VOLUNTEERS' CROSS-CULTURAL IMMERSION EXPERIENCE
IN TANZANIA AND ZAMBIA

by

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my family, friends, professors and colleagues. They have always

supported and inspired me to be the best I can be.

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Despite a growing interest in international volunteerism, there is a scarcity of literature concerning returning volunteers' cross-cultural experience in developing countries. The purpose of the study was to examine the phenomenon of volunteers' cross-cultural experience of participating in immersion trips to Tanzania and Zambia. The study also explored whether volunteers believed their cross-cultural experience to be life changing. The following research questions were used to guide this study:

1. What motivated volunteers to participate in immersion trips to Tanzania and Zambia?

2. How has the immersion experience changed the volunteers' beliefs about themselves while engaging in a cross-cultural environment?

3. How has the immersion experience changed the volunteers' cultural beliefs?

4. What is the volunteers' perception of the impact and contribution of their work in Tanzania and Zambia?

This was a qualitative study using an interpretative approach. A purposeful sample of 13 volunteers who had participated in immersion trips with the Women's Global Connection to Tanzania and Zambia between 2004 and 2012 were selected for the study. Semi-structured interviews were conducted using a series of open-ended questions to explore the meaning of their

experience. Data were analyzed from recorded transcriptions of participants to identify recurring themes in the responses to the questions.

Five major themes were identified: (a) motivation, (b) changes in their beliefs about themselves, (c) changes in their cultural beliefs, (d) impact and contribution, and (e) hospitality and relationships. Participants thought they had a skill they could contribute, and they wanted to learn about the people and culture. The participants gained more self-insight and expressed changes in themselves and in their attitudes following their immersion experience, such as having a greater appreciation for the opportunities given to them, realizing they have more career options than they previously thought, having a better understanding of culture and poverty, and learning that they can make a difference in their communities. Although some volunteers were not certain of the sustainability of their impact on those communities in Tanzania and Zambia, other volunteers thought their impact was continuing and lasting. The warm welcome and hospitality the volunteers received fostered lasting relationships with the people they met and worked with.

This study may provide valuable insights to others wanting to learn about volunteering in developing countries, and it may be of interest to organizations that recruit and prepare volunteers to participate in cross-cultural immersion trips.

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Haski-Leventhal and Bargal (2008) described volunteers as "being the backbone of society and voluntary organizations" (p. 68). The actions of the volunteers are often based on the values and beliefs in helping others. Although the act of volunteering is at times unplanned, being able to help others may stimulate the individual to become more committed to volunteering (Snyder & Omoto, 2008). The experience of volunteering may also provide an opportunity to "learn new things and feel helpful and needed. From a community perspective volunteering can change how people think about others" (Sherr, 2008, p. 32). According to the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC, 2011), "there is no higher calling than when a person gives his or her own knowledge, skills, time or resources to someone in need of help or comfort" (p. 4).

The value of volunteers' contribution to peace and development worldwide has been recognized by the United Nations (UN). The tenth anniversary of International Year of Volunteers was celebrated by the UN in 2011 stating:

> Volunteering empowers people to take an active part in development to take responsibility for the needs of others and to make an impact in their lives. Volunteering often starts at home: but together volunteers can change the world
> (para 1).

Accounts of the importance and the value of services provided by volunteers are cited in other reports. For example the World Bank Community Outreach Program supports and promotes volunteer initiatives in Washington, D.C. Volunteers from the World Bank group consist of "of families of over 10,000 staff, and retirees who donate tens of thousands of volunteer hours every year" (The World Bank n.d.a., 2013, para 1). They serve in the capacity as "mentors, teachers, technical advisors, advocates, coaches, board members and involved

parents". (The World Bank, n.d.a para.1). In 2009, a "population survey of Volunteering in America was conducted in partnership by the National and Community Service and the Bureau of Labor Statistics" (Cramer et al., 2010, p. 1). The study provided data from all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and nearly 200 cities. The survey indicated "63.4 million Americans volunteered, providing 8.1 billion hours equal to an estimated dollar value of $169 billion dollars for their services" (Cramer et al., 2010, p. 1). Services included fundraising, collecting or distributing food, providing general labor or transportation, tutoring, or teaching.

Internationally, nongovernmental organizations such as the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) and the Peace Corps are also providing services in areas of health, education, and the environment. The IFRC, for example, "is the world's largest humanitarian and development network, with volunteers based in 186 National Societies" (IFRC, 2011, p. 7). Interestingly, the IFRC (2011) reported that although it is best known for its role in disasters, "the area in which most volunteers are engaged is health" (p. 8). Furthermore, the economic and social value of volunteers is tremendous. According to the IFRC (2011), "two in every thousand people around the world volunteer for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement" (p. 7) and active volunteers "donated nearly 6 billion US dollars' worth of volunteer services in 2009 worldwide" (p. 7). The social value of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies is reflected in the "essential services" (IFRC, 2011, p. 8) provided by the volunteers that would not be possible without their support.

The Peace Corps a U.S. government run volunteer program, founded in 1961 was at the forefront of international volunteerism. The mission of the Peace Corps is "to promote peace and friendship" (Peace Corps Today, 2013, para 1). Since 1961, more than 215,000 individuals have volunteered their services around the world. Currently the Peace Corps has 7,209 volunteers and

trainees serving 65 countries in the areas of education, health, environment, community

economic development, environment, youth development, and agriculture (Peace Corps Fast

Facts, 2013 n.d.).

Interest in international volunteerism and immersion experiences is addressed in a study

by McBride, Lough and Sherraden (2010) of the perceived impact of international volunteerism.

The authors state "there is a growing interest in the potential of international service to foster

international between peoples and nations and to promote citizenship and international

cooperation" (p.3). Volunteers' immersion experience of working in another country exposes

them to another cultural setting. As people experience another culture, they become aware of

cultural differences and later recognize "commonalities in all cultures" (McBride et al., 2010, p.

4). Levine (2009) asked U. S. student nurses about their international immersion and cultural

experiences. The student nurses reported that living and learning in another culture was a life-

changing experience, both in "their personal and professional lives" (p. 156).

Context of the Study

The Women's Global Connection (WGC), a charitable organization designed to connect

with women in Africa, was founded in 2001 "under the sponsorship of the Sisters of Charity of

the Incarnate Word and in partnership with the University of the Incarnate Word, to further

education and research in the global community" (WGC, 2010, p. 6). Specifically, WGC's

mission is "to promote the learning and leadership capacity of women locally and globally,

particularly in less advantaged countries" (Ettling, Buck, & Caffer, 2010, p. 49). The Sisters of

Charity chose Tanzania and Zambia to begin their work when the women they met there showed

an interest in creating partnerships, collaborating with others, assuming ownership, and learning

about the sustainability of programs. Since the first meeting with the women in Bukoba,

Tanzania, in 2001, there has been a process of empowerment through cross-cultural education and development of leadership that has been instrumental in building relationships with women in Tanzania and Zambia. The guiding principles of social empowerment, promotion of local ownership, and sustainability are facilitated through a process of planning and collaborations with other organizations (WGC, 2010, pp. 2-3).

Since the first immersion trip in 2004 to 2009, 98 volunteers have participated in immersion trips to Tanzania and Zambia. The goals of the immersion trips are "to promote understanding of different cultures aimed at building respectful, collaborative relationships across the globe and to provide education for grass roots women around the world as a means of promoting women's leadership in community development" (WGC, 2010, p. 9). By choosing to participate in these immersion trips, volunteers have shown a sense of dedication in donating their time and in assuming the monetary cost of the trip. They have performed their work in an uncertain environment with people of different cultures, languages, and education. In keeping with the mission of the organization, volunteers have contributed their talents and skills by conducting workshops in economic development and education (WGC, 2010). Specific projects that volunteers have participated in are as follows:

- In Bukoba, Tanzania, volunteers have conducted workshops for women in the development of microfinancing, use of soy as a food product, marketing of soy products, computer literacy, and improving access to clean water. The development of these projects and education garnered from the workshops helped the women realize the need for a central office as a place for the women to meet, to support the use of technology, and to share and teach other women what they had learned (WGC, 2010)

- Volunteers have provided professional training and leadership at Hekima High School, a university preparatory school for girls, located in the Bukoba region. A deficiency in math skills was identified as an obstacle to passing national examinations; a barrier to entering higher education. Volunteers worked with teachers to improve the curriculum in math and to establish a Math Learning Center. Student's math skills have improved, and they are now more prepared for the national exam. In fact Hekima High School "now ranks 6th in its zone of over 200 schools" (WGC, 2010, p. 17).

- In Zambia, in collaboration with three women, volunteers reached out to assist the women in forming the Masupa Nzila Women's Empowerment Association. Volunteers have assisted the women in this effort by providing workshops in small business management and microfinancing (WGC, 2010).

- A 2005 project in Zambia, in collaboration with Catholic Relief Services and volunteers, addressed the need for early childhood education training. Workshops conducted by volunteers have provided training for over 60 preschool teachers in 20 different schools to enhance the classroom environment and curriculum. An online program is available to train 15 teachers as mentors to assist their peers in developing the curriculum "to enhance the learning process for pre-school children" (WGC, 2010, p. 14).

The volunteers who have participated in these immersion trips have been faculty and doctoral students from the University of the Incarnate Word and the broader community. Individuals learned about these volunteer opportunities through word of mouth and by attending informational meetings on immersion trips. Volunteers were selected based on the intent of the trip and whether their skills and knowledge matched the needs of the women they were to help. In keeping with WGC's mission, volunteers had to be willing to work within the principles of the

organization and learn about the culture. All of the participants were informed of the need to finance their trip, to be able to handle travel, and to be prepared for unpredictable circumstances (WGC, n.d.).

When a volunteer was accepted to participate in an immersion trip, information regarding passports, visas, payment for transportation, necessary immunizations, medical and travel insurance, and room and board was provided. Cross-cultural sensitivity was emphasized, and further preparation of volunteers included learning about the country, about the culture of the people they would be meeting, and about the workshops they would be conducting. Volunteers who have participated in WGC's immersion trips continue to participate in activities with the organization. Some volunteers continue to return to Tanzania and Zambia to conduct follow-up workshops and observe the development of projects.

Researcher's Connection

As the researcher I have a close association with the WGC. I first learned about the WGC's mission and immersion trips to Tanzania and Zambia in 2007. In 2008 I participated as a volunteer in an immersion trip to Tanzania and in 2009 I volunteered for a trip to Zambia. During those trips I became acquainted with the people and visited the same places where the participants in this study have volunteered.

Statement of the Problem

There is a wealth of information on the benefits of cross-cultural experiences as such experiences provide global perspectives and increase overall well-being of the participants (Carlson & Widman, 1988; Carsello & Greaser, 1976; Kitsantas & Meyers, 2001; Kuh & Kaufman, 1984; McCabe, 1994). In Levine's (2009) study, student nurses and teachers volunteering in cross-cultural contexts in developing countries explained the experience as life

changing. Bentley and Ellison (2007) and Riberio (2005) suggested that such cross-cultural immersion experiences resulted in a change in cultural beliefs. However, the literature on volunteers' cross-cultural experience in developing countries has been scarce, especially in the areas of what motivates individuals to volunteer and how they change in regards to gaining a deeper understanding of themselves. This study was specifically designed to explore the motivations of these volunteers and how their life changed, if it did, while volunteering in developing countries through immersion experiences.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative, interpretative study was to examine the phenomenon of the volunteers' cross-cultural experience of participating in immersion trips to Tanzania and Zambia. The study also explored whether volunteers believed their cross-cultural experience to be life changing.

Significance of the Study

Given the scarcity of resources on volunteers' motivations and their possible life-changing experiences working in developing countries, this study adds to the body of knowledge both for scholars and practitioners. Given the fact that international volunteerism will grow in the coming years (Lough, 2010), organizations that recruit and prepare volunteers for work in developing countries will benefit from this study as it provides insight into the volunteers' motivation, changes in their beliefs about themselves, cultural beliefs, and perceptions of their contribution and impact.

Research Questions

The study examined the volunteers' cross-cultural experience of participating in immersion trips to Tanzania and Zambia. The following research questions were used to guide this study:

1. What motivated volunteers to participate in immersion trips to Tanzania and Zambia?

2. How has the immersion experience changed the volunteers' beliefs about themselves while engaging in a cross-cultural environment?

3. How has the immersion experience changed the volunteers' cultural beliefs?

4. What is the volunteers' perception of the impact and contribution of their work in Tanzania and Zambia?

Theoretical Perspective

Maslow's theory of self-transcendence was used as the conceptual framework for this study and provided more insight and understanding of the individual's motivation to volunteer and how the experience was life changing. Abraham Maslow was "an important psychologist of modern times,1908-1970" (Koltko-Rivera, 2006, p. 302). Maslow is well known for his development of the hierarchy of needs leading to self-actualization. Koltko-Rivera (2006) discusses Maslow's theory of self-transcendence, an amendment to the hierarchy of needs that include physiological, safety, belonging, esteem, and self-actualization. Although Maslow did refer to self-transcendence in his works, there was very little attention, in the beginning, about this extension to the hierarchy of needs theory (Koltko-Rivera, 2006).

Koltko-Rivera (2006) promoted Maslow's theory of self-transcendence as a "motivational step beyond self-actualization" (p. 302). Self-transcendence is when a person "seeks to further a cause beyond the self and to experience a communion beyond the boundaries

of the self through peak experience" (p. 303). Table 1 shows Koltko-Rivera's (2006) rectified version of Maslow's hierarchy of needs order showing self-transcendence at the top above self-actualization. The theory of self-transcendence can be used to gain some understanding of an individual's motivation to volunteer. Volunteering may also be for altruistic reasons and a rise in a level of consciousness to help others. Individuals who volunteer vary in their beliefs, such as wanting to help others in need, and they have an increased awareness of needs that can be met in volunteering (Hudson & Inkson, 2006).

Table 1

Koltko-Rivera's Version of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

Motivational level	Description of person at this level
Self-transcendence	Seeks to further a cause beyond the self and to experience a communion beyond the boundaries of the self through peak experience.
Self-actualization	Seeks fulfillment of personal potential.
Esteem needs	Seeks esteem through recognition or achievement.
Belongingness and love needs	Seeks affiliation with a group.
Safety needs	Seeks security through order and law.
Physiological (survival) needs	Seeks to obtain the basic necessities of life.

Note. From "Rediscovering the Later Version of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs: Self-Transcendence and Opportunities for Theory, Research, and Unification," by M. E. Koltko-Rivera, 2006, *Review of General Psychology*, *10*(4), p. 303. Copyright 2006 by the American Psychological Association.

Limitations of the Study

This study was limited to a select group of volunteers who have participated in a cross-cultural immersion experience in Tanzania and Zambia. Because the findings relate to a select

group of volunteers, findings will not be easy to replicate. However, the limitations should not influence the results because a study of volunteers' similar experiences from another organization, in similar settings, is feasible (Creswell, 2005).

Definitions of Terms

For the purpose of this study, the following definitions of terms were used.

Volunteer and *Volunteerism* are used interchangeably throughout this study. The online Oxford Dictionaries defines a volunteer as "a person who freely offers to take part in an enterprise or undertake a task" ("Volunteer," n.d., Noun section, no. 1). Volunteerism, described by Snyder and Omoto (2008), "refers to freely chosen and deliberate helping activities that extend over time, without expectation of reward or other compensation and often through formal organizations and that are performed on behalf of causes or individuals who desire assistance" (p. 4).

Immersion was defined by Riberio (2005) as "the opportunity to remove oneself from a majority culture and experience a culture intrinsically different from one's own, such as language/dialect, dress, food, customs beliefs and political history" (p. 12).

Cross-Cultural Competence is a set of congruent behaviors, attitudes, and policies that come together in a system to work in cross-cultural situations (A Monograph of Effective Services for Minority Children Who Are Severely Emotionally Disturbed (2014 para 3).

Summary

Nonprofit organizations understand how vital volunteers are in helping them carry out their mission. As Haski-Leventhal and Bargal (2008) stated, volunteers are "the backbone of society and voluntary organizations" (p. 68). Volunteers with the WGC, for example, have carried out the organization's mission by participating in immersion trips to Tanzania and

Zambia and by promoting women's leadership. Specifically, volunteers have assisted women in developing income-generating and micro-lending activities. They have also worked with girls from Hekima High School to improve their math scores, which made it possible for the girls to be more prepared to succeed on national examinations as a requisite to enter the university. The work in Tanzania and Zambia and the number of volunteers who have participated in immersion trips have generated a desire for other individuals to volunteer for this type of experience.

In this study Maslow's theory of self-transcendence was used to explore whether the volunteers' believed their cross-cultural experience to be life changing. The findings of the study will be of interest to those who want to study and learn about volunteers' cross-cultural immersion experience in a developing country. In addition, insight into the volunteers' motivation, changes in their beliefs about themselves and in their cultural beliefs, and their perceptions of their contribution and impact may aid organizations that recruit and prepare volunteers for a cross-cultural experience in a developing country.

Chapter 2: Review of the Literature

A review of the literature targeted the contributions, definitions, and characteristics of the volunteers' role in society. The experience of volunteers working in various settings and the meaning of their experience were also examined. The focus of the review however was on the volunteers' work and experience in international settings, especially those experiences related to changes in their beliefs about themselves and in their cultural beliefs and whether the volunteers' believed their cross-cultural experience to be life changing. The terms volunteer and volunteerism were used interchangeably in the literature review.

Growth of Volunteering

The literature cites the growing trend and importance of volunteers participating domestically and globally. Reingold and Nesbit (2006) studied the volunteer growth in America since 1974 and found that there was an increase in the number of adults volunteering. The demand for volunteers is driven by the needs of nonprofit organizations and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) to accomplish their mission. Many nonprofit organizations and NGOs are dependent on volunteers to provide help for internal operations and for those services offered to the community. Episodic and short-term volunteerism has increased, which provides more opportunities for those individuals that cannot commit for extended periods of time but still wish to serve (Canadian International Development Agency, 2005).

International volunteerism, characterized by participants devoting their time and energy in another country, is another dimension of volunteering. As stated by Sherraden, Stringham, Sow, and McBride (2006), this type of volunteering is an opportunity to foster cross-cultural understanding, global citizenship, and global peace. The important role of volunteers' work in developing countries was recognized by the UN General Assembly in 2011, marking the 10th

anniversary of the International Year of Volunteers. Currently, volunteers are contributing significantly to humanitarian response, peace, and development worldwide. Volunteers working with NGOs, for example, are playing an important role in achieving the Millennium Development Goals (Volunteerism Worldwide: News, views, and resources, 2014).

World leaders met in 2000 at a Millennium Summit to adopt the UN Millennium Declaration "committing their nations to a new global partnership to reduce extreme poverty and setting out a series of time-bound targets, with a deadline of 2015, that have become known as the Millennium Development Goals [MDGs]" (UN Millennium Project, n.d., para. 1). The MDGs are also defined as "basic human rights—the rights of each person on the planet to health, education, shelter, and security" (UN Millennium Project, n.d., para. 2). The MDGs are as follows:

> Goal 1: Eradicate Extreme Hunger and Poverty
> Goal 2: Achieve Universal Primary Education
> Goal 3: Promote Gender Equality and Empower Women
> Goal 4: Reduce Child Mortality
> Goal 5: Improve Maternal Health
> Goal 6: Combat HIV/AIDS, Malaria and other diseases
> Goal 7: Ensure Environmental Sustainability
> Goal 8: Develop a Global Partnership for Development
> (UN Millennium Project, n.d.).

Significant progress has been made in achieving many of the MDGs. The number of people in the world living in extreme poverty declined by an estimated 103 million, but there are disparities across the world. According to the UN Millennium Project (n.d.), Sub-Saharan Africa "is the epicenter of crisis, with continuing food insecurity, a rise of extreme poverty, stunningly high child and maternal mortality, and large numbers of people living in slums" (Millennium Project 2006, para. 5).

Definition of Volunteer and Volunteerism

What defines an individual as a volunteer? There are a number of definitions pertaining to the term volunteer and volunteerism. The online Oxford Dictionaries defines a volunteer as "a person who freely offers to take part in an enterprise or undertake a task" ("Volunteer," n.d., Noun section, no. 1). The online American Heritage Dictionary defines volunteerism as "use or reliance of volunteers" ("Volunteerism," n.d., Definition no. 2).

Motivations for Volunteering

The reasons to volunteer may vary from a desire to help, to contribute a skill that is needed, or to learn and gain experience (Hudson & Inkson, 2006). Some researchers state that individuals who volunteer to work in a foreign country may be influenced by one or more factors, such as age, work experience, and profession. An individual's motivation to volunteer may also include wanting to connect with other volunteers and the people they want to help. In addition, volunteers may be driven by their values, such as altruism, humanitarianism, and opportunities for a learning experience (Hudson & Inkson, 2006; Sherr, 2008). Similarly, Grönlund (2011) affirmed that volunteering fulfilled different needs and goals of the volunteer. For some individuals, the focus may be on helping others because of their values, which may be influenced by family and religion. Snyder and Omoto (2008) listed factors that they believed might be related to the nature of volunteering:

- Provide a service for others or to further a cause involves some amount of decision-making.
- Activities are delivered over a period of time with an interest in helping actions that extended a specified time.
- The activity is based on the person's own goals and involves serving people or causes who desire help.
- Activity is performed on behalf of people or causes and commonly through agencies or organizations. (p. 3)

Benefits of Volunteering

Laverie and McDonald (2007) and the Canadian International Development Agency (2005), discussed the economic impact of volunteering that benefits others when governments are unable or unwilling to provide a needed service. A personal benefit for volunteers is that the experience may be seen as an enriching one because it merges their self-interests with the needs of the organization (Canadian International Development Agency, 2005; Snyder & Omoto, 2008). The personal experience can also be related to Maslow's theory of self-transcendence, which follows self-actualization. As stated by Koltko-Rivera (2006), "volunteerism provides people with opportunity to experience the dignity, justice, meaning, mastery and love" (p. 306).

Profiles of Tanzania and Zambia

Tanzania and Zambia are among the poorer developing countries. Some knowledge of the geography, demography and economy provides some insight about the conditions people in these countries encounter. See map of Tanzania, figure 1, showing the bordering countries and the Indian Ocean. Zambia is a landlocked country. See map, figure 2, with bordering countries.

According to a Central Intelligence Agency economy overview Tanzania has one of the poorest economies per capita income. Despite a strong economy in Zambia, poverty remains a significant problem "made worse by a high rate of HIV/AIDS and market distortions" (CIA, para 1). Low-level human resource development in Tanzania and Zambia has been evaluated in terms of health care, nutrition, and education. Access to health care is strained by both countries having less than one doctor per 1,000 people. Malnutrition among children is high as reflected in the percentage of children under five years of age.

Figure 1. Map of Tanzania. From CIA Maps, by the Central Intelligence Agency, (2003).

Figure 2. Map of Zambia. From Miramon Map 2014.

Both countries also have a high prevalence of HIV/AIDS. See table 2 for demographics of

population, literacy rates, level of access to health care, prevalence of HIV/AIDS, and level of

income.

Table 2

Demographic and Economic Indicators

	Tanzania	Zambia
Population	49,639,138	14,638,505
Median Age	7.4 years	16.7 years
Life Expectancy	61.24 years	51.83 years
Literacy	67.8 percent	61.4 percent
Physician Density	0.01/1000 (2006)	0.07/1000 (2010)
Underweight Children 5 Years and Under	16.2 percent (2010)	14. 9 Percent (2007)
Living with HIV/AIDS	472,400(2012)	1,606,400 (2012)
GNI (U.S. dollars, 2012)*	$570.00	$1350.00

Note. Adapted from Central Intelligence Agency,Worldfactbook (2014).
* World Bank Indicators

Cross-Cultural Experience

Adapting and learning about another culture is related to how individuals perceive their own culture and how they perceive the ideas of another culture. Not understanding the differences and commonalities of people in a different ethnic and socioeconomic environment can be overwhelming. When volunteers engage in a cross-cultural environment, they may experience fear, anxiety, and feel like an outsider. As volunteers engage in the environment, they become more sensitive to the culture and more accepting of cultural differences (Truax, 2008).

Individuals may be at different levels of cultural competency when they begin working in a cross-cultural environment. Savicki (2008) presented Dearhoff's model of intercultural competency, noting that the process of cultural competency begins with the individual's attitudes

and the "respect in valuing other cultures" (p. 36). An initial impression of individuals from the Western world who encounter people in another culture is that the people they meet appear to be like them in attitudes and beliefs. This reaction is reinforced when the people they meet speak the same language and are often dressed like them (Storti, 2007).

Being cognizant of cultural differences that may be encountered in a cross-cultural environment is important in adjusting to the cultural setting. How one adapts to another culture is based on the individual's awareness of cultural competence from his or her own perspective and the encounters the individual had in other cultural settings. Cultural competence is described in part in the Monograph of Effective Services for Minority Children Who Are Severely Emotionally Disturbed (2014) "as a set of values, behaviors, attitudes, and practices within a system, organization, program or among individuals and which enables them to work effectively cross culturally" (2014, para 9). At the individual level cultural competence is to be able "to understand and respect, values, attitudes, beliefs, and mores across cultures (para 15). Campinha-Bacote states a similar definition of cultural competence as a "set of congruent behaviors, attitudes, and practices and policies that come together in a system, agency or amongst professionals enables that system agency or those professionals to work effectively in cross-cultural situations" (as cited in Bentley & Ellison, 2007, p. 207).

Being aware of patterns of communication and language barriers is important in adapting to the culture as well. Communication in cross-cultural encounters may be the first barrier to overcome. A part of cultural proficiency is being sensitive to how "language interacts" (Sullivan & Cottone, 2010, p. 357). Individuals who work in a cross-cultural environment may feel their work is handicapped when they do not share a common language and are not familiar with communication patterns. A communication difficulty may relate to a volunteer's experience in

not sharing a common language. In a study of student nurses' experiences in cross-cultural care encounters, the student nurses felt limited in providing information to immigrant patients when they were not communicating in a "common verbal language" (Jirwe, Gerrish, & Emami, 2010, p. 418).

Immersion Experience

Riberio (2005) states that an immersion experience may be defined as being removed from a familiar environment and culture. Individuals participating in an immersion trip and working in another country may experience difficulties such as (a) not having conveniences such as potable water, (b) witnessing extreme poverty, (c) having language difficulties, (d) experiencing an inadequate transportation infrastructure, and (e) feeling overwhelmed with the different customs and traditions (Riberio, 2005). Truax (2002) explored the adjustments and difficulties that employees experience while working with other cultures. She found that preparation can reduce the uncertainty and culture shock when traveling abroad, and discovered that there were individual differences in adapting to a different cultural setting. Truax (2008) explained that cultural adjustments may depend on "emotional stability, sociability, need for cognition, need for structure, and tolerance of ambiguity, and expectations" (p. 2). Ryan and Twibell (2002) believed that educational preparation, knowledge of culture, personal characteristics, and professional experiences are all variables that affect how well individuals adapt to different cultural environments. Riberio (2005), in her study, described her experience of accompanying adult learners to South Africa and adapting to another culture. She used the metaphor "cultural plunge" to describe her immersion experience in another cultural environment (Riberio, 2005, p. 121).

Basham (2009) also discussed the importance of preparation and what happens when the volunteer was not prepared for what to anticipate. In his study of career missionaries, the volunteers were to be based in Kenya and Tanzania for about a year or longer. Their orientation did not prepare them for the environment in which they would be working. They faced loneliness and felt others did not support them. Many of the volunteers returned home in a few weeks to a few months feeling guilty and depressed that they were not able to complete their time in the countries they were to serve.

Theories of Life Change and Transformative Learning

There are various theories that account for changes in volunteers' beliefs about themselves as a result of their cross-cultural immersion experience. Individuals who have volunteered to work in a cross-cultural environment speak of the experience as transformative. Mezirow (2000) defined transformative learning as the following:

> Transformative learning refers to the process by which we transform our taken-for-granted frames of reference (meaning perspectives, habits of mind, mind-sets) to make them more inclusive, discriminating, open, emotionally capable of change, and reflective so that they may generate beliefs and opinions that will prove more true or justified to guide action. (pp. 7–8)

In a review of Mezirow's transformative learning theory, Kitchenham (2008) declared that central to Mezirow's theory is "critical self-reflection" (p. 112). The theory of self-reflection is important because "meaning is individualistic and found inside the learner and teacher rather than prescribed by external influences" (Kitchenham, 2008, p. 113). Another aspect of transformative learning is the personal values of the volunteer. Personal values of the individual

are at the heart of culture. As these values change, there is openness to change and self-transcendence (Knafo, Roccas, & Sagiv, 2011).

Erikson's psychosocial development theory also known as the life cycle theory (as cited in Sherr, 2008) explains eight stages through which a person goes through from birth to adulthood. At each stage, the person experiences a psychosocial crisis between two forces (see Table 3). Erikson's theory was influential because it considered development beyond adulthood. In addition, the life cycle theory is more universal because it applies "to all groups of people" (as cited in Sherr, 2008, p. 40). Erikson's theory in this study was used to explain the volunteers' experience, which varied depending on the individual's level of maturity and what they experienced at a given time.

Table 3

Erickson's Life Cycle

	Approximate age	Psychosocial conflict
Stage 1	birth–1 year	Trust versus mistrust
Stage 2	ages 2–3	Autonomy versus shame and doubt
Stage 3	ages 3–5	Initiative versus guilt
Stage 4	ages 6–12	Industry versus inferiority
Stage 5	ages 12–20	Identity versus role confusion
Stage 6	early–late 20s	Intimacy versus isolation
Stage 7	late 20s–50s	Generative versus stagnation
Stage 8	late adulthood	Integrity versus despair

Note. Based on a version by Sherr (2008) in *Social Work With Volunteers* (p. 40).

Haski-Leventhal and Bargal (2008) believed that as individuals become emotionally involved in a cross-cultural immersion experience, they may later report the experience as transforming, which gives meaning to their experience. In their study of volunteers, the authors outlined the stages of volunteering and described how volunteers transitioned through the various stages. The beginning stage is when the volunteer joins the organization. This stage, referred to as the "socialization process" (p. 74), is when the individual learns about the organization and may become emotionally involved when he or she helps in an activity. Following the first experience, there is a sense of renewal, and the individual then becomes an "established volunteer" (p. 74). An individual may also have a transformational experience when "giving actual help" (p. 83) as a volunteer.

Transformational experiences can take on different forms. As indicated by Peterson del Mar (2011), Peace Corps volunteers who went to Africa in the 1960s described their experience as transforming. They went to share the "American way of life" (p. 1) and with the idealism and optimism, that they could change and help the people to have a better life. However, they lacked an understanding of the cultural environment and the people they encountered, and they met resistance when trying to help. Their romantic vision of Africa was shattered and instead of believing they could make a change in the lives of people, they were changed by the people they were there to help (Peterson del Mar, 2011).

Summary

Volunteers freely give of their time without compensation to help in a time of need. The interest and participation of international volunteering is an opportunity for cross-cultural understanding, global citizenship, and global peace (Sherraden et al.,

2006).   Individuals benefit society when governments and others are unable or unwilling to provide a service. On an individual level the volunteer may see the experience as an enriching one because it merged with his or her self-interests and the needs of the organization. An individual's motivation to volunteer may differ and be influenced by such values as altruism, humanitarianism, and opportunities for a learning experience. Influencing factors, other than the desire to help, are age, education, work experience, profession, and religion.

A cultural understanding of people and the environment is necessary when working in developing countries. Participating in an immersion experience is a way to become more aware of one's own cultural beliefs and to increase one's own cultural competency, such as respect for cultural differences, when adapting and learning of cultural differences. Studies citing difficulties faced by volunteers working in a cross-cultural environment emphasized the importance of preparing volunteers on what to anticipate in a cross-cultural environment and the nature of the work. Difficulties adapting to other cultures are found to be, in part, due to a lack of preparation or the type of preparation.

Individuals volunteering in a cross-cultural environment, such as those participating in immersion trips to Tanzania and Zambia, have changed their beliefs about themselves and have described their experience as life changing or transforming

Erickson's life cycle theory (Sherr, 2008) explains the volunteers' level of maturity and what they experienced during their immersion experience. Mezirow's (2000) transformative theory addresses these characteristics that many volunteers share. As explained by Mezirow (2000), the theory focuses on "how we learn to negotiate and act on our own purposes, values, feelings, and meanings rather than those we have uncritically assimilated from others" (p. 8). The change in

beliefs that takes place following a cross-cultural experience may be through self-reflection and through stages as the volunteer becomes involved in helping those in need.

Chapter 3: Methodology

Rationale for the Study

This study examined the phenomenon of the volunteers' cross-cultural experience of participating in immersion trips to Tanzania and Zambia. The study also explored whether volunteers believed their cross-cultural experience to be life changing. According to Bogdan and Biklen (1982) "meaning is of special concern" (p. 29). A qualitative research method and an interpretive approach were utilized to "understand the meaning people have constructed about their world and their experiences" (Merriam, 2002, pp. 4-5). An aspect of qualitative research that was also used was an inductive approach to allow themes and categories to emerge during analysis of the data without a preconceived hypothesis of what might be an expected outcome (Yin, 2011).

Researcher's Assumption

There was an assumption that an immersion experience in a cross-cultural environment in an economically developing country was life changing. When volunteers work in a developing country, they have the opportunity to observe how their aid and assistance can empower people to better their lives and in turn apply what they have learned in their own communities.

Participants

The criteria for selecting participants for the study were volunteers who had participated in one or more immersion trips to Tanzania and Zambia from 2006 to 2012. Attempts were made to vary the sample of volunteers who had traveled during the years 2004 to 2012. The sample of 13 participants met the criteria and agreed to be interviewed about their cross-cultural experience in Tanzania and Zambia.

Role of the Researcher

 I have been actively involved with the WGC as a volunteer and have participated in immersion trips to Tanzania and Zambia. Participants in the study were aware of my involvement with the WGC and participation in immersion trips to Tanzania and Zambia. The position as an insider discussed by Denzin &Lincoln (2011) allows for "insights that outsiders could not or, conversely, that their insider status may have kept them from seeing operative cultural logics" (p. 663).

Protection of Human Subjects

 Ethical standards to protect the identity and confidentiality of the individual participants were maintained. Each participant was provided an informed consent stating the purpose of the study and that their participation in the study was voluntary (see Appendix A). They were informed that demographic information about their educational level, place of employment, and previous travel to other countries would be requested (see Appendix B). The participants were also told that during the interview, they would be asked questions about their immersion experience (see Appendix C). Participants were informed that all their information was confidential and their identity would not be revealed neither in the findings of the study nor in any future publications about the study. Names in the study are pseudonyms to protect the identity of the individual. Each of the participants read and signed the consent form granting their permission to participate in the study and to have their interview recorded. In addition, all the participants were informed that an Institutional Review Board (IRB) Approval Form had been submitted to gain permission for the study (see Appendix D), that the Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI) had been accomplished (see Appendix E), and that a research protocol had been followed (see Appendix F).

Data Collection Procedures

Eleven face-to-face and two telephone interviews were conducted to collect data. A series

of open-ended questions were used to guide the interviews. Other documentation of volunteer

activities in Tanzania and Zambia, found in reports and articles, were used to supplement the

data. Participants were informed as to why and how they were chosen for the study. In addition,

the participants were told that their responses to the questions and any subsequent interviews

were confidential.

Data **Analysis Procedures**

Following each interview I made notes and listened to the recording for a general sense

of emerging themes. Each recorded interview was then transcribed into a written format.

Analysis began with a process of coding responses for interpretation to look for emerging themes

and categories (Creswell, 2009; Marshall & Rossman, 2006). Transcripts were read several times

to look for and label codes or categories of data from words and phrases that were emerging

from the data. The questions and responses from the transcripts were then scanned and key

phrases were highlighted to identify a code or category. Multiple codes were identified and

labeled from the reading of each transcript. The codes were then collapsed into five major

themes that emerged from responses to questions used during the interviews. Subthemes

emerged from the codes identified from the major themes. Exact words from the participants

interviewed, "invivo codes," (Creswell, 2013, p. 185) were used in coding the themes.

When the researcher is the instrument, biases and subjectivity may occur. Merriam

(2002) stated that a method to monitor bias should be identified to show "shaping the collection

and interpretation of the data" (p. 5). As the data were collected and analyzed I sought not have a

preconceived interpretation of each participant's immersion experience. I also made a conscious

attempt to not identify and compare my immersion experience with the participant's description of their experience.

Trustworthiness and Credibility

Several methods for assessing internal validity and reliability of qualitative studies are recognized by researchers. For this study I used strategies recommended by Merriam (2002) and Marshall and Rossman (2011) to ensure validity. Triangulation, a well-known strategy, "using multiple investigators, sources of data, or data collection methods to confirm emerging findings" (Merriam, 2002, p. 31) was specifically utilized. Member checks were used by having a sample of the participants review the results to see if they recognized what had been derived from an interpretation of the raw data. Another method used for ensuring validity was peer review. This was accomplished by having a colleague familiar with the study and someone not familiar with the study scan the findings for plausibility. Finally after submerging and engaging in the data collection long enough there was an evaluation from hearing or seeing the same things over that no new data was revealed (Creswell, 2009; Merriam, 2002).

According to Merriam (2002), reliability is difficult to assess in qualitative research because replicating the findings would unlikely yield the same results. In assessing reliability, the findings and results were questioned for consistency and dependability. As the researcher I then asked myself if the findings made sense. In addition, an audit trail was used to explain how the results were derived. A written account detailing how the study was conducted, the analysis of the data collected, and categories determined was maintained throughout the study. I listened to the participants' interviews prior to transcription and one or more times after transcription to verify accuracy. Accuracy of the participants' quotes was verified by checking the transcriptions of the recordings.

Limitations of the Study

The study consisted of volunteers' cross-cultural experiences in Tanzania and Zambia. There were twelve females and one male that participated in the study. Two participants were only available to be interviewed by telephone. These two participants were limited in the time they were available to be interviewed. As a result I was unable to ask more probing questions. The ability to respond to physical emotional responses from facial expressions was also a limiting factor. In one case I did have the opportunity to meet one of the participants prior to the phone interview. I had not met or communicated with the other participant prior to the interview.

Summary

A qualitative study using an interpretive inquiry approach was used to examine the volunteers' cross-cultural experience of participating in immersion trips to Tanzania and Zambia as possibly transforming and life changing. As the researcher I was aware of my own bias related to participating in immersion trips. Therefore, when collecting and analyzing the data I distanced myself from the assumptions to avoid influencing the results. Furthermore, validity and reliability were assessed to ensure trustworthiness, and credibility of the findings was used to determine validity. According to Merriam (2000), reliability is difficult to assess in qualitative research. Methods used to assess reliability of the findings were careful reading of the transcriptions, checking and rechecking the participants' recordings for accuracy, and maintaining a written account pertaining to the collection and analysis of the data.

An important aspect of any research involving human subjects was to ensure ethical standards were followed and procedures for protecting the identity and confidentiality of the participants were in place. All 13 individuals participating in the study were asked to sign a consent form, and each participant was provided with a copy. The consent form stated the

purpose of the study and that they could withdraw from participation without prejudice at any time during the study.

Chapter 4: Results

The purpose of the study was to examine the phenomenon of the volunteers' cross-culture experience of participating in immersion trips to Tanzania and Zambia. The study also explored whether volunteers believed their cross-cultural experience to be life changing. The following research questions were used to guide this study:

1. What motivated volunteers to participate in immersion trips to Tanzania and Zambia?

2. How has the immersion experience changed the volunteers' beliefs about themselves while engaging in a cross-cultural environment?

3. How has the immersion experience changed the volunteers' cultural beliefs?

4. What is the volunteers' perception of the impact and contribution of their work in Tanzania and Zambia?

Thirteen volunteers that participated in immersion trips with the WGC were purposefully selected for the study. Participants were contacted by e-mail, and follow-up phone calls were made to arrange for the time and place for the interviews. Face-to-face interviews were conducted in the library at a university with nine of the participants, one was conducted in a quiet place near some faculty offices, one interview was conducted in a restaurant, and two interviews were conducted by telephone. Prior to starting the interview, the individuals were informed of the purpose of the study. Participants were given a consent form to read and sign that outlined what the study was about, the purpose of the study, and that the interview would be recorded. The participants were also given a copy of the consent form with names of contacts if they had any further questions. Table 4 shows the demographic information that was collected from the participants in the study.

Table 4

Participant Demographics

Variables	No. of participants
Gender	
Female	12
Male	1
Age	
30–39 years	4
40–49 years	4
50–59 years	2
60+ years	3
Education	
Bachelor's	1
Master's	5
Doctoral candidate	2
PhD	5
Last immersion trip[a]	
2006	2
2007	1
2008	1
2009	1
2010	2
2011	3
2012	3

[a] The date of the last immersion trip does not reflect the number of immersion trips with the Women's Global Connection.

Seven of the participants were in the doctoral program when they learned about the mission and the opportunities to participate in an immersion trip with the WGC. Four of the participants became interested in immersion trips to Tanzania and Zambia from an acquaintance with the WGC. One participant was a faculty member from a university when she learned about the WGC, and another participant was in the master's degree program when she learned about the WGC. During the interviews I learned that it was the first immersion trip for 10 of the participants and the second immersion trip for three of the participants. One participant had gone

on an immersion trip twice as a volunteer with the WGC and one time as a paid volunteer with another international organization.

Findings

Ten open-ended questions were used to elicit responses and capture the essence of the participants' immersion experience. Quotations used in the profile for each participant and responses to questions are exact words from the transcription of the participant's interview. A profile introducing each volunteer in the study includes some background information about the individual and his or her experiences of participating in an immersion trip.

Participant Profiles

Susan. Susan is in her 60s and has been involved with volunteering much of her adult life. She became interested in the immersion trips to Tanzania and Zambia when working on various activities with the WGC. Her interest was further sparked by her commitment to social issues affecting women. Prior to participating in an immersion trip to Tanzania, she had traveled as a tourist to other countries all over Europe, the Caribbean, and the South Pacific. Currently Susan volunteers for a group that works with three orphanages and three churches in northern Mexico. She is helping to start some economically viable enterprises and has introduced an economic model, similar to WGC's model, which might be more sustainable.

Susan developed a strong interest in Africa from growing up in a household with parents who had lived in Kenya before she was born. She grew up in a household surrounded by African artifacts and a family who "always talked about Africa" (personal communication, March 6, 2013). She said it was "like it was something that was not far away" (personal communication, March 6, 2013). When she talked about Africa and what she had learned, she went on to say,

"because of growing up and hearing about it, then I knew someday I would go" (personal communication, March 6, 2013).

Susan had prepared herself for what she would be doing in Tanzania and the people she would be meeting. Building relationships with the women was the highlight of the trip. She was impressed with all the wonderful women that she met and enjoyed seeing them express their joy through singing and dancing. As she got to know the women individually, she realized she wanted to continue working with the women in Tanzania. Susan expressed interest in taking future immersion trips.

Joan. Joan is a nurse in her 40s. Throughout her career, she was employed by the Department of Defense and has lived and worked in Thailand, the Philippines, Korea, Germany, and Spain. She has traveled to Ethiopia and Turkey as a tourist as well. When she retired from her previous job, she sought employment at a university and is currently on the faculty in a school of nursing.

Shortly after arriving at the university and assuming her duties Joan felt like something was missing in her life. She stated, "I was getting my new assignment and getting my courses I needed to teach and… I thought I needed to do something" (personal communication, March 21, 2013). Then she saw something in the "paper, something in it about Reach Out Africa Project" and later attended some "briefings in the library" regarding immersion trips (personal communication, March 21, 2013). When Joan heard the details about the immersion trips to Tanzania and Zambia, her first reaction was, "I just saw it as an opportunity to travel, because I love to travel" (personal communication, March 21, 2013). As she learned more about the WGC, she realized she wanted to get involved: "I guess it was that need and that desire in me to

wanting to do something, you know, in the helping role" (personal communication, March 21, 2013).

Joan decided that Zambia would be the best place where she could use her expertise. She had learned of the devastation of AIDS in Zambia and the incredible loss that family's experience. Because she had a background in psychology, she thought she could create a program for those suffering with grief and loss. She thought this kind of program would help people with the "whole grieving process, and how do you cope with losing your family, your whole family?" (personal communication, March 21, 2013).

With regard to her trip, Joan said, "we prepared ourselves for culture shock," but when she arrived and saw the poverty, "it was culture shock" (personal communication, March 21, 2013). Although she had traveled to other countries, she had "not seen that level of poverty" (personal communication, March 21, 2013). However, she was impressed by "the people with a heart just a warm heart and had the spirit of wanting to do better" (personal communication, March 21, 2013). When she was asked about the highlight of her trip, Joan said:

> [It was] the appreciation that I saw from the people. They were so appreciative of the things that we had to offer and were really into sharing their joy in song and dance… . It was just a very, very enlightening eye opening experience, just truly outstanding learning experience for me to do those things. I would love to continue and do more. (personal communication, March 21, 2013)

Sheila. Sheila is in her early 50s and is a high school teacher. She teaches World Geography to ninth graders and Comparative Religion to 12th graders. She has participated as a teacher in study abroad programs in Egypt, South Africa, China, and Germany and has traveled to Vietnam as a tourist. She learned about WGC through a friend. Because of her interest in Africa along with the needs of developing countries she wanted to participate in an immersion trip and be more involved in "understanding the daily lives of people". (personal communication,

March 27, 2013). Her initial reaction when she arrived in Bukoba, Tanzania, was, "just that region of Africa, you know, was of great interest to see Lake Victoria, the people, difference in climate, and the elevation that part of Africa sits. I was just very impressed with the women" (personal communication, March 27, 2013).

Sheila said that the difference between being involved in study abroad programs and participating in an immersion trip was "being part of the workshop and listening to them and interacting with them. It was a great experience. I would go back" (personal communication March 27, 2013). She also stated that she enjoys telling her students about her experience:

> I used several of my experiences in class talking to them about everything. What the women are doing with the water, to the difference in the climate, the men fishing out on the lake every day and running down the street selling their fresh fish. (personal communication, March 27, 2013)

Sheila's final thoughts about her immersion experience were the following:

> I think it just is such an important experience. It is one thing to sit back and help raise
> money for these groups, but to go there and just to see that the efforts back home are
> making. You can't beat it. I truly believe in immersion programs and the strength.
> Because you come back and you tell people, they get excited and their interest grows
> from it. And they want to know more. (personal communication March 27, 2013)

David. David is in his 30s and has experience teaching high school English as a second language to refugee students. He has traveled to the United Kingdom and Uganda as a tourist and to Ireland as a volunteer. David learned about internship opportunities during a meeting with a nonprofit organization in April 2011. He thought about participating in an immersion trip and after receiving clearance from his family he decided to go. He stated:

> I didn't really know what it would entail except going to Africa… . I originally wanted to
> explore opportunities for an internship in China and Southeast Asia . . . since then I put

those feelings aside. I think there is a lot of good work I think I can do in Africa. (personal communication, April 4, 2013)

In Tanzania, David was asked to teach and assist the women in Bukoba to learn how to use newer laptop technology. However, he wondered, "could this many years of teaching assist me in helping, in introducing this new technology to this women's group" (personal communication, April 4, 2013). Although, he said, "there was a lot of doubt, a lot of praying about it, a lot of worry, but things work out as they usually do" (personal communication, April 4, 2013).

A highlight of the trip, he said, "was actually going to hospital my second day there, to see a sick loved one, going to a funeral, going to a graduation, going to a retirement party and forced to dance with all the company" (personal communication, April 4, 2013). Another highlight was when it came close to the time he was to leave and return to the United States. Two nights before he left, the family he was living with in Bukoba took him to dinner at a club on the lake. He said, "I knew it was coming to an end, and we had a great time" (personal communication, April 4, 2013). As he was listening to Tanzanian music, David had an epiphany: "the epiphany was if I was in another situation in life, I wasn't married, I wasn't a father, I probably would have taken my ticket and just tore it up, I wanted to stay" (personal communication, April 4, 2013). He expressed his desire to return and said, "I got the sense to go back, but I don't know how, I don't know in what capacity, and I don't know if I am wanted back" (personal communication, April 4, 2013). He described his immersion experience as the following:

> I can't ever stop thinking about it. It taught me, if I immersed myself in different cultures, it taught me to feel again and to understand and most importantly to listen for difference. (personal communication, April 4, 2103)

Andrea. Andrea is in her 40s. She is currently a high school counselor and is pursuing her doctorate. It was through the doctoral program that she became interested in the WGC. She said:

> Somebody had given out a flyer during one of my classes, that just kind of talked about WGC and then I went attended one of the global summit things. When I went to do that, that's when I really learned what the organization was about. (personal communication, April 22, 2013)

Her desire to participate in an immersion trip was actually based on the fact that she wanted to join the Peace Corp after graduating from college.

When Andrea was asked about her initial reaction upon arrival in Tanzania, she said she had been told that people would be there to greet the group. She said, "the greeting was wonderful. All of these people waiting for you" (personal communication, April 22, 2013). When asked what was the highlight of her experience, she replied that every day was a constant highlight after another: "The very first time we went into a village it was overwhelming and exciting" (personal communication, April 22, 2013). She added:

> Another thing that was a highlight was going to the girl's school. Because for me, I work in education in a high school, to go and be with those girls was amazing. It was amazing to be with girls that age, who truly appreciate going to school. (personal communication, April 22, 2013)

Andrea also expressed a desire to return to Tanzania:

> I wish I could go back to them every year because I really get drained by{the work I do here}. That's the kind of place I could go and feel like, wow, there is a place out there where learning has a real learning experience. (personal communication, April 22, 2013)

Helen. Helen is also in her 40s. She is a teacher at a local college where she prepares individuals to teach and work in early childhood education. She has participated in two immersion trips to Zambia. Prior to participating in an immersion trip, she had been volunteering with the WGC to assist with curriculum writing and to develop training programs for early

childhood education teachers. When Helen learned about WGC's mission and the work in Zambia, she felt it would be a different type of teaching. She stated she was more "adventuresome than most of the people" (personal communication, April 30, 2013) in preparing for the trip to Zambia because she did not see a need for much preparation for what she might see. She said, "I went as though I was going to another part of town" (personal communication, April 30, 2013). Helen also felt she was prepared to manage any inconveniences, such as availability of drinking water and hygiene needs. Yet she was surprised at seeing places that looked "so much more alike [from] what she had left than different. [Saying] I think there was a McDonald's or Kentucky Fried Chicken" [and she] "couldn't stop laughing" [at what she was seeing]. (personal communication, April 30, 2013).

Another thing that Helen remembered about Zambia was its beauty: "there's that rich beauty of the land in a place that needs help and still has its rawness. It was amazing" (personal communication, April 30, 2013). She also appreciated Zambia at night:

> At night it's dark because they don't have all the lights, store lights, the expressway lights, and home lights. You know, we forget they live in [an] area where you really see the stars. That I have not seen before and I was happy. (personal communication, April 30, 2013)

Helen described what it was like to work with the teachers in Zambia as well:

> When I come back I am energized to teach again. . . . teachers are in huts, without windows, no lighting and their right in their teaching. And they see that as a mission and a purpose. And so when you go back and you see that, that's what I want to do forever. (personal communication, April 30, 2013)

Angela. Angela, in her 60s, has a master's degree in early childhood development and a master's degree in religious studies. Prior to her current teaching position in an all-girls Catholic high school, she had "worked 17 years for the government running child development services" (personal communication, May 8, 2013). She became involved with the WGC when she

overheard some women "talking about Africa and starting these trips" (personal communication, May 8, 2013). She said, "I listened a little bit and then I started asking questions and then I went to the meetings and I volunteered to go" (personal communication, May 8, 2013).

Angela has made two trips to Zambia as a volunteer and one trip with an international organization to work with teachers to design programs for early childhood education programs. When the researcher asked her about how she prepared for the trip, she said, "there were a lot of meetings and people who had been there or knew about the cultures and customs. And of course I read everything online" (personal communication, May 8, 2013). But as Angela further explained, she was not truly prepared stating:

> I don't think you can prepare yourself for the cultural shock, the poverty, the extreme poverty. And then on the other side of the flip of the coin, the people in Zambia are so grateful and so spiritual…. I got more that I gave, and I still communicate with some of the people over there. (personal communication, May 8, 2013)

Overall, she declared that the greatest impact of her experience was "the friendships and the relationships" (personal communication, May 8, 2013).

Linda. Linda is in her 50s and has traveled to South Africa, Egypt, Israel, the Bahamas, Mexico, the Philippines, Korea, Japan, Spain, Greece, Germany, France, Italy, and Austria as a tourist and has lived in Guam and on the Greek island of Crete. She became interested in the WGC through the doctoral program. Linda became interested in participating in an immersion trip when she attended a conference and heard presentations from the women of Tanzania.

> I didn't participate in the conference and after that I saw some of the video and pictures of women and got interested. Then the next year, there was the outreach program, so it was determined that I would go on one of the missions and participate in all the preparatory meetings and training. (personal communication, May 15, 2013)

When asked what her initial reaction was to the place and the people, she expressed, "I was very excited, very happy. I was so happy to see the people and all of the colors and all the

bustling" (personal communication, May 15, 2013). Linda especially enjoyed seeing the

women's excitement and happiness when they received their certificates of attendance.

> But, you know, just to have the women come up and hug me and get their certificate and take a picture with them. And there was always singing and dancing. But the meetings with the women, I just saw real sisterhood with those women even though we couldn't communicate very well linguistically. (personal communication, May 15, 2013)

Linda further commented about her experience:

> The experience was a valuable one for me. I am looking forward to going back one day. I like staying connected with what the women are doing and what the Women's Global Connection is doing, not only in Tanzania, but in Peru and Zambia. (personal communication, May 15, 2013)

Alice. Alice is in her 30s and is currently pursuing a doctoral degree. She heard about the

opportunities to participate in immersion trips with the WGC when she was an undergraduate: "I

would read and hear about it in the paper here on campus . . . I became involved with Women's

Global Connection as I entered the graduate program" (personal communication, May 21, 2013).

Alice then decided to participate in an immersion trip to Zambia because she felt she could

contribute something. She expressed having abilities and skills related to leadership that she

"might be able to contribute" (personal communication, May 21, 2013). Her initial reaction to

the place and the people was the following:

> It was exactly the way you saw it in National Geographic, when you see pictures of Africa. But, I mean, you feel sorry when you are here. But when you are there, it sinks in your heart. You personally feel the touch with the people. It was just a different experience. It was heartfelt. (personal communication, May 21, 2013)

Shortly after arriving in Zambia, she met with a religious leader. He asked her if she

could teach religion to parishioners from several parishes. She was prepared to teach business

courses and had not prepared for teaching religious courses. But she was able to assemble

materials and offer some religious studies. This was a highlight for her. Alice said:

Just being able to bring, you know, what we've been taught over here in our Catholic religion, and they're never exposed to over there and that we have the resources to learn theology of the body or anything on social justice. (personal communication, May 21, 2013)

Alice was asked if there was anything she wanted to add. She replied realizing:

That this was not a missionary trip. We weren't going over there to evangelize... . For me

personally, because I am so passionate [about] my religion and my faith that when I

landed on the soil and saw their rosaries—and you just see the faith [in the] community.

(personal communication, May 21, 2013)

In addition, Alice had not expected the hospitality she received: "everybody was

so kind and caring and very well-mannered" (personal communication, May 21, 2013).

Barbara. Barbara is in her 60s. She has traveled to Germany, Latvia, and France as a

tourist. She also traveled to Germany to volunteer. Currently, she is teaching at a for-profit

educational institution. She learned about the opportunities to volunteer and participate in an

immersion trip with the WGC when she was a doctoral student and when the program was "in its

infancy" (personal communication, May 28, 2013). She attended some sessions about the WGC

and decided to go to Tanzania in 2004 and has made a return visit in 2012. She stated:

Part of the motivation to go was curiosity and spirituality….I was starting on my dissertation and the spring, right before I went in 2004, I participated in a walk, a spiritual journey, and that just really opened up my eyes to many more possibilities that existed. So I wanted to go beyond my immediate environment and see how other persons live, specifically in Africa. (personal communication, May 28, 2013)

She also said, "I am passionate about education and here's a way that I could share knowledge

and information to help empower them in an educational manner" (personal communication,

May 28, 2013).

When Barbara arrived in Tanzania, the thing that struck her was the poverty.

You had to think about everything, to use the bathroom, to wash your hands, to brush your teeth, you can't use the water. We were blessed to have running water at the facility in which we lived and use bottled water. (personal communication, May 28, 2013)

The highlight of her trip was, she said, "the attitude of individuals. It's like every little thing they celebrate, it taught me to be more thankful and more observant of little things in life, and they are very inspirational in that and very thankful" (personal communication, May 28, 2013). When asked what she would like to add to what was already asked during the interview, she replied, the "relationship established in Africa, its lifelong" (personal communication, May 28, 2013). She also stated the following:

Relationships, its international relationships, have been established as a result, which I think is awesome, and it helps you to understand how other people think. And at the same time, it helps you realize that even though we are just days apart in airline travel. To go to Tanzania we traveled through three continents. You're three continents away, but still there is so much communality there with all of us. (personal communication, May 28, 2014)

Roberta. Roberta is in her late 50s. She is currently working with a nonprofit foundation in a low-income area of a city. She has traveled extensively as a tourist to France, Ireland, Denmark, Italy, Canada, Scotland, Belgium, and Germany. She has also traveled to Mexico on business. She learned about the opportunities to participate in an immersion experience from one of the volunteer's with the WGC.

When asked to describe her immersion experience, she said, "something I have struggled with this whole idea of immersion trips is that in some respect it reinforces the whole idea of power" (personal communication, June 4, 2013). She also expressed uncertainty about being able to help and teach people in a developing country, saying: "Is it really possible to bridge that divide of power, privilege, and having an abundance of resources and having an honest conversation with people who have nothing? And I think it is extraordinarily difficult" (personal communication, June 4, 2013). Roberta did speak positively of the experience stating, "I loved

the experience, Women's Global Connection they do fine work" (personal communication, June 4, 2013). However, she said, "I tend to look at it through a different lens. I think because of my work . . . where I see inequity every day" (personal communication, June 4, 2013). She further elaborated and said, "these trips are good, its important work and I think getting to know other people and new ideas and being exposed to the realities of other cultures" (personal communication, June 4, 2013).

Cindy. Cindy is in her 30s and has a background in public health with an interest in global health. She has traveled to the United Kingdom and India as a tourist, to Spain and Kenya for study abroad, and to Russia as a volunteer. She learned about the WGC through an acquaintance who is involved with early childhood education. She was asked, in a conversation with another volunteer working with the WGC, to participate in an immersion trip to Zambia because of her interest in global health and because the WGC needed someone to assist with the evaluation of the program in Zambia. She also saw this as an opportunity to use her experience in developing a thesis topic as part of a requirement for completing a master's degree program. She also stated that her motivation to go to Zambia was to learn: "to learn other people's perspective and way of life and give back in whatever [way] I can" (personal communication, June 6, 2013).

Upon arrival in Mongu, Zambia, Cindy's initial reaction "was the hospitality of the sisters" and "the local people" (personal communication, June 6, 2013). She said they were "very excited to meet us and to work with us. So they were very genuine and joyful people that wanted to learn and to better serve their community" (personal communication, June 6, 2013). Cindy's highlight of the trip was learning about the women's desire to learn: "what really stood out was a desire to learn extra information, so they could share it with other people they worked with.... I

was really impressed that they were hungry for information" (personal communication, June 6, 2013).

Cindy believed that the women learned a lot and thought the important thing was "they practiced the information they were taught" (personal communication, June 6, 2013). Another thing she became aware of was the following: "I guess I learned, but it further underscored that a limited resource environment doesn't need to be [a] barrier . . . that they are a very resourceful people, and they are using their knowledge to change communities to teach people" (personal communication, June 6, 2013). Cindy summed up her experience by describing it as a "wonderful experience and privilege to be able to work with so many people" (personal communication, June 6, 2013). She is also "particularly grateful to WGC because of the opportunity to work in global health . . . they helped me begin my career in global health" (personal communication, June 6, 2013).

Wendy. Wendy, in her 30s, is a doctoral candidate and has a part-time job. She has traveled as a tourist to Thailand, Laos, Cambodia, France, England, Spain, and Mexico. She also traveled to Australia and New Zealand for study abroad sessions. She learned about WGC's projects in Zambia and Tanzania when she was working as a research assistant to analyze data for what she described as the "children under 10 project" (personal communication, June 25, 2013). When she learned about an upcoming trip to Zambia, she said, "I thought I will really like to go and actually see [what] these projects looks [*sic*] like" (personal communication, June 25, 2013). She elaborated about her motivation to participate in an immersion trip and said, "I loved traveling, and I think that you really get a much fuller picture of the group of people who you've read about…" (personal communication, June 25, 2013).

When Wendy began her work in Zambia, she was to meet with a group of women in a cooperative. Her initial reaction was the following:

> I hoped to translate the information that we brought along [with] us in a way that would be helpful and useful to them. I didn't realize that so many of the women who were in the cooperative were not English speakers. And so I guess that I wasn't really completely planning on so much needed translation. (personal communication, June 25, 2013)

A highlight of her experience was when she conducted a workshop that introduced the women to the internet. Arrangements were made for all the women to go "to an internet café," and she was impressed because "the women were just incredibly enthusiastic to be able to have access to the computers" (personal communication, June 25, 2013).

When Wendy was asked about the impact of her work on the community, she stated, "I would've hoped that would've been more of a long-term enduring impact, but I don't really know if it did very much" (personal communication, June 25, 2013). Reflecting on her experience she said, "when I look back on it, I don't know how helpful I was. I mean I think [it] was inspiring at that time for them, but I think it's very complex" (personal communication, June 25, 2013). Overall, Wendy said, "it was an excellent experience . . . never before when I have traveled somewhere did I leave feeling like there is so much work to be done" (personal communication, June 25, 2013). Wendy further explained that because she appreciated all the opportunities she has had as a woman living in the United States, she felt compelled to give back: "I've always felt a necessity to volunteer and to give of myself in some way and [the experience] made me all that much more desiring to be helpful" (personal communication, June 25, 2013).

Themes

Multiple themes emerged from responses to the research questions and are a reflection of the participants' cross-cultural immersion experience. Five major themes were identified: (a)

motivation, (b) changes in their beliefs about themselves, (c) changes in their cultural beliefs, (d) volunteers' impact, and (e) hospitality and relationships. The following is a description of the themes as found in the words of the participants.

Motivation. Many of the participants learned about the opportunities to volunteer for an immersion trip to Tanzania and Zambia when they were in graduate school, through their classes, or through the campus newspaper. Others learned about the immersion trips from the proceedings of conferences with the women from Tanzania and through friends that had participated in an immersion trip. Individuals were motivated to volunteer when they learned about WGC's mission and the type of work being done. They wanted to volunteer because they thought they had the skills and knowledge to help and improve the lives of people. The major subthemes that emerged from the interviews were helping and contributing and wanting to learn about the people and culture.

Helping and contributing. Some of the volunteers thought they would be able to use their expertise and teach skills that the people could use. Linda, who participated in an immersion trip to work with the women in Tanzania, became interested in (WGC) "when she saw some of the videos and pictures of the women" (personal communication, May 15, 2013) from Tanzania that had attended a conference in San Antonio. She then decided that she "would go on one of the missions" (personal communication, May 15, 2013). Linda stated, "Based on the work they were doing there, economic development I saw there was a role that I could play. And I thought that, you know, my involvement would be of value to those women" (personal communication, May 15, 2013). She was able to teach the women basic business skills they could use for their small business, such as bookkeeping skills, that would help them track profit and loss statements of income. Alice used her background in business to help the women to

develop a small business by teaching the women how to do a "SWOT (strength, weakness, opportunity threats) analysis" (personal communication, May 21, 2013) in developing a business plan the women could use in starting a small business.

Joan was getting established into her position as a faculty member when she learned about the WGC. She became involved with the organization because she felt she needed to do something: "I guess it was that need and that desire in me to wanting to do something, you know, in the helping role" (personal communication, March 21, 2013). She chose to go to Zambia and help families that had lost family members to AIDS. She stated, "I could use my expertise and that was to do grief and loss kinds of training in that area" (personal communication, March 21, 2013). When Helen learned about WGC's mission and philosophy, she knew she wanted to contribute her professional skills:

> I went to a meeting that they had, and they explained the mission and their philosophy. And because I am in early childhood, I thought this resonates with me. This is what I wanted to do. And so it felt really [like a] different type of teaching. And because here in the states, I think, we take for granted education. And so going to a community where education is difficult to obtain and working with teachers. That although we lack resources and sometimes lack supplies it is at a lower level and yet their enthused about it. And that was motivating for me. Because I teach teachers so it was a different shift of thinking. (personal communication, April 30, 2013).

> ***Learning about people and culture.*** Several of the participants wanted to go to Tanzania and Zambia to learn about the people and culture as well as helping and contributing. Sheila participated in an immersion trip for this very reason:

> I teach World Geography and Comparative Religion and so I have a great interest in having a greater understanding of the daily lives of people. I know a lot about the needs of developing countries and have always wanted to get involved with the volunteer program to try to do something to make a little bit of difference. (personal communication, March 27, 2013)

Barbara said, "part of the motivation to go was curiosity and spirituality" (personal communication, May 28, 2013). She further stated:

[I wanted to] see how people…live, specifically in Africa. . . . I realized I was a servant leader, and so I just wanted to see what else I could do in order to make a difference at another level. (personal communication, May 28, 2013)

Susan expressed always being interested in women's issues. So from the time she learned about WGC's mission, which is to promote learning and leadership of women in disadvantaged areas, Susan decided to join the organization. She then got "involved in volunteering and doing conferences and became interested in an immersion trip" (personal communication, March 6, 2013). Susan had grown up seeing pictures and listening to her parents tell stories about Africa. She said, "so when that interest kind a get [*sic*] together in the Women's Global Connection, then you know, then I knew someday I would go" (personal communication, March 6, 2013). Cindy's reason for participating in an immersion trip was the following:

I have always had a desire to travel globally and learn from people abroad and if I can help in whatever way. So my motivation is to learn other people's perspective and way of life and give back in whatever way I can. (personal communication, June 6, 2013)

Wendy described her motivation to participate as the following:

I think that you really get a much fuller picture of the group of people who you've read about or who you're learning about when you [are] actually going to be physically there. And so I was very passionate about doing something that would be a volunteer experience, a spiritual experience, and an educational experience all into one. (personal communication, June 25, 2013)

Changes in their beliefs about themselves. Volunteers who participated in the immersion trips expressed changes in their beliefs about themselves and became inspired to do more for others. Some of the volunteers also developed more appreciation and a sense of gratitude for what they had and for the opportunities given to them.

Self-insight. Susan recognized a change in herself when she conveyed a story about not being sure she should go on the trip to Tanzania because of the recent loss of a close family member. She expressed, "so I went and I think it was just such a rich experience for me and

maybe even richer because of the period in my life" (personal communication, March 6, 2013).

She elaborated on what she learned from the people she met. Susan said:

> So for the first time in my life I really lived in the moment, which is kind of what they do. They enjoy and experience every day. Yes they plan and they . . . work on improving their situation in the community there. But they really enjoy every single minute. So I tried to do that too. (personal communication, March 6, 2013)

Linda said:

> I think that things I learned about myself. Now I understand sisterhood. . . . But of course, you know, I just finished my dissertation and part of what I was writing about is sisterhood. But I saw that there, and I think that kind of framed my feelings about myself in regard to feeling more of a kinship and sisterhood with other women. And really seeing how women support and [are] a part of that. (personal communication, May 15, 2013)

Linda also observed how the women support one another and explained how this had a great

impact on her.

> I think being able to accept help from other women, the things I try to do with my life and things I want to do. But I don't think I recognized that before going to Tanzania and seeing how [some of] the women there have very little or nothing, but what they have they are willing to share with other women. And so I think that has changed in me and had an impact on me. (personal communication, May 15, 2013)

> Alice, who is currently working on her doctorate, expressed how the experience

motivated her to pursue an education.

> I really wanted to push forward with it too, not to continue to go on this [*sic*] immersion trips or to any third world country and to teach. But I know that here in our own communities I would be able to make a difference. . . . And the immersion trip has to do a lot with it because it pushed me. (personal communication, May 21, 2013)

David spoke about his stay in Tanzania saying,

> I didn't worry about anything. … I was much more productive over their where I had less resources. I ate healthier over there and that's what I long for the simplistic. …It's a simplest that places people first, not money, not greed. People first that was good for me. (personal communication, April 4, 2013)

David expressed how his immersion experience has had a great impact on his life.

The work I am doing now with employment and my own studies will lead me back that journey again. Maybe on a more permanent basis. My wife and I are talking about doing missionary work at some point in the future. That's what that immersion trip has done thus far. It has turned my life around 180 degrees. (personal communication, April 4, 2013)

Andrea described her self-insight as the following:

I was in a rut of my life, and I realized I don't have to just follow this path I am on right now. There are so many things out there to do. . . . So it changed me in that it made me realize there [are] so many possibilities out there to do something small that can mean a lot.

I have no problem considering going and living overseas and teaching in the future. I really see that as an option for my future. I would love to do that . . . before that I was not seeing that as a viable option. I absolutely want to go back. . . . I think . . . that trip helped me eradicate the rut I was in, in terms of thinking I have limited options. (personal communication, April 22, 2013)

Joan described the impact of her immersion experience differently.

I don't [know] if it's change, but it [is] just more of an enhancement of my desire to help people of underserved populations, to be more involved, to continue to be involved, not necessarily Zambia. I have been more inspired to look even here in the U.S. in grossly underserved populations that sometimes go totally unknown, and we don't even know about. (personal communication, May 21, 2013)

Sheila explained she has changed by how she approaches her students in the classroom as a high school teacher and by recognizing the importance of what she is doing. She further stated, "And that has inspired me to try to actually want to do more. I just want to help" (personal communication, March 27, 2013). Sheila recognized how she could have an impact on her students as well.

Just make it more important to be in the classroom and help students appreciate other cultures and to do [it] on a positive level, to not look down on people of other cultures, to not look down on other people, to understand their struggles and to be, and to be more tolerant, trying to get them to have a greater appreciation. (personal communication, March 27, 2013)

Helen described how the experience changed her actions and her sense of time:

I was on everybody about water use . . . and that stayed with me for a while. What did stay and continues to stay with me is the intentionality of slowing down. Here at my desk

I can put some music on to make sure I'm eating when I'm eating. (personal communication, April 30, 2013)

Appreciation and gratitude. In Tanzania and Zambia volunteers observed people with few resources that are still thankful and appreciative of the things that existed in their daily lives. As a result of their immersion experience, the volunteers were more appreciative for the things they had and the opportunities given to them. Barbara, for example, said the experience taught her "to be more thankful and more observant of little things in life" (personal communication, May 28, 2013). She added:

> I guess patience. I think of my test of my patience too. You know how patient am I waiting, because you don't get anything immediately. You don't get instant gratifications, you don't get instant anything. And there's no television. And so what I learned about myself is that I can go without television. . . . So it helped me to understand that I am very self-sufficient and don't need those extravagant things or extra things that we have available to us at the flip of the switch here in America. (personal communication, May 28, 2013)

Barbara explained that she also learned what type of leader she was.

> I'm a servant leader and the transformational learning and transformational leadership. . . . So this kind of like really cemented that for me. That's the kind of leadership that I've always done. I've always been working in those capacities. But I never put a title to it or name to it. But going through the PhD program and going to Africa for the first time, it just all came together and I said like, wow, without even realizing it. (personal communication, May 28, 2013)

Angela believed that she had always been appreciative, but after her immersion experience she became even more appreciative.

> But I have even a more appreciation for everything that I have, and I try to recycle everything I have. . . . So and I think that maybe more aware every time I go buy something. I'm more aware of my impact of my purchase on the whole chain of people. And I think my spirituality deepened just being around those people who were so grateful… . So it had a huge impact on me. (personal communication, April 8, 2013)

Wendy recognized how blessed she was living in the United States after her immersion experience in Zambia. She said:

So it did change my personal beliefs about myself [in] a lot of ways and making me much more cognizant of who I am and what I've been afforded just by being here, just living in the United States. (personal communication, June 25, 2013)

Changes in their cultural beliefs. Most of the volunteers indicated they had more insight and understanding of cultural differences. They expressed how their views of the culture of poverty changed. They met people who were proud of what they had accomplished, who were creative and innovative, and who wanted to learn and find ways to improve their lives. Others saw how people's cultural beliefs shaped the opportunities given to them.

Insight into culture. Linda expressed how her views changed about the possibility of people lifting themselves out of poverty. She said:

I always had a belief that, you know, a kind of westernized belief that you [could] be whatever you wanted to be and you can do whatever you want to do and you could have whatever you wanted to have if you worked hard enough. (personal communication, May 15, 2013)

As a result of her immersion experience, Linda became aware of how difficult it was for people to lift themselves out of poverty:

I don't think the country is necessarily poor. I think the country has a lot of valuable resources that are exported by other countries or other companies. But the women can work as hard as they want and never get out of poverty. (personal communication, May 15, 2013)

She also said, "So barring what we [have] done in terms of helping with the Women's Global Connection, helping the women come together with the soy project, but, uh, just as an individual it would be very, very difficult" (personal communication, May 15, 2013).

Alice observed that the people she met did not have access to material things she could easily acquire. Once she returned from her immersion trip, her own opinion about material things changed. Alice said:

I can care less for materialistic gain. . . . And I think when you come back, purses and cars, you know, name brand things that once you worked so hard for or you wanted to

make more money and the big houses. All those materialistic goals are vanished. (personal communication, May 21, 2013)

She further stated, "my education has become number one priority, my children, my family and their well-being, and anything further than that is not important to me" (personal communication, May 21, 2013).

Joan had expressed cultural shock in relation to the poverty and living conditions she initially saw when she first arrived in Zambia. She changed her perspective of people and poverty after observing and getting to know the people she worked with:

> After having that opportunity to see that they were very, very sophisticated in what they did. They had done a lot of things with what they had. And so that was kind of a cultural change. I think that helped me to change my thinking, is that these people are [a] very, very sophisticated group of people and they have taken what they have and done [an] outstanding kind of thing, very creative, very innovating and so that was probably one of the key cultural changes that I saw in my myself. (personal communication, March 21, 2013)

Cindy who had traveled to other developing countries and had witnessed poverty said, "I guess I learned, but it further underscored that a limited resource environment does not… have to be a barrier" (personal communication, June 6, 2013).

Wendy also became aware of the limited opportunities people have in other cultures. She said:

> And so never during a cultural exchange experience had a particular type of kind of realization hit me . . . just how much as a woman I am able to have education provided for me, opportunities provide for me and so the difference in the culture there as to what women experience on a regular basis. The lack of opportunity was deeply impactful to me. (personal communication, June 25, 2013)

When Barbara was asked how the immersion experience had changed her, she replied, "I won't say changed, I would say I just have more insight of how people throughout the globe live" (personal communication, May 28, 2013). She further added, "I believe in social action, I

believe in human rights, and those are the issues that we're trying to insure that people have throughout the globe wherever we go" (personal communication, May 28, 2013).

Understanding culture. Participants expressed how they had gained a different perspective and understanding of culture. The cultural experience was not always what was expected. Andrea stated:

> I thought it would be more formal. . . . And so I was concerned there would be a level of formality between us and did not anticipate all the hugging and all that kind of thing [that] went on. So I feel, culturally, I got to be at that level with someone. (personal communication, April 22, 2013)

David said, "I don't know if my cultural beliefs changed. I think they got stronger" (personal communication, April 4, 2013). He further stated:

> It helped put things in perspective and so what I think what I learned, you could speak culture all day long, but we are not things of the heart and thing[s] of the soul. I don't think we are different. I don't think we are different at all. (personal communication, April 4, 2013)

Like David, Sheila said her cultural beliefs did not change, but they were strengthened: "It just strengthened the importance of it, going and having an interaction with another culture instead of just reading it in a book, you can't understand, I feel like I have a deeper understanding" (personal communication, March 27, 2013). Sheila also told the researcher that she has shared what she has learned about culture with her students because she wants them to appreciate other cultures as well.

Roberta expressed her perspective of change in cultural beliefs by asking the following question:

> Is it really possible to bridge that divide of power and privilege and having an abundance of resources and having an honest conservation with people who have nothing? And I think that it is extraordinarily difficult. I am not saying it's impossible. But I think it's very difficult. (personal communication, June 4, 2013)

Angela's change in understanding culture was in terms of time and immediacy in doing things. She said, "I had to be patient while I was there. Let me tell you that because in our society everything goes really, really fast. And they speak slower, and they do things slower" (personal communication, April 8, 2013). Helen spoke of what she learned and observed, such as eating food and the sense of calmness of the people she was with: "when we eat with them, they ate their food slow, so methodical . . . what was different was to see calmness, eating, walking, communicating, everything they did was very intentional" (personal communication, April 8, 2013).

Volunteers' impact and contribution. Volunteers believed that the skills and knowledge they had contributed would improve people's lives and their environment. However, it was difficult for most of the volunteers to assess their impact on the communities they served after they had left. There were some volunteers who believed their impact was lasting.

Sustainability of impact and contribution. Some of the volunteers were disappointed when they made return visits and saw that the people were not practicing what they had been taught or were not maintaining the projects that had been put in place. Other volunteers expressed doubt and had difficulty measuring their impact on the community. On her second visit to Zambia, Angela said she saw that the teachers "were not using developmentally appropriate practices" (personal communication, May 8, 2013) for the age group they were teaching. Linda had provided some training in business bookkeeping and thought the women might still be using some of the information. She stated:

> Since I was there in 2007, of course there had been other teams of people who had gone
> and added to that work. So I am not sure I am able to extract what I had done and say this
> was the impact of my contribution. (personal communication, April 8, 2013)

Nevertheless, Linda believed that WGC's work as a whole has made a great impact on these communities. "But you know I don't know what the real impact of just my work has been. I think the impact of what the Women's Global Connection has done in terms of economic development has been phenomenal". (personal communication, April 8, 2013)

Roberta expressed doubts about the impact of early childhood training in another country stating "so why do we think going to Africa or some of these other countries and doing early childhood training. And we're bringing best practices. When in reality the United States outcomes are 24th or 25th in the world" (personal communication, June 4, 2013).

David, who had provided internet training programs for the women in Bukoba, expressed some satisfaction of success but was not fully sure if the program was continuing as he envisioned:

> I was able with much assistance with a couple of the women be able to show and teach the women and to understand how to take this data the things they wanted to copy and then copy that information . . . So while we had this grand plan ultimately technology and tools are going to get adapted to the people that have the technology and need to use. (personal communication, April 4, 2013)

David further expressed his uncertainty: "I am very curious. I wish I could see what's going on" (personal communication, April 4, 2013).

Wendy was not sure of her impact and said, "honestly, I don't know what our impact was, and I think it is very hard to measure" (personal communication, June 25, 2013). She had not been in communication with individuals who might know if the project with the women in Mongu, Zambia, was continuing. She stated, "When I look back on it, I don't know how helpful I was" (personal communication, June 25, 2013).

Sheila shared Wendy's sentiment:

> I don't know how much of an impact I personally made. I think if anything, it was just like the fact [that] we were there and we cared enough [to] be there. The fact that we

were interested in their lives and that they could show these things to us, to be proud of what they were doing. (personal communication, March 27, 2013)

She elaborated on the relationship with the people and said, "and so I think just having that camaraderie and, you know, just that support we were able to give" (personal communication, March 27, 2013).

Sustained impact. Several of the volunteers who had made a return trip said that they saw the people practice what they had been taught. Joan stated:

I took a second trip two years later and found that the training and education that we had done, they had put into place. They were using the materials we taught them to use. It was very clear they had taken it to meet their needs. And that just was I guess was one of the most rewarding things for me was to go back after two years and see some of those examples and teaching strategies that we used. They were using them. (personal communication, March 21, 2013)

Barbara said:

When I went back, one of the things that I did was I went back to Hekima School and talk to the lead teacher who is still there. I talked extensively with him, and I had also heard from other reports of going back on immersion trips . . . reporting the teachers were using the strategies and techniques that I shared with them. (personal communication, May 28, 2013)

Helen stated, "[They] only go into areas they are invited and where the locals want to continue. So to me that impact is lasting because they are making it work for them" (personal communication, April 30, 2013).

Cindy said, "the people were very excited about learning, and I think they learned a great deal. One of the things I thought was really important they practiced the information they were taught" (personal communication, June 6, 2013). Other responses to volunteers' impact were addressed in terms of continued involvement. Susan replied, "How to assess one's impact but in terms of actually being in Tanzania, I just see myself as part of the whole picture" (personal communication, March 6, 2013). She further stated:

and there were many people on whose shoulders I sit . . . and the people that follow hopefully a little bit of [what] I've done, they're building on that. So I think it's sort of a never-ending, like [a] circle. (personal communication, March 6, 2013)

Hospitality and relationships. Some of the volunteers did not expect the hospitality they received nor how the people they met made them feel at home and part of the community. Others have found the relationships established to be lasting. Cindy, for example, was impressed with the people upon her arrival in Zambia: "the thing that struck me was the hospitality of the sisters we stayed with and the incredible joy they had in serving the people" (personal communication, June 6, 2013). Andrea described being met by the women at the airport in Tanzania. She said she had been told, "Watch, they would be waiting at the airport for us. We were going to be treated amazingly well and so when it happened it was very welcoming" (personal communication, April 22, 2103).

Susan described her initial reaction to hospitality and the building of a relationship with the women when she arrived in Tanzania, saying "I was so impressed with the women and meeting them and just how they made us part of the family" (personal communication, March 6, 2013). She elaborated more about building relationships with the women when they all went one weekend to an island out on Lake Victoria. Susan said, "it was a very reflective time, it gave us space to kind of, you know, adapt and get to know the individual women that we were with more. And just to work on that relationship" (personal communication, March 6, 2013). Similarly, David described his experience of bonding with those around him and being accepted by the community. One morning, he heard noises and when out to see that a road was being built in the neighborhood where he was living. He said:

> Immediately there's this man who's a friend of the family. Because we didn't have to introduce each other . . . there was a bond between me and the community there, the immediate community who lived around me. People came over speaking to me all the time. We just found a way to communicate. (personal communication, April 4, 2013)

Alice was surprised at the hospitality she received when meeting the people. She stated, "everybody was so kind and caring and very well-mannered. I don't think I was expecting that" (personal communication, May 21, 2013). She further related, "and they tried to make from your first step on the soil, they tried to make you feel at home" (personal communication, May 21, 2013). Barbara elaborated on the relationships established: "It's a lifelong one because I still receive e-mails from Tanzania . . . So you know, relationships, international relationships, have been established as a result. Which I think it's awesome, and it helps you understand how people think" (personal communication, May 28, 2013).

Summary

The five major themes that emerged from the volunteers' responses to the researcher's questions were (a) motivation, (b) changes in their beliefs about themselves, (c) changes in their cultural beliefs, (d) volunteers' impact, and (e) hospitality and relationships. Subthemes also emerged from each of these major themes.

Volunteers were motivated to participate in an immersion trip to Tanzania and Zambia when they learned of WGC's mission, and they expressed they wanted to help and contribute their skills and knowledge in order to make a difference in the lives of people. Others wanted to learn more about the people and the culture. Some of the volunteers gained more self-insight and expressed changes in themselves and in their attitudes after their immersion experience. Other volunteers expressed they were more appreciative for the opportunities that were given to them and for what they had.

After their immersion experience, volunteers also declared they had a greater understanding of the culture. Specifically, they said their views regarding poverty and how the people they met perceived poverty changed. One volunteer, for example, believed that if you

worked hard enough, you could improve your life. Based on what she saw during her immersion trip, she now believes that it is difficult for one individual to get out of poverty because opportunities are impeded by the country's lack of infrastructure and systems to support its citizens. On the other hand, other volunteers observed people with limited means improve their living conditions by being creative and innovative. In addition the volunteers' understanding of culture changed when they saw how the people they met had very little but were still willing to share what they had. Another volunteer became more aware, based on the relationships formed during his stay, that people are more alike than different.

The volunteers' perception of their impact on the community during their immersion experience was mixed. Some of the volunteers said they were uncertain about the impact they had. However, several volunteers expressed that their work during the immersion experience was lasting. What came to a surprise to some of the volunteers was the hospitality that was extended to them. The volunteers were made to feel welcome and part of the community. Some of them expressed how the relationships they established in Tanzania and Zambia are still special and meaningful.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Recommendations, and Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to examine the phenomenon of the volunteers' cross-cultural experience of participating in immersion trips to Tanzania and Zambia. The study also explored whether volunteers believed their cross-cultural immersion experience was life changing. The volunteers participating in this study shared reflections of their cross-cultural immersion experience during the interviews. For a majority of the participants in the study there was a gap of about two or more years to the time of the interview in 2013. Participants responded positively and enthusiastically to the following questions that the researcher used to guide this study:

1. What motivated volunteers to participate in immersion trips to Tanzania and Zambia?

2. How has the immersion experience changed the volunteers' beliefs about themselves while engaging in a cross-cultural environment?

3. How has the immersion experience changed the volunteers' cultural beliefs?

4. What is the volunteers' perception of the impact and contribution of their work in Tanzania and Zambia?

Tanzania and Zambia are among the least developed countries in the world. Health care, nutrition, and education are still not adequate to meet the needs of the population (CIA World Factbook, n.d.b, n.d.c). For most of the participants this was their first immersion experience as a volunteer in a developing country.

Summary of Findings

The literature cites the importance of volunteerism in society and the worth of their time and contribution. Most nonprofit organizations, such as the WGC, are dependent on volunteers to accomplish their mission to help others. Reingold and Nesbit (2006) cited the importance of

volunteers participating domestically and globally. In 2011 the importance of international

volunteering was recognized by the UN General Assembly for the contributions to humanitarian

response, peace, and development worldwide. Volunteers are also recognized for their important

work with non-governmental organizations in achieving the Millennium Development Goals

(Worldwide: News, views, and resources, 2014).

The participants in this study became interested in volunteer activities after learning

about WGC's mission and their work in Tanzania and Zambia. They were motivated to volunteer

for an immersion trip because they had the desire to help, because they had a skill they could

contribute, and because they wanted to learn more about the people and culture. These same

motivations for volunteering are cited by Sherr (2008) and Snyder and Omoto (2008).

Some of the participants said their immersion experience was transforming because it led

to changes in their beliefs about themselves and changes in their cultural beliefs. The positive

changes they saw in themselves helped them to have a different perspective about what is

important in their lives. Participants now have a greater appreciation for the opportunities given

to them, and they realize they have more career options than they previously thought. In addition,

participants have a better understanding of culture and poverty, and they have learned that they

can make a difference in their communities.

The following are examples of changes expressed by individual participants.

- Realization that family and other people are first above anything else.

- Awareness that the simple things in life are more meaningful and that there is less need
  for material things.

- Now able to accept help from other women since observing how the women she had met
  supported and shared with one another.

- Learned to develop a sense of calmness in her life. Trying to avoid the fast pace   and multitasking in daily life and intentionally tries to slow down and be in the present moment.

- Saw how the women in Tanzania lived in the present and enjoyed each day. The participant learned to live in the moment as well.

- Became aware during the immersion experience how stress was impacting self.

- Found that being removed from their previous work environment resulted in being less worried and more productive.

- Realized that one did not need to follow the path that they were on when they became aware there are options and possibilities to make a change in their career path.

- Expressed that the immersion experience pushed them to pursue an education that could lead to making a difference in their own community.

- Inspired to look at helping the underserved in the United States

- Perceptions of poverty changed when witnessing that poor people find innovative and creative ways to improve their lives.

- Belief about the western view of poverty changed from that if you worked hard enough you might able to rise above poverty to learning that there are barriers to overcoming poverty, such as corruption and underdeveloped systems in government.

- All the participants became more appreciative and grateful for the opportunity to pursue an education and have all the things one can acquire.

The literature cites different views and perceptions of poverty that

appear to be shaped by previous beliefs and the nature of encounters in witnessing poverty in developing countries. A study by Pearce (2012) of tourists' reactions to poverty were analyzed from written accounts of their visits to poverty-stricken southern African countries. Pearce (2012) categorized the emotional responses in one instance as "disengagement that was all about the wildlife adventures, beautiful sites, and the social aspects" (p.161). Another group compartmentalized their emotions reacting with "distaste, disgust and occasionally indifference" (p. 161). Other emotional responses and perceptions categorized by Pearce (2012) were similar to the volunteers experience in Tanzania and Zambia. One group of tourists felt they were lucky and that it was an "eye-opening" experience (p. 161). Another group expressed "empathy [and] sympathy" (p. 161) with a sense of "sadness and pity" (p. 161) for the people they encountered. A more positive reaction to poverty was a determination and a desire to "help alleviate poverty" (p. 161) and to take action by volunteering and donating money.

Overall reactions of the volunteers to poverty who participated in immersion trips to Tanzania and Zambia in this study differ somewhat from the tourists' in the study by Pearce (2012). This may be due to the volunteers being more prepared prior to the trip about the people they would be meeting and the environment they may encounter. Also the volunteers in this study had a close interaction with the people they met and worked with and a longer stay in Tanzania and Zambia than the tourist visiting countries in South Africa.

A study of Taiwanese adult volunteers described changes in beliefs and perceptions that are similar to the volunteers' immersion experience in Tanzania and Zambia. The Taiwanese adults' motivation to participate in international service, was to "explore the world and experience a new culture" (Chang, Chen, Huang, & Yuan, 2012, p. 238). They wanted to see a "different life, environment and people" (p. 238) There "was a gap between the expectation and

reality was very huge" (p. 240). An example was reactions to "living conditions" (p. 239) and seeing "local poverty" (p. 239) made them realize they taken for granted a having "sufficient food and opportunities for education" (p. 239).

Volunteers' participating in an immersion experience in Tanzania and Zambia in study had mixed feelings regarding their contribution and impact on the communities . They were concerned as to whether the newer teaching methodologies and business practices they taught would continue. One participant returned to visit only to find that the methods and materials that had been provided were not being used. Several of the participants, however, were confident that what they had taught was lasting. Two of the participants that made return trips, for example, observed that the classroom strategies that had been taught were still being used. The volunteers who participated in the immersion trips to Tanzania and Zambia may be underestimating their impact because follow-up reports do cite the volunteers' contributions, which are valuable in meeting WGC's mission and goals.

Interestingly, the relationships the volunteers built and the hospitality they received from the community was not something the volunteers anticipated or expected. The building of the relationships was important and effective in establishing rapport in gaining cooperation and acceptance by the people. The hospitality shown from the people was a way for them to reciprocate their appreciation for the help they were receiving.

Self-Transcendence

The participants described changing their beliefs about themselves after their immersion experience. This change can be described as self-transcendence, a theory beyond self-actualization, developed by Maslow. Maslow's "rectified hierarchy of needs places self-transcendence at the top of the hierarchy of needs. Seeks to further a cause beyond the self and to

experience a communion beyond the boundaries of self through peak experience" (as cited in Koltko-Rivera, 2006, p. 303).

Participants experienced self-actualization because their lower needs had been met, and they had reached a peak in their lives. Through their motivation to volunteer, they saw in themselves a need to go beyond their own sense of "personal fulfillment" (Koltko-Rivera, 2006, p. 303). Their desire to participate in an immersion trip was further motivated by wanting to do more, such as making a contribution and learning about the people and the culture. Since their immersion experience, the participants have overcome previous views about their own potential, they have realized there are opportunities to change direction in their future careers, they have found that material needs are less important, and they have found a desire to contribute more as a volunteer.

Implications

Participants in this study had the same motivations to volunteer as those found in many studies of volunteerism. Participants who volunteered wanted to help and thought they had something to contribute. The volunteers who went on the immersion trips were inspired and motivated to continue volunteering with the WGC and other organizations. As a result of their immersion experiences, volunteers saw changes in their beliefs about themselves and in their cultural beliefs. The immersion experience helped them have a better understanding of culture.

The participants did not know whether their work and the projects they helped to initiate were continuing, but they may be underestimating their impact on those communities. Sustainability of their contributions may be uncertain because the volunteers did not always have a way of knowing if the projects they helped start and the practices they taught were continuing. Volunteers who did make return visits expressed disappointment when they saw practices, such

as methods of teaching, not being used. However, several volunteers did express that what they had contributed would continue. Most studies on volunteerism cite objective data that measures the value of volunteers in monetary terms and time contributed. Studies of sustainability of the volunteers' contribution and their impact were limited. Perhaps it is because, in general, assessing the impact of the volunteers' work is difficult when participants cannot see if the projects and the practices they taught are continuing.

The relationships the volunteers established with the people were significant and continue to be meaningful and lasting. Some of the volunteers continue to correspond with the women in Tanzania and Zambia. The warmness and the hospitality the volunteers received during the immersion trip helped in establishing rapport and cooperation with the people they met and worked with.

Recommendation

Another study with a larger and more diverse group of volunteers with WGC and volunteers working with similar international organizations is recommended. A study of a larger group and a more diverse group of volunteers' immersion experience would contribute to the body of literature about international volunteerism. More studies to document the impact of the volunteers' work would be of value in the recruitment of volunteers. Exploring the importance and the effectiveness of volunteers' relationships established with the people they worked with in another country might be useful in determining the effectiveness of the work done by volunteers.

Conclusion

All the volunteers who participated in WGC's immersion trips had a positive experience. They were inspired to volunteer when they learned about WGC's mission, and they all want to continue volunteering and return to Tanzania and Zambia sometime in the future. The

motivations to volunteer stated by this group of participants were characteristic of others who have volunteered with other nonprofit organizations. However, changes in their beliefs about themselves and changes in their cultural beliefs were unique to this group of volunteers because of where their immersion experience took place.

Though there were many studies that described the monetary value of the volunteers' work and time, there was a dearth of objective studies of the effectiveness of the volunteers' contribution from the perspective of the recipients. Though some of the participants in this study believed that their impact and contribution was lasting there were other participants who expressed doubt as to whether they had made an impact on those communities in Tanzania and Zambia. The value of the volunteers' impact and contribution has been recognized by the WGC. Like many other nonprofit organizations, they acknowledge that achievement of their goals and objectives were enhanced by the contribution and of volunteers.

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Appendix A

Subject Consent to Take Part in a Study

SUBJECT CONSENT TO TAKE PART IN A STUDY OF
Volunteers Cross-Cultural Experience in Tanzania and Zambia
University of the Incarnate Word

I am Elaine Talarski, a candidate in the Ph.D program of International Education and Entrepreneurship at the University of the Incarnated Word.

You are being asked to be part of a study of volunteer's cross-cultural experience in Tanzania and Zambia. You have been selected to participate in this study based on your participation in immersion trip(s) to Tanzania and/or Zambia. The purpose of the study is to examine the phenomena of a volunteer's cross-cultural immersion experience, transformation and life changing events that may have occurred. You will be asked to provide demographic information and respond to a series of questions and statements. The entire process should not take longer than 25 to 30 minutes.

Your identity and source of information will remain anonymous. Your name and any identifying information will not be included in the study or any future publication about the study.

Your participation in the study is voluntary. You are free to leave the study at any-time without prejudice of future status and participation in activities associated with the University of the Incarnate Word or any work and involvement in the outside community. There will not be any compensation provided for participating in this study.

If you have any questions or concerns you may contact me at talarski@uiwtx.edu. For additional questions or any concerns about the study you may contact:

Dr. Osman Ozturgut, Dreeben School of Education, ozturgut @uiwtx.edu , Phone: (210) 519-9870
or
Dr. Kevin B. Vichcales,
Dean School of Graduate Studies and Research
Phone: (210) 829-3157

University of the Incarnate Word
IRB Approved
Application No. 12-12-004

Appendix B

Demographic Questionnaire

I would like to learn about your cross-cultural experience in Tanzania and or Zambia. Please complete the demographic information and respond to the questions and express what you learned and how you feel about the cross-cultural immersion experience. The entire process should not take more than 25 to 30 minutes.

Demographics:

Check: Female_____ Male_____

Age (check one): 20-30___ 40-50___ 60 and plus_____

Highest Level of Education: _____

Setting or Place of Employment (check one): Government___

Education: Pre-School_____ Primary___Secondary___Higher Education____

Organizations: Non-Profit___ For Profit:____

Year of Last Immersion Trip:_____

Other countries you have been and check reason(s) for visit or stay:

Country	Tourist	Lived	Employed	Volunteer	Study Abroad
_____	____	____	____	____	____
_____	____	____	____	____	____
_____	____	____	____	____	____
_____	____	____	____	____	____
_____	____	____	____	____	____

Appendix C

Interview Questions

1. How did you learn about opportunities for volunteering to participate in immersion trips to Tanzania and Zambia?

2. What motivated you to participate in an immersion trip?

3. Describe your orientation and preparation to participate an immersion trip?

4. What was your initial reaction to the place and people when you arrived and began your work?

5. Describe a high-light of your cross-cultural experience.

6. What is your perception of the impact and contribution of your work?

7. How have your cultural beliefs changed upon returning from a cross-cultural immersion experience?

8. Describe how beliefs about yourself that may have changed?

9. How has the immersion experience changed your views about your career choices and type of work you perform in your home community?

10. Is there anything else you would like to add or comment on about your immersion experience?

Please indicate if you would be available for a face to face interview if there is a question or need for clarification about responses to the questions.

Thank you for participating in this study.

By clicking on the submit button, you give consent to participating in this study.

Appendix D

Application for Institutional Review Board Approval Form

12-12-004

Application for Institutional Review Board Approval Form
University of the Incarnate Word

(PLEASE TYPE INFORMATION)
Title of Study: Volunteers Cross-Cultural Experience With The Women's Global Connection in Tanzania and Zambia

College/School or Division/Discipline: Dreeben School of Education

Investigators			
Principal Investigator - A UIW PI must be designated for all projects in which UIW is engaged in research.			
Name: Josephine Elaine Talarski	Phone #: (210) 521-5496	E-mail: talarski@student.uiwtx.edu	Address: 7922 Quail Breeze SanAntonio,TX 78250
Co-Investigator(s) -- List all co-investigators and provide contact information on each one			
Name: Click here to enter text.	Phone #: Click here to enter text.	E-mail: Click here to enter text.	Address: Click here to enter text.
Faculty Supervisor of Project, Thesis, or Dissertation			
Name: Dr. Osman Ozturgut	Phone #: (210) 519-9870	E-mail: ozturgut@uiwtx.edu	Address: University of the Incarnate Word 4301 Broadway San Antonio, TX 78209

Research Information
Research Category: ☒Exempt   ☐Expedited Review   ☐Full Board Review
Purpose of Study: The purpose of this qualitative interpretative study is to examine the phenomenon of the volunteer's cross-cultural experience from participation in immersion trips to Tanzania and Zambia. The study will explore with the volunteer the meaning of their experience as possibly life changing and transforming.Click here to enter text.

Number of Subjects: Approximately 25	Number of Controls: none	Duration of Study: 6 months

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Appendix D *(continued)*

Does this research involve any of the following:	YES	NO
Inmates of penal institutions	☐	☒
Institutionalized intellectually handicapped	☐	☒
Institutionalized mentally disabled	☐	☒
Committed patients	☐	☒
Intellectually handicapped outpatient	☐	☒
Mentally disabled outpatient	☐	☒
Pregnant women	☐	☒
Fetus in utero	☐	☒
Viable fetus	☐	☒
Nonviable fetus	☐	☒
Dead fetus	☐	☒
In Vitro fertilization	☐	☒
Minors (under 18)	☐	☒

For each "Yes", state what precautions you will use to obtain informed consent?
Click here to enter text.

How is information Obtained? (Include instruments used. Attach copy of instrument to this application.)
Participants will be asked to respond to open-ended questions on-line through Survey Monkey. See attachment. Three to five interviews may be conducted if there is a need for clarity of the on-line responses. Participants will be interviewed separately in a place and time of their choosing. The investigator will use the same questionnaire used on Survey Monkey as a guide. Interviews will be recorded on a digital recorder. Content of interviews will be transcribed and included in the analysis of the on-line Survey Monkey data.

Confidentiality – Are data recorded anonymously?   ☒Yes   ☐ No

If answer is "No", how will the study subjects' confidentiality be maintained?
Click here to enter text.

Benefit of research: Click here to enter text.
Fill some of the gaps in the literature regarding volunteers' experience in a cross-cultural setting in a country different than their own. More studies regarding the volunteer's experience in an international setting may be useful to organizations in recruiting and preparing volunteers' for immersion trips to other countries. The study will also contribute to the body of knowledge regarding characteristics of volunteers and what the volunteers have learned about themselves, their contribution and cultural beliefs.

Possible risk to subjects: Click here to enter text.
None
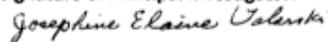
041311

Appendix D *(continued)*

Funding Source: N/A	Funded by: N/A	Grant Proposal Pending: N/A	Not Funded: ☒

CHECKLIST:

Research protocol ☒

Informed consent documents ☒

Instruments used for data collection ☒

CITI certificate of training on the protection of human subjects ☒

<u>If change in research occurs the Board must be notified before research is continued.</u>

SIGNATURES		
Original Signatures are required. This application will not be processed until all signatures are obtained.		
Signature of the Principal Investigator The undersigned accepts responsibility for the study, including adherence to DHHS, FDA, and UIW policies regarding protections of the rights and welfare of human subjects participating in the study. In the case of student protocols, the faculty supervisor and the student share responsibility for adherence to policies.		
Print Name of Principal Investigator: Josephine Elaine Talarski	**Signature of Principal Investigator:** *Josephine Elaine Talarski*	**Date:** 11/30/12
Signature of Faculty Research Supervisor – Required By signing this form, the faculty research supervisor attests that he/she has read the attached protocol submitted for IRB review, and agrees to provide appropriate education and supervision of the student investigator above.		
Print Name of Faculty Supervisor: Dr. Osman Ozturgut	**Signature of Faculty Supervisor:**	**Date:** 11/30/12
Signature of Co-investigator(s)		
Print Name of Co-Investigator: 1. **Continue if there are more co-investigators. All must sign.**	**Signature of Co-Investigator:**	**Date:**

APPROVAL SIGNATURE(S)		
Signature of the IRB College/School Representative:		
Print Name of College/School	**Signature of College/School Rep.:**	**Date:**

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Appendix D *(continued)*

Rep.:		
Absael Antelo	*[signature]*	11/30/2012
Signature of the IRB Chair (if needed)		
Print Name of IRB Chair:	Signature of IRB Chair:	Date:
Helen E. Smith	Kevin B. Nicholas for Helen E. Smith	12/14/2012

Application Number:	12-12-004

The Researcher must use copies of the **stamped** consent form. Other communications to the study subjects must also be stamped with the IRB approval number. Electronic surveys must have the IRB approval number inserted into the survey before they are used.

IRBs are filed by their number and helps the Graduate Office keep track of submissions and communications. Please refer to this number when communicating about the IRB.

041311

Appendix E

Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative

CITI Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative

IRB Training English Curriculum Completion Report
Printed on 5/23/2010

Learner: Josephine Talarski (username: talarski)
Institution: IRB Training
Contact   7922 Quail Breeze
Information   San Antonio, Texas, Texas 78250 USA
                         Department: Education
                         Phone: (210) 521-5496
                         Email: etalarski@earthlink.net
IRB Training English:

Stage 1. Stage 1 Passed on 05/23/10 (Ref # 4444075)

Elective Modules	Date Completed	Score
Module 1: History and Ethical Principles	05/23/10	4/4 (100%)
Module 2: Basic Institutional Review Board (IRB) Regulations and Review Process	05/23/10	5/5 (100%)
Module 3: Informed Consent	05/23/10	3/3 (100%)
Module 4 - International Research	05/23/10	no quiz

For this Completion Report to be valid, the learner listed above must be
affiliated with a CITI participating institution. Falsified information and
unauthorized use of the CITI course site is unethical, and may be
considered scientific misconduct by your institution.

Paul Braunschweiger Ph.D.
Professor, University of Miami
Director Office of Research Education
CITI Course Coordinator

Old Report.
- Valid per HSIRB rules

Return

Appendix F

Research Protocol

Research Protocol by Josephine Elaine Talarski

1. Aim of research is: Volunteers Cross-Cultural Immersion Experience with the Women's Global Connection in Tanzania and Zambia

2. The importance and contribution of volunteers to society is cited in the literature by Haski-Bargal, 2008 and UN DPI-NGO, 2011. There is a growing interest of volunteers experience in a cultural setting different from their own (McBride, Lough, and Sherraden and Levine 2009). However the studies are limited from the perspective of the volunteer's experience personal cross- cultural experience upon returning when returning from volunteering in an international setting.

3. The study is to explore and understand the meaning of volunteers' cross-cultural experience as a life changing and transforming experience from participating in immersion trips to Tanzania and Zambia. This will be qualitative research study using a "form of interpretive inquiry in which the researcher' make an interpretation of what they see and hear and understand" Creswell.2009, p.176). Data will be collected by the investigator using a series of questions on-line via email. Completed responses will be returned by email back to the investigator. Responses to the questions will be secured by the investigator to maintain anonymity and confidentiality.

4. No procedures will be formed on the human subject in the study. The data will be collected from healthy individuals by email.

5. A purposive sample of volunteers will be chosen who have participated with the Women's Global Connection in one or more immersion trips to Tanzania and or Zambia from 2004 to the present.

6. "Consent Methods"
 Subjects will be identified by a letter code. Subjects for the study are from a list of volunteers who have participated in immersion trips to Tanzania and or Zambia since 2004 to the present. The consent form will be posted on-line with the demographic information and series of questions on-line. The consent form will state the purpose of the study, demographic information response to series of questions and a statement and that the process should not take more than 25 to 30 minutes. Participants in the study will be informed that their identity and source of information will remain anonymous and confidentiality of the responses will be protected by the investigator. Participants will also be informed that they are free leave the study any-time without prejudice of future status and activities with the University of the Incarnate Word or any work or involvement in the outside community. Following completion of the information and responses to questions a statement, the participants will click submit that they have given permission to participate in the study. There will be no paper file of the consent document. Three to five interviews face to face interviews may be solicited if further information is needed to clarify responses from on-line responses. Participants will be asked to sign a consent form to gain permission for recording the interview. Consent forms will be secured and maintained by the investigator.

Appendix F *(continued)*

7. No compensation to the subjects will be offered.

8. There is no risk to the subjects.

9. Data collected from individual participants will be monitored by the investigator to insure anonymity and confidentiality.

10. Anonymity and confidentiality of on-line records will be maintained. Raw data will be shared with the researcher's advisor.

11. An expected sample size of 25 participants will be used for analysis. When data is received an "inductive analysis" (Marshall and Rossman, 2011, p.214) will be used to discover patterns themes and categories that may be dependent on age, gender, education, occupation, and immersion trips. A preliminary analysis will begin with a process of coding responses for interpretation from the emerging themes and categories (Creswell, 2009; Marshall and Rossman, 2006). See attachment for demographic information and series of questions to be asked. Several strategies recommended by Merriam, 2002 and Marshall and Rossman will be employed to ensure validity. The strategies include including triangulation, using the multiple responses and sources of data, data collection methods, member checks, peer review and saturation of the data. Reliability is difficult to assess in qualitative research since replicating the results would unlikely yield the same results. Reliability can be questioned for consistency and dependability to ask if the finding make sense. An audit trail will be maintained to explain how the results were derived. The audit trail will be authenticated in a journal detailing how the study is conducted and analysis of the data is collected, categories determined and decisions made throughout the study.

12. The back ground for the study is supported by a report of Reach Out Africa summarizing the Women's Global Connection activities and volunteers' contribution from 2004 to 2009. The significance of the study is from the limited studies in the literature from the volunteer's personal cross-cultural experience, upon returning from volunteering in an international setting. More studies will help to fill the gaps in the literature about cultural experience and transformation of returning volunteers from a cross-cultural setting (Levine, 2009; Merriam and Riberio, 2005). The study will also contribute to the body of knowledge regarding characteristics of volunteerism, what volunteers have learned about themselves, their contribution and cultural beliefs (Merriam, 2002; Snyder and Omoto 2008).
Research procedures used are cited by Bogan and Bilken, 1982; Creswell, 2009; Denzin, 2011; Merriam and Associates, 2002; Marshall and Rossman, 2011; Yin, 2011.