

University of the Incarnate Word

The Athenaeum

Theses & Dissertations

12-2016

The Impact of Short-Term International Volunteers on the Capacity Development of a School for Students With Disabilities in the Caribbean

Edwin L. Blanton III

University of the Incarnate Word, edwin.blanton3@gmail.com

Follow this and additional works at: https://athenaeum.uiw.edu/uiw_etds



Part of the [Secondary Education and Teaching Commons](#), and the [Special Education and Teaching Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Blanton, Edwin L. III, "The Impact of Short-Term International Volunteers on the Capacity Development of a School for Students With Disabilities in the Caribbean" (2016). *Theses & Dissertations*. 14.
https://athenaeum.uiw.edu/uiw_etds/14

This Dissertation is brought to you for free and open access by The Athenaeum. It has been accepted for inclusion in Theses & Dissertations by an authorized administrator of The Athenaeum. For more information, please contact athenaeum@uiwtx.edu.

THE IMPACT OF SHORT-TERM INTERNATIONAL VOLUNTEERS ON THE CAPACITY
DEVELOPMENT OF A SCHOOL FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES
IN THE CARIBBEAN

By

EDWIN L. BLANTON III

A DISSERTATION

Presented to the Faculty of the University of the Incarnate Word
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

UNIVERSITY OF THE INCARNATE WORD

December 2016

Copyright by
Edwin L. Blanton III
2016

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

There are so many people that have been part of this journey, that it is impossible for me to thank them all. I have been very fortunate to have received the assistance, guidance, and encouragement from many people, so I am delighted to have the chance to acknowledge a portion of my supporters.

First, I want to thank my dissertation committee.

- My committee chair, Dr. David Campos, thank you for providing valuable assistance, direction, and encouragement during the dissertation process.
- Dr. Rocio Delgado, from your advice in writing my admissions essay to serving on my dissertation committee, your support has always been extremely appreciated.
- Dr. Sandra Guzman-Foster, your guidance regarding qualitative research was invaluable and I am tremendously thankful.

I would also like to thank a team of people who carried me through to complete this achievement:

- Dr. Norman St. Clair and Dr. Osman Ozturgut who convinced me to apply and accept admission to the Ph.D. program and were very supportive throughout my time in the program.
- Dr. Patricia A. Watkins who has always been an insightful mentor who would remind me who was “the captain of my ship.”

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS—Continued

- Dr. Ashley Spicer-Runnels, Dr. Trinidad Macias, and Krystina Irvin for dedicating time to make recommendations and to proofread portions of this work.
- Dr. Patricia Norman for helping to develop interview questions, proofreading, and being a remarkable sounding board.
- Jennifer Catron, and the work that we have completed together with Ready, Willing...Enable! which inspired my research question.
- My countless friends, coworkers, fellow students, and church “family” who have supported me during this journey. The long conversations, vent sessions, and peer reviews were greatly appreciated.

Special appreciation goes to the school where I conducted my research. Thank you for allowing me to be a part of your lives, and agreeing to be involved with this study.

I would finally like to acknowledge the most influential teachers I have ever had – my parents, Langdon and Marie Blanton – who instilled in me a strong work ethic and taught me the importance of being engaged in a community through service.

Edwin L. Blanton, III

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to volunteers everywhere – individuals who see beyond their own needs and work to make the world a better place for others.

Edwin L. Blanton, III

THE IMPACT OF SHORT-TERM INTERNATIONAL VOLUNTEERS ON THE CAPACITY
DEVELOPMENT OF A SCHOOL FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES
IN THE CARIBBEAN

Edwin L. Blanton, III

University of the Incarnate Word, 2016

This qualitative study contributes to the field of international volunteerism by giving insight into the impact of short-term international volunteerism on the capacity development of a school for students with disabilities in the Caribbean. In the United States over one million people volunteer abroad annually, with 70-80% of these volunteers serving eight weeks or less (Lough, 2010). However, whether the international volunteers are having an impact on the capacity development of the population served remains to be seen. This study focused on an aspect of short-term international volunteerism that has largely been ignored – how short-term international volunteers impact the capacity development of host organizations. The study was guided by the United Nations Development Programme’s Framework for Measuring Capacity Development which was utilized as the theoretical framework.

This case study found that five years after an educational program was conducted by short-term international volunteers at a school for students with disabilities in the Caribbean, there was a noted impact on capacity development. Teachers were continuing to use some of the strategies taught by the international volunteers as well as use some of the resources provided. Recommendations for further studies are provided as well as the study’s implications for the design of short-term international volunteer projects.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter	Page
List of Tables	xi
List of Figures	xii
CHAPTER 1. INTERNATIONAL VOLUNTEERISM.....	1
Orientation to Short-Term International Volunteering	1
Categories of Short-Term International Volunteer Programs.....	3
Locations Where Short-Term International Volunteers Serve	5
Measuring International Volunteerism	7
Statement of the Problem.....	8
Purpose of the Study	8
Research Question	8
Overview of Methodology	9
Theoretical Framework.....	9
Research Site.....	12
Significance of the Study	14
Summary.....	15
CHAPTER 2. LITERATURE REVIEW	16
Exploring the Literature	17
History of International Volunteerism	18
Short-term International Volunteerism	20

Table of Contents—Continued

Impact of Short-Term International Volunteer Programs on the Volunteer.....	21
Impact of Short-Term International Volunteers on Host Organizations ...	23
Impact of Short-Term International Volunteers on the Capacity Development of Host Organizations	29
Conclusion	31
CHAPTER 3. METHODOLOGY	33
The Case Study Design.....	33
Research Site.....	36
Selection of Participants	39
Role of the Researcher	39
Data Collection and Procedures.....	39
Protection of Human Subjects	42
Data Analysis	43
Trustworthiness and Credibility.....	44
Summary.....	44
CHAPTER 4. RESULTS	46
Participant Profiles.....	46
Paula.....	46
Barbara	47
William	47

Table of Contents—Continued

Carolyn.....	48
Amy.....	48
Grace.....	49
Analysis Procedure	50
Institutional Arrangements.....	51
Instructional Delivery	51
Instructional Materials	58
Leadership.....	63
Inspirational Leadership.....	63
Knowledge	68
Professional Development	69
Professional Learning Community	72
Accountability	75
Home-School Relationship.....	75
Summary	81
CHAPTER 5. DISCUSSION, IMPLICATIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS.....	82
Summary of Themes and Connections to Existing Knowledge	83
Institutional Arrangements.....	83
Leadership.....	86
Knowledge	88
Accountability.....	90

Table of Contents—Continued

Implications91

Conclusions.....93

Recommendations for Future Research94

REFERENCES96

APPENDICES.....104

 Appendix A: Institutional Review Board Approval105

 Appendix B: Participant Consent Form.....106

 Appendix C: Interview Questions.....107

 Appendix D: Researcher as Instrument108

 Appendix E: Sample of Observational Notes109

LIST OF TABLES

Table	Page
Table 1. Key Words Used and Results	19
Table 2. Participant Profiles.....	40

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure	Page
Figure 1. UNDP Framework for Measuring Capacity Development.....	10
Figure 2. Portion of the UNDP Framework Used as Theoretical Framework in this Study	11
Figure 3. Arrow pointing to where Omega Academy is located in the Caribbean	38
Figure 4. Communication Books	53
Figure 5. Schedule of Classroom Chores.....	56
Figure 6. Themes Arranged According to the Levers of Change	83

Chapter 1. International Volunteerism

Over one million people from the United States volunteer abroad annually, with 70 to 80% of the volunteers serving eight weeks or less, and the majority serving with a faith-based organization (Lough, 2010; Tourism Research & Marketing, 2008). These volunteers focus on a broad range of activities such as poverty alleviation, community development, emergency relief, and conflict resolution (International Year of the Volunteers [IYV], 2001). They are known as international volunteers. International volunteerism is an organized period of engagement and contribution to society organized by public or private organizations with volunteers who work across an international border, and receive little or no monetary compensation (Sherraden, 2001). International volunteerism encompasses professionals volunteering for a time allotment of one or two years in developing countries to volunteers committed for one to eight weeks (Beckers & Sieveking, 2001; Engle & Engle, 2003; Sherraden, Stringham, Sow, & McBride, 2006).

This study explores the impact of short-term international volunteers on the capacity development of a school serving students with disabilities in the Caribbean. An observation that many short-term international volunteers serve at schools in the Caribbean was the impetus for this study. Prior studies examining short-term international volunteers mostly focus on the impact the experience has on the volunteer, not the school. Additionally, the research has widely ignored the capacity development of the organization served by short-term international volunteers. It is this need to determine whether volunteers are having an impact on the capacity development of the schools being served, and how, that prompted this investigation.

Orientation to Short-Term International Volunteering

Most short-term international volunteering occurs with vacationers from the global north spending a portion of their free time actively addressing an issue such as poverty, the

environment, or other causes in the global south (Butcher & Smith, 2010). The most frequent projects undertaken by international volunteers include education and training as well as construction (houses, roads, health clinics, etc.) and working with children (United Nations Volunteers, 2011). Short-term international volunteerism is highest among students and people taking a career break (Sherraden et al., 2006). Wealth, democracy, and peaceful stability are associated with the global north. These countries include the United States, the United Kingdom, many Western European countries, Israel, South Africa and more. While characteristics of war, poverty, anarchy, and tyranny, are associated with the global south. These countries include India, Mexico, China, Brazil, and most of Africa among others (Odeh, 2010).

Eighty percent of young women make up the demographics for international volunteers, with Americans between the ages of 15-24 volunteering the most (Lough, 2010; Mostafanezhad, 2013). In addition to volunteering internationally, female volunteers also volunteer solo in their home country (Nestora, 2014). Data gathered by the Current Population Survey of 60,000 households from September 2004 through September 2009 revealed that “young or middle-aged, White, college graduates with higher incomes, employed full-time, and married without dependent children were the most frequent candidates for volunteer service abroad” (Lough, 2010).

Research on short-term international volunteerism has been conducted in a variety of fields including sociology, anthropology, education, political science, and business (Perry & Imperial, 2001). However, very few studies investigate the impact of international volunteerism, particularly as it relates to the capacity development of the organizations served (Lough, McBride, Sherraden, & O’Hara, 2011; Sherraden et al., 2006). Capacity Development is defined by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) as “the process through which

individuals, organizations and societies obtain, strengthen and maintain the capacities to set and achieve their own development objectives over time” (UNDP, 2009, p. 5).

Categories of short-term international volunteer programs. Short-term international volunteerism can be subdivided into three categories: (1) short-term mission trips; (2) international service-learning trips practiced at all levels of education; and (3) volunteer tourism or voluntourism (Priest & Priest, 2008; Urraca, Ledoux, & Harris, 2009, Wearing, 2001). While there are some differences in these three categories, the foundation is the same – persons from the global north travel to the global south to volunteer for what is determined to be a worthy cause. The distinct characteristics of each of the three categories are presented next.

Short-term missions. Short-term mission trips, like other short-term volunteer programs, are in condensed blocks of time and fit into spring break, annual vacation, and school breaks (Priest, Dischinger, Rasmussen & Brown, 2006). Though the number varies considerable, short-term mission trips are generally comprised of 20 people. A distinctive factor of short-term mission trips compared to other short-term international volunteer subsets is that they include proselytizing as well as service (Trinitapoli & Vaisey, 2009). Various religious groups participate in short-term mission trips; with the highest rate of participation occurring in the following order: Mormons, Protestants, conservative Protestants, and Black Protestant adolescents (Smith & Denton, 2005).

Short-term mission trips are a popular phenomenon and growing among churches in the United States (Johnson, 2014). In 2005, 2.1% of all church members in the United States traveled on short-term mission trips outside the United States, which equates to 1.5 million Americans a year (Priest & Priest, 2008). Corbett and Fikkert (2012) stated increasingly higher numbers with 120,000 participants in 1989; 450,000 in 1998; 1 million in 2003; and 2.2 million

in 2006 (Corbett & Fikkert, 2012). Wuthnow and Offutt (2008) cite a more modest figure of 1.6 million participants on short-term mission trips in 2006 which they limited to transnational trips, with the most common destinations being Mexico and Latin America due to the relative proximity to the United States and perceived economic need.

International service-learning. Another categorization of short-term international volunteerism is international service-learning. International service-learning is an organized excursion to different countries or places with different cultures where students and faculty immerse themselves in a culture that is distinct from their own (Grusky, 2000). These experiences are gaining in popularity and can be practiced at all levels of education (Urraca et al., 2009). International service-learning students are akin to “missionaries, colonizers, anthropologists, and humanitarian aid workers... [who serve]...as “good will ambassadors”” (Zemach-Bersin, 2007, p. 24).

The many benefits to a student who engages in international service-learning have been well-documented. International service-learning is more likely to foster greater problem-solving and critical thinking on the part of the students (Kraft, 2002). The learning outcomes of international service-learning programs usually include cultural competency, respect for other cultures, and a reciprocal relationship between those serving and those being served. Many faculty and university administrators believe that international experiences promote global citizenship and professional development in an increasingly interconnected world (Sternberger, Ford, & Hale, 2005). Experiences during international service-learning have led to students having increases in civic responsibility, tolerance, and an understanding of social problems (Grusky, 2000).

Volunteer tourism. Volunteer tourism is known by several names. It is also referred to as voluntourism, volunteer work holidays, working holidays, and volunteer vacations (Bakker & Lamoureux, 2008; Heuman, 2005). One of the most common definitions of volunteer tourism is a person who volunteers “in an organized way to undertake holidays that might involve aiding or alleviating the material poverty of some groups in society, the restoration of certain environments or research into aspects of society of environment” (Wearing, 2001, p. 1). Guttentag’s (2009) definition is much broader to include any tourist who participates in volunteer work while traveling. Some sources will make a distinction between volunteer tourism where a volunteer activity is incorporated into traveling, with short-term international volunteerism where the main purpose of the trip is to volunteer (Chamberlin, 2015).

Volunteer tourism programs, like most short-term mission trips and international service-learning, require the participants pay for the experience. Some of these experiences are organized by for-profit travel companies while some are nonprofit international volunteer organizations (Chamberlin, 2015). Whether for-profit or not, these are considered “sending organizations.” Sending organizations will have volunteers dedicate time at a host organization. Typically a sending organization is from the global north while a host organization is in the global south (Butcher & Smith, 2010).

Locations where short-term international volunteers serve. In 2004, there were more than 800 organizations providing international volunteer opportunities in 200 countries (Mdee & Emmott, 2008). Most of the countries that host international volunteers are in the global south (Butcher & Smith, 2010). The top volunteer travel destinations worldwide are Peru and Brazil. For international volunteers from the United States, the top destinations were Peru and Costa Rica (Nestora, 2014). The 2012 Adventure Travel Trade Association report attempted to analyze

trends in volunteerism. Their trend analysis shows the most popular destinations for volunteer itineraries, in order of popularity, were: South America, East Africa, India/South Asia, Central America, Southern Africa, and Southeast Asia (Pettrak, 2012).

Another organization, Go Overseas, studied Google searches in 2012 to examine countries that are of interest to short-term international volunteers. Their report does not tell the number of people who actually volunteered, but rather the number of searches. Of the top forty-eight countries where volunteer opportunities were searched, three were in the Caribbean (Boyer, 2012). Because there is an interest in short-term international volunteer opportunities among volunteers in the Caribbean, the region should be examined.

Short term volunteers in the Caribbean. In 2014, 25.1 million tourists visited the Caribbean (Caribbean Tourism Review, 2014). Modern travelers, including those going to the Caribbean, are seeking meaningful vacation experiences (Bakker & Lamoureux, 2008). To meet this demand, many resorts in the Caribbean have begun offering voluntourism options (Beckles, 2015; MacNaull, 2011). In addition to resorts, in 2016, cruise lines began offering voluntourism activities when the Carnival Corporation launched Fathom, a cruise line focused on impact travel that arranges excursions on shore that include museum visits, teaching English, and more (Adler, 2015).

The Caribbean is host to a wide variety of voluntourism activities (Carrington, 2013 as cited in Beckles, 2015). The most-popular activities are cleanups, medical aid, construction, teaching and training, and environmental programs. Critics, such as community development expert and nonprofit consultant Kwayera Archer-Cunningham (2015), stated that though there is short-term international volunteerism in the Caribbean, the region is not taking full advantage of

the potential voluntourism. In fact, there is a lack of information regarding short-term international volunteers in the Caribbean (Beckles, 2015).

Short-term international volunteers in schools in the Caribbean. In 2011, the most popular projects for short-term international volunteers included education and training, construction, and working with children (UNV, 2011). In the Caribbean, beach clean-ups and environmental programs are very popular. Additionally, teaching and training are among the most popular volunteer projects (Carrington, 2013 as cited in Beckles, 2015).

With many tourists visiting the Caribbean, and in the interest of having a volunteer component with their vacation increasing, the need to measure the impact of their service also increases. The reason to measure this impact is to determine if the efforts of the short-term international volunteers have value, or are conducted futilely. If there is value, possible opportunities for how to expand this value may be suggested or inferred.

Measuring international volunteerism. The task of systematically measuring volunteerism with a plan to incorporate the results into policy has been undertaken by very few governments (UNV, 2011). The difficulty of measuring volunteerism is represented in a study commissioned by the European Commission as part of the European Year of Volunteers 2001. Among the challenges found are the complexity of the institutional landscape, difficulties in a comparative quantitative analysis, limited statistics on organizations that utilize volunteers, lack of consensus on economic data, and the social and cultural impacts of volunteering (UNV, 2011).

The methodological challenges encountered by the European Commission Report were even more distinct for countries in the global south where statistical data can be less comprehensive (UNV, 2011). Generalizability has been listed as a limitation in many studies that

have been conducted on short-term international volunteerism (Larsen, 2016; Lough et al., 2011). As noted in Larsen (2016) there is a lot of anecdotal research, but empirical research is very limited.

Statement of the Problem

While volunteering in schools and working with children is a very popular activity for short-term international volunteers in the Caribbean (Carrington, 2013 as cited in Beckles, 2015) and worldwide (UNV, 2011), there is still very little research on international volunteerism in the Caribbean (Beckles, 2015). Furthermore, there is little research on the impact that short-term international volunteers have on the capacity development of the schools served. The impact of the short-term international volunteers on the capacity development of the school is critical to explore so that organizations that are sending the volunteers, as well as the school, may conduct their programs efficiently to best utilize efforts.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to investigate the impact that short-term international volunteers have on the capacity development of a school serving students with disabilities in the Caribbean.

Research Question

The following research question guided the study: What is the impact of short-term international volunteers on the capacity development of a school serving students with disabilities in the Caribbean?

Sub-questions, guided by the UNDP Framework for Measuring Capacity Development's four core issues were:

- How did short-term international volunteers impact the policies, practices, and systems of the school?
- How did short-term international volunteers influence, inspire, and motivate others to achieve or go beyond their goals?
- How did short-term international volunteers foster knowledge through education?
- How did short-term international volunteers influence the school to put systems in place to engage parents and capture and utilize their feedback?

Overview of the Methodology

A qualitative study was used to conduct an intensive investigation of local stakeholders' perspectives and experiences of capacity development as a result of working with short-term international volunteers. This study utilized a case study design. Case study is an investigative approach used to describe complex programs in ways to unearth new and deeper understanding of a phenomenon (Moore, Lapan, & Quartaroli, 2012). The case study approach most likely identifies a single entity to study which can be as small as one individual, or as large as one school (Lichtman, 2010).

Theoretical Framework

A theoretical framework is the underlying structure, scaffolding, or frame of a study (Merriam, 2009). A theoretical framework allows the researcher to place the research study in a larger context by linking the research type and goals of the study with the results (Radhakrishna, Yoder, & Ewing, 2007). While there are other frameworks and models addressing capacity development, The United Nations Development Programme's Framework for Measuring Capacity Development was the theoretical framework that guided this study (Figure 1).

The United Nations Development Programme’s Framework for Measuring Capacity Development takes into account that “one of the pertinent challenges in the field of capacity development is measuring change and results in concrete terms” (UNDP, 2010, p. 48). Measuring capacity is particularly important regarding short-term international volunteers as “Evaluations have found disappointing long-term results from traditional technical assistance, in which an expert ‘parachutes’ in to teach a specific skill and then leaves” (UNDP, 2010, p. 38).

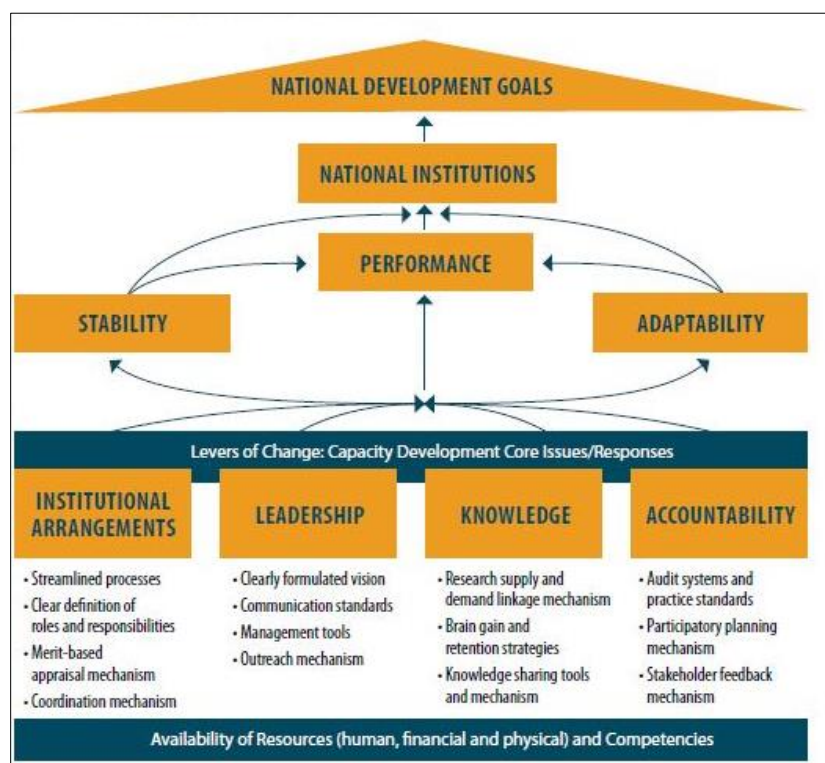


Figure 1. Framework for measuring capacity development. Reprinted from *Capacity Development: A UNDP Primer* (p. 48), by United Nations Development Programme, 2009, New York, NY. Copyright 2009. Reprinted with permission.

Because this case study focused on one school serving students with disabilities and not the impact on national development goals, only a portion of the UNDP Framework was used as the theoretical framework (Figure 2). Specifically, this study used the availability of competencies and resources (human, financial, and physical) and the levers of change (institutional arrangements, leadership, knowledge, and accountability) as the theoretical lenses.



Figure 2. Portion of the UNDP framework used as theoretical framework in this study. Reprinted from *Capacity Development: A UNDP Primer* (p. 48), by United Nations Development Programme, 2009, New York, NY. Copyright 2009. Reprinted with permission.

The Levers of Change were selected by the UNDP because they are the four core issues picked from empirical evidence as the four domains where the bulk of change in capacity happens. The four levers of change are: institutional arrangement, leadership, knowledge and accountability (UNDP, 2010). All four of these are described below.

Institutional arrangements refers to the functioning of a group and the practices, policies, and systems that allow for effectiveness. These can range from hard rules such as legal parameters and requirements to soft rules such as generally accepted values and norms. These may be thought of like a sports game which has the hard rules of how the game is played, and soft rules which include good sportsmanship among others (UNDP, 2010).

Another core issue is leadership. In this context, leadership refers to the “ability to influence, inspire, and motivate others to achieve or even go beyond their goals” (UNDP, 2010, p. 14). Leadership is not the same as an authoritarian position, and also includes the ability to

anticipate and respond to change. Leadership may be informal, and can occur at many levels. Though most commonly thought of in association with an individual leader, it also exists within the enabling environment and at the organizational level (UNDP, 2010).

The third core issue in the levers of change is knowledge. What people know supports their capacities, and therefore capacity development. At the individual level, knowledge is fostered through education. Knowledge can also be created and shared within an organization as well as general life experience. Knowledge may be supported “through an enabling environment of effective educational systems and policies” (UNDP, 2010, p. 14).

The fourth lever of change is accountability. From the perspective of capacity development, the focus of accountability is on the interface between public service providers and its clients or service providers and oversight bodies. Specifically, it is about institutions establishing ways in which to capture and use feedback. Accountability is important as it allows organizations to monitor and self-regulate as well as to adjust their behavior (UNDP, 2010).

Research Site

The research study was conducted at the Omega Academy in the Commonwealth of Dominica. The name “Omega Academy” is a pseudonym for the actual school which served as the research site. The Omega Academy is a school for students with disabilities within the Commonwealth of Dominica. English is the official language of Dominica, which is located in the Eastern Caribbean, between the French islands of Martinique and Guadeloupe. It is a sovereign nation having received independence from Great Britain in 1978. The Omega Academy is one of only two schools for students with disabilities in the country. The children at the Omega Academy have a wide range of disabilities including autism and cognitive disabilities. Due to a lack of resources, thorough diagnosis of many students has not occurred.

The school was founded over 40 years ago by the Catholic Church and operates as an independent non-governmental organization with minimal support from the Ministry of Education. I selected the site due to my previous experiences at the school and my access to interviewees.

The Omega Academy has an established track record of allowing short-term international volunteers to serve at the school. For the past five years, short-term international volunteers from both the United States and Canada have volunteered at The Omega Academy in a variety of capacities. In addition to hosting an international service-learning program from a university in the United States over spring break since 2011, the Omega Academy also hosted a group of four short-term international volunteers from a Rotary Club in Canada for two weeks in March 2011. During their time at the Omega Academy in 2011, the short-term international volunteers expanded the library collection, provided sewing machines, presented workshops on the topic of autism spectrum disorder to teachers and conducted a workshop for parents.

The Omega Academy contains five classrooms, a multi-purpose room, a library, computer lab, sewing room, woodwork shop, and two offices. Six teachers work at the school, along with one instructional assistant, the principal and a secretary. Two former students serve as custodian and maintenance staff among other tasks. Two part-time teachers spend two days each at the school providing the instruction in woodwork and sewing. The school year starts in September and concludes in early July. The school holidays consist of Independence Day (November), Christmas (December) and Easter (March-April) among others.

The school day begins at 8 a.m. with students arriving on a staggered schedule due to transportation. Therefore, students are not penalized for tardiness. After a morning assembly, classroom instruction begins with students being assigned to a classroom based on age and

ability. At 10:15 a.m. every day, the secretary rings a hand-held bell, and students begin snack time and unstructured recess. Classroom instruction continues until the end of the school day. Classroom instruction varies by class. The older students have more skill-based activities such as sewing and gardening. The younger students typically engage in puzzles or an art activity to practice and develop fine motor skills. The school day concludes at 12:30 p.m. Students also leave on a staggered schedule due to transportation.

Significance of the Study

In the United States over one million people volunteer abroad annually, with 70 to 80% of these volunteers serving eight weeks or less (Lough, 2010). However, whether the international volunteers are having an impact on the capacity development of the population served remains to be explored. This study contributes to the field of international volunteerism by giving insight into the impact of short-term international volunteerism on the capacity development in the schools that are served. This study provides international organizations that send short-term volunteers insight in understanding the impact of their volunteers. Additionally, schools and non-governmental organizations can also be informed of potential ways to expand their capacities with their international volunteers.

This study's findings add to the body of literature on international volunteerism by focusing on an aspect of short-term international volunteerism that has largely been unexplored. It is of value not only to scholars of international volunteerism but also to practitioners and providers of international volunteer opportunities (sending and host organizations). Sending organizations such as Cross Cultural Solutions, I-to-I, and United Planet might find interest in this study to determine whether modifications or changes to their programs need to be made. Host organizations (schools and non-governmental organizations that accept international

volunteers) will also gain insight on how to best utilize volunteers. In particular, schools in the Caribbean that host international volunteers can determine whether short-term international volunteers impact the capacity development of schools as a result of this study.

Summary

As international volunteerism continues to increase, volunteer organizations need to focus on measuring the impact of capacity development of their work across the globe. Certain inherent gaps related to whether international volunteers are having an impact on the capacity development of the population served largely remains in the literature. Regarding schools, and in particular the schools in the Caribbean, the literature on the matter is nonexistent. The current challenge is to find ways to measure the impact that international volunteers have on the capacity development of communities they serve. The perspectives of stakeholders in the process are valuable and should be explored, and will be detailed in the following chapters.

Chapter 2. Literature Review

An increasing number of people of all ages are volunteering internationally. It is estimated that over one million Americans volunteer abroad annually, with the vast majority serving eight weeks or less (Lough, 2010; Tourism Research & Marketing, 2008). However, it is nearly impossible to count the number of short-term international volunteers because the majority of volunteers declare tourism when entering a country to avoid issues of obtaining a work permit (Tomazos & Butler, 2008). International volunteers vary from professionals volunteering for one or two years in developing countries to more short-term commitments (Sherraden et al., 2006). Though people of all ages are volunteering internationally, Americans 15-24 years-old are the age group volunteering the most (Lough, 2010). International volunteerism consists of traveling with the intent of engaging in volunteer work as all or part of the travel experience (Wearing, 2001). The qualifications required of the volunteers are minimal; a person needs to have the willingness to volunteer and to learn (Sherraden et al., 2006). In most cases, short-term international volunteers must also be able to pay a program fee for their experience (Van Engen, 2000).

More than 800 organizations provide international volunteer opportunities in 200 countries as of 2004 (Mdee & Emmott, 2008). Most of these countries are in the global south (Butcher & Smith, 2010), with the top destination, both worldwide and for United States travelers is in South America (Nestora, 2009). After South America, the most popular destinations in order of popularity are: East Africa, India/South Asia, Central America, Southern Africa, and Southeast Asia (Pettrak, 2012). Of the top 48 countries where people searched on Google for volunteer opportunities, three were in the Caribbean (Boyer, 2012). Though for-profit companies operate some of these opportunities, the nonprofit sector still operates the largest

number of volunteer opportunities. Results of an assessment of 103 international volunteer programs showed that the primary activities included educational services (85%), human and social services (80%), community development (75%), and environmental protection (73%) (McBride, 2003).

Exploring the Literature

This review presents the history of international volunteerism, and then narrows the focus to short-term international volunteers. Previous studies that explored the impact of short-term volunteers on host organizations are presented first, which include negative and positive impacts, as well as no impact. Finally, other literature reviewed explored the impact of short-term international volunteers on the capacity development of host organizations.

In searching for the literature on the topic of this paper, two main online scholarly search engines were utilized, Google Scholar and Primo Search. Google Scholar is a free web search engine of academic documents, which includes peer-reviewed online journals plus scholarly books and other non-peer reviewed journals. It has been estimated that their collection contains between 99.8 million academic documents (Khabisa & Giles, 2014) to roughly 160 million (Orduna-Malea, Avllon, Martin-Martin, Delgado, Lopez-Cozar, 2014).

PrimoSearch is provided to students of the University of the Incarnate Word in San Antonio, Texas. It is a product of the Ex Libris Group, a provider of library automation solutions. Founded in 1986, Ex Libris caters to various libraries, and is currently utilized by 5,600 libraries, including those at all of the top 20 universities (http://www.exlibrisgroup.com/category/Our_Vision).

See Table 1 to review the different keywords that were used in the search, with Google Scholar returning more results than Primo Search. The number of articles from each search that

were valuable was not tracked, nor was the number of articles that appeared in both search engines. Using the key word(s) with and without quotation marks was important due to how search engines process words. A review of articles also included locating the references of articles that would be of possible value to this paper. In exploring the research in this manner, it was discovered that no previous studies which examined the impact of short-term international volunteers on the capacity development of schools, much less schools in the Caribbean exists in the literature. To understand what is known about volunteerism, the background literature is below. To begin exploring the literature, a history of international volunteerism will be presented.

History of International Volunteerism

Though the conventional view of international volunteers has existed since missionaries worked in the third century in northern Africa, the modern phenomenon of traveling overseas as a volunteer began nearly one century ago (Palmer, 2002). In 1920 international volunteers gathered on the battlefield of Verdun, France (Woods, 1980; Wearing, 2004). This was the first of many short-term volunteer work camps in Europe in the 1920s. The focus of these work camps was to reconstruct Europe following the First World War (Devereux, 2008). The following decades of the 1930s and 1940s saw international volunteerism expand in the areas of emergency relief in India and other developing countries (Devereux, 2008).

Opportunities for long-term volunteer assignments arose from the work camp models used after the First World War based on a need for the community and a request for the volunteers to serve in a longer-term capacity. These opportunities are government-sponsored

Table 1

Key Words Used and Results

Key Word(s) Used in Search	# of results with Google Scholar	# of results with Primo Search
Voluntourism	1,550	197
Volunteer Tourism	64,600	1,638
Short-term International Volunteerism	26,200	410
Short-term Missions	338,000	2,271
Short-term mission trips	83,500	612
International Service-Learning	54,500	7,216
Volunteers in Caribbean Schools	29,800	22
“Volunteers in Caribbean Schools”	0	0
“Impact of Volunteers on Schools”	0	0
“Impact of Volunteers in Schools”	0	0
“Capacity Development in Schools”	12	0
“Capacity Development in Caribbean Schools”	0	0
“International volunteers and capacity development”	0	0
“Capacity Development in the Caribbean”	2	0
“Impact of Short-Term International Volunteers on Schools”	0	0
“Impact of Short-Term International Volunteers on Caribbean Schools”	0	0
“Impact of Volunteers on Caribbean Schools”	0	0

long-term programs and are focused more on individual volunteers rather than groups, and began to immerse in the 1950s (Sherraden et al., 2006). It is commonly believed that the first formal opportunity for long-term international volunteering was most-likely the Graduate Volunteer Scheme at the University of Melbourne which began in 1951. This program evolved into the Australian Volunteers Abroad (AVA) which facilitates the sharing of technical skills while also promoting cross-cultural exchange with developing countries. In 1961, the administration of President John F. Kennedy created the U.S. Peace Corps. During this time in history, other government-sponsored programs were developed including the United Kingdom's Voluntary Services Overseas in 1957 and in 1965 the Japanese Overseas Cooperation Volunteers (Sherraden et al., 2006).

With the rise of volunteer programs in the 1950s and 1960s, the United Nations was under pressure to identify the role of volunteers in international development. This pressure and other factors led to the establishment of the United Nations Volunteers in 1970. While international volunteer organizations have sent volunteers from the global north to the global south (Devereux, 2008), United Nations Volunteers has volunteers from "north" countries volunteer in the "south" countries (north-to-south), as well as south-to-south. The United Nations Volunteers organization is characterized as an international voluntary service for development aid and humanitarian relief as opposed to focusing on international understanding. Though most attention is given to their contribution to development, the role in international understanding should not be overlooked (Woods, 1980).

Short-term International Volunteerism

In the 2015 study, "Good Travels: The Philanthropic Profile of the American Traveler," 55% of the 2,551 respondents indicated that they did some form of volunteering or giving to a

destination they had visited in the last two years (Fadnis, 2015). These short-term international volunteers are people who volunteer internationally for duration of 1-8 weeks (Sherraden et al., 2006). Short-term international volunteerism can also be subdivided into international service-learning trips practiced at all levels of education, short-term mission trips, and volunteer tourism (also known as voluntourism) (Priest & Priest, 2008; Urraca et al., 2009; Wearing, 2001). The most frequent projects undertaken by international volunteers include education and training as well as construction and working with children (UNV, 2011).

Short-term international volunteer programs occur mostly in the global south where vacationers spend a portion of their free time to actively address an issue (Butcher & Smith, 2010). This also applies to the subset of international service-learning. Students in the United States, who historically have studied abroad, usually exchange with a European country. However, there has been a shift in the last 10-15 years to international experiences that have students travel to where they experience the North/South divide (Grusky, 2000).

Research on short-term international volunteerism is scattered among a variety of fields including sociology, anthropology, education, political science, business, and many others (Perry & Imperial, 2001). Of the research, there is very little on the impact of international volunteerism, particularly as it relates to the capacity development of the NGO's served (Lough, et al., 2011; Sherraden et al., 2006).

Impact of short-term international volunteer programs on the volunteer. Usually volunteers in international short-term programs learn about another culture as well as about themselves (McCormick, 2015). A short-term international volunteer also increases his or her sense of well-being (Dimon, 2015). By exploring the unknown world, international participants experienced self-exploration and self-revelation (Chang, Chen, Huang, Yuan, 2012). The

experience of volunteering may also provide an opportunity to learn new things, feel helpful and needed, and can change how people think about others (Sherr, 2008). Numerous studies focus on the impact of short-term international volunteer programs on the participants. Most of these studies concentrate on the subset group of international service-learning, which creates a tremendous amount of teachable moments as students witness injustice and inequality (Grusky, 2009).

One way that short-term international volunteerism impacts a volunteer is that during the program they often feel like they are being helpful and their service is needed (Sherr, 2008). This feeling is also a motivation for people to serve as a short-term international volunteer. Larsen (2015) reported relevant findings from two international service-learning case studies. She noted that almost 90% of her students were motivated by a desire to serve and to help people. To feel helpful and needed, the dominant ideology with short-term international volunteerism is that “doing something is better than doing nothing, and therefore, that doing anything, is reasonable” (Simpson, 2004, p. 685). However, an overemphasis on doing (actively volunteering) also means that short-term international volunteers may often consciously or unconsciously pass up opportunities to learn more about the culture in which they are immersed and those they are serving (Ver Beek, 2002).

Another way in which the international volunteer program has an impact on the volunteer is that the volunteers learn about another culture (McCormick, 2015). Non-governmental organizations usually operate programs designed for fostering cross-cultural understanding and often have partial funding from the volunteers themselves (Sherraden, et al., 2006). A lot of these international volunteer programs have the intent of fostering interactions between people of different countries and promoting international cooperation. While experiencing another culture,

many short-term international volunteers become aware of cultural difference as well as recognize commonalities between cultures (McBride, Lough, & Sherraden, 2010).

An additional impact that short-term international volunteer programs have on participants is that the participant often experiences personal transformation (Chang et al., 2012). Kiely (2004) described this transformation as a “chameleon complex” that involves the long-term struggles a participant will go through when returning from an international service-learning experience as he or she attempts to change their lifestyle and engage in social action. The reentry after an international experience also contains some powerful forms of transformational learning (Kiely, 2011). However, participants struggle to engage their transformed view of the world into significant action (Bamber, 2008).

Impact of short-term volunteers on host organizations. As shown above, there have been many studies regarding the impact that short-term international volunteering has on the participant. Much less research has been done on the impact short-term international volunteers have on the organizations they serve (host organizations). Lupoli (2013) suggests that recent studies indicated there is a high level of interest among volunteer tourism organizations to conduct more systematic evaluations of the local impacts of volunteer tourism. While there is interest in knowing the impact, there is, however, little known about the effect of short-term international volunteers (Lough et al., 2011).

Most of what is known regarding the impact of short-term international volunteers on the host organization is from the perspective of the volunteers. In 2003 Baar (2003) made the observation that over 40 research initiatives published in the 20 years prior, only one surveyed communities where short-term missionaries worked. Ver Beek (2008) looked at thirteen studies

of short-term international mission trips and found that nearly all of the studies examine only the North American participants, even though the local population is the intended beneficiary.

This lack of research adds to the accusation that short-term international volunteer programs operate primarily from the perspectives of external stakeholders (sending organization) in contrast with the local (host organization) participatory approaches often advocated in current development dialogue (Simpson, 2004). Some studies can be highlighted regarding impact of short-term international volunteers on the host organizations. These are a select number of studies that indicate findings regarding the impact. “Impact” is defined by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) as “the result of a programme or project in relation to the development objectives or long-term goals. They are changes that the intervention helped bring about” (UNDP, 2009, p. 57). The results are difficult to generalize as they mostly look at volunteers coming from one sending organization to one particular geographical location.

It should also be noted that the impact may not be visible immediately. Short-term projects can have an effect on communities which may not be immediately evident. This is because many projects are completed by consecutive groups of short-term volunteers and are completed over a series of years (Sherraden et al., 2006).

Collectively, the findings across the studies include positive impact, no impact, and even negative impact. It should be noted that even though these three categories segregate the studies below, it can be much more complicated than these single classifications. Even though a study would uncover a predominant impact (positive, negative, or nonexistent) in most cases an additional impact was also revealed.

The following questions guided the review of each study:

1. Who were the participants?

2. How was the data collected?
3. What are the results of the study?

Positive impact. Findings in some of the previous studies indicate that there are positive impacts made by short-term international volunteers. Some of the impacts of volunteer tourism that are highly valued by host communities (such as education, cultural exchange, sociocultural impacts) may be secondary impacts of projects intended to focus on community development or infrastructure. Indicators currently used to assess the impacts of short-term international volunteerism may not address the impacts that are most highly valued by host communities (Lupoli & Morse, 2015).

Smith, Ellis, and Howlett (2002) conducted 150 phone interviews with project staff of the Millennium Volunteer Program. They also collected questionnaires to 127 volunteers and 26 host organizations as well as interviewed 20 policy makers. Key findings mainly involved the benefits to the volunteer. However, their contributions to host communities included increased social capital and human capacity. The researchers found that because of short-term international volunteers, there was enhanced access to services by the direct beneficiaries (Smith et al., 2002).

Green, Green, Scandlyn and Kestler (2009) conducted in-depth, semi-structured interviews with 72 individuals. The interviewees were comprised of Guatemalan healthcare providers and health authorities, foreign medical providers, non-medical personnel working on health projects, and Guatemalan parents of children treated by a short-term volunteer group. Their purpose was to examine the perceptions of short-term medical volunteer work from the perspective of members of the recipient communities in Guatemala. Results showed that there is a need for increased access to medical service in Guatemala, and many believe that short-term medical volunteers are in a position to offer improved access to medical care in the communities

where they serve. Suggestions were also given on how to improve short-term medical volunteer work with the most frequent suggestion being coordinating with and showing respect for local Guatemalan healthcare providers and their communities (Green et al., 2009).

Lough, et al. (2011) compared hosting organizations with non-hosting organizations to see how outcomes would have differed if no volunteers had been introduced. Their study took place in a low-income settlement outside of Lima, Peru where short-term international volunteers serve in several community-based social service agencies. The researchers conducted semi-structured interviews with 30 staff members in the ten organizations (3 people per organization). Five of the organizations utilized short-term international volunteers while the other 5 did not. The research found that short-term international volunteers can positively impact volunteer hosting organizations by filling-in for labor shortages, providing supplies and funding, introducing new ideas, and applying or transferring technical or professional skills to the staff (Lough et al., 2011).

To measure the effects of Canada World Youth on host communities where past volunteers served, South House Exchange and Canada World Youth (2006) hosted impact assessment workshops containing 101 community members in five countries. These workshops were half-day in length and included individual assessments and group ratings. Findings were that community members ranked interpersonal relationships and networking as the most beneficial effects of Canada World Youth's short-term international volunteer service (South House Exchange & Canada World Youth, 2006).

Jester and Thyer (2007) conducted retrospective analysis of 105 partner organization evaluation forms and 121 volunteer evaluation forms as well as prospective analysis of 19 host organizations and 43 volunteers. A key finding was that 90% of host organizations agreed that

the technical assistance and knowledge provided by the short-term international volunteers contributed to the skills within the organization. Jester and Thyer (2007) did emphasize that the interviews were face-to-face and may have introduced bias.

No impact. Findings from previous studies also indicate that there may be no change to an organization between hosting short-term international volunteers or not. Ver Beek's (2006) study included interviewing administrators from local non-governmental organizations in Honduras – some that utilized short-term international volunteers and some that did not. He concluded that the North American teams had no greater impact on the communities than the Honduran organizations – either positive or negative. Nearly all Hondurans surveyed gave reasons that it was good for short-term missionary groups to come to Honduras, but in the end, they believed that rather than using up resources on plane tickets, food, and lodging, North Americans could better spend their money on having more houses built (Ver Beek, 2006).

Forsythe (2011) explored volunteer tourism in Ghana and its role in development. Questionnaire interviews were conducted with organizations and former volunteers working in Ghana. In total, 30 volunteers from the UK, Europe, North America, and Oceania completed the questionnaire. The volunteers ranged in age from 18-42 and had participated in volunteer periods of 2-17 weeks. Activities include teaching, medical, agriculture, sports, and orphanage work. Nine host organizations that work in Ghana participated in the questionnaire. The chief purpose of Forsythe's (2011) study was to establish the motives, activities, expectations, and experiences of the participants, offering insight into the current effectiveness and appropriateness of volunteer tourism in Ghana. Forsythe (2011) concluded that volunteers enjoyed their time volunteering in Ghana, and gained personal benefits as well as a sense of positively impacting the lives of others. However, he found that volunteers lacked the training and preparation

necessary to maximize their impact, and had primary roles which lacked a sense of long-term purpose. Forsythe (2011) concluded that many of the organizations working in Ghana are failing to adopt the responsible approach necessary to benefit the communities in which they work.

Negative impact. Not all impact may be positive as there may be negative impacts of the short-term international volunteers on the host organization. Guttentag (2009) states that there appear to be numerous possible negative impacts of volunteer tourism that are receiving little attention, though voluntourism is not “worse” than other forms of tourism. With the short-term programs, there are likely to be fewer long-term benefits for the population visited and a reinforcement of cultural stereotypes and cross-cultural misunderstanding (Annette, 2002; Raymond & Hall, 2008). Most short-term international volunteer programs are only available to those with certain socio-economic standings, and the programs are very expensive to transport and manage (Devereux, 2008, Van Engen, 2000). Short-term international volunteerism programs have even been described as “allowing relatively well-off people in this world to travel long distances to experience other people’s misery for a life-enriching experience” (Guo, 1989, p. 108).

Comhlámh’s Volunteering Options (2007) uncovered a negative impact in that the host organizations in the study thought the use of short-term international volunteers may damper their self-reliance. The host organizations also saw problems due to language difficulties and lack of experience among the volunteers. The researchers collected data including 12 in-depth interviews with representatives from 12 host organizations in Tanzania and 10 in India. A total of four focus groups were also conducted, in addition to collecting secondary data. The purpose of the study was to examine the extent of host organization involvement in short-term international volunteer programs and the value of projects on the host organizations and communities served.

The greatest benefits that organizations saw from international volunteers included skill sharing, cultural awareness building, financial resources brought outside the volunteer program and networks that became available to other development partners (Comhlámh's Volunteering Options, 2007).

Lupoli and Morse (2015) designed four phases of their research project, which gathered data from sending organizations, volunteer tourism organizations, and host community members heavily involved in coordinating or planning volunteer tourism activities in the community. Lupoli and Morse (2015) then made comparisons between the responses by the sending organizations and the host community members. Their findings suggested that some of the impacts of volunteer tourism that are highly valued by host communities may be secondary impacts of projects focused on community development or infrastructure, and some of the indicators currently used to assess the impacts of volunteer tourism (as seen in the questionnaire indicators) may not address the impacts that are most highly valued by host communities.

Impact of short-term volunteers on the capacity development of host organizations.

While little is known about the impact that a short-term international volunteer has on the host organization he or she serves, even less is known about the impact he or she has on the capacity development of the host organization. Capacity development is "the process through which individuals, organizations, and societies obtain, strengthen and maintain the capacities to set and achieve their own development objectives over time" (UNDP, 2009, p. 5). Capacity development broadens the definition of development beyond the bounds of technical knowledge and narrow economic models of sustainable development. Capacity development involves learning and building upon local knowledge and strengths by providing external knowledge and strengths (Devereux, 2008). Capacity development starts from the principle that people are best

empowered to realize their full potential when the means of development are sustainable, home-grown, long-term, and generated and managed collectively by those who stand to benefit (UNDP, 2009).

Capacity development is relevant to volunteering in two distinct but equally important avenues. First, volunteers undertake capacity development activities in many ways and engage with a range of individuals and organizations. Second, an important dimension of capacity development is the fostering of greater and more effective volunteer activities (Pratt, 2002).

One of the most recent studies on the topic of short-term international volunteerism's contribution to capacity development is a 2011 study by Lough, McBride, Sherraden, and O'Hara. The study found that short-term international volunteers enhance organization practices and processes in four ways:

1. by acting as additional help to meet labor shortages;
2. by providing tangible resources and social capital that can help sustain the organization;
3. by introducing new ideas and increasing intercultural competence of staff and clients; and
4. by transferring technical or professional skills to the organization and staff.

The researchers found that both organizations that host international volunteers and those that do not believe that certain mediating factors make a difference in the effectiveness of international volunteers. Like many other studies regarding international volunteerism, the findings of the study by Lough et al. (2011) are difficult to generalize as they looked at volunteers coming from one volunteer-sending organization to one specific geographical location.

When examining the capacity development of the host organizations served by short-term international volunteers, the organizational level must be studied. The organizational level refers to the “internal structure, policies, and procedures that determine an organization’s effectiveness” (UNDP, 2009, p. 11). With capacity development, applying the fundamental principles is challenging as one size does not fit all, and no two situations are identical. Organizational capacity refers to management practices and organizational processes that help volunteer hosting organizations accomplish their missions (Letts, Ryan, & Grossman, 1999).

The UNDP Framework for Measuring Capacity Development includes availability of resources and competencies, as well as levers of change. As Figure 2 shown on page 11 illustrates, the UNDP Framework includes the capacity development core issues/responses: institutional arrangements, leadership, knowledge, and accountability. The institutional arrangements include streamlined processes, roles and responsibilities, and appraisal and coordination mechanisms. Leadership refers to clearly formulated vision, communication standards, management tools, and outreach mechanism. Knowledge includes brain gain and retention strategies, knowledge sharing tools, research supply, and demand linkage mechanisms. Accountability refers to audit systems and practice standards, and participatory planning and stakeholder feedback mechanisms (UNDP, 2010).

Conclusion

As stated, international volunteerism, in its current form, has been around for nearly a century. With the rise of short-term volunteerism and its increasing popularity, the call to measure its impact also increases. The research regarding the impact of short-term international volunteerism is limited but shows a spectrum ranging from positive to negative impacts on the host organization, community, or population served. When narrowing the topic to the impact on

capacity development, and then further to the impact on the capacity development of schools in the Caribbean, the available literature becomes even more narrow. The capacity development, however, can be viewed through the framework of the UNDP's Framework for Measuring Capacity Development. Research questions that guided this qualitative study design, along with a detailed description of the study participants, the role of the researcher, data collection and data analysis will be discussed in detail in the following chapter. The next chapter presents the methodology which was used for this study.

Chapter 3. Methodology

A qualitative case study was utilized to investigate the impact that short-term international volunteers had on the capacity development of a specific school in the Caribbean, which is given the pseudonym Omega Academy. The following primary research question guided this study:

What is the impact of short-term international volunteers on the capacity development of a school in the Caribbean?

Using the UNDP Framework for Measuring Capacity Development (discussed in Chapter 1), the following sub-questions addressed the following four core issues:

- How did short-term international volunteers impact the policies, practices, and systems of the school?
- How did short-term international volunteers influence, inspire, and motivate others to achieve or go beyond their goals?
- How did short-term international volunteers foster knowledge through education?
- How did short-term international volunteers influence the school to put systems in place to engage parents and capture and utilize their feedback?

The Case Study Design

A qualitative case study method was utilized to further answer the primary research question for this study. A case study is an investigative approach used to describe complex programs to unearth new and deeper understanding of phenomena (Moore et al., 2012). The case study approach focuses on a single entity (Lichtman, 2010), and in this research, the case explored the impact short-term volunteers had on the capacity development on Omega Academy. The case is central to one particular project that occurred when Omega Academy hosted four

short-term international volunteers in 2011. One reason this case was selected is because the volunteers met the definition of being short-term international volunteers having served Omega Academy by working toward objectives of providing different types of support. A second reason this case was chosen is because I was not directly involved in coordinating this project, but observed part of the implementation. A third reason to focus on the case is because the short-term volunteer efforts occurred five years ago, which implies that sufficient time had passed to determine whether and how the volunteers' efforts impacted capacity development at the Omega Academy.

I was able to gain access to Omega Academy and conduct interviews due to my long association with the school. I first visited this school in 2006 as the director of a small international non-governmental organization that provides access to education for children with disabilities. The organization conducts a summer program for children with special needs that serves many of the students from the Omega Academy as well as other children with disabilities in the community. Beginning in the summer of 2012, the program has been held during the summer break of the Omega Academy and uses their facilities. Many of the teachers and staff of the Omega Academy have volunteered for the summer program in recent years. The organization I direct also provides funding for the school through mini-grants to support the purchase of classroom chairs, computer equipment, and supplies to start a soap and candle-making project. Over the past ten years, my relationship with the staff has grown to be one of mutual respect, and in many cases, friendship. See Appendix D for a "Reacher as Instrument Statement" which further describes my relationship with the Omega Academy.

The short-term international volunteers traveled from Ontario, Canada to the school in March 2011. The group was directed by a Rotary Club of Ontario, Canada. Rotary is an

international civic organization with chapters in over 200 countries and territories (Rotary, 2015). Funding for the project was provided by the Rotary club among many other sources. Since one of the international volunteers had volunteered at the school in prior years when she lived in Dominica, and had a good experience, it was selected for the project.

Before their visit in 2011, the short-term international volunteers contacted the Omega Academy. The Omega Academy requested training in autism (since they had several children with autism in 2011), reading books to grade level three, and three manual sewing machines. The project further expanded to include:

- Training regarding autism for the parents of children with autism;
- Training for the teachers, including teachers from other schools and a nurse from the hospital;
- Establishing a library with instructional and reference books, as well as level-appropriate story books;
- A donation of specialized sensory toys and equipment;
- A library cataloguing and circulation system to manage new books and those already owned by the school;
- A laptop computer and printer which included software for producing communication tools for non-verbal children;
- A donation of hand washing and dental hygiene posters, as well as hygiene items;
- A donation of booklets on hygiene and information for educators on teaching personal hygiene; and
- A donation of three hand-operated manual sewing machines.

The group of short-term international volunteers consisted of four women. The group was comprised of a leader from the Rotary club in Canada, along with her daughter, an early childhood educator, and a Rotarian who had previously lived in Dominica and had volunteered at the Omega Academy. Upon learning to school's need to learn more about teaching students with autism, an autism spectrum disorder resource consultant from a children's hospital in Canada was recruited to join the team.

Prior to going to the research site to collect the data for this study, I exchanged e-mail correspondence with the project leader. I decided to e-mail her to gather further information about how they chose the project, what their project entailed, and how it was organized. In addition, I asked her to describe what she perceived to be the lasting affects her team's actions had on the school. She responded, "The teachers are using the skills on an ongoing basis to help children with special needs at the [school], as well as some of the regular schools. The resources in the school library are being access by the teachers at the teacher's college" (J. Ginley, personal communication, June 9, 2016).

The international volunteer team participated in two additional projects at the school since their project in 2011. In 2012, one of the volunteers spent the summer in Dominica and distributed books and materials for the sewing program, and was featured on a local radio program to raise awareness about Down Syndrome. In 2013 the team returned (short of one member) and conducted training on a special system for assessing special needs children for the teachers at the school as well as 14 others teachers.

Research Site

The research study was conducted at the Omega Academy, in the Commonwealth of Dominica. The island state of Dominica is located in the Eastern Caribbean, between the French

islands of Martinique and Guadeloupe (Figure 3). It is a sovereign nation that received independence from Great Britain in 1978. English is the official language of the country. Unlike other parts of the Caribbean, the country was delayed in having tourism as a priority. The government found difficulty in getting on the itineraries of cruise ships, and tourism is also limited since local airports cannot accommodate intercontinental flights (Heuman, 2005, Payne, 2008). Dominica has the least tourism penetration of the smaller Caribbean islands (McElroy & de Albuquerque, 1998).

Omega Academy was founded in 1974 to serve children with intellectual disabilities. It has grown to an educational facility with a current enrollment of 38 students with an average attendance of 26 students. A holistic curriculum of academics and life skills are now offered. The school is comprised of five classrooms, three offices, one kitchen, an assembly hall, a sewing room, a woodwork shop, and a library. The school staff includes a principal, a secretary, six full-time teachers, and an instructional assistant. Two former students are also employed at the school and tasked with maintenance jobs among other duties. Two part-time teachers are employed to teach sewing and woodwork. Sewing is offered on Monday and Wednesday, while woodwork is offered Tuesday and Thursday. On Friday of every week, it is considered “sports day” where the students do not wear their standard uniform, but may wear a sports uniform. Typical Fridays include students playing sports at the park across the street from the school which also includes a basketball court.

The Omega Academy has hosted short-term international volunteers at the school throughout the past decade. In addition to hosting an international service-learning program from a university in the United States over spring break for the past five years, the school hosted a four-person group of short-term international volunteers for two weeks in March of 2011.

I selected this site due to my previous experiences at the school and access to interviewees (see Appendix D, “Researcher as Instrument” for more information regarding my previous experiences). I first visited the school in 2006 as a director of an international non-governmental organization. The organization developed a relationship with the Omega Academy and has since sponsored small projects at the school, such as providing classroom chairs and computer equipment. In 2011, I started taking college students from a liberal arts university in the southwestern United States to the Omega Academy for an international service-learning experience. This experience occurs over spring break and is known as "Alternative Spring Break." The program has been successful and repeated in 2012, 2013, 2014, and 2016. “Alternative spring breaks” are facilitated by organizations and companies that are offering an alternative to the traditional party-laden spring break (Daldeniz & Hampton, 2010).

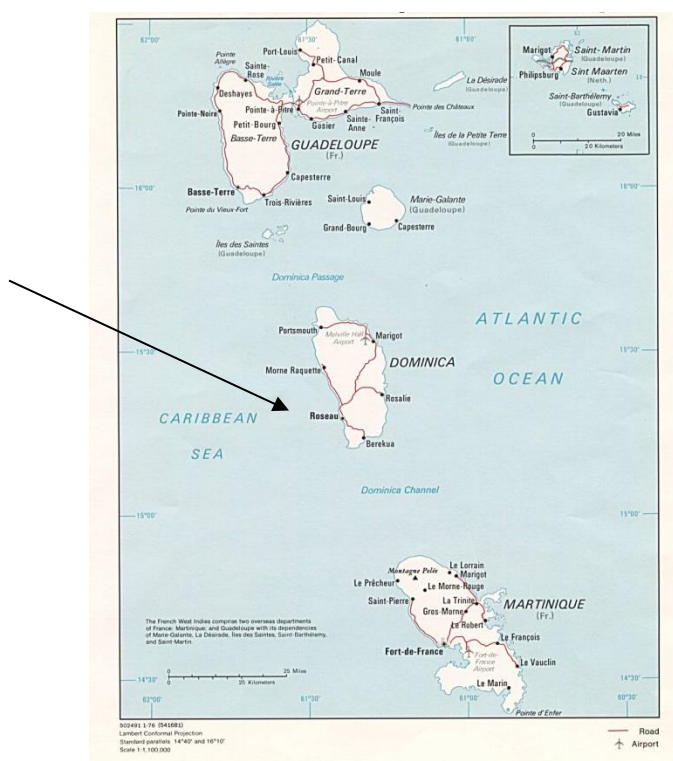


Figure 3. Arrow pointing to where Omega Academy is located in the Caribbean
Source: Central Intelligence Agency, 1976.

Selection of Participants

The school principal and the school secretary, as well as four teachers were selected to participate in the study. The four teachers were chosen instead of the entire faculty because they were present in 2011 when the short-term international volunteers served Omega Academy. The principal was employed in his current role in 2011. The school secretary recently retired, but was still accessible. All participants were given a pseudonym. Participants are presented in Table 2 below.

Role of the Researcher

In this case study, my role was to design the study, develop the research questions, and collect and analyze the data. It was part of my role to listen carefully to the participants as they described their experiences with short-term international volunteers. This role also included reflection, listening to the recorded experiences, and analyzing field notes. In short, my role was to collect, analyze, and synthesize the data. As Lichtman (2010) states, “(the) researcher is the primary instrument of data collection and analysis” (p. 16). Because of my vital role as an instrument in this study, a “Researcher as Instrument Statement” appears in Appendix D.

Data Collection and Procedures

For this case study, data was collected using two different methods: face-to-face interviews and observational data collected from the site. By collecting these two different sets of data, I was able to have a more complete view of the case, rather than just relying solely on interviews. While interviews can convey impact by participants describing whether and how the international volunteers’ impacted their practices and the Omega Academy as an organization, gathering observational data at the school site provided additional information.

Table 2

Participant Profiles

Interviewee	Gender	# of years working in Education	# of years working at the Omega Academy	Educational Training & Employment History
Amy, Teacher	Female	30+	14	Graduated from the teacher's college in Dominica. Completed a two-year program in special education in Jamaica. Worked in a regular primary school prior to Omega Academy. Considered the head teacher.
Barbara, Teacher	Female	20	20	2-year teachers training program which included 1 year of instruction in Trinidad & a 1-year internship in Dominica.
Carolyn, Secretary	Female	18	18	Training in secretarial duties.
Grace, Teacher	Female	45	42	Completing secondary school. Taught 3 years at a primary school prior to the start of the Omega Academy. Went to short-term training at schools for children with disabilities in Barbados and Trinidad.
Paula, Teacher	Female	17	17*	Specialized training in Japan, Canada, and the United States for working with persons with visual and hearing impairments. Attended summer teacher training provided in Dominica by the Canadian Teachers Federation. Has worked with other NGOs that serve persons with disabilities.
William, Principal	Male	37	7	4-year degree in education from the United States. Prior teaching in primary & secondary school. Former principal at a primary school.

*17 years over the course of a 20-year span due to breaks in employment.

Participants were invited to participate in individual interviews. The interviews were semi-structured with open-ended questions. To start, participants received a consent form (Appendix B) explaining the purpose of the study. Part of the consent included permission to audio record the interview. If the participant chose not to be recorded, the interview would have continued and I would have taken extensive field notes instead. All participants gave consent to be audio recorded. The interview questions are listed in Appendix C. A sample of my observational notes are in Appendix E.

As stated by Brinkmann and Kvale (2015), it is difficult when doing cross-cultural interviewing to become aware of the multitude of cultural factors. These include habits, practices, positions, and narrative resources. Brinkmann and Kvale (2015) suggest that a researcher needs time to establish familiarity with another culture. Even though I am not a native to the country of Dominica, I lived there as a Peace Corps volunteer in 2004-2005 and have traveled there for business and leisure at least annually since. These trips have ranged from one week to one month. Because of my familiarity with the culture, the chances of misunderstanding cultural cues, while possible, were minimized.

The other data collected was on Omega Academy's library. I wanted to see if the organizational set-up of the library completed by the volunteers in 2011 remained in use. I also wanted to determine whether the books that were donated by the volunteers were in circulation by the students, teachers, parents, and administrators. How the books were being used – whether during instruction and for students to interact with independently – was also something I wanted to note.

In addition to examining the library, I also wanted to observe any evidence of individual teachers' capacity to use any of the strategies they learned from the international volunteers to

support students with autism. By asking teachers to recall the experience with international volunteers in 2011, I used that insight to see if they were applying what they had learned. I wanted to collect additional data to triangulate the overall data available at the school that was related to an outcome of the 2011 project.

Triangulation of data sources and methods ensured accuracy of qualitative research. I demonstrated credibility of this through conducting observations in the classroom, interacting with participants, and collecting data from multiple sources. Triangulation refers to collecting data from multiple sources so that the researcher will have a more accurate picture and therefore remain less bias (Lichtman, 2010).

I was at Omega Academy for two weeks in June 2016. During that time, I was able to interview five of the six participants within the first week. Transcription was completed throughout the weekend as well as in the evenings. The final interview was conducted the following Monday. I then performed member checks by asking the participants to review the transcript to make sure that their conversation had been recorded accurately. Member checks are also referred to as respondent validation and are used by a researcher to solicit feedback about the data and conclusions from the persons being studied. This is an important way of minimizing misunderstandings (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Maxwell, 2013).

Protection of Human Subjects

Safeguards were in place to minimize any risk to the participants. These safeguards include me being certified by the Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI) in research ethics. Prior to the interviews I submitted a proposal to the Institutional Review Board (IRB), and received approval before any data was collected. I took great care to protect the human subjects, their identities, and their right to privacy. This protection is reflected in the use of

pseudonyms for identification in the reporting of data. I presented a letter of formal consent to all interviewees in advance of their participation (see Appendix B). Also, interviewee's names were not recorded in my field notes. All data is kept in a secure file drawer in my office. If at any point data needed to be destroyed, the electronic files were deleted and paper copies were shredded.

Data Analysis

I analyzed the data by listening to the digital recordings and by reading notes from my field journal. These notes included any taken during the interviews. The data analysis also included looking at any statistical data that I was able to collect from the school, which included attendance records and access to the school log from March 2011 when the international volunteers were present.

The digital recordings of the interviews were transcribed. As Bird (2005) noted, transcription is a vital step in doing qualitative research. I used the program ExpressScribe, along with the aid of a foot pedal to transcribe the interviews. During this crucial step, decisions were made as Hammersley (2010) indicated would be necessary. Some of the decisions that were made included whether to include word elements (ums, uhuhs, etc.), how to label speakers, what to do with silence, and what gestures were relevant and how to include them.

To analyze the data, all transcripts were printed on six colors of paper. Since six individuals were interviewed, there were six individual colors, one color per participant (i.e., blue paper for one participant; cream paper for another, green paper for another, and so on). Using the sub-research questions, I sorted portions of all transcripts into one of the four levers of change (institutional arrangements, leadership, knowledge, and accountability). Some portions of

the transcripts were used for background information or were determined irrelevant, and thus not placed in one of the four categories.

From the four categories, I explored the transcripts further in order to create themes. Creating themes is the most important part of qualitative analysis. An inductive approach of the data is used to develop the themes (Ryan & Bernard, 2003). By analyzing data in this method it helped me to organize the findings.

Trustworthiness and Credibility

Researchers recognize several methods for assessing internal validity and reliability of qualitative studies. For this study, I used strategies recommended by Merriam and Associates (2002) to ensure validity. Triangulation, a well-known strategy of using multiple data collection methods to confirm emerging findings was also utilized (Merriam & Associates, 2002). Finally, after submerging and engaging in the data collection, I evaluated the saturation of the data when hearing or seeing recurring themes with no new data (Merriam & Associates, 2002).

According to Merriam and Associates (2002), reliability is difficult to assess in qualitative research because replicating the findings would unlikely yield the same results. In assessing reliability, the findings and results were questioned for consistency and dependability. Also, an audit trail was used to explain how the results were derived. I listened to the digital recordings before, during, and after transcription to verify accuracy. The accuracy of the participants' quotes were verified by checking the transcriptions of the recordings.

Summary

The purpose of this study was to investigate a project's impact on the Omega Academy, which was completed by short-term international volunteers in March 2011. This case looked at the school administrators' and teachers' perspectives on the impact the volunteers had on the

capacity development of their school. Information about the research questions that guided this qualitative case study design, along with a detailed description of the study participants, the protection of human subjects, the role of the researcher, data collection and data analysis were discussed in this chapter. In the following chapter, participant's experiences and thoughts related to their experiences with the international volunteers will be discussed in detail.

Chapter 4. Results

The data presented is based on interviews, classrooms observations, and review of available school data. Data is arranged according to the UNDP Framework for Measuring Capacity Development's four core issues and the related sub-research questions which are:

- Institutional Arrangements: How did short-term international volunteers impact the policies, practices, and systems of the school?
- Leadership: How did short-term international volunteers influence, inspire, and motivate others to achieve or go beyond their goals?
- Knowledge: How did short-term international volunteers foster knowledge through education?
- Accountability: How did short-term international volunteers influence the school to put systems in place to engage parents, and capture and utilize their feedback?

Participant Profiles

Six people were interviewed for this case study (see Table 2). Participants interviewed consisted of four teachers, the principal, and the recently-retired school secretary. Each participant had varying years of employment at the Omega Academy, as well as varying years working in education. Pseudonyms of the participants were used in the study. Participant profiles are presented below in the chronological order in which they were interviewed.

Paula. Paula, a teacher, has a diverse background in having worked with many NGOs and in different capacities in working with persons with disabilities, particularly persons with visual impairments. She described her educational philosophy as, "Regardless of any challenge, each child learns at their own pace. And it comes with patience, dedication, and a sense of love

and care to teach each child.” The students she teaches at the Omega Academy are referred to by the school as “high functioning”.

Her classroom is comprised of teenagers and incorporates skills and academics. She told me how the autism specialist that was a part of the international volunteer team in the 2011 was a “dynamic teacher”. She went on to explain that when facilitating the workshop the international volunteer went “out of her way to ensure that even if you don’t pick it up the first try, there are other activities, other avenues that you will eventually pick it up.” Paula said that the instruction was always a practical model, and never a lecture.

Barbara. Barbara teaches in one of the two classrooms for the younger children. While the students in her room are ages 8-13, the content is on the pre-school level. Outside of an internship, the Omega Academy is the only school in which she has taught. She described her educational philosophy as, “Everybody has a right to an education – a special needs child or a normal child, everyone should be given that opportunity.” The most memorable thing to her from the visit by the international volunteers was that the school made connections and friends with the international volunteers.

Barbara described that she teaches and treats the students in her classroom as if they were her own children. She remarked on how rewarding it is for her as a teacher to see a child when they learn something new. It is times like that when she said she realizes that she is doing what she is supposed to do.

William. William is the principal and the only male participant in this study. Similar to Barbara, he described his educational philosophy as, “I believe every child has the right to education regardless of his level or background.” He recalls the visit by the international volunteers as very friendly and informative.

As the school leader, he described his leadership style as one of inclusion. Since most of the teachers preceded him at the school, he takes a collectivist approach in administering the school. He described the situation, “I’d rather listen, so anything we plan, we do it as a group. We all meet together to plan and I wait for input from the teachers.”

Carolyn. Carolyn was the long-time school secretary who had retired approximately six months before the interview. She had been a secretary in the private sector for many years before becoming a volunteer at the Omega Academy. After a while of volunteering, she was hired-on as secretary. Her responsibilities included correspondence and finances, which also involved soliciting donations. She had not worked with children with disabilities before the Omega Academy, but described that interacting with the children day-to-day was very transformative on her life. She said, “My philosophy is that education is there. Make the most of it. Utilize it. Use it to broaden your horizon to help your own development.”

Carolyn was instrumental in making the visit by the international volunteers possible. When asked to recall the most memorable thing about the visit of the international volunteers in 2011, she said, “To me that was the best thing that happened to [Omega Academy].” Carolyn, having taken the spring term off, hopes to volunteer in the upcoming terms at the Omega Academy.

Amy. Amy is a teacher at the Omega Academy and has over 30 years of experience in teaching. Her classroom is comprised of teenagers and focuses on academics and the first and second grade level. She is approximately six years away from retirement, and plans to volunteer at the Omega Academy after retirement. Amy described her educational philosophy as, “Every child can learn. It doesn’t matter at what level, [every] child has something special in him or her that needs to be pulled [out].” She worked at other primary schools, but always happened to find

herself working with the “slow learners”. She described the reactions she encountered when she chose to leave a government school in favor of the Omega Academy. An administrator tried to discourage her transfer and told her, “You don’t think you’re going to get retarded, too?” Other teachers in the government school also discouraged her transfer and warned that she could become contaminated at the Omega Academy and pass mental retardation along to her own children at home.

Of the project conducted by the international volunteers, Amy said that she believes the teachers could have benefited from more time in the classroom. This time could have been spent watching the international volunteers teach lessons and using the strategies they were introducing. She stated that she thinks having the teachers prepare lessons using the new strategies and having the international volunteers observe and critique the teachers could have been a more effective way to conduct the training. She went on to say that if the program had been during summer break, instead of March, that it could have allowed for a 4-6 week training which could have also involved more interaction from parents.

Grace. Grace has been working in education longer than anyone else at the school. She started as soon as she completed secondary school, which was customary at the time. She taught in a government school for three years prior to being one of the first teachers hired at the Omega Academy when it began in 1974. For approximately the past twenty years primarily her class has been teaching skills to adolescents. This involves gardening, cooking, laundry, and other skills. She described her educational philosophy as, “We all can achieve...every child can learn.” After retiring, Grace also hopes to return to the Omega Academy as a volunteer.

Grace’s “institutional memory” is a valued asset at the Omega Academy as she was there for twenty years before the next senior teacher arrived. She recalled some of the early days, when

the school did not have its own campus, but instead was held in a church fellowship hall. During the early years of the Omega Academy she had the opportunity to go to other Caribbean islands and tour organizations to see how they provided education for children with disabilities. She stated her only disappointment is that the newer teachers have not had a similar opportunity.

Analysis Procedure

Interview guides containing the interview questions were printed on different colors of paper, one color per participant, in which all participants were identified based on the interview guide color. Since the principal and the secretary were asked different questions from the teachers based on their role, I preassigned their colors prior to printing. The four interview guides (one per teacher) were printed on four separate colors. These colors were randomly chosen per teacher. Pseudonyms are used to identify all participants in this chapter.

Along with the interviews, I also made classroom observations, paying special attention to strategies that were presented to the school during the workshops conducted by the international volunteers. I also was given access to the school logbook for March, 2011, as well as the attendance records for the period immediately before the international volunteers arrived through the month after they departed. All interviews were transcribed and individual interviews were then printed on the color of paper that corresponded with that participant's interview guide. The text (transcription of interviews and observational notes) was then analyzed using the research sub-questions derived from the UNDP Framework's four levers of change (UNDP, 2010). Once text was categorized into the four levers of change, it was again analyzed in order to identify themes. The four levers of change and their respective themes are presented below.

Institutional Arrangements

Institutional arrangements is the functioning of a group and the practices, policies, and systems that allow for effectiveness. These can range from hard rules such as, legal parameters and requirements to soft rules such as, generally accepted values and norms (UNDP, 2010). The sub-research question that was asked and addressed these components was, “How did short-term international volunteers impact the policies, practices, and systems of the school?” After analyzing the data, the following two themes emerged that addressed this question – instructional delivery and instructional materials.

Instructional delivery. Instructional delivery refers to the practice of how an instructor conveys the content of the lesson to the students. The short-term international volunteers that visited the Omega Academy influenced teacher practices, specifically instructional delivery. This included the agenda of their school day, the time devoted to lessons, and utilizing pictures in displaying the agenda for the day.

Teachers identified how they changed the flow of their instructional time in the classroom. This involved changing their practice of reading to their students at the end of the day to early in the morning. By having the story lesson early in the school day, the interdisciplinary lessons that followed, from art projects to mathematics could relate back to the book, and reinforce the story. Prior to the workshops offered by the short-term international volunteers, the teachers had the story time towards the end of the day when many of the students were not as attentive. (The new reading time that was observed included the children reading a story about a sea turtle which was followed by a group discussion. The subject of sea turtles was carried forward through other lessons).

Instructional delivery was also influenced when the short-term international volunteers introduced using pictures in displaying the schedule of the day as well as in communication books for students that are unable to express themselves verbally. Teachers recalled how the pictures were used along with the scheduling of the day to help the children understand what lesson they were on, and what was occurring following the lesson. One of the advantages of using pictures to display the agenda for the day was so that children would have less anxiety in the classroom. Another advantage noted by the teachers is that it helped them be more thoughtful about how they structured the school day.

However, though the advantages of using pictures to display the schedule were recalled by the teachers, they were not observed in use. The reasons stated for no longer using the pictures varied from how the pictures no longer adhered to the classroom walls, to having changed classrooms and to moving away from the practice. Communication books, another use of pictures apart from the display of the schedule, were still in use, though not observed because the students that use the books were not present.

The sub-themes of instructional delivery, the use of pictures and classroom scheduling are presented below.

Use of pictures. An instructional delivery practice that the international volunteers introduced was the use of pictures in teaching children with autism. One of the items the international volunteers had provided was a laptop with a printer, and software used for printing pictures. As mentioned above, the use of pictures was mentioned as helping teachers in planning their lessons.

Teachers also mentioned using the pictures in different ways. Amy mentioned that many children have distorted speech. The children are capable of vocalization, but are difficult to

understand. In the past they had tried sign language, but many of the teachers were uncomfortable with it, as well as the parents. The international volunteers suggested that the teachers use communication books to speak with the students. “So when they left, we had to create communication books for those kids who had difficulty in communicating with us,” recalled Amy.

Amy went on to comment:

So one of the things after the training we decided that any time we have students here with severe speech problems we must have a communication book. We are not privy to have those communication -- electronics -- they are expensive, but the basic communication book with pictures does wonders.

Photos of one of the communication books produced at the school for use with the students is presented below (See Figure 4).



Figure 4. Communication books.

During classroom observations, use of a communication book with a child was not observed. Teachers explained that this was because the students that use that book were absent

during my time at the Omega Academy. In classroom observations, I also did not notice teachers using the pictures to demonstrate the schedule of the day.

Paula mentioned that she no longer used the pictures during her planning because she did not move them over to her new classroom when her class was moved. Grace revealed another reason that this lesson planning strategy wasn't being used. "Well right now we have a problem," she said, "Probably you might notice and have seen it." Then she went on to explain that paper materials were not able to adhere to the walls. She mentioned this was probably because of the new paint that had been used inside the classrooms which made it difficult for artwork produced by the children and others items to stick to the walls. She had tried many different things. As she was explaining this to me, almost on cue a coloring sheet that she had taped to the wall fell to the floor.

Before the problem occurred when it was difficult to stick items to the wall, Grace recalled:

You'd come to the school after [the international volunteers] left so every time you come to the classroom you'd see every teacher has a set of different pics that if you have the calendar time you have the music time, you have the poetry time, you have maths, you have the language, you have all the different pics. And we -- some of them -- would have them organized, like certain things like that for the day.

Part of the assembly hall at one time had been used as a classroom. It can be sectioned off using an accordion-style room divider. There was the only place I discovered a schedule similar to the one that Grace mentioned. It involved chores and is shown in Figure 5. One of the practices influenced by the international volunteers was being more thorough with explanations. When it comes to chores, "It's not just telling a child, 'Well, clean-up. Sweep the floor.' No, it's going way beyond that."

Paula illustrated on how she explains chores to the children:

When we keep our floors tidy it prevents germs from spreading, it makes your home clean and it makes the classroom look clean and tidy. When you do it, your home will be clean and tidy, so that's why we sweep. You pick up the dirt – dirt is not good. It causes me to be more explanatory to the children, yes. And that is something I took for granted, but now through teaching and learning the specifics like, the same way you want children to do things, it's more specific when you explain to them more.

Some of this planning involved the use of pictures, which was mentioned above. For instance, there may be a picture of food printed on a card that is approximately four square inches. That picture of food may symbolize snack time; while a picture of a house may represent that it's time to go home. These pictures can be arranged on a bulletin board or the wall to show students the agenda for the day. Grace talked about how the pictures made it easy for a teacher to go into their classroom in the morning, and arrange the events of the day before the morning assembly. She said when a teacher comes in after the assembly, she and the students then know:

You have a certain time to do that, then this one, then this one so throughout the day you had everything well organized. And that was something that they [the international volunteers] did very good and I mean all teachers really go for it. Cause it was more organized and that made teachers more organized and that made the teacher's plans even better too. It was much easier in planning.

Paula explained how after the international volunteers' visit, she had a similar recollection of how she would schedule the school day. "I have the schedule in pictorial form," she said. She then told me that when she changed classrooms the practice did not continue, though it had worked well. "I always put their schedule in picture form, and whenever that activity is done, take it off [of the board] and they see what the next activity is. So it lessens their anxiety." Paula went on to tell me, "Even if it's not in pictorial form [because of her changing classrooms] I always tell them, 'We're having math now. As soon as math is over we're going to lunch.' So they even have it in their mind that, 'You know what? This is next.'"



Figure 5. Schedule of classroom chores.

Classroom scheduling. Another instructional delivery practice that was introduced by the international volunteers and adopted by the teachers involved the scheduling of their time in the classroom. In recounting the use of pictures above, it was described how they were used in providing students with a visual of the classroom agenda. In addition to this visual representation, the international volunteers influenced other aspects of planning and preparing lessons. Amy mentioned that based on the training her lesson planning changed:

Your planning now takes a different turn. Because to be able to meet the needs of the child, it must be reflected in your plan. So our planning, from what I have saw after they left, there was a lot of excitement, ok, and a lot of them [other teachers] came to me. “Ok, [Amy], I am going to teach this. Will this fit in with what I am going to do? How am I doing to help this child?” This type of thing, so it assisted us in planning better. It boosted our confidence, now we know for sure what we are doing is right. We are on the right path. And for the students at least there was something happening with their learning.

Barbara explained a change in practice regarding the planning. “Because certain things we are doing now,” she explained, “We used to not do before they came. So it’s like, even with our planning and so on. It’s like, better way of doing it. Setting goals and stuff for our children.”

Grace mentioned how influential the new library became on lesson planning. She believes the library gives teachers more time to prepare. Teachers’ easy access to the books allowed them more time to prepare and choose stories. The stories chosen could then be taken over into the other lessons in an interdisciplinary manner. “So that is something that was very good,” she said, “Having the library organized in that way, yes.” Related to that she mentioned how the teachers now do a story in the classroom in the morning, before the snack time. “The children are much more involved compared to the afternoon session time period,” she said.

Barbara made a similar statement regarding planning and how she uses the library for her classroom. “Because every day we have to gather –we do a different story to build vocabulary. We do a different story and from that story we do a coloring activity,” she told me.

I observed Grace’s classroom and saw what she had explained earlier in the week. She was following a lesson plan that she created about sea turtles. She started by having the three students in her classroom scroll through photos of sea turtles on the iPads. She then drew a sea turtle on the board and asked the children to identify the parts. This included lots of verbal positive reinforcement. She then proceeded to read from a book about sea turtles which was in the library. She would stop to ask the students questions as she went along. This also included lots of verbal positive reinforcement. Grace then summarized the lesson and asked students some questions about the content she had just presented. The students were then instructed to complete a coloring sheet involving sea turtles. As she mentioned, in her plan this occurred prior to snack time and recess.

Grace told me:

Well what I can remember of their visit and what really struck me was it had me rearrange like my timing and my structure of my timetable. That is one thing I could remember because I had a timetable before that and then I was here, there, everything so to say, but after working with [the international volunteers] it gave me more time and different points and so they gave us during their stay to sit down and really break down that timetable. Because certain thing I would have had more time in doing and not accomplishing exactly what I wanted to do. Like I set a goal and I wanted so much done. It took me more time to sit back and rearrange the timetable to timeframe and do things in less. Because I understand and observe to that probably the children will probably get too tired.

Instructional materials. Instructional materials refers to the resources an instructor uses when delivering the content of the lesson to the students. Prior to traveling to Dominica, the short-term international volunteers consulted the Omega Academy regarding what supplies the school had access to and what supplies and resources the school did not. Similar to other short-term international volunteers (for instance in Comhlámh's Volunteering Options, 2007 and Lough et al., 2011) the group that visited the Omega Academy also brought many supplies. Some supplies were shipped ahead of time and helped through customs by a number of individuals. Many supplies were also brought with the short-term international volunteers themselves who had convinced an airline to waive a luggage fee.

Some of the supplies were used for positive reinforcement with the children. This refers to giving a child a token when they have achieved a learning or behavior objective. Many of the teachers were doing this before the short-term international volunteers arrived, but were giving verbal praise because they did not have items to give the students. After the short-term international volunteers left, the practice of giving tokens for positive reinforcement was continued until the supplies ran out. When the supplies ran out, teachers reverted back to giving verbal praise, though other modifications were made.

Other instructional materials were provided through the development of a library. In addition to story books, instructional books were also part of the new library. Other educational resources were also part of the library that went beyond books. The library and the educational resources provided with the library had an impact on the school, and was what the interview participants spoke about the most. The theme of instructional materials can be divided into two subthemes – positive reinforcement materials and the library and educational resources.

Positive reinforcement. Positive reinforcement refers to reinforcing a child's good behavior, or their learning. Positive reinforcement was influenced by the instructional materials provided by the short-term international volunteers to the Omega Academy. During the workshops conducted by the international volunteers in 2011, facilitators taught different ways to reinforce the learning of the students. Barbara recalled:

I feel like things have changed. I mean because we know better now. We know better what to do, particularly with autistic children. We know the right strategies used to dealing with these children and how you would reinforce a child.

Both Barbara and Paula mentioned how part of the reinforcement strategy was to give something to the child such as a pencil, or a crayon, or sometimes giving him or her the opportunity to use a favorite puzzle. Paula recalled with excitement learning about the reinforcement strategies:

Oh my goodness, they have come up with some ways of reinforcing for learning that, you know, we would think that it would be just have a packet of biscuits or some little and when they do it [when the child learns something] give it to them. But there are some other ways of reinforcing like ... things that... they used things that children enjoy and you get work done. And it was...it felt like, "Wow, as a teacher you should know that," but it's only when we see it in action it's like, "Yes, we will never take it for granted."

Barbara recalled a way of reinforcement that they used with the children before and after the workshops by the international volunteers.

She stated:

Before what we used to do before we would clap and praise, and “yay, good job” but even a child likes a little thing. We do it like that. A child like masters the word “see”. For two weeks you struggle with him and the “see” and then all of a sudden you master the “see”. We have little tokens, we give little tokens, if the child likes a game, we let you play on that game. We have different things of doing it instead of just a little clap and a hug and a say “yay, good job” different ways of them doing stuff.

Carolyn, the secretary, also mentioned how some parents also learned and would support reinforcement activities with their children. This would involve reporting back to the teacher what the child was doing at home. The one child that Carolyn recalled was in Grace’s class. William commented on the importance of parent’s reinforcing lessons at home. He mentioned how the school tried to get parents to know what is going on at the school, so they can reinforce it at home.

Paula was asked if there was a practice that was immediately done after the international volunteers left that was no longer done. She mentioned the rewards for her had been phased out because sometimes she just doesn’t have anything to give. “But positive reinforcement,” she said, “has stayed. Has stayed. I wish I had a bundle of things to give, but I don’t, so I go to the next best thing of positive reinforcement, I kept that up.”

The Library and Educational Resources. The international volunteers, as stated in Chapter 3, contributed 1,000 books and established the library at the school. The library was mentioned by all interviewees, and quite extensively. The library, because of its significance in institutional arrangements, particularly with instructional materials, has been placed in this section. One of the benefits of the library was already presented above, when Grace attributed the library to helping teachers plan in a timely manner.

The development of the library was very timely for the school. “We needed the resources,” said Barbara. She continued, “We were lacking that. It just came at the right time. We needed that here.” The resources were very limited before the international volunteers visited. As Paula explained, “We never had a library before they came, but there were cupboards that had access to resources.” In addition to the books, there were other resources that the international volunteers donation which William described. He told me that there were, “Materials that could be used in the classrooms and games, education games that could also be used because they need to be more motivated, more motivated as much as possible, so with games, that they enjoy doing.” Amy described that some of the materials were timers. The teachers were trained to set these kitchen timers in order to let a child know when it was time to transition to another activity. “When a child is having a tantrum,” she said, “We had material that would help you know to tone them down. We had a lot of hands-on blocks. We had pictures and things that our kids are not familiar with, you know, something new”.

William mentioned that he observes a number of things that the teachers are doing that they were taught by the international volunteers. Some of his observations include seeing the teachers use the materials that the volunteers supplied the school with such as books, educational games, and shapes, numbers, and other materials. William declared his philosophy when it comes to using resources. “That’s one thing that I always insist,” he said, “If we have a learning tool, and somebody comes in to teach us something new, by all means remember to practice.”

Amy mentioned how the existence of the library was important for students to see. She said, “We want to have them feel as comfortable, as comfortable, in mainstream society. So a library is a normal building, a normal place of interest where students go to.” She continued on to state more on why and how the teachers use the library with the students. She provided:

So one of the things we said as staff, “We need a library here, even if the kids may not be able to read. We want them to experience the environment of a library.” So what I would do and the others teachers. We have a library session once a week for class. Kids who go in you know that the library is a quiet place, you have to be quite. You go and choose your book. Remember where you took your book from. So it assists us in helping kids to remember. Take your book, find a seat, and you just sit there and you look at the pictures. We want no talking, so this is how I will structure my session.

Grace also described how her class uses the library:

Before they came we never had children go into the library and sit as a group and choose one book and then read and going through the book with them and then picture reading ... we never used to do that before. So that was one good thing that they introduced.

When the international volunteers were at the school in 2011 and established the library, they also brought a laptop and a system designed for books to be checked-out. The international volunteers trained Barbara in this system and she became the school librarian (while still having her teaching duties as well). Barbara described setting-up the library:

When we got all the books we had to sort all the stuff and then we had to stack and then we had to organize and reference areas, reference sections. We had reading materials. We had resource materials; we had religion, the different sections that you have in the library. And then we had to put a code on these things and then enter it in the computer. And then we had the card if somebody takes, you enter the person’s name yeah, so quite a bit of work yeah, quite a bit of work.

Barbara told me how books could be checked out. Different interviewees had different opinions if this was actually being done. Amy stated:

No we do not allow them to check out any books. We just have them to do their copy whatever, notes but if there is something they want to photocopy of a picture or a print that was a little income for the school. So we’d have them just pay a few coins to do the photocopy but none of our books because we have only a limited amount of Special Ed. books and you would not normally get that in libraries and the bookstore, so we wanted to make sure it kept there for others too.

Barbara clarified that the books can be checked out. Books have been checked out in the past by persons from the Ministry of Education, teachers at other schools, and college students. However, she thinks because most schools now have access to the internet they look-up their resources online rather than want to check-out a book.

Carolyn, who was instrumental in her role of coordinating much of the project, exposed a component of the library that is no longer occurring. She recalled, “They [international volunteers] had put us in contact with some American library organization in the States, every year they would send us -- they would update. But because we never took it on, they have stopped trying now. Doing different things for the library.”

Leadership

The research sub-question, “How did short-term international volunteers influence, inspire, and motivate others to achieve or go beyond their goals?” was framed by the leadership lever of change from the UNDP Framework for Measuring Capacity Development. In this context, leadership refers to the “ability to influence, inspire, and motivate others to achieve or even go beyond their goals” (UNDP, 2010, p. 14). Leadership is not the same as an authoritarian position, and also includes the ability to anticipate and respond to change. Leadership may be informal, and can occur at many levels. Though most commonly thought of in association with an individual leader, it also exists within the enabling environment and at the organizational level (UNDP, 2010). In analyzing the text, one theme emerged – inspirational leadership.

Inspirational Leadership. The participants mentioned how they were inspired by the international volunteers. Participants stated that they were more motivated to teach students with disabilities because of the interaction with the short-term international volunteers. Participants were inspired to go beyond their goals. Part of this was because the teachers realized they were

not alone in the world in working with students with disabilities. The students also were inspired by the presence of the short-term international volunteers. This was obvious to school staff by the reactions they saw among the students in their reactions to the short-term international volunteers.

The inspirational leadership also reached out far beyond the Omega Academy. The short-term international volunteers has not only networked through the local Rotary Club, but also the Ministry of Education had announced their arrival. The Ministry of Education had also invited teachers from other schools to attend the workshops. The short-term international volunteers also held a press conference which allowed news stories to be broadcast across the whole country. This inspired others to learn more about the Omega Academy as well as inspired parents of children with autism not enrolled at the Omega Academy to attend the workshops. It also inspired other teachers to learn more about the resources that are available.

I identified three sub-themes within inspirational leadership. These sub-themes were: inspiration from outsiders, influence on others, and positive language. The three sub-themes are presented below.

Inspiration from Outsiders. The principal, secretary, and three of the four teachers spoke to the inspiration from the outsiders. Amy, a teacher, when asked about what areas the international volunteers impacted the school replied, “For us it was motivation! We saw that we were not alone in the fight. There was somebody we could really relate to.” William, the principal also mentioned how the presence of the international volunteers motivated all the teachers as well as the students. He continued, “The students, they enjoy their teachers but it’s always nice to have somebody new coming, some new people coming, a change of pace.”

The international volunteers were also viewed as having inspired the parents. By having international volunteers at the school, some participants thought the parents paid more attention. Barbara, a teacher, mentioned, “I mean we have tried here and it like wasn’t effective...sometime when you bring in outsiders the parents show more interest at these things.”

The secretary, Carolyn, recalled how the international volunteers were instrumental in getting parents to avoid using the word “retarded”. She stated:

That word we were not using it much but you would still find parents would say, “Oh my child retarded,” which you have to get the parents out of that. Your child is not retarded; your child has a disability. It was already out, but some people would still, when they heard it from us. But when they heard it from the people [international volunteers], it made a difference.

As mentioned, a component of leadership is to inspire people to go beyond their goals. William mentioned that outside volunteers inspire the staff at the school to do more. Carolyn made statements that agreed with William. She said that the international volunteers were viewed as “experts” and that people listened to them.

William discussed that some children are very quiet and reserved, but when a visitor comes in “The child is more excited when they see somebody new, which encourages us from time-to-time just to play games with them, or sing-along. And so then we get the ideas and sometimes invite students from other schools.” Grace mentioned how seeing the way the international volunteers interacted with the students, that it had a greater impact on their changes.

William noted how the interactions between the students and the short-term international volunteers encouraged him to invite students from other schools to come and interact with the Omega Academy students through sports and outings in the park. These visitors include local secondary school students who are doing it as part of community service. The visitors also include local college students who do it as part of their studies.

Influence on Others. The program at the Omega Academy influenced persons not affiliated with the school. This began when the international volunteers attracted the attention of the media and held a press conference at the Omega Academy. The news segment was shown on national television. Amy recalled:

Because the training that we got it was not something that was done in secret it was advertised. It was made public, we had the media here. So it lifted the image of the school, you know. It gave persons a different perception of this school. The media raised the profile of the school, and let other teachers know about the training and the resources available.

Barbara stated:

They [the international volunteers] brought in new people, people coming from all other schools and they come to use our resources at the library. So they brought people. People have been informed because it was in the media. Teachers come from out there and they use our resources. And this is like [Omega Academy] it is known. A wide variety of people know [Omega Academy] right now.

Barbara went on to add the reaction of people that she saw after the news report aired.

“Oh, I saw you on television. I never knew you doing all those things and so on.”

Amy had a similar experience:

Cause persons would meet us on the road, and I know for me some other teachers from the other schools I worked at would say “Wow, boy, you all are getting specialized training! We need that.” And most times their concern would be, “We have children you know, we have children in our classroom that they should be at your school. Our Ministry [of Education] doesn’t . . . the Ministry would not train us teachers and we have those children in this classroom and we do not know what to do.”

The media attention, as well as an announcement by the Ministry of Education attracted teachers from other schools to the workshops. Teachers from the other schools became aware of the new Omega Academy resources during these workshops. Because they were aware of the resources, after the workshops the teachers from the other school continued to come to the Omega Academy to access some of the library resources.

Amy mentioned how a couple, whose child with autism did not attend the Omega Academy, heard about the workshop for parents through the Ministry of Education. They attended the parent's workshop. Amy recalled, "They came and their mission was to just get as much information as possible 'cause (sic) this was asking all the questions and ways and means of how I can do this and that."

William, the principal mentioned how because of the positive experience with the international volunteers, that he is now open to having other volunteers at the school. He stated, "What I would like to see is more volunteers, local volunteers, like parents or retired people coming in and giving an hour or two or a day a week if they can. We have had one or two persons do that." He went on to mention how he wishes he could find a volunteer that was a musician and play a piano that had recently been donated to the school. He also would like to see volunteers that could lead the children with sports.

Outsiders also have influence on the parents according to Barbara:

There is always room for improvement. In everything there is room for improvement. Because we have been trying so many different strategies, trying to give the early bird prizes, it's like they are not motivated ... giving something to motivate them. Sometimes you tell them, "oh we have visitors," that helps you know. I don't know if they're there expecting something or what, but it helps. Yeah, it helps.

Carolyn described how the library influenced others outside of the Omega Academy. She shared:

With all the books they brought us, there were lot of students from the college who would come to get books from psychology, disabilities, depending on what their programs were. [They] would come to our library, the students. But lately we haven't seen students, psychology students coming like we did before.

Positive Language. "Everybody changed their whole attitude towards the children," recalled Carolyn. Indeed, all four teachers and Carolyn, the secretary mentioned how the

international volunteers influenced the language they use and the attitudes they have towards the children. When asked about how the teachers and staff talk about the children, and how that was influenced by the international volunteers in 2011, Grace replied, “All the interactions, the different strategies the different steps, the different conversations we have are positive and go toward to positive.”

Paula, when asked the same question, mentioned:

It has helped because when they when they came, when the volunteers came, they always told us never see the challenge, see the child as a child. Number one, don't look at the challenge, look at the child first and then you see the challenge after. When you can understand that, then it's easier to teach a child. Because when you first look at the challenge you forget that you're dealing with a child. Because the first thing that comes on is that, “Oh the behavior if it wasn't for the behavior that child would be great.” But it's the behavior that makes the child who the child is, so first see the child as a child.

Barbara revealed, “We had to make sure to say [when speaking about the children] were positive, and so on like that. Make them feel loved. Make them feel safe here.” Amy stated that after the international volunteers left that “we teachers, I think, you know, became a little more – what word would I use –instead of become too rash in wanting to see change happen too quickly, we slowed down a bit and [it] became ‘Let it take its gradual course.’”

Knowledge

The third core issue in the levels of change is knowledge. This is connected to the sub-research question, “How did short-term international volunteers foster knowledge through education?” At the individual level, knowledge is fostered through education. Knowledge can also be created and shared within an organization as well as general life experience. Knowledge may be supported “through an enabling environment of effective educational systems and policies” (UNDP, 2010, p. 14).

The short-term international volunteers fostered knowledge through education at the Omega Academy by conducting the workshops, and providing resources and access to resources. The teachers, as shown in Table 2, have a wide-variety of backgrounds and formal training in teaching students with disabilities. The short-term international volunteers fostered knowledge by providing much-needed professional development for the teachers. Knowledge was also fostered by providing resources in the library for teacher to continue to learn.

The relationship continued after the short-term international volunteers left and were still able to foster knowledge by providing information via the Dropbox. This continuation is how the short-term international volunteers fostered knowledge after departing because they had become, along with members of the Omega Academy, part of a professional learning community.

Themes in the knowledge category include professional development and professional learning community. Both of those themes, along with sub-themes are presented below.

Professional Development. Professional development refers to the process and practice of increasing the capacities of staff through education, whether provided by an outsider or done internally. The teachers, as shown above in Table 2, not only have varying levels of work experience at the school and with education, but also have varying levels of formal education regarding teaching, especially related to teaching students with disabilities. Professional development is important for these teachers to know the appropriate practices to use when they work with their students.

Professional development at the Omega Academy takes different forms. There is one day set-aside for professional development – Ash Wednesday. This day occurs after the carnival holiday, when schools are closed in Dominica. The staff at the Omega Academy meet on Ash Wednesday, before students return to school the next day. This professional development usually

involves outside facilitators, whether provided by the Ministry of Education or guest speakers arranged by the school from other agencies.

The short-term international volunteers provided professional development to the school which went much beyond the one-day professional development on Ash Wednesday. The short-term international volunteers provided workshops which were developed by the autism expert, and were facilitated by her and the other volunteers. These workshops encouraged the school to look for other opportunities for professional development. The sub-theme of Other Opportunities is presented below.

Other Opportunities. Participants in the study mentioned how because of the international volunteers they were inclined to pursue other opportunities in which to gain knowledge. This included self-directed ways such as reading from the resource materials provided by the international volunteers to conducting research via the internet. Participants also expressed that they were more inclined to attend other workshops after the positive experience with the international volunteers.

Amy mentioned that after the 2011 workshop presented by the international volunteers that she did not recall any other workshops focused on autism. However, she said that the learning did not stop. “If teachers do anything on autism, it would be personal research or just readings.” She went on to tell me that these readings come, “From the internet, and we have materials there [at the school library] we read up on.”

Barbara mentioned that there were improvements at the school:

It has improved though because Edwin we now know we have stuff now that can teach us the right way. It has improved compared to before. It is just when I began teaching I didn't know anything and with experience and so on, this is the way you do that this is the way step one, step two, step three -- this is what you do.

Barbara recalled there was another workshop at the school, but it was provided by the Ministry of Education. She thought the workshop that was conducted by the Ministry was mostly a “refresher course”. She stated how the Ministry did not cover any content that had not already been presented by the international volunteers in 2011.

Like Amy, Barbara mentioned how she likes to learn on her own:

There are always good documentaries that I like to look at with training bodies and so on... and on special needs children as a whole. And like certain things maybe I should do with a child you realize this is not the right way we're doing it and so on. But that is informing yourself slowly yeah? We learn better strategies, the right strategies, to do certain activities with children.

Amy also mentioned how through the national radio station the teachers and other members of the community learn about autism. “I think there’s a day in Dominica where autism is highlighted on the radio programs and then if we have a chance during the day to listen to various persons when they call in to share.” She told of how teachers would then discuss the radio program with each other the next day.

The experience with the international volunteers in 2011 also encouraged the school to have workshops presented by other international volunteers. Paula recollected how an international organization contacted the Omega Academy and mentioned that they would like to upgrade communications at the school. Paula, being the computer teacher (among other duties) mentioned how she told the organization that the school could use iPads and touchscreen devices because some of the children cannot use a mouse. The organization arranged for a teacher from Mexico to visit the school and gave an orientation to the teachers on programs. “Programs that are learning, but it looks like play activities online. Interactive play, but it’s actually learning, so you are teaching numbers and counting and it’s all through technology” said Paula.

The training Paula referred to had happened less than six months before her interview. Grace, Amy, and Paula were all observed using the iPads in their classrooms. During the my visit, attendance was low in the classroom that Amy and Paula's students shared. The majority of their lessons at that time included having the students play educational games on their iPads. William mentioned that a company had donated the iPads, laptops, and brought in an instructor with experience in working with children with disabilities. The facilitator trained the teachers in how to use the technology and observed the teachers using them in the classroom.

Professional Learning Community. A professional learning community is a group of educators that meet, share expertise, and work collaboratively to improve teaching skills. In many ways the short-term international volunteers and the staff of the school entered into a professional learning community. The short-term international volunteers, though they were only at the school over the course of two weeks in 2011, did not just appear and then disappear. They spent time developing a relationship with the school staff and others. These interactions contributed to them becoming part of a professional learning community.

Interview participants all mentioned the friendliness of the short-term international volunteers. During their time at the Omega Academy, the short-term volunteers had made an effort to develop relationships with the school staff. This relationship continued past the time that the short-term international volunteers were at the school. The professional learning community is demonstrated through two subthemes – continuous relationship and knowledge within the organization. Both sub-themes are presented below.

Continuous Relationship. Carolyn the secretary and two of the teachers mentioned how the international volunteers continue to foster knowledge at the school by continuing their relationship long after they left. Carolyn reflected, "I know I still communicate Christmas and

Easter you know just say hi and this kind of thing. There was a good rapport between them and us.” She went on to mention, “All I can say is that we had a good rapport and the thing is that they never portrayed themselves as knowing their field and being at a higher level than us. For everybody it was a learning process.”

Barbara, when asked what the most memorable thing about their visit was, she reflected:

If you need this you know you have people out there you can depend on to get things for the children. You may not have something in Dominica, because we are limited here. We say, “Boy, our children need that, how are we going to get that for our children?” Let’s ask [the international volunteers], or something like that ... I’m sure they’ll be able to assist and so on. I mean it makes things a little easier for us.

Amy mentioned how the international volunteers made it easy for the Omega Academy to connect with the volunteers after their departure, as well as left access to resources. “They left their email and they created a Dropbox online so we could put in questions if we had concerns, if they got new material they could send it to us. So up to today we are in contact.” However, when asked for clarification about emailing the international volunteers with questions, she responded:

Well, for now we do not... the group is still in existence, when last we heard I think some have moved to other areas so it’s about a year now we have not. When [Carolyn] was there we could get in constant email but the new secretary, she doesn’t know much about this group or so. We have no email coming in now.

Knowledge within an Organization. Knowledge can also be shared within an organization (UNDP, 2010). Amy referred to sharing knowledge within an organization when she was discussing the autism awareness program which aired on the national radio. She mentioned how the teachers would listen to the discussion on the radio and:

Then after that we have discussions among ourselves. There is new evidence out there. There is new topics out there. We talk about it as a staff. Not in a formal setting -- it will be during their [the children’s] snack time where we just group together and then we just share what we heard. Kind of informal.

Grace told how after the international volunteers left there were “some little trainings from the Ministry.” She revealed how something they should think about doing is to share their experience and knowledge with the newer teachers. She stated:

Something we should really think of doing. Especially for the new ones. All I have known or have observed in my experience probably I should share what I have been through and we should be told to pass it on. So they would have probably observed and noticed something from us that they’ll do after we’re gone, and that’s how it continues. I think it should be continued.

Grace went on to mention how the teachers that were present for the workshops in 2011 could pass-on that knowledge to the newer teachers:

We in cohort here we probably could [conduct a workshop] because we have new teachers and so on and they would not have been here so if we get them to impact a little more knowledge and have an understanding of the children. Because I don’t think they have training. They came right from school -- from college -- and then were sent here. Probably to give more of them an understanding on the different disabilities.

Amy stated how the teachers and staff at the school organization their own trainings. They then choose the topics to be covered, and arrange their own guest speakers. This has involved workshops on school safety, fire service, and child abuse. She acknowledged that they do not have to go through the Ministry of Education to arrange their professional development, though sometimes they do receive professional development workshops from the Ministry. Ash Wednesday is typically the annual professional development day at the Omega Academy. Most, if not all, schools in the country are closed Monday and Tuesday of that week for Carnival celebrations. The Omega Academy has professional development on Ash Wednesday before resuming classes for what is considered the third term.

Accountability

The fourth lever of change from the UNDP Framework for Measuring Capacity Development is accountability. From the perspective of capacity development, the focus of accountability is on the interface between public service providers and its clients or service providers and oversight bodies. Specifically, it's about institutions establishing ways in which to capture and use feedback. Accountability is important as it allows organizations to monitor and self-regulate as well as adjust their behavior (UNDP, 2010). For the school (a service provider) that accountability lever of change would focus on the interface between it and parents. Thus, the fourth research sub-question is "How did short-term international volunteers influence the school to put systems in place to engage parents and capture and utilize their feedback?" The question is addressed below in one theme – home-school relationship.

Home-school relationship. The relationship between the home of the students and the school was the theme that emerged in the accountability category. Even before being prompted, all interview participants mentioned the parents of the children at the Omega Academy. It was obvious that this was the area of the greatest frustration for the school staff. Parents, as perceived by the interviewees were not being accountable for the education of their children.

The teachers that were interviewed, as well as the principal and secretary all recounted different ways in which the school had tried to engage with parents. Some of these had been tried numerous times over past years. Other suggestions came up during the conversation of things the school might try in order to engage parents.

All interviewees either did not recall how many parents attended the workshops provided by the short-term international volunteers, or remembers a small number of parents being present. However, the interviewees perceived that the parents that did attend the workshop did

benefit. The interviewees mentioned that the parents they really wanted to attend the workshop unfortunately did not attend. After the workshop, interview participants did not describe any improvement in the home-school relationship. The home-school relationship is evident in three sub-themes: school concerns with parent involvement, the perceived impact of the workshops on the parents, and school-parent relations after the visit by the international volunteers.

School Concerns with Parent Involvement. All participants voiced some concern about the lack of parental involvement at the school. Barbara described the uninvolved parents as “laissez-fair”. She stated, “Laissez-faire – just laid back. The parent involvement helps. It helps a child. ‘If mommy isn’t interested, why should I be interested?’” Barbara attested that she has good communication between her and the parents. Part of this she contributes to the fact that the children in her classroom are not old enough to walk home or walk to take the public bus. Instead, the children in her classroom must be picked up by a family member. This she says attributes to a good parent-teacher relationship. She also claims that the strong parent/teacher relationship also contributes to the strong attendance in her classroom.

Grace, who teaches the older children, noticed how the parents of the students in Barbara’s class were more engaged with the school. Grace theorized that the parents of younger children were more involved than parents the older kids, such as the ones in her class. Grace mentioned how she thinks there is a shift in parental involvement as compared to the first 10-15 years she taught at the school. She suggested, “They [parents] just appear to not have time. So I don’t know what’s happened to our young people these days. I don’t know. I guess too many involved, so many electronic things that has taken up, everybody has been so computerized.”

Grace illustrated this thought:

They have their attitude that their child is at school and that's it. Because even if we write reports and such we have to wait for them to come in and well tell them how much achievement their child has done or whatever, they don't even show, they don't come. That's a disappointment there.

William, Carolyn, and Amy mentioned that part of the difficulty getting parents to the school is that so many of them live far away and transportation is an issue. Though Dominica is a small country, travel can take a long time due to mountainous terrain, or lack of infrastructure. However, Amy gave examples of parents working very close to the school and walking by it every day without stopping to speak with a teacher on the progress of their child.

William shared that he estimated that only half of parents were involved at the school. As mentioned above, many parents live far from the school, but he believes many could make more effort. There are children that are also not going to school because they do not have support from parents and society. He explained:

We know kids have benefited by being here and we know they love to be here and they happy when they are here so I still feel a lot of education of the parents and education of the public on children with disabilities and their role and contribution to society needs to because in some cases it's really a problem to get kids to come, you know they're out right now.

Carolyn mentioned that when printed notices are sent home with the children for the parents about a workshop or a parent-teacher conference that it is always the same parents who would come to the school. Even some parents that live far away, like the ones mentioned above, Carolyn said would "Always call to find out you know and would really show an interest in her child. So when there's parent/teachers conferences and who would come, but for some the [Omega Academy] is just a babysitting place for them." Carolyn wasn't alone with this thought as William also expressed his thought that parent's considered the school as babysitting.

While William echoed Carolyn's thought that some parents see the school as a babysitting service, Paula echoed Carolyn on responses from parents. Paula shared:

It's the same parents, but the parents that you really want to see and their children are doing well, but unfortunately we do not get that support from the parents. Even at calling parents support meeting or parent's conference -- very few parents show up.

While parent-school relationships were not viewed very positively by the interview participants, the international volunteers did develop and plan workshops for the parents in 2011. Another sub-theme in the home-school relationship was the impact of workshops on parents. That sub-theme is presented below in the next section.

Impact of Workshops on Parents. During the visit by the international volunteers in 2011, a workshop was held specifically for the parents. Amy and Carolyn compiled a list of all of the students at the time that were diagnosed with autism. Carolyn then contacted the parents of the students on the list and invited them to the workshop. Amy remembers on the list they had included the parents of 12-15 students. Of those parents, she only recalled three or four of the parents attending the workshop. Amy commented, "To target the parents we needed to target -- they did not come."

Participants recalled very few parents attending the workshop offered for parents, though the log book indicated that 16 parents attended that workshop. Of the parents in attendance, two were the parents of a child with autism who did not attend the Omega Academy. They learned about the workshop through the Ministry of Education and came to learn how they could help their child.

While few parents attended the workshops, when the participants were asked to share how they thought the workshops influenced the parents, the responses were very positive. "Every

parent who attended the workshop showed interest in their child's welfare," said Carolyn. Barbara also attested a similar response. She shared, "The parents who came, it impacted them. What we do when we do stuff at school with the children and we send it home, they get it done. They do it at home with the children."

William expressed comments similar to Barbara's that he believed that parents who came to the workshops improved on reinforcing the school lessons at home with their children. He expanded on this thought:

The parents that did show [to the workshop] benefited, you know. A lot of the parents, all they can tell you is that the child has a disability, a learning disability or is mentally challenged you know. ... But asked to what exactly it is, or how to deal with the child you know. ... But at the workshop what we tried to do was get the people [the international volunteers] to explain to the parents exactly what, for example, "What is autism is all about?" How to relate to a child with autism. How do you ... you know what to expect with a child with autism. So the parents who came here would have benefited you know, from that.

Paula was able to recall a positive impact that the workshops made on one specific parent:

I can only identify one mother that really encouraged her child. Not only in the school, but also at home with the training. Only one mother I can identify that saw the impact that it had left on her. She actually said "You know what? I'm going to continue doing these little activities and help my child" yeah, I remember her saying that.

Another sub-theme to emerge from home-school relationship was that of parent relations after the short-term international volunteer's workshop. This sub-theme looks at perceptions of the parent relationships since the departure of the short-term international volunteers. That sub-theme is presented below.

Parent Relations after the International Volunteers' Workshop. Participants were asked to share how interactions with the parents changed after the visit of the international volunteers.

Paula mentioned her frustration with the parents:

We have gotten very little support from the parents. The parents that are active at the school are the same ones that have been there from the time [of the visit].

Carolyn lamented:

And the parents...parents and bringing in the parents...my only disappointment is that after they left we did never put enough things in place to bring in the parents. Although when we would have PTA we'd find the parent's don't come but we had that opportunity to bring the parents in and after that it wasn't there. That should have been there.

Both Grace and Amy mentioned many things that the school has tried to do to get parents involved, from holding meetings at different times of the day, to also holding meetings in more of a social gathering at a local park. Unfortunately, they told me, the attendance of parents is still mediocre. The final week of school every school year is set-aside just for parent-teacher conferences, and unfortunately, it is still not highly attended.

Paula believes the Omega Academy could greatly change their curriculum if they had support from parents. She said that the curriculum should focus more on skills-building. However, in order to properly implement a skills-building program, parents would also have to be knowledgeable of the skill in order to support the child. Paula mentioned this could include soap-making, woodwork, and sewing, but it would require more parental support than what they currently receive.

Barbara told me how she thought the interaction with the families changed after the visit of the international volunteers. She said:

Well I know I know of my children, my children in my classroom, I mean it was always there, I think it has improved a bit because the parents that you wanted to see you never see, now you getting them to come in. And it gives you a whole approach to people. How you approach people. I mean that helped a bit. I still find that parents can get more involved.

Summary

This chapter introduced the six participants in the case study. Analysis of the data revealed that the experience of the visit by the international volunteers in 2011 had an impact on the school. The impact, as can be seen, was multilayered and diverse. Using the UNDP Model for Capacity Development (2010), all identified themes were sorted into four categories which corresponded with the Levers of Change (institutional arrangements, leadership, knowledge, and accountability). Instructional delivery and instructional materials were themes identified in the institutional arrangements category. The leadership category contained one theme, inspirational leadership, and three sub-themes: inspiration from outsiders, influence on others, and positive language. Professional development and professional learning community were both themes in the knowledge category. Finally, in the accountability category was the theme of home-school relationship, which included the sub-themes of: school concerns with parent involvement, impact of workshops on parents, and parent relations after the international volunteer workshops.

Chapter 5, the final chapter, will provide discussion on the meaning of these findings and the implications. The final chapter will also provide conclusions. Recommendations for further research based on the findings discovered through the data will also be presented in the next chapter.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Implications, and Recommendations

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to investigate the impact that short-term international volunteers have on the capacity development of a school in the Caribbean. Specifically, the study sought to answer the research question, “What is the impact of short-term international volunteers on the capacity development of a school in the Caribbean?”

The research question had four sub-questions which were guided by the UNDP Framework for Measuring Capacity Development’s four core issues (2010). The research sub-questions were:

- How did short-term international volunteers impact the policies, practices, and systems of the school?
- How did short-term international volunteers influence, inspire, and motivate others to achieve or go beyond their goals?
- How did short-term international volunteers foster knowledge through education?
- How did short-term international volunteers influence the school to put systems in place to engage parents and capture and utilize their feedback?

In this study, participants all worked at a school in the Caribbean nation of Dominica, which had experienced a project completed by short-term international volunteers five years prior to the study. A case-study design was used in order to gain an in-depth knowledge of stakeholders’ perspectives and experiences of capacity development as a result of working with the short-term international volunteers. This chapter summarizes and discusses the main findings represented in the six themes that emerged from the participant data, examine their implications, and suggest recommendations for future research.

Summary of Themes and Connections to Existing Knowledge

This study was guided by the United Nations Development Programme's Framework for Measuring Capacity Development (UNDP, 2010). The six themes, along with sub-themes, are displayed below in Figure 6 as arranged by the four categories of the UNDP Framework for Measuring Capacity Development's levers of change. The six themes found and presented in Chapter 4 are summarized below and connected to the existing knowledge which was presented in Chapter 2.



Figure 6. Themes and sub-themes arranged according to the Levers of Change.

Institutional arrangements. Institutional arrangements is the functioning of a group and the practices, policies, and systems that allow for effectiveness (UNDP, 2010). In this category, two themes were identified – instructional delivery and instructional materials. Below is a summary of the findings of those themes as well as a discussion of how they are related to the existing knowledge.

Instructional delivery. A practice that was introduced by the international volunteers and adopted by the teachers involved the scheduling of their time in the classroom. The main practice

that was influenced in this theme involved using pictures to set an agenda for the classroom for the day, making it easy for the students to follow-along. This practice however is no longer used and the reasons varied. One reason was a teacher's belief that displaying the schedule in pictorial form was better for the younger students, not the ones in her classroom. Another reason this was not being used was attributed to the paint on the classroom walls and how it no longer allowed paper materials to stick to the walls for very long. Another teacher mentioned how she had used the practice, but when she changed classrooms she chose not to continue the practice of displaying the agenda for the day, but instead verbally tells students what is forthcoming.

The short-term international volunteers had an impact on the practices of the teachers by influencing the shift of reading lessons towards the beginning of the school day, rather than at the end. The short-term international volunteers also influenced the practice of how the teachers prepare their lesson plans. Two of the teachers recalled how because of the workshops by the short-term international volunteers they thought more intentionally about the individual needs of their students. The introduction of these new ideas was congruent with previous studies that claimed that short-term international volunteers had an impact on the capacity development of the host organization (Jester & Thayer, 2007; Lough et al. 2011).

Jester and Thyer (2007) reported that 90% of host organizations agreed that the technical assistance provided by international volunteers contributed to the skills within the organization. This appeared to also be the case at the Omega Academy where the teachers had received the technical assistance to produce the pictures, though it was not observed in practice. The use of the communication books for teachers to use with students who have speech difficulties was a new idea introduced to the school, similar to what Lough et al. (2011) described as a positive impact that international volunteers can have on a host organization.

Instructional materials. As noted in the research, one way that short-term international volunteers can have an impact on host organizations is by providing supplies and resources (Comhlámh's Volunteering Options, 2007; Lough et al., 2011). The short-term international volunteers at the Omega Academy affirmed the research by providing supplies and resources. Some of the resources were used for positive reinforcement with the students. The international volunteers trained the teachers at the Omega Academy to use instructional materials, tokens, to reinforce a child's good behavior or their learning. Teachers recalled that before the visit by the international volunteers, that they would verbally praise a student for achieving a learning outcome. The international volunteers introduced the instructional materials that could be used for positive reinforcement such as giving a student a small item that they would enjoy such as a pencil or crayon.

The use of the tokens for positive reinforcement was a practice influenced by the international volunteers. The impact of short-term international volunteers introducing a practice was similar to findings by other researchers (Jester & Thyer, 2007; Lough et al. (2001). Even though the teachers do not have a replenished supply of tokens to give the kids, the practice of positive reinforcement remains and was adapted by the Omega Academy. Part of this adaption was, in place of giving the child something tangible, he or she would have the opportunity to play with their favorite puzzle.

Other instructional materials were brought in and part of the library which was established by the short-term international volunteers and included one thousand donated books among other resources. One teacher received technical training on how to manage the library, relying on the laptop provided by the short-term international volunteers. The training included how to use the check-out system, as well as on how to organize the library. As Lough et al.

(2011) found, short-term international volunteers can positively impact host organizations by transferring technical or professional skills. Though there was still a way for books to be checked out, this is rarely done anymore at the Omega Academy. One interview participant did introduce a theory that the loaning of books had decreased because of the increase in internet access in Dominica which has been on the rise over the past five years. Technical skills regarding the arrangement of the library were still in use as it was observed that the books in the library were still organized in a manner similar to the way the teacher described she was taught by the international volunteers in 2011.

The library project was a participatory approach as the international volunteers gathered further information from the Omega Academy in advance regarding what types of books they needed at the school. Participatory approaches such as this are often advocated for in development dialogue (Simpson, 2004). The Omega Academy was able to provide information to the short-term international volunteers on the type of books the school could use -- instructional books as well as story books at various levels.

Leadership

Leadership refers to the “ability to influence, inspire, and motivate others to achieve or even go beyond their goals” (UNDP, 2010, p. 14). In this category, one theme was identified – inspirational leadership. This theme addresses how the short-term international volunteers influenced, inspired, and motivated others to achieve or go beyond their goals.

Inspirational leadership. As stated in Chapter 2, in many cases short-term international volunteers are recruited with the requirement that they need to have a willingness to volunteer and learn, but actually lack the training and experience necessary to have a significant impact (Sherraden et al., 2006; Comhlámh’s Volunteering Options, 2007; Forsythe, 2011). The short-

term international volunteers in this case study however had a strong knowledge base in education and working with children with autism that far exceeded just “a willingness to learn.”

Every participant spoke to how they had been inspired by the short-term international volunteers. This inspiration was displayed in different ways. For Amy, a teacher, she thought the visit of the short-term international volunteers encouraged her to be aware that the Omega Academy was not alone, and there were other people in the world that worked with children with disabilities and understood the problems they faced. Both the principal and the secretary noted that they believed the short-term international volunteers inspired the teachers to go beyond their goals.

The short-term international volunteers were seen as “experts” and received a lot of respect from school staff and parents. All participants spoke about how friendly the short-term international volunteers were towards staff, students, parents, and others. The strong interpersonal relationships that were formed, and the respect that the short-term international volunteers showed towards the staff at the school was important for this project, as is had been for past studies (Green, et al., 2009).

The inspiration went beyond the staff at the Omega Academy, as the larger Dominican community was influenced by the international volunteers. Part of this was because of the media attention that focused a spotlight on the school and their project, and part can be attributed to the Ministry of Education letting other people know about the workshops. This allowed the short-term international volunteers to not only inspire the school, but also teachers from others schools as well as parents of children who were not Omega Academy students. Similar to what Smith, Ellis and Howlett (2002) found in their study, this allowed the human capacity of the school to expand for a period of time, and enhance access to services.

As Lough et al. (2011) found in their study, short-term international volunteers can impact an organization's capacity development by introducing new ideas, such as the idea here to not use the word "retarded" when labeling children. Parents of the children were also inspired to not use the word "retarded" when referring to their child. Though not necessarily a new idea for the teachers, it was perceived that this change in language was a new idea for the parents.

Knowledge

For individuals, knowledge is fostered through education and can also be created and shared within an organization as well (UNDP, 2010). Two themes were identified in this category – professional development and professional learning community. Similar to the other categories, below is a summary of the findings as well as how they are related to the literature review presented in Chapter 2.

Professional development. Participants in this case study reflected on how they sought other opportunities to learn after their experiences with the short-term international volunteers. As Pratt (2002) mentions, one of the benefits of capacity development and how it is relevant to volunteering is that it fosters greater and more effective volunteer activities. The school had other international volunteer groups; including hosting essentially the same team from Canada again in 2013. They were also open to having other international volunteer groups at the school, which added to their professional development. This included the recent donation of iPads that teachers were using with their classes.

Another way that participants continued professional development after the sort-term international volunteers left included self-directed ways. These included reading the resource materials in the new library. This also including accessing information on the internet which

became more available in Dominica since the short-term international volunteers were there in 2011.

Networks that become available to other development partners were seen as one of the greatest benefits that organizations saw from international volunteers in a 2007 study (Comhlámh's Volunteering Options, 2007). The Omega Academy had access to these networks, though the possibilities did not come to fruition. The short-term international volunteers connected the school with a library organization in the United States. However, the school was no longer in touch with the organization which had been able to provide updated materials. The local Rotary Club which was instrumental in working with the Rotary Club in Canada that was affiliated with the short-term international volunteers, is not in regular communication with the Omega Academy, nor assesses the sustainability of the 2011 project.

Professional learning community. Half of the participants mentioned how the school staff remains in contact with the international volunteers. This is both friendly communication, such as around holidays, but also to ask questions regarding situations at the school, and to receive electronic files on helpful topics. Because of their continued interaction, the short-term international volunteers and the staff at the Omega Academy can be considered part of a professional learning community. The interpersonal relationships and networking were seen as very important to these participants, similar to how the characteristics had been important to participants in previous studies (South House Exchange & Canada World Youth, 2006; Comhlámh's Volunteering Options, 2007).

As mentioned by Devereaux (2008), capacity development involves learning and building upon local knowledge and strengths by providing external knowledge and strengths. Knowledge can be shared within the organization and that is what the Omega Academy does by

arranging workshops and bringing in outside facilitators. The Omega Academy also builds upon the knowledge within the organization by having discussions about radio programs, such as the one regarding autism. One of the senior teachers suggested that the teachers that were present in 2011 should pass that information along to the newer teachers at the school. This, however, not been implemented.

Accountability

Accountability is important as it allows organizations to monitor and self-regulate as well as adjust their behavior (UNDP, 2010). For the Omega Academy, the accountability lever of change focuses on the interface between the school and the parents of the students. This was related to the research sub-question of “How did short-term international volunteers influence the school to put systems in place to engage parents and capture and utilize their feedback?” One theme was identified for this category – home-school relationship.

Home-school relationship. The participatory approach (Simpson, 2004) which is advocated for in development dialogue is impossible to achieve if the participants are not present. All participants mentioned some concerns with the parents and their lack of involvement at the school. The basis for this concern was in the difficulty in getting parents to come to the school for PTA meetings and parent/teacher conferences. According to the interview participants, the parents that do attend school activities and parent/teacher conferences are the same parents every time. Participants lamented that the parents they want to attend, they have a difficult time in getting to come to the school.

A list of parents of students with autism was created and parents were contacted regarding the workshop given by the short-term international volunteers which was designed and directed towards parents. The parents that the teachers really wanted to attend the workshop

however did not attend. Interview participants recalled that three parents of children with autism at the Omega Academy attended the workshop for parents. This number was much less than the 12-15 names which were on the list that had been developed and had been contacted. Though attendance was low, when asked about what impact the workshops had on the parents, the participants gave positive responses. Half of participants thought that the workshop had an impact on the parents. This impact was demonstrated by the parents being able to reinforce some of the school lessons at home with their child. One teacher pointed out the reason this may have been possible because parents saw the short-term international volunteers as experts and not just volunteers with a willingness to learn (Sherraden, et al., 2006).

When participants were asked how interactions with the parents changed after the visit, their responses displayed frustration. Interview participants mentioned that after the visit they got little support from parents. However, no one attributed the perceived sense of apathy among parents to the program conducted by the short-term international volunteers, nor implied that it was any worse than it had been prior to their arrival. Being that the project happened five years prior to the study, and school staff are still feeling that the home/school relationship is still not strong, it was difficult to answer the sub-research question, “How did short-term international volunteers influence the school to put systems in place to engage parents and capture and utilize their feedback?” While the short-term international volunteers had the intention of including parents in the workshops as well, this was not continued after their departure.

Implications

In Chapter 1 it was noted that “Evaluations have found disappointing long-term results from traditional technical assistance, in which an expert ‘parachutes’ in to teach a specific skill and then leaves” (UNDP, 2010, p. 38). Though the UNDP does not define “long-term” in that

context, this study suggests that having an expert teach a specific skill and then leaving can still have an impact on capacity development five years later. Sending organizations will have to consider the following:

1. Sending short-term international volunteers with expertise. The short-term international volunteers in this study had much more than “a willingness to learn.” The volunteers were very knowledgeable of the topic, and had a lot of content that they were willing and able to share with the school. Short-term international volunteers with expertise on the topic with which they will work on abroad is extremely important.
2. Continuing the relationship. The international volunteers in this study, though they physically left the country, did not entirely leave in that they kept in contact with the school and continue to provide information via the Dropbox. This continuation of the relationship contributed to the capacity development of the school, in particular as it relates to staff knowledge. Sending organizations should consider how they can arrange for short-term international volunteers to continue the relationship with the host organization after the volunteers have returned to their home country.
3. Understanding of availability of resources. Many of the strategies taught by the volunteers such as classroom scheduling, positive reinforcement, and the use of pictures were still in use by the teachers, though in an adapted fashion to what they were taught. The reasons for these adaptations varied from lack of supplies – whether it was lack of items to give students for positive reinforcement, or lack of supplies that could keep items hanging on the classroom walls. Similarly, college students and teachers from outside the school do not access the Omega Academy library as frequently as they once did, possibly because their availability to other resources, such

as on the internet are more available at present than five years ago. Sending organizations should have an understanding of the resources that a host organization has available.

4. Local stakeholder involvement. In addition to contacting and getting the school on-board ahead of time, the short-term international volunteers also communicated with the Ministry of Education, the hospital, and the local Rotary Club. By getting this local stakeholder involvement, the volunteers were much more able to be successful because they had set-up a support network. This local stakeholder involvement was part of a two-sided preparatory process. All participants mentioned the library and educational resources even before being prompted in the interviews. Prior to their arrival, the short-term international volunteers inquired with the school the types of books and materials they could use at the school. This contributed to the use of the library and materials. The teacher with the most formal education in teaching students with special needs suggested to improve the process the international volunteers could have designed a portion of their workshop to be more participatory. Sending organizations should work to attract local stakeholder involvement at all stages of the project.

Conclusion

This study adds to the literature by examining the impact on capacity development by short-term international volunteers at an educational organization. This study found that short-term international volunteers can have an impact on the capacity development of a host organization. Similar to the findings of Lough et al. (2011) this study found that international volunteers can enhance organization processes and practices, such as the influence the short-term

international volunteers had on reading lessons at the school. Unlike an earlier study, participants did not identify language difficulties or lack of experience among the volunteers (Comhlámh's Volunteering Options, 2007). With short-term international volunteerism on the rise, and voluntourism opportunities in the Caribbean increasing, sending organizations can examine these findings when designing programs in order for their programs to develop capacity for the host organizations. These findings can especially be helpful for sending organizations that partner with schools. Host organizations, particularly schools looking to develop their capacity, can examine these findings for components to consider such as experience of volunteers, and how to continue the relationship when hosting international volunteers.

Recommendations for Future Research

Being a qualitative study, the findings cannot be generalized. The purpose of this study was to explore a bounded case; however, further studies using the same theoretical model can be used to examine other projects conducted by short-term international volunteers at other host organizations in order to further explore this and similar research questions. This study could be expanded by looking at multiple schools that have hosted short-term international volunteers and do comparisons. In addition, further qualitative research could be helpful to pave the way for a better understanding of the process and also provide a documented blueprint for host organizations as they engage with short-term international volunteers. Further qualitative studies could be used to continue to explore and discover knowledge on the topic and help lay down a foundation.

When information was being collected about the project, and how it started, one of the short term international volunteers was asked via email what she perceived to be the lasting impact of their project. Based on the response, further research could examine more closely what

were the expectations of the international volunteers and if those expectations were met.

Exploring this gap in the literature was beyond the scope of this study. Further studies could explore this gap in order to assist the sending organizations and the host organizations in setting expectations.

Furthermore, it must be reiterated that this study was a bound case study. This study took place at one school, and explored perceptions from one short-term international volunteer project. In addition, this study took place in one small Caribbean country, Dominica, but similar studies could also take place in other countries in the global south that host short-term international volunteers.

References

- Adler, T. (2015, October 22). Volontourism just got easier with Carnival's new social impact cruise. Retrieved from <https://www.yahoo.com/travel/volontourism-just-got-easier-with-1283135504261174.html>
- Annette, J. (2002). Service learning in an international context. *Frontiers: The Interdisciplinary Journal of Study Abroad*, 8(1), 83-93.
- Archer-Cunningham, K. (2015, August 18). Consultant calls on Caribbean to tap into 'volontourism.' Retrieved from <http://dominicanewsonline.com/news/homepage/news/tourism-publicity/consultant-calls-on-caribbean-to-tap-into-volontourism/>
- Baar, C. L. (2003). *Short-term student missions and the needs of nationals* (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). Denver Seminary, Denver, CO.
- Bakker, M., & Lamoureux, K. M. (2008). Volunteer tourism-international. *Travel & Tourism Analyst*, 16, 1-47.
- Bamber, P. (2008). Transforming perspectives through international service-learning. *Pedagogical Research in Maximising Education*, 3(1), 43-56.
- Beckers, U., & Sieveking, K. (2001). European voluntary service for the young people: An introduction to the present debate. In K. Sieveking (Ed.), *European voluntary service for the young people: Questions of status and problems of legal policy* (pp. 39-53). New York, NY: Peter Lang Ltd.
- Beckles, R. (2015, April 24). Volontourism--a sustainable alternative for the Caribbean. Retrieved from <http://caribbeanstats.com/volontourism-a-sustainable-alternative-for-the-caribbean/>
- Bird, C. M. (2005). How I stopped dreading and learned to love transcription. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 11(2), 226-248.
- Brinkmann, S., & Kvale, S. (2015). *Interviews: Learning the craft of qualitative research interviewing* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.
- Boyer, K. (2012, June 6). 2012 Official volunteer abroad trends report. Retrieved from <http://www.gooverseas.com/volunteer-abroad/industry-trends/annual-report/2012>
- Butcher, J., & Smith, P. (2010). 'Making a difference': Volunteer tourism and development. *Tourism Recreation Research*, 35(1), 27-36.

- Caribbean Tourism Review. (2014). Tourist industry update-2013. Retrieved from www.onecaribbean.org/wp.../Caribbean-Tourism-Review-2014.docx
- Carrington, M. (2013). Voluntourism in the Caribbean-Secondary Research, Internship Report 2013.
- Central Intelligence Agency [cartographer]. (1976). Dominica, Guadeloupe, and Martinique [Political map]. 1:1,100,000 Retrieved from <http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/americas/domguadmartinique.jpg>
- Chamberlin, K. (2015, July 14). Voluntourism 101: The dos and don'ts for planning a volunteer vacation. Retrieved from <http://travel.usnews.com/features/voluntourism-101-the-dos-and-donts-for-planning-a-volunteer-vacation/>
- Chang, W. W., Chen, C. H. L., Huang, Y. F., & Yuan, Y. H. (2012). Exploring the unknown international service and individual transformation. *Adult Education Quarterly*, 62(3), 230-251.
- Comhlámh's Volunteering Options. (2007). *The impact of international volunteering on host organizations: A summary of research conducted in India and Tanzania*. Ireland: Comhlámh's Volunteering Options.
- Corbett, S., & Fikkert, B. (2012). *When helping hurts: How to alleviate poverty without hurting the poor... and yourself*. Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers.
- Daldeniz, B., & Hampton, M. P. (2010). VOLUNtourists versus volunTOURISTS: A true dichotomy or merely a differing perception? In A. M. Benson (Ed.), *Volunteer tourism: Theory framework to practical applications* (pp.30-41). New York, NY: Routledge.
- Dimon, A. (2015, October 13). Feeling good through doing good: Voluntourism catches on in the travel industry. Retrieved from <http://www.travelmarketreport.com/articles/Feeling-Good-Through-Doing-Good-Voluntourism-Catches-on-in-the-Travel-Industry>
- Devereux, P. (2008). International volunteering for development and sustainability: Outdated paternalism or a radical response to globalisation? *Development in Practice*, 18(3), 357-370.
- Engle, J., & Engle, L. (2003). Study abroad levels: Toward a classification of program types. *Frontiers: The Interdisciplinary Journal of Study Abroad*, 9(1), 1-20.
- Fadnis, C. (2015). *Good travels: The philanthropic profile of the American traveler*. Retrieved from <http://www.phocuswright.com/Free-Travel-Research/Good-Travels-The-Philanthropic-Profile-of-the-American-Traveler>.

- Forsythe, R. (2011, September). *Helping or hindering: Volunteer tourism in Ghana and its critical role in development*. Presented at Rethinking Development in an Age of Scarcity and Uncertainty New Values, Voices and Alliances for Increased Resilience Conference, University of York, U.K.
- Grusky, S. (2000). International service learning: A critical guide from an impassioned advocate. *American Behavioral Scientist*, 43(5), 858-867.
- Green, T., Green, H., Scandlyn, J., & Kestler, A. (2009). Perceptions of short-term medical volunteer work: A qualitative study in Guatemala. *Globalization and Health*, 5(4), 1-13.
- Guo, Y. W. (1989). The overseas development network. In S. W. Showalter (Ed.), *The role of service-learning in international education* (pp. 105-111). Goshen, IN: Goshen College.
- Guttentag, D. A. (2009). The possible negative impacts of volunteer tourism. *International Journal of Tourism Research*, 11(6), 537-551.
- Hammersley, M. (2010). Reproducing or constructing? Some questions about transcription in social research. *Qualitative Research*, 10(5), 553-569.
- Heuman, D. (2005). Hospitality and reciprocity: Working tourists in Dominica. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 32(2), 407-418.
- International Year of the Volunteers (IYV). (2001). 'IYV Background Note,' available at <http://www.gdrc.org/ngo/iyv/bg-note.html>
- Jester, V. M. & Thyer, B. A. (2007). A preliminary evaluation of the Florida International Volunteer Corps Service Program. *Journal of Comparative Social Welfare*, 23(1), 7-18.
- Johnson, L. A. (2014). Can short-term mission trips reduce prejudice? *Journal for the Sociological Integration of Religion and Society*, 4(1), 10-22.
- Khabsa, M., & Giles, C. L. (2014). The number of scholarly documents on the public web. *PloS One*, 9(5), 1-6.
- Kiely, R. (2004). A chameleon with a complex: Searching for transformation in international service-learning. *Michigan Journal of Community Service Learning*. 10(2). 5-20.
- Kiely, R. (2011). What international service learning research can learn from research on international learning. In R. G. Bringle, J. A. Hatcher, & S. G. Jones (Eds.), *International service learning: Conceptual frameworks and research* (pp. 243-273). Sterling, VA: Stylus Publishing.

- Kraft, R. J. (2002). International service learning. In M. E. Kenny, L. A. K. Simon, K. Kiley-Brabeck, & R. M. Lerner (Eds.), *Learning to serve: Promoting civil society through service learning* (pp. 297-313). New York, NY: Springer.
- Larsen, M.A. (2015, March). *The dangers of helping: Re-envisioning international service learning without the service*. Presented at CIES Conference, Washington, DC.
- Larsen, M. A. (2016). International service learning: Engaging host communities – Introduction. In M. A. Larsen (Ed.), *International service learning: Engaging host communities* (pp. 3-18). New York, NY: Routledge.
- Letts, C. W., Ryan, W. P., & Grossman, A. (1999). *High performance nonprofit organizations: Managing upstream for greater impact*. New York, NY: John Wiley & Sons.
- Lichtman, M. (Ed.). (2010). *Qualitative Research in Education: A User's Guide* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.
- Lincoln, Y. S., & Guba, E. G. (1985). *Naturalistic inquiry*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.
- Lough, B. J. (2010). *International volunteerism in the United States, 2008* (CSD Research Brief 10-11). St. Louis, MO: Center for Social Development, Washington University.
- Lough, B. J., McBride, A. M., Sherraden, M. S., & O'Hara, K. (2011). Capacity building contributions of short-term international volunteers. *Journal of Community Practice*, 19(2), 120-137.
- Lupoli, C. (2013). *Volunteer tourism: A catalyst for promoting community development and conservation* (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from <http://etd.auburn.edu>
- Lupoli, C. A., & Morse, W. C. (2015). Assessing the local impacts of volunteer tourism: Comparing two unique approaches to indicator development. *Social Indicators Research*, 120(2), 577-600.
- Maxwell, J. A. (2013). *Qualitative research design: An interactive approach*. Washington, DC: SAGE Publications.
- MacNaull, S. (2011, November 24) Voluntourism just part of fun at Sandals – Great weather, beaches and food mix with chance to help children. Retrieved from <http://www.thespec.com/living-story/2138769-voluntourism-just-part-of-the-fun-at-sandals/>
- McCormick, C. (2015, October 13). Voluntourism: How far is too far? Retrieved from <http://www.thegregorianchant.org/2015/10/voluntourism-how-far-is-too-far/3/>

- McBride, A. (2003). *The forms and nature of civic service: A global assessment*. Global Service Institute, Center for Social Development. St. Louis, MO: Washington University.
- McBride, A. M., Lough, B. J., & Sherraden, M. S. (2010). Perceived impacts of international service on volunteers: Interim results from a quasi-experimental study. *Global Economy and Development at Brookings, Center for Social Development*. Washington University, St. Louis, MO.
- McElroy, J., & de Albuquerque, K. (1998). Tourism penetration index in small Caribbean islands. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 25(1), 145-168.
- Mdee, A., & Emmott, R. (2008). Social enterprise with international impact: The case for Fair Trade certification of volunteer tourism. *Education, Knowledge & Economy*, 2(3), 191-201.
- Merriam, S. B. (2009). What is qualitative research? In S. A. Merriam (Ed.). *Qualitative research: A guide to design and implementation* (pp. 3-20). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Merriam, S. B. & Associates (Ed.). (2002). *Qualitative research in practice: Examples for discussion and analysis*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Moore, T. S., Lapan, S. D., & Quartaroli, M. T. (2012). Case study research. In S. D. Lapan, M. T. Quartatoli, & F. J. Riemer (Eds.), *Qualitative research: An introduction to methods and designs*, (pp. 243-270). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Mostafanezhad, M. (2013). 'Getting in touch with your inner Angelina': Celebrity humanitarianism and the cultural politics of gendered generosity in volunteer tourism. *Third World Quarterly*, 34(3), 485-499.
- Nestora, A. (2014, April 4). Largest international volunteer survey reveals that, in the recession, travelers find meaning in volunteering abroad. Retrieved from <http://www.free-press-release.com/news-largest-international-volunteer-survey-reveals-that-in-the-recession-travelers-find-meaning-in-volunteering-abroad-1241094298.html>
- Odeh, L. E. (2010). A comparative analysis of global north and global south economies. *Journal of Sustainable Development in Africa*, 12(3), 1-12.
- Orduña-Malea, E., Ayllón, J. M., Martín-Martín, A., & López-Cózar, E. D. (2014). About the size of Google Scholar: Playing the numbers. *arXiv preprint arXiv:1407.6239*.
- Palmer, M. (2002). On the pros and cons of volunteering abroad. *Development in Practice*, 12(5), 637-643.

- Payne, A. (2008). After bananas: The IMF and the politics of stabilization and diversification in Dominica. *Bulletin of Latin American Research*, 27(3), 317-332.
- Petrak, N. (2012). Results are in: ATTA survey on volunteerism. Retrieved from <http://www.adventuretravelnews.com/results-are-in-atta-survey-on-voluntourism>
- Perry, J. L., & Imperial, M. T. (2001). A decade of service-related research: A map of the field. *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly*, 30(3), 462-479.
- Pratt, B. (2002). Volunteerism and capacity development. *Development Policy Journal*, 2(7), 95-117.
- Priest, R. J., Dischinger, T., Rasmussen, S., & Brown, C. M. (2006). Researching the short-term mission movement. *Missiology: An International Review*, 34(4), 431-450.
- Priest, R. J., & Priest, J. P. (2008). "They see everything, and understand nothing": Short-term mission and service learning. *Missiology: An International Review*, 36(1), 53-73.
- Radhakrishna, R. B., Yoder, E. P., & Ewing, J. C. (2007). Strategies for linking theoretical framework and research types. In Briers, G. E. & T. Grady Roberts (Eds.). *Proceedings of the 2007 AAAE Research Conference* (Vol. 34, pp. 692-4).
- Raymond, E. M., & Hall, C. M. (2008). The development of cross-cultural (mis)understanding through volunteer tourism. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 16(5), 530-543.
- Rotary. (2015) Retrieved from <https://www.rotary.org/en/about-rotary>
- Sherraden, M. S. (2001). Developing transnational social policy: A North American youth service program. *Social Development Issues*, 23(3), 50-59.
- Sherraden, M. S., Stringham, J., Sow, S. C., & McBride, A. M. (2006). The forms and structure of international voluntary service. *Voluntas: International Journal of Voluntary and Nonprofit Organizations*, 17(2), 156-173.
- Sherr, M. E. (2008). *Social work with volunteers*. Chicago, IL: Lyceum Books.
- Sternberger, L. G., Ford, K. A., & Hale, D. C. (2005). International service-learning: Integrating academics and active learning in the world. *Journal of Public Affairs*, 8, 75-96.
- Simpson, K. (2004). 'Doing development': The gap year, volunteer-tourists and a popular practice of development. *Journal of International Development*, 16(5), 681-692.
- Smith, C. & Denton, M. L. (2005). *Soul searching: The religious and spiritual lives of American teenagers*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

- Smith, J. D., Ellis, A., & Howlett, S. (2002). UK-wide evaluation of the Millennium Volunteers Programme (Research Report No. RR357). Retrieved from Institute for Volunteering Research, Department for Education and Skills <http://dera.ioe.ac.uk/4609/1/RR357.pdf>
- Trinitapoli, J., & Vaisey, S. (2009). The transformative role of religious experience: The case of short-term missions. *Social Forces*, 88(1), 121-146.
- Tomazos, K. & Butler, R. (2008). *Volunteer tourism: Tourism, serious leisure, altruism or self-enhancement*. Presented at the CAUTHE Conference, Griffith University, Gold Coast, Australia.
- Tourism Research and Marketing. (2008). *Volunteer tourism: A global analysis*. Barcelona, Spain: Atlas.
- United Nations Development Programme. (2009). Capacity development: A UNDP primer. Retrieved from: http://www.undp.org/content/dam/aplaws/publication/en/publications/capacity-development/capacity-development-a-undp-primer/CDG_PrimerReport_final_web.pdf
- United Nations Volunteers. (2011). State of the world's volunteerism report: Universal values for global well-being. Retrieved from: http://www.unv.org/fileadmin/docdb/pdf/2011/SWVR/English/SWVR2011_full.pdf
- Urraca, B., Ledoux, M., & Harris, J. T. (2009). Beyond the comfort zone: Lessons of intercultural service. *The Clearing House: A Journal of Educational Strategies, Issues and Ideas*, 82(6), 281-289.
- Van Engen, J. A. (2000). The cost of short-term missions. *The Other Side*, 36(1), 20-23.
- Ver Beek, K. (2002). International service learning: A call to caution. In G. G. Heffner & C. D. Beversluis (Eds.), *Commitment and connection: Service learning and Christian higher education* (pp. 55-69). Lanham, MD: UPA.
- Ver Beek, K. A. (2006). The impact of short-term missions: A case study of house construction in Honduras after Hurricane Mitch. *Missiology: An International Review*, 34(4), 477-495.
- Ver Beek, K. A. (2008). Lessons from the sapling: Review of quantitative research on short-term missions. In R. J. Priest (Ed.), *Effective engagement in short-term missions: Doing it right!* (pp. 474-502). Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library.
- Wearing, S. (2001). *Volunteer tourism: Experiences that make a difference*. Oxfordshire, UK: CABI Publishing.
- Wearing, S. (2004). Examining best practice in volunteer tourism. In R. Stebbins & M. Graham (Eds.), *Volunteering as leisure/leisure as volunteering: An international assessment* (pp. 209-224). Cambridge, MA: CABI Publishing.

- Woods, D. E. (1980). International research on volunteers abroad. *International Journal of Comparative Sociology*, 21(3-4), 196-206.
- Wuthnow, R., & Offutt, S. (2008). Transnational religious connections. *Sociology of Religion*, 69(2), 209-232.
- Zemach-Bersin, T. (2008). American student abroad can't be 'global citizens.' *Chronicle of Higher Education*, 54(26), A34.
- .

Appendices

Appendix A
Institutional Review Board Approval



5/11/2016

Edwin Blanton
517 W. Mulberry Ave. Apt. B
San Antonio, Texas 78212

Dear Edwin:

Your request to conduct the study titled *The Impact of Short-term International Volunteers on the Capacity Development of School in the Caribbean* was approved by expedited review on 5/11/2016. Your IRB approval number is 16-05-003. Any written communication with potential subjects or subjects must be approved and include the IRB approval number. Electronic surveys or electronic consent forms, or other material delivered electronically to subjects must have the IRB approval number inserted into the survey or documents before they are used.

Please keep in mind these additional IRB requirements:

- This approval is for one year from the date of the IRB approval.
- Request for continuing review must be completed for projects extending past one year. Use the IRB Continuation/Completion form.
- Changes in protocol procedures must be approved by the IRB prior to implementation except when necessary to eliminate apparent immediate hazards to the subjects. Use the Protocol Revision and Amendment form.
- Any unanticipated problems involving risks to subjects or others must be reported immediately.

Approved protocols are filed by their number. Please refer to this number when communicating about this protocol.

Approval may be suspended or terminated if there is evidence of a) noncompliance with federal regulations or university policy or b) any aberration from the current, approved protocol.

Congratulations and best wishes for successful completion of your research. If you need any assistance, please contact the UIW IRB representative for your college/school or the Office of Research Development.

Sincerely,

Ana Wandless-Hagendorf, PhD, CPRA

Ana Wandless-Hagendorf, PhD, CPRA
Research Officer
University of the Incarnate Word IRB

Appendix C

Interview Questions

Background/Contextual Questions

Describe your role at the school.

How long have you been teaching?

How long have you been teaching at the Omega Academy?

Describe your experiences teaching.

Describe your experiences teaching students with disabilities.

Describe the training you received in becoming a teacher.

Describe professional development opportunities in which you have participated.

[For the principal] Describe how you support teacher education.

Questions Recalling the Short-Term International Volunteers

Describe what you recall about the volunteers' visit in March, 2011.

Tell me what was most memorable to you.

In what areas did the visit (of the volunteers) impact the school?

Impact of the Short-Term International Volunteers

From the volunteers' visit in 2011, what has had the biggest impact on your teaching?

What are school-level policies or practices that were influenced by that visit?

After the visit, what, if anything, changed at the Omega Academy?

After the visit, what, if anything, changed about interactions with the families and with the students?

Was there a library before the visit? How did their visit change the organization or structure of it?

How did the workshops that parents attended, impact them?

How did the interactions of the volunteers influence the way the teachers and staff talk and interact with one another about the students?

How would this school be different if the volunteers had never visited?

How would your teaching be different if the volunteers had never visited?

What other opportunities have you had to learn about autism since 2011? Describe other opportunities where you learned about autism.

What are the things that you did at the school that were different immediately after they left?

Are any of these things still a part of your practice now? Why or why not?

[Principal and Secretary] – Did you go through the training provided by the volunteers?

How would you describe that experience? Tell me about what you learned from that experience.

[Principal and Secretary] – Describe how your interactions with the teachers changed after the training. Describe how the interactions with students and teachers changed.

Appendix D

Researcher as Instrument Statement

“The researcher is the primary instrument of data collection and analysis” (Lichtman, 2010, p. 16). This Researcher as Instrument statement is being included in this study because of my vital role as an instrument used to interpret and present my findings. In addition to being an instrument to interpret and present my findings, I also address how I will work to minimize by biases.

Ever since I was a young child, I enjoyed volunteering. It was part of our family culture. Both of my parents were very engaged in the community, and dedicated a lot of their time to making our local area a better place. So, I grew up volunteering. I was taught, and still believe, that those of us with certain gifts should share those gifts with other people (who are gifted in other ways). When I was eight years of age, I learned about the U.S. Peace Corps. It sounded like a wonderful adventure – to travel abroad and volunteer.

After becoming an adult and with much thought and consideration, I applied and was accepted into the U.S. Peace Corps. Wanting to go somewhere warm, I requested to be assigned to the Caribbean. That began my life with the Caribbean, and my love for the Commonwealth of Dominica. When my assignment drew to a close with the Peace Corps, I had so much energy remaining for what I would want to do through service for the country.

Upon returning, I reflected back on a need I had identified while in the country – a need for children with disabilities to have access to education. Taking on this cause, and working alongside another Returned Peace Corps Volunteer, we started a non-profit organization, Ready, Willing...Enable! (RWE). The organization has the mission of providing access to education for persons with disabilities, providing education for family members about the disability of their

loved one, and educating the public about the gifts that persons with disabilities have. Through this organization, we have mostly concentrated our efforts in Dominica. Many of the children that attend the school presented in this study, attend the RWE Summer Camp. The school has also applied to RWE for mini-grants and has been provided funds for classroom chairs and other supplies, as well as laptop computers.

It is through Ready, Willing...Enable! that I was introduced to the school that I refer to in this study as the Omega Academy. Through this point-of-entry I was able to get to know the students, teachers, and in many cases the families of the students. Through my interactions with the school, I have also been able to understand the needs of the school. In addition, I have also grown to understand the willingness of the staff of the school to address their needs. The school has invited short-term international volunteers, including the Canadian group presented in this study, to help address their needs.

Out of these observations has been my desire to research the impact that short-term international volunteers have on the school, and its ability to build capacity. In working closely with this community for several years, I have the access that I need to the interviewees, and have already built trust with them. By focusing on the work of the Canadian team, I will also be inquiring about a project in which I was not directly involved. Thus, there is some distance between myself and the case. While the prior knowledge of the school will play a role in how I interpret the findings, I will also be working to minimize biases by triangulating the data and performing member checks with all interviewees. I will also include the information gathered from the Canadian volunteer to have a fuller understanding of the case.

Appendix E

Sample of Observational Notes

Thoughts and feelings	Actions and reactions
<p>6-08-16</p> <p>I observed in Paula's morning class today. She set a chair for me in the back and to the side. Paula then instructed the students to ignore me, just like she asks them to ignore the Principal when he does classroom observations. There were three students in the room, all girls. This has been typical for this classroom all week. They begin the lesson by Paula telling them they are going to be learning about sea turtles. Each student was given an iPad and instructed to swipe to see different photos of sea turtles.</p> <p>When students had completed that task, Paula drew a sea turtle on the board. She paused after each part to ask the students what part would come next. She would tell the student "good job" or other positive</p>	<p>What a remarkable teacher! Paula has a very loving presence, and it is obvious that the students really like her. They listen to her and it is clear that they respect her. She was so incredibly friendly towards me in allowing me to come into her classroom. I really thought I would just slip in and stand in the back during the lesson, but she had a chair just for me. That made me feel special!</p> <p>I got to see how she used the iPads. Many of the teachers had told me about them, but besides students doing individual educational games, I had not seen them used like this – in a lesson. Paula was so encouraging of the students and their responses. The different parts to the lesson kept things interesting as each segment was</p>

<p>encouragement. She also called students by name every time.</p> <p>After the class had identified all the parts of the sea turtle, Paula read a book. While reading she held the book so the students could see the pictures. She also would stop for comments and ask questions of the students to see if they were comprehending the story. She has lots of encouraging positive reinforcement during this portion of the lesson as well.</p> <p>Paula summarized the lesson once she completed the book. She also told the students how important conservation is, and how sea turtles are to be protected. She warned the students that if they see someone killing a sea turtle not to try to stop them, but instead tell an adult so that the police can be called.</p> <p>She asked the class a lot of questions, and the students were able to answer her. The students then colored a picture of a sea</p>	<p>less than ten minutes.</p> <p>Paula is really good at reading in front of the class! The students' minds did not seem to wonder at all. I found myself even pulled-in to the story and had to refocus on observing the class a time or two.</p> <p>The positive encouragement she is giving the students is remarkable! I can tell students also like hearing their name when they hear "Good job, [name]!"</p> <p>Paula summarized the lesson, and then gave the warning. This is something I wasn't expecting, was to have the lesson turn to how some people kill sea turtles.</p> <p>The students answered her questions, often in unison. When they started on their art project, they smiled and giggled and shared their supplies with one another. It seemed like a very loving classroom.</p>
--	---

turtle before they were dismissed for snack time and recess. .	
--	--