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Canada

**AN EXPLORATION OF FACTORS IMPACTING YOUTH VOLUNTEERS WHO
PROVIDE INDIRECT SERVICES**

By

Andrea M. McArthur
Bachelor of Arts (Hon) Psychology, Brock University, 2007

THESIS

Submitted to the Faculty of Social Work
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the
Master of Social Work degree
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2011

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Abstract

Youth volunteerism is highly researched by volunteer organizations, but little is known about the factors impacting youth who provide *indirect* volunteering and the strengths and challenges which they face. Volunteering is indirect when the results of a volunteer's work travels through more than one channel, (usually stakeholders spreading a message or raising funds), before reaching the intended client. Awareness raising and fundraising activities are two common examples of indirect volunteering that are attractive to many youth.

Ten youth volunteers from five different organizations in the Greater Toronto Area were interviewed in order to investigate three important questions about indirect volunteering.

These questions are:

- 1) What strengths and challenges affect youth volunteers who provide indirect forms of service?
- 2) What motivations, barriers to engagement, and opportunities for leadership affect youth volunteers who participate in indirect forms of service?
- 3) How does role ambiguity impact indirect forms of service?

The methodology included purposive sampling for youth volunteers to participate in semi-structured, in-depth interviews. Open coding from an interpretivist framework was used to analyze the qualitative data. The results highlight motivations, barriers to engagement, and opportunities for leadership that validate prior literature and shed light on new themes. The results also highlight strengths and challenges for youth volunteers. Role ambiguity, along with two new core themes emerged as new issues that were important to youth volunteers who provide indirect service. These two new core themes included exploring issues of empowerment and power imbalances for youth volunteers and the meaning that youth ascribe to their volunteer experiences.

Practice recommendations weighing strengths and challenges faced by youth volunteers across each of the core themes are provided in the discussion. Practice recommendations explore implementing job design and Community Service Learning to make indirect volunteering more clear for youth. The discussion also includes a conceptual framework with new models illustrating the provision of indirect services along with ideal and problematic pathways of engaging youth who are indirect volunteers. A conceptual framework illustrating ways to overcome role ambiguity is also provided. This research fills significant gaps in the literature about youth volunteers who are engaged in indirect service delivery.

This thesis offers methods to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of work with youth in the volunteer sector – which is a deeply embedded component of the welfare state (Evers, Laville, Borzaga, Defourny, Lewis, Nyssens, & Pestoff 2004). Volunteerism is an act of helping, and volunteers perform their work in helping professions including the social services that serve the welfare state.

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Table of Contents

Chapter One: Introduction.....	1
Introduction to the Literature.....	1
A Profile of Andrea McArthur.....	3
Table 1. Key Terms of the Research.....	4
 Chapter Two: Literature Review.....	 7
Understanding Participation.....	7
Participation in a Struggling Economy.....	8
Theories of Volunteerism.....	9
Volunteer Management and Job Design Theory	11
Models Demonstrating Volunteer Impact.....	11
Table 2. Opportunities and Risks for Measurement.....	12
Indirect Service.....	13
Youth Volunteerism.....	15
Table 3. Actions that Lead to Successful Outcomes for the Core Areas of Attention Researched About Youth Volunteers	16
Motivation.....	17
Mandatory Volunteering	18
Opportunities for Leadership.....	20
Barriers to Engagement.....	21
Role Ambiguity.....	22
Understanding and Implementing Job Design.....	23
Gaps in the Literature.....	24
 Chapter Three: Methodology.....	 26
Purpose	26
Research Questions.....	26
Paradigm and Methodological Framework.....	27
Methodological Framework.....	28
Methods.....	29
Participant Recruitment.....	32
Participating Agencies and the Youth Volunteers.....	34
Free and informed Consent.....	38
Risks.....	38
Privacy and Confidentiality.....	39
Compensation of Participants.....	40
Feedback to Participants.....	40
 Chapter Four: Results.....	 42
Table 4. Core Themes and Sub-Themes from Interviews With Youth Volunteers.....	43
1. Motivations of Youth to Choose and Maintain Participation in Indirect Forms of Service.....	44
Upward Mobility.....	44
Community Membership.....	44

Interest in the Issue Being Addressed by the Indirect Service.....	46
Interest in the Organization.....	47
Desire to Make Change.....	48
Education.....	49
Convenient and Responsive.....	49
2. Origins of Leadership Opportunities for Youth Volunteers	
who Participate in Indirect Forms of Service.....	50
Desire for Upward Mobility.....	51
Personal Attributes for Leadership.....	52
Intrinsic Motivation to be a Leader.....	52
Leadership Opportunities Connected to Existing Role or Title.....	54
Undertaking Public Education.....	54
Teamwork Promotes Leadership.....	55
3. Barriers to Engagement of Youth Volunteers in	
Indirect Forms of Service.....	56
Presence or Lack of Inclusive Practices.....	57
Lack of Resources.....	58
Power Imbalances.....	60
Complexity of the Work.....	61
Difficulty Connecting with Potential Volunteers, Clients,	
and the Community.....	61
Competition with Other Organizations and Clubs.....	62
A Poor Location and Lack of Space.....	63
Age Discrimination.....	63
Prerequisites.....	64
4. Role Ambiguity.....	64
Lack of Clarity About the Volunteer's Role and Their Work.....	64
Lack of Clarity About the Organization.....	65
Creating Clarity About Their Role.....	66
Creating Clarity About the Organization.....	67
Understanding the Clients.....	68
Achieving Clarity by Perspective Taking.....	70
Describing the Indirect Service Role.....	71
Challenges of Role Ambiguity.....	72
5. The Emergence of Empowerment and Power Imbalances	
in Youth Volunteer Roles.....	73
Empowerment of Selves.....	73
Empowerment of the Service Community and Clients.....	74
Lack of Empowerment in Individuals.....	74
Lack of Power in Community.....	75
Power Imbalances.....	75
6. The Meaning that Youth Ascribe to Their Volunteer	
Experiences.....	76
Importance of Volunteering to Youth Volunteer Participants.....	76
The importance of Volunteering to the Community and Clients.....	78
Youth Volunteering for the Wrong Reasons.....	78

Exploitation of Youth Volunteers.....	79
Importance of Volunteering Related to a Specific Issue.....	79
Emerging Gems of Volunteering.....	80
Strengths and Challenges.....	81
Table 5. Strengths and Challenges of Indirect Volunteering for Youth Volunteers.....	82
Chapter Five: Discussion.....	84
Summary of Findings.....	84
Findings Under Each of the Questions.....	84
First Research Question.....	84
Second Research Question.....	90
Third Research Question.....	93
Strengths and Challenges of Indirect Service Work.....	94
Challenges.....	94
Strengths.....	95
Conceptual Framework.....	96
Practice Implications.....	103
Limitations and Recommendations for Future Research.....	107
Conclusion.....	108
Appendices.....	111
References.....	119

List of Figures

Figure 1. The indirect volunteering path of service outputs to results for clients.....	93
Figure 2. Three pathways that prevent and promote successful outcomes for youth volunteers providing indirect services.....	95
Figure 3. Factors that contribute to role ambiguity, role clarity, and actions that youth volunteers and the organizations they work for can take to reduce ambiguity.....	98

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Considerable attention has emerged in organizational literature over the last decade about trends in youth volunteering. From 2002-2007, Volunteer Canada and Imagine Canada (formerly the Canadian Centre for Philanthropy) partnered together in several research initiatives, many of which focused on trends in youth volunteering as part of the Canada Volunteer Initiative (Volunteer Canada, 2008). There remains high interest in volunteer trends because volunteers are one of the most valuable resources for organizations (Riemer, Dorsch, Hoerber, Paskevick, & Chelladurai, 2004). Youth volunteers are of considerable interest in Canada because they consist of a large portion of Canada's volunteers. They typically face unique motivators and barriers to engagement (Tessier, Minh-Nguyet, & Gagnon, 2006; Canadian Centre for Philanthropy, 2002). Key terms pertinent to trends in youth volunteering that are discussed throughout this thesis are available at the end of the chapter.

Since youth volunteers are a valuable resource for organizations (Riemer et al., 2004), interested researchers have discovered trends in youth volunteerism which have produced several theories around the effective management, retention, and engagement of youth volunteers, all of which are factors that are necessary for successful service delivery (Canadian Worker Cooperative Federation, 2005). For example, motivation, which includes the aspirations, drive, and willingness of youth to volunteer has influenced the literature about effective recruitment strategies (Tessier et al., 2006; Canadian Centre for Philanthropy, 2002; Haski-Leventhal, Ronel, York, & Ben-David, 2007; Kirkpatrick-Johnson, Beebe, Mortimer, & Snyder, 1998). Efforts to improve civic engagement and reduce barriers (or roadblocks) for marginalized populations of youth volunteers have been formulated (Stoneman, 2002; The Calgary Immigrant Aid Society,

2005). Implementing job design, which is a well organized and thorough approach to developing volunteer position descriptions with all populations of volunteers (Bowen et al., 2001), has been recommended for reducing role ambiguity. Role ambiguity is experienced by a volunteer when they feel any lack of clarity or vagueness about the full scope of their position and the outcomes of the work that they do. (Bowen et al., 2001; Volunteer Canada, 2005; Fried, Shirom, Gilboa, & Cooper, 2008). Also, literature about improving civic engagement of youth volunteers has stressed the importance of making the volunteer position description more clear in the job design process (Stoneman, 2002).

While theories about the effective management and engagement of youth volunteers demonstrate benefits for volunteer organizations (Riemer et al., 2004), much has only been speculated about the tangible benefits they have for communities and clients served by youth in their volunteer roles (Stoneman, 2002). While emphasis on the reduction of role ambiguity has important implications for improving meaningful engagement experienced by youth volunteers (Stoneman, 2002; Canadian Centre for Philanthropy, 2002), this area still needs considerable research. There are still many questions about this theory.

There has been even less research related to youth volunteering in indirect services. Indirect forms of service involve non-front line volunteers (National Volunteer & Philanthropy Centre, 2008), who are involved in awareness raising and fundraising initiatives. Firstly, what does successful engagement look like for youth who provide *indirect* forms of volunteer service? Secondly, what are the impacts of volunteer efforts? Third what are the challenges to successful volunteer outcomes including motivation, leadership, and engagement? Fourth, how can the reduction of role ambiguity better reflect clarity of outcomes of service for the benefit of clients,

communities, volunteers, and the organization (Fried et al., 2008; Bowen et al., 2001; Tessier et al., 2006; Canadian Worker Cooperative Federation, 2005)?

A Profile of Andrea McArthur: Former Youth Volunteer and Volunteer Coordinator

I began my career in social work as a youth volunteer at the age of 18. I researched issues of an international and humanitarian focus such as landmines, child soldiers, and the role of International Humanitarian Law in times of conflict. Using this research, I utilized existing workshop tools and developed new ones to educate other youth in small classrooms and large assemblies. I spoke about the issues that I was researching in hopes that youth would be motivated to take action themselves to help the people directly affected by these issues.

When I was 23 and still considered a “youth volunteer,” I was hired by the same organization to be the Community Services Coordinator of the same program in the Region of York, Ontario. As a program coordinator, I was responsible for recruiting and motivating youth volunteers to do the very same work that I once did as a volunteer. I was responsible for tracking the number of clients reached within the program and tracking outcomes of the program. It is possible to determine the number of dollars that youth volunteers raise for a social cause and even if youth volunteers are able to change people’s attitudes. However, it is extremely difficult to determine the impact of these changes upon social issues and the community. For example, we were able to quantify the dollars raised by youth volunteers to help rehabilitate child soldiers in Sierra Leone. Also, we were able to measure the changes in people’s attitudes who came to workshops dealing with this topic by delivering, collecting, and analyzing pre- and post-tests. However, we never were able to really be clear about the exact impact of these efforts upon the tangible outcomes of the rehabilitation of child soldiers. In addition, it was difficult to keep track of the impact of fundraising efforts when funds were pooled from multiple sources. The direct

impact of the efforts from one group of volunteers was difficult to track. It was a bit easier to determine the impact of this experience upon the volunteers themselves although this job was difficult at times too. It is a result of these experiences that I undertook the following study as a Masters of Social Work Candidate of Wilfrid Laurier University. It is my belief that the impact of awareness raising and fundraising does not stop at the number of people motivated in the community to get involved. There are other impacts too. Given my experiences in Toronto and the Region of York I feel that there are a number of challenges to identifying effective youth volunteer outcomes. I also suspect that role ambiguity exists in indirect forms of service, and that one of the best ways to reduce role ambiguity is to reflect on the objectives and outcomes of indirect forms of service from multiple perspectives, especially the youth volunteers.

Before sharing findings from a review of the literature on youth volunteerism, it is important to review key terms that introduce the topics being investigated.

Table 1. Key Terms of the Research

Indirect Service	Services that are not front-line based. For example, there is no direct contact with those in need. These include awareness raising and fundraising activities by volunteers (National Volunteer & Philanthropy Centre, 2008; Volunteer Mid-South, 2009).
Engagement	The process of being actively involved and participating in a community, commonly through volunteerism (Stoneman, 2002; Canadian Federation for Sexual Health, 2005).
Motivation	The aspirations, drive, and willingness of youth to volunteer. For organizations, this concerns their recruitment and retention efforts (Imagine Canada, 2005).
Barriers to Engagement	All aspects of the volunteer position and the organization that youth volunteer for that limit them from participating to their fullest potential (or for some at all). They include language barriers, socio-economic barriers, organizational barriers, barriers related to one's social location, and hidden barriers (The Calgary Immigrant Aid Society, 2005).
Leadership Opportunities	Opportunities for providing direction, inspiration and motivation to a team as well as opportunities to demonstrate and take on real and meaningful decision making responsibilities

	(Stoneman, 2002).
Organizational Governance	All bureaucratic and political aspects of the operation of an organization. The governing body of an organization is normally a volunteer board or council (Stoneman, 2002; Canadian Federation for Sexual Health, 2005).
Role Ambiguity	An experience of gaps in one's understanding of their job or position as a result of duties or outcomes of the work that is to be done that are not clearly laid out (Fried et al., 2008; Volunteer Mid-South, 2009).
Job Design	A well organized, strategic, and thorough approach to developing volunteer position descriptions which results in matching the right volunteer with the right job (Bowen, Luchuk, Hiscott, MacKenzie, Sanderson, Shouldice, & Stratton, 2001).
Community Service Learning	"Effective service learning incorporates multiple challenging and engaging reflection activities that prompt deep thinking and analysis about oneself, one's relationship to society, and complex community challenges" (Roehlkepartain, 2009, p. 12).
Awareness Raising	Included in and akin to the definition of advocacy service by Student Volunteer Connections of Guelph (2011), awareness raising "covers any volunteer role that incorporates people addressing an issue on behalf of the public's interest."
Fundraising	Akin to the definition of philanthropy by Student Volunteer Connections of Guelph (2011), fundraising "primarily involves monetary donations to charities, whether it is from a massive corporation or a single person." In addition, from the work carried out by the pool of participants in this study, it also includes an activity of solicitation of funds from donors to provide funding for a service or project carried out by the organization that one volunteers for.
Volunteer	Volunteers "give their time freely with no expectation for monetary reward. Their hours of service ensure that many activities are accomplished and that many people are helped" (Volunteer Canada, 2006).

In this thesis I will outline some of the literature in this field related to: the importance of volunteer participation, the role of volunteering in a struggling economy, the reasons why people volunteer, the impact of volunteering, some concepts of indirect services as well as theories about what creates successful engagement of youth volunteers. Then I will outline the details of my qualitative methodology for this study which examined indirect forms of youth volunteerism in five agencies in the Toronto area. After which I will provide the results of my research which

are organized into the following six themes: Motivations of Youth to Choose and Maintain Participation in Indirect Forms of Service, Origins of Leadership Opportunities for Youth Volunteers who Participate in Indirect Forms of Service, Barriers to Engagement of Youth Volunteers in Indirect Forms of Service, Perceived Ambiguity of Volunteer Roles Developed for Indirect Forms of Service, The Emergence of Empowerment and Power Imbalances in Youth Volunteer Roles, and The Meaning That Youth Ascribe to Their Volunteer Experiences. Finally, I will summarize my findings, provide new conceptual understandings of indirect forms of youth volunteerism and offer some recommendations for future practice and research in this important field of study. This thesis is the first research to explore youth volunteers who provide indirect services. This thesis also adds to the literature about role ambiguity with an exploration of this problem and offers solutions to this very critical issue in the line of indirect volunteering.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Understanding Participation

Volunteer Canada (2009) considers volunteering to be a “core value” to Canadians. Volunteer Canada (2009) makes this assumption based on the high number of Canadians who are engaged in volunteer activities that have been tracked and recorded by nonprofit organizations, volunteer associations, government agencies, and businesses. There are currently more than 12 million volunteers (46% of the population 15 and older) participating in communities throughout Canada, contributing an estimated 2 billion service dollars per year (Hall, Lasby, Ayer, & Gibbons, 2007). Fifty-four percent of voluntary service organizations in Canada are run entirely by volunteers (Hall et al., 2007).

The impact of volunteerism in the nonprofit sector in Canada (and across the globe) is significant. Changes in the ways that people volunteer over the last decade have inspired politicians, organizations, and volunteer associations to achieve a greater understanding of volunteerism (Brody, Cowling, Nissing, Paine, Jochum, & Warburton, 2009). Pathways to Participation (Brody et al., 2009), a volunteer association in Britain, recently identified four reasons why “advocates of participation in local and national governance see it as a good thing”

(p. 6). Participation is valued because:

- a) It is a way of “strengthening the legitimacy and accountability of democratic institutions.”
- b) “There is a belief that involving people in local decision-making processes and bringing them together around a common cause or interest can empower communities and help build social cohesion.”
- c) “Participation is considered a tool for reforming public services and for providing services that are better suited to people’s needs and that are more efficient.”
- d) Participation is linked to individual benefits such as “increased political efficacy and satisfaction gained from influencing change to personal development and growth in self-esteem from learning new skills such as public speaking” (Brody et al., 2009, p. 6-7).

Husbands, McKechnie, and Gagnon (2001) indicate that there exists an increased need to understand the evolution of volunteering, as the benefits to society of volunteerism are substantial. Achieving a greater understanding of participation, volunteerism, and engagement is becoming increasingly important to volunteer associations, and they are attempting to do so by exploring theories of volunteerism (Husbands et al., 2001) and by proposing the development of new models of volunteer impact (Volunteer Canada, 2009).

Participation in a Struggling Economy

Achieving a greater understanding of participation, engagement, and volunteerism is critical in today's economic climate. In recognition of the problems that nonprofits are facing in today's climate such as funding and financing, human resources, governance, advocacy, and most importantly volunteerism. Imagine Canada (2009) has embarked on a 5 year pan-Canadian engagement strategy beginning in 2010 with an objective to create a platform to:

- “strengthen the collective voice of the sector to advance common issues
- foster knowledge exchange and innovation to build capacity
- create and support linkages, networks and partnerships to enhance our effectiveness as a sector” (p. 1).

Within this strategy, there are three principal components (Imagine Canada, 2009, p. 2).

1. “A pan-Canadian symposium staged every two years in a different city across the country. The first pan-Canadian symposium will be held in 2011 and will seek to bring people together from across the country and from across the sector to learn from each other and to strengthen a collective voice.”
2. “Regional gatherings in the alternate years beginning in 2010, to build momentum for the pan-Canadian symposia. To ensure that the strategy takes differing realities into account, and to allow people to be involved closer to home, the plan is to have events based on the provincial and territorial boundaries. The regions will be encouraged to hold gatherings in 2010 to build towards the pan-Canadian event. Sector leaders are being invited to work with Imagine Canada in hosting these events across the country.”
3. “A social networking component to broaden reach and engage youth more

effectively.”

Acknowledging that it is important to find ways to engage youth more effectively, it is imperative that volunteer associations achieve a greater understanding of youth volunteerism through continued exploration of the types of volunteer activities in which youth are currently engaged.

Theories of Volunteerism

In the interest of exploring the many reasons why people volunteer, Brody et al., (2009) drew on six theories “supported by sociologists” to hypothesize why some people volunteer and others do not.

Citizen and state relationships: People are more likely to volunteer in participative democracies which involve the majority of people in decisions that affect their lives. Individuals are more likely to volunteer when there are already avenues for their active participation as citizens.

Democracy, civil society and social capital: Theories of social capital emphasize the relationships between one’s own capital (networks, resources, education) and participation. The more social capital an individual has, the more likely they are to participate in political processes and volunteerism.

Social networks and social movements: The number and kinds of ties, and levels of communication, people have are key to determining the range of opportunities, influence and power they have. The more people feel engaged in social networks the more likely they will wish to volunteer too.

Space and place: Ideas of place and space are closely linked to the notion of ‘community.’ Community is about much more than the social ties and networks that bind it. The physical

setting in which these social networks exist is just as important. Examples include a geographical community located in a particular place (urban neighbourhood, village or town) or a ‘community of interest’ where people have a common interest through shared characteristics or circumstance. Online spaces and places are new territories being used for participation. Another consideration is that these spaces of participation take place at local, national and global levels. All of these spaces and places are informed by conceptualizations of power – that is, more power exists at the more national and global levels than at the local level. It is by creating these spaces and places that facilitate people to participate and volunteer. Whether a volunteer feels empowered by participating in larger communities with more power, or disempowered by power structures in these communities determines the type and breadth of the community spheres they participate in.

The ubiquity of power relations: Different forms of power need to be understood in relation to two dimensions: how spaces for participation and engagement are created, and the levels of power (from local to global) in which they occur. Understanding each of these – the spaces, the levels and forms of power – as separate yet interrelated dimensions permits these dimensions to be analytically linked together. Both are predictors of participation. Individuals vary in how empowering they find it to work with or combat power structures in larger, more global communities.

Life course and life spheres: Other factors which impact participation include age, life events, life cycle, generation membership and the climate of participation. For example, people who are retired may have more time to volunteer, while individuals who were part of the “me’ generation may be less likely to participation than other generations which valued community contributions.

In summation, Brody et al., (2009) conclude that people are more likely to volunteer in the presence of a participative democracy and a healthy social economy. On an individual level,

the greater social ties, sense of community, position of power, and current life stage are directly linked to engagement in volunteerism.

Volunteer Management and Job Design Theory

Volunteer management theory focuses on the relationship between the organization and the volunteer, typically in the context of the staff person “in-charge” of the volunteer (Bowen et al., 2001). Volunteer management theory concerns the enhancement of these staff to volunteer relationships for the benefit of the volunteer and organization (Bowen et al., 2001). Volunteer Canada has recognized however that the composition and needs of volunteer populations are constantly changing and that volunteer organizations and associations need to turn to new ways of understanding and working with volunteers. Volunteer Canada borrowed a tool applied and heavily researched in the corporate sector called Job Design Theory. This theory focuses not so much on who does the work, but the work that needs to get done and how (Bowen et al., 2001). Pursuing job design theory as a tool to be actively applied and researched in the volunteer sector, Volunteer Canada recognized that: “volunteers, as well as paid staff, have the right to know what is expected of them and will be likely to contribute more if they can see how their role fits into the larger picture” (Bowen et al., 2001, p. 6). If volunteers can be matched to a job that appropriately utilizes their skills, enhances their learning, and positions them in a way that clearly contributes to the work of the organizations, they will be more clear about their roles and more satisfied with their work (Bowen et al., 2001). The principles of job design are explained later in the literature review as a proposed solution to role ambiguity.

Models Demonstrating Volunteer Impact

Volunteer Canada released a discussion paper in 2009 about different ways of capturing the value of volunteering in response to the growing interest in the public to know the

quantifiable economic value of the actual work of volunteers (Volunteer Canada, 2009). The discussion paper outlined how to measure the impact of volunteering upon volunteer organizations, the volunteers themselves and the community. However, this report recognized that measuring these impacts are fraught with many practical and conceptual issues which are difficult to resolve (Volunteer Canada, 2009).

While communities, organizations, and volunteers themselves would benefit from research about the impact of volunteer work, there is a real fear that standardized models capturing the economic value of volunteer contributions would devalue the generosity of volunteers (Volunteer Canada, 2009). These models would omit the value that each volunteer individually assigns to the volunteer experience themselves and the true value to organizations and communities. In order to make this issue clearer, Volunteer Canada (2009) shared the table below in the same publication.

Table 2: Opportunities and Risks for Measurement (Volunteer Canada, 2009).

Element of volunteer contribution	Opportunities for measurement	Challenges of measurement
Benefit to the organization from the volunteer contribution of time/effort	<p>Measured by counting hours contributed by volunteer</p> <p>May also include other costs/expenses related to the volunteer position</p> <p>Monetization may be at a different level depending on the skills of volunteer or the nature of the volunteer position</p> <p>Demonstrates the in-kind contribution the organization gains from the volunteer effort</p>	<p>Measures time volunteered</p> <p>Could measure other forms of value-added or “product-produced” for organizations</p> <p>Risk that the focus becomes the monetization of volunteer effort instead of how it really matters</p> <p>Risk that volunteers are uncomfortable with the dollar figure attached to their effort</p>
Benefit to the individual	Social capital is commonly expressed in terms of networks,	Social capital is complex to measure and quantification of

<p>volunteer (e.g., in the form of social and human capital)</p>	<p>social resources and awareness of social norms</p> <p>Volunteering is considered an important way for individuals to gain social capital</p> <p>Volunteering offers the benefit of moving from social exclusion to social inclusion</p> <p>Human capital measures the skills, competencies and knowledge of an individual or a group</p> <p>Volunteers may gain human capital as a direct result of their volunteer experience</p>	<p>social capital remains elusive</p> <p>Some attempts have been made to measure network depth and breadth, other indexes are only just emerging</p> <p>Other benefits of social capital are even more difficult to measure</p> <p>Human capital can be measured by skills gained, in some cases, but it is very individual</p> <p>More difficult is measuring change in cultural awareness for example</p> <p>Monetization would potentially include some but not all human capital gains for the volunteer</p>
<p>Benefits to communities and society at large</p>	<p>Financial and volunteer effort contributions to voluntary sector organizations can be measured and monetized where appropriate</p> <p>Measurement of the size of the voluntary sector inputs and some outputs are possible from statistical data</p> <p>Chance to recognize how the voluntary sector interacts with the economy</p>	<p>Size of the sector does not equal all the benefits that society gains from volunteerism</p> <p>Social well-being has been linked to the level of volunteerism and may increase when volunteerism is supported and encouraged</p> <p>Quantification is difficult and benefits are hard to isolate and attribute to volunteerism</p>

Indirect Service

Some international volunteer associations have classified their services into direct and indirect services (National Volunteer & Philanthropy Centre, 2008; Volunteer Mid-South, 2009), but it does not appear that Canadian associations and organizations are doing so. Only as of January 2011 did one Canadian organization appear to be doing so. This organization focuses on

the engagement of university students in volunteering. Student Volunteer Connections (2011) explains that an indirect volunteer is the person “behind the curtain.” These volunteers help fulfill tasks that meet a very important need that lead to large benefits for the greater community. Indirect Service can be assisting with environmental projects, building houses, designing community programs, or planning a violence prevention program” (Student Volunteer Connections, 2011). Direct services are defined as those that involve volunteers providing front line activities with the communities and clients they serve (National Volunteer & Philanthropy Centre, 2008; Volunteer Mid-South, 2009). Indirect services are those whereby the direct service outputs can be thought of as a catalyst or buffer for the intended outcomes (National Volunteer & Philanthropy Centre, 2008; Volunteer Mid-South, 2009) often occurring behind the scenes.

Many youth in the Greater Toronto area seem to be involved in indirect services. Direct services seem harder for youth to find. Plus, often because of their lifestyle youth find volunteering in one time projects much easier which are typical of some indirect service projects (Volunteer Mid-South, 2009). In addition, many youth in community colleges and universities have the knowledge and skills for fundraising and public speaking activities (Volunteer Mid-South, 2009).

Another form of indirect service is conference organizing. Pancer, Rose-Krasnor, & Loiselle, (2003) recommend that interested organizations develop conferences which bring diverse youth together to devise solutions to self-relevant social problems through dialogue and to bring about meaningful systems change in their communities. A challenge for conference organizers is ensuring that the awareness raising generated at the conference translates into action taken by attendees in their own communities that brings about systems change (Pancer et al., 2003).

A real problem emerging in the literature about indirect services is that volunteers “don’t necessarily see the benefits of what they are doing in the community, and it may not seem as rewarding despite being just as important as direct service” (Volunteer Mid-South, 2009).

Pancer et al. (2003) create a strong argument for the need to understand the motivations and the results of the participation of youth in indirect volunteering. With a lack of Canadian literature from academics and volunteer associations classifying indirect services, especially as awareness-raising and fundraising activities, the current study aimed to bring about a greater understanding of macro-level participation, such as indirect volunteering of youth volunteers in the Greater Toronto Area. In order to do so, a snapshot of topics in the current literature about youth volunteerism must first be presented.

Youth Volunteerism

Youth volunteers in Canada are between the ages of 15 and 24 (Canadian Centre for Philanthropy, 2002). They make up 18% of the volunteer population in Canada and contribute 15% of all volunteer hours (Canadian Centre for Philanthropy, 2002). Four topics have recurred in the literature about the successful engagement of youth volunteers. Three have been well researched and provide insights into the successful engagement of youth volunteers. These three topics include motivation; opportunities for leadership as well as participation in governance; and reducing barriers to engagement (Tessier et al., 2006; Stoneman, 2002; The Calgary Immigrant Aid Society, 2005). The fourth area, which has very little research for adults and none for youth, is related to role ambiguity (Fried et al., 2008). Research on this topic is lacking overall.

Existing recommendations for the successful engagement of youth have been summarized in the following table. These topics were also explored in the research questions and were expanded upon in the reporting of the results.

Table 3: Actions that Lead to Successful Outcomes for the Core Areas of Attention Researched About Youth Volunteers:

Area of Attention	Actions Leading to Successful Outcomes
Motivation (Tessier et al., 2006; Canadian Centre for Philanthropy, 2002; Canadian Federation for Sexual Health, 2005; Canadian Worker Cooperative Federation, 2005).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Ask non-volunteers to volunteer. -Promote a feeling that youth could make a difference, see results, and see benefits to the community and to oneself. -Promote a cause, activity, or interest, and a greater awareness of opportunities. -Promote relevant career skills. -Promote opportunities to build relationships and have fun. -Develop a youth inclusion plan to show your organization's commitment to youth by linking the involvement of youth to your organizations mission, vision, and values.
Opportunities for Leadership and Participation in Governance (Stoneman, 2002).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Allow opportunities for youth to demonstrate decision making and leadership by giving them leadership roles in project creation, institution governance (allow them to sit on volunteer boards and make decisions), and issue based advocacy (leadership around developing awareness initiatives for a particular initiative). -Do away with negative stereotypes of youth as individuals whom do not manage their time well and feel no responsibility towards civic engagement.
Barriers to Engagement (The Calgary Immigrant Aid Society, 2005).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Be sensitive to the other obligations of youth, such as time constraints related to jobs and school work. -Try to open volunteer opportunities that are accessible by public transportation and also accessible to more than just able bodied youth. -Demonstrate cultural sensitivity in your recruitment and retention efforts. -Develop a volunteer environment that is inclusive for all.
Reducing Ambiguity (Stoneman, 2002; Bowen et al., 2001).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Take advantage of job design tools to make the volunteer roles of youth volunteers clear. -Open opportunities for engagement that are meaningful, not just symbolic or tokenistic of youth engagement.

The following sections summarize the literature in the field related to these four topics.

Motivation

The literature indicates that youth motivation is a key to volunteering. In a study of youth volunteerism in Laval, Quebec, the following motivating factors were identified in order of importance: altruism (with 91% of respondents stressing a desire to help those in need, 83% a desire to be useful to the community, and 77% a desire to take an active role in society); acquiring new knowledge and skills to better understand their areas of interest and gain skills for jobs; formal and informal recognition from staff and gratitude from clients (this factor was more important to males than females); and socializing with clients and other volunteers (Tessier et al., 2006). While altruism was the strongest motivator, less altruistic motivations were of lesser importance to youth. In the same study, it was also found that youth see themselves more interested in projects that they can organize, while the adults they work with judge them to be more interested in volunteering for projects that have been designed for them that they believe produce clear results (Tessier et al., 2006). The social aspect of volunteering was significant in this study (Tessier et al., 2006). It was found that volunteer activities should be “concrete” and that the results should be visible and immediately accessible (Tessier et al., 2006) in order to keep the interest of youth volunteers. The outcomes of direct volunteering are therefore likely more favourable to youth.

In a study of youth volunteering for youth at risk, it was found that such volunteers are more relationship oriented in their volunteer roles, while adult volunteers are more service oriented (Haski-Leventhal et al., 2007). Youth were more interested in establishing rapport with clients and volunteers, whereas adults were more task-oriented. There were also “blurred boundaries” between youth volunteers and youth clients (Haski-Leventhal et al., 2007).

In a study about youth participation in volunteer work, a panel of youth volunteers and youth non-volunteers identified both intrinsic and extrinsic motivators affecting the decision to volunteer (Kirkpatrick-Johnson et al., 1998). The intrinsic motivators were related to work and social interest outcomes while the extrinsic motivators were the importance of community involvement as anticipated by the youth (Kirkpatrick-Johnson et al., 1998).

It was also found that youth who become involved in volunteer activities “have higher educational and employment goals, higher grades, higher self-esteem in their academic performance, and a higher “intrinsic motivation” for completing school work than youth who do not volunteer (Kirkpatrick-Johnson et al., 1998). This trend is perhaps best reflected in authentic efforts of organizations to engage youth in volunteering with real opportunities for leadership and governance (Stoneman, 2002).

Mandatory Volunteering

In Ontario, another topic that is particularly important to the discussion about motivation is mandated volunteer service. Since 1999, high school students in Ontario have been mandated to complete 40 hours of volunteer service in order to graduate. Three studies by Padanyi, Baetz, Brown, and Henderson (2010) investigated three specific research questions that addressed motivation, student learning, and future engagement. In their first study, they focused on whether or not this mandated program resulted in exposure to community service that youth otherwise would not have and whether or not this exposure was a positive experience. In their second study, they focused on the impact the program had on student exposure to the volunteer sector that they would not have normally had, and whether or not this exposure impacted future engagement. In the third study, the focus was on identifying different groups of high school

students in order to understand the factors that lead certain groups of youth to volunteer and remain engaged and others not, and also to understand why (Padanyi et al., 2010).

Overall, it was found that more mandated (94%) than non-mandated (77%) youth did volunteer (Padanyi et al., 2010). Since percentages were high for both populations, it was speculated that most “university bound students” volunteer without being mandated to by the province of Ontario (Padanyi et al., 2010). While many youth had positive attitudes towards civic participation, those who volunteered beyond mandated requirements and those who volunteered without being mandated were found to be more likely to volunteer in future. Youth with positive attitudes towards civic participation who completed only the hours they were mandated to were also found to be more likely to volunteer in future. Youth who do not volunteer and those who only complete their mandated hours who have negative attitudes towards volunteering are less likely to be civically engaged in future. Those youth who had longer volunteer placements and who enjoyed their volunteering were also more likely to volunteer after high school (Padanyi et al., 2010).

Youth also tended not to find their mandated volunteer activities as very significant because they felt like they were being “forced” to volunteer when they were completing their mandated hours (Padanyi et al., 2010). It was also found that there are 3 distinct groups of youth who volunteer, those who only complete their mandated hours, those who volunteer minimally beyond their mandated hours, and those who volunteer considerably beyond their mandated hours. Differences between these three groups are identified by low (group 1), to moderate (group 2), to high (group 3). Those who had the most positive attitudes towards volunteering were youth who had parents who volunteer and stress the importance of volunteering, come from religious homes, volunteered more before high school, and had positive attitudes towards helping

behavior. They were also more open minded and had positive attitudes about people who come from different backgrounds. These findings emphasized that not all students can be treated the same, and that the goals of and objectives of mandated volunteering need to be emphasized more clearly in the programming for students and other stakeholders (Padanyi et al., 2010). The recommended programming was Community Service Learning, a reflection tool that helps youth volunteers identify their service goals and identify the learning outcomes their volunteering had on themselves along with the outcomes their volunteering had on their service communities and the organization (Roehlkepartain, 2009, p. 12).

Opportunities for Leadership

In order to help youth overcome “disrespect and marginalization” in their communities, Stoneman (2002) recommends that volunteer organizations keep youth involved in meaningful opportunities for civic engagement. Stoneman (2002) provided successful opportunities for youth engagement in a program entitled “Youth Action Program of East Harlem Block School,” which allowed youth volunteers to participate in project creation, institution governance and issue-based advocacy. Stoneman (2002) also stressed the importance of providing meaning to youth by calling it “leadership development” for the purpose of instilling faith in youth and that they have the power to affect change with responsibility to make “real decisions.”

Kirkpatrick-Johnson et al., (1998) found that many youth who volunteer come from advantaged, non-marginalized backgrounds. This kind of background may make entry into leadership and governance roles easier (Stoneman, 2002), but not for those who come from disadvantaged backgrounds.

Barriers to Engagement

For more inclusive recruitment and retention of youth volunteers, including those from marginalized backgrounds (The Calgary Immigrant Aid Society, 2005) efforts to reduce barriers to engagement have been actively investigated and identified in the literature.

One way to reduce barriers of engagement of youth volunteers is to make youth feel included and valued by staff in the organization (Stoneman, 2002). Stoneman (2002) suggested that active efforts by organizations to engage youth in project creation, institutional governance, and issue-based advocacy can improve confidence in youth volunteers that they can make a difference. Stoneman (2002) recommended that giving youth responsibility to make “real decisions” is empowering for youth volunteers because they are traditionally overshadowed by the adult staff that they work with.

Another way to reduce barriers to engagement of youth volunteers is to identify marginalized youth and the specific barriers they face, and to strategize ways to reduce such barriers (The Calgary Immigrant Aid Society, 2005). As part of a study with Volunteer Canada, the Calgary Immigrant Aid Society (2005) identified immigrant youth as an under-represented population of volunteers. Providing recommendations and strategies for engaging immigrant youth in volunteer activities was seen as highly important for the development of a more socially cohesive Canada (The Calgary Immigrant Aid Society, 2005).

The Calgary Immigrant Aid Society (2005) recommended that it was important to provide an environment that is supportive and “culturally sensitive” to immigrant youth volunteers. Doing so involved helping youth develop leadership skills, encouragement of volunteerism and civic participation, improvement of functional language development, improvement of communication skills, and improvement of computer literacy. Organizations

should receive training on cross-cultural awareness and training on how to better involve culturally diverse youth volunteers (The Calgary Immigrant Aid Society, 2005). The results of the study by The Calgary Immigrant Aid Society (2005) produced a toolkit, whereby it was recommended that job design targeted for immigrant youth would also help reduce barriers to engagement. The application of job design could effectively improve the engagement of immigrant youth in volunteer activities by implementing practices of inclusivity, diversity, and cultural sensitivity (The Calgary Immigrant Aid Society, 2005).

Role Ambiguity

Role ambiguity is defined as the extent to which volunteers are “unclear about their responsibilities and the extent to which role-related information is unclear” (Fried et al., 2008, p. 307). Role ambiguity negatively affects the retention of volunteers, but research supporting this finding has included adult participants only (Merrel, 2000; Ross, Greenfield, & Bennet, 1999), which presents a major gap in the literature on youth volunteers. In a follow-up study of dropout rates of AIDS volunteers in Houston, Texas, dropout due to burnout was highly related to four stressors including: client problems, role ambiguity, emotional overload, and organizational factors (Ross et al, 1999). High dropout rates of volunteers also resulted in the reduced quality of AIDS care (Ross et al., 1999).

Role ambiguity can also present challenges with recruitment. In a study of volunteers in “well woman” clinics, Merrel (2000) recognized that “volunteers within formal organizations are likely to experience role ambiguity when roles and responsibilities are rarely clearly explained and delineated.” According to (Merrel, 2000), staff must come to expect that role ambiguity is a challenge faced by many volunteers in order to help them become more clear about their roles.

Merrel (2000) suggests some methods for reducing ambiguity:

- 1) “Organizations need to make explicit their motives and purpose of involving volunteers in service provision.”
- 2) Organizations need to “form written guidelines outlining the role and scope of the volunteer’s role.” This recommendation is not unlike the recommendation from the Calgary Immigrant Aid Society (2005) that thorough job design for youth volunteers improves role clarity. A clear and purposeful volunteer position description is thus required.
- 3) Organizations need to develop and deliver thorough training programs for volunteers which “enables volunteers and paid workers to have a clearer understanding of the core components of each-other’s roles and the opportunity for volunteers to demonstrate their talents.”
- 4) Individuals should be appointed who link the bureaucracy of the organization with the associational world of the volunteer.” It was recommended that this individual be a volunteer coordinator (p. 100).

Not only can effective job design help reduce significant barriers to engagement (The Calgary Immigrant Aid Society, 2005), it can also help clarify the volunteer role, thereby reducing role ambiguity. Role ambiguity consists of: a) a volunteer being unclear about their tasks and b) a volunteer being unclear about all of the potential outcomes of their work (Merrel, 2000; Fried et al., 2008). Job Design Theory is a model linking employees by skills and values to the work that they do within the organization (Bowen et al., 2001). This theory indicates that the work must be linked with the right volunteers. In this way the organization will achieve its mission, mandate, and vision (Bowen et al., 2001).

As part of the Canada Volunteerism Initiative, Volunteer Canada proposed a model of Job Design Theory for organizations to use when developing positions for their volunteers (Bowen et al., 2001), as follows:

“Understanding and Implementing Job Design

1. Review the mandate or mission of the organization
2. Look at how various functions/components/tasks are carried out to achieve the mission/mandate (task analysis, task identity, task significance)
3. Consider current and potential volunteers, and establish the qualities that will be needed to perform the various components or tasks, as defined (skill analysis, skill variety, autonomy)
4. Identify and describe discrete volunteer assignments (job descriptions)
5. Match volunteers to jobs or assignments” (Bowen et al., 2001, p. 15).

The application of Job Design in the development of volunteer positions for youth volunteers is an important place for organizations to start in their plans to reduce ambiguity (Fried et al., 2008). Doing so will help make the tasks and outcomes of a volunteer's position more clear and improve the quality of service carried out by the volunteer (Bowen et al., 2001; The Calgary Immigrant Aid Society, 2005). The more customized a volunteer position is to the skills and interests of the volunteer, the more clear the volunteer will be about their roles and responsibilities because they are familiar with them. The volunteer will also be more clear about the outcomes of their work because their position is tailored to accomplish the mission of the organization. Their confidence in themselves in their role will also be greater, as will their confidence that their work will create meaningful outcomes for their organization and the clients that they serve.

Stoneman (2002) cautions organizations not to reduce activities involving youth leadership:

“The most typical way that managers have encouraged youth involvement is by forming committees that are charged with planning entertainment for other youth, or committees that determine penalties for other youth that have broken various rules. These are marginal activities that support the adults but do not encroach on their territory of control. Very rarely does one find organizations in which young people are included in hiring staff, setting budgets, raising the funds, and setting policies that adult staff must follow” (Stoneman, 2002, p. 222).

Gaps in the Literature

While some international volunteer resource centres distinguish between direct and indirect services (National Volunteer & Philanthropy Centre, 2008; Volunteer Mid-South, 2009), few volunteer organizations in Canada classify these two types of volunteering. Inquiry into the strengths and challenges of indirect services in Canada is therefore warranted.

In addition, there has been very little research related to the role of motivation, leadership and barriers to engagement in youth volunteering, especially to indirect forms of service (Tessier et al., 2006; National Volunteer & Philanthropy Centre, 2008; Haski-Leventhal et al., 2007).

What is also missing from all research about youth volunteerism is a specific focus on role ambiguity (Fried et al., 2008). Role ambiguity is important to investigate as a barrier to participation in indirect service. The importance of applying Job Design Theory to reduce role ambiguity as emphasized by Volunteer Canada (Bowen et al., 2001) warrants further investigation of this topic in the current study.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

Purpose

The purpose of this research was to identify successes, challenges, and improvements to indirect volunteering for youth. It is hoped that this research shall benefit youth volunteers, staff, and clients of indirect services. The research included an investigation of issues related to: motivation, leadership, barriers to engagement, and role ambiguity since there are major gaps in the literature related to youth who are providing indirect volunteer services (Tessier et al., 2006; Stoneman, 2002; The Calgary Immigrant Aid Society, 2005; Fried et al., 2008).

I investigated these issues by conducting semi-structured, in-depth interviews (Alston & Bowles, 2003, p. 116-117, 120), with youth who were indirect volunteers for one of five organizations recruited in the Greater Toronto Area. Some outcomes that I anticipated were that youth volunteers would identify motivations to volunteer and leadership opportunities that were unique to indirect volunteering as well as barriers to engagement and role ambiguity (Tessier et al., 2006; Stoneman, 2002; The Calgary Immigrant Aid Society, 2005; Fried et al., 2008). At the same time I felt that new ideas regarding strengths and challenges faced by youth that are specific to indirect volunteering would emerge from the interview responses (Kelliher, 2005).

My Research Questions Included:

- 1) What strengths and challenges affect youth volunteers who provide indirect forms of service?
- 2) What motivations, barriers to engagement, and opportunities for leadership affect youth volunteers who participate in indirect forms of service?
- 3) How does role ambiguity impact indirect forms of service?

Paradigm and Methodological Framework

Knowledge for this study was shaped by multiple perspectives of participants in their natural social contexts (Kelliher, 2005). The epistemological paradigm selected was therefore interpretivism (Kelliher, 2005). Researchers focusing on improving the engagement of youth volunteers value the opinions and expressions of youth (Haski-Leventhal et al., 2007).

Interpretive researchers want to learn what is meaningful to people by “learning the way participants ascribe meaning to their separate realities and by how they perceive cause and effect” (Kelliher, 2005). The pursuit of knowledge from an interpretivist paradigm requires acknowledgement that there can be no objective way of obtaining truth, only subjective interpretations from the realities of all within a shared social context (Kelliher, 2005; Ferguson, 1993). The socially constructed realities (Kelliher, 2005) were reflected in this research as experiences shared by the youth volunteers that come from their relationships with each other, their peers, and the clients and communities they serve. Since I highly value the social construction of meaning (Ferguson, 1993) and I have a long professional interest in working with youth volunteers, this research was best guided by an interpretive process.

One of my own values which stems from my professional experience with youth who volunteer indirectly is that youth face successes and challenges that are unique to this type of volunteering. It is therefore my belief that the motivations, barriers to engagement, and opportunities for leadership (Tessier et al., 2006; Stoneman, 2002; The Calgary Immigrant Aid Society, 2005) that come with indirect forms of service such as awareness raising and fundraising (National Volunteer & Philanthropy Centre, 2008) would make for a unique social reality (Kelliher, 2005) worth investigating.

Methodological Framework

The theoretical framework that informs the study is grounded theory (Strauss & Corbin, 1996, p. 6). Consistent with the interpretivist paradigm, grounded theory values the phenomena that meanings cannot be easily classified or “taken for granted” (Strauss & Corbin, 1996, p. 6). This means that subjective realities from participants were the focus in the data collection process. The purpose for inquiry must also be to generate information where little information on a topic is already known, or to provide a “fresh slant” on existing knowledge (Goulding, 1998). Since much is already known in both professional and academic literature about youth volunteerism, this research provides a “fresh slant” (Goulding, 1998) by focusing on youth providing indirect services, investigating the previously ignored topic of role ambiguity, and exploring emerging themes that have not appeared in the research (Fried et al., 2008).

Since knowledge of this “fresh slant” (Goulding, 1998) came both from my professional experiences with youth volunteers, and an extensive literature review on the subject, it is important to distinguish how the literature will be used from a grounded theory approach in order to reconcile the difference between knowledge obtained from previous studies on the subject and the subjective realities shared by the participants (Mills, Bonner, & Francis; 2006). While traditional approaches to grounded theory omit a review of the literature before data collection so as to not contaminate the data collection process by the influence of the literature, the current study treated literature as it is used by evolved grounded theorists (Mills et al., 2006). Evolved grounded theorists “interweave the literature throughout the entire research process so as to have another voice contributing to the researcher’s theoretical construction” (Mills et al., 2006). This means that for the current study, literature previously researched informed the development of the methodology as did my own interest in youth volunteerism.

I was flexible and open to criticism from interview participants and sensitive to their words and actions (Strauss & Corbin, 1996, p. 7) by valuing, documenting, and including all responses and recommendations in the analysis process and reporting of results. I also used abstract and critical thinking during the analysis of results (Strauss & Corbin, 1996, p. 7) by allowing the data to be interpreted in a manner that best captured the emerging themes about strengths and challenges within indirect forms of youth volunteer services as they were expressed by the interview participants from their own shared social realities (Kelliher, 2005).

Methods

I was motivated to choose qualitative methodology because I identified myself in the characteristics of a qualitative researcher that are described by Strauss & Corbin (1996, p. 6). First, according to Strauss & Corbin (1996, p. 6), qualitative researchers are people who are deeply engrossed in their work. As a researcher who was motivated by my belief that ambiguous roles, responsibilities, and outcomes of indirect volunteering discourages youth and subsequently negatively affects the organizations they volunteer for, it became important to me to investigate this phenomena from the subjective experiences of youth volunteers (Kelliher, 2005).

Qualitative research should also give back to both academic and nonacademic audiences (Strauss & Corbin, 1996, p. 6). Not only does the research provide for the field of social work an example of how an interpretivist process yields results that are instructed by relational experiences (Kelliher, 2005) of all of those affected by substantial problems in the volunteer sector, it addresses for the volunteer sector recurring problems and instructs better solutions that emerge from the responses of diverse populations of indirect service youth volunteers.

The qualitative research strategy required semi-structured, in-depth interviews from a grounded theory approach (Alston & Bowles, 2003, p. 116-117, 120; Strauss & Corbin, 1996, p.

7). Ten interviews were undertaken by myself with youth volunteers providing indirect forms of service in the Greater Toronto Area. The interviews followed a semi-structured, in-depth process (Alston & Bowles, 2003, p. 116-117, 120). The process began semi-structured (Alston & Bowles, 2006, p. 116-117) because I went into each interview with questions designed to obtain feedback about motivation, barriers to engagement, opportunities for leadership (Tessier et al., 2006; Stoneman, 2002; The Calgary Immigrant Aid Society, 2005), and role ambiguity (Fried et al., 2008), but I also allowed participant responses to influence the flow, tone, and addition or removal of questions throughout. Given my own experience as a former youth volunteer and program coordinator for youth volunteers my role as the researcher was to use my own beliefs which come from my own subjective reality (Kelliher, 2005) to form the main research questions along with the prepared interview questions.

The sampling strategy used was purposive sampling (Alston & Bowles, 2003, p. 90). Since I am familiar with and have professional relationships with the work of the agencies providing indirect forms of volunteer services with youth volunteers, and since the amount of time for data collection was limited, I used purposive sampling (Alston & Bowles, 2003, p. 90).

During the interviews, I audio-taped responses which were later transcribed into text. Thorough notes were also taken during the interviews and transcribed after a preliminary analysis of the data. From the transcribed text, I conceptualized emerging phenomena for each question asked and classified text into emerging themes from the phenomena in a process known as abstracting (Kelliher, 2005). As part of the abstracting process, phrases in participant responses that produced similar themes were classified into the same categories (Kelliher, 2005). Categories were named to reflect the unique and true responses of the participants as closely as possible so as to shed light on the subjective meanings shared by youth volunteers (Strauss &

Corbin, 1996, p. 103). This approach is the essence of the open coding process (Strauss & Corbin, 1996, p. 103). In order to best organize categories that became the emerging themes of the data, I practiced diagramming whereby I developed visual aids such as logic diagrams and flowcharts to not only observe all of the themes that emerged from the data, but to identify links between the themes as they relate to the subjective realities of participants (Kelliher, 2005; Mills et al., 2006).

Another important step in the abstracting process was to abstract “essences” which included all subjective knowledge of what was learned from studying phenomena emerging from themes in participant responses (Kelliher, 2005). This process required rigorous and intuitive reflection that required creativity (Kelliher, 2005). An important tool that aided this process was a “conditional/consequential matrix” (Mills et al., 2006). Using this matrix, I was able to identify interactions in the data and anticipate influencing conditions (Mills et al., 2006). This process was critical to the outcomes of the research. The conditional/consequential matrix aided the abstracting of essences which produced core themes that did reflect the original four topic areas in the literature: motivation, leadership, barriers to engagement and role ambiguity. This matrix produced additional analysis diagrams for two emerging core themes. The diagrams used for coding were used in Microsoft Excel. Another important tool to aid this process was a reflexive journal (Kelliher, 2005), which I kept throughout the recruitment, data collection, and data analysis process. I had to reflect on how my beliefs influenced the reporting of the results because I have strong beliefs about role ambiguity. I had to remain conscientious during the semi-structured, in-depth interview process (Alston & Bowles, 2003, p. 116-117) that I did not probe for responses skewed in favour of one outcome or another to ensure that the interpretive process (Kelliher, 2005) was followed by all involved. I also had to be conscientious of my

responsibility to clients (Ontario College of Social Workers and Social Service Workers, 2008, p. 11) when analyzing and reporting the results of the interviews.

Participant Recruitment

Eight to twelve participants were proposed to be interviewed, and to participate in a follow-up focus group. Participants were youth volunteers who performed some form of indirect service, mainly fundraising or awareness-raising. They ranged from 16-24 years of age and were required to understand how to read, speak, write, and comprehend English. Each participant belonged to one of the agencies contacted for recruitment. All participants were also from the Greater Toronto Area.

The organizations were contacted by me with letters of invitation, consent forms, and confidentiality agreements. The staff person directly contacted from each organization was requested to recruit participants via verbal invitation. The same staff person also collected consent forms and confidentiality agreements from participants and returned them to me via scanned attachments in email for telephone interviews, or in-person for in-person interviews.

Since the proposed number of participants to be interviewed was between eight and twelve, two to three participants were requested to be selected by the staff contact from each agency. Over a three month time period, two volunteer participants were interviewed at each of four different agencies. The four different agencies varied in the type and scope of indirect service for the youth volunteers.

Overall, seven agencies were initially contacted for participant recruitment. The first round of participant recruitment for the first eight volunteers interviewed from four agencies took place over eight months. Of the three agencies that were not able to provide participants; one agency had to withdraw due to an inability to provide secluded space for participants to be

interviewed, and another two were dropped by myself due to a prolonged delay from staff and volunteers in the agency to participate. These agencies required conditions that produced barriers to recruitment. The agency that failed to provide a secluded space for participants was under-resourced and only had one small community room for youth group meetings two hours per week. Since this agency was unable to provide a secluded space for participant interviews, they had to be dropped because I would not be able to ensure confidentiality of responses with youth interviewing in front of their youth group peers. The prolonged delay from staff and volunteers from the other two agencies was the result of a number of different factors: including lack of commitment from youth volunteers, lack of priority of my research over other staff duties, and staff contacts transferring responsibility for recruitment to other staff. These two organizations behaved as “gatekeepers,” throwing organizational obstacles in my way. I suspect that these two organizations agreed to participate in the research as a gesture of appreciation towards our prior relationships as professionals in the field but ultimately provided the least commitment possible due to lack of priority and interest.

Since most participants interviewed identified transportation as a barrier to participation in volunteer activities, and since the participants who were interviewed volunteered and lived in neighbourhoods in Toronto that were geographically very distant from each-other, the proposed follow-up focus group was cancelled. I believed I would have an insufficient number of participants able to travel to meet at any location for a focus group.

Four months were needed to recruit an additional two participants due to limited resources from service agencies. Two staff contacts from two initial participating agencies were contacted for more participants. Unfortunately, there were unforeseen challenges that each organization claimed they were struggling with that presented a continued barrier to recruitment.

Since these two organizations were also transferring the commitment of staff contacts and struggling with youth volunteer turnout, they resorted to the same “gatekeeper” behavior as described earlier. A fifth agency was therefore contacted.

Overall, I experienced significant barriers to recruiting participants which limited the number of participants recruited from each agency to the minimum two that were required. Not only did the agencies identify being under resourced as a barrier to recruiting participants, but the barriers to participation for youth in their own volunteer activities presented as barriers to participation in the interviews as well. These barriers included work and school obligations, as some participants had to re-schedule interviews with me, transportation barriers, as some youth had to conduct their interviews over the phone with me, and language barriers, as all participants were required to have a strong grasp of the English language. As noted earlier, some agencies also acted as “gatekeepers” between myself and participants sometimes due to resource challenges, and other times, it seemed apparent that the reasons for doing this were political.

It must also be noted that there was no funding for this thesis which presented another barrier to participation. Youth volunteers had little incentive to participate beyond contributing to important research and at the discretion of their agency, receiving additional volunteer hours on their participation record. Had there been funding for this thesis, youth would have received incentives such as reimbursement for transportation to interview locations, refreshments, and additional remuneration. With these incentives, it is almost certain that the participant pool would have been considerably larger.

Participating Agencies and the Youth Volunteers

The participating agencies were diverse in the issues addressed by youth volunteers. The youth volunteers themselves were also diverse in race and gender. One agency involved youth

volunteers in raising awareness about anti-racism with diverse populations of youth in the Greater Toronto Area. This was a by-youth-for-youth organization, meaning that the organization was founded and is run by youth volunteers who focus their services on the betterment of other youth as clients. The two volunteers who were interviewed from this agency were both female and were of Latin-American descent. They were also university students in the final year of their undergraduate programs. These volunteers were each responsible for researching, preparing, and delivering events such as presentations, workshops, conferences, and rallies that teachers and other diverse youth in the Greater Toronto Area could participate in. The themes for each of these events ranged from race and identity, to multiculturalism, to racism, to social justice. One of the largest events that the two participants from this organization were responsible for was an annual conference in the City of Toronto run by their organization for high school youth. From their description of their work in their interviews, it seemed that the goal of their work was to reduce racism experienced by marginalized youth in the Greater Toronto Area by educating peers and teachers who could influence as many youth as possible not to discriminate against marginalized youth, thereby indirectly serving their marginalized youth clients by involving peers and teachers as catalysts for change.

The second agency involved youth volunteers in raising awareness about youth rights, youth justice, and the law in their Toronto neighbourhood. Although staffed by adults, this was another by-youth for youth organization whereby volunteers who were seen as leaders were promoted by staff to lead the youth volunteer group's activities. The two participants who were interviewed from this organization were each male and were of African-Canadian descent. Both were senior students in high school. They lived and volunteered through their organization in a low-income predominantly African-Canadian neighbourhood in Toronto. The two volunteers

interviewed from this agency were engaged in most of the organization's awareness-raising activities, which included hosting rallies and motivating youth to contribute to an artistic youth-justice themed zine operated by the organization. Youth volunteers at the organization were actively engaged in creating, printing and disseminating the zine along with other artwork and awareness-raising mediums to youth in local schools and satellite locations of the organization around the City of Toronto. Through these activities, youth at this organization disseminated knowledge about youth rights and the law through a chain of marginalized youth spreading awareness with empowering art. By doing so, they empowered marginalized youth to legally and proactively stand up for their rights when profiled by police, which one of the two participants had directly experienced before.

The third agency involved youth volunteers in raising awareness and fundraising for multiple community initiatives and organizations. Youth participants were part of the funding body's youth committee. They were responsible for raising awareness about programs supported by the organization. They were also responsible for planning and delivering creative fundraisers to indirectly support clients by funding partner agencies and programs in the greater Toronto Area. One of these fundraisers included a CN Tower climb, where they recruited peers to participate in a sponsored fundraiser where all participants were required to climb the stairs of the CN Tower to raise funds that would support programs in their partner organizations. Both participants from this agency were female and were interviewed over the phone. They were both senior high school students. While the racial background of one was uncertain, the other self-identified as being a first Generation Canadian of Eastern-Asian descent.

The fourth agency involved youth in their own university campus in raising awareness about the conflict in Darfur and also involved them in fundraising to help civilians affected by

the conflict. These volunteers were striving to indirectly better the lives of civilians affected by conflict in Darfur by rallying youth volunteers and peers in their university community to appeal to the Federal Government to take action against atrocities in Darfur via a 1-800 hotline linked to MPP offices that was setup by the organization. They also raised awareness in their university community about the conflict by delivering presentations to peers. These youth were engaged in some fundraising to provide aid to civilians in Darfur. The two participants who were interviewed were female and were also responsible for recruiting new youth volunteers to their university group. Both participants were in the final year of their undergraduate programs. One of the participants was interviewed in-person and was of Euro-Canadian descent. The other participant was interviewed over the phone. Her ethnic background could not be determined.

The last organization was a volunteer association in Toronto, described by one of the participants from this organization as a volunteer hub, advertising volunteer opportunities posted by several organizations all over the city of Toronto. One of the participants was a male of Eastern-Asian descent who was responsible for coordinating and advertising a volunteerism week to high schools. This participant was in the middle of his undergraduate program. As part of his role, he was required to network with youth volunteer groups. This participant was indirectly supporting an inexhaustible number of clients by networking with stakeholders offering volunteer opportunities for youth. He was raising awareness about volunteer opportunities for youth and supports available for organizations in Toronto through his association. The other participant was indirectly helping cancer patients by volunteering for a project for a cancer research organization that was supported by the volunteer hub. The project required her to recruit youth from her school to volunteer at the hub to make ribbons that would be used as fundraising tools by the cancer research organization to benefit cancer patients. This

participant was involved in many episodic volunteer opportunities through the volunteer hub and her own school, and also shared a few long-term direct service roles that she currently held. She was also interviewed in person, was a junior high school student, and was of Euro-Canadian decent.

Despite the positions of racial and socioeconomic disadvantage that some of the participants came from, all were in positions of leadership in their volunteer roles. These volunteers were high-achievers in their volunteer roles and were optimistic about the benefits that their leadership positions as indirect volunteers would have for their future careers.

Free and Informed Consent

Free and informed consent was offered within the letter of invitation and consent form. Both the letter of invitation and consent forms are in the attached appendices and include the purpose of the study, the research questions being asked, and a description of the intended interview participants. Participants were also made aware of their right to decline their participation.

Although youth volunteers include all volunteers between the ages of 15 and 24 (Volunteer Canada, 2008), only volunteers 16 years of age and older were recruited to participate in the interviews in order to omit the requirement of parental consent.

Risks

There were no physical risks, and no other risks of participation other than those that participants would encounter in their everyday lives. The social, psychological, and emotional risks for participants in each of the interviews were minor. Participants were informed that confidential information shared in the interview sessions was to stay within the interviews.

Confidentiality of all participants was respected. The participants were provided the opportunity to accept or decline being identified in the research.

The benefits for participants were that they would have an opportunity to contribute to knowledge about youth volunteerism that was unknown about indirect services. Strengths and challenges identified by interview participants were explained in the results. The results will inform organizations with volunteers who provide indirect services how to better maintain or improve the processes of recruiting and engaging volunteers, thereby improving volunteer and client satisfaction long term.

The benefits of participation outweighed the risks, because this research aimed to improve the way that volunteer work is conducted in organizations providing indirect services. Any challenges identified by participants to carrying out their volunteer work were probed for suggestions to improve the way that they work with youth involved in indirect services. No deception or concealment was necessary to obtain information from participants, nor was it used.

Privacy and Confidentiality

A confidentiality agreement was provided with the letter of invitation and consent form for participants. Since no participant names were used, since participants had the option to request that quotations with identifying information not be published, and since all other interview responses were not directly quoted, participants remained anonymous.

The confidentiality agreement informed participants that their identity would only be known by me. They were informed that no one would be identified in the publication of the research, or anywhere else after the interview sessions. They were required to acknowledge that they were not to discuss any information shared during the interview sessions once the

interviews were complete. Participants were made aware that all other feedback shared during the interviews would be coded into broad themes that answered the research questions and introduced new ones for further research. They were informed that these broad themes would in no way identify any individual research participants.

Data was obtained during the interview sessions via tape recorder and note taking. I was the only person to keep the data during analysis, and was the only person to view and handle the data, thereby ensuring that confidentiality was maintained. Analysis took four months. During the write up of results, data was kept locked in my office at all times. Raw data was disposed of upon writing up the results. Direct transcriptions of the recordings were deleted and shredded, and the audio recordings were cleared.

Compensation of Participants

Participants were not provided any form of financial compensation for their participation. I thanked all volunteer participants in the acknowledgement section of the research, but did not include participant names in the acknowledgement section in order to protect their confidentiality. Youth volunteers who participated may have been compensated with volunteer hours for the time they donated with their participation, but the awarding of volunteer hours would have been upon the action and discretion of their volunteer organization.

There were no known conflicts of interest as noted in the Wilfrid Laurier University Guidelines for Ethical Research.

Feedback to Participants

Participants were debriefed after their participation. The debriefing process entailed open feedback from myself and also included an opportunity for participants to share any last questions or comments off the record. A final report, which is the research thesis, will be

provided to each of the participating organizations. Other agencies and organizations may receive a copy of the findings upon request. The most likely places where the research will be presented are conferences, workshops, and in print as a thesis.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

Youth volunteers were interviewed directly about four topics common to the literature about youth volunteers that emerged from the Canada Volunteerism Initiative (Volunteer Canada, 2008). These three topics include 1) the motivation of youth to volunteer (Tessier et al., 2006), 2) opportunities for leadership that are available to youth volunteers (Stoneman, 2002), 3) barriers to engagement that keep youth from volunteering to their fullest capacity (The Calgary Immigrant Aid Society, 2005), and 4) role ambiguity (Fried et al., 2008). As such, these four topics emerged as core themes during analysis of the data.

Two additional core themes emerged during data analysis that were abstracted from the original descriptive map (see Table 5). These themes include: 5) the emergence of empowerment and power imbalances in youth volunteer roles, and 6) the meaning that youth ascribe to their volunteer experiences. The fifth theme highlights how the types of activities and outcomes associated with indirect volunteering are so complex and involve so many actors that this type of volunteering involves great shifts of power and has the potential to empower youth volunteers and the communities they serve. This type of volunteering can also be disempowering for youth however because of hierarchies in the organizations they volunteer for. The sixth theme captures how meaningful and important youth find volunteering to be, and captures some of the individual values they ascribe to volunteering including changing the world by combating the cause that interests them, empowering their communities and other youth, growing with their volunteer experiences, and making the volunteer experience fun for their clients, their stakeholders, and themselves. The six main themes can be found in Table 4.

Table 4. Core Themes and Sub-themes from Interviews with Youth Volunteers

Main Themes	Sub-Themes
1. Motivations of Youth to Choose and Maintain Participation in Indirect Forms of Service	Upward Mobility Community Membership Interested in Issue Interested in Organization Desire to Make Change Education Convenient and Responsive
2. Origins of Leadership Opportunities for Youth Volunteers who Participate in Indirect Forms of Service	Desire for Upward Mobility Personal Attributes for Leadership Intrinsic Motivation to Be a Leader Leadership Opportunities That Are Connected to Existing Role or Title Undertaking Public Education Teamwork Promotes Leadership
3. Barriers to Engagement of Youth Volunteers in Indirect Forms of Service	Presence or Lack of Inclusive Practices Lack of Resources Power Imbalances Complexity of the Work Difficulty Connecting with Potential Volunteers, Clients, and the Community Competition with Other Organizations and Clubs A Poor Location and Lack of Space Age Discrimination Prerequisites
4. Perceived Ambiguity of Volunteer Roles Developed for Indirect Forms of Service	Lack of Clarity About the Volunteer's Role and Their Work Lack of Clarity About the Organization Creating Clarity About Their Role Creating Clarity About the Organization Understanding the Clients Achieving Clarity by Perspective Taking Describing the Indirect Service Role Challenges of Role Ambiguity
5. The Emergence of Empowerment and Power Imbalances in Youth Volunteer Roles	Empowerment of Selves Empowerment of the Service Community and Clients Lack of Empowerment in Individuals Lack of Power in Community Power Imbalances
6. The Meaning that Youth Ascribe to Their Volunteer Experiences	Importance of Volunteering to Youth Volunteer Participants Importance of Volunteering to the Community and Clients Youth Volunteering for the Wrong Reasons Exploitation of Youth Volunteers Importance of Volunteering Related to a Specific Issue Emerging Gems of Volunteering

1) MOTIVATIONS OF YOUTH TO CHOOSE AND MAINTAIN PARTICIPATION IN INDIRECT FORMS OF SERVICE

There were seven reasons why youth were motivated to undertake indirect volunteer activities. The reasons for their motivation include: upward mobility, community membership, interest in the issue that the service addressed, interest in the organization, desire to make change, and convenience.

Upward Mobility

Some of the youth volunteered for their indirect service organization because of the opportunities for upward mobility that were available. One youth explained that the more immersed they became in the organization, the more experience they gained and the more work they wanted to take on. Another volunteer was impressed with their organization's dedication to the career development of youth volunteers. This dedication was demonstrated in the offering of resume workshops and housing assistance to ensure that the volunteer work of their at-risk youth volunteers (whom are marginalized due to living and volunteering in a low-income Toronto neighbourhood) would benefit their career development.

[Marcus] "Everyone works and helps out each other and we had such good relationships with youth and workers, it's like family you know. At [organization name] they help with so many things like, jobs, resume, housing, the people here, they help, that's dedication right?"

Some volunteers were motivated to choose and volunteer for a specific organization in hopes of obtaining roles with greater responsibility in the future.

Community Membership

Many of the youth volunteers that were interviewed identified a desire for community membership as a motivation to volunteer. The youth volunteers saw volunteering in indirect

forms of service as a means to strengthen their membership with their volunteer groups and neighbourhoods. In particular, they saw their volunteer work as a vehicle to empower their community and to empower themselves within their communities:

[I] So what are the most important issues or concerns to you as a volunteer?

[Rose] “Umm, well, one of the important things in terms of values in community service, is being part of a community, sometimes in my own community, [named Toronto suburb], since I lived there, I want to be a part of it, to improve it, empower it, be active in my own area.”

Other volunteers were motivated to volunteer because they wanted to increase their involvement on campus by participating in a volunteer club:

[Bonnie] “...I thought it would be nice to be involved on campus, it's an important experience in university. I've tried to involve myself with a lot of different clubs so, yeah this is just, this is one of them, that has more meaning for me than the other ones.”

Another participant valued networking with other organizations. This volunteer felt that networking and connecting with other organizations was integral to strengthening community networks of youth volunteers.

[Chris] “Well I mean I've been involved with a lot of organizations and really a lot of networking as well so, after I joined this [name of initiative] um, [organization] coordinates it as well so, that's what brought me there um, I actually knew about [organization] before hand with this [name of initiative]. I helped them organize a volunteer fair back in [name of suburb] so I kind of knew them before hand so it's really about networking um, get to know organizations get to know more people um, NPOs and that's how you can make connections and everything so that's how I found my way to [organization].”

Although many youth are motivated to participate in indirect services to attain membership in a community, one volunteer identified that some youth do so only for because they want to boost their egos. One participant felt that some volunteers want recognition from their communities and volunteer organizations and have no interest in the empowerment of the communities they serve.

Interest in the Issue Being Addressed by the Indirect Service

Participants were interested in the social issue that was being addressed by the indirect services where they volunteered. Causes or issues included teen poverty, youth crime, youth justice and the law, racism, sexism, genocide, medical & health science, teaching, and mental health.

One participant's experience with police profiling fueled his interest in volunteering in his community to do something about youth justice and the law. His passion for the issue turned into a means for building rapport with other staff and volunteers at his organization. [I] *"What about issues, things that motivate you to do what you do?"*

[Marcus] *"What motivated me to volunteer and to go into this field? Basically just seeing what's going on in a lot of communities, going into situations that I see youth going through around here, going through everyday life motivated me to say I wanted to change things the way I see them."*

[I] *"And what kind of things were you seeing?"*

[Marcus] *"Police hassling youth, crime, just a whole bunch of stuff. Actually, me just being, I've been harassed by police a lot of times, just going through that situation and knowing that's what's going on, there's been times that's happened just coming from school, they stop me and ask questions, what's my name and stuff, without doing anything."*

[I] *"And um...what kind of change would you like to see in the community?"*

[Marcus] *"First off, [organization] does a lot of change right now, music studio, dance studio, those type of small stuff, starting programs, feeling like I have a place to come, that's the kind of stuff that works...a lot of problems happen because of lack of place, you know? Lack of opportunity, lack of space or, give places for recreation centres in other areas and stuff like that."*

Another participant described a tipping point that turned her attention to homelessness in her own community after learning about the issue in the classroom.

[Iris] *"Well, I'm currently taking a world issues class and, we've been doing a topic on homelessness and the factors that lead into it and I guess before I was really ignorant like, I had my own preconceived notions of what causes it and, I guess after educating myself and realizing how complex the issue is and how problematic it is in Toronto I guess it's just an issue that I really want to talk about especially like, child poverty, um,*

and teen poverty, people only think that it exists in like, low developed countries, but I think it can exist in any city like Toronto and, even cities you don't even think it would exist like, sometimes we really turn a blind eye to it, but, it's something that I really want to see our organization, especially [organization] deal with, umm, I've been given a fact sheet um, basically what, specific amounts of money can do for youth programs, yeah I guess, [organization] we really just try to develop social programs and help community centres and, helping so...I respect that."

Interest in the Organization

Many participants were motivated to volunteer for a specific organization due to a particular interest they held in that organization. This interest stemmed from the perceived capacity of the organization to help the community, the volunteer's excitement about the volunteer programming offered, the attractiveness of the organization's advertisements on television, a personal desire to support the organization, and the strong reputation that some of the organizations had in the community.

One youth was inspired to volunteer for her organization of choice because she was impressed with the organization's work:

[Kendra] "I see how [organization] develops social programs and helps the needy."

This participant was impressed with her organization's work because she could see the benefit of the organization's work in the community.

Another participant's faith in the work of his organization was affirmed by positive feedback from the community – feedback that made him feel confident that the community valued his organization's work.

[I] "Has there ever been, I'm looking for your idea of how meaningful you think the work is. Have you ever received a compliment that sticks out in your mind?"

[Marcus] "That's something we hear every day. People come in say "that's good, I see what you're doing in the community.""

Additionally, another participant described her faith in her organization's work becoming stronger the more she volunteered for her organization:

[Iris] "Once I researched and learned more about what exactly the organization does, and, who it helps what number of agencies um, we provide services and funding for um, I really felt connected to the organization and um, I really felt like this is, an organization I want to be supporting."

This same participant was initially drawn to volunteer for her organization by an advertisement on television, suggesting that perhaps a high caliber advertisement like a television commercial can make an organization's work attractive to youth volunteers:

[Iris] "I guess a really big turning point um, what really got me excited about the program, I admit, I didn't really know much about the organization but, I saw commercials about [organization], and it was such a big thing."

As demonstrated by this volunteer's comment, television advertisements are an attractive and effective way to draw youth volunteers to an organization. Similarly, many participants expressed frustration over the lack of available advertising at their organizations of choice, making it difficult for them to initially find an organization that would suit their volunteer interests, and also difficult to recruit other youth volunteers.

Desire to Make Change

Another reason why youth participated in indirect services is because they wanted to affect change on a grand scale. Strengths that helped youth facilitate this desire seem to be intrinsic in nature and included a desire to take action on a specific issue, and a desire to rally and motivate other youth in an activist capacity.

[Marcus] "What motivated me to volunteer and to go into this field? Basically just seeing what's going on in a lot of communities, going into situations that I see youth going through around here, going through everyday life motivated me to say I wanted to change things the way I see them."

[Bonnie] "...we do aim for students because in a lot of cases that's where passion begins you know, in your college days, you know, you become an activist or something and

that's where it starts so you know um, I guess we want to target that demographic but also expand to other groups..."

Some participants stressed that channeling the energy that youth have to make change by recruiting them to affect change in their communities through awareness raising helps them reach their goals.

Education

Youth were also motivated to participate in indirect services for the purpose of education.

One youth wanted to be educated about an issue, and also wanted to educate their peers and others in the community about the work she was doing with her organization:

[Iris] "Well, my fellow peers are not in the cabinet so, usually I tell my friends who are not in the cabinet they ask me about [organization], what I do, so I guess lately I've been asked that because, as the chair I was told to light the big torch, I just like telling everyone that! And, so yeah I was chosen for that great position and, people were asking me whoa how did you get that and I basically told them oh, because I held [organization's] youth council, that's what I call it so, I feel like I can, sometimes they ask me what's it about and what do you do and, I guess I give them a run down..."

Education therefore seems to be a very important component of indirect service work that motivates youth to volunteer in indirect services. According to this participant, youth are motivated to become involved in indirect service work after they are educated about an issue and want to volunteer to do something about it, and because they want to educate others so that others will be motivated to do the same.

Convenient and Responsive

There were aspects of volunteering which were convenient and responsive. These aspects kept youth motivated to continue to volunteer in their current roles. Youth expressed that volunteer opportunities were more convenient and responsive for them if their peers were involved, if the location of the volunteer activities was attractive, if they liked the peers that they

got to know in the program, if there was rapport building, and if the work was fun and empowered youth.

[Bonnie] "... We do work as a group but there's also a lot of independence sometimes uh, a very go with the flow sort of thing uh because we are so small I think....because we don't have to worry about so many deadlines and delegating to so many people um like [other organization] does for example like they have all these people to take care of, for us it's like a little family I guess and when we do see each other as often as we can it's really fun, and we all know each other pretty well, we all share ideas so, I guess it's not so bad to have such a small group and again I, like I said um, there's a lot of room for independence..."

There were however challenges that made volunteering less convenient. These included poor location of the organization, language barriers and taking the first step - since one of the participants felt that motivating youth to start volunteering in a program is the most challenging part about motivating youth to volunteer.

[Chris] "The location [of organization], is not central enough, so transportation is an issue. Also, although Toronto is diverse, there are language barriers. Our meetings are more central, so there is language assistance where possible. Also, getting started is a barrier, it's hard to get youth to take initiative."

2) ORIGINS OF LEADERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUTH VOLUNTEERS WHO PARTICIPATE IN INDIRECT FORMS OF SERVICE

Leadership opportunities for youth volunteers was an important part of this research. The participants were asked directly about leadership opportunities and discussed them at various points throughout the semi-structured, in-depth interviews. The sub-themes that emerged related to this core theme include the room and desire for upward mobility, personal attributes for leadership, intrinsic motivation to be a leader, leadership opportunities that are connected to the volunteer's title, public education and teamwork.

Desire for Upward Mobility

Upward mobility emerged as a sub-theme of leadership. Many participants described a desire to move up in the organization and described available opportunities for upward mobility.

Youth described the opportunities that they were looking for and those that were available to them. Youth were seeking opportunities for advancement into more challenging volunteer roles and future co-op placements and/or work roles. Other participants described opportunities to train other volunteers in their own role so they could advance within the organization.

[Marcus] “We have regular meetings at [organization] for updating, consistent volunteers are allowed to sit in on them, just put your input in because...youth input is important, we want volunteers because when we leave younger people will take our position, if you’re above me, teach me what you know, so you can teach the person below you and they can take your position.”

This participant felt that being encouraged to train other youth volunteers was important not only to help youth volunteers feel valued as leaders, but also to help reduce turnover. Supportive mentorship was a positive facilitator of retaining volunteers.

Another participant felt it was important to be treated and valued as an employee by staff and volunteers.

[Marcus] “Umm, volunteering like, whenever we had any events, they’ll put me on to help with the organizing of it, they never treated me as volunteer, they treated me as if I work here. They never treated me like you don’t get what I get. Everyone is on the same level. We train everyone because you never know. If I can’t do it it’s not like I can’t learn, right? You can do anything as long as you try hard and work hard, that’s how I look at it.”

This participant stressed that staff supported them and appreciated them as if they were on the same level as staff.

Some youth volunteers felt that they did not have as many opportunities for upward mobility when their student schedules prevented them from volunteering to their fullest potential.

One particularly interesting obstacle was one volunteer's feeling of being overshadowed by the president of her volunteer group. Despite this participant's feeling of being overshadowed by another youth volunteer with more authority, she was optimistic of opportunities to carve out her status as a leader in her organization in the future.

Personal Attributes for Leadership

The second sub-theme that emerged from the data was intrinsic personal attributes, and strengths as a leader. Essentially, some participants felt that there were natural qualities that some youth volunteers had that made them leaders in their organizations. These qualities included a passion for involving other people in the work of the organization, having a desire to become more engaged citizens and having a "knack for networking."

[Lauren] "...in certain situations there's going to be someone who is more fitted to do certain parts of it or have a knack for networking with other clubs so that should be their area."

Another participant attributed his desire to become involved in as many capacities as possible since he was passionate to be involved and demonstrated his leadership abilities.

[Chris] "I've been a math tutor, I've had leadership roles, been to charity events, a silent auction organizer, and have provided customer service assistance. I also sit on planning committees, organize volunteer recognition events, and am a leader & liaison between the ministry and volunteer centre about opportunities."

Intrinsic Motivation to be a Leader

Many participants felt some youth are intrinsically motivated to *pursue* leadership opportunities. The qualities of youth who are intrinsically motivated to become leaders include a personal desire to make a mark and make change, a desire to lend a hand in the community and being drawn to leadership positions.

When describing available leadership opportunities in the organization, one participant described being drawn to the organization for the following reason:

[Iris] "...I wanted to make my mark, make change."

This participant described being drawn to a leadership opportunity because volunteering would allow her to achieve change in a significant way and therefore leave behind a positive impression of herself.

Another participant was initially attracted to the idea of becoming a leader as a youth volunteer because she felt drawn to social issues and wanted to lend a hand in any way she could. Being a true leader seemed to come from reducing apathy about an issue and ensuring others are informed by the issue, even if only one other person is informed. This participant turned her affinity for the cause of the organization into a leadership role.

[Bonnie] "...I was drawn to it because I thought if I could lend a hand in any way I could, inform one other person, because there is a lot of apathy and ignorance out there like I said..."

An additional participant echoed the idea that she was drawn to leadership positions when choosing her volunteer roles and attributed this desire to admiring a model humanitarian leader in her community. She felt inspired that volunteering was the way for her to become a leader after doing a case study on Craig Kielburger from Free the Children.

[Iris] "I used to be drawn to leadership positions, but, a couple of months before I saw the posting, I did a case study on Craig Kielburger, from Free the Children, I was just really inspired, I know it sounds cliché but, he was just, he was such a genuine person he made such a big difference and, it really inspired me to take on this, what I thought was a, a big job."

These intrinsic motivations include the desire to motivate others in their communities, to rally around an issue, to reduce apathy, admiring a role model and seeing a role model in themselves.

Leadership Opportunities Connected to Existing Role or Title

The type of work or titles that are given to volunteers promotes their desire to be leaders and contributes to their volunteering. Some of these roles included: attending and chairing meetings, having professional discussions, organizing and coordinating meetings and events, being ambassadors, raising awareness, learning, being on a Board of Directors, being a Steering Committee leader, networking, encouraging youth to be in charge, advocacy, fundraising, work on a youth magazine, writing poetry, doing outreach, designing flyers, being open and welcoming, and teaching life-skills such as “cooking.”

Undertaking Public Education

One specific type of work that participants felt promoted a sense of leadership was being involved in some form of public education. For example, one of the participants felt that public education was a meaningful leadership activity because she received public recognition from her audience.

[I] “How about your role? How would your clients describe your volunteer role?”

[Chloe] “Well umm, on behalf of [organization], I got to do a workshop for a youth council and it was on creative activism, they sent me back a small letter, a thank you letter, they told me how they enjoyed it. Just to have the commentaries from them.”

This participant felt affirmed in her position as a leader because the thank you letter was a tangible token of appreciation for her public education efforts. On the other hand, youth can doubt their abilities to be successful leaders in a public education capacity when there is a lack of an opportunity to interact with the audience about what they are learning. As identified by the same participant:

[Chloe] “I want to combine education and um, awareness for students because I feel a lot of the stuff we learn today is from one perspective only so, just teaching children how to deconstruct Eurocentric perspectives.”

Seeing public education work to its fullest potential with tangible evidence of results such as thank you letters and opportunities to deconstruct the education in greater depth with participants therefore makes it a valued leadership opportunity for youth. Youth feel fulfilled with their leadership roles when they see tangible results in the form of feedback from the public. So long as there are opportunities to affirm that public education efforts are having an impact on audiences and motivating them to do something about the issues, public education is one of the most valued activities for youth volunteers.

Teamwork Promotes Leadership

Participants felt that it was important to recognize the leadership potential of each individual team member and the strengths of the team as a whole, nurture space for youth volunteers for information sharing with each other, valuing each volunteer as being central to the group and organization, and seeing true influence resting in the group.

When discussing leadership with one of the participants, she seemed to feel that being identified as a leader instills a false sense of power in youth, and emphasized that because of her beliefs she does not like to be in a position of power. Instead she emphasized the importance of developing leadership skills as a team where interactions and collaboration are key.

[I] "It seems like networking skills and your input is really important. What about other experiences?"

[Rose] "Umm, I don't know because I'm not the type of person who likes lots of power, so I kind of stick to those rules type of thing, I don't really know how to answer that question. When I worked for [organization], I was camp leader/coordinator and I still had the opportunity to develop relationships with the campers, see what they were liking, and what they were not liking as a program coordinator to do as activities with them. I had opportunities to create my own workshops. It has a lot to do with...I did one on healthy-equal relationships. I had an opportunity to create my own workshops from scratch. The mentorship part of leadership seems to be important."

Another participant believed that there was not any one person at her organization who was more of a leader than another; that each youth volunteer has their own valued skills that make them all leaders on equal level with each other.

[I] “What does leadership look like at [organization]?”

[Chloe] “A lot of the board members, because I’m coordinating [initiative], I can tell board members have amazing leadership capabilities, they always ask me, ‘do you need me to do anything?’ We also take part in workshops, giving workshops, a lot of people I’ve met are part of own leadership committees, youth council organizations, If they’re part of something, they create a group, they’re awesome, they all bring something together. Even talking to some of the other volunteers, they try to get their friends involved.”

Another participant shared similar views that everyone is equally involved as leaders in the organization.

[I] “Is there anything important about your role that I missed?”

[Lauren] “Ummm, within my specific role I would pretty much just keep it at making specific events to raise awareness so, advocacy is huge. But that’s my very specific role I mean fundraising I could you know, everyone kind of does everything so you know, like having a bake sale or something.”

Many participants saw value in the work of all youth volunteers in their organizations and felt that leadership should not be attributed to any one youth volunteer over another.

3) BARRIERS TO ENGAGEMENT OF YOUTH VOLUNTEERS IN INDIRECT FORMS OF SERVICE

Barriers to engagement is another topic prevalent in the youth volunteerism literature. This topic was explored by asking youth directly about barriers to engagement. The sub-themes that emerged included: the presence or lack of inclusive practices; lack of resources; power imbalances; complexity of the work; difficulty connecting with potential clients, volunteers and community groups; competition with other organizations and clubs; poor location of activities and lack of space; age discrimination; requiring prerequisite skills; and role ambiguity.

Presence or Lack of Inclusive Practices

Most youth volunteers championed the cultural and racial diversity of their youth volunteer groups.

[Iris] “I wouldn’t say there’s any cultural or racial barriers in our organization um, I think we have a great mix um, in our cabinet...”

[Chloe] “...we’re pretty open.”

[Chloe] “I guess we provide a space, not only a physical space but an environment that’s very open to ideas that, we can allow other volunteers or students or youth, whatever label we choose to put on them, they can bring their skills, that’s what we want to see, youth have skills, but the majority of time they might not have a space to further their ideas. [Organization] has also provided creative manuals, [campaign] manual, we provide those resources, our resource action centre, I feel like we provide a lot of um, like different resources youth can use.”

[Marcus] “There’s no barriers, [organization] is a place where we accept anyone, age race colour, we’re a family, even if we don’t know you, you’re still our friend, right, we’re not mean!”

There were still some challenges related to diversity:

[Chris] “Although Toronto is diverse, there are language barriers, but our meetings are more central, so there is language assistance where possible.”

[Iris] “So as chair um, I head meetings between um, I think we have, 10 cabinet members so um, I was one myself once um, there’s a myriad of goals across the GTA, um, we have a strong female population and um, but we do have one male.”

Youth volunteers who were interviewed seemed clear about their organization’s commitment to diversity and inclusion. They were adamant that there were no racial or cultural barriers to engagement in their organization and they gave examples of the open spaces available to youth, and the diverse cultural and racial makeup of their youth volunteer teams. However, there are a host of other barriers that go beyond issues of cultural and racial diversity. These included language barriers - despite the diversity of Toronto, age barriers which emerged as a

major sub-theme of this core theme and gender barriers - as one group had just received their first male volunteer out of ten members on cabinet.

Lack of Resources

Youth volunteers also found it difficult to become volunteers and later perform their volunteer roles to their fullest capacity when the organization lacked the resources to equip the youth volunteers with everything they needed to carry out their volunteer roles. One example of an insufficient organizational resource is a small volunteer team, which one participant explained made filling roles during times of turnover difficult and made recruitment difficult given her volunteer chapter's competition with other volunteer groups in the community.

[Bonnie] "Yeah, Our group is small relative to other groups on campus, so we do have our assigned executive roles."

[Bonnie] "I guess although [organization] is a big organization nationally we're pretty small on campus so, we don't have as many numbers as for example, [other organization], they have over 100 members and a huge executive team, we're kind of like, the little train that could, we do get new members we do have new members this year but I guess that we, have a high, what's it called a turnover rate? Yeah it's hard to retain people in the long term, um, and I think that a lot of organizations um, I would say that they struggle with that. You now, for a few reasons people just drop out or they lose interest or, they become overwhelmed with pessimism they think there's no point in doing this so they just leave, um, so yea we face that as well."

Another participant attributed her organization's lack of resources to being a "grassroots" organization

[Rose] "...if you're a grassroots organization, your resources are limited, you're limited in your ability and capacity to make people aware of your capacity to volunteer."

This volunteer believed that grassroots organizations have a more difficult time making people aware of the organization, their work and how they can help as volunteers.

Some participants offered brief suggestions that their organizations could use to ensure that a lack of resources would not present a barrier to engagement for youth volunteers. These

suggestions included expanding work into the community, especially into other schools where more volunteers could be recruited.

[Iris] "...but lately we've been talking about how we can get more schools to run school wide campaigns, so, we're trying to get each individual school in Toronto to, have a mini campaign to raise money for [organization], so, this is where we recruit ambassadors."

There were also resources that the volunteers lacked themselves that made it difficult for them to volunteer. These resources included time and transportation.

[I] "So um, are there any um, barriers to volunteering um, in your organization um, for yourself or anyone else who would want to volunteer for [organization]?"

[Iris] "Umm, I would say that number one is time commitment, um, I think for me sometimes, it's difficult because we have meetings downtown and, I live way up north like, it takes me about 1 hour to get down there in public transit, and like it works for me but I think that, for some, who live in my area, it would be a big barrier and some would think it's not worth it to go for a 1 hour meeting and have 2 hours of transportation."

[I] "What are the most important issues to you as a youth volunteer, perhaps think of them in order of importance?"

[Thomas] "The main thing, I'm wasting my time. I could be at work you know, that's the main thing."

With many youth relying on public transportation, the transit system is insufficient for them to be able to participate in volunteer activities that fall outside of their community. Insufficient transportation resources also limits a youth volunteer's choice of organization to volunteer based on location.

Clearly, youth volunteers feel more confident in their capacity to carry out their volunteer roles when they are satisfied with the resources that are made available by their organization. The more personal and organizational resources that a youth volunteer has at their disposal, the easier they will be able to carry out their volunteer roles.

Power Imbalances

Participants felt that actions which enhanced hierarchical structures created power imbalances that limited their potential. Participants felt that power imbalances were enhanced when there is an obvious presence of a hierarchy at the organization, whereby staff assert authority over volunteers. They also felt that power imbalances were intensified when there was a hierarchy within the youth volunteer team based on seniority and title.

Youth volunteers felt that an emphasis on teamwork and communities helped reduce the barrier of power imbalances. Participants felt that this could be achieved by working on small scale projects and with small scale organizations to help give a sense of community, ensuring that everyone felt important, ensuring that the leadership was by youth for youth and providing room for everyone to share their ideas.

[Rose] "I like to think on big scales, small things can be part of something all together, so I don't like big organizations. I like smaller ones. It's a better experience because it's smaller, but the drive is still there."

[I] "So, if I'm correct, sense of community entices you."

[Rose] "Yeah."

[I] "What motivated you to volunteer for organization?"

[Chloe] "Well, when I heard about [organization], what I loved was it was lead by youth, I am also now working for [organization], there's no hierarchy, the board members, the staff, we all come up with ideas for each other, we all support each other. Since it's lead by youth, a youth for youth organization, it really attracted me, also because sometimes, like, you know when organizations have hierarchy structure, sometimes youth who have brilliant ideas might be scared to bring it out because of structure, but because [organization] is led by youth, we all feel safe to discuss open ideas an new ideas."

[Chloe] "Umm, I have worked with organizations that have a similar structure, youth for youth, I guess I'm used to it but um, obviously in some organizations you can tell there's a power structure but, at [organization] I've never really felt that. Every time there's meetings, we've really created an environment where people can put out their ideas without feeling scared."

Despite the some power imbalances most participants seemed to have solutions in mind based on their own experiences to counter power imbalances.

Complexity of the Work

The youth volunteer participants identified that one barrier unique to indirect service volunteerism is the complexity of the work. Indirect service work is more complex because it involves long-term engagement in activities where the outcomes affect many but are less clear. For example, one participant elaborated on how challenging some of the indirect service roles can be, such as media relations and policy development.

Indirect service volunteering can also be less complex when there are opportunities for short-term hands-on work; opportunities for group work – whereby the diverse perspectives from team members observing the work contribute to a shared understanding of the volunteer projects along with opportunities to directly see the impact of their work in the community.

[Marcus] “As a worker, that’s one way to describe it, it’s more of uh, hands on type of work, it’s university and college, [organization] is a place where, if you show us your dedication, we will put you in, just so you can see how it is, everyone looks out for each other, you scratch my back, I scratch your back.”

[Chloe] “I always consult with the volunteers, like say with the design of a t-shirt, because I want their input...as well and I try to make it clear to them that this is a group effort and that, we’re all in this together and that everyone’s opinion matters so, I try to be as inclusive as possible.”

[Chloe] “[Organization] has also provided creative manuals, [campaign name] manual, we provide those resources, our resource action centre, I feel like we provide a lot of um, like different resources youth can use.”

Difficulty Connecting With Potential Volunteers, Clients and the Community

Youth participants felt that another barrier to participation is reaching and establishing connections between potential volunteers, clients and community members.

[Rose] “Personally, I never heard of [organization] until [campaign] conference, if you’re a grassroots organization, your resources are limited, you’re limited in your ability and capacity to make people aware of your capacity to volunteer.”

[Iris] “I think as students, not many students know exactly what [organization] was, I didn’t know until, I did some homework.”

To overcome these barriers, youth participants suggested that it is best to hold events that are meaningful, fun, and keep youth engaged; pursue better recruitment strategies; adopt youth for youth models of engagement; make awareness raising fun; ensure speakers make youth feel like they are one of the audience; and establish greater community connections between the government and teenagers to make teens feel important.

[Lauren] “Um, importance? I would say holding events, you know, it keeps engagement, it’s a fun activity you know it’s not always you know all dull and depressing it’s meaning with something behind it that you can really get involved in um, yeah I think recruitment is important, in terms of clubs and it’s really surprising since [campus] is such a big school, clubs aren’t really that big like [organization] I think we have 10, like 10-11 members but um, I think recruiting more members is really important especially because this year we have a lot of people graduating so next year there’s only going to be about 3 or 4 people keeping it up so, um recruitment is pretty important and I think we had a clubs day for frosh week this week we had like 60 new sign ups or something...more effective ways of recruitment I would say is really important.”

Competition with Other Organizations and Clubs

One participant identified that among University groups, there are so many clubs, which made it very difficult to choose which one to participate in. This participant also felt that it was hard to stand out above other groups at a university.

[Bonnie] “Umm, but the other problem that we face is that at [campus] it’s really hard to stand out, There are over 300 groups on the campus so, Um yeah and uh, it’s hard to make yourself known, you can post as many flyers around campus as you want you know, like, big bright bold colourful flyers, but, people post stuff everywhere, at libraries, around the street, um, in the buildings and it’s just layers and layers of flyers and, it’s a lot and all of the colours and all of the words, um, so that’s another challenge that we face, getting your name out there. Ummm, it’s great to have these groups and everything, I appreciate it, but, there’s so many clubs to choose from but then the problem is, where do you go from there? How do you stand out?”

A Poor Location and Lack of Space

Some participants expressed concern over insufficient space and the inaccessible location of their volunteer organization. One participant felt that insufficient space was one barrier to participation for youth volunteers. There was too little space for the large group of youth volunteers. Another volunteer felt that the location of their organization was not “central enough” for most youth who want to volunteer in the Greater Toronto Area.

[Iris] “ I think for me sometimes, it’s difficult because we have meetings downtown and, I live way up North like, it takes me about 1 hour to get down there in public transit , and like it works for me but I think that, for some, who live in my area, it would be a big barrier and some would think it’s not worth it to go for a 1 hour meeting and have 2 hours of transportation. Like, I think that’s 1 of the barriers. ”

[Rose] “From the little knowledge that you have of [organization], we only have that one location that you know of downtown, so I mean um, in terms of trying to engage youth, the physical limits of [neighbourhood], it’s challenging to make one’s way out to [organization’s] office if you’re limited to one specific location.

Participants identified inappropriate space as a barrier to participation in volunteer activities. They suggested that an effective strategy might be “place-making” for youth by encouraging youth to find ways to make their space open to all where everyone can share their skills, ideas and build rapport.

[Chloe] “I guess we provide a space, not only a physical space but an environment that’s very open to ideas that, we can allow other volunteers or students or youth, whatever label we choose to put on them, they can bring their skills, that’s what we want to see, youth have skills, but the majority of time they might not have a space to further their ideas.”

Age Discrimination

Age was articulated as a barrier to engagement for younger youth volunteers.

[Chris] “...it’s hard to get youth to take initiative ”

Another volunteer identified a “paradox” that youth need experience before they can volunteer. This volunteer explained that this creates a challenge for the younger youth volunteers to find

meaningful volunteer opportunities. Age is thus a barrier to youth who want to volunteer because most organizations require them to have experience first. As explained by one participant, younger youth volunteers are also of an age where they are not motivated to become engaged in their communities as volunteers.

Prerequisites

Prerequisite assets was seen by most participants as a barrier to engagement. Some felt that youth had to have a lot of skills and a strong background to participate in this type of volunteer activities. Lack of money to participate was a factor as well as low socioeconomic status and intellectual barriers. Some needed money and preferred to work in paid employment.

[Thomas] "The main thing, I'm wasting my time. I could be at work you know, that's the main thing."

4) ROLE AMBIGUITY

Role ambiguity, or the lack of clarity that volunteers had about the tasks, goals, and outcomes of their work was addressed as another barrier to engagement. Many participants who had been volunteers in direct services felt that role ambiguity was even more prevalent with indirect service volunteering. The sub-themes that emerged about role ambiguity included: a lack of clarity of the role and work, the organization, the roles, the clients, the meaning of the work, the job description, and other challenges.

Lack of Clarity About the Volunteer's Role and Their Work

Challenges that exacerbated participants' role ambiguity were attributed to an overall sense of uncertainty about their roles at the beginning of the volunteer position. Some participants explained that they did not know in the beginning that the volunteer work would be anything like what they discovered it to be after volunteering for their organization. They were unsure of what direction the work would take them in, found difficulty finding the right language

to describe their work, felt pressured to understand more about the organization than what was within the scope of their own work, and were unable to anticipate what the results of their work would be. One volunteer who had to regularly advertise her volunteer projects to the community was unable to figure out how to advertise them because she was unsure of the project goals. She felt like a “deer in the headlights.” Another participant explained that within her volunteer youth group there were no goals to work toward and her role was not defined yet. One participant felt unclear about their role because she had never been involved in a volunteer group before and felt upon joining her volunteer group that she was expected to understand how a youth volunteer group should operate. Another participant was unclear about her role because she was made to feel like a “little helper” at her organization.

Of particular note was a comment from one participant identifying the challenge of visualizing all of the channels that the results of her work travel through from one stakeholder to the next to reach a client base that is overseas.

[Amber] “Coming into the [organization] I was basically there as like, a little helper for the day, so all I knew was that I was going to show up there for however many hours I mean I went there on days off school that other schools don’t have so that was the time I was able to go but, so basically when I go there I’m given tasks and just do those during the day, some days it’s like, oh today you’re going to be doing like some office type stuff and like other days it’s like ok today you’re going to go out with the other kids and like work with them a bit, um, again so yeah not so clear about the role...”

Lack of Clarity About the Organization

Many participants felt that the work carried out by their volunteer organizations was too difficult to understand, especially because of the complexity of the issues addressed by the organization or because of the governance structure.

Some participants explained that they were unclear about staff roles and responsibilities. Another youth volunteer expressed confusion over being presented with organization surveys as

a type of youth group activity and having to assume that survey results were the youth group's only tangible service output. Likewise, other participants felt the work of the organization was ambiguous without clear goals, notably no financial goals for fundraising and no tokens of volunteer appreciation to work towards. Participants expressed frustration over never seeing the end product of the work.

The day to day activities delegated to indirect service youth volunteers did not always produce fruitful results. One participant felt that ideas that youth talk about together were ignored at the table, as "discussions take a long time to bear some fruit." Another participant felt that many youth did not view attending meetings as volunteering.

[Bonnie] "Ummm, it's great to have these groups and everything, I appreciate it, but, there's so many clubs to choose from but then the problem is, where do you go from there? How do you stand out? And you know, the things that we talk about at [organization] are not really easy topics to grasp."

[Iris] "I would still like to see our cabinet take on a specific financial goal, like a fundraising goal because, sometimes I feel like we talk a lot, we brainstorm a lot but, we don't really have set in stone goals, so, I would really like to see more of that happening so that, you're focused like, you have, a set reward at the end like you want to work towards it. When it's kind of like a bright light but you're not sure of what the bright light is like, sometimes you kind of get too caught up in the talk."

[Kendra] This year, we have more action based youth who like to see the product of their work. They never saw the product at first."

Creating Clarity About Their Role

Despite the overwhelming responses from participants explaining they were unclear about their volunteer roles from the outset of their work, some felt more clear over time due to a variety of reasons. Some participants became more clear about their work simply through increased immersion in their volunteer activities. One participant explained that with time, she could understand and articulate the services she was providing better. As explained by another participant, they felt that they eventually became more clear about their work over time despite a

foggy start. Talking to staff and board members about their work helped. Immersion and support was associated with higher learning. One participant felt more confident with more experience.

One participant appreciated the organization's expressed interest in keeping the same youth around the next year. One participant felt that it was important for youth volunteers to get to know volunteer centres so that they could become familiar with their volunteer hub in the community and get a better scope of volunteer opportunities available that would suit them. Another participant thought it was important to strive for transparency: because seeing results and getting feedback are what is ultimately important for indirect service youth volunteers. Going on agency tours to see how much money really goes into the community is important if a youth volunteer is going to be clear about the results of their fundraising work.

[Kendra] "The longer time I spent with staff, the more clearly I could articulate volunteer services."

Creating Clarity About the Organization

Despite the volume of statements demonstrating that youth experience some sense of uncertainty about all of the work carried out by their organization, some participants were either clear about their organization's work from the start of their volunteer role, or became more clear over the course of their volunteering with the organization. One youth participant felt that they were more clear about their organization's work when they noticed that tasks were becoming more structured as the youth group expanded. Goal setting was another activity that one of the youth volunteer participants felt helped make them feel more clear about the work of their organization. Some participants placed emphasis on "articulation" as a means of achieving clarity of the work of the organization, such as staff articulating the details of the responsibilities of an indirect service volunteer. Another participant explained that the more time youth spend

with the organization, they more they understand the full potential of the outcomes of the organization's work.

[Bonnie] "I'm pretty clear about it um I'm much more confident in my role, more than I was before and that just comes from experience and you know when more opportunities come along your way it gives you more of a chance to do that."

Understanding the Clients

One factor that may have contributed to role ambiguity was a lack of understanding as to who the clients of indirect volunteering were. Indirect volunteering reaches vast groups of communities who benefit from the macro-level outcomes achieved with this kind of work. The outcomes are achieved thanks to the help of various groups of stakeholders that link the work of the volunteer with benefitting communities. Pinpointing all of the clients who benefit from indirect volunteering within these groups is challenging. When asked to visualize clients that were served by her volunteer work, one participant first struggled with the idea that she was even serving clients at all. The following excerpt follows her visualization of who the clients were that she was serving in her volunteer role.

[I] "Yeah! So um, before getting into the next questions about your volunteer role, if you could think of or describe your clients, if you could pick out groups of people who would be clients of the work that you're doing who would they be?"

[Bonnie] "Sorry, what's the word? I couldn't quite tell."

[I] "Clients."

[Bonnie] "Oh clients?"

[I] "Yeah."

[Bonnie] "Clients?"

[I] "Yeah clients as in, a very general sense so who benefits from the work of [organization]?"

[Bonnie] "Oh ok,"

[I] “Yep.”

[Bonnie] “If I said something like the general public, would that not be a good answer?”

[I] “That can cover many situations involving advocacy and awareness raising.”

[Bonnie] “Yeah. Um well, the first thing that comes to mind is the general public I don’t really see how we can gear ourselves towards one demographic although it’s a student run organization um, we have groups in high schools but I don’t see why we have to target that particular group I think that everyone no matter how old you are can benefit from this organization. You know, learning about the issue and I don’t think that you really have to be involved in [organization] it’s just immersing yourself you know becoming more of an engaged um, citizen! Um, so in that case I’ll say the general public.”

[I] “Mmm hmmm.”

[Bonnie] “But that encompasses a lot of different clients! Plus um, again, we do aim for students because in a lot of cases that’s where passion begins you know, in your college days, you know, you become an activist or something and that’s where it starts so you know um, I guess we want to target that demographic but also expand to other groups when we volunteered at the synagogue for example, most people there were middle-aged you know they were uh, congregates of the Synagogue but they were also very connected to everything so in that case you know we weren’t speaking to the young-adult group we were speaking to you know, middle-upper class educated people um, and they were just as excited um, as some of the students that we work with so, yep!”

One reason why this participant may have struggled to visualize her client base is because the first group that came to mind to her was the general public. With public education as a service goal for this participant, her organization may not have stipulated a target demographic of clients for her volunteer team to serve. Once this volunteer visualized groups she had served before, such as students and a group of adults at an event at a Synagogue, she was better able to visualize her clients. Perhaps reflection exercises prompting volunteers to imagine who would benefit from their work would help them identify their clients and reduce role ambiguity.

Achieving Clarity by Perspective-Taking

Some of the dialogue from youth volunteer participants about role ambiguity took the form of perspective-taking on behalf of clients, staff, and volunteers in order to articulate their indirect service work better. One participant believed that youth are not interested in indirect service work. This participant further explained that youth are “not keen on this form of work” because “they don’t see results right away.” Another participant identified that while youth are interested in awareness-raising about problems that are occurring overseas in places like Darfur, they are taking their attention away from problems in their own communities when they do so. This participant believed that these youth need to pay more attention to the needs in their own communities and focus their energy locally because doing so is “much more realistic.”

One participant’s belief was that staff are too preoccupied with corporate agendas to be able to effectively communicate to volunteers the connection between the work that they do and macro-level outcomes. When describing attitudes of the public some participants believed that the general public is apathetic and not interested in being informed.

[Bonnie] “Ok well, I would say that the number one issue that we face, that like, organizations face is um, apathy, because we, we organize these events, especially on campus you know we’ll have like, one person come to us, or uh, a whole party of people approach us and other people will just pass us by and they’re not interested or they’re just ignorant or they just don’t know they don’t care, and um, I think that’s one thing. People don’t want to be informed either that’s a conscious decision or, it happens for reasons that I can’t really think of, so, that’s one thing that’s really hard.”

[Lauren] “Ummm, the most important I would say is getting the issue across because when we have tabling events or just when I bring it out in passing that [organization] is coming out, people will say “what’s Darfur?” you know, why is that I’ve never heard of it, and it’s actually pretty frightening to know that people don’t actually know what’s going on, the same with anything it’s not unique to Darfur it’s Congo it’s you know anyplace with, and people only know about Rwanda because of the movie so, yeah it’s a little disheartening when you realize how many people don’t really know much about the issue it’s a huge human rights issue so I would say that that is number one, getting the issue out there, by getting together to do something, we have way more power in numbers so...”

By taking the perspective of all stakeholders of their work, including youth volunteers, staff, clients, and the public, youth volunteers were able to articulate some of the challenges associated with carrying out their work. Participants believed that new youth recruits value direct over indirect service work because direct service work is more “realistic” and the goals are more clear.

Describing the Indirect Service Role

During the semi-structured, in-depth interviews, participants demonstrated greater understanding of their indirect service roles by describing indirect services. One participant defined their indirect service role by articulating that “the most important role is their indirect role as a messenger.” By choosing the word “messenger,” this participant has given a title to their public education work. By being a messenger in their indirect service role, their job is to inform the public about the causes supported by their organizations that drive them to volunteer. Their responsibility is to identify their advocate audiences and their apathetic audiences and provide information about their cause and the affected population or client groups. They also inform their audiences about solutions to the problems at both the individual and systemic level, so that they are motivated to expand on their education about the cause with meaningful action that will affect change.

Another participant described that indirect service volunteers “bring the public back to reality” - suggesting that one key role of indirect service volunteers is to reduce public apathy. Also, although another participant was originally unsure where indirect service work would take him – the thought of the inexhaustible opportunities that indirect service roles have to offer was attractive.

For some participants, there were clearly many benefits to being an indirect service volunteer once they were able to understand and articulate their work better by being prompted in the interviews to elaborate on their client base and the outcomes of their work beyond any dialogue that had taken place at their organization before. These benefits included having an improved capacity to inform the public, and reduce apathy and pursue other meaningful opportunities for engagement with the limitless possibilities that indirect service work has to offer.

Challenges of Role Ambiguity

Participants also spoke directly about ways to avoid role ambiguity. One participant offered a few suggestions to reduce role ambiguity and better engage youth volunteers. This participant suggested that youth might prefer trips so that they can see the direct results of their “macro-level” or indirect service work. This participant believed that youth would be better engaged if they volunteered directly, either in their own communities or by travelling abroad instead of awareness-raising for an issue taking place abroad. One challenge articulated by one of the participants was that “people don’t want to be informed,” implying that awareness-raising is a futile activity for youth volunteers to pursue.

With indirect service work, another participant found that it was hard to pick only one issue or organization in which to volunteer. One participant even felt that indirect service volunteering is sometimes no better than “armchair activism.” Of high importance was one participant’s complaint that “some youth want a meaningful long term commitment that they do not get with episodic events like awareness raising and fundraising activities.” Since youth volunteers would prefer a meaningful volunteer experience, indirect service opportunities are

therefore too episodic in nature for many youth, which presents a key challenge to this type of volunteering

5)THE EMERGENCE OF EMPOWERMENT AND POWER IMBALANCES IN YOUTH VOLUNTEER ROLES

One of the additional core themes that emerged from the data was the emergence of empowerment and power imbalances in youth volunteer roles. Youth participants described how their indirect service roles empowered themselves and their service communities.

Empowerment of Selves

Youth participants felt empowered by their indirect service experiences because they liked being able to influence and educate others, especially their peers. One participant particularly valued the opportunities to network and connect with other organizations. This participant also recognized their own power in having a “knack” for networking, and felt that volunteering “opens doors” for youth in the community.

[Chris] “...so it’s really about networking um, get to know organizations get to know more people um, NPOs and that’s how you can make connections and everything so that’s how I found my way to (organization).”

Another participant liked the idea of “passing the torch” by recruiting ambassadors to spread the word about their organization, suggesting that recruiting even one youth to facilitate public education efforts is empowering. One participant found power in the idea that volunteering is a “gateway to learn more.” Participants also found power in specific actions, such as: establishing rapport with youth in camps, being able to work independently, being treated and valued like a staff of the organization, and by “teaching other youth to take charge.” One finding that was interesting to note was that some youth volunteers felt more empowered when they were able to share their own power within their volunteer teams. *[Rose] “Umm, I don’t know because I’m not the type of person who likes lots of power, so I kind of stick to those rules type of thing... the mentorship part of leadership seems to be important.”*

Empowerment of the Service Community and Clients

Some of the youth interviewed provided comments suggesting that indirect volunteering is empowering for clients and stakeholders. One participant believed that youth can best empower their communities by being immersed in them.

[Rose] “Umm, well, one of the important things in terms of values in community service, is being part of a community, sometimes in my own community, (community), since I lived there, I want to be a part of it, to improve it, empower, be active in my own area.”

Another participant felt that youth are better able to empower service communities if they volunteer directly in their home communities instead of abroad, as it is “more realistic to volunteer directly in the community.” Other participants challenged themselves to “volunteer for causes that were bigger than they could comprehend” and make use of the tools and resources in their home communities to improve their communities. Youth volunteers can also empower their volunteer teams by building cohesion between volunteers. This is accomplished when youth teams focus on smaller scale projects instead of projects that are too complex, create space for teamwork, and make volunteering meaningful and fun to youth volunteers.

Lack of Empowerment in Individuals

There were a few variables that youth volunteers felt prevented them from feeling empowered in their volunteer roles. They included a lack-of money, lack of time, lack of prerequisite academic skills to understand complex problems, age and prior volunteer experience to volunteer.

[Amber] “Uh, the reason why a lot of people are here today making ribbons even though they probably have big ambitions curing cancer itself and you know, go out and help people in the poorest regions of the world, it’s because there’s not a lot of other opportunities available to them especially for the gr7 and 8 students, the minimum age for a lot of things is high school, which is understandable because there’s liability issues and safety issues and maturity issues but, uh yeah I would say that that’s the biggest barrier and then, another barrier I think is experience it’s that kind of paradox I think that kind of takes to get a role you need experience but to get experience you need to be

able to fulfill some kind of volunteer role so, in that way it's kind of hard to get into things and so for me, it was kind of lucky that my brother has autism because I was able to volunteer at his sector but they wouldn't just take any 12 year old, they took me because I was his sister, and because I asked if I could help there so, yeah I think finding a way in for a lot of people is hard and as nice as it is to do 1 time events, and uh, making ribbons like this a lot of places are looking for experience that's more long-term and when you're in grade 9 looking for a long term position that's asking for long term experience then that's it's very difficult to have that unless you had an "in" some other way."

There are clearly varied and profound limitations that make youth feel disempowered when trying to find volunteer opportunities.

Lack of Power in Community

Sometimes the indirect service work did little to empower a community. Some initiatives were too large in scale to carry out. Another challenge where initiatives were empowering for volunteer communities occurred where the initiatives were too small relative to the "competition" – making the service team feel overshadowed by other teams of youth volunteers. Volunteer communities were also disempowered by grassroots structures because grassroots groups are often limited in their capacity to achieve results with their work. [Rose] *"Personally, I never heard of (organization) until (campaign) conference, if you're a grassroots organization, your resources are limited, you're limited in your ability and capacity to make people aware of your capacity to volunteer."*

Service communities therefore are sometimes disempowered despite some of the best intentions behind a volunteer initiative.

Power Imbalances

Some participants found power imbalances between the organization, its staff and youth volunteers. One example of this kind of power imbalance was the complexity of the work, such as the high level of education, planning, and speculation of outcomes required for indirect service activities. Another challenge occurred when volunteers and other members of the organization did not appreciate the contribution of ideas from other youth volunteers. To combat these power imbalances, one participant found that it was helpful if there were resources

available at the organization that helped the youth volunteers carry out their awareness-raising and fundraising activities.

[Chloe] “[Organization] has also provided creative manuals, fired up manual, we provide those resources, our resource action centre, I feel like we provide a lot of um, like different resources youth can use.”

Another participant felt that it was helpful if a youth-for-youth service structure was in place to combat hierarchical structures between staff, volunteers, and youth clients:

[Chloe] “Well, when I heard about (organization), what I loved was it is lead by youth, I am also now working for (organization), there’s no hierarchy, the board members, the staff, we all come up with ideas for each other, we all support each other. Since it’s lead by youth, a youth for youth organization, it really attracted me, also because sometimes, like, you know when organizations have hierarchy structure, sometimes youth who have brilliant ideas might be scared to bring it out because of the structure, but because (organization) is led by youth, we all feel safe to discuss open ideas and new ideas.”

Empowering youth with more resources and active leadership roles in their organization is a way to combat the development of power imbalances in these organizations.

6) THE MEANING THAT YOUTH ASCRIBE TO THEIR VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCES

Another theme that emerged from the data that was not directly asked in the semi-structured, in-depth interview questions was the meaning that youth ascribe to their volunteer experiences. The existential importance of volunteering emerged as six distinct sub-themes including: the importance of volunteering to the youth volunteer participants, the importance that they feel volunteering is to their communities, an exploration of why youth might volunteer for the “wrong reasons,” concern over the exploitation of youth volunteers, the importance of volunteerism as it is related to a specific issue, and emerging gems of volunteering.

Importance of Volunteering to Youth Volunteer Participants

Overall youth participants felt that volunteerism was highly important and significant to youth. As one participant explained, youth can turn their passions into volunteering. This

participant wanted to become a teacher and felt that volunteering in a public education capacity helped him turn his passion for teaching into a volunteer experience. Other participants found that volunteering provided an opportunity to explore their own values. By volunteering in a public education capacity, this participant discovered that it was not the power she valued that came with her role, but her opportunity to connect with and mentor the youth she was educating. Particularly important is the immersion of youth in their volunteer role. As described by one participant: youth learn with increased immersion and support in their volunteer role.

Despite how important the participants felt that volunteering was to youth volunteers, there was one profound challenge. As explained by one of the participants, that challenge was the 40 hours of mandatory volunteering for high school students in the Province of Ontario.

[Chris] "I find that um a lot of students in high school they're required to do 40 hours and I know it's a big task to really get started and I think a lot of young people in high school especially complete their 40 hours because they do the 40 hours because they're forced to to graduate but they don't see the benefit beyond those 40 hours and I think that that's a big issue in terms of volunteerism. I know that a lot of students just complete their hours and say hey I'm done I don't need any more hours so how come I should do more hours, but really volunteering has really helped me as an individual with um, jobs, networking and various opportunities so that's um, one of the big issues in terms of volunteerism with youth and high schools."

With the mandatory 40 hours of community service volunteering, some youth do not see the benefit to volunteering beyond completing their 40 hours. While volunteering offers youth an opportunity to explore their passions and their values, there are clearly some youth who volunteer for the "wrong reasons" and lose sight of the value that volunteering can have to themselves and to the communities they serve.

The Importance of Volunteering to the Community and Clients

Participants cited benefits to themselves and their service community. As explained by one participant, volunteering helps improve youths' sense of belonging in the community and empowers the community in return.

[I] "So what are the most important issues or concerns to you as a volunteer?"

[Rose] "Umm, well, one of the important things in terms of values in community service, is being part of a community, sometimes in my own community, (neighbourhood), since I lived there, I want to be a part of it, to improve it, empower, be active in my own area."

One of the participants attended agency tours with their organization so that they could "see how much money really goes into the community."

Some challenges that prevent indirect service youth volunteers from being able to see the importance of volunteering within a particular community include episodic volunteering and ego boosting. One participant felt that "one-time events" are frustrating because they offer no sense of attachment to the organization. One participant explained that youth have to make sure not to put themselves *above* the community.

[Amber] "If you were to help the homeless, you're not so much an authority figure as you are like someone who is at their level and like helping them in being part of the...helping the community so, you know what I mean? You're not like giving them charity."

Despite these limitations volunteerism helps youth become more immersed in their communities. Volunteering helps improve youths' sense of belonging and attachment to their communities, and helps them empower their communities, in particular by inspiring other youth to become engaged volunteers.

Youth Volunteering for the "Wrong Reasons"

Not only was ego-boosting discussed as an example of youth volunteering for the "wrong reasons," but again the issue of mandatory volunteering as part of the Ontario high school

curriculum emerged again because “youth don’t see the benefit of volunteering beyond 40 hours.”

Exploitation of Youth Volunteers

Youth volunteers felt exploited when they were not being provided meaningful volunteer opportunities from their organizations. One participant felt that the importance of volunteering is often not clear to most youth, and that as a result, they are more vulnerable to being exploited by staff with specific agendas for volunteers. If volunteers do not advocate for their interests, organizations can influence them to follow their own agendas. One participant also thought that getting started is challenging for youth because it is hard to get them to take initiative. This being so, agencies do not always engage youth in the most meaningful volunteer opportunities.

What was also interesting to note was one participant’s belief that the community does not appreciate indirect volunteers. According to this participant, indirect volunteers are a “luxury” because “they just talk about people needing help.”

[Kendra] “The community doesn’t appreciate youth and indirect volunteers. With direct volunteers, it’s easy to see how they appreciate you. Indirect volunteers are a luxury, they just talk about people needing help.”

Methods to avoid the exploitation of youth volunteers were discussed. One participant felt that youth volunteers need long-term opportunities, instead of episodic ones, to keep them engaged. Another participant appreciated opportunities for agency tours to see how much money really goes into the community. They could see the results of their work and not feel that their efforts were being exploited.

Importance of Volunteering Related to a Specific Issue

Participants felt it was important to volunteer to do something about a specific issue. For some participants, this importance came about by observing problems that they wanted to change

in their communities. Many also wanted to support their organization in combating an issue they were equally as passionate about. The specific issues that participants were interested in ranged from anti-racism, to youth crime, to child soldiers, to youth with disabilities, to healthy neighbourhoods, to youth volunteerism, and also community education. Even though youth participants were currently volunteering to do something about an issue of interest, many were interested in more than one issue, which created an interesting challenge:

[Amber] "It's hard to pick only one thing and volunteer for that "

While indirect volunteering offered an avenue for youth volunteers to do something about an issue they were passionate about, especially if the issue was taking place overseas, youth were still conflicted over their lack of personal resources to volunteer for every organization that addressed a mutual issue of interest.

Emerging Gems of Volunteering

There were segments of dialogue from some participants that emerged as “gems of volunteering.” These quotations were comments that were clearly important to the participants who made them. These comments did not necessarily fit under any of the other core themes or the other sub-themes within this core theme about the meaning that youth ascribe to their volunteer experiences. One gem was the idea that volunteering is a growing experience for volunteers and clients. Everything collectively learned by both volunteers and clients has more impact than what youth volunteers learn alone. Although youth volunteers learn by conducting research to educate themselves about an issue, they learn even more about that issue from the reactions of their stakeholder audiences and the results of their work with their clients. Another gem was that “volunteering with causes that are bigger than you can comprehend is important.” The participant who made this statement believed that complexity of an issue should not be a

deterrent for youth to volunteer for a cause. Many participants also believed that volunteering was the best avenue for youth to solve community problems and to “make a mark and make change.” One felt that because of his role, “any question in life can be answered.” One of the most interesting gems was expressed when one participant was asked to reflect on how meaningful she thought her clients (whom were peers she was educating) would find her work.

[Amber] Well I don't think that kids would actually think about whether my job is meaningful, they would probably just decide whether they have fun or not at the end of the day... either that's not something that registers to them or it's not important and of course that's understandable. So I guess for me, it doesn't really matter how meaningful they find my role specifically, but yeah rather, I guess whether at the end of the day they had fun or they, felt better. Or they learned something.”

According to this participant, a concrete expression of how meaningful volunteer work is to clients is not what is most important, it is whether or not clients are engaged and having fun. Clearly, there are unique gems of volunteering that stand out beyond all of the other strengths and challenges associated with indirect service work. These gems include client and volunteer growth, youth volunteers challenging themselves to combat issues that are not easy to comprehend, youth volunteers having the power to do something about an issue and leave their mark on their communities, empowering and engaging other youth, valuing community feedback, and valuing how their clients enjoy their volunteer work.

STRENGTHS AND CHALLENGES

Participants described many strengths and challenges associated with providing indirect service work as youth volunteers. These strengths and challenges make up the core themes. They are summarized in Table 5.

Table 5. Strengths and Challenges of Indirect Service Volunteering for Youth Volunteers.

Core Theme	Strengths	Challenges
Motivations of youth to choose and maintain participation in indirect forms of service	Motivations include upward mobility, seeking community membership, being passionate about an issue, interest in a service organization, a desire to make change, interest in public education, and sometimes the volunteer opportunity is convenient for them.	Barriers to engagement prevent youth from volunteering. They include insufficient advertising, an inconvenient location on the part of service organizations, and distaste for youth who pursue self-fulfillment and ego-boosting. Some youth are not motivated to volunteer at all, as it is “hard to get youth to take initiative.”
Leadership opportunities for youth volunteers who participate in indirect forms of service	Leadership is infused in indirect service volunteering as many youth who choose this type of volunteering either already have strong leadership qualities and skills, have a desire to become leaders or improve their leadership skills, and have staff assuming that leadership is part of their volunteer role. Public education and teamwork improve leadership.	Some youth feel overshadowed by other youth volunteers who they see as natural leaders. Youth are discouraged by apathy and lack of feedback from their audiences following a public education event. Singling out individual youth volunteers detracts attention from teamwork.
Barriers to engagement of youth volunteers in indirect forms of service	Youth felt that their organizations were very diverse and inclusive when it came to race and culture. Volunteers also felt their organizations were successful at reducing power imbalances when they focused on teamwork. The complexity of work could be reduced by engaging youth in episodic, hands-on opportunities that are fun and by articulating the impact of their work. Staff who included youth in networking helped them connect with stakeholders to gain indirect access to clients. Place-making and branching off to satellite locations were ways in which one organization was successful in resolving issues to do with an inaccessible location and insufficient space.	Barriers to participation included a lack of inclusive practices for younger youth, male youth, and newcomer youth with a limited grasp of the English language. A lack of personal and organizational resources restricted volunteer recruitment and participation, access to clients and community members, and increased competition with other organizations and club chapters. Hierarchical structures between staff and volunteers created power imbalances, as did the complexity of the work. Lack of sufficient location and space restricted volunteers’ access to indirect service opportunities. Prerequisite skills limited participation in indirect service work to over-achieving youth.

<p>Perceived ambiguity of volunteer roles developed for indirect forms of service</p>	<p>Some youth were very clear about their work within their organizations, and those who were not became more clear with guidance and mentorship from staff, and by being offered an orientation and training materials from the organization. Youth became more clear about who their clients were, how they valued their work, and the components of their indirect service role overall when probed with interview questions that made them reflect on these components of their volunteer role.</p>	<p>Many youth were unclear about their indirect service roles, the work of their organizations, and were unable to initially name who some of their clients and stakeholders were. Participants also believed that youth volunteers and community members value direct over indirect services because direct volunteers see the results of their work immediately, where as indirect volunteers are a “luxury.”</p>
<p>The emergence of empowerment and power imbalances in youth volunteer roles</p>	<p>Indirect volunteering allowed youth to educate, influence, and motivate others to do something about their issue of interest, and to turn their issue of interest or their “passions” into volunteering. Youth found that indirect service work could be empowering for the communities they were serving because doing so allowed them to engage in place-making in their communities.</p>	<p>Youth felt disempowered when their volunteer work was taken advantage of by other youth who just wanted to fulfill their mandatory 40 hours of service requirement, and overshadowed by other youth volunteers who seemed to naturally have strong leadership qualities. Organizational hierarchies, volunteer turnover, large scale projects, competing organizations, and an apathetic public made indirect service work ineffective for communities.</p>
<p>The Meaning Youth Ascribe to Their Volunteer Experiences</p>	<p>Indirect service volunteering gives youth an opportunity to explore their own values, turn their passions into volunteering, become immersed in their communities, make their mark and make change, learn along with their service clients, and seek meaning in how fun their volunteer work is for their clients.</p>	<p>Sometimes, youth volunteer for the wrong reasons, such as fulfilling their mandatory volunteer service requirements for high school and boosting their egos. Some indirect service volunteers feel exploited when they are treated like “little helpers.” It is difficult for any youth volunteer to pick only one organization and issue to volunteer for. Youth acknowledge that grassroots organizations have many limitations. Youth volunteers want to see feedback with their work.</p>

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

Summary of Findings

The purpose of this research was to identify successes, challenges and ways to improve indirect services for youth in order to benefit youth volunteers, staff and clients. Through a semi-structured, in-depth interview process with ten youth volunteers from five different agencies, the following research questions were answered:

Research Questions

- 1) What motivations, barriers to engagement, and opportunities for leadership affect youth volunteers who participate in indirect forms of service?
- 2) How does role ambiguity impact indirect forms of volunteer service?
- 3) What other strengths and challenges affect youth volunteers who participate in indirect forms of service?

The research questions were designed to identify unexplored issues that confront youth who are indirect volunteers. The answers to the research questions have important conceptual and practice implications so that the research is of use to academics conducting research in the social services and volunteer sector and professionals engaging youth in indirect volunteering. For this reason, the findings are first presented in response to each of the research questions before presenting the conceptual and practice implications.

Findings Under Each of the Questions

First Research Question

The first research question dealt with the motivations, leadership opportunities and barriers to engagement for youth volunteers who participate in indirect services. Youth volunteers mentioned aspects of each of these three important issues that have emerged in the

literature before, along with those that have not. Little previous research has actually dealt with these topics related to youth and even less has dealt with youth volunteering in indirect services.

Motivations of Youth to Choose and Maintain Participation in Indirect Forms of Service

Some of the participants were motivated to volunteer for reasons cited in prior literature under the Canada Volunteerism Initiative (Volunteer Canada, 2008). Tessier et al., (2006) found that the top reasons included that: youth volunteers are altruistic, wish to be useful to their community, want to help those in need, wish new knowledge and skills to become more work ready, appreciate the recognition and feedback from clients and staff as well as to socialize. Similar findings emerged directly from the sub themes in this research about motivations of youth to volunteer in indirect services. Many of the participants were altruistic in their endeavours. They cited a desire to change the world for the better. Similar to the findings of the research by Tessier et al., (2006), youth from this study also wanted to become more immersed in and connected to their communities in a volunteer capacity and wanted to become more employment ready. They also wanted to volunteer to become part of a community. They also identified a desire for upward mobility through their own organizations into more challenging volunteer roles, staff positions within the organization and future careers in teaching. The social aspect of volunteering did not emerge as a sub-theme although participants mentioned that one of the reasons they volunteered was because a friend was already volunteering for their organization.

There were several motivations to volunteer in indirect services that emerged in the results that had not appeared in prior literature before. These motivations included an interest to volunteer to do something about a specific issue and an interest to volunteer for a specific organization. Convenience of the volunteer opportunity was facilitated by volunteering with a

friend and volunteering locally. Public education was a strong motivator. It was a specific skill identified by the volunteers that they wanted more experience with because they knew that it was one of the main roles and responsibilities required for indirect volunteering.

Origins of Leadership Opportunities for Youth Volunteers who Participate in Indirect Forms of Service

As explained by Stoneman (2002), volunteer organizations need to keep youth involved in meaningful opportunities to help overcome the “disrespect and marginalization” which they experience in society. Youth identified that they were engaged in meaningful volunteer work that promoted their leadership skills and opportunities and often had a high amount of responsibility. Most volunteers felt that their volunteer roles *made* them leaders. As explained in the literature by Kirkpatrick-Johnson et al., (1998), many youth who volunteer come from advantaged, non-marginalized backgrounds and this was no different for some of the youth volunteer participants who were engaged in this study of indirect service delivery. Those participants that seemed to have had come from marginalized backgrounds were very high achievers. Most participants identified that they had a desire to be a leader and wanted to expand their leadership skills.

The participants identified that undertaking public education was the most valued skill and service activity in indirect volunteering. This occurred in the form of researching an issue, developing presentations, campaigns, and workshops in teams, and delivering these activities in teams. These tasks required them to develop leadership skills to be able to lead the public in their awareness-raising endeavours. Not all youth have the confidence or the resources to educate the public. It appeared that it was important to assist some of the youth from more marginalized neighbourhoods in building these skills in leadership. Team work often helped in developing these skills for everyone and collectively built upon individual skills. What was most relevant

was that teamwork was the most valued form of leadership for youth over celebrating individual leaders, as they felt they were able to collectively engage their organization and stakeholder audiences better this way. The relationships that youth built in their teams were also very important

Barriers to Engagement of Youth Volunteers in Indirect Forms of Service

There were a number of barriers to engagement. Prior literature identified that marginalized youth, especially youth who were new immigrants had many barriers to engagement (The Calgary Immigrant Aid Society, 2005). In the current research however, youth felt that their organizations were doing a reasonable job of being inclusive to groups of youth volunteers from diverse racial and cultural backgrounds.

Although some of the participants came from a position of racial and socioeconomic disadvantage, they acquired a position of advantage in their leadership roles. Some of these youth may have already come from a place of advantage as some of the participants noted that youth need to have a certain level of academic skill in order to understand and participate in an indirect role. As stated before, these volunteers were high-achievers and were optimistic about the benefits that their leadership positions would have for their futures.

Although the specific socioeconomic status of most participants was unknown, as youth participants were not asked directly about this in their interviews, two youth volunteers came from an African-Canadian neighbourhood that was fraught with poverty and crime. The youth volunteers from this neighbourhood fit the profile of their community members and experienced these issues themselves. Despite the diversity of the youth interviewed and the known challenges faced by some, all seemed to be high achievers based on the complex issues they displayed an in-depth understanding of in their interviews, and the high academic quality of the vocabulary used

by most of them. As found in the research by Padanyi et al., (2010), youth experience “academic enhancement” through volunteering. All youth recruited for participation in this study were also identified by their staff contacts as having volunteered in their current positions for approximately a year. One assumption may therefore be that much of the intellect and insight shared by participants was a function of their academic enhancement through volunteering.

This research highlighted that volunteer organizations were failing to be inclusive in the areas of preventing age barriers, socioeconomic barriers –such as lack of finances to afford accessible transportation to the locations where volunteer activities were taking place and being more inclusive of both genders. For example, one participant noted that her volunteer group only had one male member out of ten. This issue is not unique to the experiences of this participant. Although insufficient literature has been found specifically investigating issues of gender among youth volunteers, the majority of participants in this study were female. Three of the five organizations provided only female participants, suggesting that many organizations struggle to attract participation among male youth. Since recent literature (Pomerantz, Altermatt, & Saxon, 2002) points to higher academic achievement among females than males, this may explain the lack of male presence in indirect services, especially since the participants explained that indirect service work is very complex and attracts only high achievers. As for the two of three male participants who came from the same organization, they seemed to have experienced much achievement as a result of their volunteering. Since they were living and volunteering in a high crime, low socioeconomic status neighbourhood, the accessibility of their organization and opportunities for upward mobility that were available were highly attractive to them.

One participant also acknowledged that language was a barrier to participation for youth who do not speak English as a first language. The Calgary Immigrant Aid Society (2005) also

noted that limited English-language skills presents a barrier to participation for youth because youth who have a limited grasp of the English language may feel self-conscious about volunteering. Also, organizations typically require their volunteers to have a strong grasp of the English language. The participant who recognized this barrier for his non-English speaking peers recommended that organizations working with youth volunteers need to partner with multicultural groups and services offering English as a second language to better facilitate access to volunteer opportunities requiring English language skills and enlighten English-speaking youth volunteers about the diverse languages spoken by their peers.

In regards to the noted age barriers, another participant explained that younger youth volunteers have a difficult time finding volunteer opportunities because of a “paradox” that many agencies require them to already have volunteer experience. If youth need experience to volunteer, then how are younger youth ever going to gain access to their first volunteer experience? Tessier et al., (2006, p. 17) recommend that organizations need to invest more energy in reaching “12-year olds” in order to “foster an early introduction to volunteering and help to ensure that young people will continue to volunteer in the community.”

Stoneman (2002) also found that organizational barriers – those that are embedded in the structures, roles, and responsibilities of the organization, are important barriers to break in order to make it easier for youth to participate in volunteer work. Many of the participants focused upon these organizational barriers. Insufficient organizational resources prevented youth volunteers from being able to carry out their work. Power imbalances, such as hierarchical structures where staff exercise power over youth volunteers, prevented youth from feeling empowered by their volunteer work. Volunteer projects that were too grand and complex in scale were overwhelming and difficult to understand, making it less likely for youth to achieve the

desired outcomes of their work. Location and space was another barrier as the organizations and event locations were not accessible or inclusive for some volunteers. Another organizational barrier emerged was that youth felt competition with other volunteer groups that were more successful with their recruitment and fundraising which made them feel discouraged.

One participant identified mandated volunteering as a serious issue and considerable barrier for youth volunteers. This participant explained that mandated volunteering presents an engagement barrier for those youth who volunteer only because they are forced to because forced volunteering is not true engagement. Mandated volunteering is also an engagement barrier for those youth who are committed to civic engagement because they find themselves put off from volunteering with teams of youth who are just trying to collect their 40 hours of service. Padanyi et al., (2010) acknowledged that many students may not see the impact of their mandated volunteer program. They recommend that the goals and objectives of mandated volunteering need to be a clear component of this program and suggest that community service learning provides the tools to explore these goals and objectives of volunteering further (Padanyi et al., 2010).

There were some other barriers to engagement that did not appear in prior literature on the subject. These barriers were different kinds of organizational barriers (Stoneman, 2002). An additional barrier included difficulty connecting with stakeholders. Another barrier was age, as participants explained that it is hard to get youth to take initiative to volunteer. Organizations that require youth to have prior volunteer experience do little to help youth who are pursuing their first volunteer opportunities.

Second Research Question

Role Ambiguity

Another research question dealt with how role ambiguity impacts indirect forms of volunteer service for youth volunteers. Since this research offers a first glance of how role ambiguity is a barrier to indirect volunteering for youth, there were many unique aspects of this issue that emerged in the research that had not appeared in the prior research reviewed on role ambiguity experienced by adult volunteers (Merrel, 2000; Ross et al., 1999) and research about youth volunteers.

Role ambiguity emerged as a problem where participants expressed that they were unclear about their volunteer roles *and* the work of the organization when they started their volunteer positions. At the outset of their volunteer work, many youths described feeling muddled about their roles and expressed that they were not provided clear definitions of their roles. Other volunteers felt unclear about work carried out by their organization that did not fall within their volunteer duties and responsibilities. One participant articulated why role ambiguity is such a barrier to volunteering in indirect services for youth. That barrier is that often the distance between volunteers and their clients is substantial both in terms of geography and the multiple layers of the organization. As a result the youths are unsure about what they are really doing or accomplishing and how their role fits into this process. This participant suggested that the two best ways to prevent youth volunteers from feeling this distance are to offer opportunities to travel where their intended clients are located abroad and/or to help them focus on change that they can affect in their own communities through awareness raising and fundraising activities where travel is not possible. The greater the capacity of organizations to reduce the distance between indirect volunteers and their clients, the more clear that youth volunteers will be about their work.

Some volunteers became clearer of their roles with time. Participants were better able to understand their own roles and the work carried out by their organizations as a result of mentorship and guidance from staff and other volunteers, with increased immersion in their work and with the assistance of a formal orientation and training manuals. When asked who their clients were and to anticipate how they would value their work, it became clear that some participants had not reflected on this before. Participants came to discover much more about their indirect service work by being prompted to reflect about their work from the perspective of their clients for the first time during the semi-structured, in-depth interviews. This was implied when participants made comments indicating their volunteer teams had never given a name to their service communities and clients or hypothesized what the outcomes of their work would be with these groups. By being prompted to reflect for the first time as identified by most of the participants on who their clients were and ascribe meaning to how they valued their work, participants seemed to discover that their client base ranged from: community members, stakeholders from other organizations, future youth volunteers and youth audiences, and the general public - to the vulnerable populations intended to benefit from their volunteer work. However, most youth eventually found their work to be meaningful, valuable, and, as shared by one participant, “cool.” Nevertheless, there were a few participants who felt that many community members value direct service volunteers more because, as expressed by one participant, indirect service volunteers are seen as a “luxury” who accomplish little with their volunteer work. This statement may reflect the experience of some youth volunteers that they were treated by staff like “little helpers” and were given “busy work” in their indirect service roles in the form of discussing community and world issues without any extension of meaningful service intentions in this dialogue.

Third Research Question

Other Issues Faced by Youth Volunteers in Indirect Services

Two additional core themes emerged from the data analysis that were not major topics reviewed in the literature or topics addressed directly in the interview questions.

The Emergence of Empowerment and Power Imbalances in Youth Volunteer Roles

Youth found that indirect service work could be empowering for themselves because this type of volunteering allowed them to educate, influence, and motivate others to do something about their cause of interest and to turn their cause or their “passions” into action. Youth found that indirect service work could also be empowering for the communities they were serving by engaging community members in action towards a common cause.

At the same time youth could feel disempowered. Youth felt particularly disempowered when their volunteer work was undertaken by other youth who just wanted to complete their mandatory 40 hours of service. Some felt overshadowed by other youth volunteers who seemed to naturally have strong leadership skills. Factors such as organizational hierarchy, power imbalances, turnover, complex volunteer projects, competing organizations and an apathetic public made indirect service work disempowering too.

The Meaning Youth Ascribe to Their Volunteer Experiences

There were a number of ways in which youth volunteers felt volunteering was important. According to the participants, indirect service volunteering gives youth an opportunity to explore their own values, turn their passions into volunteering, become immersed in their communities, make their “mark” and “make change,” learn along with their service clients and seek meaning in how fun their volunteer work is for their clients.

However, youth volunteers also described a number of situations that detract from the value they hold in volunteering. For example, sometimes youth volunteers volunteered for the wrong reasons such as fulfilling their mandatory service requirements for high school and boosting their egos. Some indirect service volunteers felt exploited. One volunteer stated that she was treated like a “little helper” at her organization. It is difficult for some youth volunteers to pick only one cause to work on since many youth are passionate about a number of causes and want to be able to change the world by addressing all of them. Youth acknowledge that many grassroots organizations are limited in capacity to carry out their work because of their size and budgets. Also, they often did not get any feedback from their efforts.

Strengths and Challenges of Indirect Service Work

One of the research sub questions asked what strengths and challenges youth face with indirect volunteering that may be unique to this type of volunteerism.

Challenges

There were many challenges related to indirect volunteering that the participants discussed. Some volunteers were unable to volunteer to their fullest potential due to organizational barriers. Participants were also discouraged by those youth who volunteer for less altruistic reasons. Participants also felt like they were ineffective leaders when overshadowed by other youth volunteers whom they perceived to have natural leadership skills, and when their organizations failed to emphasize the importance of collective leadership in volunteer teams by rewarding individual leaders only. Some unique and profound barriers included barriers towards younger youth, male volunteers, and youth who do not speak English. When one of the participants reflected on the experiences of his peers looking for volunteer opportunities, he explained that all of the positions that were available for youth in Toronto required them to read,

speak, and understand English. This posed a barrier for many of Toronto's non-English speaking first-generation Canadians. Complexity of the volunteer work as well as competition with other volunteer clubs and organizations were also profound barriers to engagement. Role ambiguity was a severe barrier to engagement as many participants were unclear about their volunteer roles, the work of their organizations, their client base, and the outcomes of their work. Power imbalances affected the capacity of youth to carry out their work where an organization was hierarchical.

Strengths

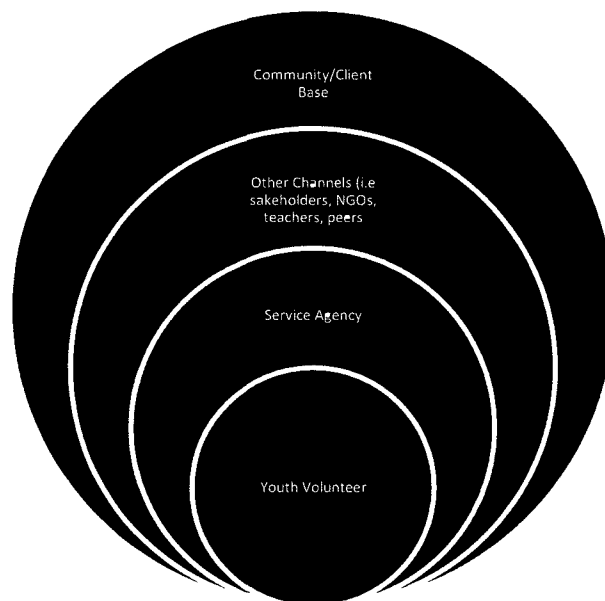
Despite some of the profound challenges that youth volunteers faced in performing their volunteer work, there were many important strengths that they identified. Many youth were motivated to volunteer to affect change on a large scale and make their mark on their communities. Many were also very passionate about the issue they were addressing and their volunteer organizations. Volunteers who perform indirect service work also saw themselves as leaders. Leadership opportunities were often built into their volunteer roles. They also valued public education as the most important leadership role in indirect service work and valued the leadership of volunteer teams. Youth volunteers also felt that their organizations were successful in reducing barriers to engagement by being fairly inclusive of diverse racial and cultural groups of youth volunteers. Organizations were most successful in reducing barriers to engagement by helping youth see the direct impact of their work in their communities, and by offering hands-on work. Role ambiguity was reduced when staff offered youth volunteers an orientation and training manuals, mentorship, and facilitated their increased immersion in the organization and additional volunteer work. Role ambiguity was also reduced when participants reflected on who their client base was and how they would value their work. Participants also felt that their

indirect service work was empowering for themselves and their communities. They felt that volunteering was very important to them because it allowed them to explore their own values and turn their passions into social change. They also believed that volunteering was the means for youth to affect real change in their communities.

Conceptual Framework

I feel that the results can be placed in a broader conceptual framework. I have created three diagrams.

Figure 1. The indirect volunteering path of service outputs to results for clients.



The first figure demonstrates the complexity of indirect services. The youth volunteers impact the service agencies where they volunteer. At the same time the service agency may empower them by offering clear roles and responsibilities that are supported by access to resources, teamwork, and engaged stakeholders. Alternatively agencies may disempower the volunteers by having vague roles with no clear outcomes. Male youth, younger youth volunteers, and youth who do not speak English can also be disempowered. Often the volunteer's work must impact

and collaborate with governments and other NGOs. Finally, the service of the volunteers may impact the actual communities thanks to the efforts of the organization to channel their work to stakeholders whom channel their work to the service community. The service communities are sometimes within the youth volunteers' municipality, but also may be far away such as in foreign countries.

This diagram illustrates that indirect youth volunteer work often has to go through many levels to impact the clients and may take a long period of time to have an eventual benefit. As an example, two of the participants used education materials from their organization to establish a 1-800 hotline to MPs in their community. They educated the peers at their campus about the conflict in Darfur and the 1-800 hotline so that their peers could lobby their politicians to make aid to Darfur an issue of Federal interest. This process can often be frustrating for youth who wish to see the actual immediate impact of their work. At the same time it is often difficult for youth to understand how all of the levels of change operate. Their work can further be empowered or disempowered by the service agency where they volunteer through a range of different processes.

The impact that indirect youth volunteers have on their intended clients via embeddedness in indirect levels of service is representative of macro-level change as influenced by Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory (Darling, 2007). Youth have a direct impact on the population they are directly imbedded in, but the impacts of their work on their intended clients at the macro level must travel through the remaining layers of populations they are embedded in to reach their clients at the external layer of the system.

As Bronfenbrenner's Ecological System's Theory suggests, the relationship between the individual and the macro level systems they are embedded in are reciprocal (Darling, 2007).

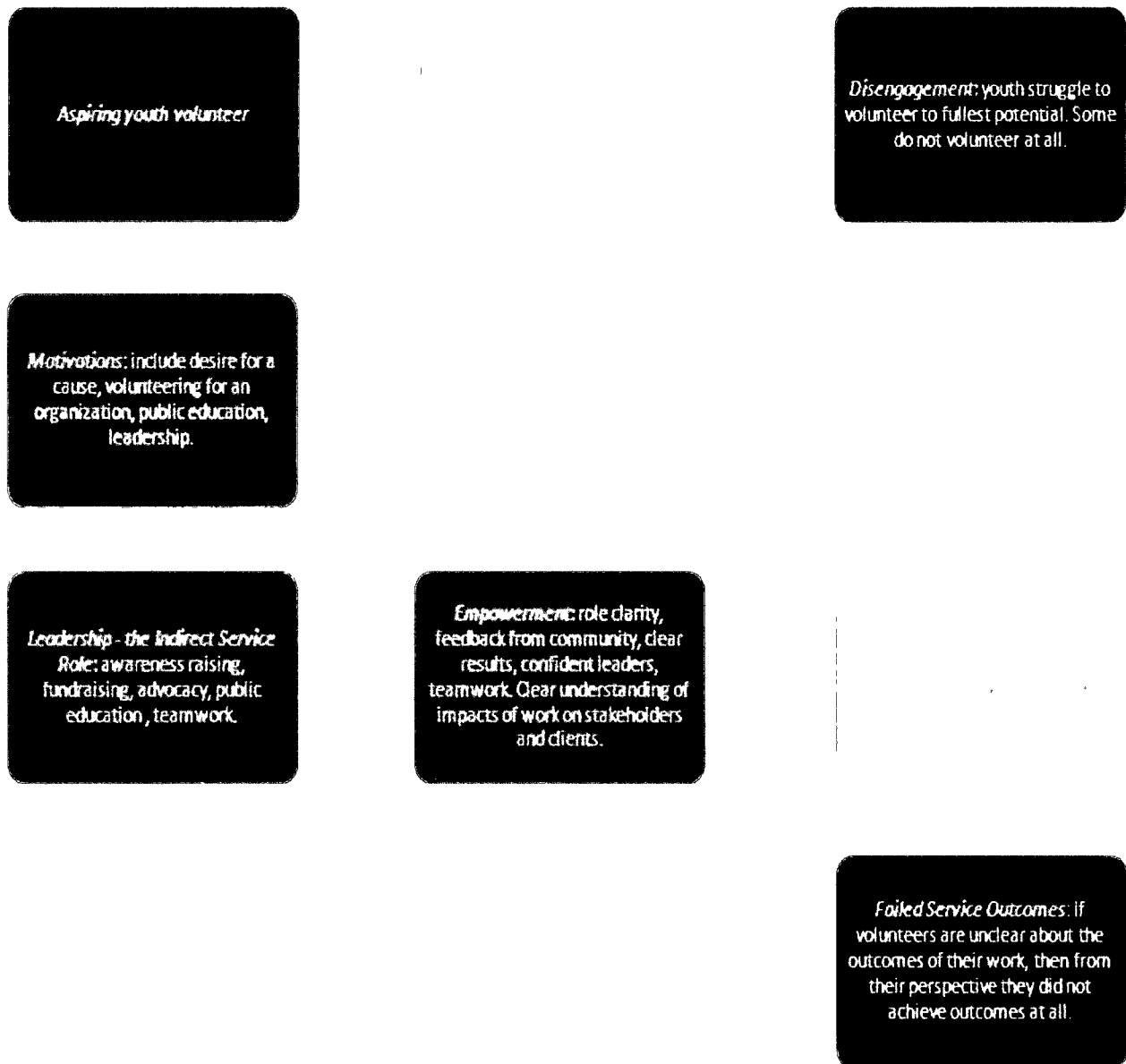
While the individual can indirectly impact their macro level systems, the macro level systems also impact the individual (Darling, 2007). This process is made possible thanks to the direct services that youth volunteers provide to their organizations and their stakeholder audiences as the public educators they are. This process is particularly relevant for youth volunteers who are impacted by the successful outcomes of their work at the macro level thanks to their relationships with their organizations and the stakeholders they partner with who channel their volunteer service work.

Although the youth who participated in this study were identified as indirect volunteers because their volunteer work travels through many stakeholders to reach the intended client, it is important to acknowledge the significance of the volunteer's relationships with their service organizations and their stakeholders as these components of the indirect service experience also play an important role in shaping outcomes at all levels of macro service (Darling, 2007). With this acknowledgement, youth volunteers who provide indirect services provide direct services in order to do so. Indirect service volunteers provide a direct service to their organization by expanding the organization's capacity to reach vast networks of stakeholders who have access to the intended service clients. Indirect service volunteers also provide a direct service to their stakeholders by educating them about important issues affecting their own or global communities and the direct roles they can take to affect change. It is therefore important to acknowledge that not only do indirect volunteers service their intended communities via channels of stakeholders and the organizations they volunteer for, but they provide a direct service to their stakeholder groups and their organizations.

The second figure considers strengths and challenges that emerged under each of the core themes to demonstrate how to best engage youth in indirect volunteering with meaningful

outcomes. The diagram also illustrates two problematic paths (in orange) that lead to disengagement of youth and disempowerment of the youth volunteers, staff, and clients.

Figure 2. Three pathways that prevent and promote successful outcomes for youth volunteers providing indirect services.



The first problematic path reads horizontally along the row across the top three boxes. As discovered from participant statements, there are barriers to engagement that prevent youth from volunteering in all of the activities that they want to participate in with their organization. These

barriers to engagement sometimes prevent youth from being able to volunteer at all. They include gender, age, language, low income-status (e.g. unable to pay for transportation) an inaccessible volunteer location, and insufficient volunteer space.

The second problematic path is in the bottom row in the diagram. There are many motivators that help aspiring youth volunteers pursue their ideal leadership opportunity as indirect service volunteers. These motivations include a desire to volunteer to do something about a cause, a desire to volunteer for a specific organization, and an interest in pursuing public education work to improve one's leadership capacity as an indirect volunteer. Once youth acquire an indirect volunteer position, which includes awareness-raising, fundraising, advocacy, public education, and teamwork in volunteer youth groups, they are recognized as leaders.

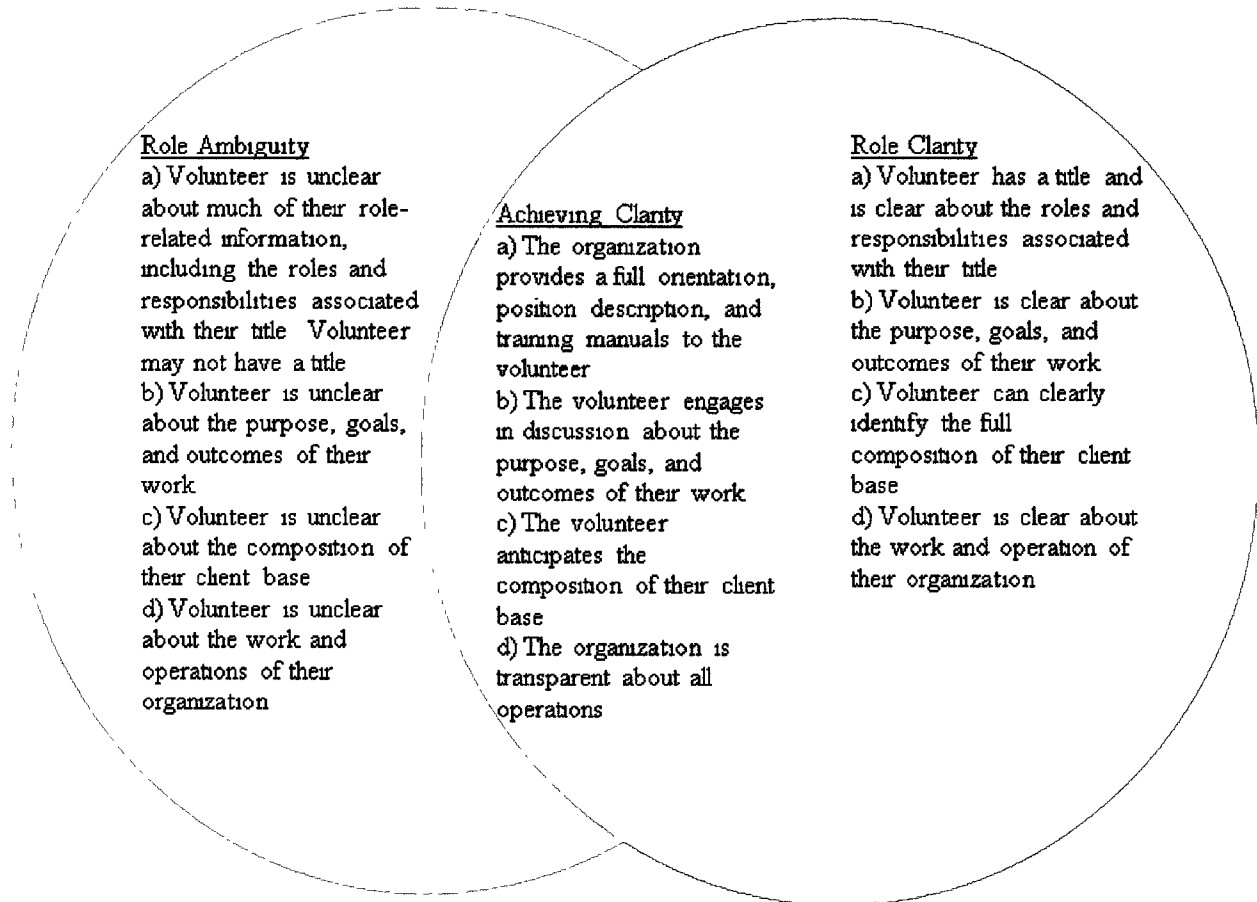
Sometimes, youth in these positions are met with role ambiguity, which is a major barrier to participation. If this happens, youth feel disempowered because the purpose of their roles and outcomes of their work are unclear. If youth cannot see or understand the outcomes of their work, they feel disempowered as they doubt their leadership abilities in producing concrete results. This may then results in a lack of service outcomes. As described in the diagram, if youth do not understand or cannot see the results of their work, then they are not achieving the desired service outcomes from their perspective. Also, if they are disempowered due to role ambiguity and lack confidence in their leadership, then the quality of their volunteering will be affected and there may indeed be no outcomes of their work for the service community at all. Youth volunteers therefore need clear goals to work towards to be confident leaders providing indirect services and to have a positive impact on their service community.

The third path therefore represents the successful engagement of youth volunteers who achieve the intended outcomes of their indirect service work. This path reads vertically down to

the third box on the left in the diagram, then horizontally across the second-to last row of boxes. Once youth volunteers successfully acquire a leadership position as an indirect volunteer, they need to feel empowered as leaders in order to achieve the intended outcomes of their indirect service work. Youth feel empowered when they are clear about their volunteer roles. Youth are clear about their roles and the outcomes of their work when they have clearly defined roles and responsibilities and are supported by strong teams of youth volunteers. They are particularly clear about their roles and the outcomes of their work if they are able to understand the indirect service process and anticipate the outcomes of their work. This can be achieved by reflection, which will help youth identify who the stakeholders of their work are, how they facilitate their work, and who their clients are and how they benefit from their work at the macro service level (Roehlkepartain, 2009).

Organizations that work with youth volunteers must therefore avoid role ambiguity in order for the volunteer experience to be beneficial for youth, their organization, and their clients. It is imperative that organizations have a clear understanding of the barriers that create role ambiguity, factors that improve clarity, and the outcomes of these actions. From the analysis of participant responses, Figure 3 has been provided depicting this process. Items in the overlapping space titled “Achieving Clarity” represent a direct action that either the organization or youth volunteer can take to avoid the corresponding conditions that lead to role ambiguity and achieve role clarity.

Figure 3. Factors that contribute to role ambiguity, role clarity, and actions that youth volunteers and the organizations they work for can take to reduce ambiguity.



This thesis supported the importance of the concept of Job Design (Bowman et al., 2001). Without adequate Job Design youth volunteers found their work to be confusing and challenging. Job Design appeared important for helping youth volunteers craft their position descriptions so that they can feel more clear about their work and more confident volunteering with their organization, thereby improving their engagement. In addition, grounded theory as a method of inquiry, *guided by an interpretivist framework* (Strauss & Corbin, 1996, p. 6, Kelliher, 2005) was very helpful in helping youth volunteers to clarify their role and more clearly identify their

clients. This method might be used to help other volunteers to reflect upon their work more effectively.

Practice Implications

Since strengths and challenges of indirect service volunteering for youth were found for each of the core themes, volunteer service organizations need to tailor their recruitment, volunteer management, and volunteer services to harness the strengths and prevent the challenges that youth volunteers face in indirect service.

Harnessing the Strengths of Youth Volunteers Engaged in Indirect Service Work

My recommendations related to harnessing the strengths of youth engaged in indirect volunteering flow predominantly from the core themes about motivation, leadership opportunities, and the existential importance of volunteering to youth volunteers. Youth volunteers highly value volunteerism as a means to affect change in their communities, turn their “passions into volunteering,” and volunteer for an issue for which they feel deeply. Volunteer organizations should target youth interested in the cause being addressed by the indirect service instead of targeting youth who just want to collect their mandatory 40 hours of volunteer service, especially since many youth who are motivated to volunteer for this reason do not understand the value of volunteering and belittle the value of volunteer work of truly engaged youth volunteers.

Volunteer service organizations should also understand the importance of ensuring youth engaged in indirect volunteering are confident leaders (Stoneman, 2002). Since public engagement was identified by participants as the most important role of an indirect service volunteer, volunteer organizations should ensure that their indirect service youth receive these opportunities and trained to deliver them. Many youth choose indirect service volunteering to improve their skills, and many of the participants valued teamwork over celebrating the

leadership of individual volunteers. Organizations should therefore focus on skill building in teams with their youth volunteers, so that volunteers seeking to improve their public education skills are not overshadowed by other youth volunteers who naturally have these skills.

Correcting Challenges faced by Youth Volunteers Engaged in Indirect Service Work

My recommendations to prevent or reduce challenges faced by youth volunteers engaged in indirect service work come from the core themes related to barriers to engagement, empowerment and power imbalances, and role ambiguity. Organizations need to ensure that they are inclusive to all groups of youth volunteers (The Calgary Immigrant Aid Society, 2005). While organizations in the Greater Toronto Area may be inclusive of diverse cultural and racial groups of youth volunteers, they need to be more inclusive to male youth, younger youth, and newcomer youth who have a limited understanding of the English language. The participant who mentioned that language was a barrier to engagement for youth volunteers recommended that volunteer organizations partner with other organizations in the community offering language services to newcomer youth, so that new youth in Canada have access to the volunteer opportunities that they are interested in. Volunteer organizations should also actively encourage male youth when recruiting volunteers for indirect service opportunities. There should be entry level volunteer positions with opportunities for skills development for younger groups of youth volunteers because not every youth pursuing a volunteer opportunity will have had prior volunteer experience.

Organizational barriers to engagement need to be reduced, so that youth are not disempowered in their volunteer roles by structural barriers on the part of their organizations (Stoneman, 2002). First, organizations should avoid hierarchical structures that afford more responsibility to staff over youth volunteers. Youth need to be made to feel valuable and an

integral part of the organization and need to be actively involved in decision making. Emphasizing the value of teamwork should be championed over focusing on the leadership of individual youth volunteers. Despite the complexity of indirect service work, organizations need to make indirect service work less complicated for youth volunteers by developing episodic, hands on opportunities for volunteering. This approach may mean engaging youth more directly with stakeholders such as teachers, peers, community members, and politicians who help them accomplish their service goals for the vulnerable populations who indirectly benefit from their work. To engage youth more directly with these groups, the organizations they volunteer for need to encourage the stakeholder audiences of the youth volunteers to provide direct feedback reflecting stakeholder learning and service outcomes to the youth. Organizations should also offer as many opportunities as possible for youth to see the outcomes of their work. Youth need to see the outcomes of the research completed that tracks outcomes over time. Youth also appreciate opportunities to directly see the outcomes of their work, such as participating in agency tours, viewing projects at satellite or partner sites of the work, receiving feedback from stakeholders whom they raise awareness with, and, if the service recipients are overseas, travelling to do some direct volunteering with the intended vulnerable population.

Participants also provided recommendations for reducing role ambiguity that are similar to the components of job design (Bowen et al., 2001). First, youth would like orientation and training manuals describing their volunteer roles. Also, since the boundaries of indirect service volunteering are “limitless,” then job design would be an appropriate tool to help youth develop volunteer position descriptions. It is flexible enough to be tailored to the individual roles that each youth volunteer fills in an indirect service capacity (Bowen et al., 2001). Youth also appreciate mentorship from staff to help them understand their volunteer roles, and opportunities

for increased immersion in the organization to better understand the work of their organization. The more opportunities that youth have to become engaged in volunteer opportunities and work with staff, the better they are able to understand their roles and the work of the organization.

Reflective interview questions using grounded theory from an interpretivist framework (Strauss & Corbin, 1996, p. 6; Kelliher, 2005) helped youth become more clear about their indirect service roles. Youth reflected on and imagined their entire client base and anticipated how all of their stakeholders and intended service recipients would value their work. Since reflecting helped youth become more clear about their indirect service work, then reflection would be an excellent tool for organizations to help their youth volunteers better understand their roles.

Staff can help youth volunteers reflect on their indirect service work by using Community Service Learning reflection tools (Roehlkepartain, 2009). Community Service Learning tools prompt youth volunteers to reflect on their service experience to anticipate benefits for themselves in terms of their interpersonal and career goals, and benefits to their service organization (Roehlkepartain, 2009). With these tools, youth can also imagine the potential benefits and outcomes for the service client. Roehlkepartain (2009, p. 12), explains that: "Effective service learning incorporates multiple challenging and engaging reflection activities that prompt deep thinking and analysis about oneself, one's relationship to society, and complex community challenges." Reflection involves a variety of oral, written, artistic, and nonverbal activities before, during and after service experiences." Outcomes are best understood by youth when they engage in a process known as demonstration following their reflections on their community service experience. Youth are encouraged to demonstrate their learning about themselves and their impact on the community and organization by teaching their experiences to

small groups of people and by celebrating their achievements through awards and recognition.

Using reflection exercises guided by the principles of Community Service Learning can help youth become more clear about how their indirect service work benefits their organization, their stakeholders, their clients, and themselves (Roehlkepartain, 2009).

Limitations and Recommendations for Future Research

One of the limitations of the study was that there were not any questions related directly to providing practice recommendations. While the semi-structured in-depth interview process produced ample feedback from participants, there was insufficient information about practice recommendations. I was able to assume service recommendations from strengths and challenges discussed related to indirect service work and from ideas related to role ambiguity. Youth unfortunately were not directly asked what their organizations could do to improve upon some of the challenges related to indirect service work. Youth were not asked about steps their organizations could take to improve upon the challenges that emerged from the results because this was to be an objective of a semi-structured follow-up focus group for the participants. Some of the identified barriers to engagement affected participation in the follow-up focus group, and the focus group had to be cancelled. An important piece of the puzzle, whereby youth reflect on their responses and provide meaningful solutions was missed.

This research sought to explore themes that are unique to indirect service volunteering, and to call attention to strengths and challenges unique to this form of volunteering so that staff can better articulate indirect volunteering to the youth they recruit to perform these services. Distinguishing another form of volunteer service in the literature may be a limited approach to bringing clarity to a youth volunteer's work. As addressed by Volunteer Canada (2009),

assigning a value to a volunteer's work by ascribing the same formula or model to every volunteer's work omits the value that individual volunteers ascribe to their work.

Since the importance of reflection as a component of Community Service Learning emerged as a practice recommendation. Future research should investigate the Community Service Learning work (Roehlkepartain, 2009) carried out by youth volunteers, so that more information about the strengths and challenges of this type of volunteering can be ascertained (Volunteer Canada, 2009).

Conclusion

Research about youth volunteers has dealt with motivations of youth to volunteer, leadership opportunities, and barriers to engagement (Tessier et al., 2006; Stoneman, 2002; & The Calgary Immigrant Aid Society, 2005). However, the research has not, investigated role ambiguity (Fried et al., 2008) for youth volunteers or youth participation in indirect service work (Volunteer-Mid South, 2008). The purpose of this research was to examine strengths, challenges, and emerging issues related to motivation, leadership, and barriers to engagement for youth volunteers involved in indirect services and investigate how role ambiguity affects youth who are indirect volunteers. Another objective of the research was to identify emerging issues for youth participating in indirect service volunteering that have not emerged in the literature before.

What was found was that role ambiguity is a problem for youth who provide indirect service work. New strengths and challenges specific to indirect services emerged under the first three core themes.

Conceptual and practical implications were discussed. Tools for reducing role ambiguity and recommendations related to the youth volunteer's feedback were suggested for volunteer organizations (Bowen et al., 2001; Roehlkepartain, 2009). Applying grounded theory from an

interpretivist framework (Straus & Corbin, 1996, p. 6; Kelliher, 2005) was championed for future research. Future research should engage youth volunteers in more opportunities to provide recommendations for specific service organizations.

Indirect service has minimally been explored as a type of volunteering in the Canadian literature on youth volunteers. This thesis provides new insights into the role and issues of indirect services for youth.

Although research is lacking on volunteers in social work, some literature does acknowledge the impact of volunteering on the third sector. Evers et al., (2004, p. 14), point out that: "...third sector organizations operate for the public good and as part of a guaranteed system of welfare services...there has been an increasingly complex relationship between public policies, state authorities, and actors within the third sector." The work of volunteers has a huge impact on the efficiency and effectiveness of the third sector. The third sector, which includes the volunteer and nonprofit sector, has a great benefit for the welfare state, and often shoulders a large percentage of social services in the field of social work (Evers et al., 2004, p. 14). It is hoped that by improving the efficiency and effectiveness of how youth conduct their work in the volunteer sector the result will be noticeable benefits to our social services. This thesis raises some key issues and provides a vision for future youth volunteer work.

This research also has profound implications for macro social work practice, and it is the focus of this research on youth volunteers that makes this particularly important. Youth volunteers who participate in indirect services are engaged in providing macro level social work with the NGOs and other service agencies where they volunteer. So long as efforts are made to improve their engagement and subsequently the efficiency and effectiveness of their work, the immersion of students, mainly youth in macro-level practice will help improve this area of social

work through learning (Meyer, 2007). Community Service Learning tools in practica and in all volunteer work is one way to fill the void of student learning (Roehlkepartain, 2009) of macro social work practice.

Despite the noted research limitations of this thesis, it is the first research to explore youth volunteers who provide indirect services. This research also adds to the literature about role ambiguity and offers solutions to this very critical issue in the line of indirect volunteering.

*Appendices*Appendix A – Letter of Invitation to the Agencies and Volunteers
Providing Indirect Services

REB#: 2156

Dear staff and volunteers of For Youth Initiative,

You have been selected for an interview and follow up focus group study through Wilfrid Laurier University about youth delivering indirect forms of volunteer service in the Greater Toronto Area. Your agency was selected because your youth volunteers offer one or both of the following indirect services: awareness raising initiatives and fundraising initiatives. The main research questions under investigation are:

- 1) What strengths and challenges affect youth volunteers who provide indirect forms of service?
- 2) What motivations, barriers to engagement, and opportunities for leadership affect youth volunteers who participate in indirect forms of service?
- 3) How does role ambiguity impact indirect forms of service?

I would like to request that two to three interviews each with one youth volunteer be conducted at your own agency in order to answer the research questions. Your help is requested selecting and recruiting 2-3 youth volunteers between the ages of 16 and 24 whom can read, write, and comprehend English to participate in the interviews, no longer than 1 hour each at a specific date and time to be negotiated with you very soon. I also request permission to recruit the participation of the same volunteers in a follow up focus group with other youth volunteers being interviewed at other agencies to take place at a date, time, and location to be announced soon. While all youth volunteers interviewed will be invited to the follow up focus group, their participation in the focus group is not required.

Consent forms and confidentiality agreements have been provided for enough volunteers who agree to participate in the interviews and focus group. I request your assistance disseminating all consent forms and confidentiality agreements. Youth volunteers who agree to participate in the interviews can hand them in to me when each meets for an interview before the interview begins. I will also bring extra copies of consent forms and confidentiality agreements to each interview in the event that a participating volunteer has misplaced their forms.

Risks to participation are minimal and are in the interview and focus group design. Consenting participants agree, as outlined in this statement in this letter, to have their responses audio recorded and transcribed both during the interview, and following the interview when the audio recordings are reviewed by me. I will be the only person to have access to audio recordings and transcribed interview and focus group statements. I will be using direct quotations in the write-up of the results so any participant is welcome to identify following interview and focus group sessions any information that they would not like to have quoted directly. Participants understand that quotations may contain some identifying information but strict efforts will be made by the researcher to omit that information from any quotations used. Participants will also have an opportunity before the interview begins to sign whether they do or do not consent to have direct quotations used on the consent to participate form. All other information shared will be

summarized and condensed into broad themes as they are compared to other participant responses.

The benefit to participation is that all information that youth volunteers who participate in the interviews and focus group share with me will help to raise insights about youth participation in indirect forms of volunteer service, an area of youth volunteerism that has never been distinguished in the research about youth volunteers before. Youth participants will therefore hold the esteem of having contributed to literature about this distinct area of youth volunteerism. They will also hold the esteem of having influenced the way that volunteer organizations work with youth providing indirect services and may reap the benefits of their own recommendations as volunteers should their recommendations influence the way that their current organization works with youth. An additional benefit to youth volunteers who participate is that they may be rewarded volunteer hours upon your own discretion for their participation in this study, which may be used toward mandatory volunteer hours for high school students under the Ontario curriculum, community service hours, co-op hours, and applications for jobs and scholarships.

Additionally, your organization will be formally thanked in the final write-up of the results and anywhere else where the results are presented, such as conferences and workshops. You will receive a free electronic and hard copy publication of the results upon completion of the study, of which the anticipated completion time is April 2010. Both you and the youth volunteers who participate will receive the final results in an electronic copy via email, and one hard copy will be mailed to you to be shared how you see fit at your organization.

The participation of all youth volunteers in this study is voluntary. Youth volunteers may decline to participate without penalty. If your organization decides to participate, you may withdraw from the study, as may any youth volunteer at any time without penalty and without loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. If you withdraw from the study before data collection is completed your data will be returned to you or destroyed. You have the right to omit any question(s)/procedure(s) you choose.

Please respond as soon as possible to confirm your participation. I encourage you to address further enquiry to me through the following contact information and also request that you contact me should you wish to decline your participation in this research:

Voice Mail: 905-964-3392

Email: mcar6250@wlu.ca

Thank you, your consideration is greatly appreciated.

Regards,
Andrea McArthur
MSW Candidate, Wilfrid Laurier University

WILFRID LAURIER UNIVERSITY
INFORMED CONSENT STATEMENT

Exploring Services of Youth Volunteers Providing Indirect Services in the Greater Toronto Area

Researcher: Andrea McArthur

Faculty Advisor: Dr. Peter Dunn

I _____ hereby agree to participate in one hour long interview and, at my own discretion, a two hour long follow up focus group with youth volunteers from both my own organization and three other organizations (with knowledge that the date, time, and location of the focus group are to be determined) to contribute to the study about youth volunteerism in agencies providing indirect forms of volunteer service in the Greater Toronto Area. I have read the letter of invitation and understand the purpose of the study that I am about to participate in. I have also read and understand the attached confidentiality agreement. I acknowledge that I am between 16-24 years of age and that I can read, speak, write, and comprehend English. By consenting to participate in the interview, I agree to attend the interview at the below date, time, and location identified and will actively participate to the best of my ability.

Date and Time of Focus Group Session: _____.

Location:

Signature of Participant

Signature of Witness

Date

Date

I consent to have my responses quoted with the understanding that the researcher will inform me before hand which quotations are to be quoted. (Optional).

Signature of Participant

Signature of Witness

Date

Date

WILFRID LAURIER UNIVERSITY
INFORMED CONSENT STATEMENT

Exploring Services of Youth Volunteers Providing Indirect Services in the Greater Toronto Area

Researcher: Andrea McArthur

Faculty Advisor: Dr. Peter Dunn

I _____ hereby agree to recruit 2-3 youth volunteers to participate in 3, one hour long interviews at my own agency location to contribute to the study about youth volunteerism in agencies providing indirect forms of volunteer service in the Greater Toronto Area. I also agree to the participation of the same 2-3 youth volunteers in a follow up focus group at their own discretion of which the date, time, and location have yet to be determined. I have read the letter of invitation and understand the purpose of the study that volunteers in my organization are about to participate in. I have also read and understand the attached confidentiality agreement. By consenting on behalf of my organization to participate in this research, I permit all information shared by the youth volunteers of my organization, including quotations that they permit the researcher to publish to appear in the written results of the research which are to be published as a thesis paper and which may be shared both as a paper and a presentation with my own, and other organizations and academics in future.

Signature of Consenting Staff

Signature of Witness

Date

Date

Appendix D – Confidentiality Agreement for Youth Volunteers
Providing Indirect Service.

REB#: 2156

WILFRID LAURIER UNIVERSITY
Confidentiality Agreement
Exploring Services of Youth Volunteers Providing Indirect Services in the Greater Toronto Area
Researcher: Andrea McArthur
Faculty Advisor: Dr. Peter Dunn

I _____ hereby understand that all information shared by me during the interview and by both by myself and other participants during the follow up focus group session is to be kept confidential and will not be shared by the researcher outside of the interview and focus group environments. I agree that any information I share with the researcher may be quoted in the published findings but also understand that I may identify at any point of the interview any comments that I would not like the researcher to quote in the reporting of the results.

I agree to have my comments audio recorded and transcribed by the researcher and understand that most of my comments will be summarized and compared to other participant interviews after all interviews have been conducted. These responses will contribute to insights that are to appear in print and may be presented in the results of the study at conferences and workshops. I understand that, should I participate in the follow up focus group session, all comments shared by focus group participants will be respected and are not to be shared outside of the focus group setting. I agree that by failing to do so, I am breaking the confidentiality agreed to by all participants in the focus group session and would be sharing information that has the potential to harm those whom participated in the focus group session.

Signature of Participant

Signature of Witness

Date

Date

Appendix E – Interview Questions for Youth Volunteers Providing Indirect Service **REB#:** 2156

Note: The ordering of the questions may be interrupted by the semi-structured in-depth process. The researcher will probe and clarify comments from participants and ask new questions to reflect the flow of the interview as guided by participant responses.

- 1) Why don't you tell me a little bit about yourself as a volunteer?
- 2) What are the most important issues or concerns to you as a youth volunteer in order of importance?
- 3) What motivated you to volunteer for the organization you are working with?
- 4) What leadership opportunities are available to you in your current role?
- 5) Are there any barriers to volunteering in your organization for yourself or anyone else who would want to volunteer for your organization?
- 6) Describe in as much detail as possible the kind of work that you do in your volunteer role.
- 7) How clear were you about your volunteer role when you first started volunteering for this organization?
- 8) How clear do you feel about your volunteer role today?
- 9) How would your clients describe your volunteer role?*
- 10) How meaningful to your clients do you think the work is that you do?

***What else do staff and youth volunteers of programs for youth volunteers offering indirect service have to say about what makes a valuable service experience for youth volunteers, staff, and clients?*

*Influenced by interpretive questions about volunteer working relationships and workloads by Abbey-Livingston & Wiele (1984).

** To be informed throughout by the semi-structured, in-depth process (Alston & Bowles, 2003, p. 116-117).

Welcome. My name is Andrea McArthur and I am a Masters of Social Work Candidate from Wilfrid Laurier University. Thank you for your consent to take part in this very important research about youth volunteerism in indirect services. The information that you share with me today will help to raise insights about youth participation in indirect forms of volunteer service, an area of youth volunteerism that has never been distinguished in the research about youth volunteers before. This organization was selected because youth volunteers here offer one or both of the following indirect services: awareness raising initiatives and fundraising initiatives. The research questions that you will be helping me answer today are:

- 1)What strengths and challenges affect youth volunteers who provide indirect forms of service?
- 2)What motivations, barriers to engagement, and opportunities for leadership affect youth volunteers who participate in indirect forms of service?
- 3)How does role ambiguity impact indirect forms of service?

The research questions will be addressed in a semi-structured, in-depth interview process which will take no longer than one hour. As part of this process, I have prepared some questions to ask you but the ordering and flow of them may be interrupted at any time to ask questions related more closely to the rich and unanticipated information that you share with me today. The interview questions have been approved by the University Research Ethics Board and you may contact the Chair of the Research Ethics Board if you have any questions about the ethics of this project. I have received your letter of consent and confidentiality agreement which means that you agree to have your responses recorded by audio tape and direct transcription, and that you agree to the rules of confidentiality that were explained in the confidentiality agreement.

When I analyze and report the results of these interview sessions, I will be using a process called open coding which means that I will group your responses into general themes and report these themes in the results. I will only use direct quotations where a quotation provides a rich answer to a research question or an important insight. No names of participants will be identified in the results of the study, only the names of participating organizations. One risk of including quotations in reporting is that there could be identifying information in the quote even though it is not attached to any participant's name, so if there is any information that you share with me that you would prefer to not be included as a quotation in the final results, you will have an opportunity to speak directly to me and identify those quotations once the interview session has ended. The results of this study will be found in print as a thesis paper at Wilfrid Laurier University, and may also be presented at conferences and workshops in future. If you have any questions of clarification that you would like to make, I invite you to do so now.

I will now begin asking you questions and will start the audio recording.

Appendix H – Debriefing Statement for the Interview

REB#: 2156

I would like to take this time to thank you for your generosity donating your time and your thoughts to this important research. Your organization will be acknowledged in the final publication of the research and will also be formally acknowledged at any conferences or workshops where this research is presented. I would like to remind you that you will remain anonymous as the data is analyzed and reported in the final results. As stated before we began the interview session, quotations may be used where they provide rich insights into answers to the main research questions so I invite you to approach me before leaving to identify any information that you shared with me that you would not like to be directly quoted.

I would also like to remind you that you will be invited to a follow up focus group with all youth volunteers whom I interview, some of whom are volunteers from this organization. The location, date, and time of the session will be announced in future and you will be receiving this information from the staff contact of this organization. The purpose of the follow up focus group is for me to present a summary of the results of the interviews to all participants so that you can all brainstorm together ways to improve on successes and challenges of youth volunteerism in indirect services together. Your participation in the follow up focus group is not required, but it may be of interest to you for further contribution to this area of research.

Before we end the session, I invite you to take the time now to ask or make any other clarifying questions or comments about the research.

Appendix H – Proposed Budget Costs for the Researcher and Focus Group Sessions

Item	Cost
Travel by coach for researcher – 2 round trips from Kitchener to Toronto and additional subway costs	\$94.68
Cost of audio recording device	\$94.99
Cost of refreshments for both focus group sessions	\$125
Estimate of total Printing Costs	\$200
Estimate of total Postage Costs	\$20
Total Costs	\$534.67

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