



Center for Social Development

GEORGE WARREN BROWN SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK

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SPRING 2015

COMMUNITY PARTNER PERSPECTIVES OF DUKEENGAGE: 2011–2013

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Sarita Barton, Amanda Moore McBride, & Jaclyne Demarse Purtell

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

COMMUNITY PARTNER PERSPECTIVES OF DUKEENGAGE: 2011–2013

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BACKGROUND

Since its inception in 2007, DukeEngage has supported the civic engagement activities of close to 3,000 Duke University students in nearly 600 communities across six continents. Through an immersive service experience, students work with community partners to provide services to beneficiary communities while also developing their knowledge and skills. This report focuses on the perceptions of community partner concerning the students and the DukeEngage experience. It provides a summary of results from the Community Partner Impact Survey (developed by DukeEngage staff) and identifies valuable volunteer traits and organizational expectations of student volunteers. It also assesses perceptions of the strengths and weaknesses of DukeEngage students.

Data for this report come from the Community Partner Impact Survey administered in 2011, 2012, and 2013. Across the 3 years, a total of 336 surveys were collected. They provide information on 210 organizations and 427 DukeEngage students. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, including tests of relationships between variables when such tests were appropriate. Additionally, content analysis was employed for interpretation of open-ended survey items.

MAJOR FINDINGS

DukeEngage students worked on projects in a variety of organizations, engaging in a range of tasks. Some students worked directly with community members, and others supported the work of the organizations in administrative roles. The most frequently identified area of student project activity was the expansion of the organizations' capacity. Associated tasks included

project development, event coordination, and database management.

Organizations' expectations concerning DukeEngage students most often included specific academic or professional skills and experiences as well as character traits such as flexibility. When asked to identify the attributes of successful student volunteers, community partners were most likely to indicate that successful students had initiative, were hard working, and were capable of learning and adapting. Selection of particular attributes was often related to the responding organization's area of service or the extent of client-community contact. As might be expected, respondents from abroad were more likely than U.S. respondents to state that language skills are important. The same trend is present in responses on the importance of familiarity with local customs and interaction with the community. In addition, international respondents were more likely than their U.S.-based counterparts to select specific academic training and being hard working as important volunteer traits.

Overall, DukeEngage students were rated favorably. The attributes with the highest average scores were the ability to complete tasks, work as a team member, have a sense of service, work independently, and take direction. Community partners rated DukeEngage students somewhat lower on knowledge of the local culture as well as on the ability to communicate, accept criticism, and ask for help as needed.

Community partners reported that DukeEngage students had a "great" impact on their organization (74%), the respondent himself or herself (71%), and the communities served by the organization (54%). Organizations in the United States were more likely

than organizations abroad to indicate that DukeEngage students had a positive impact on the community, the organization, and the respondent, respectively. Respondents from organizations that had previously hosted DukeEngage students were also more likely to positively assess the students' perceived impact.

When asked how DukeEngage students could be better prepared, community partners identified a range of possibilities. Some said that students should have more background familiarity with the organization, its local context, or professional office settings in general (66 responses). They indicated that students would benefit from more knowledge of the organizations with which they worked; social issues, such as racism and poverty; and the culture of the organization's beneficiary community. Most respondents (95.1%) said that they would partner with DukeEngage again, but 0.4% said that they would not. An additional 4.5% said that they were unsure, and a review of those responses showed that their hesitation was largely related to organizational considerations—particularly ensuring sufficient time, funding, and administrative structure to support a volunteer for the duration of his or her service.

When asked how DukeEngage could better support community partners, some respondents replied that they desired more communication about and knowledge of DukeEngage's expectations prior to a student's service (26 responses), more of a network or collaboration with DukeEngage and other local agencies (10 responses), and greater supervision or evaluation throughout the student's service with their organization (nine responses). Some respondents thought that students could serve a longer term or at a different time of year (nine responses). Others desired greater continuity of service, with volunteers from one year informing the work of those who come after (two responses) and more follow-up from DukeEngage.

From the survey results, the interplay between organizations' expectations of the program and of the student volunteers themselves shaped respondents' perceived estimation and impact of DukeEngage students. As a result, DukeEngage, student volunteers, and community partners must all be clear on what is expected of students, both personally and professionally. Clarity is also needed on the students' abilities to meet those expectations. Although character is an important consideration and something appreciated by community partners, perceived impact seems to be driven by relevant skills and experience. Students are perceived to have a higher impact when their professional skills align with those desired by the community partner organization.

These results emphasize the importance of context and communication. An in-depth understanding of community partner expectations, which are driven by their local context, area of service, and desired tasks, will enhance student selection, aligning expectations and student attributes. To achieve this, communication between DukeEngage and community partners must be open and clear. DukeEngage must also ensure that application and selection procedures accurately identify the applicant traits preferred by the partners.

COMMUNITY PARTNER PERSPECTIVES OF DUKEENGAGE: 2011–2013

BACKGROUND ON DUKEENGAGE

DukeEngage was first formed in 2007. Springing from the Big Ideas Task Force convened under the leadership of Provost Peter Lange during the prior year and greatly helped in its establishment by generous financial support from both the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and the Duke Endowment, the program was created to embody three central values of Duke University: “globalization, interdisciplinarity, and learning in service of others.”¹

Now in its ninth year, DukeEngage has supported civic engagement projects involving close to 3,000 students. Their efforts have aided nearly 600 community organizations located in 78 countries on six different continents. Since 2007, the combined efforts of students have provided nearly 1 million hours of service to partner communities, with the “million hour” milestone expected in midsummer 2015. Moreover, DukeEngage has grown to become one of Duke’s most well-known programs and is often cited by incoming undergraduate students as one of their reasons for attending the university.²

The DukeEngage model is straightforward. The university provides one-time funding to support rising Duke sophomores, juniors, and seniors during participation in an immersive service project of at least 8 weeks. Each project must meet a community need but may do so in a local, national, or international context. Travel and living expenses are covered by the program, and additional help is available for students eligible for need-based financial aid. No academic credit is offered for these experiences, though some students will use DukeEngage participation to satisfy fieldwork, internship, or other requirements for majors, minors, and certificate programs. Additionally, some programs require or recommend

that participating students complete specific courses or course sequences, but there are no for-credit courses embedded in DukeEngage summers; students learn languages or complete skills labs as part of the scope of the project.

In past years, students have undertaken diverse assignments. Examples include mentoring and school-enrichment projects, creating initiatives for community support, producing documentaries to educate others on the environment, and developing microfinance opportunities for economically disadvantaged families.

Several service options exist for DukeEngage students. Most students are accepted to participate in group programs. These are structured experiences led by faculty, staff, or volunteer-sending organizations that often partner with established or existing organizations within host communities. A smaller portion of students is accepted to participate in independently designed projects under the supervision of a faculty mentor. These students collaborate with community-based organizations on a project of mutual interest. Students are able to deepen their educational experiences while providing impactful service to communities in the United States and around the world.

Previous assessments of DukeEngage have been largely positive. This study extends those assessments by analyzing the role that students play within the community partner organizations and by examining the partners’ perceptions concerning the students’ preparation, engagement, and impact.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This report presents results from an analysis of 3 years of community partner assessment data and a summary of community partner perspectives on DukeEngage students. The data are presented across four major categories: (a) descriptions of DukeEngage projects and activities, (b) assessment of DukeEngage students, (c) perceptions of DukeEngage students’ impact, and (d) overall perceptions of DukeEngage. The data are also

¹DukeEngage, *DukeEngage 2017: A Blueprint for Deeper and Broader Engagement* (Durham, North Carolina: DukeEngage, 2012).

²DukeEngage, *DukeEngage 2017*.

analyzed across such key variables as the location and service beneficiaries of community partners. These analyses may inform programming. The following discussion outlines key questions and analyses deemed most beneficial by DukeEngage staff. Answers to these research questions are provided in the report.

As community partner organizations are largely satisfied with their relationships with DukeEngage and DukeEngage students, exploring their perspectives on DukeEngage students may help identify which volunteer traits are most significant in shaping their estimations. Such information could be used in selecting future volunteers and determining appropriate assignments.

What volunteer attributes do community partners identify as most important? Does this vary by program attributes such as region (U.S. vs international), type of service offered, and area of service?

Community partners specify requirements for student volunteers, and these requirements reflect expectations of the student. To ensure that a student can fit into the organization and help to further its mission, the community partner collaborates with the program's leaders to identify students who have the necessary skills or qualities. A review of the organizations' expectations of DukeEngage students would illustrate what skills or attributes they believe are advantageous and which are most significantly linked to student impact.

Do the organization's expectations of students influence their evaluation of the student's contribution to the organization and the community?

In addition to expectations of students, it is necessary to examine the qualities that community partners find to be most and least advantageous for students to possess or develop when working with their organizations. Moreover, it is possible that organizations with diverse missions and goals will have different needs, depending on the type of work they do and the areas in which they work. By reviewing the community partner responses, we may be able to determine helpful student characteristics and to identify the contexts in which specific characteristics are most beneficial. This information can then be used by DukeEngage and its community partners to strengthen the selection and assignment of DukeEngage students.

What are the most commonly identified student strengths and weaknesses?

METHODS

DATA COLLECTION

The Community Partner Impact Survey (CPIS) is the primary tool through which DukeEngage collects feedback from the community partners that support group programs and independent projects. In general, a DukeEngage staff member gives the CPIS, either on paper or via electronic link, to supervisors in community partner organizations. DukeEngage staff receive instruction on administering the CPIS and administer it in the final 2 weeks of the program or project. This enables DukeEngage to collect information about the nearly complete efforts of students.

DukeEngage asks that the CPIS be completed using these decision rules:

- » If students assigned to a community partner work collectively at one or more of the partner's sites, the supervisor completes one CPIS for the group as a whole.
- » If students work independently or in independent pairs at several community partner sites, the supervisor completes one CPIS per site for each student or pair.
- » If students work independently, the CPIS is modified to exclude questions about the specific student. This exclusion is intended to increase the likelihood of student compliance with efforts to gather the data.
- » Whether an individual or group format is used for the evaluation, DukeEngage generally asks partners to provide one CPIS per student.

Because of the diversity of locations in which DukeEngage programs and projects are held, field staff can be involved in translating and transcribing questions and answers from English to the language spoken by the community partner.

Completed electronic surveys are returned directly to DukeEngage via the Qualtrics survey software platform. Paper surveys are completed and returned by field staff. DukeEngage does not require community partners to complete the CPIS and offers no incentive for completion.

INSTRUMENT

The CPIS was initially developed by DukeEngage in 2008 as the Community Partner Survey. The survey's purposes were to assess community partner satisfaction

with DukeEngage students, to provide information on the types of projects students completed, and to identify the perceived effects of the students and the projects on the community and organization. Survey items were developed in line with the research priorities of DukeEngage and with the aid of feedback from community partners.

DukeEngage's community partner survey was significantly revised in 2010 to better address the goals of partnerships. Since 2010, multiple versions of the survey have been adapted for different DukeEngage service models. Core questions remained consistent across the versions, but some questions vary with the context of the host organization: whether a partner hosted an individual student or a group of DukeEngage students and also whether the student was placed by DukeEngage or the student created the project independently. Additionally, the 2013 version of the survey included items not seen in previous iterations; these changes reflected DukeEngage's growing understanding of the dynamics between community partners and students. They also reflected growing knowledge about the skills and qualities important in successful and positive partnerships. A note in the findings section identifies results from an item posed only in the 2013 survey. All survey versions included a mix of closed and open-ended items.

The following describes the major content areas included on the survey:

Organizational characteristics. This section asked respondents to describe the organizations with which they worked. It included information about the nature of the organization's contact with its client community, the organization's areas of service, the partner's expectations of students, and its history with DukeEngage.

Student projects and contributions. In this section, respondents detailed the work that DukeEngage students did for the respondent's organization, how their projects were developed, how students were supported by the organization, and who was served by their work.

Student assessments. This section required respondents to assess the students on a range of qualities and abilities. It also asked respondents to describe student strengths and areas of improvement.

Insights and recommendations. General in scope, this section asked respondents to identify five attributes of DukeEngage students who would do especially well working with their organization. It also asked them to reflect on the contributions of

DukeEngage students to the organization, the respondent, and the community. In addition, respondents provided recommendations on ways in which DukeEngage could better support them and their organizations. And this section asked respondents to say whether they would work with DukeEngage again.

DATA ANALYSIS

Descriptive statistics were used to analyze the survey data. Responses are summarized in the text, with data presented in tables and figures. When appropriate, statistical tests of difference (such as chi-square and *t*-tests) were utilized to assess the relationships between variables. These analyses provided a depth of perspective on the data.

To prepare the data for analysis, ordinal or nominal variables that included more than two categories but lacked variation were condensed into dichotomous variables. This included type of client-community contact at the organization as well as the perceived student impact on the community, the respondent, and the organization. Additionally, a dichotomous variable was created to describe whether the organization's location was within the United States. Finally, grouping variables were created to describe organizational areas of service.

Content analysis was used for interpretation of open-ended survey items. Two researchers analyzed a sample of responses and developed preliminary codes, which coders then independently applied to the remaining responses. From their coding, frequencies were developed and dominant themes identified. In addition to providing summaries of open-ended responses, results were used to turn open-ended items into categorical variables, which could be used in further quantitative analysis.

To preserve the independence of observations, analysis was restricted to only the most current responses from respondents who submitted surveys in more than one year and to responses for questions related to their general impression of DukeEngage students (i.e., Successful Student Attributes). For all other questions, the entire sample was used.

LIMITATIONS

There are several limitations of these data. Some responses may have been interpreted as socially desirable by the respondents and so the candor of those responses may be limited. In addition, the

Table 1. Community Partner Respondents and Students Hosted by Year

Group	2011		2012		2013	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Respondents (n = 339)	101	30	148	44	90	27
Students hosted (n = 427)	140	33	138	32	149	35

different versions of the survey and variation in the wording of several items complicated aggregation across respondents and years. Also, data are missing for a range of items. It is not always clear whether the data are missing at random or are missing because the respondent's intended to omit them.

SAMPLE DESCRIPTION

The entire sample included 339 survey responses from community partners spread across 210 organizations and the 3 years of survey administration.³ The largest number of surveys were collected in 2012 (44%), with fewer ones collected in 2011 (30%) and 2013 (26%; see Table 1). In total, these surveys evaluated 427 DukeEngage students distributed almost evenly among years. Most organizations hosted only one student, but the number of students assigned to group projects ranged from two to 43, and the mean was close to four students ($M = 3.94$).

Compared to the total number of DukeEngage students and community partners (Table 2), 31% to 35% of students and 39% to 46% of community partner organizations are represented in the sample each year. It should also be noted that student volunteers may work on more than one project or with more than one organization in a given year; if all supervisors completed the CPIS, a student with more than one project would be represented in more than one set of survey responses.

Community partner organizations in this sample differed on a variety of organizational attributes such as location, client-community contact, area of service, experience with DukeEngage, and length of operation. Organizations were almost split between national locations and international ones: A small majority (54%) operated outside of the United States, and 45% operated within it (Table 3).

Community partners also diverged in their client-community contact, which is measured as the nature of the organization's contact with its beneficiary community. Direct service programs work more closely with community members; indirect service programs

³Hereafter, *organization* is used to refer to the community partner respondent.

Table 2. Total Number of DukeEngage Students and Community Partners by Year

Group	2011		2012		2013	
	N	N (%) in sample	N	N (%) in sample	N	N (%) in sample
Community partners	132	51 (39)	201	81 (40)	169	78 (46)
Students hosted	408	140 (34)	441	138 (31)	422	149 (35)

operate on behalf of beneficiary communities through policy, advocacy, and research. Most organizations offered a combination of direct and indirect contact (60.2%), though some respondents indicated that their organization offers only direct service (27.2%) or indirect service (12.6%).

In addition, community partner organizations also had varying missions and goals. The CPIS asked respondents to indicate their organization's areas of service by choosing up to three options from a list of service areas. Of the 17 options, the most prevalent choices were children and youth (96 organizations), development and outreach (91 organizations), and education and literacy (76 organizations). At the other end of the spectrum, the least prevalent program areas were social enterprise (11 organizations), immigration and migration (11 organizations), race and ethnicity (nine organizations), and engineering (five organizations). Thirty organizations indicated other program areas not listed, including mental health, child abuse, civic engagement, and labor rights.

Organizations were roughly sorted into three service categories based on their service-area selection on the CPIS: social service, social issue, and development. Social service organizations, so named because they provided amenities for the good of the community, were those indicating that they focused on one of the following service areas: children and youth, education and literacy, health and human services, and disability services. Social issue organizations concentrated on the amelioration of societal ills such as racism or poverty. Organizations in this category claimed a service area among the following: environmental advocacy and sustainability, human rights and civil liberties, women's advocacy and women's issues, poverty and hunger, immigration and migration, and race and ethnicity. Finally, development organizations were those that concentrated on the improvement of social, political, and economic conditions. The category consists of organizations that identified one of the following as an area of service: community development and outreach, economic development, microfinance and microenterprise, and social enterprise. The creation of discrete service categories was not possible given the nature of responses to the CPIS. As a result, only 33% of organizations were sorted into one category; 50% were sorted into two, and 15% were sorted into three.

An analysis of service areas by geographical location shows that international locations outnumber domestic ones in all three service categories (Table 4). Of the three, only social issue organizations were close to evenly split between the U.S. and international locations. This trend reflected the tendency for international organizations to select areas of service that spread across categories. The tendency suggests a wide array of goals. Additionally, between 2011 and 2013, close to 67% of DukeEngage placements were international. Development organizations were the most likely to be located abroad, but a significant percentage (38%) of such organizations were located in the United States. Although development is often thought of as a subset of foreign aid, the number of U.S. development organizations suggests that it can also be considered an important area of service within the United States.

Table 3. Attributes of Community Partner Organizations

Organizational attribute	Freq.	%
Location (n = 203)		
Outside the United States	112	54.7
Inside the United States	91	45.3
Client-community contact (n = 206)		
Combination	124	60.2
Direct service	56	27.2
Indirect service	26	12.6
Area of service (n = 209) ^a		
Social services (n = 151)		
Children and youth	96	46.2
Education and literacy	76	36.4
Health and human services	60	28.7
Disability services	14	6.7
Social issues (n = 112)		
Environmental advocacy and sustainability	44	21.1
Human rights and civil liberties	36	17.2
Women's advocacy and women's issues	31	14.8
Poverty and hunger	26	11.5
Immigration and migration	11	5.3
Race and ethnicity	9	4.3
Development (n = 107)		
Development and outreach	91	43.5
Economic development	19	9.1
Microenterprise and microfinance	13	6.2
Social enterprise	11	5.3
Other (n = 50)		
Other	30	14.4
Arts	16	7.7
Engineering	5	2.4
Hosted DukeEngage students before (n = 204)		
Yes	122	59.8
No	75	36.8
Unsure	7	3.4

Note: Freq. = frequency.

^aOrganizations could select more than one service area.

Table 4. Area of Service by Location

Attribute	United States (n = 90)		International (n = 111)	
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
Social service	59	40.4	87	59.6
Social issue	52	47.3	58	52.7
Development	39	37.9	64	62.1

Community partners differed in how long they had been in operation. Most organizations had been operating between 10 and 25 years at the time of their most recent survey (136 organizations), but a sizeable number had been operating for nine years or less (82 organizations). The average amount of time in operation was nearly 22 years ($M = 21.58$), and the median was 14 years.

In describing previous associations with DukeEngage, 60% indicated that they had hosted students before, 37% stated they had not, and 3% were unsure (this uncertainty reflects staff turnover in the organizations). Among organizations that had a multiyear relationship with DukeEngage, the number of previously hosted students ranged from 1 to 100 and summed to 1,284. The mean was 8.79; both the median and the mode was 4. Of the organizations with prior DukeEngage hosting experience, 63% had hosted between 1 and 7 students, 16% had hosted between 8 and 30, and 21% had hosted 31 or more. The relatively large number of organizations hosting sizeable groups of DukeEngage students (over 30) could account for the substantial differences among the mean, median, and mode of previously hosted students.

DUKEENGAGE PROJECTS

PROJECT DESCRIPTIONS

Respondents were asked to describe the primary project, task, or deliverable assigned to the DukeEngage students they hosted. DukeEngage students worked on projects of various types in numerous fields, and student work often extended to more than one assignment (161 responses). Typically, student projects were developed by someone in the community partner organization (142 responses) and rarely by the student (16 responses). Often projects were created in reference to a community or organizational need (93 responses). Close to a third of the respondents (64 responses) indicated that the preferences, skills, or interests of students were kept in mind as projects evolved, though this usually occurred after the students had arrived at the organization and not before.

Table 5. Primary Project Activities by Beneficiary Group

Activity	Total	Beneficiary community	Organization	Wider community ^a
Expanding organizational capacity	93	25	56	12
Teaching or training	87	71	16	0
Engaging in social support or relationship building	80	50	26	4
Producing tangible products	69	26	36	7
Writing or communicating	68	19	37	12
Performing office-related tasks	63	21	42	0
Disseminating information	41	32	6	3
Performing research	23	13	8	2
Offering special skills or expertise	16	7	9	0

^aIf applicable.

PROJECT BENEFICIARIES

The beneficiaries of students' projects regularly included children or youth (102 responses) as well as marginalized (73 responses) and low-income populations (66 responses). In addition, several respondents identified the hosting organization itself or related agencies as part of the beneficiary community (54 responses).

Results from analysis of predominant client-community contact indicate that indirect service organizations were slightly more likely than direct service ones to include staff, volunteers, or related personnel as beneficiaries (9% of indirect service organizations compared with 3% of direct service organizations). Similarly, indirect service organizations were more likely than direct service organizations to include an advocacy or issue-related community as beneficiary (33% vs. 9%). Some respondents identified a specific geographic community as a beneficiary (100 responses), though such communities varied widely from small villages to states.

PROJECT ACTIVITIES

The most frequently identified area of project activity involved expansion of the organization's capacity (Table 5). Understandably, respondents most often described that student work as a contribution to the organization; they less frequently identified it as a service to the beneficiary community and to the wider community. Student work that expanded the organization's capacity included project development, event coordination, and database management.

Teaching and training and engaging in social support were other commonly identified areas of contribution. The bulk of respondents who included them classified the activities as service to the beneficiary community more often than as service to the organization. Projects related to teaching or training ranged from English

lessons to community instruction in health behaviors. They were often related to social support through the provision of mentoring and role modeling.

Conversely, producing tangible products and writing and communicating were more commonly identified as contributions to the organization than to the beneficiary community. Tangible products were frequently created through the writing and communication efforts of student volunteers. For example, written outputs by students included instructional manuals, information sheets, lesson plans, reports, and fact sheets.

As with the expansion of organizational capacity, the performance of office-related tasks was considered more of a benefit to the organization than to the beneficiary community. Student contributions of this type involved the provision of support to the hosting organization. For example, one student volunteer's aid freed up the organization's staff so that they could "focus more on high-touch communications." This type of activity included work on newsletters, comment letters, reports, and lesson plans, as well as the development of models. Additionally, students worked with digital and electronic media (including social media; 55 responses). Their projects ranged from "[assisting] in deploying Google apps ... and implementing other Google technologies" to setting up a cybermedia library to handling Facebook, Twitter, and other social media sites on behalf of their hosting organizations.

Disseminating information was another project activity normally characterized as a contribution to the beneficiary community rather than to the organization. Such activities could include teaching or training but also encompassed educational campaigns that focused on increasing knowledge of political initiatives, sanitation, animal care, and other issues.

The least frequently identified project activities were performing research and offering special skills

or expertise. For example, one student was given “a questionnaire based survey to be conducted on local broom making [communities’] socio-economic and environmental issues.” Another student aided in performing an evaluation of volunteer experiences at the hosting organization. Research was more often deemed a contribution to the beneficiary community than to the organization, but the reverse was true of activities that involved offering special skills or expertise. Research was conducted on a variety of topics that ranged from women’s history to health insurance. And special expertise was provided in numerous areas such as technology and business. Of these two activity areas, only research was also identified as a contribution to the wider community.

ORGANIZATIONAL EXPECTATIONS OF STUDENTS

How organizations are able to maximize the impact of hosting DukeEngage volunteers may depend on their initial expectations. In response to an open-ended question, respondents described what their organizations expected from student volunteers. A review of their responses showed that a large number (163 responses) asked for or desired a specific skill or experience related to the organization’s mission and area of service. For example, one organization working in the areas of community development, engineering, and education expected “knowledge and skills in science, engineering, math and computing.” An organization focused on environmental education and advocacy stated that it was “great to have students with experience in education and a natural science or environmental science.” This particular expectation is not surprising given that most DukeEngage community partners are professional organizations.

An almost equal number of respondents expected student volunteers to possess particular character (156 responses) or work-related traits (45 responses) such as independence, work commitment, and patience. Other expectations included an interest in or passion for the organization’s mission and goals (109 responses) as well as the ability to write or communicate (43 responses).

Of the character traits that respondents expected from students, the largest number related to the student’s flexibility or openness (60 responses), the student’s ability to take initiative or be a self-starter (47 responses), and the student’s enthusiasm or commitment to the work (41 responses). Respondents also mentioned the ability to work independently (36 responses); a positive demeanor, warmth of character, or patience (28 responses); social skill or teamwork ability (21 responses); and work ethic (19 responses).

Most of the relevant professional traits identified by respondents involved a background or proficiency in a related field (36 responses), knowledge or familiarity with the organization’s service area (26 responses), or relevant academic training (13 responses). Thirty-five respondents mentioned a technical skill related to the organization’s work. Examples included eye screening, teaching, math, and manual labor. Additionally, several respondents included social skill or facility with the organization’s client group (e.g., teens, persons with developmental disabilities; 30 responses). Anticipated general skills were typically linked to computers or technology (26 responses), research and analysis (23 responses), and language (19 responses).

ASSESSMENT OF DUKEENGAGE STUDENTS

PERCEIVED SUCCESSFUL STUDENT ATTRIBUTES

In addition to exploring the work by DukeEngage students with their organizations and communities, respondents were asked to identify the attributes of the types of students who do especially well in their projects. Responses in this section do not apply to any specific DukeEngage student but to student volunteers in general.

From a list of 17 attributes, respondents identified the top five ones for student success (Table 6). Important attributes included taking initiative (152), being hard working (127), learning and adapting (127), being committed to the organization (111), and interacting with the community (93).

Attributes deemed less important tended to pertain to specific knowledge such as language skills

Table 6. Perceived Successful Student Attributes

Attribute	Freq. (n = 224)	%
Initiative	152	68
Hard working	127	57
Learning and adapting	127	57
Committed to the organization	111	50
Problem solving	93	42
Interacting with the community	93	42
Flexible	88	40
Social and personable	85	38
Reliable	79	35
Willing to take direction and criticism	76	34
Willing to learn	74	33
Professionalism	71	32
Language skills	32	14
Specific academic training	21	9
Familiarity with local norms and customs	20	9
Other	9	4
Been to the area before	6	3

Note: Freq. = frequency.

Table 7. Perceived Successful Student Attributes by Location (U.S. Projects vs. International Projects)

Attribute	Domestic		Internat.		χ^2
	%	N	%	N	
Initiative	74.1	86	62.5	65	3.45
Learning and adapting	56.0	65	57.3	59	0.04
Hard working	50.0	58	65.0	67	5.04*
Committed to the organization	47.4	55	51.9	54	0.45
Problem solving	44.8	52	37.9	39	1.09
Reliable	40.2	47	29.1	30	2.94
Social and personable	39.7	46	36.5	38	0.23
Flexible	37.1	43	41.7	43	0.50
Willing to learn	36.2	42	29.1	30	1.24
Professionalism	33.3	39	29.1	30	0.45
Willing to take direction or crit.	32.8	38	35.9	37	0.24
Interacting with the community	31.9	37	52.4	54	9.47**
Language skills	5.1	6	23.3	24	15.36***
Other	4.3	5	3.8	4	0.03
Been to the area before	2.6	3	2.9	3	0.21
Specific academic Training	1.7	2	18.4	19	17.78***
Familiarity with local norms and customs	2.6	3	16.5	17	12.74***

Note: Internat. = international; crit. = criticism.

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

(32 responses), specific academic training (21), understanding of local norms and customs (20), and having been to community partner's geographic area before (6).

PERCEIVED SUCCESSFUL STUDENT ATTRIBUTES BY LOCATION

Organizational respondents differed by location in their assessments (see Table 7). Language skills were more often identified as important by respondents located outside of the United States than by respondents located within the United States ($\chi^2 = 15.36$; $p = .000$). The same trend is present for familiarity with local customs ($\chi^2 = 12.74$; $p = .000$) and interaction with the community ($\chi^2 = 9.47$; $p = .002$). In addition, international respondents were more likely than their U.S.-based counterparts to select specific academic training ($\chi^2 = 17.78$; $p = .000$) and being hard working ($\chi^2 = 5.04$; $p = .025$). Although international community partners placed greater emphasis on the importance of local community, they were no more likely than U.S.-based counterparts to indicate that having been to the area before was a successful student attribute.

PERCEIVED SUCCESSFUL STUDENT ATTRIBUTES BY AREA OF SERVICE

Organizations with diverse goals and missions varied in their perceptions concerning the attributes that

Table 8. Perceived Successful Student Attributes by Area of Service (Social Service Organizations)

Attribute	Social services		Not social services		χ^2
	%	N	%	N	
Initiative	64.8	103	75.0	48	2.18
Learning and adapting	54.4	86	62.5	40	1.21
Committed to the org.	54.1	86	37.5	24	5.02*
Hard working	53.2	84	67.2	43	3.66
Interact with the comm.	43.7	69	37.5	24	0.71
Social and personable	40.3	64	32.8	21	1.07
Problem solving	39.2	62	48.4	31	1.58
Willing to take direction or criticism	39.2	62	21.9	14	6.10*
Flexible	36.1	57	48.4	31	2.91
Reliable	34.0	54	39.1	25	0.52
Professionalism	32.7	52	29.7	19	0.19
Willing to learn	29.1	46	42.2	27	3.52
Language skills	14.5	23	14.1	9	0.01
Familiarity with local norms and customs	12.0	19	1.6	1	6.08*
Specific academic training	11.9	19	3.1	2	4.17*
Other	4.4	2	3.1	2	0.19
Been to the area before	3.1	5	1.6	1	0.44

Note: org. = organization; comm. = community.

* $p < .05$.

enable students to be successful. Social service organizations were more likely than their non-social service counterparts to believe that specific academic training ($\chi^2 = 4.17$; $p = .041$), willingness to take direction or criticism ($\chi^2 = 6.10$; $p = .014$), familiarity with the local norms and customs ($\chi^2 = 6.08$; $p = .014$), and commitment to the organization ($\chi^2 = 5.02$; $p = .025$) were attributes of student volunteers who did well (Table 8). Additionally, social service organizations appeared less likely to select being hard working or having a willingness to learn, though those relationships did not meet the criteria for statistical significance.

Social issue organizations did not appear to have strong dispositions toward many particular student attributes (Table 9). They were more likely to select the ability to learn and adapt ($\chi^2 = 4.19$; $p = .041$) but less likely to select being social and personable ($\chi^2 = 6.86$; $p = .009$).

Organizations using particular development approaches or methodologies had tendencies to select certain student attributes. As Table 10 shows, development organizations were more likely to indicate that familiarity with local norms and customs ($\chi^2 = 4.92$; $p = .027$), interaction with the community ($\chi^2 = 3.89$; $p = .048$), and learning and adapting ($\chi^2 = 3.91$; $p = .048$) were important attributes for student success. But they were less likely to include professionalism ($\chi^2 = 5.69$; $p = .017$). And, although the relationship did not rise to the level of statistical significance,

Table 9. Perceived Successful Student Attributes (Social Issue Organizations)

Attribute	Social issues		Not social issues		χ^2
	%	N	%	N	
Initiative	72.4	92	61.5	59	3.02
Learning and adapting	62.7	79	49.0	47	4.19*
Hard working	54.0	68	61.5	59	1.25
Problem solving	46.8	59	35.4	34	2.91
Committed to the org.	44.1	56	56.2	54	3.23
Flexible	43.7	55	34.4	33	1.96
Flexible	43.7	55	34.4	33	1.96
Interact with the community	42.1	53	41.7	40	0.00
Reliable	35.7	45	35.1	34	0.01
Willing to learn	35.7	45	29.2	28	1.06
Willing to take direction or criticism	31.7	40	37.5	36	0.80
Professionalism	31.7	31	31.7	40	0.00
Social and personable	30.7	39	47.9	46	6.86**
Language skills	13.4	13	15.1	19	0.13
Specific academic training	11.1	14	7.2	7	0.98
Familiarity with local norms and customs	8.7	11	9.4	9	0.03
Other	3.9	5	4.2	4	0.01
Been to the area before	3.2	4	2.1	2	0.26

Note: org. = organization.

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$.

development organizations were also less likely than nondevelopment organizations to include commitment to the organization.

For organizations outside of the main thematic groupings (i.e., arts and engineering) only the arts had particular tendencies to select certain student attributes. Arts organizations were more likely to choose specific academic training (22% vs. 8%; Fisher's Exact test, $p = .049$), problem solving (70% vs. 39%; $\chi^2 = 8.07$; $p = .004$), and familiarity with local norms and customs (40% vs. 7%; Fisher's Exact test, $p = .002$) as successful student attributes. And, they were less likely to include being reliable (9% vs. 39%; $\chi^2 = 8.01$; $p = .005$), hard working (35% vs. 60%; $\chi^2 = 5.27$; $p = .022$), and flexible (13% vs. 42%; $\chi^2 = 7.59$; $p = .006$).

PERCEIVED SUCCESSFUL STUDENT ATTRIBUTES BY CLIENT-COMMUNITY CONTACT

Perceptions of successful student attributes varied by type of service just as they did by location (Table 11). Respondents from direct service organizations were more likely than their indirect or combination service counterparts to identify interaction with the community as a successful student attribute ($\chi^2 = 4.84$; $p = .004$). Direct service community partners were also more likely to include language skills as a successful student attribute ($\chi^2 = 5.86$; $p = .015$) but less likely to

Table 10. Perceived Successful Student Attributes by Area of Service (Development Organizations)

Attribute	Development		Not development		χ^2
	%	N	%	N	
Initiative	68.7	79	66.7	72	0.11
Learning and adapting	63.2	72	50.0	54	3.91*
Hard working	57.0	65	57.4	62	0.00
Interact with the community	48.2	55	35.2	38	3.89*
Committed to the org.	43.5	50	55.6	60	3.25
Problem solving	43.0	49	40.7	44	0.11
Flexible	42.1	48	37.0	40	0.60
Social and personable	40.0	46	36.1	39	0.36
Willing to take direction or criticism	39.5	45	28.7	31	2.86
Reliable	30.7	35	40.4	44	2.28
Willing to learn	30.7	35	35.2	38	0.51
Professionalism	24.6	28	39.4	43	5.69*
Language skills	15.8	18	12.8	14	0.39
Familiarity with local norms and customs	13.2	15	4.6	5	4.92*
Specific academic training	7.0	8	11.9	13	1.57
Other	3.6	4	4.6	5	0.19
Been to the area before	2.6	3	2.8	3	0.00

Note: org. = organization.

* $p < .05$.

include professionalism ($\chi^2 = 11.12$; $p = .001$), learning and adaptation ($\chi^2 = 6.76$; $p = .009$), problem solving ($\chi^2 = 8.86$; $p = .003$), and initiative ($\chi^2 = 5.5$; $p = .019$).

RATINGS ON PREFERRED ATTRIBUTES OF DUKEENGAGE STUDENTS

Respondents were asked to evaluate the DukeEngage students they hosted on 15 different characteristics. The preceding sections discussed respondents' impressions concerning the attributes that generally distinguish a successful student volunteer, but those results do not refer to the attributes of the specific students assigned to the respondents' organizations. In contrast, this section examines the respondents' ratings of actual DukeEngage students on a range of attributes and abilities. Responses could range from *unacceptable* (assigned a score of 1) to *very high* (assigned a score of 6). Overall, respondents rated DukeEngage students favorably, but students received the highest average scores for the ability to complete tasks (this item only appeared in the 2013 survey), the ability to work as a team member, sense of service, the ability to work independently, and the ability to take direction (Table 12).

Students were rated somewhat lower on the ability to communicate, the ability to take criticism, the ability to ask for help as needed, and knowledge of local culture. However, even the lowest rated characteristics

Table 11. Perceived Successful Student Attributes (Type of Service)

Attribute	Direct service		Indir. or comb. service		χ^2
	%	N	%	N	
Initiative	54.7	29	71.9	123	5.50*
Hard working	66.0	35	54.1	92	2.34
Learning and adapting	41.5	22	61.8	105	6.76**
Committed to the org.	49.1	26	49.7	85	0.01
Reliable	41.5	22	33.5	57	1.13
Interacting with the community	54.7	29	37.6	64	4.84*
Flexible	28.3	15	42.9	73	3.63
Social and personable	41.5	22	36.8	63	0.37
Willing to learn	26.4	14	35.3	60	1.44
Willing to take direction or criticism	37.7	20	32.9	56	0.41
Problem solving	24.5	13	47.6	81	8.86**
Professionalism	13.2	7	37.6	64	11.12***
Language skills	24.5	13	11.2	19	5.86*
Specific academic training	5.7	3	10.6	18	1.15
Familiarity with local norms and customs	11.3	6	8.2	14	0.47
Other	3.8	2	4.1	7	0.01
Been to the area before	1.9	1	2.9	5	0.17

Note: Indir. = indirect; comb. = combination; org. = organization.

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

and abilities had average scores of *satisfactory* or above. In fact, only the mean score for knowledge of local culture fell below 5.

OPEN REFLECTIONS ON PERCEIVED STUDENT STRENGTHS

In addition to rating the DukeEngage students hosted at their organizations, respondents described the strengths of their student volunteers in their own words. Their responses illustrate how community partners perceive and evaluate DukeEngage students. In identifying strengths, respondents were most likely to name traits related to student character (229 responses). Examples of identified strengths include having compassion, adaptability, and a positive attitude.

Respondents also identified relevant professional or academic qualifications (e.g., prior writing experience, 47 responses). The range of professional or academic proficiencies varied and depended upon the types of projects to which students were assigned. One respondent from an educational organization had student volunteers prepare local high school students for the SATs. Accordingly, the respondent specified the exam preparation experience of the student volunteer as strength. Another respondent, from an organization aimed at youth and community development, highlighted the coding expertise of a student volunteer because the student was working on a project concerning the organization’s web page. Other strengths identified by respondents focused on their

Table 12. DukeEngage Student Ratings Across Preferred Attributes

Skill or characteristic	N	Mean score	Median score
Ability to complete tasks ^a	64	5.53	6
Ability to work as a team member	259	5.42	6
Sense of service	264	5.39	6
Ability to work independently	266	5.37	6
Ability to take direction	259	5.36	6
Fit with the organization	236	5.31	6
Ability to problem solve	261	5.25	5
Necessary academic background	226	5.25	5
Fit with the community	235	5.24	5
Timeliness	262	5.23	6
Professionalism	231	5.23	5
Ability to take criticism	230	5.22	5
Ability to communicate	264	5.21	5
Ability to ask for help as needed	263	5.16	5
Knowledge of local culture	253	4.59	4

^aItem only on 2013 survey.

students’ work engagement (38 responses), including their goal orientation and commitment to completing tasks as well as such office-related skills (37 responses) as organization and the ability to give presentations.

Other remarkable strengths included the volunteers’ approach to work: 113 respondents emphasized the drive, motivation, enthusiasm, or initiative of the students that they hosted, and another 51 reported on students’ positive demeanor. The work ethic of students was also cited as a strength (40 responses), as were social skill (24 responses) and having the ability to work independently (18 responses). Some community partners concentrated on the ability of students to be professional and conscientious (16 responses), to be flexible (14 responses), and to manage environmental pressures (10 responses).

PERCEIVED STUDENT IMPACT

PERCEIVED IMPACT ON COMMUNITY

Community partner organizations were asked to rate perceived student impact on “the community.” To do so, respondents used a scale ranging from 1 to 10 with 10 representing the highest rating. The average student impact score was 8.36 with a median of 9 and a mode of 10. Although these results are largely positive, some respondents may have provided answers that were socially desirable but not true to their candid opinions. Of the 304 responses, only 11 (3.6%) fell below a score of 5 (Table 13). Ratings were grouped into three categories

Table 13. Perceived Student Impact on the Communities Served by the Community Partner Organization (n = 304)

Impact	Frequency	%
Great impact	163	53.6
Some impact	130	42.8
Little impact	11	3.6

of impact: great (rated between 9 and 10), some (rated between 5 and 8), and little (rated between 1 and 4).

PERCEIVED IMPACT ON COMMUNITY PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS AND RESPONDENTS

Rating by respondents also indicated that DukeEngage students positively affected their organizations and the respondents themselves (Table 14). Most indicated that the students had a great impact on the respondents (71%); many acknowledged some impact (28%), and few respondents said that the students had little impact on them (1%). Additionally, the majority of respondents reported that students had a great impact on the organization (74%), and almost 25% stated that students had some impact (24.6%). Few reported that students had little impact (1.1%).

OPEN REFLECTIONS ON COMMUNITY BENEFIT

A majority of respondents in this sample reported that their beneficiary communities gained as much as the student or more from their experience with DukeEngage (64%); 46 respondents said that they were unsure (15%), and 16 said that the beneficiary community did not gain as much as the student (6%). Respondents thought that communities benefitted from the personal relationships with or social aspects of hosting volunteers (65 responses) as well as from such character or personality traits as the volunteers' warmth and enthusiasm (60 responses).

One respondent pointed out that the children served by the organization received rare individual attention from the volunteer, and another respondent emphasized that a student was "naturally respectful of [their] clients who often don't get a lot of respect in the community. It's important to ... [the] staff to give clients that experience of respect."

Along with respect and attention, the demeanor of volunteers was often cited as a quality that mattered. As one respondent indicated: "Everyone loved [the volunteer]. He is very lovable, friendly, open, and accepting which makes a difference." The positive attitude of a different volunteer was said to help to

Table 14. Perceived Student Impact on Community Partner Organization and Respondent

Impact	Impact on organization (n = 280)		Impact on respondent (n = 276)	
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
Great impact	208	74.3	195	70.7
Some impact	69	24.6	77	27.9
Little impact	3	1.1	4	1.4

Note: Freq. = frequency.

motivate clients. Another volunteer showed a genuine sense of caring about members of the beneficiary community, and this "created the opportunity for both the student and the community [to benefit] equally."

Additionally, many respondents anticipated that the effects of hosting volunteers would be seen in the long term (32 responses). For example, one respondent acknowledged that the community benefitted but stated that "the impacts/results will take some time to be seen." Another respondent said, "The [volunteer's] contributions to the community [were] very far reaching and may continue to have a positive effect for long after she leaves our organization."

Other respondents felt that the students' impacts would be tied to the community partner organization's larger mission and ongoing projects (36 responses). For example, one respondent from a women's advocacy organization identified the volunteer's impact as allowing the organization itself to increase its capacity.

DIFFERENCES IN PERCEIVED IMPACT BY ORGANIZATIONAL AND SERVICE ATTRIBUTES

Although community partners were likely to rate students' impact positively across the board, some organizational attributes were linked to greater perceived impact. Within the sample, organizations from the United States were more likely to report that DukeEngage students had a positive impact on the community, the organization, and the respondent (Figure 1A). Direct service organizations were more likely to indicate that the students had great impact (Figure 1B). More than 97% of respondents in direct service organizations rated students with a score of 5 or above; in contrast, such scores were given by only 88% of respondents in indirect or combination service organizations, and this difference was statistically significant ($\chi^2 = 4.89$; $p = .027$). Respondents from organizations that had previously hosted DukeEngage students were also more likely to positively assess the students' perceived impact (Figure 1C).

As to areas of service, social service organizations were more likely to report higher impact than their non-social service counterparts (Figure 2A), but the

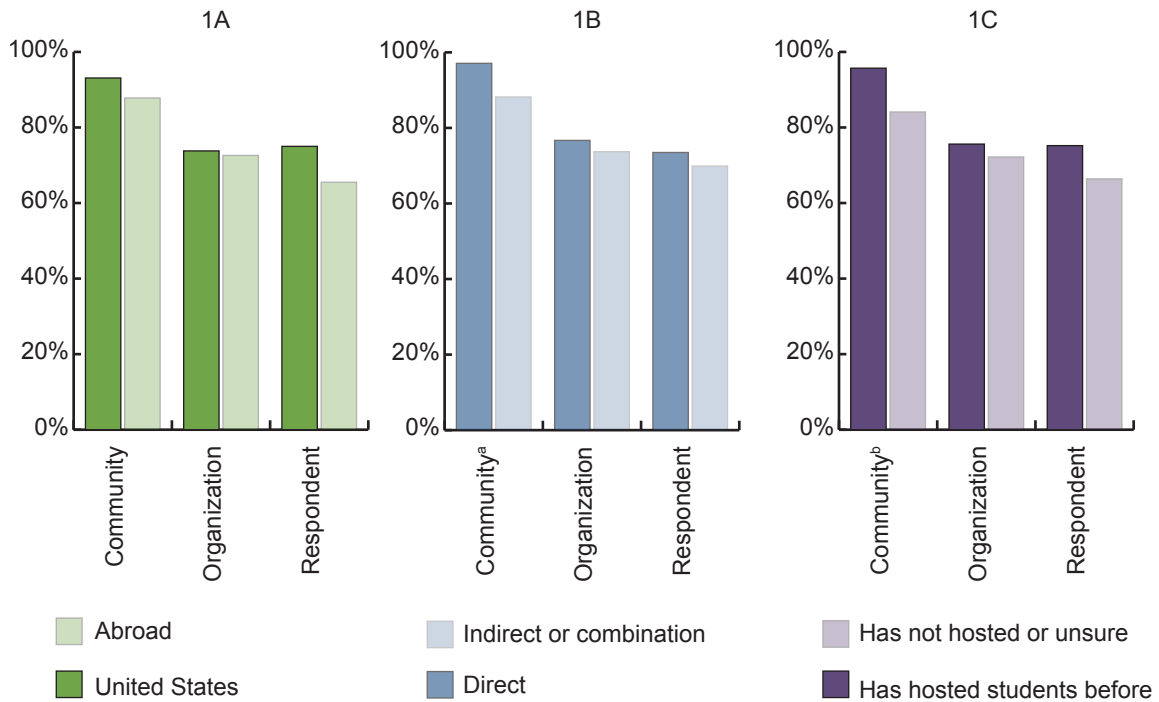


Figure 1. Percentages reporting high or great student impact (organizational attributes).

^a $\chi^2 = 4.89$; $p < .05$.

^b $\chi^2 = 10.74$; $p < .01$.

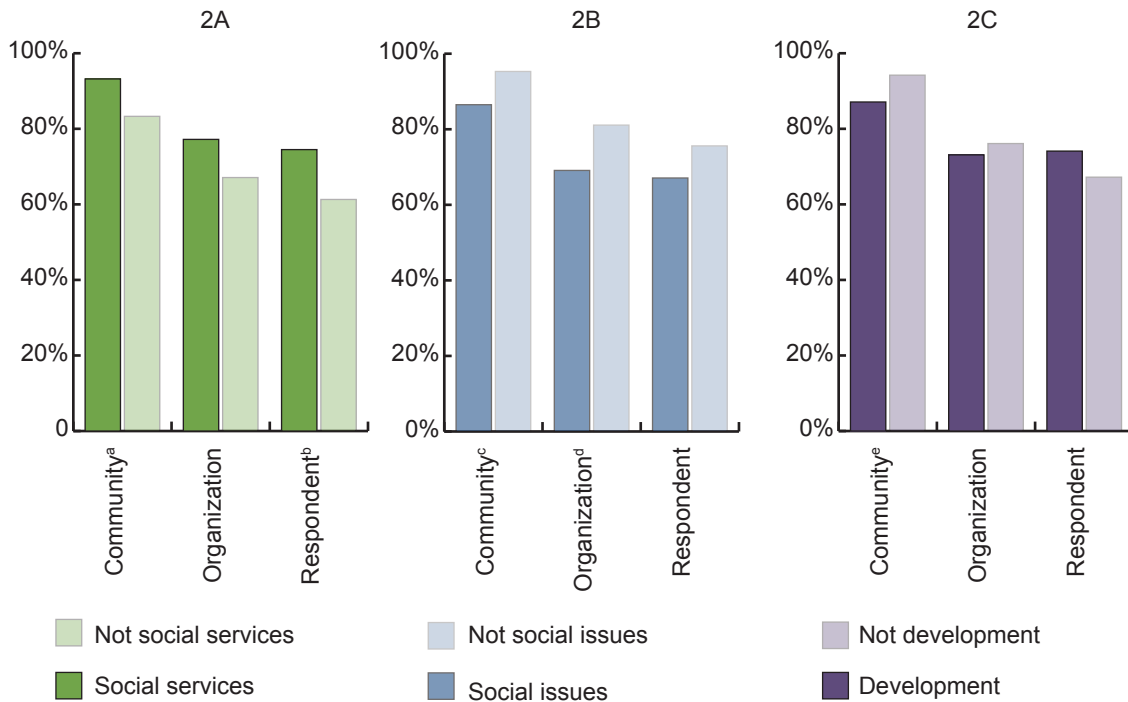


Figure 2. Percentage reporting high or great student impact (areas of service).

^a $\chi^2 = 6.34$; $p < .05$.

^b $\chi^2 = 4.58$; $p < .05$.

^c $\chi^2 = 6.29$; $p < .05$.

^d $\chi^2 = 5.72$; $p < .05$.

^e $\chi^2 = 4.89$; $p < .05$.

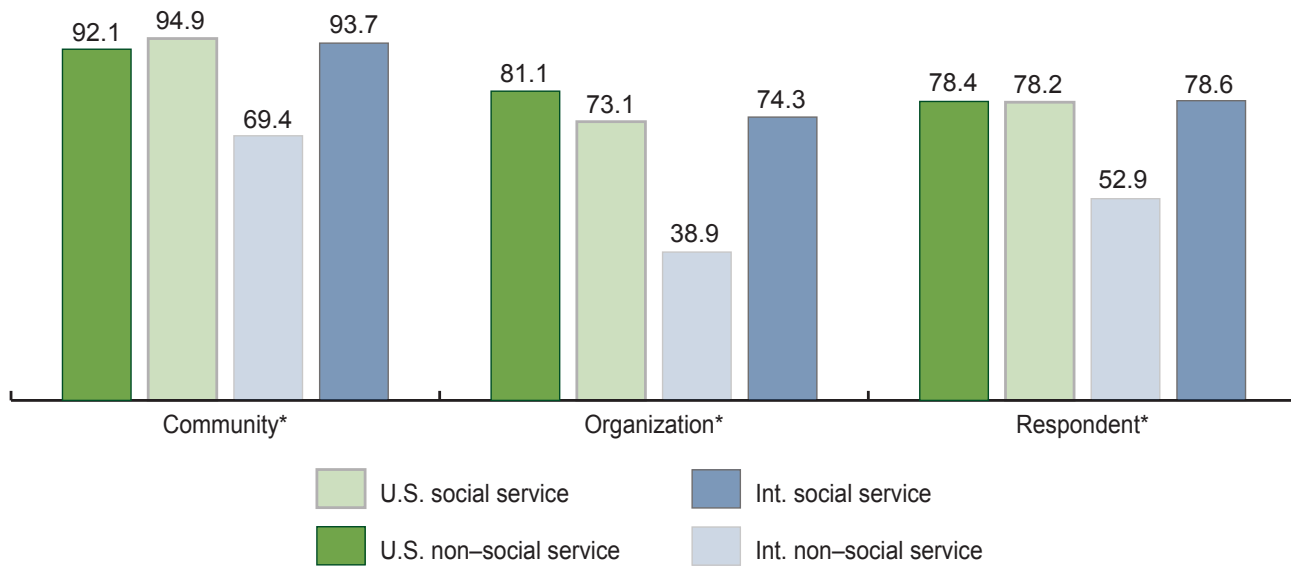


Figure 3. Social service organizations and perceived student impact by location. *Note:* Int. = international.

*International social service organizations: Community ($\chi^2 = 14.87$; $p < .001$), organization ($\chi^2 = 8.61$; $p < .01$), and respondent ($\chi^2 = 15.03$; $p < .001$).

opposite was true of social issue organizations (Figure 2B). Reports from development organizations, such as those providing educational or community-organizing functions, were mixed: They were less likely to report that DukeEngage students had great impact on the community and organization but were more likely to report that they had great impact on the respondent (Figure 2C).

These results are likely related to the geographical placement of organizations, as most development and social issue organizations operate outside of the United States. In fact, when crosstabulations of perceived student impact and areas of service were stratified by location, the relationship between perceived student impact on the community and area of service disappeared for development organizations within the United States ($\chi^2 = 05$; $p = .832$) but remained significant for organizations abroad ($\chi^2 = 3.99$; $p = .046$).

Similarly, the relationship between social issue organizations and perceived student impact differed by location. Although organizations both within and outside of the United States reported perceived positive student impact on the community and organization less frequently than did non-social issue organizations, the relationship was only statistically significant for international organizations (Community, $\chi^2 = 6.91$; $p = .009$; Organization, $\chi^2 = 5.14$; $p = .02$).

Conversely, social service organizations in the United States showed a different trend. They reported that

their students had great impact on the community, the organization, and the respondent slightly less often than did their non-social service counterparts, but international social service organizations were more likely than their domestic counterparts to indicate that DukeEngage students had a great impact on each group (Figure 3).

In other areas of service (i.e., arts and engineering) only community partners that identified art as a service area had any significant relationship to perceived student impact. Compared with non-arts organizations, arts organizations were more likely to indicate that the students they hosted had great impact on the respondent (Table 15).

DIFFERENCES IN PERCEIVED IMPACT BY ORGANIZATIONAL EXPECTATIONS

The ability of students to provide meaningful impact to hosting communities and organizations will be affected by students' knowledge, skills, and

Table 15. High/Great Student Impact on Beneficiary by Arts and Non-Arts Partners

Impact	Arts		Not arts		χ^2
	%	N	%	N	
Impact on community	96.0	24	90.0	233	0.97
Impact on organization	84.0	21	73.6	187	1.29
Impact on respondent	88.0	22	69.2	173	3.89*

* $p < .05$.

Table 16. Character Traits, Professional Background, and Student Impact

Impact	Character traits			Professional background		
	Expected	Not expected	χ^2	Expected	Not expected	χ^2
Some impact on community	87.2 (123)	94.4 (151)	4.68*	92.9 (143)	89.1 (131)	1.29
Great impact on organization	71.9 (105)	76.6 (121)	0.87	78.4 (116)	70.5 (110)	2.46
Great impact on respondent	71.0 (103)	74.0 (114)	0.34	78.2 (115)	66.4 (101)	5.18*
Equal community benefit	67.6 (92)	81.8 (121)	7.53**	80.0 (108)	71.1 (106)	2.99
Great impact on community	51.8 (73)	55.6 (89)	0.45	58.4 (90)	49.7 (73)	2.34

Note: Results in parentheses are *n* values. Unless specified, other results are percentages.

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$.

experiences. Community partner organizations are able to influence student success in many ways by establishing expectations at the beginning. Whether these expectations relate to student impact, however, remains to be determined. On the one hand, community partners are more likely to know the needs of their beneficiary communities and may set their standards accordingly. On the other, they might believe that setting stringent expectations restricts their ability to bring in volunteers with diverse backgrounds.

From the analysis, it can be seen that an organization’s expectations of students are related to the organization’s perceptions of the student’s impact on the community, the respondent, and the organization.

As discussed previously, 156 respondents included character traits as expectations of their student volunteers. However, the inclusion of character traits was not indicative of higher perceived student impact. Similarly, including a preference for passion or interest in the organization’s mission and goals was not related to greater perceived impact. Content analysis of short-answer responses revealed that those who discussed character traits in their expectations reported that students had some or great impact on the community (i.e., scored student impact as a 5 or above) 87% of the time (Table 16). In contrast, respondents who made no mention of character traits rated student impact with a score of 5 or above 94% of the time, and this relationship was statistically significant ($\chi^2 = 4.68$; $p = .031$).

Furthermore, respondents with character expectations were less likely than respondents without such expectations to report that the community benefitted equally (as much as or more than the student) from the student’s service (68% vs. 82%), though the results were not statistically significant. The same trend was observed among responses from organizations expressing an expectation that the students possess an interest in or passion for the organization’s area of service (Table 17). Respondents who expressed no expectation concerning the student’s passion for or interest in the organization were more likely to report

that their students had great impact on the community (56% vs. 46%) and on the organization (78% vs. 68%). Conversely, respondents who specified expectations concerning students’ professional background (including professional, academic, or skill requirements) were more likely than those who did not to report that students had great impact on the community (i.e., to rate student impact with a score of 9 or above), the organization, and on the respondents.

Additionally, such respondents were more likely to indicate that their communities benefitted equally (i.e., as much as the student or more) from the DukeEngage experience. Although a trend was observed—respondents who specified professional, academic, or skill requirements also reported greater perceived student impact—the only observed statistically significant relationship was for student impact on the respondent ($\chi^2 = 5.18$; $p = .023$). Additionally, those who included work-related personal traits as student requirements, traits such as organizational skill or teamwork ability, were more likely than their counterparts to describe their students as having had great impact on the respondents (81% vs. 71%).

Whether the respondent had or included specific expectations of students was also related to student impact scores. Respondents who included a reference to nonspecific professional, academic, or skill requirements were less likely to report positive student impact, when compared to organizations without requirements or who were specific and the relationship was statistically significant ($\chi^2 = 5.38$; $p = .020$; Table

Table 17. Referenced Passion or Interest by Perceived Student Impact

Impact	Expected		Not expected		χ^2
	%	<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>	
Some impact on the comm.	90.6	87	91.3	188	0.03
Great impact on the resp.	75.0	72	71.1	145	0.50
Great impact on the org.	67.7	67	77.7	145	3.51
Equal comm. benefit	67.5	54	78.0	160	3.42
Great impact on the comm.	45.8	44	57.8	119	3.75

Note: comm. = community; resp. = respondent; org. = organization.

Table 18. Unspecified Expectations vs. No Specific Expectations by Perceived Student Impact

Impact	Unspecified requirements			No specific requirements		
	Included	Did not include	χ^2	Included	Did not include	χ^2
Some impact on community	80.4 (41)	93.2 (234)	8.58**	100.0 (22)	90.6 (252)	2.25
Equal community benefit	69.2 (36)	76.4 (178)	1.17	75.0 (15)	75.0 (198)	0.00
Great impact on organization	59.6 (31)	77.5 (196)	7.23**	86.4 (19)	73.7 (207)	1.74
Great impact on respondent	58.0 (29)	75.2 (188)	6.16*	77.3 (17)	71.8 (199)	0.30
Great impact on community	39.2 (20)	57.0 (143)	5.38*	63.6 (14)	53.6 (149)	0.83

Note: Results in parentheses are *n* values. Unless indicated, other results are percentages.

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$.

18). The same inclination can be seen in the respective relationships of student expectation descriptions with perceived impact on the organization and with perceived impact on the respondent. Those with nonspecific expectations were less likely to report that their students had great impact on the organization (60% vs. 78%) and the respondent (58% vs. 75%). Again, the relationships were statistically significant. The respective chi-square values are 7.23 ($p = .007$) and 6.16 ($p = .013$).

However, the opposite relationship was observed for organizations that had no set expectations of student volunteers. They reported that their students had great community impact more frequently than did their counterparts (64% vs. 54%) and were more likely to indicate their students had great impact on the organization (86% vs. 74%).

PERSPECTIVE OF DUKEENGAGE FROM COMMUNITY PARTNERS

AREAS FOR STUDENT IMPROVEMENT

When asked how DukeEngage students could be better prepared, community partner respondents identified a range of possibilities. Some said that students should have more background familiarity with the organization, its local context, or professional office settings in general (66 responses). They indicated that, among other things, students would benefit from more knowledge of the organizations with which they worked; of social issues, such as racism and poverty; and of the culture of the organization’s beneficiary community. For example, one respondent indicated that volunteers would be better prepared “by learning more about the culture of [the students] and families [the organization] served.” Another suggested that the volunteer “could have benefitted from having an understanding and appreciation of diversity and people living in poverty.”

Their suggestions included learning some of the local language and culture (15 responses) and gaining academic or professional familiarity prior to serving (12 responses).

One respondent suggested that students needed more experience in office settings, and another believed that more training on professional interactions could be advantageous.

Only a small number of respondents said that they should play a role in preparing students (13 responses). Among those who did, recommendations in this area included sending students educational and other background material prior to their arrival at the organization and providing more involved supervision or training.

Sixteen respondents specified that prior communication and planning would be beneficial. They indicated that information exchanged could help the organization to learn about the students’ interests and expectations. It could help the students learn about the organization and their role within it. Conversely, a lack of communication could limit the amount of time that students have to complete their goals—as happened to one student. The largest number of respondents (85 responses), however, stated that they had no recommendations or that DukeEngage students were already very well prepared.

COMMUNITY PARTNER RECOMMENDATIONS TO DUKEENGAGE

Perhaps the final indication of community partner satisfaction with DukeEngage and DukeEngage students is whether the partner would work with DukeEngage in the future. The vast majority of respondents in this sample responded affirmatively: 253 said that they would partner with a DukeEngage student again, 12 said that they were unsure, and one respondent said no. A review of the responses expressing uncertainty showed that respondents’ hesitance was largely related to such organizational considerations as ensuring sufficient time, funding, and administrative structure to support a volunteer for the duration of service.

Furthermore, relatively few respondents had suggestions to improve their collaborations with DukeEngage in the future. When asked how DukeEngage could better support community partners, some

respondents replied that they were satisfied with the support they received (38 responses). Others desired more communication and knowledge about Duke's expectations prior to a student's service (26 responses), more of a network or collaboration with DukeEngage and other local agencies (10 responses), and greater supervision or evaluation throughout the student's service with their organization (nine responses). Some respondents thought that students could serve a longer term or at a different time of year (nine responses). Others expressed a desire for greater continuity of service, with volunteers from one year informing the work of those who come after (two responses) and more follow-up from DukeEngage.

DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

On both their personal attributes and their level of impact, DukeEngage students were highly rated by community partners between 2011 and 2013. Through diverse projects focusing on a variety of beneficiaries, student volunteers were able to provide contributions in different ways. However, the significance of their impact was related to the types and locations of organizations with which they served.

Respondent expectations of student volunteers included a range of character traits, work-related personal traits, student interests, and relevant professional or academic skills and abilities. From the data, however, only the indication of desired work-related traits and abilities are indicative of higher perceived student impact. Both students and organizations benefit from clear and specific student expectations, particularly from those related to the students' skills and abilities. Consequently, clear articulation of such expectations could help DukeEngage to be more responsive to organizational needs when assigning student volunteers.

In contrast, but not contradictorily, organizations that indicated they had no specific expectations of student volunteers reported higher impact scores than their counterparts. Although this finding may illustrate the value of keeping open the options of and attitudes toward young volunteers, the finding may also indicate that organizations with no specific expectations also hosted more student volunteers than did their counterparts with more specific expectations; organizations with no specific expectations hosted an average of three students each year; in comparison, 1.5 were hosted by organizations with specific expectations. As a result, the higher impact scores reported by organizations with no specific expectations may actually reflect the volunteer management strategy that results from hosting multiple volunteers and their attendant projects. It may be that, for organizations with large

volunteer pools, both the organization and the volunteer are better served by limiting upfront expectations and by allowing projects and volunteers themselves to drive perceptions of impact.

In addition to expectations concerning students, organizational attributes play a role in the assessment of students. Organizations outside of the United States were less likely to indicate that students had great impact on the community, the organization, or the respondent; though when compared with organizations in the United States, none of the differences was statistically significant. International organizations also held a different perception of successful student attributes, placing greater emphasis on qualities that would support their adaptation to the local context—for example, interacting with the local community, language skills, and familiarity with local norms and customs. Similarly, the level of organizational contact with the client community and previous experience hosting DukeEngage students influenced the evaluation of students.

Direct service organizations and organizations that had hosted DukeEngage students in the past were more likely than their counterparts to indicate that DukeEngage students had a great impact on the community, the organization, and the respondent. Furthermore, direct service organizations were more likely than indirect and combination organizations to name student attributes that facilitated work with communities (e.g., interacting with the community and language skills). As a result, when matching students to organizations and determining mutually beneficial projects, such factors should be taken into account.

As with other attributes, the organizations' missions and goals were related to their perceptions of DukeEngage students. Social service organizations located outside of the United States were significantly more likely to report that their hosted students had great impact on the community, the organization, and the respondent; the opposite was true of development and social issue organizations operating abroad. The contrasting relationships exhibited by such organizations indicate that the ability of students to meet the needs of community partners and positively affect beneficiary communities may be partly dependent on the organization's area of service. Consequently, it is another aspect to consider when placing students with community partners.

All of these findings underscore the need for detailed information on community partner needs and on preferences regarding student attributes, knowledge, and skills. It further highlights the need for detailed application processes that provide evidence on applicant

capacities and abilities. Achieving mutually beneficial outcomes for the community partners and the students may depend on this important first step. These outcomes can be further supported through orientation and expectation setting with the community partners.

APPENDIX

SAMPLE DUKEENGAGE COMMUNITY PARTNER IMPACT SURVEY

(For students serving in individual placements with international or U.S.-based group programs. Asterisks below identify new items included only in the new items in the 2013 survey)

2011-2013 DukeEngage Community Partner Impact Survey⁴ (*Individual Placement Model*)

DukeEngage Program: _____
DukeEngage Student: _____
Direct Supervisor Name: _____
Organization Name: _____
E-mail Address: _____
Telephone Number: _____

Some Information about Your Organization

Areas of Service (please choose up to 3 areas):

- The arts
- Children/youth
- Community development/outreach
- Disability services
- Economic development
- Engineering
- Environmental advocacy/sustainability
- Education/literacy
- Health/human services
- Human rights/civil liberties
- Immigration
- Microfinance/microenterprise
- Poverty/hunger
- Race/ethnicity
- Social enterprise
- Women's advocacy/women's issues
- Other: _____
- Other: _____
- Other: _____

How long has your organization worked in these areas? _____

In what type of service do volunteers with your organization engage?

- Direct service with the population in need
- Indirect service with the population in need (such as fundraising, research, advocacy, etc.)
- Combination of direct and indirect service

What does your organization expect of its student volunteers? For example, do you require specific skills or academic backgrounds, or certain character traits or interests?

Has your organization hosted DukeEngage students in previous years?

YES NO UNSURE

If yes, how many DukeEngage students (approximately) has your organization hosted? ____

2011-2013 DukeEngage Community Partner Impact Survey. © 2013 by DukeEngage. To use or reproduce, contact Jaclyne Purtell, jacki.purtell@duke.edu.

Overall, what level of impact (great, some or little) would you say that participating in a DukeEngage project has had on you and your organization? (Please choose one for each.)

	YOU	YOUR ORGANIZATION
Great impact		
Some impact		
Little impact		

The Student

How would you rate the DukeEngage student with whom you worked on the following?

	Very high	High	Acceptable	Low	Very low	Unacceptable	Not necessary
Professionalism							
Timeliness							
Sense of service							
Ability to take direction							
Ability to take criticism							
Ability to problem solve							
Ability to work independently							
Ability to work as a team member							
Ability to communicate							
Ability to ask for help as needed							
Ability to complete tasks							
Fit with the community							
Fit with your organization							
Knowledge of the local culture							
Necessary academic background							

If the student was rated low, very low or unacceptable in any of the above categories, please describe what contributed to the student's low rating.

What was the greatest strength the student brought to his/her work?

How could the student have been better prepared to work with your organization or project?

Insights and Recommendations

Based on your experiences this summer, have you developed any insights the type of Duke students who will do especially well in DukeEngage projects? Please pick and rank the top five attributes.

Students who ...

Are professional.
Have specific language skills.
Have specific academic training.
Have been to the area before.
Are reliable.
Are willing to take direction and/or criticism.
Are hard-working.
Are flexible.
Are willing to learn.

Learn and adapt quickly.
Are problem-solvers and/or quick thinkers.
Understand local norms and customs.
Want to interact with the community.
Are social and personable.
Are committed to the organization and/or project.
Take initiative to complete tasks/projects.
Other (please describe).

What do you think your organization and the community you support most received from hosting a DukeEngage student that is valuable to you, to your organization, and to your community? Please select one contribution for each category – You, Organization, and Community.

	YOU	ORGANIZATION	COMMUNITY
The additional help (staff capacity, time, hands, etc.) the student group provided.			
The project that the students completed.			
The new or additional skills students contributed to the project, organization or community.			
The new or additional perspective students added to a project.			
The attitude the students brought to working on and completing the project.			
The relationships the students formed with the organization and/or community.			
The example students set for others (in the community, at the organization).			

Do you have any suggestions or recommendations regarding how DukeEngage staff can better support you and your organization during the student’s service?

YES NO UNSURE

Please share your thoughts with us.

Would you/your organization/your community want to partner with DukeEngage and a DukeEngage student again?

YES NO MAYBE/UNSURE

Please tell us why or why not.

Thank you for working with DukeEngage this summer! Please feel free to contact dukeengage@duke.edu if you would like to provide additional feedback on your experience.

<Question> indicates new items in 2013

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