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# Community Perspectives- How Study Abroad with Service Learning Impacts the Locals

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“Community Perspectives: How Study Abroad with Service Learning Impacts  
the Locals” A Case Study

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May 25, 2012

Kevin Brennan, Advisor

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## **ABSTRACT**

This case study focuses on the community perspectives of homestay families, partner organizations, and local program staff that collaborated with Xplore USA Summer Language Adventure Camps in the Summer of 2011, in Asheville, North Carolina. The researcher focused on the service work aspect of

the Xplore programming, and its impact on the local community via the local community's perspective, to inform the reader of an underexplored subject. Interviews and survey results showed that the volunteer service projects performed by Xplore students and their local brothers and sisters were perceived as beneficial by an overwhelming majority of all local parties concerned: Xplore staff, host family siblings and parents, and local recipient organizations. The case study illustrates the need to collect local community feedback for proper evaluation of international service learning experiences.

## Foreword

I have never been so enthused to do physical labor than with a group of peers from another culture. My experiences performing service in communities far from my home and very different from my culture, influenced my career aspirations to create more service opportunities for young people in communities disparate from their own. Living, studying, working, and volunteering in other countries is what influenced my decision to work in the field of international education and go back to school for a masters, five years after I had completed what I thought was my last years of formal education.

As I began my graduate school experience, I was focused on service learning internships as my career path. During my first week on campus at SIT Graduate Institute, I recall feeling anxious that what I thought was a novel idea, service learning internships abroad, was already passé. Despite feeling like I was late in the game, I was determined that degree in hand, I could create internship opportunities in non-traditional locations that were beneficial to all major stakeholders. Ambitious and excited, I imagined two years of course work where I would learn all there was to know about the burgeoning field.

Classes in my program were set, so I was not able to choose classes that might better prepare me for service learning internships specifically, but I kept my eye on what was happening with the industry. In my international education

classes, it became apparent that I was not going to learn “all there was to know” about even a sub topic of international education. The field is much broader than I had thought. However, by my choices of projects and reports in my international education classes I learned a great deal that applied to the field of service learning and internships abroad.

As I took classes and worked full-time in international education, I noticed the service-learning element growing rapidly in the education sector. Granted, I was hyper-aware, but service-learning was starting to feel like a buzzword. International Service Learning (ISL) programs had taken off. I had two major volunteer experiences before graduate school. One was with a reforestation project in Southern India, and the other was building Monk’s homes from clay and rice husk bricks in Thailand. I found those projects through a loosely run organization called WWOOF and I organized my service, and my learning, on my own. I saw first hand what great experiential learning took place. My practice of journaling and written reflection has been with me since early childhood. I wrote all about both experiences abroad and used my journals later to analyze the service projects. I thought the projects I worked on in India and Thailand were reciprocal in that both the community I worked with and I, the volunteer, benefited.

Since 2006, when I started keeping my eye on volunteer tourism and service learning, I have seen hundreds of organizations creating more and more opportunities to volunteer while traveling, for school, for work and for alternative tourism. Whereas the practice used to be practiced by missionaries and international aid organizations, now it is one of many mainstream ways to travel.

Planning to be an orchestrator and developer of sustainable, reciprocal, ISL internships, I have watched with a critical eye. With the growth of hundreds more organizations in the field, came the growth of organizations that sent students abroad to do volunteer work with out evaluating its impact or success. I have found studies showing negative impacts of well-meaning service projects. If I were to create ISL programs using the current organizations in existence as guides, I may only spread faulty practice. I am hopeful however that there is a way to serve students, education institutions, partner communities, governments, employers, and foster understanding between nations and communities using ISL. As any professional should, researching this field to make sure it is both warranted and needed was a primary goal before endeavoring to make it a career path.

## **Introduction**

My primary interest in studying International Service Learning (ISL) led me to research an under-published area of the field. I will focus on the less studied side of service learning; the impact these emergent programs make on the communities they live with and volunteer in. The impact is rarely documented, or discovered due to funding, time, personnel, demand, and interest. This case study of Klubgroup's short-term education abroad program's

impact on the participant community of Asheville, NC aims to explore possible impacts, and reports results so other program developers can use the information in designing their programs.

Klubgroup is a German based youth travel provider. It runs programs in several international destinations, but its program in America, Xplore, is fairly unique. The Xplore program is for high school aged students, currently tending to come from Western European countries. These groups of 20-30 students travel to America to improve their English through English classes and living with an American host family for three weeks. Xplore is meant to be an experience of “real” America, complete with adventure and leisure activities and volunteer projects to give back to and encounter the many aspects of the local community. It is the service element of the Xplore program that sets it apart from other Klubgroup offerings. I hoped to find evidence that Xplore’s service element is welcomed, beneficial, and necessary. If there are negative impacts, I wanted to find out ways Xplore can avoid making these negative impacts, and publish a best practices document on ISL so that other providers can avoid the same mistakes.

**Problem:**

Is volunteerism necessarily beneficial to the recipient communities? This IPIC capstone explores the problem of the lack of evaluation of the recipient community of International Service Learning programs. It aims to bring to light unforeseen impacts of international service learning programs on partner communities and host families that house the international students. Additionally this IPIC aims to serve as a guide for Klubgroup and other organizations to conduct regular evaluation of program impacts on local communities.

**Leading experience:**

My interest in this topic has evolved throughout graduate level course work that has made me consider the stakeholder groups in education abroad programs. My experiences in volunteerism positions across the globe have often left me wondering who was helping whom. I have stayed with a host family in rural Turkey where our program's "service" project was nothing more than donating school supplies and singing a song with the school children. I have built earth brick homes in Thailand with a volunteer group, and I have helped farmers in India with seed saving and reforestation. These experiences all had their benefits and drawbacks. Partially because of all these experiences, I have gravitated towards a field where I can create these opportunities for others, and insure they are carried out using best practices.

I have been interested in designing ISL programs as I believe when done appropriately, they can benefit all stakeholders involved. However, doing one properly requires research, not just of impacts on the students, but impacts on the communities too. Thanks to a course designed to understand research methods, Practitioner Inquiry, I read Ivan Illich's address to a group of American volunteers heading to Mexico, where he warned them their volunteerism was unwanted by its recipients. After reading this, I knew if I were to continue my career path in ISL design, I owed it to myself to research impacts on the participant community. I want to be sure, when designing programs, everyone's benefit is considered integral to the success of the program. Without research in this area, it will not be known whether ISL is indeed helping two groups of people at once, or if people will just continue to assume a volunteer project done out of charity would be beneficial to its recipients. A colleague's research, Erika Nelson, in South Africa actually found the opposite to be true.

I suspect that in my case study there will be few negative aspects of the service work expressed. The organizations which are served in this case, regularly take on other volunteer groups, are accustomed to working with students (though not typically with international students), and the work the Xplore students complete does not take much interaction with partner organization's staff. The host families on the other hand interact greatly with the

students. I hoped for interesting results regarding the role the service element of the program has played within these host families.

**Research Question:**

How are partner organizations and host families impacted by the service aspect of Klubgroup's Education Abroad program based in Asheville, North Carolina?

**Conceptual Framework and Context:**

I want to learn about the benefits and issues of service learning, as seen by the participant community. Service learning is increasingly a part of study abroad programs, particularly short-term programs to developing areas. That is when people from another country, do work in service to a community, group, organization, or person and reflect on the experience. This form of experiential learning is generally seen as a benefit for the student so the opportunities are widening. In this case study, a less typical set up will be studied, that is, western students volunteering in a western country as a small part of their study abroad program. My hope is this study may give way to further study of service learning as it impacts different communities. There are thousands of organizations that are based in the west, doing philanthropic work in disadvantaged communities, but I question if their work is always beneficial.

Last year, I worked for Xplore, a part of Klubgroup, as an ESL teacher and

an activity leader. No longer affiliated, I am interested in studying the impacts of the program's unique feature: service activities. When service is associated with an education program and students reflect on the volunteer experiences, it is referred to as "service learning". In a setting involving students from one nation and a community from another, it would be "international service learning". Given the increased amount of programming in this field, and my interest in developing programs of this nature, I am compelled to study the lasting effects and impacts on the communities in which they are set. Due to limitations such as budget and time, using my local community of Asheville as a case study, is a viable option to study what may be trends in the field of ISL. Specifically I am looking at the impacts of service learning on the families and organizations involved in the volunteer work. Additionally, I want to assist Klubgroup in evaluating and improving their Xplore, USA programming.

My goal is to conduct exploratory research. I feel Klubgroup's programs are well received already, but their service-learning element has not been sufficiently evaluated, and perhaps more can be learned if the voices of the participant community members are heard.

There is already research about this general topic, that is, the impacts of service learning. Namely research shows the importance of a participatory approach between the education institution and the community partnerships.

However in the field of service learning and its impacts on participant communities, there are many questions yet to be answered. I am focusing on one of those un-answered questions. How are the partner organizations and participating host families impacted?

I am conducting this research from a post modernist view and as someone who has been raised and educated in the West. I have spent time doing community service domestically in a variety of settings and in cross-cultural settings in the United States and abroad. I recognize the tendency for misunderstandings and ambiguity in many of these settings. I aim to conduct a case study based on the interviews and questionnaires with each organization that Xplore volunteered with in the summer of 2011 as well as host family (including siblings who volunteered) participants.

I find this topic significant because it is intended to help my reader understand the impacts of volunteer work in international settings. The reader may be someone who intends to engage in or support service learning, a homestay, volunteerism abroad, or a related practice. This research may serve as a starting point for Xplore to conduct evaluations of their own program. Ultimately, with this research I aim to provide insight into the necessity of gaining an understanding of the impacts of ISL for different stakeholder groups.

## Literature Review

My literature review focuses on two areas of study and research: student service activities impact on: 1) partner (recipients of volunteer projects) organizations 2) partner community - host families, esp. host siblings.

In both of these areas of study there are significant emergent themes: the *need* for evaluation of study abroad/service learning impacts on: 1) community partnerships 2) host families.

### *International Service Projects Impact on the Local Community Organizations*

The need to conduct this research was informed by the work of past researchers from fields ranging from psychology to geography. Two main insights were revealed regarding the impact on partner communities of international volunteering programs: there is insufficient data being collected from participant community members, and of the data that has been collected, some results show alternative tourism, including international service learning (ISL), can be harmful to communities without careful planning and regular evaluation. This case study aims to provide a form of evaluation to kick start Xplore's efforts to improve the volunteer aspect of its programming, and strengthen its relationship with the Asheville community.

Harming a partner or host community is not the intended impact of any

service learning partnership I have come across. There are however, few organizations that have the skills, manpower, funding, and motivation to make sure their impacts are indeed as beneficial as they claim. It is the stated goal of many ISL programs to be reciprocal in nature, that is, to exhibit mutual dependence, action or influence as defined by Merriam Webster's Dictionary (Reciprocity). In the recently published work, *International Service Learning, Conceptual Frameworks and Research*, the authors note the struggle many ISL programs have to make reciprocity a reality. Even in their comprehensive book, their stated focus is on the North American student partaking in the ISL course. Hatcher and Bringle, wrote the title ISL is part of the struggle because the term "service" implies a charity model of helping. They go on to say, "Yet, most practitioners conceptualize and approach community service in a manner that emphasizes working *with* the community. Working with the community is not easy in ISL because there are many constituencies to be considered when working with international partners." (Bringle, Hatcher, & Jones, 2011, p. 15)

In her 2009 Capstone, Laura Litwiller did an excellent job of illustrating the spectrum of reciprocity and the different motives for service learning partnerships (from both the community perspective and the sending organization's). She highlighted the fact that ISL providers commonly use the term "host" community, which connotes a parasitic rather than mutual beneficial

relationship. In biological terms, a symbiotic relationship in which there is a “host” is characterized by exploitation or harm (Litwiller, 2009 p.6).

Within nature, the lingo of symbiotic relationships is more cut and dry, as the “host” in the relationship will die quicker due to the relationship. Period. In human relationships, the benefit or harm of a particular symbiotic relationship tends to be much less clear. Sometimes, despite negative elements of a relationship, the lesson learned is of great value. I feel the telling question, is would the “host” repeat the experience if given the chance?

It is the assumption of most international service learning projects I have encountered that a community exhibits a perceived need, and the students’ service is meant to answer the need while providing meaningful experiential learning to the volunteer. In communities across the globe, a farming cooperative in Thailand, a slum in South Africa, or a rural village of indigenous people in Peru, families play “host” to visiting students. The students come to learn from the program, and certainly from their interactions with the community, but on a service learning trip, they contribute something to the community they visit. I could see how the guest would want to give back to their “host” community. Like with any giving, it helps to know what the receiver might want. Often one gives the gift that they themselves would want, or one that they think is good for the recipient in their perspective. For example, buying

a friend in poor health due to poor eating habits, a healthy cook-book. I believe gifts can carry messages, maybe subconscious messages that try to fix, change or persuade. In international service learning settings I believe it is important the service project is considered a part of a reciprocal exchange rather than a gift. For in the occurrence of gift giving, it is generally impolite to reject the gift even if it is not useful or even unwanted.

The predominant amount of literature available regarding ISL pertains to the students or volunteers performing the service, and the sending institution. Schroeder's study of university sponsored international experiences in 2009 reported, "little reliable data is available on the impact that our students have on host communities." Despite growing numbers of students studying in non-traditional locations, she noted "What has been virtually ignored... is a critical examination of the impact of these programs on the communities that students visit." (Schroeder, 2009, p.141) In Schroeder's study of alternative spring break programs that included a service project and in depth reflection, interviews with faculty "reported favorable impressions of the student impact on the communities they served" (Schroeder, 2009, p.143). One faculty member did say, "the project that [the students] were working with seemed to be exacerbating inequality" (Schroeder, 2009, p.144) Additionally the host agency personnel were interviewed regarding the impacts the alternative study abroad program had on

the community and their feedback was not especially rich: “the host agencies said that student groups provided needed assistance...” (Schroeder, 2009, p.144).

Though Schroeder’s study was a critique of sending institution’s negligence to assess the impact study abroad programs can have on host communities, her study did not gather information from any of the host families or community members not financially tied to the programs being studied. I saw this as a major limitation since the participants may have felt the need to respond positively due to their dependent relationship. Her study argued for the need to ask questions about the possible negative impacts on host communities, remarking “We believe that if these questions are not asked, if the impacts on local communities of study abroad continue to be ignored, that we will without a doubt be engaged in the pursuit of academic goals at the expense of people who have no choice about the matter.” (Schroeder, 2009, p.147) The study concluded, “Ultimately, host communities should have control over if and how student groups should visit and study.” (Schroeder, 2009, p. 146) She recommended sending institutions should further “screen” study abroad programs for unintended negative outcomes on local communities.

In Levy’s 2002 Capstone, which focused on the feedback of a Central American community that hosted a study abroad program, she proves the validity of asking the host culture the impact study abroad has on them, by

exposing great variance between what the host community found important and what the students, and sending organization found important. Her literature review in 2002 showed the need to collect this community perspective and in my findings too, 10 years later, it is still rare that the community stakeholders are consulted in gathering evaluation indicators. Some studies I found even went as far as to make conclusions about the benefits for the community, provided by the service learning ventures being evaluated, without gathering data from the participant communities who were the beneficiaries. For example, Stukas in his 1999 article entitled "Service Learning: Who Benefits and Why?", where the author's research methodology did not include interviewing the community participants themselves. I believe, to *assume* benefit on the part of the local organization or community is flawed research. Seeking the community perspective is vital to understanding the impacts and benefits of any program servicing that community. The dearth of studies I located in which the community stakeholder opinions were solicited, led me to investigate with my own original research.

Regarding what was attainable through research in past studies of a similar nature, the general conclusion from my literature review is that ISL is, by in large, beneficial for the student participants both personally and academically (Stukas, 1999; Driscoll, 1996). But the well-documented benefit to the student

volunteers is not my focus. However, in researching studies that focused on the impact of student service from the student participant perspective, I noticed another, more interesting trend in my ISL research. Again and again, researchers' conclusions and recommendations expressed the need for further research into the beneficiary community's perspective (Clayton, 2009; Colburn, 2007; Driscoll, 1996; Levy, 2002; Litwiller, 2009; Stukas, 1999). Through my literature review I see a definite gap that my study will attempt to fill, in part, by showing the community perspective of a specific program run by Klubgroup in Asheville, North Carolina. I found there is very little literature with primary sources from beneficiary community members involved with ISL or volunteerism based programs. As Nelson notes in her Masters thesis, ISL and its close cousin volunteer tourism "create the opportunity for an infinite number of outcomes, both positive and negative, that are relatively new and unexamined" (Nelson, 2010 p.63).

Although I used several sources from the mid 1990's to inform my research regarding service learning, several documents from the last five years reveal a more targeted effort of addressing the participant communities' point of view. In 2007 Colburn published a book that grew out of a service learning partnership between Indianapolis University and their sister university in South Africa. My case study, seemingly only loosely related as it focuses on a

partnership between a European company with mostly European participants volunteering in America, is tied in that Colburn cites “common themes and concerns” between service learning in Africa and America despite significant local differences (p.3). The communities in South Africa are determined by some kind of need, oppression, or discrimination and visiting international students usually work with non-profits or advocacy organizations. Klubgroup’s choice of community partners in Asheville was also based on determining groups in need. Colburn claims this choosing of “needy” communities “presupposes a mutually beneficial relationship” (Colburn, 2007, p.11). It may seem counter-intuitive to imagine that a volunteer group can do more harm than good to the organization it is working for, but there is certainly evidence that this happens in many cases. The recipient organizations must use their time, personnel and sometimes funds to organize a group volunteer project. The benefits from the work completed, do not always outweigh the time and money spent organizing the project. I found it interesting that Colburn’s book alluded to benefits received by the participant communities but he did not use primary source data. In one case, he mentions positive impact on community members is *suggested* because of bonds made through civic association while working towards a common good. He cites “mutual respect” and “reciprocal concern and need” to show there are benefits to the community participants (Colburn, 2007, p.17).

A significant finding from Colburn's research was also evident in other works related to university level study: there is pressure on institutions to benefit others through interactions. Especially in international settings he says there is "a call on universities to recognize the need to benefit the community into which they send students." Thankfully, Colburn found there is an increasing trend to assess these community service oriented programs and how they are aligned with needs of recipient communities. Methods include: action research, process education, and quality assurance (Colburn, 2007, p.27).

This trend to add service work in study abroad programs is visible in other, non-university related types of education abroad as well. Several education abroad providers serving high-school aged students focus on leadership and volunteerism. Providers like The Experiment in International Living, Global Routes, Global Works, Global Explorers, and Klubgroup advertise that students will gain these qualities and experiences while participating in their programs. Organizations like these partner with community organizations in their program locations very similarly to the way university level service learning trips are organized. These travel companies are looking into ways they can better assess the impact their programming has on local communities.

Erika Nelson, my former director at Youth For Understanding, USA (an education abroad provider that focuses on academic years abroad at the high

school level) wrote her 2010 thesis on service learning and volunteer tourism using three case studies in South Africa. Her research question was, “who benefits from the efforts of development agencies and NGOs, and who is accountable for the measurement of outcomes related to volunteer service?” (p.2)

The development agencies and NGO's are often the partner organizations that service learning programs use to organize their student volunteer projects. I was surprised by her results, which showed many negative effects of volunteer tourism (including university level service learning programs) including the undermining of local control and customs, people becoming dependent on the NGO's rather than actively working in their community, and resentment between community members (Nelson, 2010, p.9). Though provocative and covering a similar theme as my research endeavors, Nelson's research was based on groups quite different from my own. She focused on vulnerable communities interacting with students from a very different culture. I included this source because it was one of the few that managed to gather first hand data from the recipients of volunteerism in a partner community. She concluded her research by saying “Evidence from community interviews points directly to the need to listen to local priorities before attempting to impose solutions.” In my research the community groups were the ones suggesting the work projects via their own

needs assessments, so the reader will notice a significant difference in results, despite a similar methodology.

### *Impacts of Home Stays on Host Family*

My literature review also led me to focus on research regarding “homestays”. I found research on the hosting of international students, and its impact on the families is still young, despite “homestays” being around since the 1930’s when they were officially used by the Experiment in International Living (2012). My research corroborated what Schmidt-Rinehart stated in her 2004 research collecting host family experiences; “Although the “homestay” has long been considered a key factor in the study abroad experience, it is one of the least examined components of foreign study.” The Xplore program uses homestays during its short-term summer programs for teens. The children of these families participate with their guest student in many activities including community service. This case study will provide further study on the impacts of education abroad programs. In particular, those programs where a family invites an international student into their home. Specifically studied here is the impact a summer program with volunteerism can have on a host family. In terms of existing research regarding homestays, much of it has focused on the foreigners adjusting to their new surroundings (Owen, 1997). Owen gathered host family perspectives in her study of Japanese students living in home stays in Victoria

Canada. Her findings suggested that host siblings can play a large role in the success of the relationship between the student and the family. Even in this case where the host families' perspectives were utilized, the international student was the focus of the study.

Even less frequently addressed is how children in the "host" family adapt to the new situation. Some childhood cross-cultural development studies have touched on this slightly. The focus of these studies has been on the cultural awareness developed by the children from living with a foreign student (Duveen, 1997; Harkness, 1996; Joerchel, 2004). But what I want to know is how are children of host families impacted by their service work done with foreign brothers and sisters? What is the impact of international students on host siblings as role models or not, while doing service work that is familiar or conversely, new? I have found little on this specifically. In related research there are theories surrounding a child's ability to adapt to their surroundings, informed by their parents' psychological characteristics, the social context in which they live, and the customs and cultural rearing practices of the family (Harkness and Super 1996). This would include the influence of the international student, and the cultural upbringing they bring with them as a brother or sister in the house. Regarding children in cross-cultural settings, psychological studies show how children adapt and are "highly influenced by their environment and the people

and cultures that exist within it.” (Shuster, 2007 p.12) I aim to gather more information by conducting my own original research that may show volunteer work coupled with cross-cultural interaction has a strong impact on young people.

### **Research Design**

I aimed to gather feedback from all participants local to Asheville, North Carolina, the “host” city to Xplore students. The only group that was not selected to participate in this study was the international students because this group is the most frequently assessed in other research studies and I am specifically concerned with the local communities’ perspectives. I wanted a well-rounded, triangulated view of the volunteer projects. Thus I planned to gather feedback from local Xplore staff, staff at the organizations which were recipients of the four service projects, and host families whose own children were involved in the Xplore programming.

To assess the impacts of Xplore’s service learning on host families I sent out questionnaires to the parents and conducted interviews with their children who were involved in volunteer work. The questionnaires were made anonymous by using the online survey maker, Survey Monkey. The ten questions are listed in Appendix A. Out of the twenty-five families asked to participate, ten parents and fourteen children responded and agreed to

participate in the study. The interviews took less than twenty minutes, and the children's feedback was rather general, as suspected. All interviews were recorded and transcribed. Some interviews flowed organically and different questions were asked in addition to the original 11. See Appendix B for host sibling interview questions.

To assess the impact on the community organizations, I interviewed the Xplore program director Jens Behrman, and all of Xplore's local staff who taught and led activities and volunteer projects for the international students and host siblings. These Xplore staff interviews, five in total, provided the greatest insight into the program's impact as Xplore staff are community members themselves, and are the biggest critics and proponents of the service projects. See Appendix C for the Xplore staff interview questions. Most vital however, were the interviews conducted with each of the partner organizations' volunteer coordinators. These interviews, one with each organization, four in total, aimed to understand how the volunteer work was organized, implemented, received, and evaluated (if it was). See appendix D for partner organization interview questions.

### **Limitations**

In the outset I imagined limitations would include time constraints on the part of the partner organization staff but I found these participants were more

than willing to give lengthy and helpful feedback during the interviews. I foresaw a lack of clarity of comprehension for child subjects, and in a few cases this did taint results. The biggest limitation I suspected was that subjects might correlate the interviewer (me), an independent researcher, with the success of Xplore's programming as I served as a teacher and activity leader for Xplore in August of 2011. With the children especially I tried to mitigate this by explaining I was a student, like them, doing a research project, and their most honest answers would be the most helpful.

As with many ISL programs and volunteer tourism programs, Xplore's partnerships with Asheville organizations are designed for a long-term relationship. Most of the participants interviewed were likely to work with Xplore again in future summers. Interviewees may have kept future partnership opportunities in mind when answering my questions. Despite that I conducted my research independent of Xplore, it would be natural for the participants to think their comments, though anonymous, would be available to Xplore staff upon publishing of my research. Participants could have answered more generally or more favorably than they would have if they held no prospects of working with Xplore programming in future summers.

## **Presentation and Analysis of Data**

Though Xplore staff members were asked to speculate upon the impact the volunteer activities may have had on the host families, the opinions shared from the parents and siblings were the most telling. The host parents' responses gave a mixed review of the impact of the volunteer work, though a clear majority supported Xplore having volunteer activities as part of their programming. No parents took part in the service work themselves. The parents were not interviewed but instead completed anonymous surveys. Their answers tended to be the most frank of all the respondents.

The partner organizations interviews and Xplore staff interviews revealed the design of the service projects. Xplore staff members tended to be more critical of the quality of the experiences, though in theory they were all supportive of the service work aspect of the program. The partner organization participants gave mostly positive feedback and were clearly open to partnering with Xplore in the future.

### **Host Parent Survey Results**

The survey started by asking about Xplore programming in general. To the first question, "Have there been any lasting impacts on your family from you international student's visit last July/August?" Nine of the ten parents said there had. Specific examples included a number of different impacts including, "Our children are more aware of geography and the fact that people speak different

languages outside the U.S”, “[there] is an understanding that there is a big world out there beyond our city...”, and “We have gained a new member to our family,”. Parents also cited impacts such as the tendency to eat more meals at home, a new desire to explore other countries, a relationship with their Xplore student’s family, a connection with Germany (where more than half of the Xplore students came from), and one parent said of their children, “...they are more interested in learning about additional cultures.” Conversely one parent responded in the negative stating, “We have traveled a lot and have friends from other countries so we are already interested in international affairs, different cultures, etc.”

Parents responded to the second question with more specific examples of things they do differently after being a host family for Xplore. Answers included, “My children think bigger and broader than before the experience.”, developing a bond with the exchange student’s family, “Yes, it has opened my eyes to international travel. I never had a desire to see Europe before hosting a child from there.”, “Yes, our children have a more global view of life now.”, and “We talk about visiting other countries and how things are different everywhere you go.”

Two out of the ten respondents said they did not notice any changes after the experience.

The third question asked if the parents noticed any changes in their children that they attribute to the Xplore experience. Of the nine who answered this question eight believed there are changes in their child. Examples included, "...good exposure to intercultural awareness.", openness to new things, their children speaking German or Italian, "It has expanded their world.", and another parent said he noticed the start of a "world view" in his child. One mom said her child is more interested in talking about multi-cultural experiences from school. "He is always showing us countries on the globe...and talks about the international guest speakers."

The remaining seven questions on the parent survey related directly to the volunteer aspect of the Xplore programming. Question four asked if their child had participated. Five parents said their child/children had participated. The other five gave reasons why not, including their child/children being too busy with summer jobs, too young, involved in summer camp, "...our son was out of town for part of the Xplore visit.", "...he missed the bus and missed the opportunity to go.", and "our student was sick that day."

One parent mentioned, "It was more about timing than whether the work had merit." The other answers also painted a picture of the volunteer work being skipped not by choice, but because of other obligations or incidences.

The next questions asked parents to recall what their child shared about the service experience. This question was only applicable to the five parents whose children had participated. Two reported their children said they had fun, and other details included, "It offered an opportunity to get to know more of the international students.", "Sometimes they complain that it was hot or a lot of hard work but they always have fun with the group.", "...they had to do a different job because they didn't wear close-toed shoes.", and "They shoveled mulch. He had little to say about it."

Eight parents responded to question six, which asked if they encouraged their child to participate in the volunteer activities, and all eight said they had. Reasons included, "It is good for kids to think outside of themselves for five minutes!", "Yes, we talk about helping others all the time and he is interested in volunteering.", "Yes, socializing is healthy. And the good intent for his age group is a good guiding principle.", "Yes, to be part of the group.", the opportunity to get to know more students from other countries, and "It helps them meet kids just like them from another country and helps them understand and appreciate similarities and differences between all of us."

Question seven asked if parents thought their children *wanted* to do the service work activities with Xplore. Three parents declined to answer sighting non-applicability, four said yes, and two said no. The tenth parent's response

gave more than a simple yes or no. This parent replied, "He seemed interested if it was fun or challenging, but on the whole I would say he was less interested in the service work than the rafting etc."

Question eight asked if the child had previous or post volunteer experiences. Eight parents responded their child had done volunteer work previously, and five stated their child has done volunteer work since the Xplore experience. It should be noted, all the children who volunteered after Xplore, are involved in ongoing volunteer work that started before Xplore and continued after it, so it would be fair to say the Xplore volunteer work was not the impetus for continued volunteerism.

The ninth question asked if parents felt the service aspect of Xplore's programming made an impact on their family or children. Three parents said yes, three said no, one citing, "The service work didn't seem that meaningful." and four responded the question was non applicable. This question, meant to give the most information, was mostly answered in brief yes or no responses which unfortunately did not yield the desired result: explanation of perceived impact or lack thereof.

The last question, asked if and how the parents felt the volunteer projects conducted by Xplore made an impact on the Asheville community. All ten parents responded in the affirmative. Reasons included: "It sends a message to

the community that these visiting foreign students are going to give back in some small or big way to the community.”, “Every little bit helps...one never knows the impact they have when the work is being done, the only thing we know is that they left the place better than when they arrived.”, “How wonderful for other people to experience the students. Their kindness and generosity.”, “Would like to think it did, but not there, no way of knowing. From comments it seemed to have an impact on the international students.”, and “I’m sure it did. Every bit of volunteer work done by anyone impacts our community!”

Though not in direct response to any question in particular, some parents shared their suggestions for more impactful, or beneficial volunteer work. Suggestions included: having projects with a more important purpose, (rather than shoveling mulch), to have a list of volunteer activities prepared before hand, “If they got to interact with people more they would get more out of it.”

### **Host Siblings Interview Responses**

The fourteen host siblings interviewed ranged in age from seven to eighteen and came from eight different families. These were not necessarily the same families in which parents were surveyed, though in some cases both the parents and children participated.

The first question asked what the child remembered most from participating with Xplore. The table 1.a is listed in Appendix E and shows their

responses. The most remembered activity/experience was the exchange students and only one participant said the volunteer activities were the most memorable.

The children were next asked what part they liked the best and if they disliked any part. Table 1.b, listed in Appendix F illustrates their responses. Again the most popular response had to do with exchange student interaction. Only one child participant mentioned volunteering as their favorite activity.

Participants were next asked if they recalled volunteering at any of the four project locations, and to share about their experience. It turned out that four of the children had not been present for any of the volunteer activities. Reasons included, sickness, classes, and missing the bus. Of the remaining ten who did volunteer, their recollections varied widely. Explanations included: Spreading mulch onto the yard at the church, going to MANNA Foodbank, yard work at the Children's home, picking up trash at the nature center, watering a garden, planting flowers, team building and group motivation to finish the job.

The fifth questions asked if the child worked with their exchange brother or sister while doing the volunteer work. Seven said yes, and one said no. For the others the question did not apply, or they were not sure. With the next question I was hoping to gather an example of cross-cultural exchanges taking place during the volunteer activities. I asked the host siblings if they learned anything about/from their exchange brother or sister while working with them

on the service project. I also asked if they thought their exchange brother or sister learned anything from them. Unfortunately, this question yielded few useful responses for it was non applicable to the six of the children. The other eight were split fairly evenly. Five said they learned from their exchange student during the volunteer activities, and four said they could not think of anything they learned from them during the project. Five host siblings said they thought their exchange student learned something from or about them during the project, and three thought there was nothing learned from them during that time. Examples of things learned from the exchange students included: The student likes to work and have fun at the same time, the student likes playing and joking around, Spanish words, how to prepare certain foods.

Host siblings speculated their exchange students may have learned the following from them:

- “[exchange student] learned that I can get outside sometimes.”
- “Might have learned to speak better English from me.”
- “They learned some new words from me and bettered their English.”

Next the host siblings were asked if they had ever done service work before. If few had, then perhaps Xplore would have served as a catalyst. It turned out that a majority of them, (eight) had previous volunteer experiences

and for six volunteering was new. The six who had never volunteered before were the youngest, and two of them did not volunteer with Xplore either.

In trying to ascertain if they host siblings partook in the volunteer activities of their own free will, I asked them if they knew they would be volunteering in the afternoon on the days they participated, how they found out about the volunteer activities, and why they participated. See table 1.c in Appendix G for their complete responses. Nine of the participants said they knew about the activities and six said they read the schedule to find out. The reasons why they participated were diverse but most expressed positivity towards volunteer work. Several mentioned the need for their participation either as expressed by Xplore or from the community recipients.

Lastly the children were asked to share their thoughts, opinions and feelings regarding volunteerism and service work, either via their experiences with Xplore or more generally. Their responses were overwhelmingly positive.

Some quotes to give an idea of their sentiments:

- “I think it is really nice to help people, and now I really like helping my teachers a lot...”
- “I think it is nice to help other people and more fun when you get to do it with other people.”
- “I think it is nice for other people, and I liked it!”
- “It was fun because I got to spend time with [exchange brothers]”

- “[There was] a lot of ‘I’m gonna do this! I’m gonna finish!’ which is nice because if you have to do some kind of service work that’s the way to do it.”
- “I see the value a little bit more than I used to. I see the value in just doing work, even if there is no point to the work.”
- “I think [volunteerism] is really needed, especially for the exchange students because I think some of them might not have had volunteer work anywhere.”
- “I think it is very important for everyone in the community to pitch in to help those less fortunate than us. I think it is important to make our society work.”
- “It is nice to help people, and it is an important part to be a good citizen.”
- “I think it feels good to help other people. It makes it more fun.”
- “It is what a good American should do!”
- “I like to give things to people that don’t have homes.”

### **Asheville Community Partner Organization Interview Responses**

The four organizations that were the recipients of Xplore’s service projects were all very different types of non-profit organizations. One organization is Grace Church, the organization that donated space for Xplore’s English classes, where the students’ volunteer project was spreading mulch. The second, was MANNA Foodbank, a large non-profit in Asheville that accepts hundreds of volunteer groups each year to help process and get food out to food pantries and needy families. The third, WNC Nature Center, is an education wildlife park.

The students beautified the park by picking up trash. The last volunteer project was done at an orphanage called the Black Mountain Home for Children. This organization accepts volunteers regularly, and the Xplore students' project was yard work on a section of the campus.

In speaking with the volunteer coordinators at each one of the organizations, the participants were first asked to explain their organizations work with volunteer groups. See table 2.a below.

Organization	Work with volunteer groups
Grace Church	"Most are associated with the church, we are trying to reach out a little more."
MANNA Foodbank	"We work with them in a lot of different ways, they come in and help us process. We work with youth groups, at risk youth, homeless individuals...some are high skill level volunteers."
WNC Nature Center	"We have two primary set ups for volunteers: adults and youth. We have about 85 students that participate in the junior naturalist program. We work with a lot of schools in the area, we also have group service projects through the court system...ymca, girl scouts..."
Black Mountain Home for Children (BMH)	"Volunteer groups are significant in completing work projects that we would otherwise have to outsource. Last year we hosted 2,002 volunteers from 17 states. They

	completed more than 14,000 hours of service...from general upkeep to construction projects.”
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2.a Local organizations work with volunteer groups.

When asked if they use student groups often, three of the four said they use groups a great deal, with BMH adding they hosted around forty student groups last year. When asked how Xplore became one of their student groups, three of the four said the Xplore director had contacted them, the exception being the Nature Center, which was not pre-planned but chosen due to several students being ineligible to work with MANNA because they were wearing open-toed shoes. Two of the four organizations reported their experience with Xplore was their first interaction with an international group of students.

Questions five through eight tended to get responses that were blended or answered more than one of the questions at a time. I asked how the volunteer opportunities were set up, who suggested the projects, if they were involved in the decision, and if a needs assessment was completed. The respondents had similar but unremarkable answers. I had difficulty gaining any helpful insight from these questions. Table 2.b shows the response summaries.

Name of Organization	Response Summary from Questions 5-8
Grace Church	Works closely on what needs of building are, and what needs to be done. “Pulled out to do list and looked for something that would be good for a group setting, kids doing the work, and what fit the group and our needs at the time.”
MANNA Foodbank	“We try to make a project that we feel like we can

	communicate well with [international students].” Had a project in mind but usually offers two to three different projects to group leaders to give them choices. “Majority of what we do is done by volunteers”
WNC Nature Center	Provides guidance on particular projects. Chooses big projects from outstanding list of prioritized tasks.
Black Mountain Home for Children	“We assess the age and skill level of each group. We base the volunteer work on these things. We want all groups to feel successful and capable to do each project.”

2.b Summary of Partner Organization’s responses to Questions 5-8

Each organization said the Xplore group carried out the project to their satisfaction, though no organization claimed to have conducted a formal evaluation of the work. BMH said they usually have groups fill out a survey and are sure to thank the Xplore volunteers at project completion. The Nature Center said it tries to get group contacts to send thank you cards but rarely manages this. MANNA responded that only work done improperly gets brought to the coordinator’s attention. Grace Church remarked, “Everything was completed and completed well. I let [Xplore staff] know I inspected the work and it was satisfactory.” Each of the four organizations enthusiastically said they would welcome Xplore students back for future projects.

When asked the final question, “What would you like to do differently in partnering with Xplore, if anything?” it was evident that each organization’s recollection of partnering with Xplore was positive. The only suggestions for improvement included adding a stronger orientation element and tour and more advanced notice so the project could have been more advanced.

## **Xplore Staff Interview Responses**

The Xplore Staff themselves are Asheville community members. Four of the five were hired seasonally as teachers and leaders for the summer language and adventure camp. The responses of this staff gave both the inside the organizational perspective as well as community insight. Each of the five staff members shared positive answers about the first question; how they felt about the volunteer aspect of the Xplore programming. Remarks included: "It is very beneficial for the young travelers.", the "Giving back aspect" is in the limelight of international youth travels, international parents point to [volunteer aspect of program] as a good thing for their children to experience, " it is an opportunity for self improvement, exposure, and to think about cultural differences.", it is the aspect that makes Xplore stand out from other programs, it is important for student visitors to see all sides of America, and the volunteer work is "more for the students than for the receivers."

When asked if they believed the volunteer activities were "integral to the success of Xplore" each of the five answered in the affirmative. Reasons cited included: "Parents and students appreciate it.", "It is part of the whole success.", it is an opportunity for a lot of interaction, gives a full picture of America, "To leave [volunteering] out would do a disservice to them.", and the "Students get a lot out of it."

Each staff member rated the volunteer activities high in comparison to other activities, though no staff interviewee ranked it number one in importance. Three staff members explicitly listed volunteering as one of the top three aspects of the programming. Other top aspects included staying with host families, and English classes.

Not all staff members were privy to how the volunteer opportunities were set up. It was made evident that two staff members sought out partnership opportunities, and that patterns were selected by a process of elimination based on which organizations in the area could accommodate (and benefit from) a large group of young students. It was also clear the current partnerships have been under cultivation for years.

When asked if the partner organizations suggested the projects, all staff members concurred that the partner organizations were in charge of this element. Remarks showed the Xplore staff has little ability to dictate the projects though several staff members mentioned they “wished there was more interaction with [non Xplore community] locals.” In response to question six not many staff members knew if a needs assessment had been conducted. Feedback illustrated the questions lack of clarity:

- “Did we dictate a little about what we would like [Xplore students] to be involved in?...we always end up backing off and letting them tell us what their needs are...”

- “It ends up we are doing a lot of outdoor work but for very different purposes.”
- “ Most organizations that are willing to take a group of volunteers have something in mind for them to do. Otherwise they would not benefit from the visit, and not be likely to invite them.”

Staff was asked if there was any formal or informal evaluation of the service work’s success or impact, just as the partner organization was asked. Xplore staff and partner organization interviewee responses were fairly congruent regarding evaluation. Not one staff member answered that there were formal evaluation elements, but four mentioned informal evaluation elements such as the partner organizations thanking the students.

Each staff member believed the partner organizations would be interested in working with Xplore volunteers in the future. This response was matched by the partner organizations sentiments. Staff comments included:

- “I think it was well received, and the kids were well behaved while there and did helpful things.”
- “They have always shown interest in having us back”
- “I’m sure MANNA and GRACE look forward to it every year.”

Staff members speculated what impact they thought the volunteer work had on host families to answer the ninth interview question. Responses varied and included opinions that reflected that the “idea” of volunteer work was better

received than the actual projects completed. In question 10 staff theorized the impact on the recipient organizations. See table 3.a for a comparison of perceived impacts.

Staff perceived impact on host families	Staff perceived impact on recipient organizations
<p>“The volunteer work had a good impact on host families. Host siblings that otherwise may have stayed at home on a lazy summer day ended up doing some public service instead; they probably would not have done this otherwise. It also provided bonding experiences for the host siblings and their adopted student...and other with other host siblings.”</p>	<p>“The large number of participants in Xplore groups had a positive impact on the recipient organizations. Real progress was made in the areas of yard work and food distribution.”</p>
<p>“It seemed very mixed. I think some host siblings really embraced the volunteer work and gained some of the same awareness of our students, while others skipped this because it wasn’t a “fun” activity. Overall I would say it had little effect on host families expect that they like the idea that we are not all fun and games but doing something for the community.”</p>	<p>“It was certainly help to them. I think it helps create good relations between countries and cultures when students take time from their holiday to help people in a foreign country. I think this impact is not as measurable as weeds being pulled or mulch being shoveled, (the obvious ways these organizations were impacted). Students like these pave the path for understanding and tolerance.”</p>
<p>“Host families saw their own community in a new light. They made connections with organizations they might not have known about before...afforded the opportunity for kids to give back and see meaningful activities they could do during summer vacation.”</p>	<p>“Other than the obvious impact of the volunteers, having hands to sort, lay mulch, clean etc. the organizations see that children are willing and able to help. It is also impactful to make connections with international students and see that they too have a stake and interest in the Asheville community.”</p>
<p>“Host families liked the idea of volunteerism, and in part that is why they participated. I think for families that already do volunteer work, the impact may have only been that they</p>	<p>“I think the volunteer work had a positive impact on the recipient organizations. Connections were made with Xplore that will lead to positive volunteer projects in the future.</p>

<p>changed their perspective about the youth of other counties, seeing that they to are willing to do volunteer work. For those families where volunteer work was new, I think they will do it again. That is a big impact. Some parents thought the projects were pretty low tech, low interactions and not so great but I doubt they thought it was a pure waste of time.”</p>	<p>Every group makes an impact in that they get jobs done that could not be done without them. Having a steady influx of volunteer groups at their disposal is a big aid and makes a big impact even if the individual projects can be small and almost unnoticeable.”</p>
<p>“The basic idea of international students coming to the Asheville area not only to have fun and enjoy their language experience but also to give back to the community is very well received by host families.”</p>	<p>“I personally noticed that an organization like MANNA that is used to volunteering groups, lacks special appreciation for our appearances. The Xplore group seems to be regarded as "one of a thousand" each year. Grace and BMH on the other hand show a great amount of thankfulness each time we show up with the students.”</p>

Table 3.a Staff perception of impact on host families and recipient organizations

Lastly, Xplore staff members were asked their suggestions for growth regarding the volunteer activities. Themes that were brought up several times by several staff included more interactive volunteer projects, and more orientation and preparation. Responses included:

- Reaching out to other organizations
- Have Xplore students do something more interactive with people
- “We would be interested in trail clean up, river clean up...”
- Providing more background on why students are doing what they are doing will help students feel like they are really making a difference to someone.
- More interaction with kids themselves at BMH
- “More orientation and a debriefing as well”
- More pre-planning

## Discussion

I think the fact that so many of the host siblings had already gained volunteer experiences, and shared such positive remarks about the experience with Xplore and about volunteering in general shows these children and possibly their families include volunteerism as a cultural value. The families could have been more inclined to host an Xplore student, allowing them to participate in the three weeks of activities, because the volunteer aspect of the program resonated with them. It was evident that parents valued the Xplore program in more ways than one. The volunteer aspect seemed like a definite plus with all the parent participants, but their comments regarding the impact participating with Xplore had little to do with volunteering. Instead, the impacts highlighted developing international interests, intercultural experiences, and exposure to other cultures for their children.

The Xplore staff, found it important to include volunteerism in the program not only to give back to the hosting community, but because it was a way the American youth and exchange students could bond. Though Xplore's program model is not like traditional ISL (because it lacks formal reflection on the service work as a required part of the program), Xplore staff does agree that the students learn from the experiential learning their volunteer work provides. Xplore USA's volunteer element sets it apart from Klubgroup's other educational programming. Xplore has become a very popular program since last summer's

success and Klubgroup is currently planning to implement community service activities in some of its other programs. This alone speaks to the perceived success of the volunteer aspect of the programming and it a major reason that it will continue to be a part of Xplore's summer camps in Asheville.

Additionally as volunteerism is a common practice in America, engaging in a service activity would allow the exchange students to experience "real life in America" rather than just a vacation. Experiencing "real America" is a stated goal of the Xplore program to its European applicants. Though Xplore is marketed as a language and adventure program, a more implicit goal is to provide an opportunity to be immersed in another culture. The homestays and activities are meant to allow the student to experience America as members rather than tourists. Doing service work, particularly along side their "host" siblings, is a big part of making that connection.

The feedback from partner organizations and Xplore staff aligned well in many ways. In Levy's 2002 ISL case study (noted in the literature review), which also gathered participant community feedback, results showed very little congruency between community and staff understanding of the program's goals and impacts. In this case study, despite no official documentation such as needs assessments or formal evaluations, participants of the partnerships expressed mutual interests. Both sides agreed on how the volunteer opportunities were set

up and both sides concurred that future partnership was likely. Suggestions for improvement came from both the community organizations and Xplore staff, and even here there were some parallels. More orientation for the students, more pre-planning for projects, and more interaction with local community members during service projects were all mentioned on both sides.

The congruence in responses shows a healthy match was made between Xplore's need to create a well-rounded study abroad program, and the Asheville communities' need for volunteerism. Based on the feedback collected, the two sides seemed to have a basic understanding of each other's needs and priorities. It is when this understanding and communication is lacking that many ISL programs go wrong and partnerships fizzle. Without reciprocity, one side will eventually feel the tipped scale and will need to move towards striking a balance or ending the relationship to protect their interests and stakeholders.

### **Conclusions**

It is evident that in this case, there is a multi-dimensional, beneficial impact on the locals, perceived by all parties. This case study served its purpose to provide an initial evaluation for Xplore programs. Xplore USA, now has a survey template for gaining participant feedback that it can alter to generate more useful responses where my questions yielded few. Not only is the way

paved for Xplore to conduct future evaluations, but the results reported in this case study speak to the need for evaluation practices to continue. Understanding the community's perspective is necessary to please all stakeholders.

Findings also support the *need* for Xplore's volunteer activities on behalf on the international students and local community (host families and recipient organizations). The Asheville community feedback showed the service projects completed by Xplore students were warranted and made a positive impact on the community. Evaluations are often the most important and useful when the results reveal room for improvement and strategies or suggestions for positive change. This evaluation did just that. Luckily for Xplore and the Asheville community, the changes suggested are doable, and more or less agreed upon by all major stakeholders.

Though each case of international service learning is different, much can be inferred from this study. Xplore's design included letting partner organizations determine projects and fostering partnerships year after year. With a similar program design to the one Xplore employed, other ISL or volunteer tourism programs can expect results may be similar; beneficial and impactful to both sides of the partnership. This would likely hold more true if the partnerships are made between groups of similar socio-economic standing. For example, this case study would be more useful to someone designing or

researching an ISL program between western countries, as is the case with Xplore rather than a partnership between a wealthy country and a so called “developing” one. In this setting there are likely many other variables to consider that were not at play in my case study.

Another possibly major factor in Xplore’s success is that the Xplore students themselves, and the “host” families from the partner community have similar financial standing. It seems to me, the more difference between two groups, they greater space for misunderstanding. When using this case study’s results to inform other ISL program design, designers should keep in mind factors that are liable to substantially change the product, such as major differences in socio-economic standing or culture between student and community partners.

The practical applicability of this case study is clear for other international service learning programs using a set up similar to Xplore. As this branch of experiential education continues to expand so too will the uses of this study. For ISL programs that differ greatly in their design and stakeholder demographics, the literature review and evaluation design can still be useful. Other student travel organizations, which are thinking about adding or improving service aspects to/of their programs, could also find this case study helpful.

This case study was more comprehensive in its community feedback collection than most I found in research of existing literature. It could be strengthened still however, if it included the perspective of the community members served by the service projects completed with the local partner organizations. For example, if the hungry who received the weekend food-packs that the Xplore students packed for their service project with MANNA Foodbank, then an additional stakeholder group's perception would be represented. Similarly, it would be interesting to see what the orphans living at BMH thought of the service project completed by the Xplore students and host siblings. Their opinions could differ greatly from that of the BMH staff. I would suggest that other researchers looking for well-rounded community evaluation, aim for this type of stakeholder feedback.

This case study is ultimately the most useful for Klubgroup itself. Xplore staff can use this data to assist in conducting future evaluations and assessments of the volunteer activities used and the relationships with local organizations. Klubgroup may use this study to support the expansion of service learning to its other summer program locations. Several participants of this study, both on Xplore staff and from the participant community of Asheville, requested a summary of my research results. I believe the information provided will further cement bonds between Xplore and the local community. I also think local readers

of my results will see the benefits of volunteerism in the Asheville community. Furthermore, it may foster their positive opinion of Xplore's role in the community.

Lastly, this study will add to the body of studies that exists to further inform international education professionals and others who seek to use best practices in developing international service learning programs that are reciprocal and seek to gather partner community feedback. In my research, I found very few studies that gathered substantial community feedback regarding service work completed by foreigners. This study will be a drop in the bucket of filling that void.

### **Appendix A Host Parent's Survey**

1. Have there been any lasting impacts on your family from your international student's visit last July/August?
2. Do you feel you do, think, or talk about anything differently after the experience of hosting with Xplore? Please explain.

3. What about your son/daughter, have you noticed any changes you attribute to the Xplore summer program experience?
4. Did your son or daughter participate in the volunteer work with Xplore? Why or why not?
5. If your son/daughter participated in volunteer work with Xplore, what do you recall them sharing about the experience?
6. Did you encourage him/her to participate? How and why?
7. Did your child/children want to do the service work activities with Xplore?
8. Had your son or daughter done volunteer work before their experience with Xplore? Have they done any after? Please explain.
9. Do you feel the service aspect of Xplore's programming made an impact on your family or your children?
10. Do you feel the volunteer work conducted by Xplore made an impact on the Asheville community? How so?

## **Appendix B Host sibling Interview Questions**

1. What part of participating with Xplore programs last summer do you remember most?
2. What part did you like the best?
3. Dislike?
4. Do you remember volunteering at (listed names of organizations)? If so, Can you tell me about your experience?
5. Did you work with your Xplore brother or sister?
6. What did you learn from them if anything? Do you think they learned anything from you?
7. Had you ever done service work before?
8. Did you know you would be doing volunteer work with Xplore? How did you find out?
9. Do you have any feelings about volunteer work that are different now than what they may have been before you tried it?
10. What are your thoughts about service work?
11. Why did you participate in the volunteer activities?

## Appendix C Xplore Staff Interview Questions

1. How do you feel about the volunteer aspect of Xplore's programming?
2. In your opinion, are the volunteer activities integral to the success of Xplore?
3. How important would you rate the volunteer activities compared to other Xplore activities? English class, free weekends, day trips, adventure activities etc.
4. How were the volunteer opportunities set up?
5. Did the partner organizations suggest the projects?
6. Was there a needs assessment done?
7. Was there any formal or informal evaluation of the service work's success or impact?
8. Do you believe the same organizations would be interested in partnering with Xplore volunteers in the future?
9. What impact do you think the Xplore volunteer work had on the host families?
10. What impact do you think the Xplore volunteer work had on the recipient organizations?

11. Do you have any suggestions for growth?

#### **Appendix D Partner Organization Interview Questions**

1. Please explain your organizations work with volunteer groups.
2. How often do you use student groups?
3. How was it that you had the Xplore students volunteer with your organization?
4. Was this the first time your organization has partnered with international student volunteers?
5. How were the volunteer opportunities set up?
6. Who suggested the projects? The Xplore Director? Your organization?
7. Were you involved in the project decision? How was the project chosen?
8. Was there a needs assessment done before a project was decided on? What was this process like?

9. Did the Xplore groups carry out the volunteer projects to your satisfaction?
10. Was there any formal or informal evaluation of the service work's success or impact? If so what were the results?
11. Would your organization be interested in partnering with Xplore volunteers in the future?
12. What would you like to do differently in partnering with Xplore, if anything?

**Appendix E Table 1.a**

<b>Most remembered activity/experience</b>	<b>Number of responses</b>
The exchange students, or their student in particular.	5
Rafting (adventure activity)	2
Sliding Rock (adventure activity)	2
Tubing (adventure activity)	2
Carowinds (theme park day)	2
Volunteering	1
Scavenger hunt in downtown Asheville	1
The drive to Xplore director's home	1

1.a Children's most memorable Xplore experience.

**Appendix F Table 1.b**

<b>Part liked the Best</b>	<b>Number of responses</b>
Meeting/talking with exchange students	5
Scavenger hunt	2
Riding in bus hearing different languages	1
Sliding Rock	1
Tubing	1
Volunteer activity	1
Family beach trip (with exchange student)	1

Part Disliked?	Number of responses
Nothing	12
Exchange student not talkative or playful	1
Family trip to Greensboro (with exchange student)	1

1.b Children's liked and disliked experiences.

### Appendix G Table 1.c

Did child know about the volunteer activities scheduled?	How were they informed?	Why did they participate?		
<table border="1"> <tr> <td>Yes 9</td> <td>NO 1</td> </tr> </table>	Yes 9	NO 1	From reading the schedule (6)	"I just like to give things to people and to help out with things."
Yes 9	NO 1			
Not applicable: 4	Father had a list of activities (2)	"I get a feeling inside that makes me happy because I'm helping other people."		

	Friend in past program	"It was fun, because we got to bond with everyone."
		"Because my mom made me go, and I think it would be good to do something like that."
		"I wanted to go to MANNA foodbank because I never have to know what it is like to be hungry, and I know some kids who know what it is like to go days and days without food...I think it is very important to help the charities, and those less fortunate."
		"It might give us different experiences than what we usually do during the summer"
		"I thought it would be cool and it would be nice to help people."
		"Because maybe we were the only ones that were going to work there that day and we didn't show up and no one else did then maybe people wouldn't have food for the day."

1.c Host siblings explanations of how and why they participated in volunteer activities

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