

**Exploring the Experiences and Perceptions of Community Ambassadors in the New World
Community**

by

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AUTHORS 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.

I understand that my thesis may be made electronically available to the public.

ABSTRACT

Volunteering is a very dominant activity which is represented prominently by university students – a group which represents an important demographic for non-profit organizations and private enterprises. Participating in volunteer tourism acts as a prospect to develop relationships in accordance with volunteers and motivates consciousness-raising understandings (McGehee & Santos, 2005; Smith & Holmes, 2009). The promising growth of volunteers supporting tourism to develop a destination, engage with the local community and practise sustainability while traveling acts as a source of motivation to get involved in volunteering (Hustinx et al, 2012). Using New World Community – a Canadian social enterprise as a context, this thesis seeks to understand the experiences and perceptions of the community ambassadors during volunteering at various international communities. Reasons to participate with New World Community and to develop understanding of volunteering were drawn through 9 semi-structured interviews with repeat student volunteer travelers. This basic interpretive qualitative study revealed that the volunteers indulge in volunteering with predetermined goals such as making a difference in the community, experiencing varied cultures and showcasing kindness and care towards each other. This study also revealed from the lens of the community ambassadors that the community members showcased unconcealed actions of generosity and appreciation towards each other and the volunteers and they paid little attention to materialistic possessions. However, no acknowledgement was given to CV enhancement as a potential source of motivation to volunteer. The ability to function with a sustainable mindset in the communities was progressively carried out by the community ambassadors and the community members.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

NWC	New World Community
NGO	Non-government organization
TRAM	Tourism Research and Marketing
WTO	World Tourism Organization
CA	Community Ambassador

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background and Rationale of Research

Voluntourism emerged as an alternative form of tourism and stems from the International Voluntary Services, a Non-profit organisation sending volunteers overseas to aid development projects in the 1950s and Earthwatch which emerged in 1971 (Boluk, Kline & Stroobach, 2016). Wearing (2001) puts forth the term voluntourism as someone who “volunteer in an organized way to undertake holidays that might involve aiding or alleviating the material poverty of some groups in society, the restoration of certain environments or research into aspects of society or environment” (p.1). Whereas McGehee & Santos (2005) are more specific to the cause of volunteering defining voluntourism as “utilizing discretionary time and income to travel out of sphere of regular activity to assist others in need” (p.436). Voluntourism indeed has created opportunities like “social movement participation and activism” (McGehee & Santos, 2005), enhancing global citizenship, self-development for those interested in travelling with a purpose. These individuals as described by Singh (2002) are altruistically motivated and willing to learn and reflect and in the end create opportunities mutually for the volunteer and the community (Boluk, Kline & Stroobach, 2016).

When travelers dedicate their income, livelihood and time to a project at a travel destination, that contribution of volunteer tourism could fall under a variety of tourisms such as religious tourism, dark tourism, event, wildlife, cultural or ecotourism (Wearing, 2001). This emerging market allows travelers to devote some, or maybe 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; Wearing, 2001). The volunteer tourism sector has now

become central to development with the ever increasing for-profit and not-for-profit organizations and local communities representation as the fitting place for development. Volunteer tourism is represented as “attempting to move beyond superficial social interactions, allowing volunteers to gain self-developmental experiences and local communities to achieve sustainable community development outcomes” (McIntosh & Zahra, 2008, p.34). 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” (Stoddart & Rogerson, 2004; Lo & Lee, 2011; Bakker & Lamoureux, 2008). These motivations lead to volunteers acquiring career enhancement needed expertise and awareness about topics such as world political and social issues, team-building skills, organization skills (Turcotte, 2015).

Volunteering has gained its reputation of an easy way to travel around the world, especially to third-world developing countries. Wu (2011) as mentioned in Turcotte (2015) has suggested that “volunteerism, by bringing together persons from all walks of life to work on a common project or objective, contributes to ‘social cohesion’ or ‘social capital’ for example, by increasing social trust, reciprocity and sense of belonging in communities” (p.65). More amount of giving, volunteering and nurturing the society is all through the efforts of social cohesion (Brown & Ferris, 2007; Brook, 2005). When people from all the age groups venture into the act of volunteering, the society receives far-reaching benefits. The emergence of a Gap year in Australia, New Zealand and UK has spilled over to the United States and Canada triggering the promotion of volunteer tourism more so than ever. When young people from high-income countries indulge in taking time off typically after high school or an undergraduate degree before pursuing further education, it

leads to the establishment of Gap year, which has now become a more traditional and familiar phenomenon (Simpson, 2004). This has significantly steered towards a rise in student volunteering with motivations ranging from CV enhancement to community building to international exposure (Brown & Ferris, 2007 & Hustinx et al, 2010). Hustinx et al.'s (2010) study on student volunteers in six countries i.e. Belgium, Canada, China, Finland, Japan and the US to determine the motivations for student volunteering highlights, "the primary motivation to volunteer is building one's CV to be higher in Canada, the US and China, whereas students in Belgium, Finland and Japan attach the lowest importance to resume padding" (p. 26). CV enhancement is one aspect to get involved in volunteering. There are multiple other factors like community building, society enrichment through varied cultures are some of the reasons for students to participate in volunteer tourism. Commercialization of volunteer tourism sector, which is mostly dominated by not for profit organisations is evolving at a faster rate (Tram, 2008; Gray & Campbell, 2007; Brown & Morrison, 2003). Analyzing the operations of the organisation and their actual contribution to the host community is always questionable and also limited in current research. It is equally vital to explore the reasons for student participation in volunteer organisations and how through the participation of students the aim of the organisation is achieved. Understanding how through the practice of indulging in volunteer tourism the effect it has on non-volunteer tourists, the organisation involved, the local community can help to further aid in the decision making and change making capability of the student volunteers.

This basic interpretive qualitative study will be conducted on a unique voluntourism organisation called as New World Community (NWC) consisting of two profit run models called Sustainable Travel, which is basically focussing on sustainable travel for impact and CLOUD projects, which is focussing on community development projects. This study will help understand the experiences

and perceptions of repeat volunteer travelers working with NWC. It will also help enlighten the effect that student participation has on the staff, work environment of the New World Community, their Cloud projects and the host community. The community ambassadors are primarily students who have participated in the CLOUD project previously and then made the decision to work again with NWC and take charge of an active project. The idea channeled behind the functioning of NWC'S CLOUD project is to connect with one of their international partner communities based in Dominican Republic, Haiti, Guyana, Kenya and Uganda, fundraise for a community development project and then travel to live and work with the community to make that project into a reality. One hundred percent of the money raised by the group is funded directly to the partner community (thenwc.com). The NWC'S Sustainable Travel revolves around the idea of an all-inclusive vacation lead by community ambassadors to include making a difference in the places visited by making connections with the local and international communities and experience the real country, the one which travelers would not see on their typical vacation (thenwc.com). However, in this study the prime focus will be on students who have participated in CLOUD projects and not sustainable travel due to the recent establishment of Sustainable Travel by NWC leading to less experienced participants.

1.2 Purpose Statement and Research Questions

The purpose of this study is to explore and understand the experiences and perceptions of repeat volunteer travellers with NWC. The research questions guiding this study focus on understanding the meanings and context of volunteering. The research questions are as follows:

1. How does volunteering with NWC help the community ambassador understand their personal motivations?
2. What impact is being made in the community from the perspective of community ambassadors?

1.3 Significance of the study

This study on the New World Community, a novel Canadian Volunteer Tourism Organisation that operates for a for profit and not-for-profit model and the community ambassadors involved in the organisation who mostly are university students is uprooted from the context of volunteer tourism. Coming from a niche category volunteer tourism attempts to diminish the upcoming and current negative effects of mass tourism and re-define the most ethical and sustainable way to take holiday and contribute to the destination (Mowforth and Munt, 2009). “Volunteer tourism, a growing sector, is another form of alternative tourism re-defining holiday, as it claims to proffer potential for cross-cultural understanding, a sense of global citizenry among participants, and shift towards a more responsible form of travel” (Raymond & Hall, 2008, p.15). Researchers like Guttentag (2009) & Sin (2010) however question the presence of volunteer tourism and the struggle it creates for local communities. When the volunteer organisations consider to give more value to the participants’ interests rather than focussing towards the host communities, the credibility and sustainability of volunteer tourism is challenged (Guttentag, 2009, Sin 2010). Additionally,

community ambassadors were chosen for this study, specifically to represent the experiences encountered by them in the community volunteered, to understand the reasons for volunteering with NWC and the social impact they encountered while volunteering with NWC.

I have been an active volunteer for the past seven years and the idea of conducting a research on student volunteers working in an international environment with the aid of a non-governmental organisation instilled ardour within me as being a student myself I can relate to the undergoing's of a student volunteer. New World Community was chosen for this study because of its recent involvement in the not-for-profit sector as a burgeoning community development social enterprise that uses travelling as a method to make a positive impact in the partner communities. Additionally student volunteering is also an essential aspect of this research since the community ambassadors who take charge of NWC's independent project are primarily university students.

It is anticipated that the outcome of this research will prove beneficial to the organisation, providing insights into the reasons for working with NWC as community ambassadors and how their experiences mould their perception of the community. It will also offer insight into the specific practices of commercial volunteer tourism organisation, an area which is relatively unexplored in tourism studies. Finally, as this topic has not been adequately explored, this thesis aims to address a number of gaps in tourism literature, and will hopefully generate discussion and act as a foundation for future research examining the volunteer tourism organizations and the volunteers who render services to destinations all over the world.

1.4 Thesis Outline

The structure of the thesis is as follows: Chapter One introduces the topic and sets the context for research in volunteer tourism and student volunteering. Chapter Two presents an examination of the existing, relevant literature surrounding this topic, including Volunteering, its origin, extent of participation and decline, Alternative tourism, Volunteer tourism and its impact on tourists motivations to volunteer and the phenomena of student volunteering and social change. Chapter Three describes the methodology and methods used to collect the data, followed by an overview of the approaches to analyze, interpret, and represent the outcomes of this study. The result outcomes of this study are discussed in Chapter Four. A discussion is introduced which will act as the conclusion for each theme highlighting the research questions, limitations and areas for future research.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

A literature review was compiled to inculcate a more methodological comprehension of the important concepts of volunteer tourism, with an additional focus on student volunteering. This chapter begins with highlighting and discussing the concepts of volunteering, in particular, a discussion on its evolution, its global importance and the motivations behind volunteering. Focus on benefits and norms that drive volunteering is also discussed here. This is followed by a brief overview of alternative tourism. This section discusses how alternative tourism niches like eco-tourism, community based tourism, volunteer tourism claim to offer cross-cultural understanding, sense of global participation and minimal perceived negative environmental impacts which ultimately lead to enhancing the tourist experience. Building up from alternative tourism the next section is dedicated to exploring volunteer tourism and the following sub-categories: volunteer tourists, motivations, impacts on the hosts and on the volunteers and how existing research in the field of volunteer tourism has evolved. It should be noted that this chapter will identify the various forms of voluntourism motivations by students and travellers in general. The final area of research reviewed is social change specifically exploring how social movement and volunteers as change agents assist in building the dynamics of social change.

2.1 Volunteering

It has been noted that researchers, Cnaan, Handy and Wadsworth (1996) performed a content study and in depth review of the definition of the term volunteering. Hustinx et al., (2010) came to a conclusion, “that their analysis revealed that all definitions of volunteering discuss the provision

of time, labor, and expertise and are centered on four axes: (1) free will; (2) availability and nature of remuneration; (3) the proximity to the beneficiaries; and (4) a structure (formal, informal)” (p.4). Despite the description of these four axes as an aid to understanding the essence of volunteering, “statistics about volunteering are murky and the knowledge about who volunteers and for what activities is clouded by people’s differential understanding of the construct of volunteering” (Hustinx et al., 2010, p.13).

Haski-Leventhal et al. (2010) state that, “volunteering is usually perceived as a social and communal activity that enhances social capital, strengthens the community and helps in delivering services that otherwise would have been more expensive or underprovided” (p.66). They also highlight that “ the world of volunteering has consisted of three major actors: the *volunteers* who give their time freely to help others with no monetary remuneration; the *volunteer organisations* who provide the mechanism for formal volunteering; and the *clients* who are the target population of the services provided by the organisations and the volunteers”. (Haski-Leventhal, 2010, p.67). This is what entails the cluster of helping activities. Another definition coined by Van Til (1998) in Stebbins (1996) is: “volunteering may be identified as a helping action of an individual who is valued, and yet is not aimed directly at material gain or mandated or coerced by others” (p.4). To sum up in a broad context, “volunteering is an uncoerced helping activity that is engaged in not primarily for financial gain and not by compulsion or mandate. It is thereby different in definition from work, slavery, or conscription” (p.4). Stebbins (1996) uses this definition to relate volunteering to a leisure activity. Research was conducted on a group of peace workers (see Parker, 1987) and elderly volunteers (see Chambre, 1987) driven mostly by two prominent motives i.e. altruism and self-interestedness, stated that for the participants, the entire process of volunteering as a recreational activity with helping other as a secondary activity. The fact that the participants

were enjoying the activity for self-expression and self-actualization indicated that volunteering theoretically has been considered as serious leisure. Now that the importance of volunteering is established it is imperative to observe the global impact of volunteering.

2.1.1 Participation in volunteering

Identifying the framework in which volunteering occurs or exists is as complex of a task as the term ‘volunteering’. Describing this is of utmost importance as it highlights the environment and the location or place in which the volunteer participates. Volunteer participation generally occurs among full-time employees contained in a corporate program or in the volunteer’s leisure time or among people who are not working as full-time but might consider volunteering as a means to attaining marketable skills (Bussell & Forbes, 2002). Earlier work by Handy (1988) in Bussell & Forbes (2002) “distinguishes between three categories of voluntary organisations: mutual support, where people with mutual enthusiasms come together; service delivery (which tends to be organised along professional lines, focussing on effectiveness and low costs through formalised roles, responsibilities and accountability); and campaigning or cause specific” (p.245). The working structure of an organisation may also impact the experience any volunteer has in the host communities. World Values Survey evaluates the proportion of a population volunteering through gathering data from 67 countries. There were considerable variations witnessed in the participation rates across the world. “China, where volunteering is mandatory, has the highest participation rate followed by United States and South Africa. Other Western, English-speaking countries including Canada, Australia and Great Britain also have high rates of volunteer participation, which explains the levels of academic interest in volunteerism in these countries” (worldvaluessurvey.org).

The likelihood of someone indulging in volunteering has increased and it has been supported by many factors which are identified by some researchers. Holmes & Smith (2009) summarize factors which have been identified in Australian and UK research. Table 1. below indicates how the life cycle of a person enables the decision to participate in the act of volunteering. Holmes & Smith (2009) note that “the proportion of a population volunteering generally increases with age, and those in the middle-age groups are most likely to volunteer” (p.8). Researchers point that “young people have an urge to volunteer and their work is often linked to educational requirements and the desire to gain experience and enhance their career prospects” (Holmes & Smith, 2009, p.10). Retirement and the urge to keep oneself busy may desire volunteering but voluntary activities start to decline as people get older and health and commuting becomes a relative problem (Holmes & Smith, 2009). There are factors such as demographics which may also influence in participation in volunteering. Holmes & Smith (2009) make note that some research have highlighted that women are more inclined to volunteer in comparison to men due to the availability of more recreation time, family responsibilities and their work status. They also comment that, “in countries such as Australia, the United Kingdom, Canada and The United States, people from ethnic minorities have lower participation rates but this is likely to be the result of other factors (e.g. lower socio-economic status) rather than as a result of any intrinsic cultural characteristics” (p.9).

Table 1. Factors influencing Participation in Volunteering

Higher volunteering participation rates associated with

Age/lifestyle	Being of working age or recently retired
Gender	Being female
Family and household structure	Being partnered/married Having dependent children
Labour market status	Being in paid employment (full or part time)
Socio-economic status	Higher level of educational attainment Higher status occupation Higher income level
Disability or long-term illness	Absence of a disability or long-term illness
Ethnicity	Member of the dominant ethnic group
Geographical location and length of residence	Living in a rural rather than urban area/being a long term resident
Migration	Being born in a country (rather than an immigrant born overseas)
Religion	Being actively involved in formal religious activities Being involved with voluntary associations
Civic and social participation	Having a higher level of civic participation

Source: Holmes & Smith (2009)

Surveys have been conducted to indicate the level of participation and commitment volunteers make to an organisation. “In 2006, 40% of Australian volunteers were involved on a weekly basis, with another 28.5% volunteering at least once a fortnight or month (ABS, 2007)” as mentioned in (Holmes and Smith, 2009, p.13). This consistency indicates the amount of volunteers participating in quite large every given year. “The global development of volunteering is influenced by a wide range of factors and trends such as: the ageing population, changing family and household arrangements, escalating education and delays in financial education, information and communication technology revolution, and raised aspirations” (nfpSynergy, 2005). As these trends tend to become more popular and wider, the choice of getting involved in volunteering for people is also expanding leading to Holmes & Smith (2009, p.11) “establishing six main emerging areas of volunteering in the recent years:

1. International, transnational or cross-national volunteering

2. Volunteer tourism
3. Episodic volunteering
4. Virtual, online or cyber-volunteering
5. Family and intergenerational volunteering
6. Corporate, workplace, employee or employer-supported volunteering”

The authors argue that some of these areas have a long history while others are relatively new, but all areas of volunteering have been increasing in popularity/interest in recent years, both in practice and in study. Even though it can be understood that these areas have developed as vitally important in volunteering in the past few years, it is vital to comprehend the theoretical framework which deals with determinants, motivations and benefits and the process of volunteering. The next section below will explore this further.

2.1.2 Student volunteering in volunteer tourism

Volunteers as tourists and volunteers who tend to support tourism in their local vicinity or community, for instance at visitor attractions and events are known to make contributions across the vast span of tourism (Smith & Holmes, 2009). Volunteering is a very dominant activity which is represented prominently by university students – a group which represents an important demographic for non-profit organizations and private enterprises. Smith & Holmes (2009) note that, “since the mid-1990s there has been a burgeoning of a dedicated volunteer tourism industry, and with for-profit operators entering the market or expanding their programs, the volunteer tourism sector has developed in scale and scope and become increasingly commercialised and complex” (p.404). With the promising growth of volunteers supporting tourism to develop a destination, hold events and engage with the local community, the volunteers have managed to

attract the attention of researchers and other not-for-profit research communities (Smith & Holmes, 2009; Francis, 2009; Handy et al., 2010; Hustinx et al., 2012).

There have been certain ambiguities revolving around volunteer tourism and volunteering which basically highlights that “volunteer tourism is typically framed as international or cross-national volunteering with participants generally seen as volunteers who travel (international volunteers) rather than travellers who volunteer (volunteer tourists) leading to reluctance from participating organisations and participants being called as tourists” (Smith & Holmes, 2010, p.6). It must be noted that “volunteering is campaigned for it’s to seamlessly bind together individual preparation for work practices and cultures, yet at the same time transforming individuals and communities” (Holdsworth & Brewis, 2013, p.207). Hence it is considered that most of the volunteers who participate with organizations in volunteering at different communities and locations, work for them is leisure and the time, effort and dedication that they give in is out of sheer altruism and no monetary prospect.

The reasons for students volunteering are diverse and numerous models of the motivations have been presented leading to motivations that drive volunteering a highly researched topic (Francis, 2009; Smith & Holmes, 2009; Handy et al., 2010; Hustinx et al., 2012; Holdsworth & Brewis, 2014; Holdsworth, 2010;). Francis (2009) included Clary et al.’s (1998) functional model which states the six functional motives which deliver insight regarding the volunteer’s intention to volunteer. “Those are as follows:

- (1) Values: express and act on humanitarian or altruistic tendencies,
- (2) Protective: protect the ego from negative features of the self and negative feelings,
- (3) Enhancement: develop and expand the positive aspects of one’s ego,
- (4) Understanding: learn and practice life knowledge, skills and abilities,

(5) Career: develop, prepare, and maintain career-related skills,

(6) Social: be with friends and do something that important others view favourably” (p.2).

However, Francis (2009) highlights that this model seems to be valid for generation X university students leaving us to understand that more deliberations needs to be done on demographic factors of volunteering such as age, gender, and group norms. Meanwhile, Handy et al. (2010) suggest that there are two main classes of motivations. The first one being altruistic motives or value based motives which includes religious beliefs and helping others while the second one being utilitarian motivations which includes enhancing human capital, exploring different career paths, enhancing resumes or gaining work experience. A third class of motivations as suggested by Hustinx et al. (2012) is also present namely social motives for volunteering. This basically includes, “responding to social pressures to volunteer, volunteering because friends do so and extending one’s social networks” (p.57).

The motivational factors to indulge into volunteering are numerous. When it comes to students, the role that volunteering plays into getting admission into institutions of higher learning and in the labour market plays a very crucial role (Handy et al., 2010). It has been noted that as “mounting competitive pressures to obtain admission in institutions of higher learning and find good jobs rise, students are more likely to seek out the types of volunteering experiences that help resume-padding” (Handy et al., 2010, p.501). Marks & Jones (2004) discovered in their research that those people who volunteer for episodic (flexible volunteering patterns with short-term involvement of volunteers) purpose, the act of volunteering significantly increases, in contrast to those who consider volunteering as a medium of displaying their principles and beliefs. This indicates that the act of volunteering is considered by students as an engagement for various complex motives and not just resume enhancement (Holdsworth, 2010; Francis 2009). “Motives

such as altruism, religious values, and care for the less fortunate can coexist with that of resume padding” (Handy et al., 2010, p.15).

Hustinx et al’s., (2012) research on university students in China and Canada to understand the nature of student’s volunteer participation and perceived benefits highlights a stark difference in the notion of volunteering. Volunteers in western society are generally recruited at the grassroots levels by non-profits and voluntary associations with government interventions playing a negligible role in recruitment where in China, despite volunteering considered as an individual act, it is chiefly promoted and funded by the government. The reasons for Canadian students volunteering as mentioned by Hustinx et al (2012) are mostly of their own volition, generally driven by private benefits while it seems that Chinese volunteering seems closer to the idea of civic participation and community building, reflecting more unconventional values of the society. The Chinese form of volunteering could implicate negative consequences like deterring a student from achieving academic success, following high expectations of organisations may have stress related effects on volunteers and when personal, interpersonal or organizational stress is present, chances of burnout are possible (Hustinx et al., 2012). As noted by Holdsworth & Brewis (2014), “rather than fostering the creative capacity to get involved and really make a difference, the alignment of volunteering with entry into graduate labour market has the potential to stimulate suspicion and precaution” (p.205). While conducting research in England, Holdsworth & Brewis (2014) encountered students who suggested that, “they want volunteering to be recognised and endorsed as a rewarding activity, but in a way that their agency is privileged and their capacity to make a difference is upheld” (p.217).

Smith & Holmes (2009) desires the researchers to ‘go beyond’ the current parameters in volunteering. Altruism marks a relative small impact on student volunteering by investigating the

perspective of others involved in the tourism volunteering experience: the company, the community, and the casual or full-time employees is much desired.

2.1.3 Why, who and how of volunteering

Often it has been noted that volunteering is a multifaceted marvel which encircles a vast expanse of varied associations, organisations, activities and sectors. Volunteering seems to remain a social paradigm with numerous definitions and several alternative explanations. Hustinx et al., (2010) note that, “in India the term is social work and in Russia no specific word is used to denote volunteers” (p.410). Volunteering also appears to be a subject studied across multiple disciplines, ranging from social science and management science to social work and sociology which leads to these disciplines attributing to different purposes of volunteering. It has been noticed that, “the existing literature in volunteering is focused on the decision to join the volunteer force while little focus has been given on why someone may assume gainful employment” (Hustinx et al, 2010, p.412). Motives in volunteering are regarded as a source of platform where people can question their actions and also make clarifications to a wider field in a socio-cultural environment. Clary et al., (1998) state that “while social psychologists refer to a functional match in terms of volunteering serving certain psychological needs and reflecting certain personality traits, rational-choice theorists argue that volunteers weigh costs and benefits of their participation and will not participate unless they are able to identify selective incentives of the choice solution” (p.1520). Hustinx et al., (2010) mentioned that “volunteers do not distinguish between types of motives [...] Volunteers act not from a single motive or category of motives but from a combination of motives” (p.421). Hence it is often stated that volunteering through the involvement of people, needs to produce benefits to improve, enrich and sustain volunteering.

Building upon the symbolic meaning of the desire to volunteer, the phenomenon of *who* volunteers is equally researched upon. “One of the most agreed upon aspects of volunteer research is that people with higher social and economic status tend to volunteer more” (Wilson, 2000, p.234). It has been claimed that “people with higher education and higher social-economic status tend to join groups and organizations as these groups provide connections and enhance one’s status and networks” (Hustinx et al., 2010, p.411). People from this category usually have a tendency to participate with formal organizations that consist of volunteers and accomplish prominent tasks. Hustinx et al., (2010) points out that “most agencies that look for volunteers do not take volunteers with disabilities and those who pose as barriers on their way to becoming volunteers” (p.415). This selective process of hiring volunteers indicates that non-profit organisations tend to capture people with high efficiency potential.

In volunteering the rate of getting absorbed with an organisation and making significant progresses is dynamic over the period of time even despite its reputation as a stable factor (Hustinx et al., 2010). Instances like these lead to the comprehension of the how, who and what of volunteering. Numerous frameworks determining the styles and nature of volunteering have been established. Hustinx and Lammertyn (2003) “developed a new framework of ‘style of volunteering’ based on the following three criteria:

1. The nature of volunteering is essentially multidimensional (motivations, frequency of volunteering, types of activities, etc.)
2. Volunteering is a multilayered phenomenon that required multiple levels of analysis (structural and cultural, level of individual volunteer, the organization)
3. Volunteering is a multiform reality” (p.170).

This framework targeted towards understanding the varied aspects of volunteering. Bussell & Forbes (2001) state that there is a social-adjustive motive to volunteering. People volunteer primarily when somebody with similar values requests them to do so. This is supported by Bussell & Forbes (2001) “who cite a national study in the USA by Gallup which reported that people are more than four times as likely to volunteer when asked than when they are not” (p.250). Making sure that the volunteers once hired are absorbed and engaged within the organisation is of prime importance. Having acquired volunteers, the volunteer organizations must seek to retain their support of the volunteers involved. It has now become imperative to understand, in this world of ever-increasing volunteer tourism organizations, not only the reasons for volunteering or why people get involved in volunteering but also what really retains them in the organization or undertake volunteering. Decline in volunteering is one of the most prevalent problems of all volunteer organisations. The reasons behind the gradual decline in attractiveness of volunteering are explored in the next section.

2.1.4 Decline in volunteering

Procurement of volunteers is one of the prime facets of any volunteer organization but a much important facet is the ability to retain the volunteers. Smith’s (1999) study on “young people’s attitude towards volunteering commissioned by the Institute for Volunteering Research” suggested that there seems to be an image problem (p.373). “It was noted that the organisation seemed to be demanding a better deal from volunteering in context of more emphasis on personal development and excitement; more emphasis on the career benefits of involvement and positive relationship between paid staff and volunteers” (Smith, 1999, 373). Yanay & Yanay’s (2008) study on the volunteers at the Centre for Assistance to Victims of Sexual Assault and Domestic Violence

highlight a number of reasons for dropout. Ranging from “misdirection and faulty placing of volunteers for a job, low level of challenge, tension among the volunteers and professional staff, difficulty in dealing with a type of client, to lack of professional support and burnout are some of the reasons why people dropout from the act of volunteering” (Yanay & Yanay, 2008, 67). To retain the volunteers’ organisations should offer something exclusively for its members. Avoiding the offer of long and empowering training course can help limit the volunteers in becoming motivationally saturated. Offering more emotional support to avoid potential discrepancies like anxiety, ambiguity and loneliness can moderate the number of dropouts. However, Yanay & Yanay (2008) argue that decline or dropout in volunteering is the problem of neither the volunteers nor the organisation alone. “The process of dropout (or perseverance) is contingent on self-expectation and the distance of this expectation from actual experiences during and after training” (Yanay & Yanay, 2008, p.68). Volunteers leaving an organization is a loss to the community, destination and employees involved but despite the efforts of retaining them through intrinsic and extrinsic rewards, there are some things that remain outside of the organisations control. As Bussell & Forbes (2001) said “you will lose volunteers, don’t berate yourself for every loss, but tackle avoidable losses” (p.251). Hence it is vital to be considerate the workplace environment and understand the feelings and emotions of the staff, employees and the volunteers so that they can perform better in the host communities.

This literature review will further investigate the phenomenon of volunteer tourism and student volunteering. While this study’s primary focus is on volunteer tourism, there is a need to delve into the existence of volunteer tourism through the branches of alternative tourism. The next section will further discuss this issue.

2.2 Alternative Tourism

According to Wearing (2001) “tourism denotes a temporary, short-term movement of people to destinations outside the places where they normally live and work, and the activities they engage in during their stay at these destinations” (p.25). Much of this movement is international and much of it is a leisure activity. There are multiple definitions of tourism, for instance the United Nations (2010) describes tourism as “the activities of persons travelling to and staying in places outside their usual environment for not more than one consecutive year for leisure, business and other purposes not related to the exercise of an activity remunerated from within the place visited” (as cited in Beaver, 2012, p.585). Another definition often cited which was coined by World Tourism Organization (WTO) in 1986 described tourism as “trips made by residents of a country, both within the country and abroad, for non-migratory purposes” (as cited in Beaver, 2012, p.585).

To make it clear, when stated staying in a place outside their usual environment means outside of areas where they usually reside on a day-to-day basis. In the context of volunteer tourism, considering the idea of time is highly significant, as mentioned in the definition by United Nations, since some people end up residing in the place abroad beyond one year at which the person involved in volunteering is no longer considered a tourist. Many individuals staying beyond a period of one year may have experiences which are quite different from those choosing short trips, hence the target for this study is individuals who opted for short trips, specifically with the NWC.

The dynamics in tourism are always unpredictable. Conventionally, people participated in activities that could be related to mass tourism activities, comprising mainly mainstream tourism activities, such as beach-style travel. However, one of the most recent and major changes in tourism is a shift in the focus away from traditional mass/conventional tourism (Wearing & Neil,

2009). This shift has led to the growth of a relatively fresh and promising form of tourism known as alternative tourism. Weaver (1991) explains “if the evolution of tourism research, as it applies to small developing destinations, can be seen as a dialectical process, then the concept of alternative tourism is emerging as the antithesis to conventional mass tourism” (p.415). Weaver (1991) “considers the most appropriate way of perceiving alternative tourism, therefore, is a generic term encompassing a range of tourism strategies (e.g., ‘appropriate,’ ‘eco-,’ ‘soft,’ ‘responsible,’ ‘people-to-people,’ ‘controlled,’ ‘small-scale,’ ‘cottage,’ and ‘green’ tourism), all of which imply to offer a more benign alternative to conventional mass tourism in certain types of destinations (p.415).

Wearing (2001) however states:

“The term ‘alternative’ logically implies an antithesis. It arises as the contrary to that which is seen as negative or detrimental about conventional tourism [...] the terms alternative and mass tourism are mutually interdependent, each relying on a series of value-laden judgments that themselves structure the definitional content of the terms” (p. 28).

Since most of the definitions of alternative tourism are ambiguous and often dependent on the definition of mass tourism, alternative tourism would ideally be different from what is characteristically viewed as mass tourism or dominant forms of tourism. Alternative tourism was borne out of the move from people selecting traditional mass tourism forms of travel holidays, such as sand, sea and sun vacations, to more individualized and relatively unique experiences (Stoddart & Rogerson, 2004). There are many different definitions of alternative tourism as it has been “interpreted by various authors in widely differing and sometimes openly contradictory

ways” (Wearing & Neil, 2009, p. 1). Regardless, alternative tourism is commonly seen as one end of a spectrum of tourism activities with the other end comprised of traditional/conventional mass tourism activities (Wearing, 2001). To aptly assess the merits of different forms of tourism, Butler (1990) suggests that “it is necessary to not only consider the dimensions, behaviour and traits of visitors, and requirements of these forms of tourism, but also their inherent characteristics and their relationships with the agents of changes associated with tourism” (p.41).

Table 2. Below helps demonstrate this.

Table 2. Characteristics Tendencies: Conventional Mass Tourism and Alternative Tourism

Variable	Conventional Mass Tourism	Alternative Tourism
Accommodations		
Spatial Pattern	Coastal, High Density	Dispersed, Low Density
Scale	Larger-scale, Integrated	Smaller-scale, Homestyle
Ownership	Foreign, Multi-national	Local, Family, Small business
Market		
Volume	Higher	Lower
Origin	One dominant market	No dominant market
Segment	Psychocentric-Midcentric	Allocentric-Midcentric
Activities	Water/beach/nightlife	Nature/culture
Economy		
Status	Dominant sector	Supplementary sector
Impact	High import sector Repatriated profits	Low import sector Retained profits

Source: Weaver (1991); Adapted from Butler (1990, p.43)

Moving forward Lyons and Wearing (2008) refer to it as “a form of tourism that rebukes mass tourism and the consumptive mindset that it engenders and instead offers alternative, more discriminating, socially and environmentally sustaining tourist experiences” (p.3). The concept portrayed by Lyons and Wearing would eventually be followed for this study.

With the new found recognition of increasing tourist demand for new and alternative tourism experiences a multitude of niche tourism sectors within alternative tourism came into existence. The many niches prominent in alternative tourism include nature-based tourism, back-packer tourism, ecotourism, fair trade tourism, adventure tourism and volunteer tourism. These new niches “are essentially small-scale, low-density, dispersed in non-urban areas, and generally cater to special interest groups of people with mainly above-average education and income” (Wearing, 2001, p.15).

As volunteer tourism stems from alternative tourism, this area of alternative travel is important to look at when considering volunteer tourism. Specific forms of alternative tourism, such as ecotourism and volunteer tourism, are becoming increasingly significant and, as Wearing argues, are collectively being considered as “a significant area of tourism experience” (2001, p. 6). Such forms of travel help in facilitating local economic, socio-cultural and environmental objectives. McGehee’s (2002) study on social movement participation among Earthwatch expedition volunteers indicated how alternative tourism had a major role in establishing and crafting relationships, altering tourist’s perspectives, increasing volunteer’s engagement and ultimately leading to a positive effect on social movement activities. It is apparent in her study that alternative tourism influences and activates on-going participation in social movements. These offerings seem to be corresponding with some of the goals of sustainable tourism as defined by Butler (1990). The confines of alternative tourism and mass tourism are witnessing blurriness as researchers highlight the rapid growth of other alternative tourism forms, such as backpacker tourism and volunteer tourism (Butler 1990). These distorted boundaries compel to generate a critique of alternative tourism and this is offered next.

2.2.1 Critical review of alternative tourism

“Alternative tourism is very much of a contextual creation in terms of space and time with its reflection similar to the contemporary attitudes and values within a society” (Macleod, 2005, p.125). This in turn has led to the critiques of alternative tourism which often relate to arguments like, just because alternative tourism is not considered mass tourism, it does not guarantee that the same set of social, environmental, and economic impacts will not occur under the alternative form. “An awareness of alternative tourism weakness further leads to a realisation of the importance of a detailed analysis and comprehensive understanding of the host community in order to appreciate the breadth and depth of influences that tourism can have on the lives of local residents” (Macleod, 2005, p.130).

Ecotourism which was once portrayed as a prime example of alternative tourism with similar altruistic underpinnings, is now that area of tourism which is becoming more mainstream and consumptive, thus undermining some of the initial drive for ecotourism development (Lyons and Wearing, 2008). Wearing and Neil (2009) note that “one of the most common criticisms of ecotourism is the sheer breadth of definitions that have been proposed to delineate the phenomenon” (p.4). On further explanation it is stated that the problem that this causes “is a situation that hinders the effective and sustainable development of ecotourism due to the uncertain policy, planning and development foundations that underpin the sector” (Wearing & Neil, 2009, p. 4).

Wearing (2001) notes that “the stress here is on the facilitation and improvement of contacts between hosts and guests, especially through the organization of well-prepared special interest tours, rather than on actual development of facilities” (p.29). Volunteer tourism has only

recently begun experiencing a more critical examination of such concepts, with most literature to date showing it in a positive light (McIntosh and Zahra, 2008).

The blame for the growth of new and alternative forms of tourism cannot be exclusively associated with problems due to mass tourism (Mowforth and Munt, 2009). Fernandes (2004) declares “this growth has arisen because the mainstream tourism industry has in fact merely tried to invent a new legitimisation for itself – the ‘sustainable’ and ‘rational’ use of the environment, including the preservation of nature as an amenity for the already advantaged” (p.4, as cited in Mowforth & Munt, 2009). Regardless of the reason for the growth of alternative tourism, Mowforth and Munt (2009) argue “there is now an abundance of tourism offerings attempting to minimise negative impacts of mass tourism and claiming to be alternative” (p.96). Alternative tourism niches like eco-tourism, community-based tourism, volunteer tourism and are reactions to mass tourism, attempting to re-define the ethical holiday (Mowforth & Munt, 2009). As Lyons and Wearing (2008) explain “Other forms of alternative tourism have also emerged in recent times but it is volunteer tourism that has become the new ‘poster-child’ for alternative tourism in the past few years” (p. 6). It is another form of alternative tourism that redefines holiday. The potential power of volunteer tourism for cross-cultural understanding, understanding of global citizen partnerships and shift towards a more responsible form of travel is phenomenal. The next sections addresses the aforementioned factors with more focus on community volunteerism and volunteer tourism in-depth.

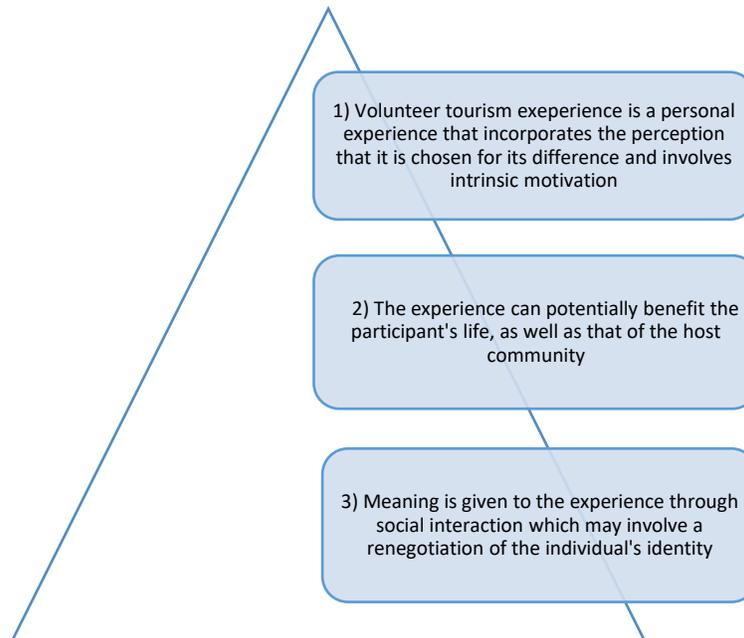
2.3 Volunteer Tourism

“Alternative and sustainable tourisms have become well-established sectors, coinciding with alternative development perspectives similarly adopting grass-roots and participatory development initiatives” (Sin, 2009, p.482). As such, “key concepts identified as part of community development, such as community empowerment and participation have also taken centre stage within the relevant tourism literature” (Hammersley, 2014, p.856). “With multiple definitions and conceptualizations of volunteer tourism, Wearing (2002) mentions that volunteer tourism remains distinct from other forms of tourism such as ecotourism, cultural tourism and poverty tourism similarly operating within a broader poverty-reducing framework” (p.37). Volunteer tourism which is defined in numerous ways belongs to the category of alternative tourism mainly due to its amalgamation of social-cultural lived experiences. Volunteer tourism is a distinctive feature of tourist behaviour compelled by a belief i.e. making contributions to a community and/or society by either living their temporarily, traveling and working as a volunteer thereby improving lives of people involved in that community. This invariably leads to “intensive host-guest interactions, the exposure to local cultures, the cross-cultural experiences and the local tourist attractions which are all perceived by volunteer tourists as a major benefit alongside the fulfillment of their ideological urge to volunteer” (Wearing, 2001, p. 43). As McIntosh and Zahra (2009) rightly stated:

“Volunteer tourism is seen to foster a reciprocal and mutually beneficial relationship between the host and guest. Thus, it is seen as offering an opportunity for sustainable ‘alternative’ travel that is more rewarding and meaningful than other holidays and focusses on the altruistic and self-developmental experiences that participants can gain and the assistance that

can be delivered to communities in terms of community development, scientific research or ecological/heritage restoration” (p.543).

In light of the statement Wearing and Neil (2000) have described three aspects of volunteer tourism experience which are illustrated in Figure 1.



Source: (Wearing and Neil, 2000) **Figure 1. Aspects of volunteer tourism experience**

“Volunteer tourism has become a global phenomenon with future market predictions indicating growth both in size and value” (Benson, 2011, p.1). Tourism Research and Marketing (TRAM), an independent consultancy, established in London in 1980, operates in many sectors of the tourism industry with an emphasis on research and feasibility studies. TRAM (2008) published statistics from a 2007 survey, indicating “a significant growth within the volunteer tourism sector, estimating total expenditure generated by volunteer tourism is likely to be between 1.66 billion USD and \$2.6 billion USD”. Additionally, it is estimated nearly 1.6 million people participate in volunteer tourism per year. The growing popularity of volunteer tourism is evident, with recent

research providing confirmation of this dramatic expansion of this sector (Guttentag, 2009; Benson 2011; Young 2008).

Volunteer tourism occurs in both developed and developing countries. According to Novelli (2005) and Wearing (2001) Central America, South America and Africa account to be popular volunteer tourism destinations. “Numerous volunteer tourism projects exist all over the world and are organized by a wide variety of ‘sending organizations’ which consist of private companies, NGOs, charities, universities, conservation agencies, religious organizations and governments” (Guttentag, 2009, p.539). The projects typically range from education, construction, community welfare and development, healthcare and environment conservation (Guttentag, 2009). Lorimer’s (2008) study on UK conservation volunteers identifies Southern and Eastern Africa, Central America and the Caribbean, the Andes and the Amazon, and the Indonesian Islands as regions that account for 77% of UK volunteers. Wearing (2001) suggested an array of developmental projects with the sole goal of helping host communities at various destinations in need “namely conservation projects, environmental projects, scientific research (wildlife, land and water), medical assistance, economic and social development (including agriculture, construction and education), and cultural restoration” (p.36). Volunteers often end up participating in activities ranging from assisting with mass eye surgeries to constructing a rainforest reserve (Wearing and McGehee, 2013). There is great potential for successful volunteer projects wherein the residents become involved and empowered through teaching and learning with people from other cultures.

Due to the influx criticisms faced by mass tourism, alternative tourism and sustainable tourism have proven to rise and act as a new platform to conducting tourism. However researchers noted qualities/characteristics of volunteer tourism that could have been placed in other areas (Lyons & Wearing, 2008; Wearing, 2001). Volunteer tourism has fallen under various headings in

research including ecotourism, alternative tourism, international volunteering (Wearing, 2001). As Sin (2009) states, “it is within such paradigms that volunteer tourism is situated – where attempts are made to develop a form of travel that is more benign or beneficial to the local community and the ecological environment” (p.482).

Much of the published research over the past decade focused on the volunteers involved (Brown & Morrison, 2003; Campbell & Smith, 2006; McGehee & Santos, 2005; Wearing 2002), whilst more recent volunteer tourism studies are focused on impacts of volunteer tourism on host communities (Guttentag, 2009; McGehee & Andereck, 2009; McIntosh & Zahra, 2008; Raymond & Hall, 2008). Further, Benson (2011) points out “recent research is challenging the ethics of volunteer tourism, rather than the previous passive acceptance of volunteer tourism as saving the world (p.2). This debate will be examined in the next section whilst looking at the trends of volunteer tourism research.

2.3.1 Volunteer tourists and their motivations

Wearing (2001) stated that “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” (p.1). As evident in the description of volunteer tourism, volunteer tourists are known to participate in volunteer tourism projects in places away from their usual environment in order to benefit from the society and find purpose in their lives. Thoits & Hewitt (2001) “while discussing the effect that volunteering has on well-being identified six dimensions of well-being that evolve from volunteering, namely: levels of happiness, self-esteem, physical health, depression, sense of control over life, and life satisfaction” (p.121). Their

study showed that the chances of volunteering are more as volunteers experience happiness, contentment and a stronger mental health.

However it has been noted that volunteers who are potentially tourists are not considered as such by the organisations and by the host communities. Even though volunteer tourists are expected to carry out meaningful volunteer work, current literature highlights that many volunteers expect to experience tourist activities during their volunteer vacation (Alexander & Bakir, 2011). A similar example in the literature is presented by Gray and Campbell (2007), whose research investigates the idea of volunteer tourism as a decommodified ecotourism product. In order to better understand the volunteer tourism research, Gray & Campbell (2007) “conducted case study research to look at perceptions of 36 stakeholders, including hosts, NGO staff, government employee’s and guests (volunteers)” (p.467). One of the findings indicate that “subtle difference exist between volunteers and (other) tourists. Four differences that were cited by both volunteers and host respondents were work, the altruistic nature of the volunteers, their desire to learn, and their local involvement” (Gray & Campbell, 2007, p.468).

Brown’s (2005) “research suggests that the type of volunteer tourism an individual participates in is based on two possible mindsets: the volunteer-minded, where most or the entire trip is devoted to volunteering at the destination, and the vacation-minded, where volunteering is only a small portion of a predominantly leisure experience” (p.23). People with these mindsets are usually targeted by organizations that provide vacation volunteer packages where in the travellers can volunteer for a few days and spend the rest of the vacation traveling (Brown & Morrison, 2003). Volunteering indeed promotes self-discovery, appreciating the value of relations, and respecting other cultures to all the volunteers involved. Volunteer tourists include any individuals who volunteer in an organized way, participating in trips that may involve alleviating poverty,

restoring the environment, or research into aspects of society or environment (Wearing, 2001). This definition by Wearing (2001) rightly highlights the sole motives of individual's participation in volunteer tourism irrespective of their mindsets.

After looking into the deeper streams of motivations, most of the volunteer research revolves around why a volunteer travels, and whether those motives are different from mainstream tourists (Wearing & McGehee, 2013). Understanding the motive behind the desire and willingness to participate in volunteer tourism programmes is the reason why researchers evaluate the values and motivations of volunteers. "Much of the debate around the motivations for volunteer tourists revolves around the self-interest versus altruism issue, which is certainly unique from mainstream tourism (Wearing & McGehee, 2013, p.126). Callanan & Thomas (2005) propose "a conceptual framework of volunteer tourist motivation that includes three types: shallow, intermediate and deep volunteers creating a typology of target markets for volunteer tourism organizations (p.186). For instance, commercial tourism operator may focus on the more extrinsically-motivated "shallow volunteer" whereas NGO's may wish to focus on the altruistic "deep volunteers" (Wearing and McGehee, 2013).

McIntosh & Zahra's (2008) research focuses on examining the experiences of 12 volunteer tourists volunteering in a Maori community. The findings of the study showed that "the main motivation for undertaking the volunteer project was not primarily related to sightseeing but to volunteering, to 'work; not just be tourists', 'to give' and 'to experience a service project'," (McIntosh & Zahra, 2008, p.544). Sin's (2009) research using a similar approach, "investigates 11 volunteer tourists' motivations; performance of the 'self' in volunteer tourism; and the tensions and paradoxes surrounding volunteer tourism" (p.486). The wanting to contribute was a common

response, as well as self-challenge. Altruism, or ‘wanting to contribute’, was often referred to in conjunction with learning and benefitting others and themselves.

Often it has been debated in research whether that altruism or self-interest is the more dominant common theme in volunteer tourism. Some researchers find it is an altruistic pursuit, while others maintain that “volunteers are not ‘born altruistic’, they can adopt any position on the continuum between pure altruism and pure egotism” (Wearing & McGehee, 2013, p.123). Some researchers have managed to find connections between the age-gender differences and the own-interest versus altruism debate. Brown (2005) states that the older, ‘baby boomer’ age group (40-70), which is seen as a lucrative target market by many volunteer tourism organizations, very rarely have personal motivations for volunteering. “Instead they are motivated by cultural immersion, seeking camaraderie, giving something back and family bonding” (Wearing & McGehee, 2013, p.126). This is in contrast to what Lepp (2008) and Simpson (2004) suggest. They say the young age group demographic seems to consider self-centeredness as an incentive to volunteer. The reason could be because most participate in volunteer tourism during “a period of transition between school and tertiary education or work” (Wearing & McGehee, 2013, p.126). However, researchers have found other factors apart from age differences which motivate individuals to volunteer.

Table 3. The category of tourist with its concept of ‘motivation’

Category: Tourist

Motivation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ to do something ▪ to explore ▪ to do something special ▪ to become actively involved ▪ to see another part of the world ▪ to see another culture ▪ cultural immersion ▪ cultural exchange ▪ a challenge ▪ the thing to do ▪ to learn ▪ to escape ▪ to visit a warmer climate ▪ to develop one’s career ▪ to network ▪ to meet new people and develop friendships ▪ to go on a family holiday and instil values ▪ to spread personal beliefs – primary religious ▪ altruism <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Wanting to serve others - To improve other people’s lives - To give back - To help - To give time - To allow others to benefit from one’s skills - To support - To positively impact
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Source: Alexander & Bakir (2011)

Helping the needed though education, building relations and travelling while doing something for the society were found by Stoddart & Rogerson (2004) as the motivations among most of the age groups. Alexander & Bakir (2011) research on voluntourists visiting South Africa to look at the effect of international voluntourism highlighted themes namely ‘volunteer work’, ‘tourist’ and ‘engagement’. “The category of tourist was found to encompass the diverse components of expectations, assumptions, issues, motives and awareness of impacts” (Alexander & Bakir, 2011,

p.14). A list of motives were highlighted for participating in voluntourism which is presented in Table 4. above. These motives are more or less similar to what has been in found in undertaking volunteer tourism on a marae in New Zealand (McIntosh & Zahra, 2009) and in South Africa (Sin, 2009). These motives could be repeated during the discussion of this case study with the community ambassadors. Moving forward, while the strong foundation in the area of volunteer tourism seems to remain constant, the management implications which volunteers tend to witness and the ways in which action can be taken to optimise day-to-day running and sustainability of projects and organisations is the main question which needs to be answered.

Literature surrounding the motivations of volunteers invariably has a direct link to exploring the socio-cultural impacts of volunteer tourism. The impacts of volunteer tourism can be both positive and negative. These issues/impacts are important and are discussed in the next section.

2.3.2 Impacts of volunteer tourism

Volunteer tourism is perceived as an “effective catalyst for cross-cultural exchanges partly because volunteer tourism can create an environment in which power is shared equally between tourists and hosts” (Guttentag, 2015, p.538). It generates opportunities for facilitating relationship with like-minded volunteers, and encouraging consciousness-raising experiences (McGehee & Santos, 2005).

The impacts of volunteer tourism be it socio-cultural or economical is not only spread to the volunteers but to the host community as well. The chances of witnessing a cross-cultural misunderstanding is more prominent as many a times the destination host community may not be sure of what to expect from the volunteers whilst the volunteer may not seem to know much about the community hence examining positive and negative impacts of volunteer tourism is even more

necessary (Raymond & Hall, 2008). Fee & Mdee (2011) in their research talk about “how volunteer tourism makes a difference have established three benefits of volunteer tourism to the volunteers: personal development, cross-cultural experience and global perspective” (p.226). Their research on volunteer service overseas shows that there is dire need to effectively manage expectations and attitudes in order to have a positive impact experience on a volunteer and on their host. In order to make a volunteer’s transition to the destination a smooth experience, it is very crucial for the organisation to introduce contextual background of the setting prior to the journey (Fee & Mdee, 2011). Fee & Mdee (2011) state that “we do not wish to argue that it is the individual volunteer who makes a ‘difference’ but rather the collective process of cultural exchange that volunteering facilitates” (p.226).

McGehee’s (2002) research on a similar context about volunteering with Earthwatch argues whether other forms of tourism can influence a tourist’s activism upon their return from the experience. Her research portrays how expeditions with organisations like Earthwatch facilitate resource mobilisation and networking, leading to an increase desire to participate in social movement activities.

Many organisations tend to indulge in effective volunteer schemes in the hope of leaving a long-term impact in the communities worked as they tend to recruit more local people (Fee & Mdee, 2011). As it has been noted that “the longer a volunteer stays the more likely they are to see and understand the impacts of their engagement” (Fee & Mdee, 2011, p.241). Ineffective schemes which are usually run by not-for-profit organisations and exploitative schemes which are generally by private organisations with the mindset of gaining maximum profit, generally have tendency to make promises of ‘making a difference’ but their negative impacts are felt both by the volunteers and the host community (Fee & Mdee, 2011).

Raymond & Hall (2008) have suggested that “interactions between the volunteers and their hosts within the concept of international volunteering have led to improved cross-cultural understanding with the volunteer tourists and volunteers attaining a cultured understanding of the local culture along with prominent issues facing the host communities” (p.545). Lepp (2008) stated, volunteer tourists, working on projects abroad, develop deeper perspectives of their lives at home, and discover an intrinsic desire to become involved in society in more meaningful and purposeful ways once they return home. Guttentag (2009) also highlighted positive benefits of volunteer tourism which include “revenues generated through volunteer tourism, promotion of environmental conservation, personal growth of volunteers and the intercultural experience involving volunteers and hosts that could foster a better understanding between cultures” (p.539); see also (Lyons & Wearing, 2008; McGehee & Santos, 2005; Wearing, 2001). In regard to the impact on host community, Wearing (2001) highlights a number of impacts that could arise from volunteer tourism on the host community, including power inequalities between host communities and the ‘visitor’, the consumption of community resources for tourism, the degradation of the natural environment, and the high dependency on some imported goods, which can lead to economic leakage. However, positive impacts, such as community involvement and the promotion of sustainable development were also presented by Wearing. Development of sustainable tourism initiatives, which, by their nature, could be sustained for long periods of time with little to no damage to the natural, social, and/or cultural environments were seemed to be stimulated by him. Additionally, he also focusses on the importance of community involvement in development, whilst acknowledging some of the challenges faced by such involvement. Wearing (2001) notes that “though it is recognized that tourism can pose a threat to the well-being of a community, if it is managed properly it can assist in efforts to maintain and enhance their environments” (p. 140).

Sin's (2010) research on examining host-guest relationships from the perspectives of hosts in volunteer-receiving communities of Cambodia highlights the investigation of positive and negative views of Cambodian hosts towards volunteer groups. Volunteer tourism still has to achieve equality between the host and guest relationships for this particular case. Sin (2010) argues that at times it causes authority struggles and dependency issues. On similar lines, Guttentag (2009) implies "laxity of local's interest caused by a lack of local involvement and an increase in dependency from the organisations' perspective caused by the presence of volunteer labour" (p.541). Raymond and Hall (2008) indicate the problem with volunteer work is local community members can usually complete the projects volunteer tourists perform. Volunteer tourists, nevertheless, generally work for free (sometimes they even pay to work) as mentioned above in reference to the volunteer schemes. Henceforth there is a chance that these volunteer tourists end up destabilising competing local labourers. Guttentag (2009) notes a decrease in employment opportunities caused by the presence of volunteer labour. Moreover, for organisations, satisfying volunteers' personal motivational factors becomes necessary to attract future project participants, even if this may result in negative impacts for the host community (Guttentag, 2009). On similar grounds, Fee & Mdee (2011) as mentioned in Benson (2011) have debated, "development oriented volunteer tourism providers (NGOs or private enterprises) can bring benefits to the host community but we must not fool ourselves that the primary benefit is necessarily the labour of the volunteer" (p.237). "This doesn't imply that an individual volunteer is not capable of making a difference, the volunteer can, but the 'difference' that they make has to be appropriately contextualised and understood by both host and volunteer" (Fee & Mdee, 2011, p.238). This leads to the unanswered question in volunteer tourism research that how through indulging in volunteer tourism can the communities be benefitted sustainably.

Some of the ideas put forth by Raymond & Hall (2008), Fee & Mdee (2011), McGehee & Santos (2005) and Lepp (2008) would potentially target the student volunteers of my research as once they are in the field they develop a new understanding and awareness about volunteering and the culture of the place, which will eventually help them shape, how they relate and become involved in the world once they return home. As Guttentag (2009) highlights in his research that “through the mode of improved understanding and awareness of volunteer tourism’s potential negative impacts can projects be planned and managed to avoid the aforementioned consequences” (p.548). Consequently, the benefits of indulging in volunteer tourism will then prove to be valuable to both the volunteers and the host communities.

The reason for bringing social change to the society is questionable hence a holistic view of tourism volunteering or at least recognising the cohesions between volunteering in different environments and making similar progressive contributions is vital. The next section will highlight the position of altruism in the consumption of tourism and the action for social change in today’s society.

2.4 Social Change

This section utilizes the theory of social movement and volunteers as change agents to identify the underlying forces of social change and its association with volunteer tourism.

2.4.1 Social Movement Theory

According to Gundelach (1989), “social movements are created when social conflicts are transformed to political action which is translated through social factors where networks,

organisations and mass media are particularly important” (p.421). The theory is that “in the transition from one societal formation to another, new social groups are formed with a set of odds with the societal formation and in congruence with the new” (Gundelach, 1989, p.421) Social movements then transforms these standards to socio-political action directed towards societal change. The efforts made to solve a social problem via awareness and participation in prominent global issues will lead to the attainment of social change. NWC aims to work in a similar manner, wherein the student ambassadors’ are geared towards solving a specific issue and the impact of their doings will lead to a probable change in the community and the ambassadors themselves. “The components of social movements like consciousness-raising, networking and self-efficacy” (McGehee et al., 2014, p.141) are derivatives of social capital. Modern social movements as described by Marshall (1994) as seen in McGehee et al., (2014) talk about “an organized effort by a significant number of people to change (or resist change in) some major aspects of society” (p.141). “Social movements as mentioned by (McGehee et al., 2014) are known to occur outside the mainstream political system and they usually consist of people who either choose to be or are excluded from routine institutionalized channels of participation” (p.143). Some of the prominent examples of social movements include the black civil rights movement in the United States during the 1950s and 1960s, the anti-vietnam war in 1960, the uprising of the Arab spring in the early 21st century, Black Lives Matter, the HeforShe campaign, Gay rights movement, #BringBackOurGirls, or even The Ice Bucket Challenge which arguably was the biggest real-world impact of any social media movement raising \$15.6 million for ALS. As described by Della Porta, Kriesi & Rucht, (2009) as seen in McGehee et al, 2014, “social movements may result in collective action anywhere from the supranational level to the local level but the challenge of applying this theory

to rural tourism development lies in identifying organisations that may portray the components of social movement and thereby contribute to the communities” (p. 147).

The concept of “consciousness-raising is seen quite often as an important tool in gaining participation in social movements as organizers know that during episodes of collective action, a participant’s consciousness is raised considerably” (Klandermans, 1992) as seen in McGehee et al., 2014, p.142). It occurs through personal experience gained from a specific issue or situation over a period of time or immediately depending on the individual (Klandermans, 1992). “As an individual becomes aware that they are a part of the larger movement, there is a greater sense of this possibility for success and more motivation to participate” (McGehee et al, 2014, p.143). Social psychology theory contends that a ‘conscious-raising experience’ is important for any social movement to occur (McGehee & Santos, 2005). It has also been stated that conscious-raising by one group can affect the awareness of another collective. Social networks have always played an integral role in conscious-raising since the bonds that are created amongst individuals are essential factors for creating participation and support in social movements (McGehee et al, 2014). Limited research has been conducted studying how effectively social movement theories have been utilised in the context of volunteer tourism.

2.4.2 Volunteers as Social Change Agents

Volunteer tourism “increases an individual’s awareness and participation in global issues thereby initiating ideas for them to help improve the world around themselves” (Rattan & Mair, 2012, p.4). This awareness and participation in disputes can be implemented as a facilitator for social change (McGehee & Santos, 2005). Light (2011) in his book ‘Driving Social Change’ discusses how “social entrepreneurs and other change agents make an effort to solve an intractable social problem

through pattern-breaking change” by sharing, comparing, experimenting and use the same kind of creative collaboration to achieve social change (p.4). Understanding what goes through the minds of these change agents is vital. Light (2011) suggests that in order for change to take place “one must simultaneously push forward with new solutions to old problems, while protecting past breakthroughs that continue to produce progress” (p.4).

Kotter’s (1996) eight stage process of creating major change is a good guide to NWC’s ideology of generating opportunities for leadership. “It includes the following steps:

- 1) A sense of urgency
- 2) Create a guiding coalition
- 3) Develop a vision and strategy
- 4) Communicate the vision
- 5) Empower broad based action
- 6) Generate short term wins
- 7) Consolidate gains and produce more change and;
- 8) Anchor new approaches in the culture” (p.62)

Kotter (1996) points out that “major change often begin with just one or two people, but nothing much worthwhile happens unless the number of leaders expand exponentially” (p.62). The similarities of this model provide a useful lens to the functioning of NWC.

There has been a significant rise in the investigation of volunteer tourism from varied perspectives such as global contribution, best practice, market demand, impact on participants lives (McGehee & Santos, 2005). McGehee & Santos (2005) state that the activity of volunteer tourism is basically providing a platform for people of similar interests and it “may impact participant’s lives by providing a community of individuals with common goals and values, providing fertile

ground for both the development of networks and consciousness-raising experiences” (p.764). As consciousness-raising consists of a major dynamic in an individual’s insight about the general society, in particular about the solutions for prominent social and cultural problems, one of the propositions made in this study is that through participation in volunteering by an individual their perceptions about society undergo drastic change.

2.5 Summary of literature review

Throughout the literature review I have highlighted other researchers’ perspectives on topics such as origin and participation in volunteering, alternative tourism, volunteer tourism, reviewing existing research and impacts of volunteer tourism, student volunteering, and the subparts of social change – social movement theory and volunteers as agents of social change.

The core theme is social change and voluntourism which is surrounded by sub-sections namely change agents, volunteer tourism and volunteering. Volunteering appears in the literature review as an act of help by an individual that is valued and not forced upon by others. This section is of the prime importance as it aids in understanding the multiple disciplines of volunteering, age and demographics for participating in the activity of volunteering and how via the mode of volunteering social change can be brought upon a community. Volunteer tourism heavily diversifies into understanding the motivations behind becoming a volunteer tourist, what impacts does it have on the community and the tourists themselves and the relative importance of student volunteering in volunteer tourism and what benefits do they ultimately gain from becoming involved in volunteer tourism. Lastly, social change is emphasised in this literature review, as this is what the case study of NWC would be about. The goal of this study is to understand the impacts

student community ambassadors have upon themselves after indulging in volunteer services at the NWC in the CLOUD projects.

The three themes are known to intersect. The notions of strengthening the community and motivations for volunteering play out simultaneously under the themes of volunteering and volunteer tourism. Student volunteering focusses primarily on varied ideologies that are implemented within individual preparation for work practices and cultures, focussing on transforming individuals and communities for betterment. Furthermore, volunteer tourism and volunteers as change agents intersect on issues such as alternative tourism. In the literature it appears that volunteer tourism which is an alternate form of tourism indicates that alternative tourism influences and activates on-going participation in social movements and thereby reflecting the importance of sustaining and developing relationships with the agents of change i.e. community ambassadors associated with tourism. Lastly, change agents and volunteering intertwined in regard to social capital and entrepreneurship. As stated in the literature social capital by Brown & Ferris (2007), “the networks of community and the norms of trust and reciprocity that facilitate collective action, seem likely to play an important role in eliciting philanthropic behaviour from individuals in a community” (p.89) which is quite the case for the involvement of community ambassadors with the NWC. Overall, the literature review expresses the idea of volunteering for a destination along with working with an organisation to create social change in the community. This study will instrument effective assessment of community ambassadors based on the time they spent of field creating a more meaningful, in-depth understanding of the operation of NWC as a volunteer organization.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This qualitative study was designed to help better understand the reasons for student participation in volunteer programs, assisting to enlighten the reasoning and effect that student participation has on the staff and work environment of the New World Community and their CLOUD project. Through exploration into this phenomenon there is a potential to create a deeper understanding of the experiences and perceptions of NWC's community ambassadors and help explore the key differentials between Sustainable Travel and the CLOUD projects in order to ensure that those involved with the organisation strive to remain positive and create social impact to the community the students are involved within.

3.1 Methodology

This chapter will consist of an overview of the research context, and research questions.

In addition, I will present my methods and methodology for the study, as well as my own positionality as the researcher. This chapter will also outline the relevance of the research and the contributions that I wish to make with this project.

3.1.1 Research site

This basic interpretive qualitative study will be conducted on a unique voluntourism organisation called as New World Community (NWC) consisting of two profit run models called Sustainable Travel, which is basically focussing on sustainable travel for impact and CLOUD projects, which is focussing on community development projects. "The NWC is a Canadian social

enterprise that celebrates the importance of the human connection by connecting the participants directly with their partner communities across the world and providing convenient avenues to make positive impacts in the lives of those who need it the most”(thenwc.com, 2016, p.1). The primary aim of NWC is to employ a zero negative impact philosophy by providing a platform to experience cultures, communities and destinations while having the adventure of a lifetime (personal communication, Jay Mahoney, May 2015). The organization proudly accomplishes its goals “by promoting cultural sensitivity, social awareness, respectful behavior, environmental consciousness, religious sensitivity, self-awareness, zero tolerance for illicit drug use, responsible use of alcohol and respect for dry communities” (thenwc.com, 2016, p.3). The Waterloo established organization has two business models, Sustainable Travel for responsible tourists which starts at the \$1,850 and the CLOUD projects for global volunteers which start at \$1,599 with approximately 12 trips per year to developing countries such as Dominican Republic, Guyana, Haiti, Kenya and Uganda. The idea behind running Sustainable Travel is to provide a responsible and authentic method of travelling by giving back to the country visited through economic development for communities and experiencing the lives of others, sharing the cultures by working with the Community Ambassador (thenwc.com). Also, those who are participating in Sustainable Travel will have the opportunity to experience a taste of CLOUD projects and indulge in volunteering in the communities that need the most (thenwc.com, 2016). The CLOUD projects on the other hand provide an opportunity to choose a community, identify the needs and formulate a development project with maximum six people in the group and with the help of a local Community Ambassador. 100% of the money raised by the group is funded directly to the partner community (thenwc.com, 2016). This is one experience where a participant travels and lives with the partner community whilst making the development project a reality. The project ranges from

teaching English to building houses and installing water tanks. In the past NWC initially did not consider the use of volunteer tourism in its title but they now do for marketing purpose and also to showcase consistency. The table below highlights the organizational structure and activities of NWC.

Table 4. Organizational structure of NWC

<p>NWC New World Community is a Canadian social enterprise that uses travel and tourism to make a difference at destinations across the world. Consists of two profit run business models:</p>	
<p><u><i>SUSTAINBALE TRAVEL</i></u></p>	<p><u><i>CLOUD PROJECTS</i></u></p>
<p>For responsible tourists which start at \$1,850 Countries covered: Kenya, Domican Republic, Haiti, Uganda and Guyana</p>	<p>For global volunteers which start at \$1,599 Countries/Communities covered: Kenya, Puerto Plata and San Jose De Ocoa in Dominican Republic and Haiti</p>
<p>Aim is to provide a responsible and authentic method of travelling by giving back to the country visited through economic development, experiencing the lives of others and sharing the cultures by working with the local Community Ambassador.</p>	<p>Aim is to choose a community, identify the needs and formulate a development project with the help of local community ambassador. The project is fundraised by the group members.</p>
<p>The participant lives in a guest house and explores the community, culture and natural landscape during their trip.</p>	<p>The participant lives with the partner community and turns the project into reality. Projects range from repairing and building homes, teaching English to water sanitation projects.</p>

3.1.2 Theoretical perspective and Research Methodology

The purpose of this study is to explore and understand the experiences and perceptions of repeat volunteer travellers with NWC. The research questions guiding this study focus on understanding the meanings and context of volunteering. The research questions are as follows:

1. How does volunteering with NWC help the community ambassador understand their personal motivations?
2. What impact is being made in the community from the perspective of community ambassadors?

In qualitative research, “theoretical perspective is most discussed as the philosophical stance informing the methodology and thus providing a context for the process and grounding its logic and criteria” (Crotty, 1998, p. 3). Epistemology provides an overarching framework under which the theoretical perspective is situated, and theoretical perspective, in turn, funnels these assumptions to facilitate methodology and method selection. Theory proceeds from epistemology, and precedes methodology; it is both a foundation of assumptions and a philosophical connecting point for qualitative research ventures.

This study is positioned as a basic interpretive qualitative study as I’m interested in understanding how participants make meaning through volunteering with NWC and what social impacts do they witness while volunteering in the communities. As Merriam (2002) states that “in conducting a basic qualitative study, you seek to discover and understand a phenomenon, a process, the perspectives and worldviews of the people involved, or a combination of these” (p.6), my study fits with this methodology as through the means of conducting interviews I aspire to find solutions for my research questions via inductively analyzing the data, identifying recurring

themes or patterns that cut across the data and later progress towards discussing the rich, descriptive account of my findings and refereeing it to the literature that framed the study in the first place. Reeves & Hedberg (2003) note that the “interpretivist” paradigm stresses that need to put analysis in context as it is concerned with the understanding the world as it is from subjective experiences of individuals (p.32). It has been noted that interpretive research tends to lay more stress on the “full complexity of human sense making as the situation emerges” (Merriam, 2002, p.10). This leads to the understanding of the interpretive approach, with primary objectives set to explain the subjective implications that lie behind social action. Together, these reasons provide a foundational backdrop for the selection of a basic interpretive qualitative research approach to the current study, illuminating the social phenomenon of repeat volunteer travelers.

“The emerging nature of research in small enterprises is best suited to an interpretive qualitative approach that can yield a rich understanding of key issues by minimizing the distance between the researcher and the key decision maker, in order to develop the practical and theoretical understanding and generate new and alternative theories and concepts” (Crotty, 1998, p.26). NWC has been selected as the organization with an interpretive qualitative approach as they have demonstrated a commitment to community involvement over the recent years and provided a unique context to expand scholarly knowledge of volunteer tourism and social impact on host communities. Specifically, this approach will provide the prospect to better grasp the experiences of students who volunteer with NWC repetitively and also help NWC, the organization to work effectively towards delivering positive impacts in the communities involved, as the researcher and the participants work to co-construct a deeper understanding of the experiences and perceptions of volunteering with NWC. To conduct this study semi-structured interviews will be conducted with the Community Ambassadors which are discussed in the following section.

3.2 Methods

In this study I conducted 9 in-depth semi-structured interviews with the Community Ambassadors working with the NWC with a structured interview guide (Appendix – C). Most of the participants have worked for CLOUD projects before becoming a Community Ambassador so it was interesting to comprehend their perspective and experiences while volunteering with NWC. Out of the 12 participants that initially selected only 9 were able to participate in the study. They were selected primarily because of their deep understanding about the working of NWC and their experienced interaction with the local Community Ambassadors and the community members. Jay Mahoney, the co-founder provided a list of Community Ambassadors who has volunteered with NWC. The list included students who had worked with NWC from one to five years. Merriam (2002) suggests that the researcher should interact and respond to the participants' view by following up on the emerging idea or topic. This can encourage unexpected statements and stories to surface (Charmaz, 2006). These semi-structured interviews were set as open-ended, however, set topics and purposeful conversations guide the research and new avenues were expanded or explored using prompts and probes. Probing helped interviewees make sense of issues and events, which is ideal for the research questions posed for the study. I chose to conduct these interviews during the month of November as most of the Community Ambassadors return from their respective trips in July-August and their memories are fresh and crisp which will be beneficial to some extent. The interviews were recorded and transcribed for the analysis portion of the study. Each interview lasted about 40-55 minutes and each transcript of the interviewed participant was of 9-10 pages. All the participants who are mostly students of universities in Ontario agreed to have their quotations used in this study, and therefore were identified as numbered participants in

the data analysis. The same was applied while transcribing. This study has already received The Office of Research Ethics approval at University of Waterloo.

3.2.1 Participant profile

Table 5. contains relevant participant information of the community ambassadors, including their name (pseudonym), age, nationality, and length of stay is included. Each participant signed a confidentiality agreement, and has given permission to allow use of interview quotes in reporting the findings for this study. Thus, participant quotes will be used to allow for further description of emerging themes, and formatted in italics. Additionally, where necessary, reflexive journal entries will be formatted in text boxes to show researcher reflection on specific themes.

Table 5. Participant profile

<i>Code</i>	<i>Duration of association with NWC</i>	<i>Community projects</i>	<i>Country</i>	<i>Occupation</i>
P 1	Two years	Building houses	Dominican Republic (2)	Student
P2	Five years	Building houses	Dominican Republic (2)	Working professional
P 3	One year	Building houses	Dominican Republic (2)	Teacher
P 4	Four years	Targeting infrastructure; Teaching English	Dominican Republic (2); Haiti (1)	Student
P 5	Three years	Building houses; Teaching English and working in orphanage	Dominican Republic (1); Haiti (2)	Student

P 6	Five years	Building houses	Dominican Republic (4)	Student
P 7	Two years	Teaching English and working in orphanage	Haiti (2)	Student
P 8	Five years	Building restoration; Plastic water bottle housing; Teaching English	Dominican Republic (1); Kenya (1); Haiti (1)	Working professional
P 9	Two years	Building houses	Dominican Republic	Student

3.3 Data Analysis

For the purpose of this study, an inductive approach is used primarily due to its descriptive and exploratory orientation alongside the tenets of thematic analysis. Guest et al., (2012) define thematic analysis as,

“Applied thematic analysis as we define it comprises a bit of everything—grounded theory, positivism, interpretivism, and phenomenology—synthesized into one methodological framework. The approach borrows what we feel are the more useful techniques from each theoretical and methodological camp and adapts them to an applied research context. In such a context, we assume that ensuring the credibility of findings to an external audience is paramount and, based on our experience, achieving this goal is facilitated by systematicity and visibility of methods and procedures” (p. 15).

This method of analysis is valuable to the study as it takes the multifaceted meanings and values of the community ambassadors’ opinions as each contribution is a part of the volunteer tourism

sector in the respective communities of the study. Braun and Clark (2006) further note that, “Thematic analysis provides a flexible and useful research tool, which can potentially provide a rich and detailed, yet complex account of data” (p.5). However, with thematic analysis, “the analysis process tends to require more involvement and interpretation by the researcher as it moves away from explicit words and phrases and focuses on identifying and describing implicit and explicit ideas and themes within the data” (Guest et al., 2012, p.10). Data analysis and interpretation in the inductive approach of the study take place in the early stages of the research ‘sense-making’ process, thus requiring comparisons with existing literature and data endeavoring to form new constructs about the world (Coles et al., 2013). As an interpretive qualitative study in the realm volunteer tourism, this approach is fitting as it allows for the extraction of raw data from volunteers who have worked on different projects in different communities whilst not being driven by an existing theory but still strongly linked to the data. The data will be collected through semi-structured interviews, specifically for the research, driven by community ambassador experiences and not a theoretical researcher interest.

The data was analyzed in the six steps of thematic analysis. The 9 transcripts were firstly transcribed then read and re-read by the researcher to generate initial ideas within the data. Through this step, initial codes were then derived across the entire data set. The next step involved organizing the codes generated into prospective themes, clustering relevant data into potential main themes and sub themes. The themes generated were then checked for validity over the entire data set to ensure they were appropriately related to the coded data. Upon further review, the themes were then identified and defined and named, refining the specific aspects of each theme to address the purpose of this study. The most appropriate examples of data were used to address the research questions, relating the final analyses to the study’s purpose and relevant literature.

3.4 Ethical considerations and reflections

Preliminary contact to respondent interest in participating in the study and all other correspondence was done via email to set up appropriate dates and times convenient to each CA to conduct interviews. At the beginning of participant interviews, the CA was provided with an opening statement regarding the study and the objectives. They were then given a letter explaining the data collection process, asking for their consent to participate and for permission to use the data in the study. They were also asked for their permission to be recorded and for notes to be taken during the interview (see Appendix – A). One element that acted as a constraint according to me was the supposition that I might have been seen as an outsider, resulting in participants not feeling comfortable discussing their experiences; or due to hegemonic perceptions, they may have felt pressured to act a certain way within the interview context. In going forward with the recruitment and interview process, it was crucial to keep in mind the notion of cultural difference and the subsequent impacts and influences, and to be flexible to the perceptions and backgrounds of those whom I interacted with.

Additionally, prior to undertaking my fieldwork, The University of Waterloo's Office of Research Ethics approved my study, as well as all of the information I would be providing to potential participants (information letter – appendix A, consent form – appendix B, and interview guides – appendix C). The formal ethics review consisted of reviewing issues of privacy, confidentiality, and security related to this study and the participants.

CHAPTER FOUR: RESEARCH OUTCOMES

4.1 Personal Motivations

“The type of volunteer tourism an individual participates in is based on two possible mindsets: the volunteer-minded, where most of the trip is devoted to volunteering at the destination, and the vacation-minded, where volunteering is only a small portion of a predominantly leisure experience” (Brown, 2005, p.23). Both mindsets are captured by NWC through their programs including CLOUD projects and Sustainable Travel. CLOUD projects is an experience where in the students get to experience the rich and diverse culture of the community by participating in local community projects keeping in mind their personal goals that they intend to achieve through participating in such projects. For this study to effectively explore the reasons for student participation in NWC and what changes the community ambassador’s (CA’s) witness in themselves, it was necessary to have an understanding of the personal growth encountered and goals achieved with the NWC. The three themes emergent from the data highlight notions of growth and professional goal setting and include the following:

1. Personal growth opportunities
2. Future goals
3. Leadership and Mentoring

4.1.1 Personal growth opportunities

In sharing their stories of their personal goals in life and whether the NWC is a major factor in changing their goals, 7 of the 9 participants suggested that working with a well-structured organisation had a huge impact in comprehending the work environment of non-governmental or

private run volunteer organisations. Many reflected on the relationships they built following their first trip to the communities and after visiting the same community again the sense of creating a difference through the connections built over the years is something they reflected upon repeatedly. Participant 1 discusses about how through the vision of NWC she was able to do well in the community and the experience overall taught her to accomplish goals that she personally determined. For example:

It was a factor in kind of reaffirming the good works that organisations can do if they are organized in a good way and they operate in a good way. So each time I have been involved in an organisation, it's been a quite different organisation. The main thing about NWC was that I really liked how the organisation worked. So that taught me a bunch about maybe kind of working with NGO's and reaffirming that that is something I would love to do. And the cool thing about CLOUD is that it's a social enterprise and not just a NGO.

She also talks about how the relationship that NWC has established with the communities helps the community ambassadors to take charge of projects with ease. She further commented:

The relationship NWC has with the community, they tend to have from what I have seen a very causing relationship in the community that they work in. So my kind of reasoning to go back the second year was of course to return with the people I had done my first trip with and the second thing was to return back to the community, so we could see all the same people a year later, see a change and then just kind of work a little more closely with CLOUD in a leadership position. I guess the community members understand the reason why they have such a good relationship with us is because they are the only one organisation working there that say that, okay you chose a project, we don't have any conditions on the project, you just know that we are there to help and direct you to the project that has the highest priority and we'll do it. So of course the community is thankful for that but it was a little bit harder to direct them in a way to be the most mutually beneficial but CLOUD was able to do that and that's the reason why I feel they have such a positive relationship.

For some participants the primary goal during their role as a community ambassador was to raise awareness about the project and the organisation and the impact they had on the communities involved. For Participant 4 the experience was basically maintaining a cordial relationship with

the community members so that when other CA's or participants come to participate in different projects the feeling of goodwill is still alive:

Going back to Dominican to see the partners that we had connected with was my primary motive. The communities are phenomenal and seeing the direct impact we had on these communities and how appreciative they were inspired me to go back again. My primary goal was also to maintain a relationship with the members that could be cherished for a long time along with telling my friends and family how fantastic this specific organisation was.

5 out of the 9 participants shared the joy of leading a trip and witnessing the same thrill and excitement that they had as participants during their very first trip. Participant 5 explains:

I have always wanted to see the joy and excitement that I had visiting these communities for the first time in the students that I take down with me and just like seeing their initial reaction because I know I have had that experience before and like going into it again and knowing what to experience, being able to see everyone else and always wanted to provide the best opportunities for them, allowing them to see the culture as raw as it is and sort of immerse into that so that they could get a full lifetime experience and understanding of varied cultures, societies and lives.

Participant 6 shared the same experience as Participant 4 but with a more proactive approach. She touched upon the same sentiments but also mentioned that these goals could not have been achieved outside of NWC. She stated:

I was trying to get people to see why it is so important to volunteer abroad but also locally, during my year we tried to put a lot of focus on why [we] need to be involved in our community so basically McMaster and Hamilton and then try to teach people that even if we do go abroad it's just not putting a band aid on a problem abroad, we are trying to I guess motivate and help communities build their own communities instead of us going there to fix their problems.

I mean any goal that I put before me I think I could achieve with the help of different organisations or different people, I don't think I can do anything on my own because that's just not how change happens, you can't change the world on your own. So it could have been through NWC or it could have been through another organisation but either way I would have been with another group with like-minded individuals to accomplish the same goal.

The data clearly demonstrates that NWC has been a vital organisation in the lives of these participants to help achieve and/or facilitate the development of their goals to contribute positive change at the community level. Furthermore, the organisation facilitates confidence building and independence to lead both a project and a team. By making the contacts, raising funds for the project and finally leading a team of 6-9 students each participant felt as though through their involvement with NWC the impact they collectively contributed to communities such as Dominican Republic, Kenya and Haiti was clearly visible and altruism was often referred to in conjunction with learning and benefitting others.

4.1.2 Future goals

Most of the participants were students when they participated with the CLOUD project and their objective in life as a student was to graduate and involve themselves in work that is engaging and impacting lives. For some since it was their first time leading a trip as a community ambassador making sure that the trip runs smoothly was their primary aim. Participant 3 mentions:

I went to the Dominican as a CA that was the first year at NWC and so it was all very new under this CLOUD project. I was trying to make sure everyone on the trip was safe, and was having a good time that is achieving our goal of working together to build homes. And I believe as a community ambassador I was just trying to logistically make sure everything was running smoothly in terms of transportation, food etc.

Participant 4 claimed:

During my second year I was just starting to specialize in my program and I was just trying to figure stuff out because it was challenging, navigate through my degree and decide what I wanted to do after and where to apply to grad school. But I love extracurricular activities, I found that as much as I loved my program in undergrad I needed extracurricular to ground me to other things in terms of meeting new people and fulfilling leadership skills that I wanted to work on and be a part of and making a difference in the community. I was already working with the Hamilton community i.e. DREAMS and locally but I wanted to get involved globally and attain that big picture.

The informant highlights the desire to explore something extraordinary that would challenge her and help her gain new insights, allowing others to benefit from one's skills and at the same time improve other's lives. NWC helped her channel those energies and see a different aspect to the world. Participant 7 has a similar vision such as Participant 3 but focussed more on getting each and every participant involved in the community. She mentions:

I was used to the culture that was there in Haiti and I was used to the culture shock as you visit these countries, do these kind of trips so I think my goal was to just make sure that everybody was okay, comfortable, prepared and most importantly everybody got the experience that I got when I went on my first trip. A lot of times it was the students doing their first trip, hopefully the feeling is good enough that you want to continue doing it and that was my goal, to get my team really involved and really inspired when they came back in order to continue on. I actually went on to achieve this goal of mine when two students who accompanied me on their very first trip are now becoming community ambassadors and will be leading a trip next year. So that goal is pretty awesome and I'm glad it has been met.

For Participant 2 who had worked with NWC as a community ambassador twice shares the goal of helping people in need through care, kindness and spreading awareness. The idea of helping and making a difference is highly reiterated by many community ambassadors. Participant 2 explains:

Essentially when I went for the first time in high school and I saw the extreme poverty and I was just shocked to see how the people were living and the injustice and the inequality that was going on in the world. Basically ever since then I guess my goal in life has been to help people that are in poverty so that's why I decided to study peace and conflict studies. So basically my goal is just to help people in poverty, in life I'd say the same like just wanting to help people and kind of spread the word and raise awareness and as a CA I really wanted to show people what I have seen in the Dominican Republic because it had changed my life and what I wanted to do and my life goal. So I wanted as a CA to show people what I had seen.

For others like Participant 1 and Participant 6 when describing their experience in the data, working in communities that are impoverished or dealing with low socio-economic status and engaging in

the process of learning in areas like social justice development and international relations were set targets that they desired to achieve in life. Most of them were primed through the trips that they made with NWC and experiences that they gathered.

Overall, the idea of having goals in life motivated the community ambassadors to create an impact in other's lives through volunteering and the concept of goal setting was achieved eventually through lived experiences at the communities. It is important to acknowledge and understand the impacts the students intend to create and the motivations to achieve such are also commonly discussed in the literature.

4.1.3 Leadership and mentoring

Reflection on personal change was of utmost importance while the participants were making efforts to solve a social problem to attain social change. Social awareness is gained through a specific situation or over a period of time depending upon the individual. The sense of participation for the cause increases variably as the awareness increases. Due to this high profile focus on social change, a question in the interview guide was geared towards the community ambassadors acting as a support system to the participants witnessing personal traits such as confidence booster and problem solver within themselves. When interviewees were asked, "thinking ahead, would you again volunteer as a community ambassador if given the opportunity? Have you experienced any personal change as a consequence of your role? ", 5 of the 9 informants agreed to volunteering with NWC again, rest of the four community ambassadors aimed to focus on their respective career goals, feelings of being a leader and mentor to the participants was widely claimed, awareness of different community causes and cultures were also mentioned which they were ultimately grateful for to have discovered.

Participant 1 spoke about how leading a group of students abroad instilled the quality of a leader and the confidence to take responsibility of the entire project, when she said:

The way CA position was beneficial to me was being in charge of a bunch of students abroad, once we were there we were kind of taking care of by the community but I had the responsibility to make sure everyone was safe. Make sure everyone was happy and safe, drinking water, putting on sunscreen that kind of thing. So that was the first time I was able to do that. So I guess it would be kind of helpful experience in the sense that if I was going to do an experiential like that then I would use it. I went from going just as a participant and just really enjoying it and in second year doing the same thing but at the same time trying to look out for everyone else and set the tone for everyone else. So yeah it kind of gives you a skill of being in a leadership role as well as experiencing yourself. So that was kind of something I was able to take forward with me. Like I'm now volunteer society coordinator it's more of a facilitating step back, like sort of putting things in place for others to have opportunities which I also enjoy. But as the community ambassador it was kind of the responsibility to do that for others like while you are in the middle of experience as well and of course if you are having the best time as possible then other people will too as well.

Participant 5 explains how her experience as a community ambassador twice helped her take charge of unexpected situations. She believes that the innate quality of being a problem solver aided her in being more acceptable to different cultures and more aware of different community causes. She said:

When I went in grade 12 as a participant I didn't really pay attention to what was going on in the background. I was simply told stuff to do by other CA's like making sure I had my passport etc. But when I became a CA I realize I'm the one dealing with all the situations now... for example, we were four hours from San Jose De Ocoa which is about another 2 hours away from our base camp in Dominican and one participant demanded to get back on the plane. That's not something that is doable, so even having to deal with things like that on the trip when someone changes their mind in an instant and you have to sort of brainstorm and how you are going to solve this problem, that's definitely helped me even coming back to Canada... I try to take on leadership roles and try to figure things out because that's what I have been happy to do every time I have been on a trip.

Participant 9 expresses about experiencing growth by participating in these trips. She talks about self – awareness and how vital it is to support social causes in today's world. She could experience

the growth within her as she encountered the day to day situations and dealt with them with less stress and over thinking. She states:

I feel like as I feel like as soon as I get back from a trip I notice a lot more than paying attention to all these small details like simple things like having shower, I'll be in and out of shower within two seconds and then I feel like the more I'm home the more I fall back into the routine of the Canadian lifestyle of the first world lifestyle which for me every once in a while I'll come across something and I feel that I really can't be doing this ... I can't be taking this for granted and then I'll sort of stick with it for few weeks and then fall off the wagon again because I feel like you'll just get sucked back in to this lifestyle here. I feel like I have these changes as soon as I come back and then after that it's harder but then I also feel the same time being a CA I have grown so much more as a person as for I would never would have thought I would be the person to take a group of students to third world country and lead them when I'm the same age as them so I feel like that definitely sort of helped me grow and my personality to change. I know I have talked to the co-founder before he's like you are completely different person that the person I met when you were going into second year, he's like just because you have grown so much and these opportunities have helped you sort of nurture and expand and build off these things and learn from them.

Participant 8 shares similar sentiments, explaining through her role as a leader she became more aware of the surroundings and adaptable to various communities. The sense of empowering broad based action and communicating the vision helped her work through the various projects in different communities that she got involved in. She mentions:

I actually grew a ton. I'm not the same person today that I was in second year when I first went on the CLOUD trip as a participant. I'm just way more self-aware, I think would be a good word and I think because I'm self-aware and I know who I am and I know what my interests are I'm happier because I'm not struggling to find who I am or be who I am and I understand my role as a leader and where I am and I think naturally I like to have a leadership role and so being a CA allowed me to explore that and experience that and maybe I would have never experienced that another way, and so as a CA I learned the type of career path that I like to explore and in some way or shape to be a leader in that tour, somebody who inspires and supports other people. I'm definitely a people person and so sitting behind a desk all day would not really be a role that I would be best suited for, I can do it but it wouldn't probably be a role that I'd be best suited for.

Participant 4 realizes the importance of following best practices so as to have little negative impacts in the society. It is after visiting the communities that the values of care and kindness have evolved gradually. She highlights:

I am more responsible with my traveling ever since, in terms of where I am going and what I am going to do and I definitely still like to try and get involved when I am buying certain gifts for friends and family, for example, with Christmas coming up, I try and buy them environmentally responsible items. The NWC has an online shop where they pair with communities and sell little gifts and give back to the community. So little things like that, and being more appreciative of the things I have is something that I think is an indirect component of these trips.

The data expresses that reflection on personal change is an innate quality that helps community ambassadors act as change agents in the community involved and once they return from the trip in their day to day lives. Through their efforts of solving an intractable problem the community ambassadors gain confidence to act as mentors to fellow student participants.

4.1.4 Discussion on personal motivations

The analysis of the data revealed that students who participate in CLOUD projects come with a pre-determined goal and experience personal development as they progress in the community and in their personal life after the project. Data also suggests that due credit should be given to the organisation as without the support, motivation and guidance from NWC the community ambassadors would not have been able to take lead and make a difference at the community. Different classes of motivation have been talked about in the data which are similar to what has been talked about in the literature. For instance, Handy et al. (2010) highlighted two main classes of motivations with the first one being altruistic motives or value based motives which includes religious beliefs and helping others while the second one being utilitarian motivations which

includes enhancing human capital, exploring different career paths, enhancing resumes or gaining work experience. However, Hustinx et al., (2010) state that “volunteers act not from a single motive or category of motives but from a combination of motives” (p.281). This is recognized in the data; as students do not have their life goal set as participating in volunteering but since they have the desire to make a difference in the communities, experience varied cultures, showcase kindness and care towards each other and the community members; the motives to participate in such projects are vast.

Particularly, the data explains that students desire to explore something extraordinary that would pose as a challenge and help them gain new insights. The yearning to participate in extracurricular activities just to ground the students in other things in terms of meeting new people, fulfilling leadership roles and making a difference in the community was very much a rewarding aspiration. This aligns with what Holdsworth and Brewis’s (2014) research which highlighted, “that students want volunteering to be recognised and endorsed as a rewarding activity, but in a way that their organisation is privileged and their capacity to make a difference is upheld” (p.12). Wilson (2000) points out that “people with higher education and social economic status tend to volunteer more as the organisations help to provide connections and enhance one’s status and social networks” (p.18). This is not recognized in the data, however, students who started working with NWC began their first tryst with volunteering during high school as a participant and for most of them, during their university years they ended up transitioning to the role of a community ambassador. The reason articulated for continuing to work with NWC after a participant was not only limited to the working environment of NWC but also the efforts the organisation made to develop and sustain long term connections with the host community members. For CA’s the

motive to take charge of a project independently proved to be helpful in achieving their personal goals and acted as a stepping stone for their professional growth.

In the literature Bussell & Forbes (2001) explain that there is a social-adjustive motive to volunteering. They mention that people volunteer because someone with similar values asks them to do so. Interviewees clearly acknowledged this as in order to lead a team they needed participants and it was through funds raised within a year they managed to complete their respective project in the community. Hence if aspiring volunteers are approached with a lucrative idea of making a difference at a community they would not hesitate to be a part of and show their dedication through active participation.

The debate between altruism and self-interest is unclear in the literature but in the data it explicitly states that participants became community ambassadors due to the primary reason of altruism. They chose to participate again in the project with NWC because they were highly impacted by their first trip. Hence, in order to make a difference at the community by at large, experience different culture in a similar environment motivated the informants to get involved with NWC. It should also be noted that none of the informants once mentioned about volunteering for the reason of enhancement of CV or extra-curricular activity which opposed the published literature such as Handy et al. (2010), McGehee (2013) and Raymond & Hall (2010) who state that this is a priority. This subsequently leads to the existence of the notion of social change within NWC. The informants visibly highlighted the significance of social change in the data through their contribution of participation in the projects organised by NWC. The reasons for participating and leading a trip is what is essentially missing from the literature. The concept of gathering participants, discussion a potential project to work on, collecting funds to support the project and then leading a trip to a developing country has not received adequate attention in the literature.

Aligned with this study lies the notions of consciousness-raising experiences or intent to impact lives impact lives (McGehee & Santos, 2005). However in the data it is revealed that it is through being independent, being a mentor to other participants and problem solving tricky situations without anybody's guidance CA's are able to make a difference in the lives of the participants and aid to the successful completion of the project. McGehee & Santos (2005) and Light (2011) talk about how through volunteering an individual's awareness and participation increases about global issues but the reasons behind how such changes take place has not been adequately addressed in the literature. Self-awareness appears to be a prominent theme in the NWC's CA's experiential volunteering process. It is not because the CA's had already visited these communities their ability to solve problems or help the community members helped them take leadership role. It is through attaining self-awareness a volunteer decides to participate in a project again with NWC. This has not been adequately addressed in the literature but during the interviews it was recalled by many participants. Light (2011) states that in order for change to take place "one must simultaneously push forward with new solutions to old problems, while protecting past breakthroughs that continue to produce progress" (p.4). It should be noted that if a person has conscious knowledge of one's own character, feelings, motives and desires making a difference is not a hard target to achieve. It is vital for researchers to magnify the importance of self-awareness in volunteer tourism. It is palpable that personal growth will take place through the adapted perception of the participant during their volunteer tourism experience with an organisations. Once that awareness is achieved it is easy for participants to chalk out their professional goal setting.

4.2 Reflecting on community impact

Most interviewees in this study had been part of the CLOUD community project more than once as a Community Ambassador (CA). All informants initially began as participants and then transitioned into the role of CA. The countries where these informants volunteered were Dominican Republic, Haiti and Kenya. Learning about the most memorable experiences was important to comprehend the lived experiences of the CA's. The feedback which the CA's were receiving from the community members seems to be vital during their journey of volunteering with NWC. It is from the profuse experiences and memories at the community, the CA's managed to witness traits of generosity, care, contentment, attention to small gestures which they would have not been able to nurture if not for the community members. There was an extensive amount of learning, facing the feeling of empathy and eye-opening instances which left a huge visible impact on the lives of both the CA's and the community members. The following sub-themes illuminate the social impacts on the community from a CA's perspective:

1. Overt generosity and expressions of appreciation
2. Absence of materialism

4.2.1 Overt generosity and expressions of appreciation

Throughout the data that was interpreted interviewees have been talking about their vivid memories from the trips made to different communities. Each action triggers a memory and aids to stories that can be cherished for lifetime. These experiences have had a befitting impact on the interviewee's lives as participants did not have a hard time recalling the memories that consisted of stories ranging from instances showcasing kindness, communicating via non-verbal gestures, focus of the community members towards the well-being of each other and being appreciative of

the efforts made by the CA's and the participants of NWC. Familiar instances where kindness and generosity was shown to the CA's by the community members stirred emotional memories to the interviewees. Participant 4 recalls:

When I was leaving Haiti our last day in the classroom they were saying thank you and thanking us for all of our work and fundraising, and one of the students who was just really funny in class stood up and he said a special thank you to me and teared up and gave me a hug and it was very moving. A lot of organizations you go for a week or 10 days and you think how big of an impact can you actually make? And you're just leaving these people, and there's this idea that you go and see the little children and then you leave and that's pretty hard and pretty sad because sometimes I have a difficult time with that notion, but seeing his appreciation and seeing how he felt and how appreciative he was made it all the more worth it and was a special moment for me. As well as with most of the NWC trips you get to travel and you get to sit in a pick-up truck in the back and that is something so incredible you go through mountains driving all the way up to these communities. And it's really something special and the fact that it is mountains and a pick-up truck with 10 of your friend is incredible.

To participant 4 the fact that there are so many unexpected, openhanded gestures happening along with the volunteering experience of making a difference in the lives of the community members is quite overpowering. Participant 6 shares a similar instance, expressing:

And then in the Dominican the stars at night are unlike anything else, they are beautiful but there is something about them that makes me emotional [...] I think that the first time I went and the second as well, after the whole week we were building a house and we got to meet the family that we were building this house for [and the funds that were going towards]. These people don't have much but they are constantly willing to give like there was a little party to thank us and we had extra money leftover at the end so after we finished the house we left some money for the family saying this will help you and make the house comfortable, and they went and used it to buy us some pop and things to say thank you for the work for fundraising. So instead of using it to buy themselves stuff they just wanted to show how appreciative they were. The wife came and she gave us a big hug and was so thankful and saying how they couldn't have done it without us, that was something beautiful, a lot of this notion is that you go and get in their way and you take from them and not give back but seeing the response from the people validates how important these kind of trips are, it's a responsible [kind of] volunteering. Voluntourism is when you go and you take pictures with people who are less fortunate than you and you post it on social

media and you say hey look, I did a good thing whereas here it's really showing, it's a wonderfully led organization and you get to appreciate what you are doing.

Participant 6 highlights the fact that voluntourism is not only about giving or assisting those in need but also valuing the response from the community members, be it positive or negative. She tries to re-define voluntourism by laying stress on accepting the response from the community members, their appreciation and benevolence, praising the efforts of the organization and not how analyzing how big of an impact the CA's or participants are making by showcasing on various platforms of social media.

Conversely, Participant 1 recalls how small interactions can lead to sharing of stories that could leave an impact in your lives. The struggle that the community members witnessed is not discussed in person with the CA's but they could sense the despair. At the same time the fact that despite their living conditions the community members find little moments to cherish with their loved ones, value their relationship and engage with various people left quite a few participants surprised for good. Participant 1 recalls:

It was a pretty amazing to be able to work alongside the people who were working there, like to build the house [...] and then it's just like kind of little moments, it's usually with the people you remember. Like little moments like for example I think the first year we were there, Sandra, a community member, of course she is busy she doesn't have time to sit and chat with everyone, but my friend Cindy and I, we brought the dishes, we kept the kitchen after lunch one day, the kitchen was off the church. So Sandra told us her life story and she spent an hour just talking to us. So that was something memorable I would say because just to have this woman who you just met and this was the first summer like the first couple of days into the trip. So I have this woman who I just met, open up and share and thinks is valuable to share. There was that and then the NWC is I think trying to work more of the contact with the community into experience because they realize you're only there for a week so you may as well get out as much as you can.

Participant 7 echoed this sentiment when she discussed how the community member discussed with her, a complete stranger, her life goals, she reflected:

Tony, the captain of the community who knew English would translate, Bridgetta didn't speak English but Tony would translate and so that was one of the most valuable things for a lot of people like to be able to see the impact you have and to see. People were asking what your goals are, are you happy to have this happening? And she was pretty happy and her goals are all to do with like creating a better future for her kids. So it's pretty cool to be able to have a direct opportunity to put some of these things into perspective for yourself.

Participant 2 shares her story of how her typical day would go about and how interacting with the kids and the members was part of a day to day activity. Through her observation, she noticed their standard of living, the hardships they have to go through every day, yet staying positive encountered a deep reflection. She stated:

So a typical day I guess would be to wake up, eat breakfast, go work on the house for like the majority of the day like 9-5ish um and then at night you would hang out like with the community. That's one of the things I liked about going with the NWC is that you're so immersed with the community, you're living with the community and every night you're hanging out with them and during the day they're all there and just working on the house and stuff. Even though I was there for only a week I developed so many strong relationships with the people in the community. They take you in kind of as their own and you get to know all of them really well and I think a part of the reason like what made me change my life goal and make me want to devote my life to helping people and poverty is because I think like when you just see, you hear about these things like it doesn't mean that much to you but when you get to know the people who are suffering and going through these hardships, it hits a lot more I guess, so yeah that was like my memorable part.

Throughout the data analysis it seems that despite the hardships that community members were going through, or as depicted by the CA's, gestures like beaming smile of their face, buying pop at the end of the trip for the NWC community showcased that there is so much to be thankful for, be appreciative of and value the little joys that they have. The aspect of generosity and kindness ultimately changed or helped shape the CA's their overall experience. Some participants' interactions also depicted that communication is not often an issue even if there was a language barrier. Through non-verbal actions the community members and the NWC community managed to successfully carry out their tasks and understand each other emotionally.

As much as the feeling of kindness and big-heartedness was expressed by the community members, it was also noticed by the respondents that they the members paid little importance to materials. Objects that had monetary value were least acknowledged by the members. The next theme talks in detail about this aspect.

4.2.2 Absence of materialism

As big-heartedness and compassion were identified throughout the data that was interpreted, another aspect which was discovered by the CA's during their interaction and feedback from the community members whilst they were participating in the projects is acknowledgement and less value to materialistic objects. Many of the community members and the children showed slightest interest in valuing the things that they had, but rather focussed towards living as a close-knit community and giving back to the NWC participants and the CA's. This left the CA's in awe and inspiration. Participant 2 explained:

One time I was sitting outside on the road I guess, it's a little drive way thing um with one of the little girls, we couldn't talk to each other because she didn't speak English and I didn't speak Spanish but we kind of had like a little dictionary and we were kind of friends and she only had like a little shirt on and it was really cold that night um and I had a sweater so I was like it was fine so I took my sweater off and gave it to her but I had no way of saying like I want this back so I was like okay she's just going to keep this sweater now like a gift so I gave her the sweater just thinking I wouldn't get it back, she was like thank you so much and she was so grateful and then 10 minutes later I guess she saw me shiver and she immediately took the sweater off and put it back on to me. It's not a grand jester but I was just so shocked because she was so little and she had nothing, she didn't even have like a sweater to wear at night and I had so much and she knew that but even though she was so little and I had given her the sweater and she saw that I was cold and she just immediately gave it back. I don't know to be honest, the culture they have there is just very like they're going to give everything away and even though they have nothing they're willing to give anything they do have which is I think very different in the way we operate here and so different than Canadian culture.

At times, for 3 participants there were certain instances which even now bring back memories to live. The way they talked about their struggles, in how poverty they have been living and how through the efforts of NWC this is being eliminated. Participant 3 stated:

In the second community, I can't recall the name, we went to the former home of one of the community members that we were building the home for and this man, who did not speak English but was showing us that for the first time his community had gotten power. I'll never forget how proud this man was of himself, his community getting power and the way he was explaining to this group of English speaking group – just a beaming smile on his face, just the gestures of this man portrayed a lot. Something that we take for granted meant the world to him and that's often something I think of not regularly but momentarily, popping in my head every month or two.

Participant 4 acknowledges the same sentiment wherein the feeling of thankfulness never died. She claims:

They are always appreciative of every little thing, both in my experience at Haiti and Dominican Republic. For example, in Dominican they are thankful for supporting them to build a house or in Haiti they are thankful for you helping to fund their school or bring new ideas and insights to classrooms and I think people have always had good experiences with all the people that I had interacted with. I never once felt that I was like an outsider, they are very inclusive and appreciative.

Participant 9 deeply recalled stories that made her feel that people living in developed countries care about petty little things. The fact that there is constant focus on materialistic things displeases her and led to a very different approach of leading life when she returned from Kenya. Helping the community members do their daily chores left her in astonishment. She stresses on the things that truly were valued by the members i.e. family, friends, love and faith. She explains this saying:

I think for me travelling to these communities, you see a different side of the country, you are not just going to an all-inclusive resort, you are not just seeing the Americanized version of that country, the beaches, the resorts, the french fries, the pizza, they are eating the raw food, you saw the chicken running around earlier that day and then you are eating it that night, you know you are helping the people harvest the beans, but then the lessons that you learn from coming back from that is wow, I was complaining two days ago that my cell phone wasn't working and then here I am slaving away for five hours a day, opening

up pods of peas that I can have for dinner tonight but it just kind of makes you realize what's important in life which is not the materials. It's I have a roof over my head, I was given the privilege to be born in my country where I have health care, education and all these social supports and these services and then coming back to that is almost a reverse culture shock - coming back home and realizing that on a monetary perspective we are rich, because we have access to credit and so lot of people look at these impoverished communities and think, oh, they are poor they must not be having these things in life that we have that make us happy but what I realized that aside from money these people have family, they have faith and yeah, day to day life can be hard, sometimes kids cannot go to school, they have to help their parents, they have to farm the field.. they have what they have truly in life which I feel people here might overlook, family friends love and faith .. those are just staples in life that you can't live without and it's so true that money can't buy you everything. It can't buy you happiness all the time and yeah, life might be a bit easier like I can buy a blanket to keep me warm, I have a job everyday but these are a lot of things that we take for granted and to sum all of that up, yes, we are going there to help all of these people but what we are bringing back home is so much more valuable than just a trip. It's a whole new perspective on life that I think everybody needs to experience.

Such accounts put forward by the informants represent a different side to what is actually rarely discussed. The impact the community members have had on these CA's is quite alarming and something which can be of help to the organisation – NWC. The fact that the CA's and participants are going into a developing country to assist in building a better liveable society, asking for nothing in return is more than expected from an organisation but upon reflection the care and kindness showed from the community members as a method of giving back needs to be contemplated in volunteer tourism literature.

4.2.3 Discussion on community impact

The analysis of the data pertaining to reflection on the degree of community impact through tangents such as unconcealed actions of generosity and appreciation from the community members to the CA's and participants and the community members showcasing miniscule importance to material possessions posits that there is mutual reciprocity amongst the community members and the NWC community during these trips, with no inhibitions from portraying care, compassion and generosity.

Community impact here not only discusses how the NWC's CA's and the participants work towards fulfilling a project, working alongside the community members which is catered towards the welfare of the community but also how the efforts of the participants are truly valued and genuinely honoured through unexpected tokens of appreciation. This is quite apparent in the literature, as well, as Huski-Leventhal et al., (2010) explain that volunteering is centered towards enhancing social capital, strengthening the community of the organisation and the destination and aids in providing services that people would not have been able to afford. The fact that the interviewees are enjoying themselves in this process of giving a better living to people living in Haiti, Dominican and Kenya through working hard and building projects, empowering communities, is indicative hypothetically towards the consideration of the act of volunteering as serious leisure. Stebbins (1996) describes volunteering as a primary rewarding activity and a secondary helping activity wherein the participants enjoy the activity of self-expression and self-actualization. This is quite the case when NWC's CA's and participants interact with the community members. The gravity of establishing and crafting relationships ultimately leads to a positive effect as this was highlighted a number of times by certain participants. This aligns with McGehee's (2002) study which discusses social movement participation amid Earthwatch

expedition volunteers. It indicates how volunteer tourism, a segment of alternative tourism had a major role in establishing and crafting relationships, altering tourist's perspectives, increasing volunteer's engagement and ultimately leading to a constructive outcome on social movement activities. It is apparent in her study that alternative tourism influences and activates on-going participation in social movements. However unlike its presence in the literature, it has been noted that more thought and analysis needs to be conducted in order to understand the density of influence volunteer tourism can have on the lives of local community members. There appears to be a gap regarding the community social impacts in volunteer tourism literature which may be interesting for further investigation.

It is through deep reflection by the CA's towards the community it is understood that the community members are extremely appreciative of the efforts made by NWC. They comprehend the drive for effective and sustainable development of the community projects with the maintenance of a healthy and prosperous relationship amongst the members and NWC community. Wearing (2001) states that it is imperative to facilitate and improve the contact between the hosts and the guests, especially through well-organized trips, rather than on the actual development of facilities. Interestingly, this is not what the data portrays in the analysis conducted. Laying no stress on the value of material possessions, cherishing the paths shared with the members, appreciating what they have and being content with it, keeping intact the sense of mutual harmony amongst each other as community members was found in a positive light throughout the analysis. Henceforth, there is need for researchers to draw their attention towards highlighting the effects of the volunteers on the community/residents of the destination. This can help the organisations associated in noticing the impacts they are making either socially, culturally or economically.

4.3 Realizing impact of social and cultural experience

When making a contribution to the community, the CA's were unquestionably making an impact either on the community members, the destination or even the organisation i.e. NWC. The realisation of what impact the CA's were witnessing or making helped most of the interviewees understand the numerous community causes that they were not aware of before. The NWC has prime key differentiators set up for its successful implementation in the community which are basically geared towards 1. 50% project based, 50% experience based; 2. Working with grassroots NGOs in partner communities; 3. 100% of all fundraising goes to their projects and partner communities; 4. Living and working with global partnerships; 5. Adapting to the needs of their community (thenwc.com, 2016). The CA's participate and lead various community projects keeping in mind the correct implementation of the key differentiators. Many expressed similar views in regard to the impact NWC is making on the host community and how it has managed to change the lives of different families. The following sub-themes illuminate the range of socio-cultural and economic impacts:

1. Community engagement
2. Understanding key differentiators

4.3.1 Community engagement

Many respondents suggest that NWC's ability to partnership with the community and empowering the members is one of the greatest aspects of participating in CLOUD projects. The tangible impacts like developing a house and certain intangible impacts like teaching English to kids were appealing to the CA Participant 1 explains how by participating in these trips direct impact is felt both on the participants and the community members. She explains:

I think the impact for the participants on the trip is a huge amount of exposure because it's only 7 or 8 days, everyone is able to learn from each other. I think the impact is of course in the way NWC works, one of the priorities is housing experiencing flooding all the time because they are right beside the ocean, and they are in the middle of a flood right now. Tony posts pictures on facebook and the water is up to their waist. The NWC was able to establish partnership with the community, identify this as one of their greatest things. It's the aspect that the NWC kind of provides resources and then the community is kind of empowered in that way to um achieve what their own priorities are. Like something like housing that's a lasting impact so like rather than going to teach English, of course that has an impact but it's a little intangible. Whereas building a house, it is there and it's done in a week and it's there to see and stay.

Participant 7 focusses on the weight of the impacts in their own lives. She states how both the members and the CA's work collaboratively to complete a project. The participants actively empower members in different tasks, engage children in education and this is appreciated by the members which instills the passion to care, nurture and respect each other. She states:

I think it's more of an impact on us. Honestly we go down there and they really appreciate everything we have to offer them just teaching wise, they look up to what we say to them or what we teach them [...]they are always very eager to learn and at the same time they teach us a lot as well [...] [...] It's just human connection is awesome and showing them that you know we can come in and we can connect to them at a very personal level, like we are not tourists, we don't stay in fancy hotels and come into the community and tell them what we think that they need to do. It's very collaborative, we work together in the community, we live together in the community and it just goes to show us, as well as them that there is that trust, friendship and that bond we create, it's very mutual, we just help each other out.

It is through community engagement the sense of gratefulness was experienced by most of the participants. Different community causes that they were not aware of like how sanitation is maintained, how difficult it is to obtain education and medical facilities and also being cognisant to the fact that there is poverty in these places but still the people living there were willing to share their little joys, culture and day to day activity with the CA's without any assumptions. Participant 8 explains this situation by sharing her views, she commented:

Obviously I saw the poverty that was apparent and that's obvious, like you still see the kids on the street, the houses that are torn down are still affected by the Hurricane that happened, like the first hurricane that happened a while ago, so you can tell these places are definitely impoverished and it's pretty much what you see on TV in that sense but when I say stigma I'm more talking about the people in general who always get to go to these countries, the people always think you know the people living there are scary or dangerous but when you are there it's quite the opposite, yes somethings happen in different areas but at the same time we walk down the street every single day to school, nothing bad happened to us. People respect who we are, what we do you know do good and it's just about being confident and getting to know these people and letting them know you know that you are there to help and to be a friend and rather than come and impede on their culture ... It's just it was different in the way I saw the people, they were welcoming and it's definitely different than what you usually see on the TV.

Participant 4 shares how maintenance of garbage was an issue in Haiti. She explains how sanitation was not as big of a community cause in Dominican Republic but it could have been definitely been preventable in order to limit the spread of disease. In developed countries garbage disposal is executed through rules but this development still needs to take place in such communities, she explains:

The garbage issue is huge in Haiti, which is something we weren't able to tackle and a lot of groups don't tackle it because the garbage was literally unreal and everywhere and it is tragic because the country itself is so beautiful with the landscapes but the garbage was everywhere and that isn't something I have seen before. We learned about their history and how garbage is used in federal election campaigns that claim they will clean up the streets and there used to be police who would monitor littering, and with different people coming into power it just became trash everywhere.

This showcases that the CA's and participants through community interaction were made aware of the disposal system and that the government takes little efforts to maintain sanitary conditions. Despite this fact, NWC volunteers in such communities in order to better the situation and the living standards, which aligns well with the purpose of this research. Becoming aware of different

community causes is one aspect, but living there in such conditions and making the efforts to bring change is remarkable by NWC in the volunteer sector.

Travel has been long associated with volunteer tourism. Participant 3 senses that through the activity of travel and volunteering one gets to see the real life behind the high-end resorts or hotels. A whole new perspective about how people are living in third world developing countries that boast of beaches, sand and beautiful hotels, something that isn't talked about in open or experienced with smiling faces. She feels:

I think travel is a great way to see the world and it really opens up your eyes, you know there are many different cultures, there are many different things that countries have to offer, not only is Dominican great for their beach and their resorts but a very special part there is knowing the people in amount and how kind and genuine they are.

Participant 5, too, explains how following sustainable travel is one of their priorities for this trip. Not only are they supporting the community via means of development, comprehending the issues that are not common in developed countries but traveling with conscious reasoning is something that they are aware of. She explained:

I think showing that we're not just going and trying to make connections and leave but we are trying to promote sustainability, on the trip directly, when you are there in the community obviously, you're going there and trying to show support, hey we are trying to support you but also learning from them because you don't just want to go down and give the community what we think they need, we want to understand their needs and go and support. At the same time that gives the participants the chance for experience based travel and see how their fundraising has direct impact on the community. Here we are literally paying for cement for a house for someone to live, to stay dry. That is a beautiful experience for the participants and for us as community ambassadors. Even the difference between Dominican and Haiti is beautiful, The Spanish vs. French vibe, to put it blatantly, my parents are from Europe, my mom is French and half Portuguese and I know this connection. The Dominican people here are very Spanish and love to dance and love music and love all of that, whereas on the other side, the French side I feel the people are just different, it's very interesting.

Interviewees suggest that the impacts they are making are not only on the community members but also on the participants that they are responsible for. However through their comments it is noted that by living in such communities they are open to change in society, less reliant on material possessions, mindful of responsible traveling and respectful of different cultures and standards of living. Thriving community engagement is imperative for the projects to function in prosperity. This aspect works well in coordination with the key differentiators laid by NWC as their working policy. The key differentiators as discussed in section 4.3 are discussed in detail in the next section and indicate how the CA's have managed to respect these whilst working in the community.

4.3.2 Understanding key differentiators

NWC as an organization is leaving a powerful impact both on the lives of the participants and CA's and the community as an organization. This is reflected from the work that is done by the CA's as a leader, participants as loyal volunteers and the appreciation received from the community members to the entire volunteer community. Participant 1 put forth this:

If you're thinking about it on the macro level, there is something tangible you can take from participating in a CLOUD project. Even a small action that you will take, will kind of shut off the domino effect. There is no way you can change the world instantly. So you have to kind of focus in a little more towards making individual change which clearly is the opportunity given by NWC.

The method of making a difference is varied for different communities depending upon the project but NWC makes sure that their key differentiators are not negotiated. Participant 2 expanded on this and explained how specifically through fundraising and maintaining long term close relationships with prime community members the differentiators are valued:

NWC is a small organization so they're able to maintain more direct contact, and they're small which allows them to be more flexible. They are more personal too, they are pretty committed to I think there's 5 identifiers on how CLOUD is different than other organizations. Such as choosing the project that community identifies. In terms of fundraising that makes them different, because they are able to direct all they raise to the project. So in that way they're very much transparent, and I think is very important for a lot of people these days. And since they are a social enterprise they are non-profit [...] So they are small but I think that is also a strength, because one of their biggest strengths is that they have a close relationship with the community.

Participant 9 voices similar sentiments by stating:

The NWC kind of is just continuing those long term partnerships and the piece that I like and what makes me confident is the fact that they're making a difference in the way they partner with local NGOs in other countries like in the Dominican and they ask them like "how do you want us to help, what do you want us to do"? and I know for a fact if tomorrow that community says, "we don't want your help anymore or we want you to do a different project or whatever", the NWC would immediately change and be flexible to that because they're just so focused on what the community wants and they're not saying we're coming to build you a house, they're asking how can we help you and in the end the community essentially designs the project. So that's what makes me confident that they're making a difference.

Development of infrastructure is the main priority of the co-founders of NWC and as per the views of Participant 5, NWC working collaboratively with the community is of utmost importance. She echoes:

In the Dominican infrastructure is their number one priority, that we can help with in the mountainous communities, so from my understanding (Jay and Ryan might have switched it up a little bit) once they identify we have a trip and we are here and have fundraising capabilities, the community down there invites them to find all the families in need and they determine the family that receives the support in terms of who is in most desperate need and are they able to contribute help because we don't want to just give away we want to have a working partnerships. They understand the people best because they are there, they are the people. That's an important aspect.

Even though most of the interviewees agreed with the fact that NWC is making a difference at the destination along with the support of its participants and CA's, the duration of the trips seemed to

be a common disagreed facet. The things the children learn within a week's time is not sufficient for them according to the CA's. It eventually leaves no time to grasp how much have the children learned from the classes and hence the impact on the children is debatable. Participant 7 explains this when she says:

I feel that impact in Dominican is so much easier to see because it's physical, it's right there in front of you but in Haiti when we were teaching it's a lot harder because you are teaching them English so sometimes you might not be able to tell throughout the week how much they have actually learned but when you go back, for instance, I have had students who were there when I first went down and they were still there during my second time and seeing how much they have improved over that time it shows that all the donations that we do, all the time we do go down there it's working. Like it's helping them, they are improving their English because we just don't go down there for like a week and then leave, we do like some of our donations go towards the school to get them books, more supplies so that they can continue writing their exams and having more books so that they are able to progress and develop, like that is a bit hard to see from our perspective as one week trip to the country can sometimes be limiting but I do feel like it is still there.

Comparing the work structure of other organizations with the NWC has led to the conclusion that staying with the community, in their surroundings makes a difference in the overall experience. Living in hotels and resorts and then participating in the act of volunteering for a couple of hours in a given day doesn't account for the substantial experience which is gained by NWC community. Participant 4 shares her sentiments on this by commenting:

I think one of the things that I like the most about NWC and kind of why I got involved with them is just they are very community oriented in terms of their standards that they have for themselves and they keep the values high, it's also working with the community directly by living with them. A lot of these organisations, they fly a bunch of tourists in, stay in the fanciest hotels and they come down for a day or two, thinking they are making a really big impact when internally they are actually hurting the community more as they may not be necessarily seeing or understanding what the community means and I think that is what makes NWC stand out, its being community oriented for their welfare. They work really hard with Kenya, Haiti and DR and I feel it means a lot in terms of making a difference and an impact that they create.

It is mentioned by the interviewees that respecting the key differentiators set by NWC is of prime significance. Not making donations to the community despite the amount of empathy driven from the CA's or the participants, is a very firm differentiator. The CA's believe in their efforts and they know it is going to pay off in the future at the destination. It is through their own hard work put in for fundraising that they manage to build the house and work with the community members eventually.

4.3.3 Discussion of social and cultural experience

The CA's have benefitted in numerous ways from participating in trips more than once. Their mindfulness about varied community causes, something that they were not aware of until they participated, but are now aware of has increased on every trip made with NWC. There were many experiences voiced by the community ambassadors which were perceived as an effective catalyst in volunteer tourism literature from the volunteer's point of view. In the literature this is supported by Guttentag (2015) who discussed how emotions such as power, care, generosity and sympathy lead to the creation of a sustainable setting between the hosts and the volunteers. This understanding eventually generates "opportunities for facilitating relationships with like-minded volunteers, and encouraging consciousness-raising experiences" (McGehee & Santos, 2005, p.16). It is interesting to view this in the analysis when discussed by the community ambassadors.

By understanding the impact of participation from both the perspectives, i.e. community members through the eyes of the CA's and the CA's themselves, examining the positive and negative impacts is clearly apparent. In the data, language barrier is viewed as an obstruction in scenarios where the lead captain from the community is not present. The CA's then rely on non-verbal

actions to communicate and get the work done collaboratively. Similarly, being aware that the entire project will not finish with the CA's trip duration. The work established by the CA's will always be continued by the community members till the projected outcome is successfully achieved. Hence the expectations from the CA's need to be effectively managed by the NWC leaders.

This particular finding is recognized in the literature, specifically, Fee & Mdee (2011) explained that introducing contextual background of the setting prior to the journey can be crucial to helping a volunteer manage their placement. It is evident from the data that the CA's are satisfied with the organisational structure of NWC. They clearly feel that the differentiators are being followed and respected while in the community. As mentioned by Raymond & Hall (2011), "many organisations tend to indulge in ineffective schemes which are usually run by profit or not-for-profit organisations and exploitative schemes which are generally by private companies on a profit making basis have a tendency to make promises of 'making a difference' but their negative impacts are felt both by the volunteers and the host community" (p.46). Raymond & Hall (2008) also suggested that interactions between the volunteers and their hosts within the concept of international volunteering have led to improved "cross-cultural understanding with the volunteer tourists attaining a sophisticated understanding of the local culture along with issues facing the host communities" (p.13).

It is to be noted that the effect of participating in such projects is lifelong. Lepp (2008) too, states that volunteer tourists, working on projects abroad, develop deeper perspectives of their lives at home, and discover an intrinsic desire to become involved in society in more meaningful and purposeful ways once they return home.

In regard to the impact on host community, it has been found in the data there is huge amount of local involvement and a significant decrease in dependency caused by the presence of volunteer labour. The local community members are ever ready to work on different projects with their heart and soul for they realize the aftereffect of the project will lead to their own welfare development. This has significantly been absent from the literature. The fact that the locals are conscious of how organisations from developed countries are making efforts to sustain their future and living standards is nascent in the current volunteer tourism literature. Authority struggles and dependency issues were highly unlikely while both the communities were working. Rather, certain projects of the NWC are catered towards establishing fair wages for locals so that they are able to support their families over the long term. As per the perceptions of the volunteers, the volunteer labour does not act as a hindrance once they leave the destination as opposed to what has been said in the literature by Raymond & Hall (2011). The fact that they establish the project, work with the community members to put that into action and later on if left incomplete the community members work to finish it thereby empowering labour in the community. By channeling correct implementation of the key differentiators volunteering ultimately benefits the host community members.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION

5.0 Introduction

While investigating the viewpoints of the Community Ambassadors (CA's) working with New World Community (NWC) on their CLOUD projects, this thesis aimed to understand how participants make meaning through the act of volunteering and what social impacts are witnessed by them and what effect does it have on their lives and the lives of community members by discussing their experiences and perceptions of working with NWC as repeat volunteer travelers. As Merriam (2002) states, "in conducting a basic interpretive qualitative study, you seek to discover and understand a phenomenon, a process, the perspectives and worldviews of the people involved, or a combination of these" (p.6). This thesis has done just that through the data analysis: the interpretation of the data demonstrated that students who participate in CLOUD projects come with a pre-determined goal and experience personal development as they progress in the community and in their personal life after the project, they felt reciprocity amongst the community members and the NWC community during these trips, with no inhibitions from portraying care, compassion and generosity. The students also found that the key differentiators are respected and valued with prime involvement of local members of the community. As a result, with the increasing participation of students in volunteer non-profit programs there needs to be a way to highlight the social-cultural impacts put forth by the interaction among the members of the communities and students for the welfare of sustainable development, and to gain a deeper understanding of how to extend the professional horizons of volunteer organisations as volunteer tourism continues to grow and develop.

This chapter's purpose is to summarize and discuss the main findings of this research. Subsequently, the key contributions this work adds to the greater academic debate on student volunteering is discussed. Following, limitations and constraints that presented themselves throughout this research process will be expressed and will be followed by implications for future research.

5.1 Summary of main findings

The primary aim of this basic interpretive qualitative study is to explore the meanings community ambassadors gave to lived experiences of volunteering with NWC in the developing countries and determining the social impacts that volunteers and volunteering organisations have on the communities. This was achieved through conducting 9 semi-structured interviews with the community ambassadors of NWC who have been a part of CLOUD project more than once. Two research questions guiding this study focused on on-site experiences and interpretations of volunteers involved with the NWC and they are as follows:

1. How does volunteering with NWC help the community ambassador understand their personal motivations?
2. What impact is being made in the community from the perspective of community ambassadors?

The following two subsections will illustrate how the study responded to each of these research questions.

5.1.1 Research question #1

How does volunteering with NWC help the community ambassador understand their personal motivation?

In the data it appears that, it is partially through the work structure of NWC the students feel motivated to participate in CLOUD projects for the second time and this time take charge as a project lead. Participant 6, for example, explained that, “when I went to Haiti in 2015, I fell in love with, the people, atmosphere, the way NWC worked with us to formulate the project and make it work in Haiti [...] and the local CA’s were so empathetic, I loved the country and from then I knew I had to go back and this time I lead the team”. Interviewees explained that they did not ever have their life goal set as volunteering with an organisation in a different country altogether, but since they had the passion to make a difference in someone’s life, familiarise themselves with a different culture and live in a diverse surrounding, experience attributes such as kindness, generosity and care towards a community unlike their own motivated them to participate again as a CA.

Interviewees also explicated that during volunteering in the communities, the desire to participate in extracurricular activities grounded the students; in terms of meeting new people, fulfilling leadership roles and making a difference in the community. This led to rewarding experiences on behalf of the CA’s. It was also noticed in the data that none of the interviewees ever mentioned CV enhancement as the reasons to participate in volunteering, but rather notions of independence were stated, being perceived as a mentor to other participants and problem solving tricky situations without anybody’s guidance. As such, CA’s were able to make a difference in the lives of the participants and aid to the successful completion of projects as they were determined

by the local communities. Having self-awareness of what they wanted to achieve in these communities laid a path for them to follow in their own lives.

5.1.2 Research question #2

What impact is being made in the community from the perspective of community ambassadors?

The interactions between the CA's and the community members have always been warm and compassionate as depicted in the data. Unconcealed actions of generosity and appreciation from community members to the CA's and the participants and vice-versa showcased mutual reciprocity during the trips with no inhibitions. It was also encountered by the interviewees that the community members paid little attention to material possessions and valued the efforts being made by the CA's for their sustainable living through miniscule tokens of appreciation. The relation of give and take was prominent in the community but it has never been of materialistic things. The CA's were more aware of the hardships that community members are going through hence they try to focus on those projects that will help them attain a better living standard for generations to come. Many times the interaction would be barred due to language barriers but the use of non-verbal actions were found to be helpful. Also mentioned in the data by the interviewees was the statement that even though the NWC makes a visit more than four times a year to the communities, depending on the projects undertaken, the community members look forward to the volunteers of NWC. However, the duration of the trip was always an issue for the CA's as they felt that the moment they become extremely close to some members of the community, it is time for them to leave. That limits the impact of having a positive crafted relationship and deters the volunteer engagement for the next set of volunteers. However, it appears in the data that the positive association established

over the years by NWC with the communities is bound to last and has managed to outweigh the negatives.

It was evidently noted in the data, the realisation of what impact the CA's were witnessing or making, helped most of the interviewees understand the numerous community causes that they were not aware of before. Helping the communities by working on projects that target housing, teaching English, building eco-friendly sanitary latrines instilled the "power to empower" community members in different tasks thereby enhancing social and cultural impacts on the communities. Travelling with keeping in mind the sustainable component is one of the main priorities of the NWC as an organisation which the interviewees expressed firmly. For example, participant 5 explains through travelling sustainably, "not only are we supporting the community via means of development, comprehending the issues that are not common in developed countries but we are traveling with conscious reasoning so as to have a lasting positive effect on the communities".

It is therefore shown in the data through the perspectives of the community ambassadors that the community members are well aware of how the organisations are making an impact in their lives. Through constant interactions there is a lot of cultural exchange happening which inevitably makes the community members even more curious and keen to interact with the CA's. The fact that the locals are conscious of how organisations from developed countries are making efforts to sustain their future and living standards is seen to be nascent in the current volunteer tourism literature. However, as long as there is constant community engagement the impact of participation will not deter in these communities.

Another impact that was widely witnessed during the volunteering process on the communities and on the volunteers themselves was the application of NWC's key differentiators. The New

World Community has been attentively following their five key differentiators, as evidenced by the informants, which are highlighted in detail in Section 4.3. Respondents were well aware of each and every differentiator in the data, rather as told by Participant 3, “training was given to them and they had to make sure that no donations are given to the community members”. Valuing the NWC guidelines was an important aspect which highlighted the importance of following sustainable practices in the communities. Interviewees pointed out in the data the fact that the NWC is staying with the community members highlights the way NWC is practicing and giving to the community. It makes a huge difference in the overall experience of the CA’s and the participants. By living in hotels and resorts is the concept of sustainable volunteer tourism is not getting achieved and the end result would lead to limited interaction with the communities. The efforts made by NWC, economically and sustainably, will definitely prove beneficial to the future generations living in these communities.

5.2 Limitations and Areas for Future Research

After undertaking this research process, one limitation of the study that is important to note was the time taken to contact the NWC’s CA’s. Since most of the CA’s were students it was hard to determine a mutually suitable time to schedule interviews during their semester. Recruiting was not a hassle but arranging students to a common time caused a little delay in data collection. This also led to reducing the original number of participants from 12 to interviewing only 9. At the same time some students who had participated in the projects at the very start of the organisation had participated in more than two projects. Despite having experience once as a participant and twice leading different projects in varied communities and destinations, it was a bit hard for them to recall certain memorable experiences or conversations. I had to probe them with questions based

on the situation they could recall so that they could somehow link it to the memories they had. Since time was a hindrance for few, it was hard for me to get answers from the questions asked in the interview guide.

Also, it should be noted that all of my respondents were female. While it was not a main purpose when developing the objectives for this study, it is important to acknowledge and perhaps further explore the notion of gender and its role in this specific study. The contribution by male volunteers is significantly less. Hustinx et al. (2010) talked about the significant decline in the participation of men in volunteer projects. I was only able to recruit nine female participants who were CA's for this study. If men had been included in this study, it would have been interesting to compare and contrast their stories of volunteering with those of the female participants. It would be significant to examine male participant stories with respect to their willingness to participate in volunteering, sustainable travel or related activities, and see how this compares with female participant experiences. Future research in this area could address factors and motivations enabling these specific encounters to take place.

This study focused on the community ambassadors who volunteered at various destinations and lived with the communities. The perspective is not inclusive of the community members of the communities and therefore does not illuminate completely the people associated with NWC and the CLOUD project. While 9 individuals were studied, the viewpoint of the volunteers portrays a one-sided view of the organization, work culture and the destination.

One element in this study that warrants future research as mentioned in the results section was the notion of CV enhancement. This was not discussed as a motivational factor during the interviews conducted. Henceforth this leads to the point that research needs to be conducted on volunteers so

that their perspective of participating in such projects could be of valuable significance to the organisation involved.

Another aspect that could be touched upon in research could be understanding the impacts such organisations have in volunteer tourism on the communities involved once their project is completed. A detailed mapping exercise exploring the work done by the NWC, the stability of the work conducted and whether the community members have followed the sustainable path which was set by organisations like NWC would be particularly interesting to look at. Cross comparison of different organisations working at the same destination would also be an attention-grabbing topic to work on. This type of research would definitely make valuable contribution to the extensive literature of volunteer tourism.

The overall intent of this study was to understand student volunteering, volunteering across borders, as a phenomenon through NWC, and its impact through the experiences and perceptions of the repeat volunteer travelers working with NWC. The experiences depicted by the repeat volunteers provide lessons for the organization and opportunities for future research in topics such as post project completion impact and cross comparison of different community development organisations.

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APPENDIX A - INFORMATION LETTER

Dear Participant:

My name is Retnika Devasher. This letter is an invitation to consider participating in a study I am conducting as part of my Master's degree in the Department of Recreation and Leisure Studies at the University of Waterloo, Canada, under the supervision of Professor Karla Boluk. I am interested in exploring and understanding the decision making process of student participation in NWC and determining the social impacts students have on the communities involved, and would like to hear about your experiences.

Participation in this study is voluntary. If you decide to participate in my research, you will be asked to take part in one interview of approximately 45 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 tape-recorded to facilitate collection of information, and later transcribed for analysis. After the interview is completed, I can provide you with a copy of the transcript to give you an opportunity to confirm the accuracy of our conversation, and to add or clarify any points if you so wish.

All information you provide is considered completely confidential. Your name will not appear in any thesis or report resulting from this study; however, with your permission anonymous quotations may be used. Data collected during this study will be retained for one and a half years in a secure location. Only the primary researcher will have access to the data. There are no known or anticipated risks to you as a participant in this study.

If you have any questions regarding this study, or would like additional information to assist you in reaching a decision about your participation, please contact me at 289-887-5710 or by email at rdevashe@uwaterloo.ca. You can also contact my supervisor, Dr. Karla Boluk at 5190888-4567 ext. 34045 or by email: kboluk@uwaterloo.ca.

I very much look forward to speaking with you and thank you in advance for your assistance in this project.

Yours sincerely,

Retnika Devasher
MA Tourism Candidate
Department of Recreation and Leisure Studies
289-887-5710; rdevashe@uwaterloo.ca

APPENDIX B - CONSENT FORM FOR STUDY PARTICIPATION

I have read the information presented in the information letter about the study “Beyond Travelling: Exploring the Decision Making Process and Social Impact of Community Ambassadors within the New World Community” being conducted by **Retnika Devasher** of the Department of Recreation and Leisure at the University of Waterloo, under the supervision of Dr. Karla Boluk.

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 that 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 am aware that I may withdraw my consent from the study without penalty at any time by advising the researcher of this decision.

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 519-888-4567 ext. 36005.

By signing this consent form, you are not waiving your 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

Participant Name: _____ (Please print)

Participant Signature: _____

Witness Name: _____ (Please print)

Witness Signature: _____

Dated: _____

APPENDIX C - INTERVIEW GUIDE

Note: *This interview is meant to be conversational in style. I have several questions that I would like to ask, however, I am more interested in exploring new ideas and topics as they arise. Prompts will be used to invite the participant to expand on ideas, or to elaborate and provide detail wherever possible and appropriate as it relates to the stories of volunteering in various projects with NWC. The following script will act as a guide.*

Prelude: *Hello, my name is Retnika Devasher, I am a Tourism graduate student at the University of Waterloo in the Department of Recreation and Leisure Studies. Thank you for agreeing to participate in my study. I would like to ask you some questions about your experience with NWC as a community ambassador. I am interested in learning about your experiences on the site, and how you understand and interpret these experiences.*

If you are uncomfortable with any of the questions, you do not have to answer them, and you may request to stop the interview at any time. In order to gain a more accurate account of our conversation today, I will be audio recording our interview. Is this okay with you?

- 1) Can you tell me a little about yourself? Where are you from and how did you get connected with NWC?
- 2) How long have you been associated with NWC?
- 3) How many community projects have you been a part of and where in the world?
- 4) What are your goals and/or what are you trying to achieve in your role as a Community Ambassador with the NWC?
- 5) Do you believe such goals could be achieved on your own, outside of the NWC?
- 6) Can you explain the type of experiences you have had on your trips?
- 7) Can you describe some of the most memorable experiences you have had with the NWC?
- 8) What impacts do you feel you are making on the trips?
- 9) Do you feel that from these impacts that you are making, your awareness of different community causes has increased? Something that you weren't aware of before?
- 10) Do you feel that you are making a difference on your trips? How do you know this?
- 11) Do you think that the NWC is making a difference at the destination? How do you know this?
- 12) What kind of feedback are you getting from community members?

13) Thinking ahead, would you again volunteer as a community ambassador if given the opportunity? Do you feel through volunteering internationally your overall personality has transitioned?

14) Are there any additional comments or insights that you would like to share at this time?

APPENDIX D - FEEDBACK LETTER

University of Waterloo

Date _____

Dear (Insert Name of Participant),

I would like to thank you for your participation in this study entitled “Beyond Travelling: Exploring the Decision Making Process and Social Impact of Community Ambassadors within the New World Community” As a reminder, the purpose of this study is to explore and understand the decision making process for participating in volunteering with NWC, placing emphasis on understanding the reasons for student participation in volunteer programs, assisting to enlighten the effect that student participation has on the staff, work environment of the New World Community, their Sustainable Travel and Cloud projects and the host community involved.

The data collected during interviews will contribute to a better understanding of student participation and determining the social impact that volunteers have on the community within Volunteer tourism contexts, and aim to provide the academic community and the voluntourism organisations with an increased understanding of, as well as further insight into reasons for student participation with the voluntourism organisations and the impacts generated on the community involved.

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 outcomes of this study, or would like a summary of the outcomes, please provide your email address, and when the study is completed, anticipated by [insert date], 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 below. 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 the Director, Office of Research Ethics, at 1519-888-4567, Ext. 36005.

Sincerely,

Retnika Devasher

University of Waterloo
Recreation and Leisure Studies

289-887-5710
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