects that have been developed at destinations in partnership with local organizations. They usually do not create projects, but provide aid to projects based on what is determined in conjunction with stakeholders. This indicates a desire to keep the community's needs in mind when selecting projects to work with. PA also stated that they don't always have a set time limit for completing projects. In contrast, M2W works only through the community development model created by FTC. This model focuses on empowering communities and breaking the cycle of poverty. M2W explains they achieve this through focusing on community

ownership, community partnerships, and self-sufficiency. M2W participants also suggest this should be achieved over a period of five to eight years. M2W identifies this model as what differentiates them from other volunteer tourism models as they, in their view, put the community first.

Both organizations identified that it is the operators' responsibility to ensure that the projects they work with are sustainable. M2W further identified that sustainability is also the destination partner's responsibility as well. To determine how effective they are at a destination, both organizations noted the importance of creating and measuring goals. Participants all discussed that measurement of goals are important for identifying the impacts they are having at projects. As such, both organizations conduct yearly reviews. PA creates a management plan with goals and objectives, and identifies priority goals that are chosen by the stakeholders implementing the project. This allows them to determine the work that volunteers will do and are doing at projects. Members of PA explained that this also allows them to determine whether their partner organization is satisfied with the work that is being done at the project. In the case of M2W, FTC is the organization that creates the management plan and measures the goals for each project. FTC also identifies the work that volunteers will do at the project, but is not involved with volunteer coordination.

Creating positive impacts for the volunteer and community is an important sub-theme of operating towards making a difference. Both organizations want to make a difference in the communities and projects where they work. To do this they have instituted operational guidelines that aid them in facilitating memorable and positive impacts for both the volunteer and the communities they are engaged with. Creating and measuring their impacts have allowed them to determine the efficacy of their operations. Both organizations utilize different methods

to determine the projects they engage with, yet both have emphasized the importance of consultation with the communities they work with. Ensuring the needs of their main stakeholders are accounted for within their operations allows both organizations to ascertain whether they are operating in a way that makes a difference.

7.3 Creating Social Responsibility within the Volunteer Tourism Sector

Participants from both PA and M2W agreed that volunteer tourism can have positive impacts at a destination if implemented in a socially responsible way. Specifically, PA mentioned that social responsibility can be attributed to the operations of the organization, which they argue leads to better outcomes for the community. M2W also stresses the importance of their development model that is used to create volunteer opportunities.

It is also worth noting that neither organization viewed itself as a volunteer tourism organization, suggesting their businesses encompassed more than that. Furthermore, the resistance in the use of language demonstrated by both M2W and PA reflects some of the issues they identified within the sector. For example, PA participants mentioned the increasing size of the sector as a problem. Members of both organizations agreed there were vast differences within the sector, particularly in terms of the types of organizations operating, their various development models and the sense that some other organizations are not really legitimate in wanting to make a difference. Members of M2W noted it is becoming challenging for consumers to distinguish good projects from bad projects, and volunteers may become disheartened with the sector due to bad experiences. Members of PA supported this notion, arguing the reputation of volunteer tourism could potentially affect their business as they become grouped with disreputable organizations.

As such several suggestions were given by PA and M2W for enhancing social responsibility within the sector. Members of PA argued other organizations should be "more serious" about the work they accomplish at their destination and that awareness should be created about the meaningful impacts that volunteer tourism can make. M2W participants suggested that creating a rubric with a common language could be beneficial. This would entail creating a monitoring or ratings group could that looked at the development model of volunteer tourism organizations Both organizations stated they would subscribe to certification for volunteer tourism operators but noted that the implementation of such a scheme would have to be meaningful and organizations subscribing to it should be held accountable to it. Members of PA raised concerns about the applicability of certification on an international level and in developing countries. PA argues that lack of awareness of such schemes by consumers may also be a hindrance. Both organizations raised concerns about the financial accessibility of such a scheme and potentially prohibitive costs. Members of M2W suggested that, for the scheme to be successful, certification should be affordable so that it is accessible to everyone who wants to subscribe to it.

Looking across these cases of commercial volunteer tourism operators, it is clear both organizations stress the importance of responsible and effective operational practices that allow them to sustainably facilitate positive social value for their stakeholders. Value creation is not only centered on the volunteers that they send, through pre-trip preparation, but also on the communities that they work, through stakeholder involvement. This allows both organizations to operate towards making a difference. Furthermore, their role in creating social responsibility within the volunteer tourism sector can be seen through the products and experiences they create. Operating in a socially responsible way is ingrained within the operational culture of these

organizations. This type of corporate culture may lend to why the participants would identify with the implementation of socially responsible strategies such as certification as one possible solution for improving the volunteer tourism sector.

The next chapter pulls the findings from both phases of the research together in order to provide a concluding discussion for this study and to link to the extant literature.

CHAPTER EIGHT: DISCUSSION

8.1 Introduction

This study involved a two-phased approach to shed light on a complex topic. First a background understanding of the issues related to volunteer tourism sector and volunteer tourism certification were determined through semi-structured interviews with key informants. Second, I utilized a case study approach to explore the specific operations of large volunteer tourism operators: Projects Abroad (PA) and ME to WE (M2W). Within this phase a cross-case synthesis was also done to compare and contrast the cases. The following sections provide a discussion of the data attained during the research conducted for this study. It begins by presenting all the themes from phase one and phase two and explains the interconnection between themes. Second, it will provide further discussion, utilizing the extant literature, on the operations of PA and M2W. Finally, it will create a dialogue exploring the role of social responsibility within the sector and the potential use of certification to impart this.

8.2 Discussion of Themes

There were two major objectives that guided the research within this study. As a reminder, these objectives were:

- 1) To determine the current perceptions of volunteer tourism stakeholders regarding social responsibility in the volunteer tourism sector,
- 2) To consider additional measures (e.g., certification) as tools to enhance socially responsible tourism practices.

From the research attained, several themes emerged from the data in both phases. To aid in identifying these themes, Table 9 provides a summary of the major themes and sub themes from both phases.

Table 9: Summary of Major Themes within this Study

<i>Phase</i>	<i>Type of Theme</i>	<i>Theme</i>
Phase One	Major	Needing More Responsible Practices within the Sector
	Major	Involving Stakeholders is Essential
	Major	Barriers to Implementing Certification
	Major	Implementing Certification Will Aid Sustainability
Phase Two		
PA	Major	Creating A Meaningful Volunteer Experience
	<i>Sub</i>	<i>Pre-trip preparation</i>
	<i>Sub</i>	<i>Destination preparation</i>
	<i>Sub</i>	<i>Volunteer interactions</i>
PA	Major	Operating Towards Sustainability
	<i>Sub</i>	<i>Selecting partnerships</i>
	<i>Sub</i>	<i>Hiring their own staff</i>
	<i>Sub</i>	<i>Organizational responsibility</i>
PA	Major	Creating a Better Volunteer Tourism Sector
	<i>Sub</i>	<i>Creating valuable change</i>
	<i>Sub</i>	<i>Facing tensions</i>
	<i>Sub</i>	<i>Improving the Sector</i>
M2W	Major	Creating Transformational Experiences
	<i>Sub</i>	<i>Creating a transformational experience for the volunteer</i>
	<i>Sub</i>	<i>Creating a transformational experience for the community</i>
M2W	Major	Improving the Volunteer Tourism Sector
	<i>Sub</i>	<i>Creating meaningful change</i>
	<i>Sub</i>	<i>Role of the operator</i>
	<i>Sub</i>	<i>Tensions within the sector</i>
	<i>Sub</i>	<i>Suggested Improvements</i>
Cross-Case	Major	Operating Towards Making a Difference
	<i>Sub</i>	<i>Preparing the volunteer</i>
	<i>Sub</i>	<i>Creating positive impacts for the volunteer and community</i>
	Major	Creating Social Responsibility within Volunteer Tourism Sector

One of the major themes that emerged from the first phase of this study was the 'need for more responsible practices within the sector'. From the interviews participants identified the growth in the number of volunteers being sent overseas along with the increase in the number of operators has created a concern for the types of projects being offered within the sector. This sentiment was also echoed by participants in phase two from PA in which it was discussed the sector is gaining a negative reputation due to the increase in the number of operators who appeared to be unconcerned about their projects. M2W also identified the poor development models set forth by other operators created tensions within the sector. Participants in phase one also stated some operators within the sector appeared to be more focused on making profits and not actually providing benefits for the communities they are situated in. There was also concern about the extent to which volunteer tourism projects were actually helping the communities they were located in. Other issues identified were a lack of socio-cultural training of volunteers and how their presence has impacts on the project and communities. It was also suggested volunteer tourism created issues dependency for foreign aid and economic resources within destinations.

The types of concerns brought forth from participants in phase one can be related back the operational guidelines that are implemented within the volunteer tourism organization. In phase two, analysis of the interviews showed that both PA and M2W had major themes which identified they implemented practices that were contradictory to the concerns raised by participants in phase one. For PA these themes consisted of creating a meaningful volunteer experience and operating towards sustainability. From the interviews it became evident that creating a meaningful experience could be defined as "*the creation of an experience that is memorable and has internal value for their volunteers*". Creating a meaningful volunteer experience involved setting up practices that prepared the volunteer prior to their trip and during

their trip. Pre-trip preparation included ensuring the volunteer is able to participate in projects, providing information about the destination including socio-cultural issues, and access to support systems. Destination preparation involved an orientation to the project, the destination, and ensures the safety of volunteers. PA also provides opportunities for the local people through their home stay program for volunteers. This program allows for a more culturally immersed experience for the volunteer, while also providing economic benefits for the community. The next theme, operating towards sustainability, consisted of several aspects such as selecting partnerships, hiring their own staff, and organizational responsibility. In regard to selecting partnerships, PA focuses on creating long standing commitments to the projects they decide to work with. PA felt strongly that it is the responsibility of any organization to work with and develop good partnerships and relationships within projects. As well, within each destination PA has a local office in which they hire their own staff predominantly from the local community, an aspect they identify as important to operating towards sustainability. PA identified that it is the organization's responsibility to create and measure goals within the projects that they work with so their impacts can be measured. The meaningful work they create for volunteers should be part of PA's, and their partner organizations, movement towards achieving their goals. It was emphasized that it is the responsibility of the operator to ensure that the work volunteers perform at a project is meaningful for both the volunteer and community.

Within the analysis of M2W's interviews, a major theme: creating a transformational experience, revealed the role the organization has taken towards their volunteers and communities they work with. From the interviews, it became apparent that creating a transformational experience is considered to be "*an experience that creates significant and permanent change, both internally and externally, for the individuals or groups involved.*"

Creating a transformational experience for the volunteer involved several different aspects. M2W stressed the importance of ensuring that all aspects of their volunteer's trip (pre, during, and post) were supported. This support consisted of the provision of information for volunteers about the project, the destination, specific socio-cultural information about the community, well trained facilitators, and ensuring a safe environment. Furthermore, they build upon the volunteers experience by engaging in discussions about what they may have witnessed, and empowering them so they could create ways to actively help when back home. Creating a transformational experience for the community was also identified as an important aspect of M2W's operations. M2W achieves this transformation through their partnership with Free the Children (FTC). The development model utilized by FTC is community driven and aims to empower communities, so they eventually they are not reliant on any aid from M2W and FTC.

Both PA and M2W utilize an approach that recognizes the importance of meeting the needs of their two main stakeholders: the volunteer and the community. In phase one this was also reflected as an important aspect, through the theme "involving stakeholders is essential", which emerged from the interviews. Within this theme it was identified the stakeholders of volunteer tourism are tour operators, NGOs, government agencies, volunteer tourists, and the communities. It was recognized that tour operators should be the main group responsible for ensuring sustainability within the sector. This is due to their direct involvement in creating projects and experiences for volunteers, choosing suppliers, and the interactions they have within communities. Collaboration with local project managers, NGOs, and local communities was identified within the interviews as an important aspect in the creation of projects. Both PA and M2W also acknowledged the importance of the role the operator plays within the volunteer tourism sector. Although tour operators were identified as being the most accountable, all

stakeholder involvement was also deemed as an important component for the sector. Specifically, it was acknowledged by participants that members of the community should be more involved in the types of projects being created; tourists' should ask more questions and be more aware of the types of destinations that they choose; and the government should be more involved in placing restrictions on the work that tourists can do while on vacation.

In both phase one and phase two, participants suggested there is a definite need to improve the volunteer tourism sector. Both PA and M2W believed that volunteer tourism can make a difference in the places it occurs. This view was based on first-hand experiences through the work done by their organizations. However, the current tensions within the sector and the negative reputation it is receiving has lent to conversations of what could be done to improve this situation. PA suggested that creating more awareness about the positive impacts of the sector, collaboration of organizations, and certification could potentially help. M2W recommended creating a common language, educating consumers, creating regulations, and creating a structure sector association or certification should be something that is considered. In phase one, the theme of implementing certification will aid sustainability was also derived from the interviews. As such, certification was identified as way to improve the sector. Specifically, these participants argued certification could make operators more accountable for their operations; increase the quality and experience of the product that is offered; increase standards and best practice; and provide transparency and verification of the organization to the outside world. Both PA and M2W also agreed that certification could be used as a way to verify their organizations and provide awareness to consumers about the positive work they do.

Although the majority of participants from both phases identified certification as a potential solution for increasing sustainability within the sector, several concerns were also

raised about its implementation. In phase one, participants identified several barriers to implementation. High costs and accessibility was the first barrier. It was discussed that small operators may not be able to subscribe to a certification, and it would be more likely taken up by large operators. M2W also identified this as a concern to implementation, citing that high costs could lead to limited uptake within the sector. Another barrier identified in phase one, was the large number of certifications already within the tourism industry, and their lack of efficacy. It was suggested this may be a deterrent for volunteer tourism operators. The lack of awareness of consumers of certification and what it means may dissuade operators from subscribing. Participants from PA also discussed the lack of consumer awareness of such schemes would be an important concern for certification implementation. In phase one and phase two participants agreed that any certification that is created should be rigorous in its implementation to ensure its credibility.

The data presented above shows the interconnection between the themes that emerged from all phases of this study. The quality of the volunteer tourism projects that are offered within the sector has been identified by all participants as lacking. Specifically, the data has identified that there needs to be more focus on increasing responsible tourism practices within the sector. The issues identified by participants involved the actual intention of operators, the ineffectiveness of volunteer aid within communities; lack of pre-trip training for volunteers; and creating dependency for foreign aid and economic resources. These impacts have also been identified within the literature on volunteer tourism (Broad & Jenkins, 2008; Callanan & Thomas, 2005; Clifton & Benson, 2006; Lepp, 2008; Guttentag, 2009; Simpson, 2004; Sin, 2009; Ver Beek, 2006). From the data it was also discussed that social responsibility should predominantly fall on the volunteer tourism operator as they are indefinitely involved in the

creation of projects. Participants also identified this responsibility included involving project stakeholders (such as the community and government agencies) when creating, implementing and sustaining projects. Stakeholder involvement in creating tourism projects has been identified within the tourism literature as an important component to sustainable development (Bourdreaux & Nelson, 2011; Bramwell, 2010; Choi & Murray, 2010; Duffy, 2008; Harrison & Schipani, 2007; Higgins-Desboilles, 2008; International Centre for Responsible Tourism (ICRT), 2014; McGehee & Andereck, 2009; Pearce, 1992; Russell & Wallace, 2004; Scherl et al., 2004; Sharpley, 2013; Spenceley, 2008; Schwartz, Tapper, & Font, 2008; The International Ecotourism Society, 2014. Shibia, 2010; Spenceley & Goodwin, 2008).

The current negative image the volunteer tourism sector is receiving lends to the identification by all participants that something needs to be done to improve the sector. Several suggestions were given by participants such as: creating awareness about positive impacts, collaboration of organizations, creating a common language, educating consumers, regulations, a sector association, and certification. Certification was acknowledged by the majority of participants in both phases as a potential way to create and engage social responsibility within the sector. Participants related this to the accountability, standards, improved product quality, transparency, verification and monitoring that a certification can provide. These reasons for subscribing to a certification are also identified within the tourism literature (Center for Responsible Travel, 2009; Honey & Stewart, 2002; Lee & Moscardo, 2005; Marchoo, Butcher, & Watkins, 2014). However, participants also identified that there are several barriers to certification implementation. These barriers were: high costs, accessibility for SME's, limited dissemination, limited efficacy, lack of awareness by consumers, large number of certifications within the industry and weak standards and verification. These concerns have also been raised

within the literature. Specifically, Bien & Russo (2006) discuss the costs inherent to certifications decrease its accessibility for small and medium sized enterprises, community-based enterprises, and indigenous groups. Furthermore, within the tourism industry it has been determined that there are over a 100 ecolabel and certification schemes worldwide which has caused concern for the criteria and standards utilized within each scheme (Font, 2002; Gossling & Buckley, 2014; Honey & Rome, 2001). Finally, the lack of recognition and dissemination of certification schemes with consumers has also been discussed within the literature (Chafe, 2005; Fairweather, Maslin, & Simmons, 2005; Hamele, 2002; Kangas 2007; Reiser & Simmons, 2005).

From the data it can be concluded that both PA and M2W have focused on operating in a way that makes a difference. The following section will discuss how their operations can be explored utilizing a Corporate Social Entrepreneurship (CSE) lens.

8.2.1 The Operations of Commercial Volunteer Tourism Organizations and CSE

In the past, the business model adopted by many volunteer tourism organizations was closely aligned with social entrepreneurship. This type of model focuses more on creating social value rather than profit creation (Certo & Millera, 2008). The emergence of large commercial volunteer tourism organizations has resulted in an increasingly commodified sector (Coren & Gray, 2012). Accordingly, the efficacy and reputation of volunteer tourism within destinations have been questioned based on prioritizing profit over social value (Fitzpatrick, 2007; Lyons & Wearing, 2008). Broad and Jenkins (2008) and Lepp (2008) have identified concerns that projects are being created without the consultation and involvement of local stakeholders. These authors argue operators are mainly focused on attracting volunteers, and their motivations for visiting a project, without regard for the actual needs of the communities that they are located in.

This study has uncovered the perspectives of volunteer tourism operators and other stakeholders within the sector. Furthermore, it identifies the opportunity and need to better align volunteer tourism operators with more social responsibility practices within the sector. This study has illustrated that the socially responsible practices that are implemented at an operational level could aid in understanding the actual contribution that an organization will make within the sector. Within PA and M2W there are evident similarities within their operations. Specifically, both organizations focus on providing a memorable and impactful experience for volunteers while furthering their other organizational goals of helping the communities they partner with.

An exploration of the operational practices of both organizations has shown they are focused on making a difference at their destination, however, each is utilizing a different business model of socially responsible tourism to do so. PA operates within a for-profit structure that works as an intermediary for volunteers and various NGO's. M2W is also operating in a for-profit structure, however, they are only in operation to fund the development model of FTC. This is the key distinguishing feature of the operations of both the organizations. However, PA and M2W both embody an approach that combines both corporate and social entrepreneurship. Such is the premise of Corporate Social Entrepreneurship (CSE), which was discussed in the literature review. As a reminder, CSE is defined as the "process of extending the firm's domain of competence and corresponding opportunity set through innovative leveraging of resources, both within and outside its direct control, aimed at the simultaneous creation of economic and social value" (Austin, Leonard, Reficco, & Wei-Skillern, 2006, np). As such it is suggested that CSE can be considered as corporate entrepreneurship that creates social value and tries to solve social issues (Kurtako, Hornsby, & McMullen, 2011). Austin and Reficco (2009) and Zaefrian et al. (2015) suggest that there are various factors and characteristics that an organization must

have when practicing CSE. Austin and Reficco (2009) identify the key central processes of CSE are: enabling environment, the corporate social intrapreneur, corporate purpose and values based organization, value creation and the double return, and co-generating value. As was described in Chapter 2, Zaefrian et al. (2015) suggest that there are various enablers of CSE. Specifically, organizations that are successful in developing CSE must embody organizational characteristics which include: organizational values, open communication, organizational support, and alliances and partnerships the a company has (Zaefrian et al, 2015). These key central processes, or enablers, can also be applied to the commercial volunteer tourism organizations to aid in understanding and perhaps provide a guide to improving their operations.

Within the operations of both organizations there are several factors that suggest their presence of an enabling environment. Both organizations utilized performance indicators for measuring their economic and social value (Austin & Reficco, 2009). They also both utilized an approach which allows them to bring all relevant stakeholders to the table i.e. their board of directors, communities they work with, and government and school agencies (Austin & Reficco, 2009). Each organization has management teams of individuals who are responsible for ensuring that social value is created within the projects that they are involved with (Austin & Reficco, 2009). However, within M2W this is mainly facilitated through FTC. Finally, both organizations cultivate an entrepreneurial mind set (Austin & Reficco, 2009) for their organization. For PA this is achieved through creation of new opportunities, partnerships, and projects. For M2W this is specific to their retail line of products that they sell to consumers to generate income for the projects created by FTC.

In both organizations it appears the role of the corporate social and corporate intrapreneurs coexists and is not separate within the organization (Austin & Reficco, 2009). It

was noted there are individuals within each organization who are focused on creating internal organizational transformations, which allow the organization to become more socially responsible (Austin & Reficco, 2009) and creates the organizational support system for it to occur (Zaefrian et al., 2015). This is in part due to the nature of these organizations and their focus on creating social and economic value for the business and the projects that they work with. It is also apparent based on the type of innovations and growth of both organizations. However, more detailed analysis of the organizational culture is required to fully argue and understand the operational role of the corporate social intrapreneur within PA and M2W.

PA and M2W both have missions and values that outline their commitment to fulfilling social responsibility, as shown in the background section within both case studies (Austin & Reficco, 2009). From the interviews it was revealed both organizations see themselves as agents for creating social change within their destinations. It is evident their operational practices allows them to build trust with their volunteers and organizations they work with, which can be further seen through the number of volunteers they both send to projects every year. Furthermore their focus on accountability and transparency of their operations further creates this trust and shows their commitment to operating in an ethical way that allows them to create innovative solutions to the social problems within their projects (Austin & Reficco, 2009). Both organizations strive to lead through example, to exceed expectations, and to set new standards within the sector through their operations (Austin & Reficco, 2009). M2W facilitates this through their operational guidelines and development model, their use of external industry resources, focus on youth empowerment to create transformation, and B Corp certification. PA does this through their transparency, commitment to high operational standards, support for

external projects and causes, and memberships and partnerships in sector organizations aimed in increasing standards.

Social value is at the core of the operations within these organizations. When comparing both organizations on an operational level as volunteer tourism organizations, it is evident their priorities centre on a sustainable development approach (Van Marrewik & Were, 2003). As shown from their operations, and the results of this study, both organizations utilize a values based approach which focuses on the triple bottom line of profit, people, and planet (Elkington, 1997; Wijffels, 2001). This focus is not only outlined in the mission of both organizations but is also embodied within operations of their organizations (organizational value) (Zaefrian et al, 2015). Both organizations also utilize an approach which requires them to be transparent and accountable to both their internal and external stakeholders (Austin & Reficco, 2009). This is achieved through the generation of reports, and with meetings they have annually that details performance to their internal and external stakeholders. It is this value creation and accountability which can be argued as lending to the success of both organizations within the sector and has made them more sustainable, in comparison to other volunteer tourism operators. Accountability to their stakeholders, such as the volunteers and communities they work with, is also a key characteristic of both organizations. This accountability has been identified as an important aspect towards their daily operations, and guides their engagement with stakeholders (Garriga & Mele, 2004). Stakeholder involvement had been utilized by both organizations during the creation of volunteer tourism opportunities. Consulting and involving stakeholders was identified by McGehee and Andereck (2009) as an important aspect when creating volunteer tourism projects. Preparing the volunteer through the provision of extensive information on the destination and projects they are visiting was also utilized by both organizations to create a

meaningful experience. Sin (2010) identified that such practices are lacking within some volunteer tourism organizations.

Collaboration, alliances and partnerships with other organizations such as businesses, civil society, and government (Zaefrian et al., 2015), occur within both organizations. Both organizations also have a board of directors composed of individuals with various skill competencies. It can be argued that the collaboration of all these entities enables them to develop innovative solutions to long-standing social and economic problems (Austin & Reficco, 2009). Furthermore, the success of both companies is reliant on their ability to provide meaningful experiences for their volunteers and to ensure the sustainability of their projects. Hence, alignment of company agendas with those of external groups to create social value is definitely engrained within the corporate culture of both organizations (Austin & Reficco, 2009).

The discussion contributes to the understanding of how the key processes of CSE can aid in explaining the operations of PA and M2W. The following diagram (Figure 11) proposes a model of the interconnections of the ideas that are inherent in this study.

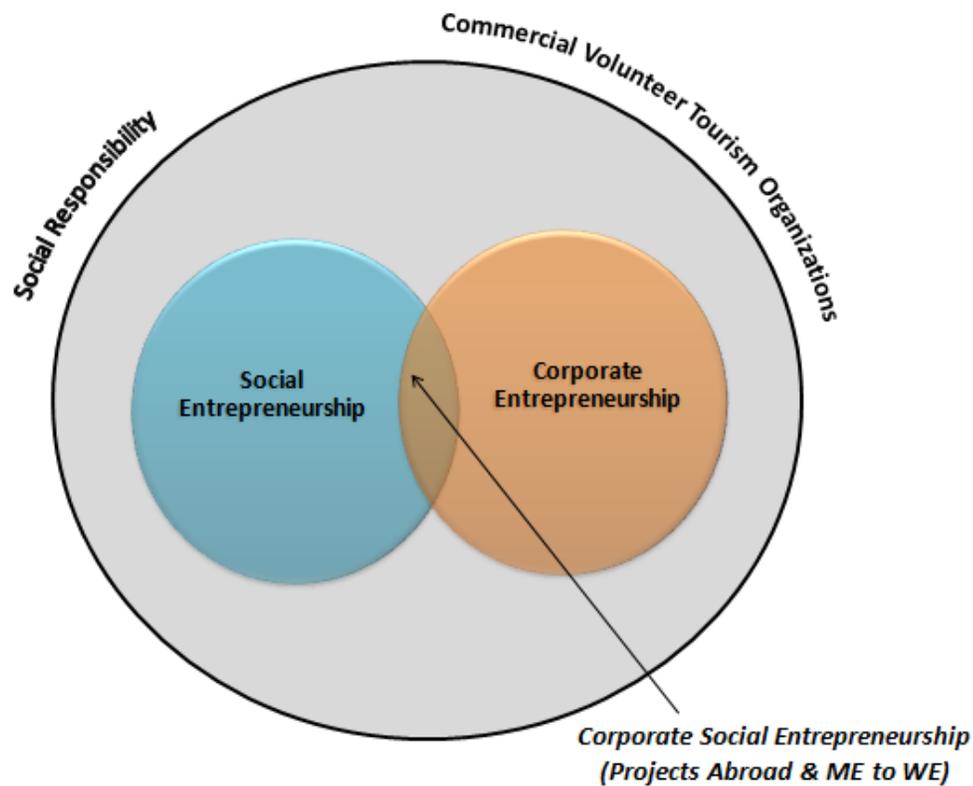


Figure 11: A Model of CSE as it Relates to Commercial Volunteer Tourism Organizations

This model shows that the intersection of Corporate Entrepreneurship and Social Entrepreneurship can be viewed as Corporate Social Entrepreneurship (CSE). The outer circle, social responsibility, is an overall theoretical concept that dominates the literature on corporations. Social responsibility was identified within this study as a duty or obligation that an individual, or organization, is expected to participate in for the benefit and welfare of an individual or society as a whole (Berman, 1997; Gallay, 2006; Li, Zhang, Li, Zu, Zhao, & Zhao, 2011; Kohlberg & Candee, 1984; Rossi, 2005). At an individual level social responsibility involves citizens working together to promote the health and well-being of a community and wider society (Youniss, Bales, Christmas-Best, Diversi, McLaughlin, & Silbereisen, 2002) through social, civil, and political involvement. At the corporate level, social responsibility

includes the donation of time, resources, implementing best practices for the greater good, all while furthering the best interests of the corporations and its stakeholders. Such is the theoretical underpinning that encompasses volunteer tourism, corporate social responsibility and responsible tourism implementation strategies, at both the individual and corporate level.

Commercial volunteer tourism organizations utilize a for-profit structure. Some operators may solely fall within the corporate entrepreneurship category in which their focus is on mainly generating profit and innovating their business in recognition of new opportunity to expand their practices and increase positive outcomes for their business (Covin & Miles, 1999; Ireland, Covin & Kurtako, 2009; Kuratko, Goldsby, & Hornsby, 2012). These organizations are not usually focused on providing social benefits for the destinations they are in, which is one of the reasons argued for the poor reputation that the sector is receiving (Fitzpatrick, 2007; Lyons & Wearing, 2008). Other commercial volunteer tourism organizations may fall solely in the social entrepreneurship category where their focus is providing social benefit, rather than profit (Certo & Millera, 2008), at their destinations. These organizations do not focus on making profit but rather improving the conditions in destinations where there is a lack of support and resources from government agencies and even NGO's (Prahalad, 2009; Zahra et al., 2009). The overlapping of both social and corporate entrepreneurship by a commercial volunteer tourism organization can be identified as corporate social entrepreneurship (Austin, Leonard, Reficco, & Wei-Skillern, 2005). This type of CSE organization focuses on creating benefits not only for their organization but also for the local communities and environment at the destination they are located in. This is a key differentiating feature between socially responsible commercial volunteer tourism organizations and other industry corporations. As identified within the literature, CSR approaches are implemented into traditional commercial focused organizations to

create more socially responsible organizations (Van Marrewijk, 2003). To further this CSR, the next inevitable step, in traditional commercial organizations, is to continue on a path towards CSE (Austin & Reficco, 2009). However, within some commercial volunteer tourism organizations it is more likely that socially responsible initiatives have been created and enveloped into the overall operations of the corporation since its early beginnings. Of course this is highly dependent on the individual commercial volunteer tourism organization and what their goals are within their organization. For these types of organizations, as appears to be the case with Projects Abroad and ME to WE, CSR is not really something that is ascribed to, but rather is integral to their operational mission. As such, a CSE lens could be applied to describe the operations of socially responsible commercial volunteer tourism organizations that have been identified as embodying these key processes, such as Projects Abroad and ME to WE. These practices must be imbued within the social and cultural framework of the organization from its onset. This does not mean that other volunteer tourism organizations cannot achieve socially responsible initiatives, however, there must be purposeful attempt to do so. One way that could aid in the implementation of socially responsible practice could be through the implementation of certification as a strategy to achieve this. The next section will provide a discussion of the views on certification from participants within this study and suggest possible solution for imparting social responsibility within the sector.

8.2.2 Creating Social Responsibility within the Volunteer Tourism Sector

Creating ways to impart social responsibility within the sector have been identified as a possible solution to mitigating the negative impacts that volunteer tourism can have. Within this study certification was explored as a socially responsible implementation strategy for volunteer tourism operators. Of the 23 people interviewed within phase one and phase two of this study,

18 identified that certification could be a way to create sustainability within the sector. Specifically, this could create more requirements for socially responsible practices of operators within the sector. Within the literature on tourism certification, and identified by participants within this study, certification is deemed as a way to make operators more accountable for their actions (Honey & Stewart, 2002), increase the quality of the volunteer tourism experience through training of employees and improving customer relations (Lee & Moscardo, 2005; Marchoo, Butcher, & Watkins, 2014), set standards for best practice, and provide verification and transparency of operations (Center for Responsible Travel, 2009). Although certification was discussed as a possible solution, several issues specific to certification implementation were identified, which have also been described in the extant literature on tourism certification. One major issue identified, and also discussed by participants within the study, is the lack of financial resources that some of the small and medium sized enterprises within this sector may have in order to subscribe to certification (Medina, 2005; Mycoo, 2006; Rivera & deLeon, 2005). Many of these businesses within the sector are non-profits (Wearing & McGehee, 2013) who would tend to focus mainly on the social entrepreneurship side of their business, rather than generating a profit (Certo & Millera, 2008). The high costs inherent with certification schemes may reduce accessibility to all operators (Bien & Russillo, 2006; Sasidharan & Font, 2001; Sasidharan et al., 2002), which in turn would decrease its dissemination and usefulness within the sector. Other issues included: rigour and accountability of certification schemes (Black & Crabtree, 2007; Font, 2002; Medina, 2005) and recognition of schemes by customers (Chafe, 2005; Fairweather, Maslin, & Simmons, 2005; Hamele, 2002; Kangas 2007, Reiser & Simmons, 2005). Certifications ideally make businesses publicly accountable for their operations, increase operating standards and create visibility within the industry. However, it is evident that there are

several large issues inherent to certification implementation. As such, creating a certification scheme that utilizes the traditional certification approaches, as discussed within the research, may not be a practicable option for the volunteer tourism sector and perhaps a new type of scheme should be something that is developed.

Though certification was acknowledged, within this study, to be a tool that would be accepted as a method to increasing social responsibility of volunteer tourism operators, at the present time building more social capital within the sector is first still required before uptake could make it successful. However, there are other ways that could be utilized for creating social responsibility. For example, one suggestion from participants involves employing the opinions of volunteers to rate the projects that they have participated in, which has been done in other sectors of the tourism industry, through sites like TripAdvisor. This has worked successfully in other sectors and would at least create more public accountability for the volunteer tourism operators. Another suggestion is to create a stronger membership association for volunteer tourism operators which is a forum that focuses on creating socially responsible initiatives for the sector. This association would set out an international mandate, standards, and policies and procedures for its members. To become a member, operators would have to prove that they ascribe to socially responsible practices and guidelines that have been identified by the membership organization. The members of this organization would also be involved in promoting and creating awareness about best practice within the sector to their volunteers and communities they work with. As with any membership organization, a nominal fee would be paid by members to aid in its upkeep. However, this type of scheme differs from certification as it is self-regulated, and does not require third party verification or steep fees. Such membership associations do exist within the tourism industry. The International Association of Antarctica

Tour Operators (IAATO) is an example of long standing member association that is focused on socially responsible and sustainable tourism (International Association of Antarctica Tour Operators, 2016) in the Antarctic. The International Volunteer Programs Association (IVPA) is an example of a membership organization for international volunteering organizations. However, the dissemination of this organization is limited and does not only pertain to volunteer tourism organizations. Within the volunteer tourism sector there are various types of organizations, as discussed within this paper, who are trying to create more responsibility within the sector. However there appears to be a lack of collaboration amongst these various initiatives, resulting in a silo effect within the sector. As such, it is proposed that creating an international membership association for socially responsible volunteer tourism operators that partners with various organizations, and acknowledges diversity within the sector, may be a good starting point.

The ideals behind social responsibility can be argued to be inherent to the discourse on volunteer tourism. This is predominantly due to the outward focus within the sector on the betterment of the social, cultural and environmental issues within a destination (Chen & Chen, 2011) and by creating a "more conscientized practice" of tourism (Singh, 2004, p. 184). The literature on volunteer tourism has shown its role in creating both positive and negative impacts for the destinations it is located in. However, the issues identified within the sector show the disconnect between the theoretical definitions of volunteer tourism and the actual activities that occur within the sector. The current definitions of volunteer tourism do not outline the actual expectations for the sector. Most of these definitions are narrow in scope and refer only to the activities of volunteers and their assistance to the developing world (Benson, 2011; Lyons & Wearing, 2009; McGehee & Santos, 2005; Scheyvens, 2002; Singh & Singh, 2004; Wearing,

2001) and none of them refer to local community or businesses within the sector. Chen and Chen (2011) attempt to expand the definition to include the provision of benefits for the local community. By the current definitions the activities and operations of volunteer tourism operators within the sector can be argued to only meet the minimum requirements that have been set out within the literature. Yet, the current criticisms suggest that the sector should do more. Hence, this is the juxtaposition that is present within the sector.

The potential impacts that volunteer tourism activities can have within the sector are ideally aligned with the theology instilled within sustainable tourism (Mitchell & Hall, 2005; Sharpley, 2003; Horner & Swarbrooke, 2004), and both civic (Youniss, Bales, Christmas-Best, Diversi, McLaughlin, & Silbereisen, 2002) and corporate responsibility (Banerjee, 2008; Garriga & Mele 2004; Van Marrewijk, 2003). Within this study several participants mentioned they do not consider their organization as volunteer tourism, and believe that they embody much more than that. Based on the current definitions of volunteer tourism, and the study of their operations, it could be argued that these operators are justified in their belief that they are more than what is defined as volunteer tourism. The term social responsibility is an important concept within volunteer tourism yet there is no description of it within current volunteer tourism definitions. It has been shown that there are volunteer tourism operators who actively try to epitomize these principles within their operations. As such, it is proposed that a new definition and approach for the volunteer tourism sector, Socially Responsible Volunteer Tourism, should be considered to distinguish the operations and methods of practice of some businesses within the sector. A Socially Responsible Volunteer Tourism approach can be defined as:

A socially responsible and ethical business approach that utilizes volunteering as a mechanism to create meaningful, transformational, and long-term sustainable impacts for the volunteers, and community..

Organizations adhering to this definition would embody socially responsible practices, which include the following considerations for all stakeholders:

- Volunteer - create a safe environment; provide staff support for volunteers prior, during and after their trip; prepare and educate volunteers through providing information about cultural aspects and socio-economic issues at the destination; outline work requirements at the project and create roles for volunteers; and provide destination information.
- Community - involving community in the development of projects; hiring of local people at projects wherever possible; empowering communities through the co-development of long term solutions to the problems they are facing.
- Volunteer Tourism Business - stakeholder collaboration at all levels in the creation of projects; create partnerships with other organizations to further their cause; transparency and accountability of operations to both internal and external stakeholders; ensure that social and economic value is created for all stakeholders involved; creating goals and monitoring the impacts of what has been set out.

This study has uncovered the perspectives of volunteer tourism operators and other stakeholders within the sector. These individuals have not been heard from in the past research on volunteer tourism. Understanding their viewpoints allows for a starting point in creating a dialogue about

their perceptions of social responsibility within the sector. Furthermore, it identifies the opportunity and need to better align volunteer tourism operators with more social responsibility practices within the sector. This study has illuminated that the socially responsible practices that are implemented at an operational level could aid in understanding the actual contribution that an organization will make within the sector. Identifying that certification is something that would be considered by the large organizations within this study is not surprising given the operational commitment they have to being socially responsible. Although there are challenges, certification should not be ruled out as a possible way to create sustainability within the sector. Creating a new approach and definition for volunteer tourism is greatly needed due to the evolution that is occurring within the sector and emergence of new operators. This has been witnessed in other sectors of tourism and should be the inevitable next step for the volunteer tourism sector. The next chapter concludes the study.

CHAPTER NINE: CONCLUSION

The volunteer tourism sector has been promoted as a means to improve the conditions of destinations through imparting economic and social aid. However, criticisms of the practices of volunteer tourism organizations, from both within and outside the sector, have lent to discussion surrounding the inefficacies of the impacts that these organizations are making. This has also created discussions of what could be done to improve the sector and make it more accountable and socially responsible for the claims that are being made. The purpose of this study was to explore the practices of volunteer tourism operators and assess the role of certification as a strategy for socially responsible volunteer tourism. The following objectives guided the research for this study:

- 1) To determine the current perceptions of volunteer tourism stakeholders regarding social responsibility in the volunteer tourism sector,
- 2) To consider additional measures (e.g., certification) as tools to enhance socially responsible tourism practices.

This study was conducted in two phases. Research during phase one provided a background understanding of the issues related to volunteer tourism certification through an assessment of the perceptions of 15 key informants within the volunteer tourism sector, which were gathered through semi-structured interviews. Phase two involved case study analyses of the practices of two large commercial volunteer tourism organizations, Projects Abroad and ME to WE. Data for phase two was gathered through semi-structured interviews conducted with key employees within the organizations, as well as an examination of each organization's website and

publication materials. From the data, various themes emerged which aided in understanding the tensions surrounding volunteer tourism practices. This study revealed the negative reputation the sector is receiving could be in part attributed to the lack of commitment towards socially responsible initiatives by operators. Specifically, concerns were raised about the increase in the number of operators utilizing poor development models which focus on profit generation; lack of stakeholder consultation in setting up projects (specifically community); and no preparation and support of volunteers pre-trip, during, and post trip. Participants also expressed concern that irresponsible practices by operators could cause dependency on foreign aid and economic resources for the host communities, which in turn could have detrimental long-term effects. Hence, it was argued that more responsible practices are needed within the sector.

The tensions faced within the sector also provide an understanding of the challenges faced by volunteer tourism organizations. The case studies identified that a significant challenge faced by Projects Abroad and ME to WE is the negative reputation within the sector. This was deemed as creating initial uncertainty with volunteers about the trip that they would be taking with the operator. The operators within this study believed the volunteer tourism sector made a difference within the destinations it was situated in. However, this belief was based on the models of volunteer tourism that their businesses were utilizing. These models that have been created have afforded both organizations the success and continuity of their businesses.

At the operational level, both Projects Abroad and ME to WE utilized practices that were identified as operating towards making a difference. These operational differences were recognized through the practices they had in place to prepare volunteers for their experience, and creating positive impacts for both the volunteer and community. As such it was identified from the interviews that such experiences can be considered transformational in that they are "*an*

experience that creates significant and permanent change, both internally and externally, for the individuals and groups involved." Both organizations imparted extensive information (about the destination and communities) for volunteers, pre-trip and during trip, to prepare them for the experiences they would have at the project. They also provided constant support for their volunteers, through facilitators or volunteer advisors during these experiences. Creating long-standing and mutually beneficial partnerships within the communities they work with was also acknowledged as an important aspect for both organizations. Furthermore, both organizations identified the importance of ensuring that the work being done by volunteers is impactful and meaningful for the communities that the projects are situated in. From the interviews it was identified that a meaningful experience can be defined as *"the creation of an experience that is memorable and has internal value for their volunteers"*. As such, both organizations stressed the importance of utilizing methods to measure and evaluate the impacts of the work being done at projects.

Projects Abroad and ME to WE utilize a business approach that is different from some of the traditional models of volunteer tourism organizations, in that they are a commercial organization that is focused on a for-profit structure. It has been argued that the growth of these commercial types of organizations has changed the face of volunteer tourism (Wearing & McGehee, 2013). Within this study it became evident that both organizations did not solely focus on a corporate approach to their business practices, but also implemented a socially focused approach. Hence, a Corporate Social Entrepreneurship (CSE) lens was utilized to explore the operations of these organizations. It was determined that a CSE lens could be applied to describe the operations of Projects Abroad and ME to WE as socially responsible commercial volunteer tourism organizations as they embody these key processes. Such

practices must be instilled within the social and cultural framework of the organization from its origin.

Within this study, all participants agreed that something needs to be done to improve the current issues within the volunteer tourism sector. Certification was viewed, by most participants, as one way to aid in increasing social responsibility within the sector. Specifically, it was argued that certification could make operators more accountable for their operations; increase the quality and experience of the product that is offered; increase standards and best practice; and provide transparency and verification of the organization to the outside world. However, although certification was viewed as one potential way to aid in increasing social responsibility, several concerns were also identified in its implementation. These concerns consisted of: high costs and accessibility for SME's and other groups; limited uptake by sector due to current industry certifications and perceptions of inefficacy; and lack of awareness by consumers, which may dissuade operators from subscribing. It was agreed by participants that any certification that is implemented should be rigorous and accountable to ensure its credibility.

Participants, within this study, argued that some volunteer tourism organizations are not being socially responsible in their current practices. Yet, the ideals behind social responsibility are inherent to the discourse on volunteer tourism due to the outward focus within the sector on the betterment of the social, cultural and environmental issues within a destination. The current definitions of volunteer tourism do not outline the actual operational expectations for the sector, are narrow in scope, refer only to the activities of volunteers and their assistance to the developing world, and none of them account for the local community or businesses within the sector. Upon closer examination of the definitions it could be argued that many of the extant volunteer tourism organizations are meeting out the responsibility that has been defined of them

within the literature. However, the tensions that are being identified within the sector suggest that more needs to be done and presents the current juxtaposition of the practices of volunteer tourism operators and the definitions used within the sector. This discrepancy also became evident within this study when participants from both organizations stated that they do not view themselves as volunteer tourism. This was based upon their belief that the operations of their organizations actually encompassed more than what is currently defined. Due to the lack of scope of the current volunteer tourism definitions, it is argued that a new definition and approach be considered for the sector: Socially Responsible Volunteer Tourism.

Although certification was recognized as a way to instill more social responsibility within the sector, other ideas were also suggested. These consisted of a comprehensive and popular website for volunteers to rate their volunteering experiences, and/or a membership association for volunteer tourism operators. The dissemination of some of these initiatives currently within the sector was recognized within this paper. However, it appears that there is a lack of collaboration amongst these various organizations, which is resulting in a silo effect within the sector. Furthermore, it is proposed that creating an international membership association for socially responsible volunteer tourism operators may be a good starting point for increasing social capital within the sector. Such an association would strive to create congruence and partnerships with the various initiatives within the sector and facilitate ways for volunteer tourism operators to create meaningful impacts through their projects.

This study contributes to the scholarly research on this topic in several ways. First, the study has shown that the size of the volunteer tourism organization and its classification, as either for-profit or non-profit, does not determine the efficacy the organization will have in the volunteer tourism sector. Instead it is argued that the commitment the organization has to being

socially responsible will define their presence within the sector. Second, this study also suggests that large commercial volunteer tourism organizations could be classified as corporate social entrepreneurs based on how they meet the outlined requirements. Third, studies on the potential of utilizing certification within the volunteer tourism sector are limited. This study has shown that certification was viewed as a potential way to increase the social responsibility of other operators within the sector. Finally, it was argued that the current definitions of volunteer tourism need to be broadened to differentiate the types of operators within this growing sector. Hence, this paper proposed a new classification be used to describe volunteer tourism operators that have operationalized their commitment to social responsibility: Socially Responsible Volunteer Tourism.

It is important to acknowledge that although this research contributes in various ways to study of the volunteer tourism sector, further research could still be conducted. Specifically, this study only researched the operational aspects of large commercial volunteer tourism organizations. Further research could be conducted to evaluate the actual efficacy of the programs implemented by commercial volunteer tourism organizations, to assess whether the goals and values in their mission are actually being achieved. This could consist of creating an evaluation tool based on the stated impacts the organizations are claiming they have and assessing whether those impacts are actually occurring. Such an evaluation could be conducted within the communities where the organization is working. Impacts could also be determined by conducting interviews or focus groups with the local community involved to determine their perceptions of the organization and whether they feel they are receiving any benefits from the operators.

Further research could continue to employ case study methodology to determine the operations of other, large volunteer tourism organizations and their use of socially responsible business practices. Interviews could be conducted with key players within these organizations utilizing the same semi-structured interview questions within this study. This could allow for a comparison of all organizations to determine the similarities and differences between these organizations. Within these case studies, a CSE lens could be utilized to better understand their operational commitments. A survey could also be created, utilizing key attributes of CSE, and distributed to these types of organizations to determine an organizations consideration and commitment to social issues relevant to the destinations where they operate..

In regards to creating more social responsibility within the volunteer tourism sector, further research could be conducted with more stakeholders such as other operators, communities, government agencies, and volunteer tourists. Focus groups could be facilitated to determine the perspectives of these groups in regard to improving the sector, utilizing responsible tourism implementation strategies, such as certification, and exploring means to further promote best practices within the volunteer tourism sector. The results from these focus groups could also create a foundation for creating a survey instrument which could be distributed to volunteer tourism organizations within the sector.

It is evident that volunteer tourism has the ability to create change within the destinations that it is situated in. This change can be either positive or negative and is dependent on how programs are implemented within destinations. As such, it is important to emphasize the social responsibility that operators within the sector must have towards the communities they work with. This would allow for the long term sustainability of projects and insure that benefits are received by all stakeholders involved. Creating awareness and empowering stakeholders such as

the communities and volunteers could create demand for best practices amongst operators. Implementing best practice guidelines or codes of conduct for operations could also aid in facilitating this. Such a task is not simplistic in its undertaking and requires the cooperation of all the major players within the sector. As such, it is hoped that perpetuating this dialogue within the volunteer tourism sector could actually lend to making a positive and sustainable difference for all those involved.

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APPENDIX A: Email to Request Interviews

Dear (Name of Interview Participant)

My name is Jasveen Rattan and I am a third year PhD student at the University of Waterloo in Canada. The reason I am emailing you is that I am currently conducting my dissertation research on volunteer tourism and am specifically looking at the Feasibility of Creating a Volunteer Tourism Certification.

One part of my research involves me interviewing various stakeholders involved in the volunteer tourism industry to determine their perspectives on such an initiative. I was wondering if you would be willing to participate in an interview? I really feel that you would be able to provide valuable insights on this topic.

I am attending, and presenting a poster, at the ESTC conference in Monterrey this year. I am not sure whether you are attending, but if you are I would appreciate it if I could interview you one of the days. It would take about 30 minutes of your time.

Please let me know if this would work and whether you would be willing to participate.

I understand that you may be busy during the conference so if this is not possible we could always conduct the interview on Skype.

Thanks so much for your time,

Jasveen

APPENDIX B: Study Introduction Letter

(Printed on U of W Recreation & Leisure Letterhead)

Dear

I am conducting a research study to fulfill the requirements of my PhD degree in Recreation and Leisure Studies, from the University of Waterloo, Ontario, Canada, under the supervision of Dr Paul Eagles. Through my research I hope to determine the feasibility of creating a certification program for volunteer tourism operators and sites. Volunteer tourism applies to “those tourists who, for various reasons, volunteer in an organized way to undertake holidays that might involve aiding or alleviating material poverty of some groups in society, the restoration of certain environments or research into aspects of society and environment” (Wearing, 2001, p. 1).

This study will investigate the feasibility of creating a certification program that can be utilized by small, medium, and large tourism operators of volunteer tourism sites. It will consist of three areas for analysis:

1. A market analysis will be conducted to determine the demand for certification within the industry, wants and needs of various stakeholders, identification of competitors, and strengths, weaknesses, and barriers to entry for certification programs;
2. A background, operational and financial analysis of certification organizations to determine the general financial structure of implementing a certification scheme; and
3. An implementation analysis to determine the requirements of implementing a certification program.

The interview that I would like to conduct with you is geared towards discovering your opinions of certification for volunteer tourism operators and sites. It will specifically address questions relating to your opinions on sustainable tourism and volunteer tourism. These questions will be used to provide information for the market analysis portion of this study. The interview will take approximately thirty minutes to complete.

Participation in this study is voluntary and does not require the disclosure of your address, phone number or email. Your name, occupation, and the name of your organization will not be disclosed in this study. This information will remain confidential unless otherwise agreed to. You may decline to answer any of the interview questions if you so wish. Further, you may decide to withdraw from this study at any time without any negative consequences simply by letting me know your decision. With your permission, the interview will be audio recorded to facilitate collection of information, and later transcribed for analysis. These audio recordings will be deleted five years from the date of the interview. Excerpts from the interview may be included in the thesis and/or publications that come out of this research, however, the source of these quotations will remain anonymous.

Shortly after the interview has been completed, I will send you a copy of the transcript, if you would like, to give you an opportunity to confirm the accuracy of our conversation and to add or clarify any points that you wish. All information you provide is considered completely confidential. There are no known or anticipated risks to you as a participant in this study.

Data collected from the interviews will only be accessible by the researchers associated with this study. Information collected from other interviewees will not be shared amongst interviewees, nor will participants be named or identified in any way. Interviewees will also not have any access to the notes or transcripts that will emerge from the interview, and I will keep these interviews in a secure location and shred them after five years.

If you have any questions regarding this study after completion of the interview please contact me at 1 (416) 602-2243 or by email jrattan@uwaterloo.ca. You can also contact my supervisor Paul Eagles at 1 (519) 888-4567 ext. 32716, email eagles@healthy.uwaterloo.ca.

I would like to assure you that this study has been reviewed and has received ethics clearance through the Office of Research Ethics at the University of Waterloo, Ontario, Canada. However, the final decision about participation is yours. If you have any comments or concerns resulting from your participation in this study, please contact Dr. Susan Sykes of this office at 1 (519) 888-4567 Ext. 36005 or ssykes@uwaterloo.ca.

I appreciate your participation in this study and if you have any questions please do not hesitate to ask me.

Thank you

Jasveen Rattan

Jasveen Rattan

APPENDIX C: Consent Form

(Printed on U Of W Recreation & Leisure Letterhead)

I have read the information presented in the information letter about a study being conducted by Jasveen Rattan of the Department of Recreation and Leisure Studies at the University of Waterloo, Ontario, Canada, under the supervision of Dr Paul Eagles. I have had the opportunity to ask any questions related to this study, to receive satisfactory answers to my questions, and any additional details I wanted.

I am aware that I have the option of allowing my interview to be audio recorded to ensure an accurate recording of my responses.

I am also aware the excerpts from the interview may be included in the thesis and/or publications to come from this research, with the understanding that the quotations will be anonymous. I was informed that I may withdraw my consent at any time without penalty by advising the researcher.

This project has been reviewed by, and received ethics clearance through, the Office of Research Ethics at the University of Waterloo, Ontario, Canada. I was informed that if I have any comments or concerns resulting from my participation in this study, I may contact Dr. Susan Sykes, Director Office of Research Ethics at 1 (519) 888-4567 ext. 36005 or by email: ssykes@uwaterloo.ca.

With full knowledge of all foregoing, I agree, of my own free will, to participate in this study.

YES NO

I agree to have my interview audio recorded.

YES NO

I agree to the use of anonymous quotations in any thesis or publication that comes of this research.

YES NO

Participant Name: _____ (Please print)

Participant Signature: _____

Witness Name: _____ (Please print)

Witness Signature: _____

Date: _____

APPENDIX D: Semi-structured Interview Questions

- 1) What is the name of the organization that you work for? How long has it been in operation? What regions in the world does it service? Please be reassured that the information that you provide in these questions will not be used to identify you within this study.
- 2) What is your job title and what does it entail? How long have you been in this position? How long have you been involved in the volunteer tourism sector?
- 3) Do you feel that the volunteer tourism sector is growing/or decreasing in size? What advantages/disadvantages do you identify within the sector? Do you feel that the volunteer tourism sector is beneficial for tourism operators, local communities, and the volunteer tourist? Why or why not?
- 4) How would you define sustainable tourism? Within the organization that you work for what measurements or benchmarks do you have in place to measure sustainable tourism practices? (In the case of academics – what practices do you think that businesses should utilize to measure sustainable tourism?)
- 5) Do you think that volunteer tourism is a sustainable tourism activity? Why or why not? Why do you feel this way?
- 6) Do you think any improvements could be made within the volunteer tourism sector in terms of its sustainability?
- 7) Who do you think should be responsible for ensuring sustainability? The tourism operators? Government? Tourists? Community?
- 8) Do you think that implementing a code of conduct or guidelines for the volunteer tourism sector will make it more sustainable? Why or why not?
- 9) Do you believe that certification can be an effective tool within the tourism industry? Why or why not? What are the strengths and weaknesses that you can identify with utilizing certification scheme?
- 10) Do you think that implementing a volunteer tourism certification within this sector will help to make it more sustainable?
- 11) Do you think that the industry would be willing to adhere to the standards and guidelines set out within a certification? What do you think would be the barriers to entering this market?
- 12) Based on your knowledge of certification programs do you think that a volunteer tourism certification programs should be attached to an existing program? If so which one?
- 13) Is there anything else that you think I need to know or that I have missed during this interview?

APPENDIX E: Thank you Letter to Participants

(Printed on U Of W Recreation & Leisure Letterhead)

Dear *(Participants Name)*

I am writing you to thank you for taking the time to meet with me (on Skype). It was a pleasure speaking with you and I feel that I have gained some valuable insights.

Your responses to the questions that I posed will aid in the understanding of industry perspectives of a certification for volunteer tourism.

I hope you will get in touch with me if you have any further thoughts or questions regarding this study. You can contact me by phone at 1 (416) 602-3343 or by email jrattan@uwaterloo.ca. You can also contact my supervisor Professor Paul Eagles at 1 (519) 888-4567 ext. 32716, email eagles@healthy.uwaterloo.ca.

Please remember that any data pertaining to you as an individual participant will be kept confidential. Once all the data are collected and analyzed for this project, I plan on sharing this information with the research community through seminars, conferences, presentations, and journal articles. If you are interested in receiving more information regarding the results of this study, or would like a summary of the results, please provide your email address, and when the study is completed, anticipated by December 2013, I will send you the information. In the meantime, if you have any questions about the study, please do not hesitate to contact me by email or telephone as noted above. As with all University of Waterloo projects involving human participants, this project was reviewed by, and received ethics clearance through, the Office of Research Ethics at the University of Waterloo. Should you have any comments or concerns resulting from your participation in this study, please contact Dr. Susan Sykes, Director, Office of Research Ethics at 519-888-4567, Ext., 36005 or ssykes@uwaterloo.ca.

Sincerely,

Jasveen Rattan

Jasveen Rattan

APPENDIX F: Email to Potential Participants

Dear (Name of Interview Participant)

My name is Jasveen Rattan and I am a PhD student at the University of Waterloo in Canada. The reason I am emailing you is to see if you would be willing to participate in a study that I am conducting for my dissertation research on volunteer tourism.

One part of my research involves conducting an in-person interview, that would take approximately 60 minutes, with volunteer tourism operators within the volunteer tourism sector. The purpose of this interview is to determine their perspectives on volunteer tourism and certification. I really feel that you would be able to provide valuable insights on this topic. This study has been reviewed and received ethics clearance through a University of Waterloo Research Ethics Committee.

Please let me know if you are willing to participate in an in-person interview or have any specific questions or need any clarifications about my study.

Thanks so much for your time,

Jasveen

APPENDIX G: Information Letter for Study

(Printed on Applied Health Sciences Letterhead)

Dear

I am conducting a research study to fulfill the requirements of my PhD degree in Recreation and Leisure Studies, from the University of Waterloo, Ontario, Canada, under the supervision of Dr. Heather Mair. Through my research I hope to determine the feasibility of creating a certification program for volunteer tourism operators and sites.

The purpose of this study was to explore the practices of volunteer tourism operators and assess the role of certification as a strategy for socially responsible volunteer tourism. This will be achieved through conducting a case study of two volunteer operators, your organization and one other. This case study will specifically address the following research questions:

- 1) What are the tensions between volunteer tourism practices and the growing call for certification of socially responsible tourism?
- 2) What are the opportunities and challenges faced by volunteer tourism organizations?
- 3) In what ways would the move towards certification relieve or exacerbate these opportunities and challenges?
- 4) What are the ways volunteer tourism is being practiced at the organizational level?

The interview that I would like to conduct with you is geared towards attaining a better understanding of volunteer tourism operators. It will specifically address questions relating to your opinions on sustainable tourism and volunteer tourism. Finally it will aid in discovering your opinions of certification for volunteer tourism operators.

Participation in this study is voluntary. It will involve an interview of approximately sixty minutes in length to take place in a mutually agreed upon location. You may decline to answer any of the interview questions if you so wish. Further, you may decide to withdraw from this study at any time without any negative consequences by advising the researcher. With your permission, the interview will be audio recorded to facilitate collection of information, and later transcribed for analysis. Shortly after the interview has been completed, I will send you a copy of the transcript to give you an opportunity to confirm the accuracy of our conversation and to add or clarify any points that you wish.

All information you provide is considered confidential. Excerpts from the interview will be included in the thesis and/or publications that come out of this research, however, the source of these quotations will remain anonymous through the use of pseudonyms, unless you give

permission otherwise. Furthermore, with your permission, the name of your organization will also appear in the thesis or report resulting from this study. Data collected during this study will be retained for 10 years and I will keep these interviews in a secure location. Only researchers associated with this project will have access. There are no known or anticipated risks to you as a participant in this study.

If you have any questions regarding this study after completion of the interview please contact me at 1 (416) 602-2243 or by email jrattan@uwaterloo.ca. You can also contact my supervisor Heather Mair at 1 (519) 888-4567 ext. 32716, email hmair@uwaterloo.ca.

I would like to assure you that this study has been reviewed and has received ethics clearance through a University of Waterloo Research Ethics Committee. However, the final decision about participation is yours. If you have any comments or concerns resulting from your participation in this study, please contact Dr. Maureen Nummelin, the Director, Office of Research Ethics, at 1-519-888-4567, Ext. 36005 or maureen.nummelin@uwaterloo.ca.

I appreciate your participation in this study and if you have any questions please do not hesitate to ask me.

Thank you

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jasveen Rattan', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Jasveen Rattan

APPENDIX H: Consent Form for Study Participation

(Printed on Applied Health Sciences Letterhead)

CONSENT FORM FOR STUDY PARTICIPATION

I have read the information presented in the information letter about a study being conducted by Jasveen Rattan of the Department of Recreation and Leisure Studies at the University of Waterloo, Ontario, Canada, under the supervision of Dr Heather Mair. I have had the opportunity to ask any questions related to this study, to receive satisfactory answers to my questions, and any additional details I wanted. I am aware that I have the option of allowing my interview to be audio recorded to ensure an accurate recording of my responses. I am also aware the excerpts from the interview may be included in publications to come from this research, with the understanding that the quotations will be anonymous. I was informed that I may withdraw my consent at any time without penalty by advising the researcher.

This project has been reviewed by, and received ethics clearance through a University of Waterloo Research Ethics Committee. I was informed that if I have any comments or concerns resulting from my participation in this study, I may contact Dr. Maureen Nummelin, the Director, Office of Research Ethics, at 1-519-888-4567, Ext. 36005 or maureen.nummelin@uwaterloo.ca.

By signing this consent form, I am aware that I will not be waiving my legal rights or releasing the investigator(s) or involved institution(s) from their legal and professional responsibilities. With full knowledge of all foregoing, I agree, of my own free will, to participate in this study.

YES NO

I agree to have my interview audio recorded. YES NO

I agree to the use of anonymous quotations in any thesis or publication that comes of this research.
YES NO

I agree to the use of the organizations name in any thesis or publication that comes of this research.
YES NO

Participant Name: _____ (Please print)

Participant Signature: _____

Witness Name: _____ (Please print)

Witness Signature: _____

Date: _____

APPENDIX I: Interview Guide

Background Information

- 1) What is your role with [company name]? How long have you been in [company name]?
- 2) What prompted you to be involved with the volunteer tourism sector?

VT Organization Details

- 3) What is at the core of your volunteer tourism organization? What does the business focus on as its goal?
- 4) How many volunteers do you send per year? What training or pre-trip information do you provide for volunteers?
- 5) How do you determine which locations to send volunteers to? Who is involved in this process? What are the types of skills you look for in a volunteer?
- 6) What is the typical length of the projects you initiate within communities? What is the longest running project that your organization is currently involved in?
- 7) In your opinion, do you think volunteer tourism makes a difference in the places it occurs? How do you know this? What indicators or benchmarks does your organization have in place to determine the impacts that you are having within the community you are located in?
- 8) Is your organization different in any way to other volunteer organizations?
- 9) Who do you think should be responsible for ensuring sustainability at a destination? Why do you feel this way?

Strengthening the VT Sector

- 10) In your opinion, what could be done to enhance the volunteer tourism sector?
- 11) What are your thoughts on accreditation and certification schemes in tourism?
- 12) What are your thoughts on utilizing a certification scheme for improving the volunteer tourism sector?
- 13) Would you be willing to subscribe to a certification for volunteer tourism operators? Why or why not?

14) Would you be willing to share a breakdown of fund allocations for the trips that you host?

15) Is there anything else that you think I need to know or that I have missed during this interview?

APPENDIX J: Thank you letter to Participants

(Printed on Applied Health Sciences Letterhead)

[Date]

Dear [Participant]

I am writing you to thank you for taking the time to meet with me. It was a pleasure speaking with you and I feel that I have gained some valuable insights. Your responses to the questions that I posed will aid in the understanding of volunteer tourism operators and the potential for certification.

I hope you will get in touch with me if you have any further thoughts or questions regarding this study. You can contact me by phone at 1 (416) 602-3343 or by email jrattan@uwaterloo.ca. You can also contact my supervisor Heather Mair at 1 (519) 888-4567 ext. 32716, email hmair@uwaterloo.ca.

Please remember that any data pertaining to you as an individual participant will be kept confidential. Once all the data are collected and analyzed for this project, I plan on sharing this information with the research community through seminars, conferences, presentations, and journal articles. If you are interested in receiving more information regarding the results of this study, or would like a summary of the results, please provide your email address, and when the study is completed, anticipated by July 2016 and I will send you the information. In the meantime, if you have any questions about the study, please do not hesitate to contact me by email or telephone as noted above.

As with all University of Waterloo projects involving human participants, this project was reviewed by, and received ethics clearance through a University of Waterloo Research Ethics Committee. Should you have any comments or concerns resulting from your participation in this study, please contact Dr. Maureen Nummelin, the Director, Office of Research Ethics, at 1-519-888-4567, Ext. 36005 or maureen.nummelin@uwaterloo.ca.

Sincerely,



JASVEER KAUR

APPENDIX K: Projects Abroad Cross-Case Synthesis Summary of Themes

Projects Abroad: Cross-Case Analysis - Summary of Themes		
Theme		<i>1) Creating a Meaningful volunteer Experience</i>
Sub-theme		<i>(i) Pre-trip Preparation</i>
Pg. 1	D	- Flexible start times
	D	- Volunteers choose country
	✓	- Assessment of participants
	✓	- Open line of Communication with VA (create ease of volunteer)
	✓	- Extensive pre-departure information
	✓	- MyProjectsAbroad webpage
	✓	- No formal training due to costs
Sub-theme		<i>(ii) Destination Preparation</i>
	D	- One day training/induction about project, transportation and destination
	D	- Safety a priority, PA only chooses safe destinations

Sub-theme		<i>(iii) Volunteer Interactions with Community and Volunteers</i>
Pg. 2	✓	- linking of volunteer and the community
Pg. 2	✓	- value for volunteer and creates long lasting impact
Pg. 2	✓	- immersion with local culture through homestays
	D	- networking with volunteers from around the world
Theme		<i>2) Operating Towards Sustainability</i>
Sub-theme		<i>(i) Selecting Partnerships</i>
	D	- created based on issues at destination or outreach
	D	- portfolio of organizations they work with at destination
	D	- establish partnerships for a reasonable period of time
Sub-theme		<i>(ii) Hiring their own staff</i>
Pg. 1	✓	- staff and office at all destinations
	D	- creates constant and fluid communication
	D	- majority of staff from destination office located
	D	- local staff important for choosing and ending projects

	D	- staff choose based on site visitations, making contacts,
	D	writing a proposal, assessing the need for volunteers
Sub-theme		<i>(iii) Organization's responsibility</i>
Pg. 4	✓	- responsibility of the operator for projects they work with,
		and not abandoned, projects are worthwhile
	D	- develop good partnerships, create meaningful work for volunteers
		work towards a greater goal, not doing so means operator not
		meeting their obligations
Pg. 2	✓	- entire organizations responsibility to ensure sustainability
Sub-sub-theme		<i>ORGANIZATION RESPONSIBILITY</i>
		<i>(i) Creating Goals</i>
FTC	✓	- management plan with objectives
FTC	✓	- priority goals chosen by project
		<i>(ii) Measuring Goals</i>
FTC	✓	- measuring goals is identified as important, allows them to make genuine

		claims
	D	- some goals are easier to measure than others decided with project
	D	- type of project may cause difficulty in measurement due to others involvement
	D	- no hard deadlines for goals due to uncertainty in number of volunteers
FTC	✓	- yearly reviews determines project progress and viability
	D	- goals do not usually change in yearly review...but determines progress
	D	- determining partners satisfaction with work they do at projects is important
Theme		<i>3) Creating a better volunteer tourism sector</i>
Sub-theme		<i>(i) Making a Difference</i>
Pg. 4	✓	- volunteer tourism makes a difference=knowledge of sector and work with PA
Pg. 4	✓	- free help, place may not ever receive it, accomplished quicker rate
Pg. 4	✓	- how the project is run will determine whether it makes a difference
Pg. 4	✓	- VT makes a difference due to personal experience, more organized sector is the better the outcome for the community.

Sub-theme		<i>(ii) Challenges Faced</i>
Pg. 4	✓	- increasing size of sector = bad companies should not get bigger as they don't appear to really want to make a difference
Pg. 4	✓	- reputation of the sector and potential of viewing PA in a negative light
Pg. 4	✓	- disassociation from the term volunteer tourism due to industry stigma
Sub-theme		<i>(iii) Improving the Sector</i>
	D	- other organizations should be more serious about the work they do and set out expectations of what is required with their volunteers
	D	- collaboration with sector organizations to share ideas and improve sector
	D	- creating more awareness about the meaningful impacts of VT
Sub-sub-theme		<i>THOUGHTS ON CERTIFICATION</i>
Pg. 5	✓	- creating legitimacy of organizations is a benefit
Pg. 5	✓	- difficulty in applying such schemes in developing countries
Pg. 5	✓	- accessibility and costs, and customer awareness
Pg. 5	✓	- creating an accountable and meaningful label with weight behind it
	D	- perceived difficulty in applicability due to international focus of sector
Pg. 5	✓	- 3 out 4 would subscribe to certification

Pg. 5		- 1 = do not need certification to justify operations
	✓	- 1 = more popular type of approach would be considered.

APPENDIX L: ME to WE Cross-Case Synthesis Summary of Themes

		ME to WE: Cross-Case Synthesis - Summary of Themes
Theme		<i>1) Creating a Transformational Experience</i>
Sub-theme		<i>(i) For the Volunteer</i>
Sub-sub-theme		<i>(i) Pre-trip Preparation</i>
Pg. 1	✓	- volunteers assessment prior to trip
Pg. 1	✓	- assessment to ensure support of volunteer
Pg. 1	✓	- build the experience of the volunteer supported by staff
Pg. 1	✓	- give information on project, destination, logistical aspects
	D	- daily itinerary, stories about community, resources
	D	- detailed overview about community, incl. Challenges face by community
Pg. 1	✓	- volunteers do not receive formal training, trips designed to meet their skill level
Sub-sub-theme		<i>(ii) Staff Training</i>
	D	- highly educated and trained staff with previous experience
	D	- facilitators play a key role with volunteer experience
Pg. 2	✓	- in country team= knowledgeable about culture and project

Sub-sub-theme		<i>(iii) Managing the Experience</i>
Pg. 1	D	- conversations throughout trip with volunteers about what they are experiencing
	✓	- conversations help volunteer to relate to situation at destination and connect to community
Pg. 1	D	- identified to be more than just volunteer travel = created leaders who will implement change
	✓	- focus on creating connection with the community
Pg. 1	D	- Action Planning = translate passion into making a difference
	D	- Action Planning discussed through all phases of trip - help volunteers to implement change when back home
	✓	- centered on volunteer experiences and the impacts they have, on volunteer and community, had and can have
	D	- Responsibility of organization and other influencers to create knowledge, understanding and support for volunteers and their experiences
	D	- Help volunteers and their parents to reintegrate them when they come back from trip
	D	- focus on providing socially conscious and quality products for their consumers
Sub-theme		<i>(ii) For the community</i>
	D	- empowering communities and breaking the cycle of poverty

	D	- FTC model distinguishes them from other VT organizations because they put the community first
	D	- development driven, and opportunities created that are great for the community
	D	- projects created through consultation with local government and community leaders
	D	- volunteer trips based on needs identified by FTC and community, not on volunteer preference
	D	- focus on creating sustainable tourism development, not just handout, trips meant to enhance community development
	D	- focus on build community ownership and self sufficiency
	D	- community participation necessary for project, involved in physical labour and contributing money sometimes
	D	- projects created on communally owned land
	D	- experience impactful for everyone
Theme		2) <i>Improving the volunteer tourism sector</i>
Sub-theme		(i) <i>Volunteer Tourism Makes a difference</i>
Pg. 4	✓	- all believed that it does
Pg. 4	✓	- based on experience working with ME to WE
Pg. 4	✓	- based on FTC model
Pg. 4	✓	- based on right development model
Pg. 4	✓	- based on how it originates and development model

Sub-theme		<i>(ii) Role of the Operator</i>
Pg. 2	✓	- responsibility of sustainability falls on operator
	D	- both tour operator and destination partners responsibility
	D	- both tour operator and destination partners responsibility
Sub-theme		<i>(iii) Tensions within the Sector</i>
Pg. 4	✓	- vast differences in projects and poor development models
	D	- no standard operating procedure
Pg. 4	✓	- challenging for consumer as not sure what they are getting into until they are there
Pg. 4	✓	- no common language or regulations within VT sector to identify good from bad projects
	D	- travelers become disheartened with sector due to bad experience
	D	- common language could aid in differentiating experiences.
	D	- no way to distinguish good from bad
Sub-theme		<i>(iv) Suggested Improvements</i>
Pg. 5	✓	- creating a rubric with a common language, that is monitored or has a ratings group
	D	- certification, education and a common language may help
Pg. 5		- important to have something that creates structure within the sector to hold it to a higher standard
	✓	- standards organization are not credible if an organization can buy

		into it and should be more accountable
Pg. 5	✓	- willing to subscribe to a certification scheme, however must be accessible for everyone that wants to subscribe to it
Pg. 5	✓	- all participants were willing to subscribe to a certification

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APPENDIX N: Other Products and Service that ME to WE Offers

ME to WE Leadership Training Programs

ME to WE offers Leadership Training Programs for youth and adults. These programs are based on process they call 'Theory of Change. Theory of Change is considered to be a transformative process. For youth it creates an environment for them to explore social issues, equips them with skills that build self-confidence and to inspire others, and empowers them to make impacts on a local and global scale (ME to WE, 2015).

For adults ME to WE offers a Signature Leadership Program and a Customized Leadership Training. These programs are set up to help interested parties build a program for 'young leaders' in their respective schools or communities. These programs are geared towards school board representatives, conference organizers, community association representatives, educators, or any other interested individuals (ME to WE, 2015). The Signature Leadership Program encompasses topics such as: civic engagement and volunteerism, inclusivity training, bullying awareness and prevention, and aboriginal issues, cultures and perspectives (ME to WE, 2015). ME to WE (2015) states that the themes addressed in the Signature Leadership Program "are a launching pad to develop students' leadership capacity and result in meaningful action plans to support their community and the world". Customized Leadership Training is a more customized and flexible approach which is tailored to fit the needs of program participants. These programs can be tailored to any age group, any setting and any country in the world.

Impacts of ME to We Leadership Programs

ME to WE facilitators work with over 40,000 youth and over 20 school boards/divisions across Canada and the United States. To determine what types of benefits their programs are having on youth, ME to WE surveys the participants of their programs. The data they gathered found that:

- 70% of participants were motivated to get better grades in school.
- 84% of participants were thinking about their career path and academic future.
- 82% of participants feel more informed about social issues locally.
- 88% of participants feel more informed about social issues globally.
- 86% of participants feel they are more likely to volunteer.
- 79% of participants feel they are more likely to join a school club.
- 79% of participants intend to donate to charity.
- 87% of participants now consider themselves a leader.

ME to WE Camps

ME to WE offers "Take Action" camps which for youth ages 9-18. These camps give youth tips in public speaking and help to build leadership skills, discuss social issues, mentorship from leadership facilitators, build friendships with other youth, and opportunities to volunteer at local organizations in need (ME to WE, 2015). The camps take place in Bethany, about thirty minutes outside of Peterborough, Ontario and in Arizona at the Windsong Peace and Leadership Centre, a large ranch an hour and a half outside of Tucson (ME to WE, 2015). The cost for the Take Action Camp in Ontario is CDN \$900 plus tax and the Take Action Camp in Arizona is USD \$750. Each camp includes all accommodation, organic homemade meals, activities and day

trips. Prices do not include travel medical insurance, spending money at the ME to WE store and transportation to and from camp. Campers also earn eight volunteer hours per trip (ME to We, 2015). Returning campers are also given opportunities to advance their skills and participate in new programs. For campers aged 14 years old and up, Action Camp Ontario offers streams in Arts and Activism, Social Movements Through Media or Social Innovation for Change (ME to WE, 2015).

ME to WE Clothing and Accessories

ME to WE sells merchandise that they state makes an impact. This merchandise is in the form of jewelry, cards, apparel, home decor, shoes, school supplies, books, dvds, water bottles and mugs to help raise money for Free the Children projects. Each type of merchandise is identified as linking to a specific social impact that the purchaser will have at a Free the Children Project. Depending on the product purchased, each item will contribute to the one or all of the five pillars that Free the Children ascribes to: education, health, water, food, and income. Consumers of these products are also given an opportunity to track the impact they are making through each purchase at their online site (ME to WE, 2015).

APPENDIX O: ME to WE Country Profile of Kenya

FREE THE CHILDREN



Photo Credit: Scott Ramsay

KENYA

ABOUT KENYA

Located in Eastern Africa, Kenya borders the Indian Ocean between Somalia and Tanzania. Approximately the size of the province of Manitoba (or the state of Texas), Kenya's population of 43 million lives among an abundant and varied wildlife and an exceptionally diverse geographical landscape. Home to Africa's second highest peak (Mount Kenya) and sharing the world's second largest freshwater lake (Lake Victoria) with Tanzania and Uganda, Kenya boasts a tropical coastline to the south, savannah grasslands throughout the east, forested and hilly highlands to the west and a near-desert landscape in the north-east. Attracting thousands of visitors every year, Kenya's Maasai Mara National Reserve is host to one of nature's most spectacular annual events: the migration of one million wildebeest from the dry plains of Tanzania to more fertile grazing in Kenya.

Despite Kenya's natural wealth of beauty, more than half of the population still lives below the poverty line. Kenya has one of the fastest population growth rates with 73% of the population under the age of 30 and a life expectancy of 57 years. Together with a widening income gap, the tripling of Kenya's population over the past 30 years has eroded gains in education, health, food security, employment and income.

KENYA FACTS

- Approximately 80% of Kenyans live in rural regions.
- 25% of all Kenyan girls under the age of 15 are married.
- English and Swahili are Kenya's two official languages, although each of the country's 42 ethnic groups has their own dialect as well.
- 26% of Kenyan children aged five to fourteen are engaged in child labour.



ADOPT A VILLAGE

Sustainability and community ownership is the goal of all Free The Children's Adopt a Village projects. From the very beginning of our work in all countries, Free The Children works closely with community leaders, families, educators and students to ensure that the local community is empowered and given ownership over each Adopt a Village project, whether it's school-building, a clean water well or alternative income project.

Because we work hand-in-hand with communities to implement our projects, the commitment of all community members is essential to making Adopt a Village work. We aim not only to ensure the sustainability of our programs, but to empower communities with the skills and resources needed to change their lives. Our commitment to each region is only met when community members have acquired these skills and are capable of sustaining change themselves.

Adopt a Village supports community development in areas where there is a high incidence of child labour, exploitation of children and minimal opportunities for the girl child. Currently, Adopt a Village is implemented in Kenya, Sierra Leone, Ghana, Ecuador, Haiti, Nicaragua, rural China and India.

FTC AT A GLANCE

We're proud to say that through Adopt a Village, Free The Children has

- Adopt a Village has brought over 650 schools and school rooms to young people around the world, educating more than 55,000 children every day.
- \$15 million US dollars worth of essential medical supplies has been shipped to Asia, Latin America and Africa, benefiting more than 512,000 people.
- 1 million people have improved access to clean water, health care and sanitation.
- 30,000 women are economically self-sufficient due to our micro-loans and alternative income programs.

Free The Children is proud of its unique Adopt a Village development model because it is:

- Effective, cost effective and sustainable
- A rights-based model built on community need and ownership.
- Holistic

Each core model pillar enhances the other, ensuring the greatest impact and long-term sustainability. Free The Children focuses on what communities really need: a holistic solution to ending poverty.

- We do not give hand-outs; we do not merely give a home or a pair of shoes or other personal items. Instead, we seek the greatest benefit through investing in the community infrastructure.
- Our model is structured to maximize the return on investment as activities and programs produce complementary, reinforcing outcomes.
- Each core model pillar enhances the other, ensuring the greatest impact and long-term sustainability.



FREE THE CHILDREN'S WORK IN KENYA

In 2002 a new government was elected in Kenya. One of the first things they did was make primary education free. They also made primary education compulsory. This is a massive move to be applauded, but they did not tell anyone it was coming. It was printed in the newspaper on a Friday, then on Monday it was in effect. Over that weekend, no extra textbooks were released, no new teachers were hired, no new uniforms were made and as a result, schools were left unprepared. One million additional children went to school on this day, significantly overwhelming local resources and capacities. Classrooms were dark, crowded, leaky in the rain and hard to maintain. There also weren't enough teachers or supplies and many families were still unable to pay for the mandatory uniforms, books and examination fees. Although 85% of children in Kenya currently attend primary school, this figure remains significantly lower for rural schools where isolation and child labour practices continue to prevent thousands of children from acquiring even the most basic levels of education.

Working in Kenya since 2002, Free The Children is dedicated to improving the lives of indigenous communities throughout the Maasai Mara region in the Narok South District and supporting the government in Kenya with their plan to provide primary education for all children. The Maasai, Kipsigis and Kisii communities face significant challenges, which threaten the survival of their vibrant pastoral culture. Maasailand region has the highest primary school drop-out rate in the country, which is a direct result of poor educational facilities and resources, the need for children to tend to cattle and goats and the lack of quality health services.

Through the 'Adopt a Village' development model, Free the Children works in partnership with these communities to eliminate the barriers that prevent children from accessing education. Free The Children's commitment to community development has also served to unite government leaders, local elders, parents and students in the Maasai, Kipsigis and Kisii communities.

AT A GLANCE

- Over 7,500 Kenyan children attend Free The Children schools every day.
- Free The Children has built over 130 school rooms, libraries, teachers offices and kitchens in Kenya.
- Free The Children has implemented Adopt a Village programming in 15 communities in the Maasai Mara region of Kenya, serving a population of 30,000 community members.
- Free The Children has constructed two all-girls secondary schools for both Maasai and Kipsigis girls, who are graduating from Free The Children Primary Schools.
- In 2010, Free The Children opened the doors to its first Health Center and a second opened in 2013. To date, thousands of patients have received high quality medical care.





EDUCATION

To date, Free The Children has built over 130 school rooms throughout the Maasai Mara region, including the construction of an all-girls secondary school in 2010 and a second one in 2012. Girls in Kenya are often prevented from going to school because of low family income, early marriage and pregnancy or time-consuming household responsibilities. The introduction of two all-girls boarding schools provides girls of surrounding local communities with a safe place to live and learn. However, the focus for Free The Children in Kenya will continue to be increasing access to quality primary education for all.

Free The Children's educational programming includes many different projects that support our holistic community development model for marginalized children and their families. We work in partnership with educators and local governments to enhance the quality of education.

Free The Children's education projects in the Maasai Mara region include the building of school rooms, teacher's accommodations, offices and libraries, the purchase of school furniture and basic supplies, teachers training and educational programming.



CLEAN WATER & SANITATION

Clean water and sanitation projects are vital to the development of healthy communities. Almost 40% of Kenya's rural communities do not have access to clean drinking water and the average distance women and children walk to collect water is over one hour. Time spent walking, and the diseases that invariably ensue, prevent women from taking care of their families and children from attending school.

Communities in the Narok South District of Kenya are becoming increasingly vulnerable to drought and to the negative effects of changing weather patterns. The impact of drought in recent years has been devastating to many people who rely on rain-fed water systems and natural water sources.

By providing these communities with access to sustainable clean water projects, children, especially girls, are freed from their daily treks to collect water. Free The Children's Adopt a Village clean water and sanitation projects include the construction of wells, safe water tanks, hand-washing stations, latrines and community education workshops in basic hygiene practices and waterborne disease prevention.





HEALTH CARE

Malaria, typhoid, respiratory illnesses and brucellosis are the most common types of health problems in rural Kenya, which contribute to Kenya's low life expectancy of 57 years. With just 4,500 physicians in the entire country and only 1000 of these working in the public sector, rural Kenyans are at a severe disadvantage when it comes to accessing quality health care. When Free The Children first began working in rural Kenya, young people were often too sick to attend school or they had to stay home to care for their ailing parents.

Through the health pillar of the Adopt a Village development model, Free The Children provides basic medical supplies, training for health care workers, mobile health clinics and direct health care services at Baraka Health Clinic. One of the most important aspects of Free The Children's health programming in Kenya is health education which is conducted at the school and household levels. Over the past decade, Free The Children has witnessed a decrease in the incidence rate of preventable disease and illness in all of its Adopt a Village communities in this country.



Photo Credit: Scott Ramsey



ALTERNATIVE INCOME & LIVELIHOOD

Rural women in Kenya are particularly vulnerable to the country's unemployment rate of 40% as they do not have equal access to social and economic assets. Subsistence farming is often the sole and primary source of livelihood for about 70% of these women. Men's income and livelihood are also greatly dependent on agricultural practices, which remain precarious and erratic.

Free The Children's alternative income and livelihood pillar facilitates the implementation of lending circles, financial literacy and business training, which assists marginalized Kenyan community members, especially women, to generate a sustainable source of income, build savings and start their own businesses. Income generating activities include the development of artisan work (e.g. beading) in the Maasai communities and beekeeping in the Kipsigis communities. A large focus of the alternative income and livelihood pillar, beyond the tangible increases in income, is the formation of women's, men's and youth groups which provide the means for community capacity-building and empowerment.





AGRICULTURE AND FOOD SECURITY

Due to rising food prices, food insecurity and drought, the majority of Kenya's communities are unable to acquire the nutrients necessary to maintain a well-balanced diet. As a result, 1 in 5 children suffer from malnutrition and 35% of children are affected by stunting. A significant portion of the population remains heavily dependent on food aid as Kenya has not attained the required level of agricultural investment and efficiency to generate food security. Compared to 3% in food secure countries, 75% of Kenya's workforce relies on agriculture for most of its income – a sector that remains one of the country's least developed and most ineffective. Climate changes (e.g. changing weather patterns) are also undermining an already fragile resource base and have contributed to declining yields over the past decades.

Through the implementation of the fifth pillar in its Adopt a Village model, Free The Children's agriculture and food security pillar facilitates the implementation of school nutrition programs, irrigated school gardens and farms, and agricultural training and tree-planting activities, which enable students, parents and communities to learn better and more efficient agricultural practices and techniques, allowing them to become more productive and resourceful members of their community.



Photo Credit: Scott Ramsey

LEARN MORE

For more info on Free The Children's projects in Kenya and how you can get involved with Free The Children's community development projects please visit:

<http://www.freethechildren.com/wherewework/kenya>
or email projects@freethechildren.com

