

ABSTRACT

Promoting Cultural Humility in International Volunteer Tourism Discourse

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The international volunteer tourism sector has grown rapidly in the past four decades. Some researchers argue that colonial ideas of Western superiority have flowed into volunteer tourism discourse. The language communicated by some of the organizations not only reveals their attitudes but has the potential to shape and reinforce volunteer perceptions. These communicated perceptions may be harmful when translated to host communities. This thesis examines the language these organizations communicate in their promotional materials. Seven characteristics were identified from the literature as most important for demonstrating an attitude of cultural humility and reducing neocolonial stereotypes in the discourse. These criteria are evidence of self-reflection, recognition of historical relationships, appreciation for mutual learning, building of partnerships, exhibiting respect for others, rejecting stereotypes of the “other,” and reducing praise of the volunteer. Six organizations were rated on these seven criteria on a scale of 1-5. Several organizations were concluded to communicate a value for partnership building but appeared to demonstrate a lack of respect for the host community. Goals for necessary improvement are to highlight the mutual benefit of the host-volunteer relationship and to challenge volunteers to reflect on their own expectations.

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PROMOTING CULTURAL HUMILITY IN
INTERNATIONAL VOLUNTEER TOURISM DISCOURSE

A Thesis Submitted to the Faculty of
Baylor University
In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the
Honors Program

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Waco, Texas

May 2021

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This thesis project would not have been possible without the assistance of my thesis director, Dr. Michael Stroope. I am deeply grateful to Dr. Stroope for his willingness to support me in this journey and for his kindness and guidance along the way. I am thankful for my family for their continuous encouragement as well as the friends who have cared for me and shared many words of wisdom. I could not have completed this project without all of you.

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

Volunteer tourism first emerged during the 1980s as a niche sector of the tourism industry. This market was founded with the goal of becoming a more sustainable alternative to mass tourism and with the intention to benefit not only tourists but also host communities. International volunteer tourism has grown rapidly in the last four decades. Callanan and Thomas (2005) believe that the volunteer tourism, or “voluntourism,” market grew as a result of an “ever increasing ‘guilt-conscious’ society” (p. 183). Voluntourism was created to benefit not just the tourist and tourist agencies but also the host communities (Pastran, 2014). While the mass tourism industry was historically developed for external profit, voluntourism was intended for local development. To be a volunteer by definition is to be driven primarily by a central motivation of altruism (Bussell & Forbes, 2002). Volunteer tourists travel to undertake activities such as aiding in alleviating material poverty or environmental restoration. Volunteers may take part in projects such as teaching, medical service, construction, or childcare.

The niche has become a mass sector of the tourism market within a rapid timeframe. Over \$3.6 billion was estimated to be spent on these trips in 2008 (Tourism Research & Marketing, 2008). In the United States, approximately 48% of volunteer tourism is in the form of evangelical Christian mission trips (Priest & Priest, 2008). A survey in 2005 found that over 1.5 million U.S. Christians travel abroad on short-term

mission trips each year (Priest & Priest, 2008). The majority of these volunteers are teenagers and young adults between the ages of 18-30 years (Callanan & Thomas, 2005).

The rapid growth of volunteer tourism has triggered a responding wave of criticism. The relationship between volunteers and recipients are unequal in nature, bringing together volunteers who are wealthy enough to travel abroad with communities who are regarded as poor enough to require aid (Pastran, 2014). The majority of volunteer trips are 1-2 weeks in length, and this short time span limits the potential for shifting the power differentials between volunteers and hosts. Additionally, foreign volunteers are often young and unskilled for the project type. Callanan & Thomas (2005) observed that fewer than 10 percent of volunteer teaching programs abroad required any form of educational training. The assumption that inexperienced and unskilled Westerners have the ability to bring development to low-income countries is criticized for being underpinned in neocolonial ideas of Western superiority (Pastran, 2014).

Callanan and Thomas (2005) state that short term trips which are less than four weeks, require no specific qualifications and promote self-gain through academic credit and resume-enhancement, are unlikely to be driven by strictly altruistic intentions. This is in conflict with Bussell and Forbes' (2002) definition of what it means to be a volunteer, which is to be driven by selfless motivation to help others. Researcher Harng Luh Sin (2009) studied the motivations of volunteer tourists and found the primary driver to be to visit someplace 'exotic.' Callanan and Thomas (2005) similarly conclude that the popularity of volunteer projects is related to marketing of the destination. Photos of natural beauty which advertise adventure serve to glamorize volunteer projects. Not only

does this marketing technique call into question the volunteer's motivations to serve, but also the intentions of the volunteer organizations.

The volunteer tourism movement has been criticized for reinforcing power differentials rooted in colonial ideas. International volunteerism emerged in the Global North and is primarily directed towards the Global South (Baaz, 2005). Kothari (2006) states that early European colonial discourse justified exploitation by regarding the people inhabiting the colonies as "others" who needed to become civilized through encounters with the West. These ideas have flowed into contemporary relations between 'developer and developing' which are rooted in colonial notions of racialized superiority. Drawing the dichotomy between "first" and "third" world is foundational to many modern international aid institutions (Kothari, 2006). Discourse of these institutions perpetuate the idea that the 'modern first world' holds a knowledge which must be imparted on the 'traditional third world' which are by nature lacking and in need. This third world "other" is described as poor, resource limited, helpless, and tribal (Kothari, 2006). This implies a lack of knowledge and a stereotype of inability to solve problems without any outside aid. This perception ignores the historical causes of such inequalities and the legacy of colonial exploitation which impacted the development of colonized societies.

Language and Perception

Language is the structure humans use to give meaning to the world, and evidence supports that language directs cognition (Kneupper, 1975). George Herbert Mead first proposed the theory of symbolic interaction, although the term was first coined by his student Herbert Blumer in 1969. According to Blumer (1969), humans ascribe meaning

to objects, events, and phenomena by attributing meaning to symbols of language. This is how humans make sense of the world. These meanings emerge through social interaction, not due to an intrinsic property of a given object. Symbolic interaction studies the meanings which emerge from the interaction of individuals in a social environment. These meanings then shape how people form their own sensory world. Therefore, humans form meaning as a result of their personal experiences, which are tied to language and social interaction. Symbolic interaction acknowledges the interplay of language and thought.

Habitual exposure to types of language can therefore shape individual interpretation of the world. Kneupper (1975) uses an example of two people observing a group of lumberjacks cutting down trees in a forest. One of the observers may describe the event as a “destruction of natural resources” while the other calls it “progress.” These descriptions reveal two different attitudes. One way a shift may occur from one perception to another is by moving into a new language community, such as one which consists entirely of people who use the “destruction of natural resources” language (Kneupper, 1975). Repeated exposure to this description would increase cognitive availability for use. New members would learn “through observation and exposure to the redundancy of the communication pattern” (Kneupper, 1975, p. 314). Socially shared cognitions emerge from shared modes of discourse in interpretation. Social Psychologist Rommetveit concluded that as private cognitions are shared among a group, “participants become committed to a particular interpretation of reality” (Krauss & Chiu, n.d.).

Narratives of neocolonialism which are perpetuated in the language employed by volunteer agencies may subtly shape perception and influence behavior. The perceptions

volunteers have towards host communities are shaped by their cultural context. The Global North's perception of the Global South as poor and needy are reinforced by the narratives found in the media. Coinciding with the perception of the poor and needy "other" often is positive rhetoric which praises the volunteer's altruism. Language praising the volunteer as selfless reinforces ideas of superiority of skill and knowledge. These narratives shape the perceptions of volunteer, causing a self-perception of superiority. The language used by volunteer agencies has the power to more deeply entrench volunteer perceptions. Repeated rhetoric about the poor, third world "other," if present within a volunteer organization, has the potential to reinforce volunteer perceptions of superiority. This concept may then translate to volunteer actions. Kothari (2014) believes that the neocolonial narrative negatively impacts the relationship between international volunteers and host communities.

Neocolonial notions of superiority and inferiority can be perpetuated through volunteer actions. Perold et al., (2013) concludes that "Members of host communities perceive international volunteers as being of higher economic status than their own, as having special skills, and often as a superior race" (p. 7). One Tanzanian community members who had received volunteer services revealed in a focus group:

White people are very wealthy people; they are filthy rich and have no money problems. They are very developed and their living conditions very far removed from the way we live in poor countries. They are very powerful as nations. They are very intelligent people and capable of anything (Perold et al., 2013, p. 7).

Similar perceptions were found in focus groups and interviews conducted in host communities throughout Tanzania and Mozambique (Perold et al., 2013).

One case study explored the perceptions of Kenyans towards the international volunteers who had worked in their community (Dickey et al., 2020). A member of the

host community reported feeling as though “international volunteers seem to see themselves as the problem solvers and overlook Kenyan knowledge, expertise, and agency to effect positive change,” (Dickey et al., 2020, p. 688). These community members felt as though the volunteers viewed themselves as superior and had maintained control over the project and did not collaborate with Kenyans, receive input, or involve locals in the work. Kenyans also reported that the projects eventually failed as volunteers left hastily to return home without enabling locals to take ownership and sustain the endeavor. This common theme of a misalignment between the host community’s needs and the vision of the volunteers may diminish the project from having a lasting positive impact. Dickey et al. (2020) concludes that the volunteer’s perceptions of their own superiority in part led to project failure. Community members in the Dominican Republic perceived volunteers to have superior knowledge while viewing locals people as inferior (Loiseau et al., 2016). The volunteers’ perceptions of superiority were translated to their behaviors and had a negative impact on the hosts.

Decreasing Ethnocentrism through Volunteer Tourism

Proponents of volunteer tourism cite the positive impact of a cross-cultural experience on the values of the volunteer. In a survey taken by volunteer alumni, 95% reported that volunteering abroad had “increased their appreciation of other cultures” and “exposed them to new ideas and ways of seeing the world” (Lough et al., 2009, p. 5). Many also reported that their experience had strengthened their commitment to volunteering more in the future and that it had changed the course of their lives. Most improvement in volunteers’ values or social consciousness, however, is short-lived. Harnng Luh Sin (2009) found little evidence of actual change in willingness to volunteer

in other areas following an experience abroad. Terry Dischinger administered a 15-item survey to measure ethnocentricity in high school students before and after volunteering for one week in Mexico (Priest et al., 2006). Dischinger found that this short-term trip produced only temporary improvements in ethnocentrism following the trip. Students that had been on previous short-term mission trips did not score higher in ethnocentrism compared to those with no prior experience volunteering abroad.

Robert Priest (2006) writes that brief exposure to another culture does not automatically lead to greater understanding but has the potential to do so only when paired with proper learning and guidance. International volunteerism is an opportunity to reflect on prejudice, racism, and hedonism, not distantly, but rather in the context of relationships with people from other ethnic groups who may be living in poverty. Dischinger found that pairing a short-term mission trip with cultural orientation and field-based learning intended to help volunteers grow in appreciation for people of other ethnicities led to a sustained drop in ethnocentrism (Priest et al., 2006).

Researchers agree that short-term volunteering can be improved when volunteers are guided in assessing their own unconscious bias through a process of self-reflection (Wearing, 2003; Dickey et al., 2020). This practice is growing in a skill referred to as cultural humility. This term was first proposed in 1998 by Tervalon and Murray-Garcia as an alternative to cultural competency in the context of physician training (Tervalon & Murray-García, 1998). Cultural competency training has become a common component of clinician training and is centered on learning about other cultures and belief systems in order to reduce cultural barriers in communication and care. One criticism of cultural competency training is that culture is constantly changing and varies greatly even within

nations and communities. Attempts to prepare clinicians for the heterogeneity of cultures they will face may be unrealistic and efforts to do so may also lead to the false perception that one culture is homogenous (Tervalon & Murray-Garcia, 1998). Cultural competency training is also critiqued for focusing on understanding the “other” while viewing the Western self as normal (Kumas-Tan et al., 2007). This understanding is tied to issues of ethnicity and race and implies both that whiteness and Western culture are to be viewed as the norm. Cultural competence does not require a shift in attitude or behavior. Teaching cultural competence is “insufficient without a simultaneous and ongoing process of humble reflection on how one’s knowledge is always partial, incomplete, and inevitably biased” (Wear, 2008, p. 626).

Cultural humility, in contrast, is defined as a “lifelong commitment to self-evaluation and critique, to redressing the power imbalance in the physician-patient dynamic, and to developing mutually beneficial and non-paternalistic partnerships with communities on behalf of individuals and defined populations” (Tervalon & Murray-Garcia, 1998, p. 123). Rather than memorizing information about cultural norms, this is a process of developing the skills for viewing others as equal through inward, personal reflection. Cultural humility training is learning to identify even unintentional patterns of racism and classism by challenging existing power imbalances between groups and examining the complex history behind present inequalities. Although this type of training originally emerged as an alternative to cultural competency training for health care workers, the term is now viewed as a useful tool for any cross-cultural interaction. Cultural humility begins with an examination of one’s own beliefs and cultural identities.

This concept is not focused on growing in knowledge about other cultures and does not have a finite endpoint but is a lifelong shift in way of thinking about the world.

Growing in cultural humility has the potential to shift power differentials between international volunteers and hosts. Self-reflection involves taking note of perceptions of Western superiority, normalcy, and growing in respect for others. This process has the potential to increase the sustainability of projects and to foster mutually beneficial relationships (Dickey et al., 2020).

The Promotional Messages of Volunteer Organizations

The international volunteering sector is dominated by strategic marketing techniques and under-informed consumers (Hartman, 2014). Private companies are selling international service experiences as commodities. Volunteers are customers and many tourism organizations are motivated by profits, requiring marketing techniques which drive up demand. Many organizations have the goal of community development, yet through their promotional materials “may subvert their stated purposes and reinforce inequality, dependency, and/or ethnocentric thinking” (Hartman et al., 2014, p. 112). Although many organizations have a mission of promoting cross-cultural interaction, respect, and empathy for others, this goal cannot be achieved if they continue to reinforce colonial stereotypes (Caton & Santos, 2009). If organizations are complicit in reinforcing these harmful narratives, they will be unable to achieve their stated goals and have the potential to harm host communities.

Postcolonial scholars seek to call attention to the power imbalances which persist between ‘the West and the Rest’ (Caton & Santos, 2009). Colonial ideologies continue to persist in discourse to legitimize current inequalities. Postcolonial theory can be applied

to analyze volunteer tourism discourse (Pastran, 2014). This theory is a two-part approach used to deconstruct colonial narratives present in development work and to foster equitable mutually beneficial relationships between volunteers and host communities. Pastran (2014) concludes that “Voluntourists and agencies must honestly and actively challenge volunteer tourism’s colonial past, its inherent contradictions, and the discourses and assumptions that perpetuate neocolonial relationships in order for their activities to be truly transformative and mutually beneficial” (Pastran, 2014, p. 49).

The language used in a volunteer organization’s mission statements and goals can give insight to the organization’s cultural attitudes. This insight can be observed by analyzing whether their language reinforces neocolonial ideas or demonstrates an attitude of cultural humility. This evaluation not only reveals the biases of an organizations, but the language used has the potential to shape the perceptions and actions of volunteers.

CHAPTER TWO

Literature Review

The existing body of literature which puts forth the best practices for international volunteers can be summarized by the following concepts. These concepts promote an attitude of cultural humility by addressing and deconstructing postcolonial narratives in volunteer tourism discourse and rebuilding assumptions to produce equitable relationships. Seven necessary characteristics were concluded for volunteer tourism discourse to achieve these goals. Five positive practices consist of self-examination, recognition of historical relationships, valuing mutual learning, partnership building, and demonstrating respect for others. Several characteristics are directly antithetical to an attitude of cultural humility when they are present in an organization's communication materials. These characteristics can be summarized into two categories: perpetuating stereotypes about the "other" and praising the volunteer. These constructions oversimplify the relationships between volunteers and hosts and have the potential to negatively influence the perceptions and actions of volunteers. Identifying and addressing the ways these narratives are perpetuated in the language of international volunteer organizations will allow for the analysis of volunteer agency discourse and the identification of areas in needs of improvement.

Self-Reflection

Rather than focusing on mastering a body of cultural information, cultural humility is primarily concerned with examining one's own beliefs and cultural identities.

This involves reflecting on personal background to understand how one's assumptions and values have been shaped by their social environment (Tervalon & Murray-García, 1998). This process does not have a discrete endpoint but is a continual and active engagement. The outcome of achieving cultural humility is to foster increased understanding of others through deeper examination of the self. Cultural humility is a willingness to assess one's own limitations and recognize gaps in personal knowledge (Tangney, 2000). One critical attribute of cultural humility is self-awareness (Foronda et al., 2016). This equates to being aware of one's own values, beliefs, and perceptions and gives considerations to how one appears to others. Self-awareness is similarly recognizing personal limitations. This means willingness to view the worth of individuals as equal rather than as inferior and superior to one another (Foronda et al., 2016).

Personal reflection has the ability to decrease ethnocentrism through the recognition that one's own learned behaviors are not "normal" on a global scale but perhaps only within a certain cultural context. Volunteers becoming more aware of their own unconscious bias has the potential to have a positive impact on cross cultural interactions (Lough & Carter-Black, 2015). This strategy can enable volunteers to reflect on the ways they may perpetuate inequities.

There is a neocolonial assumption which underpins volunteer activities that propose that unskilled Westerners can "bring development" to other countries with limited experience and knowledge of the local context (Pastran, 2014). Volunteer tourism agencies must analyze their own discourse to prevent reproducing this construction of Western superiority (Pastran, 2014). Volunteer organizations which challenge ideas about superiority encourage self-reflection in volunteers. Andreotti (2012) concludes that it is

important for development initiatives to recognize the innate human “self-centered desire to be better than/superior to others” (p. 2). This desire must be challenged in pursuit of cultural humility.

Recognition of Historical Relationships

Proceeding from reflection of the self is examining the legacy of colonial relationships which have shaped some current inequalities. Because countries on the receiving end of development aid are typically those which were previously colonized, volunteer development work can be perceived as similar to colonial dominance (Escobar, 2012). These imbalances of power continue to have lasting impacts on host communities and affect the relationships between volunteers and hosts.

Fürsich (2002) found that many tourism programs do not acknowledge the historical relationships between wealthier, Western countries and lower-income countries. Caton & Santos (2009) state that “Problematic conditions in the ‘third world’ are the product of historical circumstance and not the result of ‘natural,’ innate cultural characteristics” (p. 202). A simple solution for the West is to erase the history of imperialism and to ignore Western responsibility (Caton & Santos, 2009). Volunteers must understand how such relationships have shaped modern inequalities (Fürsich, 2002). If not, the resulting assumption is that inequalities are due to natural inabilities of people in developing countries to solve problems.

Lough & Carter-Black (2015) recommend that volunteers programs include structured historical reflection on the historical roles that colonization has had on communities. Pastran (2014) also advises for critical analysis of positionality of global structures. Growing in awareness of racial differences and their relation to postcolonial

disparities is an important process for volunteer sending organizations (Kothari, 2006). The ability to recognize and bring light to these tensions enables volunteers to consider how they may avoid making incorrect cultural assumptions and perpetuating inequities through their service.

Through cross-cultural interactions, organizations often have the goal of teaching volunteers to learn that all “cultures are complex, dynamic, and interrelated” (Caton & Santos, 2009, p. 202). Acknowledging the lasting impacts of colonization and the history of forces which have driven inequality is a significant component of cultural humility. It is important to recognize how the volunteer may be a part of the problem, or are complicit in these issues (Andreotti, 2012).

Opportunity for Mutual Learning

Emphasizing the opportunity for bidirectional benefits between volunteers and hosts is critical. Volunteers often report that they are significantly impacted and receive more from the hosts than they are providing in volunteering (Dickey et al., 2020; Lough & Carter-Black, 2015). However, this sentiment is often not transmitted to the hosts. Lough & Carter-Black (2015) conclude that “although volunteers often recognize personal gains, racialized perceptions of inferiority and dependency will be perpetuated if the reciprocal nature of exchange relationships remains unrecognized or unspoken” (p. 217). Dickey et al., (2020) similarly identified this issue through conducting interviews with host communities. One Kenyan who had worked with international volunteers stated:

When the volunteers come to Africa, their major attitude, they come to ‘the colony’ where these people are not informed. Normally they come knowing that

there is nothing we know, I mean we are just there (Dickey et al., 2020, pp. 687-8).

This quote demonstrates that there is precedent for negative perceptions to be transmitted from volunteers to hosts. The reciprocal nature of the relationship must be communicated in order to prevent the perpetuation of feelings of inadequacy in host communities.

In order to reinforce mutual learning opportunities, sending organizations can promote the opportunity for volunteers to learn from the host culture (Dickey et al., 2020; Lough & Carter-Black, 2015). Benefits gained from the host should be clearly acknowledged by volunteers. Respect can be conveyed to hosts through volunteers sharing the benefits they have received from the hosts. This improvement may enable the hosts to see that they bring essential elements to the relationship. This also has the potential to help mitigate the paternalistic giver versus receiver relationship (Devereux, 2008). Highlighting the mutuality of partnerships has the potential to empower community members. “Volunteer sending agencies may alter expectations by more accurately portraying the strengths of partner communities in the global South, and more realistically communicating the contributions of, and benefits to, volunteers,” (Lough & Carter-Black, 2015, p. 218).

Valuing mutual learning can be observed when volunteer organizations emphasize the importance of relationship building between volunteers and locals (Devereux, 2008). Language which demonstrates the value in volunteers having the opportunity to build relationships with local people shows the importance of mutual learning. This concept is communicated through promoting activities such as living with a host family and sharing meals with locals. “Promoting intercultural communication within a context of mutuality is vital in moving away from neo-colonial paternalistic

binaries” (Everingham, 2015, p. 179). This idea requires active engagement with the lives of host communities rather than a passive observance.

Cultural humility is observable when an attitude of willingness to learn from a community is easily visible. This virtue can also be seen in volunteers who are able to directly acknowledge their own limitations and ask locals for input when faced with challenges. Volunteer agencies can prepare volunteers to engage with this attitude by communicating the value and potential of learning from hosts (Lough & Carter-Black, 2015).

Partnership Building

In order for hosts to be empowered and development projects to be sustained long-term, organizations must view hosts as equal partners in the relationship. Crewe and Fernando (2006) report that the leaders of development agencies are typically expatriates, while local people often maintain lower-level positions within the organizations. Host communities are aware of the power differences in aid organizations and also of the connection to racial differences. Lough & Carter-Black (2015) report that 90 per cent of volunteers from the United States are white. When organizations are led predominately by expatriates, recipients do not view themselves as active participants on the projects. This leads host communities to believe that the projects belong to “white people” who have access to profuse resources (Loftsdóttir, 2009). Interviews with local staff members of development organizations in Kenya reveal:

There is a tendency, even with the staff here, that we tend to look at volunteers who come from the Western world and... elevate them at higher level—regardless of whether a volunteer who has come from Zambia or Malawi is highly skilled.... We would value what this [white] person is doing more than we value what this

other [African] person would do, simply because of their race (Lough & Carter-Black, 2015 p. 214).

There is a perception that white volunteers naturally have greater knowledge and skills (Lough & Carter-Black, 2015). This superiority perception may make the community more readily accept the suggestions of international volunteers.

Chung (2012) found that appointing local staff does not necessarily lead to local ownership of projects. If funding continues to be controlled by expatriates, this may also play a role in power dynamics. Lough and Carter-Black (2015) recommend decentralizing decision-making to improve local ownership and make initiatives more effective. This helps “validate the strengths and increase trust” in local leaders (Lough & Carter-Black, 2015, p. 217).

In one study conducting interviews with Kenyans following interactions with international volunteers, Dickey et al. (2020) identified that Kenyans perceived that volunteers maintained a position of power in service projects and did not adequately involve local people in decision making and execution. “Kenyans experience international volunteers as managing collaborative projects and expecting Kenyans to implement the vision they have crafted beforehand for the community” (Dickey et al., 2020, p. 689). Inadequate collaboration may lead to project failure due to a lack of recognizing the needs of the hosts and the community structures already in place. When projects are not adequately collaborative, local people are unable to take ownership. Projects are not sustainable if local leaders are not established and eventually will fail after volunteers return to their home countries (Dickey et al., 2020; Lough & Carter-Black, 2015). When volunteer agencies are unwilling to involve locals, neocolonial ideas of inferiority in the hosts are reinforced.

Respect for Others

Respect for the hosts is demonstrated in valuing and appreciating the experiences and knowledge of others. Cultural humility is reflected in language which demonstrates solidarity and respect for other cultures rather than using language centered on helplessness or inferiority. Foronda (2016) identifies openness as a significant aspect of cultural humility. Openness is an attitude of willingness to explore and engage with new ideas. Respect for others can be demonstrated in a willingness to listen and learn from others. This language of respect demonstrates a postcolonial stance and transformative potential (Pastran, 2014).

A clear demonstration of respect for others is recognizing the strengths of host communities. One Kenyan who was interviewed following an interaction with international volunteers stated:

Volunteers need to come down here and try to understand what we are doing and let it be their problem to fit into what we're doing. Remember we were there before. This is not *tabula rasa*. You don't come and find nothing. There are people who were living and who have structures that support their day to day life. They know how to solve their problems, they know how to interrelate, they know how to do business, they know how to work it out (Dickey et al., 2020, p. 694).

Respect is communicated by recognizing the agency of communities and their ability to make decisions about their own needs. Agency goals of sustainability require supporting and enhancing the structures that are already in place in a community (Lough & Carter-Black, 2015). If volunteers are able to observe and appreciate the inherent strengths of the community, this may reduce perceptions of superiority.

Stereotype of the “Other”

At the base of the postcolonial critique of volunteer discourse is the presentation of non-Western people as being fundamentally different from Western people and culture. Volunteer organizations have exploited images of poverty in order to gain donations and volunteers (Lough & Carter-Black, 2015). Reference to a helpless “other,” unable to solve their own problems without outside help, may be used to create sympathy but reinforces damaging perceptions (Pastran, 2014). This rhetoric must be recognized and restricted. Volunteer organization must prevent stereotypes of “poor” or “traditional” communities. The reality is that all cultures follow tradition, not just the “traditional other” (Yeager & Bauer-Wu, 2013). Instead of emphasizing the difference between the volunteer and the host, volunteer organizations should speak of the value and strength of hosts (Pastran, 2014). Portrayal of the hosts as ‘traditional’ masks the dynamism of their culture (Caton & Santos, 2009). Contrastingly, volunteers themselves are often portrayed as modern in their knowledge, dress, use of technology, and skills. This concept reinforces the binary of traditional versus modern. The emerging theme presented is that hosts are depicted as fundamentally different from the volunteers. This “us” versus “them” distinction is the root of colonial ideology (Said, 1978).

Many international volunteer organizations state that a central goal of promoting increased cross-cultural understanding or global citizenship is centered on growing in respect and appreciation for cultural differences. Caton & Santos (2009) critique that website images and materials often “essentialize or exoticize hosts by depicting their culture as primitive, backwards, stagnant or dependent on the West for advancement” (p. 201). Portraying host communities as “always happy, always eagerly waiting to welcome

Western visitors” ignores their complexity and hardships of poverty (Caton & Santos, 2009, p. 200). Using images of extreme poverty in order to generate support only further entrenches this perception. This presentation is contradictory to goals of cross-cultural understanding. Organizations may use this imagery to sell their program, however, in doing so they are promoting the very imagery of the “third world” that they are trying to educate against. “Representational practice that juxtapose the West and the Rest are still problematic” (Caton & Santos, 2009, p. 202). Exoticizing is a common strategy used as a marketing technique to appeal to the desires of tourists to experience difference from their home while traveling abroad (Fürsich, 2002). Discourse which polarizes the West from the Rest demonstrates an attitude of Western cultural superiority (Chang & Holt, 1991).

Praise of the Volunteer

Positive rhetoric is common which praises the altruism of the volunteer. Volunteer tourists often embark with ideas of “changing the world” (Lough & Carter-Black, 2015). This construction fosters the volunteers’ self-perception of superiority. Volunteers are often presented in the media as intelligent, strong, and powerful. Sending agencies often reinforce these ideas through their marketing materials (Caton & Santos, 2009). This may be a marketing attempt to attract more participants and enthruse them for the work in which they will take part. Images painting the host communities as disordered and corrupt societies reinforces to the volunteer a unidirectional benefit where only the hosts benefit from the interaction (Lough & Carter-Black, 2015). Language which over-emphasizes the good that the volunteer will be doing for the “helpless” community can be translated through volunteer attitudes. This communication may inflate the volunteer ego

and create an attitude of superiority. The extent that volunteers expect to provide unidirectional aid influences the behaviors that the recipients will adopt (Biddle, 1979). According to social role theory, recipients will take on the role of the 'needy beneficiary' to accommodate the relationship. Recipients then view themselves as needy and with decreased agency through interactions with volunteers.

Andreotti (2012) cautions against initiatives which imply that hosts should be very grateful for the help of the volunteer. It should instead be communicated that hosts have the right to disagree with volunteers because they have an understanding of their own needs. Hosts shall be able to propose different solutions than what the volunteers have in mind. Andreotti (2012) cautions against initiatives which present development workers as the chosen people on a mission to save the world and lead others towards peace and progress.

There is need for a more realistic communication of the actual contribution volunteers will make in the host community (Lough & Carter-Black, 2015). Brief exposure to another culture does not automatically lead to greater empathy and understanding of others (Priest, 2006). This concept is a misconception of international volunteering which is perpetuated by tourism organizations. Encountering cultural differences can be just as likely to increase ethnocentrism than to decrease it (Priest, 2006). Cultural immersion must be paired with better orientation and learning in order to have lasting benefits on volunteer attitudes.

Antithetical to praising the volunteer is when volunteers are able to acknowledge their own limitations in knowledge and skill. Interviews demonstrate the importance of volunteers being able to admit in front of their hosts when they do not know the answers

to certain challenges and ask local people for their expertise (Dickey, 2018, p. 87). If problems of poverty and corruption are viewed in simplistic ways, there is potential to do more harm than good (Andreotti, 2012). There is a need for the acknowledgement of the complexity of poverty and acknowledgement for how “we are implicated or complicit in the problems we are trying to address” (Andreotti, 2012, p. 2). Instead of offering simplistic answers, organizations should invite participants to think deeply about the complexity of these issues.

CHAPTER THREE

Content Analysis

The language communicated in the mission statements, values, and project descriptions of five international volunteer organizations and one volunteer search database was analyzed. Each organization was assessed based on the seven characteristics identified in the literature review.

Content analysis was chosen as the analytical methodology for this paper. Content analysis is a research methodology used for the “objective, systematic, and quantitative description of the manifest content of communication” (Berelson, 1952, p. 55). The purpose of this method is to analyze the communicated messages rather than the behavior or opinions of the interpreter or the characteristics of the communicator. This enables the researcher to make a series of judgments using a specifically defined set of criteria. Content analysis is a method of observation in which rather than observing direct behaviors, surveying, or conducting interviews, “the investigator takes the communications that people have produced and asks questions of the communications” (Kerlinger, 1964, p. 544). Kassarian (1977) defines three distinguishing characteristics of a content analysis:

Objectivity. Categories of analysis must be defined so that different researchers may apply them to the same body of content and conclude the same results (Berelson, 1952). Establishing a set of rules limits the probability that the results reflect the analyst’s own subjective predispositions. This objectivity differentiates content analysis from a

literary analysis. Objectivity was achieved in this paper by producing definitions for each unit of analysis.

Systematization. Inclusion and exclusion criteria for communication materials must be consistently applied. This prevents the selective inclusion only of materials which fit the researcher's thesis statement. This was accomplished by reviewing each organization's promotional material in its entirety for the mission statements, organization values, and project descriptions. In the case of large organizations such as International Volunteer HQ, a random sample of three distinct project types was drawn to maintain systematization. This was performed in order to include more specific project descriptions in the sampled material.

Quantification. Quantification is "a measurement of the extent of emphasis or omission of any given analytic category" (Kassarjian, 1977, p. 9). This allows the data to be translated into meaningful results and to draw conclusions. Quantification is achieved in this project by applying an ordinal scale to make the data interpretable. For each organization, the units of analysis returned for the seven criteria were totaled. This allowed for comparison between organizations.

Kassarjian (1977) defines four procedures necessary for performing a content analysis. These procedures are as follows:

Random Sample of Manageable Size. This sample must be representative of the defined body of documents so that generalization is possible. This study includes analysis of five international volunteer organizations and one volunteer search engine. Of these

organization, three are Christian mission-based. The sample includes a variety of organization sizes, common project types, and geographic locations. These descriptions can be viewed in *Table 1*.

Define Units of Measurement. This project uses *themes* as the unit of analysis. Kassirjian states “the theme is among the most useful unit of analysis because issues, values, beliefs, and attitudes are usually discussed in this form” (Kassirjian, 1977, p. 12). Since the goal of this paper is to identify perceptions and attitudes through language, the *theme* unit of analysis is used. This requires the coder to reduce sentences into themes in order to analyze the material into categories.

Categorized Units of Analysis. The categories of a content analysis reflect the hypotheses and purpose of the study (Kassirjian, 1977). Polynary units of analysis typically return more reliable results compared to binary categories. In this project, the units of analysis are identified on an ordinal scale of 1, 2, 3, 4, or 5. This classificatory scheme is then used in accordance with the stated definitions. The categories are selected which best describe the content.

Statistical Analysis of Results. Statistical methods are then applied to the data to summarize the findings and to interpret the data and draw inferences. In this project, interpretations are drawn from the criteria totals to make recommendations for improvements in language communication.

Defining Categories of Analysis

In order to maintain an objective description of the content, the researcher must minimize subjectivity. The primary challenge in performing the content analysis is assigning the categories of analysis. This requires objectively determining which characteristics of the content are required to return a response of 1, 2, 3, 4, or 5. In general, a response of “3” demonstrates neutral language which neither perpetuates negative stereotypes nor promotes critical thinking and cultural humility. A response of “4” demonstrates some respect and a mild engagement with the issues mentioned, while a response of “5” is an active recognition and challenging of these issues and promotion of cultural humility. A response of “2” is returned for a more passive approach and mild perpetuation of neocolonial stereotypes. A response of “1” may demonstrate the absence of a characteristic or a strong perpetuation of stereotypes. Providing a definition for each criteria and response category increases the objectivity and reproducibility of the study. The definitions below were created using the literature review of each criterion. The descriptions for each classification are as follows:

Criterion 1: Evidence of Self-reflection

- 1 – Language which challenges volunteers to think critically about their self-perceptions is not present.
- 2 – Mention of volunteers experiencing some form of transformation through their trip abroad such as growing in cultural understanding and appreciation for others. However, there is no evidence of challenging volunteer perceptions.

3 – States that the volunteer will learn from locals. May state that the volunteer will be challenged. May also attempt to deliver realistic expectations for volunteering, but does not directly call for rethinking ideas of superiority.

4 – States that volunteers should consider their motivations before volunteering. A warning against ideas of Western superiority may be present but is unclear or subtle. Little evidence of guiding the volunteer in the process of self-reflection.

5 – Language directly challenges the reader to think about their own self-perceptions of superiority or desire to save the world. Acknowledges that Westerners often wrongly view their own culture as correct or more advanced.

Criterion 2: Recognition of Historical Relationships

1 – Appears to place blame on the host for inequalities which are due to their own natural inabilities.

2 – Implies inferiority of hosts without offering explanation for inequalities.

3 – Does not appear to blame local people for inequalities or offer an explanation.

4 – Challenges a Western view of progress but does not directly mention the West's role in creating inequalities. However, does not show evidence of blaming local people for inequalities.

5 – Does not blame local people for inequalities, rather considers that the West has historically played a role in inequalities and therefore has a responsibility to help others.

Criterion 3: Opportunity for Mutual Learning

1 – No mention of learning from the hosts. Strictly communicates a unidirectional benefit of the volunteer helping and teaching the host.

2 – Brief mention of volunteers learning from other cultures through exposure. Primarily emphasizes a unidirectional benefit from volunteer to host.

3 – Discusses growing in understanding of other cultures and widening one’s worldview but does not specifically mention learning from the hosts. Does not clearly state what the host brings to the relationship.

4 – Discusses personal transformation of the volunteers through cross-cultural interaction. Language is more vague stating what the volunteer will learn. It is not clearly communicated that the hosts have valuable knowledge, culture and ideas to share. Communicates more so that volunteers will be changed through experiencing a different culture, not through learning directly from others.

5 – Specifically states that the hosts have knowledge to share with volunteers. Prepares volunteers that they will be learning from others. Clearly highlights the skills that the hosts bring to the relationship. Promotes taking part in activities together such as sharing meals.

Criterion 4: Partnership Building

1 – No mention of local involvement in projects or organization leadership.

2 – Mentions a value for sustainable projects or for collaboration. Does not directly discuss involving locals in project leadership and decision making.

3 – States that projects are locally led. Does not communicate why this is necessary.

4 – States that it is a central value of the organization to have locally led projects and to collaborate with locals. States the importance of involving the hosts but does not explain that local people are better equipped to know the needs of their community.

5 – Clearly communicates that locals are best suited to know the needs of the community. Therefore, local people are active in project leadership roles. Also communicates a desire to support and enhance the community structures already in place.

Criterion 5: Exhibits Respect for Others

1 – Communicates that hosts are inferior and unable to solve their own problems.

Demeaning language about their abilities and character is present. Contributes to the narrative that hosts are backwards, traditional, and less intelligent.

2 – Language indirectly implies that hosts are inferior. Local people are described as needing volunteers to solve their problems. There is a lack of recognizing the complexity of the host culture.

3 – Does not communicate a clear disrespect for others. Minimal communication of the strengths of the hosts or of value for learning from them.

4 – Language demonstrates value for the hosts and appreciation for their culture.

Communicated is the importance of learning from hosts and involving them in projects.

5 – Demonstrates high respect and value for others by communicating the strengths and an appreciation for the host culture. Recognizes the agency and capability of host communities to make their own decisions and be aware of their needs. Challenges volunteers to adapt to the local culture. Communicates the importance of volunteers listening, learning, and being open to new ideas.

Criterion 6: Rejects Stereotype of the “Other”

1 – Communicates that the hosts lack knowledge, technology, and have a low self-worth.

They are depicted as unable to solve their problems without help from volunteers and

may not even have the will to improve on their own. Communities are seen as backwards and broken. The hosts are viewed as extremely welcoming and grateful for the help of volunteers.

2 – More indirect transmission of stereotypes. This language highlights the differences between host and volunteer culture in a way that makes poverty appear “exotic.”

Volunteering may be presented as an adventure for witnessing poverty and traditional ways of life.

3 – Stereotypes about the traditional hosts are not communicated. Additionally, there is little to no inclusion of the strengths of the hosts.

4 – Communicates the strengths of hosts and ability of volunteers to learn from the hosts. Mild evidence of a “traditional” narrative is also present.

5 – Directly speaks against perpetuating the traditional and backwards narrative.

Communicates the strengths of the host and the value of having host involvement in projects. No evidence of praising the altruism of the volunteer is present.

Criterion 7: Prevents Praise of the Volunteer

1 – The volunteer is presented as a savior who has the ability to solve the problems of the host community. Only a unidirectional benefit from volunteer to host is communicated. The altruism and skill of the volunteer is praised. Hosts are depicted as extremely grateful for the help of the volunteer.

2 –Stresses the impact the volunteers will make on transforming the hosts. Predominately discusses the skills the volunteers bring to the relationship or their altruism. May mention that hosts are welcoming and grateful for the help of volunteers, which indirectly communicates a unidirectional benefit.

3 – Mentions the positive impact the volunteers will have on the hosts. Little other mention of the role of the volunteer.

4 – Mentions that volunteering will be challenging. Communicates realistic expectations of projects and the volunteer role. Some language is also present which praises the impact the volunteers will have on the hosts.

5 – Challenges simple solutions to poverty. Delivers realistic expectations to volunteers about what they will be able to accomplish. Directs volunteers to consider their motivations. Directly warns that volunteering can cause harm to the hosts.

Table 1: Summary of Organization Descriptions

Organization	Organization Type	Number of Volunteers	Founding Year	Location of Projects	Main Project Types	Typical Trip Duration
GoAbroad	Search Engine	Connected 125,000 volunteers with other organizations	1997	Wide Variety	Wide variety	1 week – multi-year internships
IVHQ	Volunteer Tourism Agency	Over 113,000 volunteers	2007	Over 50 project locations in 42 countries and 6 continents	Wide variety; top advertised are in childcare, teaching, medical service, and conservation	Ranging from 1-24 weeks
Kaya Responsible Travel	Volunteer Tourism Agency	Unknown	2008	150 different projects in 32 countries and 4 continents	Community development, conservation, healthcare, education	2-24 week volunteer trips, 2-6 month internships
The Real Uganda	Non-profit	Over 900 volunteers	2005	South central Uganda	Teaching, public health, farming, women’s empowerment	2-12 weeks
Empower a Child	Christian Non-Profit	Unknown	2008	Zirombe, Uganda and Nairobi, Kenya	Volunteering in a school, construction, community outreach in youth rehab centers	2 weeks – 4 months
Potter’s House	Christian Non-Profit	Unknown	1986	Guatemala City, ‘trash dump’ community	Volunteer at community development centers	3-12 weeks for volunteer trips, 3-12 month internships

Content Analysis of Promotional Materials

A summary description of the organizations included in this content analysis can be viewed above in *Table 1*. The following section includes the content reviewed from the six organizations. This includes the organizations' mission statements, values, and project descriptions. Included is analysis of the communicated language in accordance with the seven defined criteria.

GoAbroad

The GoAbroad's mission statement is as follows:

It has always been our mission to change lives through meaningful travel, one destination and one experience at a time. We believe that travel is the key to individuals attaining a broader perspective of the world, and that the world is a better place when people have a deeper understanding and greater empathy toward all individuals and cultures (*GoAbroad*, n.d.).

This mission statement demonstrates the goal of increasing empathy and growing in appreciation for others through cross-cultural interaction. This does indicate a goal of increasing in understanding of others. However, absent is a direct reference to growing in appreciation for others through sharing in culture, learning from the hosts, and recognizing the strengths of others. GoAbroad does not clearly promote mutual learning.

GoAbroad gives the following advertisement to promote volunteering abroad:

Do you ever get the feeling that you have a higher calling? A purpose that thrives outside the limits of 9 to 5 or the commercially driven promises of the American dream? Like a homing device lodged deep within your chest, your heart might just be trying to tell you that it's time to volunteer abroad. Human beings have an innate desire to help one another, but this goes far, far beyond the warm fuzzies you get when you help someone out. This purpose not only manifests, but flourishes when you are serving others. Sign up for volunteer trips today!

The theme of this statement here is praising the volunteer. This language communicates a unidirectional benefit from volunteer to host. The volunteer is praised for their altruism

and is told they will receive a feeling of self-satisfaction through serving. There is a lack of communication in what the volunteer can receive from the host community. This language is also calling the volunteer to the *adventure* of volunteering abroad, to living a life more exciting than the routine 9 to 5 job, and to following their heart to the exciting adventure of helping someone abroad. This theme of exoticizing poverty also depicts a unidirectional benefit from volunteer to recipient. This language appears neutral, but subtly transmits negative stereotypes of inferiority. This statement praises the selfless nature of volunteers rather than addressing need a for caution, self-reflection, or potential for harm.

International Volunteer HQ (IVHQ)

IVHQ's primary stated goal is to "create positive transformation through life-enriching travel experiences" which occurs "not just within the communities but within volunteers themselves" (*International Volunteer HQ*, n.d.) This phrase is presenting the positive experience volunteering abroad will have on the participant. This is evidence of recognizing the opportunity for mutual benefit rather than only presenting the volunteers as helping and teaching the hosts. This language can be stronger by distinctly identifying that personal transformation happens through learning from the hosts and their culture. It should be communicated that hosts have valuable ideas to share with the volunteers.

IVHQ puts forth in their mission statement:

We believe in a future where any traveler, anywhere in the world is empowered to make a meaningful difference in the community they are visiting. Our programs heighten global awareness and cultural understanding through the skills and expertise taken by volunteers to their host communities, and through the experiences and lessons that volunteers take back to their own countries and cultures.

This language demonstrates a desire for volunteers to learn and grow in cultural understanding through their experience abroad. Clearly stating the personal growth that the volunteers will gain is recognition of the reciprocal nature of the interaction. There is a strong emphasis in this statement on the skills that volunteers bring to the relationship. This indicates a heightening of the ability of the volunteers, which can be considered to be praising the volunteer. The quotation also discusses the importance of volunteers bringing their new experiences and lessons back to their home. This is presenting the idea that volunteers will learn from their experiences abroad but does not directly state that they will learn from the hosts.

IVHQ has a mission of being committed to ethical and responsible volunteering. Part of achieving this goal is through “collaboration with local organizations.” IVHQ believes this is the best approach to volunteering.

Local organizations are in the best position to see where volunteers are genuinely needed. The staff in these organizations are locals - they can speak the local language, know the area inside out and are best placed to provide guidance, advice, supervision and support to volunteers.

IVHQ recognizes that local people provide valuable insight in knowing the needs of the community and have the expertise to lead volunteers. This language exhibits a desire to place volunteers where they are genuinely needed. Evident is a value of collaboration and of humility through listening to the needs of others rather than entering with expectations about the perceived needs of others. This is a focus on involving local people in decision making and building partnerships.

Our programs are designed to deliver sustainable value for communities and for the environment, and we talk openly about the issues and challenges of responsible tourism. We believe in always doing the right thing and having a long-term mindset, and we work hard to ensure volunteers develop realistic expectations about the impact they'll have.

The mention of volunteers developing realistic expectations calls for a more accurate representation of what volunteers will experience. This statement may be in reference to the potential negative impacts of volunteer tourism. This is a contrast to the extreme optimism found in other volunteer organizations which praise the always positive and unidirectional impact the volunteer has on the host.

Due to of the size of IVHQ and diversity of locations and projects, the main mission statements do not discuss the specific work the volunteer will contribute to the host communities. A random sample was taken of three different volunteer projects to analyze their descriptions. Three different project types were included in the sample to include a representative scope of the variety of project types IVHQ offers. The project types studied were childcare, cultural immersion, and women's empowerment in three distinct locations.

Childcare Volunteer Program in Buenos Aires. The project description states that volunteers will be “providing support” to local staff working in a soup kitchen. This demonstrates an emphasis on collaboration with locals. Rather than praising the volunteer, this language gives volunteers more realistic expectations for the work project. This statement gives the expectation that they will come under and support local staff who have established structures and practices for improving their own community. The description states that “children born into marginalized communities in Buenos Aires have fewer opportunities available to them, and have higher likelihood of not fulfilling their potential. However, with good support networks and strong nurturing, their outlook on life can be much improved.” This communicates the potential for an improved outlook

on life which is not solely the work of volunteers but is through local development projects that the volunteer can take part in and support. The description states “you create a safe environment for the children, by encouraging them to stay off the streets and engage in activities that develop their skills.” This language hints at a potential oversimplified solution to development through the idea that volunteers can solve systemic issues just by encouraging children to stay off the streets. However, it is communicated that volunteers do get to take part in an organization that is working towards this development. This language demonstrates respect for others but can be clearer in preventing praise of the volunteer.

Mayan Cultural Immersion Volunteer Project in Guatemala. The project description states “the goal of this project is to share in everyday life with the host family and community ... By living with local families you’re able to get a full cultural volunteer experience that takes you outside your comfort zone to make a direct contribution to the community.” This language communicates that the main goal is for the volunteers to learn from their hosts and grow in appreciation for their culture. The description emphasizes some of the skills and strengths the community is known for, which are stated to be hand-woven craft production. This shows respect for others. “Your help is needed with business enterprises, domestic tasks and community roles to help maintain their authentic way of life.” This language implies the hosts’ need for volunteer help with everyday tasks. This communication risks praise for the volunteer’s abilities and skills simply because they are from the West.

Women's Empowerment Volunteer Project in Kerala, India. The project description states that “women’s empowerment in India is still a relatively recent concept, and many women live very traditional lives.” This broad statement, without providing additional explanation, is evidence of oversimplification of the complexity of the culture in Kerala. This language also contributes to the “traditional” and “backwards” narrative of non-Western people. This reinforces the traditional versus modern binary. The project is entitled Women’s Empowerment, but the stated purpose is to practice English with women in order to help them build confidence in their language skills and find jobs.

It is important to recognize that the context around women’s equality in India is far different than in other parts of the world, so volunteers should have realistic expectations around what you will achieve. The main focus is on speaking conversational English using contemporary topics.

This description prepares volunteers to have realistic expectation for the work they will do rather than unrealistic or naïve expectations for their impact to go beyond the scope of the project and the volunteers’ skill set. This is antithetical to praising the volunteer.

Kaya Responsible Travel

One of the Kaya’s key responsibilities is listed as promoting sustainable projects. Their goal is not to encourage dependence on aid, but instead to “establish foundations upon which people of that country can build and develop themselves” (*Kaya Responsible Travel*, n.d.). Kaya supports “locally developed and led initiatives, rather than building programs of our own that don’t originate from within the community.” Kaya reports a commitment to “projects with a genuine need for the physical assistance of a volunteer.” This language communicates that Kaya values development work done in collaboration with locals in order to address relevant needs. This language of sustainability, self-

development, and locally-led projects demonstrates an emphasis on partnership building in order to meet the needs of the community. This also shows respect for others by implying that locals have the expertise to know what their community needs. There appears to be a subtle recognition that volunteers can potentially do harm by creating dependence or providing help where there is no real need. Kaya states that locally-led projects also help ensure that “solutions are culturally acceptable.” This concern for recognizing and adapting to cultural differences demonstrates respect for others.

The primary purposes Kaya lists for volunteering abroad are to “learn about new places, cultures, open yourself up to new ideas, learn new skills and apply your existing skills and knowledge for a greater good.” This language conveys an appreciation for what can be learned from other cultures and communicates a value for mutual learning. Several important personal skills for volunteers are also listed. These consist of “listening skills, adaptability and flexibility, team working, willingness to learn from others, proactive nature, and understanding of others.” These values of listening, openness, learning and understanding demonstrate an attitude of humility. This communicates the importance of volunteers learning from the hosts and demonstrates respect for others.

Kaya lists another of their key responsibilities as a commitment to honest marketing.

The organization states:

We are highly aware of the balance we strike between getting people excited about the prospect of participating in a program and ensuring that we provide a well-rounded and realistic idea of what you are getting involved in. The desire to volunteer and make a difference is a great place to start, but to ensure that you don't end up in your own worst nightmare, it is best to come into the process with open eyes. Volunteering can be challenging, in many different ways, and whichever program you choose to get involved with, it will certainly not be a beach holiday. The challenges of working as a volunteer are part of what makes it such a great experience, but if you're not ready for those, then they can ruin your trip and prevent you achieving what you set out to do in the first place.

This statement demonstrates a desire for the realistic recognition of the challenges of volunteering abroad and is in contrast to an approach of pure optimism. It is mentioned here that it is good to want to make a difference, but if you are not prepared to work hard this can ruin your trip and prevent you from accomplishing your goals. The phrase “it will not be a beach holiday” communicates a straightforward expectation in order to prepare volunteers for the hard work they will face. Rather than selling an adventure filled vacation, Kaya uses this realistic marketing approach. In another statement, Kaya does warn that if a volunteer has unrealistic expectations, they can actually harm the people they aim to serve.

If you are not ready and haven't thought it through it can be difficult, not just for you. It will also affect other volunteers, project participants who have been waiting for your help ...Done badly, volunteering can be a waste of time, or even worse, cause more damage. Done well, it can provide valuable assistance that makes a real difference.

This is awareness of the potential to do harm to host communities. This theme is antithetical to praising the volunteer by instead calling for recognition of potential harm.

Kaya Responsible Travel lists several statements to guide potential volunteers to determine if volunteering abroad is right for them and to assess their personal motives. They state that if your motivation is “I want to ‘save the world’ – you can play a part in making a difference, but it is the combination of everyone’s small efforts that make a real difference, not any single individual.” This communicates an opposition to the desire of volunteers to ‘save’ others. This also presents a more realistic expectation of the impact the volunteer will be able to have. The language should go further and address why volunteers have the desire to ‘save’ other humans, a paradigm which reflects a Western view of progress. This topic is addressed in another guiding question Kaya poses:

Are you willing to adapt to local customs in order to fit in with a different culture? As Westerners, some people think our approach is ‘the right way’, ‘better’ or ‘more advanced’, when most often it is just different. You will be expected to adapt to the local approach to fit in.

This communicates an appreciation for cultural differences and is in contrast with language supporting ethnocentric ideas about Western cultural superiority and unidirectional benefit to the hosts. This directly challenges Western perceptions of “advancement” and ideas of progress. This language calls for volunteers to adapt rather than impose their own ideas. This invites self-reflection, examining of relationships, and a respect for other cultures. Kaya critiques another potential motivation for volunteering. Volunteering abroad is often viewed as “‘an easy way to see the country’ – while you will have time to sightsee and travel at weekends and in the evenings, volunteering is hard work and the projects need your full commitment during the working days.” This again communicates realistic language surrounding the difficulty of projects.

The Real Uganda

The Real Uganda promotes serving Ugandan communities as a first priority. The organization states that their focus is to “support and work alongside motivated Ugandans as they improve their lives, on their terms. We’ve got to stop the stereotypes and prove the reality. Volunteering in a developing country isn’t about saving, it’s about SOLIDARITY” (*The Real Uganda*, n.d.) The theme of “working alongside” demonstrates a desire for collaboration, while the word “solidarity” reduces praising of the volunteer. The organization states “The Real Uganda doesn’t want to save Uganda, we want to share it with the world.” This phrasing is in direct opposition to the “savior” theme which implies a redemption of the traditional South through interaction with

volunteers. This communicates a recognition both of the unequal nature of volunteering and of the potential for perpetuating inequalities. However, there is a lack of communication challenging the volunteers to rethink their own ideas of superiority, aside from encouraging “solidarity” rather than “saving.”

The Real Uganda’s purpose and values are stated in the following promotional message for volunteers:

We want you to experience Uganda in an authentic and meaningful way. Life in Uganda is tough. Wages are low, corruption is rampant, and education is inefficient. In spite of this, Ugandans are some of the most motivated and welcoming people in Africa. While working with the Real Uganda, volunteers are deeply immersed in our culture. You’ll learn to cook, speak the language, sit peacefully, and appreciate life. We hope volunteers take these lessons home and spread the word about Ugandans development issues and culture around the world.

This states a desire for authentic cross cultural international yet portrays Ugandans as lacking in education and resources and who simultaneously welcome the help of volunteers. This is an example of paternalistic language and reinforces the idea that local people are inferior and are in need of volunteer help in order to overcome their problems. There is no mention here of collaboration with local people or recognition of their knowledge. Mention of Ugandans being “welcoming” implies that they should be grateful for the help and ideas of volunteers. The quote does indicate the goal of cultural immersion through joining in with the daily activities of locals and “appreciating life.” This communicates the importance of learning from hosts. This is a contradiction in the Real Uganda’s communication. The organization has the goal of mutual learning, yet they employ language that does not communicate an attitude of respect towards the hosts.

The following statement communicates reasons why participants should volunteer abroad with the Real Uganda:

Why volunteer in Uganda? Your new ideas can be very effective out here. Imagine an area where people are not encouraged to work together, or rarely believe they can achieve good things. Volunteer presence and care helps build self-worth and confidence in our communities. Basic information on conservation, hygiene, nutrition, income generation, and early childhood development is also needed. Besides, Ugandans are known for their hospitality and absolutely love working with international volunteers. It's all about group solidarity, team building, and shared leadership. Not to worry, you also get something out of it! Who doesn't love meeting like-minded people from all over the world, learning new cultures and ways of doing things, and getting a meaningful, yet adventure-filled break from normal life?

This phrasing perpetuates ideas about Ugandan society as lacking novel and Western ideas. Although indicated is a desire to help empower locals, the language shows a perception that Ugandans are on their own unable to work together and lack self-confidence. They are described as lacking other basic information and skills. This quote implies that Ugandans do not have the ability to develop without outside intervention. There is no communication or questioning of why inequities exist. The phrase that Ugandans "absolutely love working with international volunteers" is a simplification of the relationship between hosts and volunteers and ignores the potential for harm. This reinforces the idea that Ugandans should be grateful for the help of Westerners regardless of if the aid reflects their actual needs or if collaboration occurs. However, phrases such as "solidarity" and "shared leadership" demonstrates a desire for collaboration and respect for others. This communication is contradictory as it is seen proximal to paternalistic language.

The organization does highlight that the volunteers will personally benefit through learning from other cultures and ways of life. This is evidence of a desire for mutual learning. The organization advertises the benefits to the volunteer as meeting new people and learning new cultures but also getting "adventure-filled break from normal life." This

phrase appears to be exoticizing poverty tourism as an escape from everyday life.

Promoting volunteering as an adventure is risking using poverty as an instrument for the entertainment of the volunteer.

Empower a Child

Empower a Child states that one of their core values is having volunteer programs that are run by locals.

One thing that really makes us stand out from other organizations is that Ugandans and Kenyans run operations on the grounds and you work alongside them in communities. You will find it an enriching experience to meet new friends from all over the world as you live together, minister together, share meals together and learn about different cultures (*Empower a Child*, n.d.).

Empower a Child highlights that their projects are locally led, implying an emphasis on partnership building and collaboration with locals. Additionally, promoting sharing meals and learning about culture communicates the importance of cross-cultural learning and demonstrates respect for the hosts.

Empower a Child's mission statement is as follows: "Empower a Child seeks to bring confidence and self-sustainability to orphaned and vulnerable children of East Africa by teaching modern skills, giving the opportunity of education, and enlightening through the word of God." Communicated again here is a desire for empowerment and for sustainable partnership building. However, the phrase "modern skills" reinforces the traditional versus modern binary. This demonstrates a Western view of progress and low value for the local people and view of their intelligence and abilities.

Empower a Child describes that volunteers will work in their youth rehabilitation center in Nairobi, writing that the children are "young and curious as to what life is really about. They are so teachable and we have the opportunity train them in the way they

should go.” While Empower a Child states that they work with underprivileged children, many of whom have run away from home or have committed small crimes, the language stating the children are “so teachable” and need to be taught the way to go by volunteers implies a Western superiority. This has the potential to perpetuate the idea of a civilized West able to solve the problems of the global South with simple solutions. There is no engagement with thinking critically about the complexity of these issues. This language exhibits stereotypes of the “other.”

One central aspect to Empower a Child’s mission is evangelism. “Every week some members of the team go evangelizing in Kenya’s largest slum, Kibera. This is an amazing opportunity to share the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the lost and hurting people of Kibera.” This is misleading language. Using the words “lost” and “hurting” to refer to material poverty demonstrates a lack of respect for others and stereotypes of inferiority. However, classifying Kenyans as “lost” and “hurting” in this instance may be in reference to the spiritual state of those who do not have faith in Jesus Christ. In this case, it is important to note the major presence of Christianity in Kenya. The population of Kenya in 2019 was reported to be 83% Christian. Cultural humility requires recognizing and respecting the existing religious structure of the local people. There is no mention in Empower a Child’s communication materials of the existing presence of the Christian church in Kenya. Communicating a belief that the majority of Kenyans are lost and hurting is a misrepresentation of the cultural context and does not demonstrate respect for others.

Empower a Child also communicates a promise of the significant impact volunteers will have. “Your life and heart will be impacted no matter how short or long your trip. Not only that, you will also be making a positive impact on almost every child that you

encounter.” Emphasizing that the volunteer will naturally be able to make a significant impact on every child is reinforcing the volunteer’s self-perception of superiority. This is reinforcing the narrative that the developing world can be modernized through interactions with Westerners. It is important to instead highlight the potential for mutual benefit, specifically the opportunity for volunteers to learn from their hosts.

Empower a Child contains contradictory language. The organization appears to pride itself on collaboration with Ugandans and Kenyans in development projects. However, there is a lack of recognizing the strengths of locals or of the history of colonial dependency which has led to present-day inequalities. Empower a Child does communicate an appreciation for cross-cultural interaction and valuing shared experiences between hosts and volunteers.

Potter’s House

Potter’s House goal is to “Empower center members to take ownership of their community’s growth and development. 40% of community center staff are treasures who grew up in the dump” (*Potter’s House Guatemala*, n.d.) Potter’s House reports that the organization is completely staffed by Guatemalans, communicating a value for involving local people in projects. This indirectly communicates that locals have valuable expertise to offer the project. This is also the recognition that collaboration will improve project sustainability, however this idea is not explicitly communicated.

Potter’s House communicates the importance of using a holistic approach to address issues of poverty. They describe going beyond addressing economic and physical causes of poverty to focus on family development, education, health and nutrition, micro-enterprise, and community development. This language does not present a simple

solution for poverty nor does this indicate that the volunteer can easily solve these issues. Instead, the language invites the reader to think critically about the complexity of the host community. Potter's House communicates their goal of empowering community members. They recognize that development takes time and does not happen solely through volunteers building infrastructure. "Lasting change comes when the community itself is empowered to make changes for their own growth." Potter's House has a goal of teaching local people skills and knowledge so they can "become responsible and capable of continuing developing their family and community." This shows a desire for projects to be sustainable.

Potter's House created an educational video to help their volunteers understand their approach to poverty. The organization states that poverty is not just an economic issue, but that there are eight forms of poverty which reinforce each other. These forms of poverty are spiritual, intellectual, poverty of affection, poverty of the will, of civic involvement, and poverty of support network. The video states:

Most poor people don't have a personal relationship with God or knowledge that they are indeed wonderfully made. The majority have no access to knowledge or technology. They believe that they are trash, worthless, and dumb. For many, violence is simply a way of life. They live outside of love – in hate, bitterness, low self-esteem, and selfishness. Too many are enslaved to substance or sex abuse. They lack the will or the encouragement to change ... For many, 'I am alone' is a very common phrase. People feel a sense of loneliness, not just within their broken families, but in the broader community. Leadership, cooperation, collaboration, and community are simply not part of the culture. The poor have close to nothing and get by on just \$60 a month.

Many problems are present in this language describing the experience of poverty in the community. First, the generalization that most poor people do not have a relationship with God. The population of Guatemala City is reported to be 45% Catholic and 42% Protestant Christian (*2019 Report on International Religious Freedom: Guatemala*,

2019). One aspect of valuing the strengths of the hosts is recognizing the complexity of the community and the religious structures that are already in place. An over-simplistic view is the perception that the local people have no modern system of beliefs. The intention of Potter's House of sharing the gospel of Jesus Christ with the people they work with is a primary goal of the organization, but volunteers should be prepared that many of the people they interact with already have knowledge of Christianity. For this reason, language implying that poor people do not know God does not communicate respect for others.

Stating that the locals do not have "access to knowledge" reinforces the idea that they are unintelligent. This also demonstrates a lack of recognizing the strengths and abilities of the hosts. The statement that "they live outside of love – in hate, bitterness, low self-esteem, and selfishness" is demeaning and communicates inferiority. "They lack the will to change" communicates an inability to solve problems on their own. Potter's House communicates generalizations that cooperation and collaboration do not exist as a part of the culture. This language prepares volunteers to expect to interact with people who are hateful and who lack knowledge of how to work together. This is depicting the hosts as fundamentally different from the volunteers and supporting the colonial ideology of "us" versus "them." This leads the volunteers to perceive their hosts as inferior. There is additionally no communication here of the role the West has played in creating current inequities.

Potter's House works in an area of extreme material poverty in communities living in and around a large trash dump in Guatemala City. Group volunteer trips are described as being intended for "exposing individuals to the eye-opening experience of

serving the poor.” Short term youth group trips in particular are described as “an opportunity to participate in the adventure of serving the poor in an exciting and exotic place.” This language of “adventure” of coming face-to-face with extreme poverty polarizes the hosts from the volunteers. This language links experiencing extreme poverty to an “exciting and exotic place” which stresses the otherness of Guatemalans. Communicating a desire to expose volunteers to poverty without mention of the historical causes of poverty may reinforce ideas of inferiority.

Potter’s House explains that “We call the people we work with Treasures, because they are determined, hardworking, brave people created in God’s image. They are human beings with value and dignity. To God and to us, they are Treasures.” This quote communicates a value for local people and their natural abilities. However, it is important to extend this idea and communicate that volunteers can learn just as much from the hosts. Potter’s House language in this quote communicates evidence of valuing the humanity of others but still not a willingness to learn from the hosts. It is important for local people to see that they have knowledge and skills to share with volunteers and to have the opportunity to do so. This quote which states that Potter’s House believes locals have “value and dignity” is contradictory to the earlier statement that they “live outside of love” and “lack the will to change.” The presentation of these two ideas implies that hosts inherently have worth and dignity, but they need volunteers to show them the way because on their own they cannot change. This communicates both harmful stereotypes about the “other” and indicates low respect.

Potter’s House states:

Our SERVE program provides deep meaningful opportunities for servants (volunteers) to enrich the lives of the Treasures as well as their own. After the

experience of serving the Treasures you will gain a very personal appreciation of the many types of poverty and a love for the people who are afflicted by them.

This communicates the importance of growing in empathy. However, for personal transformation to occur through international volunteering, there needs to be a process of self-reflection, which is not evident in the communication materials. Also, there is no discussion of the knowledge or values that the hosts can teach to or share with volunteers.

CHAPTER FOUR

Results and Recommendations

This study is a brief analysis of the communication materials of six volunteer tourism organizations. Therefore, its purpose is descriptive, to observe and measure the presence of the narratives which are communicated in a few volunteer tourism agencies. This study is also intended to make recommendations for improvements in discourse as well as to bring attention to the importance of critical analysis in volunteer tourism promotional messages. The final purpose is to recognize the language some organizations employ in challenging participants to think critically about their intentions and perceptions about non-Westerners as well as the role of the volunteer.

Using the criteria definitions presented in the previous chapter, each of the organizations were given a rating of 1, 2, 3, 4, or 5 for the seven criteria. The results of this analysis can be viewed below in *Table 2*. The total rating for each organization was found by summing the rating for the seven criteria. This cumulative rating is presented below in *Figure 1*. This was performed in order to provide a measurable basis to compare the organizations. This quantified the extent to which the organizations reproduce stereotypes and assertions of Western superiority or demonstrate goals of promoting cultural humility. The average rating for each criterion was found in order to determine which characteristics are the most and least present in the communication materials. The averages can be viewed below in *Figure 2*.

The GoAbroad search database received a relatively low cumulative rating on the seven criteria. GoAbroad was determined to have a rating of 15 out of a total of 35. GoAbroad is the largest volunteer search organization and serves to connect potential volunteers with organizations. Their promotional materials have the potential to impact the perceptions of many participants, as they have connected over 125,000 volunteers with projects abroad. For this reason, it was determined to be critical to include their promotional materials in this analysis. However, since GoAbroad does not send volunteers directly, there is a lack of discussion in their promotional materials about interacting with host communities. This introduces a conflict in comparing a rating of the seven defined criteria between GoAbroad and the five tourism organizations. There is limited amount of communication material relevant for review from this organization as there exists an absence of the organization's goals and values. To overcome this issue, the average rating for each characteristic was calculated both with and without GoAbroad's rating. The average rating excluding GoAbroad can be viewed below in *Table 2* and in *Figure 2*. The narratives in GoAbroad's promotional materials are important to assess but are more useful when viewed apart from the five volunteer tourism agencies.

Several study limitations are present. Although definitions were created for each criteria response in order to increase objectivity, the reproducibility has not been tested. Reproducibility of the criteria definitions may be confirmed by having another analyst complete an independent analysis. The results of the second analysis could then be compared with the current results. Additionally, time constraints limited the scope of this study to the analysis of six volunteer organizations. In order to draw conclusions about the communication material within the volunteer tourism industry as a whole, a larger

sample size would need to be drawn. The sample could also include a wider variety of tourism organizations to give a more complete description.

Rating scale for the determined communicated effectiveness of each criterion:

- 1 – Strongly Ineffective
- 2 – Ineffective
- 3 – Neutral
- 4 – Effective
- 5 – Strongly Effective

Table 2: Analysis of Promotional Materials

	Self-Reflection	Historical Relationships	Mutual Learning	Partnership Building	Respect for Others	Stereotype of the “Other”	Praise of the Volunteer	Total
GoAbroad	1	3	3	1	3	2	2	15
IVHQ	3	3	4	5	4	4	4	27
Kaya Responsible Travel	5	4	5	5	5	5	5	34
The Real Uganda	2	1	2	2	1	1	2	11
Empower a Child	1	1	2	3	1	1	1	10
Potter’s House	1	1	1	3	1	1	3	11
Average	2.17	2.17	2.83	3.17	2.5	2.33	2.83	-
Average Excluding GoAbroad	2.4	2	2.8	3.6	2.4	2.4	3	-

Figure 1: Cumulative Rating for Each Organization

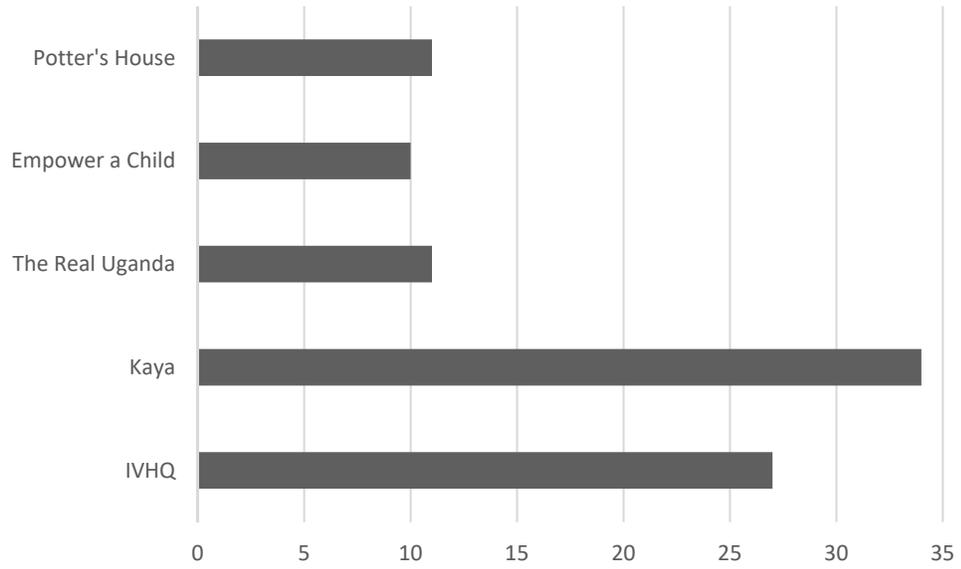
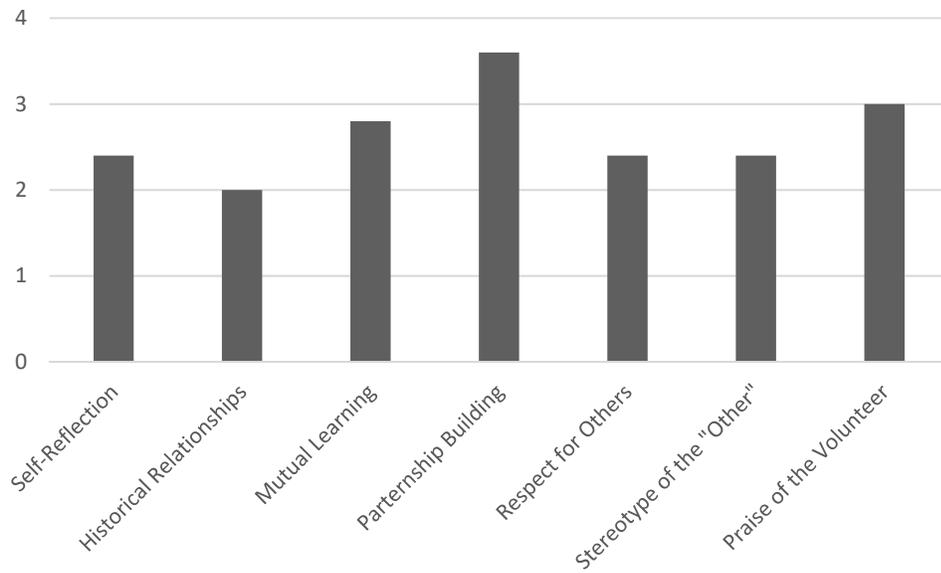


Figure 2: Average Rating for Each Criterion excluding GoAbroad



Partnership Building

Of the seven criteria, the organizations received the highest average rating in communicating the importance of partnership building. The five volunteer tourism organizations scored an average rating of 3.6 on this criterion. Collaboration is a necessary goal of volunteer tourism in order for projects to be sustainable long term. Dickey et al. (2020) concluded that when volunteers maintain control over the projects and do not involve local input, the project often fails when volunteers return to their home. If volunteer organizations have the goal of sustainability, it is necessary for the hosts to be involved both in decision making and project implementation. Because the communication materials indicate goals of partnership building, the conclusion can be drawn that these organizations recognize that this is an important goal and necessary to include.

Even the organizations which received the lowest overall ratings communicate value for partnership building. Both Empower a Child and Potter's House, who respectively received a total rating of 10 and 11, communicate a central goal of having locally led projects. Potter's House states that a significant portion of their staff are local people because "lasting change comes when the community itself is empowered to make changes for their own growth." This communicates the acknowledgment that volunteer projects need to involve locals in order to be sustainable. Empower a Child similarly states that "one thing that really makes us stand out from other organizations is that Ugandans and Kenyans run operations on the grounds and you work alongside them in communities." However, both Empower and Child and Potter's House miss the opportunity to directly communicate that locals need to be involved because of their

intimate knowledge of the community, the community's needs, and because they are qualified with the skills and expertise needed for this type of work. The importance of local involvement needs to be explained to volunteers in order to translate this sentiment to the host. Lough & Carter-Black (2015) conclude that local ownership of projects is critical to validate the strengths of local leaders and to build trust. If volunteer agencies portray the abilities of the host to lead projects, this may alter volunteer expectations to approach interactions with an attitude of humility.

Contradictory Goals

Several of the organizations communicate a value for partnership building but elsewhere in their discourse do not demonstrate respect and value towards the hosts. The three volunteer organizations surveyed which received the lowest ratings were Potter's House (11), Empower a Child (10), and the Real Uganda (11). These were found to include language which perpetuate neocolonial stereotypes and demonstrate low respect for the host community. The Real Uganda states "life in Uganda is tough. Wages are low, corruption is rampant, and education is inefficient." Potter's House writes that in the communities they work in, "most poor people ... believe that they are trash, worthless, and dumb ... Leadership, cooperation, collaboration, and community are simply not part of the culture." This language perpetuates the idea that inequities are a result of innate cultural characteristics. There is a lack of critical analysis for why these problems exist today. Additionally, these organizations focus on a unidirectional benefit from volunteer to host. Empower a Child states that their goal is to teach "modern skills" to the children of East Africa, which enforces the traditional versus modern binary. Empower a Child also promises volunteers that "you will also be making a positive impact on almost every

child that you encounter.” This language praises the volunteer and their ability to provide simple solutions to poverty. This perpetuates neocolonial stereotypes within the organizations’ promotional materials and goals. The material enforces narratives of Western superiority. “Colonialist reasoning patterns are still creeping in to shape the representational dynamics even of tourism agencies with socially transformative missions” (Caton & Santos, 2009, p. 202). In this way, these organizations contradict their own goals through their promotional strategies. Language which perpetuates these stereotypes and a lack of respect needs to be eliminated from promotional discourse.

Achieving sustainability and collaboration is an important end goal for international development organizations. However, this is not a means to an end. Successful collaboration can be achieved through viewing hosts as equals in the partnership. This requires an attitude of humility and is reflected in the way organizations describe the people they are serving as well as the relationship between the host and the volunteer. A potential solution, aside from eliminating disrespectful language, is for organizations to communicate that volunteers will receive benefits through interacting with the hosts. These benefits go beyond simply observing poverty and extend to growing in appreciation and value for others through relationship building. Volunteers need to come in expecting to listen and learn. Lough & Carter-Black (2015) recommends that the mutuality of exchange be emphasized on the “sending side” of volunteer partnerships. Recognizing the inherent strengths of the host community and the potential benefit for the volunteer before traveling abroad can have a positive impact on volunteer expectations.

Communicating respect for others becomes arguably more important in the discourse of Christian mission organizations. Genesis 1:27 says “So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him” (English Standard Version Bible, 2001, Gen. 1:27). Man is created in the likeness and image of God, and as God cares for His creation, followers of Jesus are commissioned to do the same. Through the lens of Christianity, volunteers view those who do not have faith in Jesus Christ as lost. However, valuing creation requires respect for others and should be evident in the language missionaries use. In the case of Christian mission, it is significant to recognize the inherent value of all of humanity as made in the image of God. Organizations that have the purpose of proclaiming the Gospel of Jesus Christ but do not show care and honor for others and are instead demeaning in their language and working in opposition to their own mission.

Directly Addressing Neocolonial Stereotypes

Kaya Responsible Travel received the highest rating of the organizations included in the content analysis, with a cumulative rating of 34 out of a maximum of 35. Kaya goes beyond avoiding the perpetuation of stereotypes. Their communication actively addresses the role of the volunteer tourism industry in contributing to imbalances of power. Kaya calls for volunteers who have “listening skills, adaptability and flexibility, and willing to learn from others.” The organization encourages active self-reflection to help volunteers grow in cross-cultural respect and compassion by asking potential volunteers to consider:

If you are not ready and haven’t thought it through it can be difficult, not just for you. It will also affect other volunteers, project participants who have been

waiting for your help ...Done badly, volunteering can be a waste of time, or even worse, cause more damage.

This is a direct recognition of the negative impact volunteering can have on the host community. This statement has the potential to challenge readers to critically consider how they can cause harm through their attitudes while interacting with people from other cultures.

International Volunteer HQ's discourse had little evidence of perpetuating stereotypes as the organization received a cumulative rating of 25. IVHQ communicates a value for mutual learning and a desire for volunteers to develop realistic expectations about the impact they will be able to have. This language may cause volunteers to approach the exchange with an attitude of humility. However, this can be improved if the volunteers are directly challenged to face their own biases. IVHQ does not directly address the potential negative impacts of volunteering.

Raising self-awareness among volunteers to understand power dynamics is critical (Lough & Carter-Black, 2015). Recognizing both unconscious bias and historical context is dire for international volunteers. This process can be extended beyond just promotional discourse and should play a significant role in volunteer training. However, organizations can challenge neocolonial narratives, potentially causing volunteer self-reflection, in their promotional materials. This requires a direct communication that "cultures are complex, dynamic, and interrelated; problematic conditions in the 'third world' are the product of historical circumstances and not the result of 'natural,' innate cultural characteristics; and that everyone's problems are everyone's responsibility because all people have the same right to dignity and fair life chances" (Caton & Santos, 2009. p. 202).

Recommendations for Volunteer Organizations

Tourism organizations which seek to promote cross-cultural understanding can benefit from analysis of the differences between their goals and their promotional messages. It is important to understand the messages that are being sent through the portrayal of volunteer work. Tourism agencies are responsible for preparing volunteers to travel abroad and engage with other cultures. Promotional materials have a critical influence on volunteer motivations and have the opportunity to be positive contributors in altering Western discourse about the non-West. Volunteers must be directed and guided in processes of self-reflection in order for this to occur. Based on the literature and the gaps identified in this content analysis, practical areas for current improvement in volunteer promotional discourse are summarized as follows:

1. Communicate the strengths of the host community and the complexity of their culture and society.
2. Emphasize the mutuality of the host-volunteer relationship. Content must prepare volunteers to anticipate that they will be learn from the host community through engaging in shared experiences.
3. Challenge volunteers that Western ways of life are not necessarily right or more advanced. Prepare volunteers that they will learn to appreciate different ways of life.
4. Make direct reference to the historical context which has led to current inequities.
5. Provide realistic expectations for volunteers, that they will be coming alongside local people to serve and play a part in the work already being done.

Volunteer organizations must take on the goal of fostering social change and understanding among volunteers. This is necessary to achieve the often-stated intended goals of empowering host communities and increasing cross-cultural learning and empathy in volunteers. Using language in alignment with cultural humility has the potential to decrease ethnocentrism in volunteers and shift imbalances of power to play a part in the creation of a more equitable world.

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