

Learning Beyond Borders: Exploring the stories of participants in a Canadian International
Youth Internship Program (IYIP)

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Abstract

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Emilie Salvi

The present qualitative research is primarily centered on interviews with five interns who participated in Canada's 2013 International Youth Internship Program (IYIP) for a period of six months. The research seeks to explore learning acquired by participants in IYIP programs based on their own narratives, and to make recommendations to be integrated into strategies for more effective IYIP planning. Specifically, it investigates the level of participant satisfaction in reaching two out of the three IYIP objectives for Canadian youth: preparing for future employment and promoting Canada's international development efforts at home and abroad. An experiential and critical learning theoretical lens is applied to that end.

The findings reveal that participants gained professional and personal competencies following their experiences and these gains indeed helped them to prepare for future employment or academic field of study. The findings also show little attention is paid to promoting Canada's international development efforts, both at home and abroad. Rather, participants were moved by their experiences in their host communities and they discovered some new strengths and experienced personal growth. Unforeseen key findings emerged as well when some participants disclosed their lack of faith in Canada's IYIP model, particularly their discomfort in imposing their values on host communities. Recommendations and suggestions for further research point towards a revised and enhanced strategy for a more enriching IYIP.

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I also have a special vote of thanks for the participants who volunteered to share their IYIP experiences and lessons learnt with me. The thesis could not have been written without their valuable collaboration.

Thank you to my loving mother who has truly supported me during this crazy journey in my life.

This thesis is dedicated to my father; a man who, despite little formal education, devoted himself to giving me a rich and lifelong education, and who has without a doubt, shaped my heart and mind.

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Chapter 1: Introduction, Statement of the Problem and Research Questions

The proposed study is meant to examine the ways novice, well-intentioned Canadian adult educators engage in a multifaceted global community development context, and the lessons they learn in this process. As Michael Collins claims, adult education must be “informed by a theory of justice and social theories of action with which its practitioners can engage” (Spencer & Lange, 2014, p. 167). It is with Collins’ perspective that I share my story, bringing to light the lessons learnt by adult educators within the context of international experiential internship programs.

My Story

I was selected as an intern through the 2013 International Youth Internship Program (IYIP) with the purpose to offer professional experience in international development work in Costa Rica. Before reaching my destination, I crossed a three-hour drive through the winding *Inter-Americana* Highway encircling the magical and scenic mountains and then tracing the sharp turns of *Cerro de la Muerte* (a direct English translation for Peak of Death). I descended into the valley of San Isidro de El General, known as San Isidro by the natives, located in the province of Pérez Zeledón, in the South Central region of Costa Rica. San Isidro is a place I would call my home for the next six months of my life.

The director of non-profit women’s organization, the Asociación de Mujeres Generaleñas, also known as Casa de la Mujer, invited me along with two other interns to stay at her home upon the first few days of our arrival. San Isidro, a flourishing agricultural town celebrated for its farming, is surrounded by rainforest and cloud forest. The warm moist from the fog and light morning breeze sneaked into the bedroom and awakened my senses on my first

morning. “*Buenos dias!*” eagerly greeted me the director with a radiant smile. Barely awake, I took a moment to respond in my fragmented Spanish, and thought that improving my limited knowledge of the language should be on my priority list. The background noise led me into the kitchen where *Teletica Canal 7*, a popular news station, was broadcasting a morning episode. Understanding few, if any of the news stories through the videos and pictures, I once again reminded myself the urgency of improving my Spanish. Enthusiastically, the director explained to us the history of Costa Rican gastronomy with elaborate hand gestures, before pointing to the buffet and introducing us to what is known as the simple yet typical meal found in Costa Rica la *comida tipica*. To our delight, we ate the *gallo pinto*, the *platanos*, the *casado*, and the *huevos fritos*, all Costa Rican specialties served with freshly handpicked fruits from the garden, mango, *granadilla*, *piña* and *sandia*. I devoured my first Costa Rican breakfast, drank the fresh coffee cultivated in the surrounding mountains and quickly got ready.

My first day at work was unlike any of my previous first days at a new job. Thrilled to begin my journey as a Women’s Entrepreneurship Advisor at the Casa de la Mujer, I imagined applying all my academic knowledge in political science, human rights and community development to the organization. After reading hundreds of articles and sitting through hours of lectures, watching dozens of documentaries on social justice issues, writing multiple essays and reflections, and dozens of exams that focused on analyzing the political ideologies, philosophies, theories and debates on the meaning and purpose of human rights, social justice, community building in different contexts and globalization, I felt ready. I felt academia had well prepared me. I believed my academic and community experience had equipped me to solve the real gender issues in Pérez Zeledón.

The director assured everything went smoothly for her three Canadian interns. She provided us with a welcoming home, drove us around town to introduce us to the heart of San Isidro, and then brought us to her pride and joy, the Casa de la Mujer. Though I dreamt of wearing light summer clothes with the above thirty degrees weather and humidity that made me sweat from all over, I put on a knee-high skirt, perfectly ironed blouse, blazer jacket and heels; I did not want to look anything shy than a professional.

Painted in pink, the building was situated on the second floor of a print shop. The coordinator of the Casa de la Mujer kindly greeted us. Many new eyes stared at us: the psychologists, local interns, board members, and maintenance employees, all gently yet readily introduced themselves to us. The coordinator and director gave us a tour of the office. They walked us through the shared office space occupied by all employees, the coordinator's private office, and the classrooms. We were then led into our private offices. I was sharing a beautiful office with the other Canadian intern. Natural sunlight shone through the big windows overlooking the bright office out onto the soccer stadium, local shops, and above that the mountains shaping the valley we stood in. The two big desks were already equipped with all the pens and stationary we needed. Starting from our first day, we were showered with compliments by every person we met. We were given everything we needed and more than we had imagined.

I was mandated to design and facilitate the first entrepreneurship course for women planning to start a local business. I was also involved in researching and organizing a human rights workshop for young mothers. Eager to share my newly acquired academic knowledge, I had designed a workshop to teach teenage girls human rights through my political science and human rights perspective. After weeks of preparing the workshop through the organization's resources and my own human rights material, the presentation day had finally arrived. I proudly

presented an overview of the workshop, followed by national and international human rights laws. I further mentioned some important social justice leaders in the world and then in Costa Rica. Frightened young eyes looked at me. I then asked the participants to introduce themselves. The youngest participant, a twelve-year-old mother, was unfamiliar with most of the terminology being used, such as the word “convention”. She wasn’t the only one. Other mothers and pregnant young teens were perplexed about locations in the world I was referring to. I looked around the room. The pregnant adolescent mothers were concerned with more immediate issues. While at their age I was listening to the latest album of my favorite bands, these girls were overwhelmed with understanding what happened to their bodies between the time they were playing with dolls and watched their bellies grow.

The social justice advocate side of me was troubled. The director and committee members of the organization considered I was passing on valuable Western knowledge to the adolescent mothers. But I felt that my curriculum, based on international and national human rights treaties, organizations, global facts, and significant leaders, was not what the young mothers needed to hear. They needed to learn about access to birth control and community centers providing them with the proper assistance to survive as teenage mothers: breastfeeding, medical assistance to them and their newborns, proper nutrition, social assistance, to name a few. The human rights workshop they deserved consisted of acquiring an understanding of the behaviours of the not-so-evident power structures among their very own communities. These teenage mothers needed to know their rights; abortion being illegal and adoption rare, the teens needed answers to their realities. Only once they understood their rights, would they be able to protect themselves against the manifestation of diverse and multiple shades of gender-based violence.

This reality check was a life-changing experience for me. On the bus ride back home, I replayed the workshop in my head over and over again. I was convinced my academic studies and my volunteer community work in Uganda had prepared me for these community issues abroad. By the following month, I would be presenting a workshop for the adult entrepreneurs. All sorts of questions came to mind. Am I prepared to properly assist these women? How could I have known the adolescent mothers needed more relevant and practical advice? Is my Spanish good enough to communicate? The daunting question of all, am I the right person for the job?

Statement of the Problem

The primary objective of the study is to investigate the learning explored by Canadian participants during a 2013 IYIP internship. The research examines the level of participant success in attaining two out of three IYIP objectives for Canadian youth: preparation for future employment and promotion of Canada's international development efforts both in Canada and abroad. I quote: "eligible Canadian youth with international experience, skills and knowledge that will prepare them for future employment; increase employment opportunities by promoting awareness among Canadian organizations of the advantages of integrating young Canadian professionals into their structures and programs; and, provide opportunities for Canadian youth to promote Canada's international development efforts both in Canada and abroad" (Global Affairs Canada, 2016). Accordingly, participants are asked the ways in which their work abroad internship experience has helped them determine a career path by providing them with successful employment opportunities in their chosen fields of endeavour or for a career in international development. In what ways did they help promote Canada's international development objectives in Canada and abroad? Due to limited research on learning outcomes of participants during IYIP placements, it is not yet clear whether the IYIP program is achieving its goals.

The Context

The IYIP was funded by the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), a recognized international development Canadian agency, now amalgamated into the Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development (DFATD). The IYIP, a project belonging to the Government of Canada's Youth Employment Strategy (YES), provides Canadian youth with the tools and experience they need to launch successful careers. The IYIP is designed to offer Canadian post-secondary graduates the opportunity to gain professional experience through international development work. The objective of the IYIP is to support sustainable international development initiatives proposed, in partnership with local partner organizations, by Canadian professional associations, educational institutions, non-governmental organizations and private companies (Global Affairs Canada, 2016).

My role was to *empower*. At the time, empowerment seemed like a positive word. Yet, I began to deeply question my role as an intern, working as an adult educator in an international development setting. The theories I had learned did not prepare me to answer the needs of these girls. Did empowerment imply my role was to provide teenage and adult women with my Western conceptions?

By the end of my internship, I had obtained new perspectives on Canadian interns' role in designing and teaching in international development. The many challenges I faced during my experience gave me new outlooks. Despite recent skills and confidence acquired abroad, my internship experience left me deeply perplexed about the role of the Global North empowering communities in the Global South through international development internship programs. As I

reached a new chapter in my life, I decided to pursue an MA in Educational Studies to further my inquiry into the role of education and learning in a global community development context.

Chapter 2: Operational Definitions, Literature Review and Description of IYIP

International Experiential Learning Programs

Work abroad programs, in the context of Canadian international development, is understood through several terms, such as: internship abroad programs, international internship, work in the form of volunteer abroad programs, professional education programs related to topics in international development, such as gender, health, the environment, sustainability, small business development, agriculture, and education (Global Affairs Canada, 2016).

The term international experiential learning program is more specific to the context of the IYIP and will therefore be adopted. Designed to implement meaningful learning opportunities, international experiential learning programs are meant to learn about local and global realities through practical work experience (Tiessen & Huish, 2014). Within academia, international experiential learning is referenced in several areas, such as international service learning, study abroad programs, and practicum placements (Tiessen & Huish, 2014). These programs also exist in non-academic environments such as internships, volunteer abroad programs and other similar programs (Tiessen & Huish, 2014). For the purpose of this research, international experiential learning programs focus specifically on international internships.

Global Citizenship Education

The notion of global citizenship education has been adopted by schools, higher education institutions, and non-government organizations (NGOs) (Tiessen & Huish, 2014). Higher education researchers design and challenge the implications of global citizenship by continuously reflecting upon the changing global issues through varied perspectives. Curriculum

ideas on global citizenship have focused on educating students and the public on global connectivity and also explore structures of inequality (Tiessen & Huish, 2014). While it has become a popular term, global citizenship education remains an ambiguous term. Vanessa Andreotti's (2006) account on critical global citizenship poses an important question: "How to face the economic and cultural roots of the inequalities in power and wealth and labour distribution in a global complex and uncertain system?" Throughout the present research, notions of global citizenship surface when reflecting upon the IYIP and implications for other international experiential learning programs.

Adult Educator

Spencer and Lange (2014), through their examples of adult educators, refer to renowned leaders such as Moses Coady, from the Antigonish Movement. Adult education's work, according to Lindeman (1935), is understood as a social practice not simply for transferring knowledge from one mind to another, but as a tool for social change (Spencer & Lange, 2014). Yet, Nesbit, Brigham, Taber, and Gibb's (2013) account of adult education provides more critical, varied, and accurate perspectives. Not only do they discuss the historical events shifting the purposes of adult education, but also provide examples of growing identities in the field of adult education.

The present study is particularly concerned with adult educators as individuals mainly working with adults through multiple capacity-building or developmental projects. Adult educators work in global contexts coordinating and facilitating professional development seminars, mentor adults in partnership with local organizations to create learning opportunities. According to Robert C. Mizzi and Zane E. Hamm's (2013) examination of the role of Canadian adult educators, advancing respectful relationships with learners and colleagues are significant.

“Respectful” refers to educators who are reflective facilitators, and are sensitive to teaching and learning processes within an international context (Mizzi & Hamm, 2013, p. 342). English (2004, 2005) stresses the importance of adult educators’ reflections on their own motivations to better understand their international experiences and to find meanings in their lives (Mizzi & Hamm, 2013).

An adult educator in international development also focuses on a variety of areas, such as, education, health, housing, food systems, community organizing, and advocating for policy (Ginsburg, 1998 in Mizzi & Hamm, 2014). It is only once such motivations are understood that adult educators develop knowledge on the boundaries of differences (Mizzi & Hamm, 2013). Finally, an understanding of adult education and development involves providing Canadian adult educators with the tools to analyze and question the role of the “expert” (Mizzi & Hamm, 2013, p. 345). Through the examination of the adult educators’ own insights on what they understand as knowledge, they create learning atmospheres where students and local community members are co-creators of knowledge, as well as teachers and learners (Mizzi & Hamm, 2013). Teaching in an international context is complex, but participatory approaches, the use of engaging with reflective learning, and learning from Canada’s multicultural past create profound perspectives to culture and community (Mizzi & Hamm, 2013). It is with this understanding that adult educators can enrich adult teaching and learning practices in international settings.

International Development Work

While humanitarian aid is meant to provide short-term fixes to emergencies, the role of international development is to achieve long-term and sustainable results. Canadian international development refers to foreign aid projects. As described on the Global Affairs Canada website, Canada currently works in twenty-five countries particularly focusing on their needs, ability to

benefit from Canadian development humanitarian assistance (for short-term and long-term results), and their position with Canada's foreign policy, all with the purpose for "Canada's international assistance to be focused, effective and accountable"

(<http://www.international.gc.ca/international/index.aspx?lang=eng>). As countries have different changing needs, Canadian assistance is a contested domain. Recent literature on Canadian aid reveals the importance of rethinking Canadian aid policy and concludes "rethinking" involves Canadian aid extending far beyond technical and institutional reforms based on changing priorities. It must instead focus on the research and practice of Canadian aid through which Canadians engage with Global South projects. Therefore, Canadian aid policies ought to focus on policies for development cooperation through four types of partnerships; "foundations of development partnerships, partnerships within the changing international aid regime, partnerships with key 'stakeholders' in Canadian society, and intra-governmental partnerships" (Brown, de Heyer, & Black, 2014, p. 297). In other words, these four frames serve as guides for thinking about Canadian development efforts.

The dire necessity for development assistance has resulted in an ever-more continued demand for development studies, a discipline widely engaged in the field of Canadian international development. According to a 2016 research, 795 million people in developing countries, also known as Global South countries, are considered food insecure, while 896 million people living below the poverty line (Akram-Lodhi, 2016). Development studies, having changed since its creation in the late 1940s and early 1950s, is facing new obstacles today, with critiques of 1990s structural adjustment policies, market-focused consensus approach to development, and new understandings in terms of practical policy alternatives. A thorough

account of the current state of development studies can be found in the March 2016 Canadian Journal of Development Studies, by editor A. Haroon Akram-Lodhi.

Global North and Global South

During the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s, “Underdeveloped World”, “Third World” or “Developing World” was the terminology used to describe poorer countries in the world (Hollington, Salverda, Schwarz, & Tappe, 2015). Yet, during the last decade, there has been a shift in terminology. The terms “South” and “Global South” were coined as an attempt to overcome the division between countries in the First and Third World representing the poorer world and are commonly located in the southern hemisphere (Rehbein, 2015). The purpose was to describe “developing” countries without portraying them as less developed. “Global North” was broadly understood as a stable country with a large economy controlled by the state with a main formal sector. Contrarily, all countries with a weak economy and receiving foreign aid belonged to the Global South. However, these definitions have changed. Global North and Global South no longer belong to geographical entities nor are they distinguished within socio-economic contexts (Rehbein, 2015). Therefore, Global North and Global South are reshaping within a multi-centric world where North and South are situated anywhere in the globe (Rehbein, 2015). For instance, typical Southern countries such as, China, Argentina, and South Africa, are now characterized by both a large economy and are recipients of foreign aid (Hollington et al, 2015). Contrarily, some Northern cities are undergoing drastic economic downfalls. For instance, the city of Detroit, is selling land free of cost or for as low as twenty-five dollars. Despite the changing nature of the terms, for the purpose of this study, “South” and “Global South” refer to countries in Latin America, Africa, and Asia.

Theoretical Framework

As elucidated by Bruce Spencer and Elizabeth Lange (2014), adult education is a critically reflective practice that can be explored through its philosophy. In light of this, the adult educator's philosophy is a reflection of his or her belief system and therefore carries mental maps guiding their practice (Spencer and Lange, 2014). The present thesis is mainly grounded in progressive and critical perspectives in adult education.

Experiential learning theory, belonging to the progressive ideology, is seen by some as the essence of adult education, as it refers to learning through everyday experience (Spencer & Lange, 2014). The value of experience in education is understood by John Dewey's notion of continuity of experience and interaction, which lies at the core of experiential learning (Dewey, 1998). David Kolb (1984) offers a theory of experiential learning based on structures of social knowledge and preferred learning styles, where concepts are formed from and continuously modified by experience. The purpose of the theory is to promote a holistic, integrative outlook combining experience, perception, cognition, and behavior (Kolb, 1984).

Experiential learning theory connects with Jean Piaget's notion of experiential learning through cognitive development. Piaget (1999) underlines the value of learning as a lifelong practice of discovering knowledge, assimilation and accommodation of learning from experience and knowledge. Yet, experiential learning can be problematic as it is challenging for adult educators to connect their experiences in ways that allow for development within themselves and their society. Therefore, adult educators must also learn to balance their experiences with socially learned knowledge (Spencer & Lange, 2014). Within a university environment, it is also challenging for professors to assess the learning acquired during the experiential experience. Hence, it is of fundamental importance for professors and organizers of experiential learning

initiatives to determine the objectives, significant questions participants are expected to address, and appropriate learning sites to engage with the questions and issues (Tsui, 2013). Another widely influential thinker, Paulo Freire's progressive and critical ideology contributes to the importance of a theory and practice based on genuine dialogue between teachers and learners (Freire, 1998). Freire contends, "it is truly an act of knowing, through which a person is able to look critically at the world he/she lives in, and to reflect and act upon it", as his approach demonstrates such dialogue is based upon the learners' existential situations and leads to not only skills, but also, an awareness of their rights as human beings to transform their realities (p. 480). Critical theory, vital to this research, emphasizes the notion of adopting a critical lens when involved with international experiential development initiatives.

Literature Review

Though there exist valuable insights in other work-study placements, such as international business management, industrial internships, nursing, and other programs of education abroad, this study is concerned with literature related to internships within the context of international development. Yet, the literature is limited. For this reason, the review consists of a philosophical and theoretical exploration of experiential learning and its connections to international development projects. Further, it examines the different roles of Canadian participants working for international development purposes. Specifically, the literature review covers experiential learning theories due to the fact the IYIP program is based on expectations of learning through internship placement opportunities abroad. It begins with a brief history on work-study placements, followed by a review of international experiential learning programs.

Brief History of Work-Study Programs

One of the first formal work-study programs dates back to the 1930s Experiment in

International Living located in Putney, Vermont (Epprecht, 2004). The Experiment in International Living promoted a deep spirit of idealism or romanticism about experiential education. It was created based on the belief that wars and global poverty could be prevented if people just learned about one another through shared experience of their daily activities. Hence, the local hosts received no compensation for their hospitality except for knowing they have contributed to a global initiative on friendship and understanding (Epprecht, 2004).

Canadians eventually followed the American initiative with leadership from the Catholic Church in 1961, when universities began establishing their first programs with the South (Epprecht, 2004). During the late 1960s, the Canadian government formed scholarly connections between Canada and the South (Epprecht, 2004). Since the 1980s, the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) was responsible for academic exchanges, as well as, trade unions, professional associations, and other non-academic NGO programs (Morrison 1998; Vanio-Mattila, Inwood, & Parmar 2004). In the 1970s and 1980s, business schools greatly develop co-operative programs in close partnership with government promotion of international trade and investment (Epprecht, 2004). Hence, international internship programs were born as an initiative of the Canadian Liberal Government's 1997 Youth Employment Strategy (YES), piloted by the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade and Human Resource Development Canada, with the purpose to provide employment to Canadians.

International Experiential Learning Programs

The very lack of clear intentions for the YES programs, for investment or development purposes, becomes problematic and raises deep, critical questions concerning the purpose of international internship programs. For instance, Wayne Nelles (1999) critiques Canada's lack of

policy and program to support “sustainable livelihoods” or “sustainable employment” given the program is intended to develop the Federal sustainable development strategy for 2000. His study challenges the complications in globalization in protecting and promoting socio-economic and ecological sustainability in Canada and abroad (Nelles, 1999).

A vast literature sheds light on the positive impact of study and volunteer abroad programs for adults (Bégin-Caouette, Angers, & Niflis, 2014; Epprecht, 2011; Moorhead, Boetto, & Bell, 2014; Boateng, & Thompson, 2013; Tiessen, & Heron, 2012). Research demonstrates the number of study abroad students in the U.S. has increased by over 77.7% in the past decade. Lisa Gates (2014) describes how although the international internships and short-term immersion programs in the United States may not allow for a traditional academic model of learning, they instead lead to practical experience, by providing cultural and linguistic immersion by bridging both the academic and potential career opportunities (2014). Gates (2014) notes that multiple employee surveys emphasize international experience can make students more attractive candidates for hiring, provided students are able to articulate the relevance of the experience to the employer (Gardner, Steglitz, & Gross, 2009; Hart Research Associates, 2013; NACE, 2013; Trooboff, Vande Berg, & Rayman, 2007/2008). As cited by Nolting, Donahue, Matherly, and Tillman (2013), “success in today’s global marketplace demands increased adaptability, cross-cultural sensitivity, political awareness and intellectual flexibility” (p. 64).

“Learn and volunteer abroad” programs in international development are articulated by the works of Rebecca Tiessen. She describes the growth in international experiential learning in not only universities and colleges, but also in secondary schools (as cited in Fizzell and Epprecht, 2014). According to her research, participant motivations are linked to personal growth, related to academic background or career choice, skills development, language

acquisition, cross-cultural comprehension as well as the desire to help others (Tiessen, 2012). Yet, an important body of research finds participant motivations are deeply self-centered and leave no benefits to the global South (Tiessen, 2012; Laywine, 2013). Particularly, the literature questions fundamental ethical issues, namely, the self-oriented motivations of participants, the concerns for structural changes, the absence of explorations of global inequality rooted in our daily actions, and the participants' lack of drive to improve the quality of lives of others (Tiessen, 2012).

Jennifer Gosselin's (1999) practicum thesis on the International Youth Internship Program is the closest research related to the subject of the present research. Her work focuses on CIDA's strategy to help employ Canadian youth. She created a questionnaire and interviewed previous CIDA interns to gain knowledge on if their experience met the objectives set out by CIDA's youth strategy (Gosselin, 1999). Gosselin's report, based on her experience as a Program Manager for the 1999 IYIP at Saint Mary's University, provides a practical and thorough perspective on IYIP positive results. Yet, this thesis is concerned with learning through a more profound and critical outlook of internship results and implications to future programs.

Community development initiatives are one of the most important contributions to the literature. Led by Western non-governmental organizations and educational institutions, community development initiatives are significant because they are commonly found within non-profit or the voluntary areas (Mizzi & Hamm, 2013). Mizzi and Hamm examine the role of community development initiatives as tools of adult education in non-Western countries.

Wayne Nelles' (1999) study on "Globalization, Sustainable Development and Canada's International Internship Initiative" provides his theoretical and policy-oriented perspective on Canada's international internship initiative. According to his research, the Canadian initiative

was a planned response to the demands of globalization and a tool to increase Canada's international economic competitiveness and trade opportunities.

Marc Epprecht (2004), observes that there is a common assumption about work abroad programs as being effective and good, but he questions the usefulness of sending undergraduates in a “real world” placement for a short period of time. Particularly focused on work-study abroad courses in international development, his analysis concerns the risks related to development ethics and educational goals during international exchanges and research. He asks the following question: “Is it possible that well-intentioned, liberal, humanist, anti-colonialist ethics developed in the context of elite institutions in the North could be perceived as (or could in fact be) colonialist in specific situations in the South” (Epprecht, 2004)?

From an academic perspective, teaching and learning practices within adult education and international development spaces are becoming increasingly common. For instance, since the creation of Trent University’s Development Studies program in 1970, there has been a steady surge in the emergence of Departments of International Development, MA degrees, and recently PhD programs of international development (Cameron, Quadir, & Tiessen, 2013). Through an examination of the academic field in Canada, known as International Development Studies (IDS), experts reveal the necessity of rapidly adapting to changes in IDS. Various disciplines, such as IDS, social work, nursing, medicine and Language programs provide international experiential learning as a part of their curriculums (Tiessen, 2012). Among vital questions that arise in this respect are the following: How is international development teaching and research affected by changes in the contemporary global political economy? Is the old structure of theory-based teaching still successful? Should development teaching further encourage critical scholarship or should it focus on the vital skills needed by practitioners in the field? How

important is it for academics to link development theory to practice (Cameron et al., 2013)? Other academics, such as Moore (2013), critique the current practices of experiential learning in the university setting. He claims that the fundamental role of higher education's programs of internship abroad is bridging the divide between academic and practical methods of thinking and creative initiatives. University education is not merely about having an experience and generally reflecting upon it, but rather it should examine, analyze and critique the experience.

Yet, Andreotti's (2015) research challenges this notion in higher education spheres. Though university institutions have been known to advance colonialism and imperialism, recognizing these problems and asking critical questions can lead to valuable learning.

Angeles and Boothroyd (2003) contend the Canadian internationalization of universities does not address international development strategies. These strategies are only recognized when higher education institutions indicate a clear commitment to address development and related issues, such as poverty reduction, social justice, global citizenship, at the core of their teaching, research and outreach duties. Their research concludes for both to contribute to international development, while improving themselves as learning institutions. This way, academic institutions could establish long-term relationships with global South institutions with the goal to advance mutual learning through engaging with complex social problems, instead of through knowledge transfer strategies.

According to a Ford Foundation ten-year longitudinal study on the impact of an International Fellowships Program (IFP) in the U.S., the report, *Social Justice and Sustainable Change* reveals investing in higher education of emerging social justice leaders from marginalized groups leads to profound, measurable benefits for communities and organizations in their countries and throughout the world (Martel, M. & Bhandari, 2016). The research

demonstrates the connections between higher education and social justice and the outcome that higher education can have on marginalized populations and leadership provides the beginning of the long-term impacts of international higher education programs like IFP (Martel & Bhandari, 2016). They question the ways an individual changed during the experience and if the individual experiences lead to larger community and societal changes (Martel & Bhandari, 2016)? Results report the IFP created significant global social justice leaders as 79% of the alumni occupy senior leadership positions, “including founders of grassroots organizations and strategic leaders in national governments and international organizations” (Martel & Bhandari, 2016, p. 1). New initiatives implemented by IFP alumni impacted approximately 9.5 million adults and children in the IFP countries and almost one million additional individuals globally (Martel & Bhandari, 2016). Over and over again, literature demonstrates how international experiential programs led to valuable lessons learnt and help participants get closer to their career goals.

Gaps in Research

There is a paucity of research literature on international experiential programs, specifically on the perspectives of the 2013 IYIP participants in host countries in the global South. Though there exist many studies on volunteer abroad programs, the IYIP placements are distinct in nature as they are designed to hire Canadian participants to increase professional experience and provide a professional service all with the general aims of contributing to a community. Despite the significant experiences of participants and communities, especially Gosselin’s research on CIDA whether or not CIDA has met its “youth strategy” objectives, there is a shortage of literature on IYIP placements’ ability to explore the overall learning acquired by Canadian participants. Particularly missing are interns’ ability in preparing for employment and

in promoting Canada's international development efforts, therefore demonstrating a deep lack of acknowledgement of these programs and lessons learnt in IYIP placements.

Research Questions

In view of the gap in literature, the study is prompted by a desire to explore the learning acquired by the participants in IYIP programs based on their own narratives and to advance some recommendations for strategies for more effective IYIP planning. More specifically and as stated at the beginning of this proposal, it seeks to explore the level of participant success in attaining two out of three IYIP objectives for Canadian youth: (1) preparation for future employment and (2) promotion of Canada's international development efforts both in Canada and abroad. The following sub-questions were prepared to find answers to the two main research questions:

1. What kind of learning have you acquired during the IYIP program?
2. How have your learning experiences helped you apply your prior knowledge to acquire new knowledge?
3. How have you applied your learning from the IYIP program to help build professional experience? If it was not applied, why not, what are the reasons?
4. Do you think that the learning acquired will contribute to international development in the long-run? In other words, are those who participate in internship abroad programs more likely to commit to a career in international development service? To support increased funding for international development programming? To work toward equality and solidarity with the Global South?

5. How do you evaluate your experience and success in the promotion of Canada's international development efforts both in Canada and abroad? Give some concrete examples in each case: in Canada and abroad.
6. In what ways could lessons learnt improve the future practices of IYIP programs, research institutions, and academics concerned with international development?

Chapter 3: Method

This is a qualitative study that seeks to understand participant learning in IYIP settings and offer some suggestions for enhancing the overall IYIP experience for future participants. Data has been collected through three sources: My own story based on my IYIP experience 2013; documents pertaining to the IYIP program; and Narratives of five IYIP 2013 participants. The findings are expected to provide practical value for future participants in the improvement of the learning process related to the program. This project wove together the learning experiences of five 2013 IYIP participants through their narratives, as well as my own, with the use of semi-structured one-on-one interviews (see Appendix C), lasting between 45 and 75 minutes. The interviews took place in a safe place agreed upon between each participant and the researcher. Given the expectation that the participants will be located in different provinces of Canada, a Skype interview was the most practical way to conduct the interviews. Consent of participants to be interviewed via Skype and e-mail was obtained beforehand as they were invited to participate in the project.

Data Collection and Recruitment of Participants

The research involves the selection of five participants belonging to my cohort from June to December 2013 who have completed their IYIP internships. I have met all potential participants and interacted with them during the IYIP 2013 orientation and post-departure

session at the University of Calgary. Due to the fact that most IYIP 2013 participants now live across Canada, from Toronto to British Columbia, I communicated with them through e-mail and Skype.

All participation in this study was voluntary and informed written consent signatures to participate in this project were obtained from the five participants prior to any data collection. Before asking the informants to sign the consent form (Appendix B), I clearly described the purpose of the research project, assuring they understand the research process, I explained how the data will be used, and to whom the results will be presented. All participants' names and personal information have been kept strictly confidential. Confidentiality is guaranteed through the use of pseudonyms and the name of the educational institution and other identifying features will not be foreclosed or published in order to further guarantee the participants' confidentiality. I also informed the participants of their right to withdraw from the research if they so wish, during the study and before the data analysis period.

Presentation of Data

The narratives of my own personal experiences, as well as those of the participants, are the primary sources of data in this research. I sent an e-mail to each participant asking for their consent to participate in the study. Once the signed consent form was received, I scheduled a Skype meeting for the interview. The interviews were based on a series of closed and open-ended questions (Appendix C). I recorded all interviews, then analyzed the participants' experiences and highlighted common themes.

Chapter 4: Participant Profiles and Data Analysis

Open to all students and university graduates, the 2013 IYIP welcomes participants from various academic backgrounds. The sample participants interviewed for the research, have distinct academic and professional backgrounds, and their unique perspectives contribute to measure in qualitative terms what they learned during the 2013 IYIP experience. At the time of the internship, all five interns who participated in this study were between 23 and 29 in age. Four female and one male intern volunteered to participate in this study (See Appendix D). In order to respect the participants' opinions and distinct personalities throughout the analysis, the participants' own words are quoted as transcribed from the interviews. Before analyzing the common themes emerging from the interviews, the following section is intended to present the participants' narratives of their experiences, as an illustration of their backgrounds and personalities. This section begins with my own narrative arrived at by answering the interview questions based on my IYIP experience.

Emilie (My Narrative)

Before interviewing the participants, I responded to the same questions that were going to be asked to the research participants, and began with a brief overview of the academic and professional background.

I had just completed a Bachelor of Arts (BA) with a major in Political Science and minor in Human Rights Studies. Passionate about understanding the world through a different lens, I spent the majority of my BA being involved with clubs on campus focusing on local and

international community engagement initiatives. During this time, I also volunteered in Uganda for a HIV/AIDS organization with the intention of acquiring professional development practice in international development. Upon graduation, I submitted my candidacy to many entry-level positions at varied international organizations, such as Médecins Sans Frontières and United Nations, and was finally accepted in the IYIP Costa Rica internship.

At the time, I knew the IYIP goals were to help young Canadian professionals find work and gain experience in the field of Canada's international development projects. What had really struck me about the IYIP posting was the chance to develop professional experience while immersing myself into Canada's projects on the global scale.

I was hired as a Women's Entrepreneurship Advisor for a women's non-profit community organization located in Pérez Zeledón, Costa Rica. My mandate was to design and implement an entrepreneurship course for women who were hoping to reintegrate into their community after having been mentally and physically abused. The course was then open to all women, with an entrepreneurial drive, who were members of the organization.

My work did not end there. The director of the organization, who noticed my enthusiasm to learn the skill of the trade on the job, invited me to participate in various organization and community activities and events.

One of my first activities consisted of the design and facilitation of a one-day human rights workshop for teenage mothers, a definitely eye opening experience, as described in "My story", the first section of the present research. First, I learned that local knowledge and context were valuable prerequisites. When I designed the entrepreneurship course, I applied the insights from the workshop.

During the same time, along with the other Canadian interns, I began co-facilitating an English course created to meet the Casa de la Mujer professionals' needs. This was an incredible experience that gave me the opportunity to learn about the various professionals who worked at the organization comprising of board members, members of the organization and staff. The two other Canadian interns and I used an informal approach to English teaching. On the first day of class, we asked the women of different age groups what they wanted to learn. For the older women, the language would enable them to communicate with their family members and friends who lived in the United States. The young ones instead thought a better language proficiency would help them get a job. A consensus was established to learn basic conversational English. I, on the other hand, acquainted myself with their husbands, extended families, culinary traditions and favorite foods, what made them happy, angry, or even embarrassed. We laughed a lot. Although informal, this learning approach certainly was the best immersion into the Costa Rican culture.

It did not stop there. The director of the organization invited me to participate in community meetings she organized to establish a Gender Policy in the region of Pérez Zeledón. This was a really fascinating experience. I learned about what female leaders in the community (either related to the government or grassroots organizations) were doing to advocate for gender equality in their community.

To live the Costa Rican culture, the director of the organization invited me to participate in social and political community events. I also wanted to learn about the local entrepreneurial practices. I met with a financial advisor to gain insight on special financial initiatives for women wishing to start their own business. Additionally, I met with a university professor who taught business and had plenty of material to share. Furthermore, the director registered me in a

women's entrepreneurial class, led by a university professor, allowing me to create a curriculum and deliver a course.

My perspectives on teaching and learning in the Global South had widened. Teaching and learning was complex and nuanced in all shapes and forms. Upon my return back home, I could not find work directly related to capacity-building. I began working in the medical education field as an administrator in the Faculty of Medicine at McGill University. My experience in teaching and learning in global settings led me to plan for my next step, and I applied to an MA in Educational Studies.

Claudia

“Internally, I felt my internship has a lot of value... it enhanced my intercultural lens into understanding others, which is always useful [working] in a diverse campus, [within] a diverse country.”

Excited to share her experience with me, Claudia attempted to paint a picture of her life and the context she had immersed herself in. By the time she had completed her undergraduate degree in Sociology and Family Studies, Claudia had already participated in an internship in Singapore. That experience fueled her desire to explore the field of international education. When she applied to the IYIP, she was in between studies and pursuing a career, and hoped to gain professional experience. As Claudia recalled, full-time careers were hard to find in comparison to short-term positions. She hoped that IYIP's experience would position her well to get into the field of international education. At the time, with the knowledge on IYIP's mission statement and goals, she hoped to obtain a global depth, an exposure, and intercultural and global skills.

Claudia was hired, for an internship period of six months, as a Program Planner and Implementing Officer for a non-profit organization for families and youth mentoring. Located in Castries, Saint Lucia, the organization was founded to support youth and families through programming. She hosted a variety of programs centered on empowering families and youth. For instance, she helped create a drop-in center open to the children in the community at the organization and facilitated workshops with children and adolescents. The school programs ranged from career development to positive behavior in the elementary school setting. While her colleague created modules from scratch, Claudia put together information on families, family development, and parenting resources.

Claudia is an outgoing, compassionate and kind person. She loves to learn about new cultures. Her eagerness to participate in the IYIP, with the intention to gain intercultural experience, proves it. However, confronted with cultural barriers, a slower pace of life, combined with a lack of basic resources such as Wi-Fi to conduct research, office supplies and an office space, her job became very difficult. When asked what was most fulfilling about her role as an IYIP participant, she responded, “honestly, it wasn’t very fulfilling...We also realized we cannot do so much because we don’t have money. We need money to do things that we want to do and so that was a really big problem. We were lacking resources and so it kind of made us feel like we weren’t getting anywhere.”

Claudia’s experience, unsatisfying, mainly as a result of the difference in culture, lack of preparation and resources, greatly impacted her mandate. She felt useless when she found she was not contributing to the community and felt that she was not making a difference. Although she developed relationships with the teenagers who would visit her office, she felt it was

impossible to connect with them in such a short amount of time. The short placement was a real barrier to the success of her role at the organization.

Despite her frustrations, she did however learn about the Saint Lucian social issues, such as the difference between working class and poor communities. Touched by her experience, Claudia's eyes lit up while remembering the complexity of the Saint Lucian social issues. "Sometimes, mothers are thirteen years old, fourteen years old, and as a result they're young moms, so how do you raise a child when you're not fully raised yourself?" a question stemming from the many young parents with single female-headed households, a common circumstance in Saint Lucia. As a result of that, Claudia learned about reasons for family dysfunction in Saint Lucia. She further elaborates:

If you're not raising your kid properly, then you can see certain kinds of behaviors. And they themselves start acting out those behaviors and then there is a perpetual cycle. Really, people are just not receiving the adequate parenting that they need. But of course, this is also within the context of a difficult life in St. Lucia. Things are expensive, there is a lot of unemployment, so crime happens a lot, petty crime like thefts and things like that, poverty as well. Of course, in impoverished places you always find things like that.

She was also exposed to social systems that opened her global perspective. For instance, in Saint Lucia, one's success or failure determines what happens for the rest of one's life. The system really divides you from the very beginning. For instance, a child in low-income school, who performs poorly in school due to family problems, will continue to encounter problems, not only academically but professionally as well, like a vicious cycle. Claudia also discussed the lack of community spaces, or park spaces, thus encouraging people to stay on the streets. The streets were very busy. She remembers walking on the street and seeing many kids and adolescents with their different uniforms. Each school had its own ranking which again emphasized hierarchy. Therefore, she learned about social classes and drew connections with differences in Canada.

In addition to learning about a new culture and social issues, Claudia felt what had really shaped her was the friendships she built. According to her, the interns get more than just their work experience, they are immersed into a whole experience, which is why the internship is so meaningful. Though her biggest difficulty was adjusting to the new group of Canadian interns she lived and worked with, once settled in, she considered she had a valuable experience.

Despite Claudia's unfulfilling experience, she has remained positively impacted by the IYIP and continued her interest in international education. She developed an interest in intercultural competence and has applied to study towards a Master's in Education degree. Her learning abroad directly applied to her career, where she is now working in a university's International Program office where she helps coordinate international internships for students. She admits the learning in her internship applied afterwards, as upon her return, she reveals:

It has helped me to empathize with interns because now I'm on the other side, administering the program and that's how I've applied it back into my current work setting, which is always something good to have, especially in my case in the International Education department, in the Study Abroad office. Though at the same time, do I have many opportunities to go into details about these things in my office? No. But internally, I felt my internship had a lot of value. So I felt it enhanced my intercultural lens into understanding others, which is always useful in a diverse campus and country.

In terms of learning to help contribute to international development in the long-run, Claudia has difficulty in understanding how Canada's current model successfully functions. According to her, Canada's development strategy doesn't always help the Global South, but rather helps participants going abroad. She then elaborates her thoughts on the types of people involved in international development projects:

Honestly I kind of feel like international development is meant for people who come from First World countries who just want some exposure to Third World countries... But the question is, does it really impact the local community?

Therefore, Claudia believes IYIP was a learning experience, but is not convinced that she truly contributed to international development. Moreover, she questions how IYIP funds can be used in a different way. She explains, CIDA gives the NGO money to run the organization, but to also host Canadian interns. Yet, she critiques this model, and questions:

Wouldn't that money be better used for locals doing their jobs, versus Canadians doing their jobs? You know? So that's why I know, international development, it's meant for people from developed countries to have a learning and humbling experience and feel more grateful for the things and the life that they have. I don't think it's meant to develop a place internationally!

Due to IYIP's short six-month placement, the internship also does not provide enough time to make an impact and therefore contribute to Canada's international development. In fact, her experience led her to conclude she does not wish to commit to a career in international development service. She believes the low-paying jobs will not allow her to live a lifestyle she desires. Though she is aware other NGOs, more established than the one she worked with, could provide her with a more comfortable salary, she would nonetheless not commit to a career in global development.

Yet, Claudia would still support funding for international development programming. However, she would do so differently as she explains, "I'm more in favor to giving money to [the organization she worked with] to hire a local person to run their programming. But would I pay to run interns to do what I do? No." She emphasizes the importance of local communities being able to take care of themselves, without the help of Canadians. She believes in equality, in a wide sense, but does not believe she would commit to a career to work towards equality and solidarity with the Global South. According to her, she's cautious to impose her values on another country, as she elaborates:

I have become less comfortable working on social justice issues. There are differing values in every part of the world. I'm not going to be that person to impose my

understanding of social justice to another country. Working for social justice, wouldn't that mean that I'm imposing my values in another country? This is why I don't have the right to impose my values in another country's affairs! I'm not there to save the world, according to what I think needs saving.

Based on her experience, Claudia provides suggestions for the host organization and the overall organization of the IYIP placement. According to her, the host organization lacked basic necessities for interns to properly conduct their work. For instance, good space as the one room where students could hang out was not air conditioned. "So how can you work on anything when you're just so hot?" Therefore, the heat strongly impacted Claudia and the other interns' ability to facilitate workshops, to keep students' attention, and for interns themselves to pay attention, due to the extreme heat to which they were not used at all. The space was also too small for activities so that was a real problem.

Furthermore, although Claudia had a Canadian supervisor who had helped her along the way to teach her about what the locals think about her, she lacked guidance from the local supervisor, who was the director of the organization. Having faced challenges, Claudia explains though she was an excellent supervisor, she could only be excellent for the limited amount of time that she was actually in the office. Given she was such a busy woman, she wasn't as available as Claudia and other interns would have liked her to be. On her first day of work, her supervisor announced some surprising news; she was leaving in three months and that another colleague was going to replace her.

Consequently, Claudia felt that she was thrown into the internship without any preparation. According to her, the IYIP pre-departure training was fun as she met IYIP participants from across Canada, but she did not believe it was applicable. Provided she had only six months to establish herself, learn about the community, and connect with the children and teenagers she met with, she found she would have benefitted from a better IYIP orientation and

training as she and the other interns had trouble working with the teenagers, as well as the elementary school kids, for several reasons. Claudia had difficulty relating to them, from their language to their culture. “Even if we were speaking the same language, accents were somewhat hard to understand.” In addition, the interns lacked preparation with how to deal with children from a low-income background and how to earn their respect. Working with youth was challenging. Fortunately, she was relieved to have worked with two other Canadian interns with diverse academic backgrounds and professional experiences. For example, another intern with social work background, brought her social work skills and her experience interacting with people of all ages. Therefore, working with other interns from different academic backgrounds greatly benefitted her. However, for Claudia, having limited experience with youth, particularly Saint Lucia youth, was remarkably difficult, as they were “a little rough around the edges.”

Claudia also continues how the choice of organization, with a lack of resources, was very difficult. Provided the NGO she worked with was still a new organization, it has almost no economic resources. This made her work almost impossible. Thus, she suggests IYIP ought to choose a host organization that is prepared to host interns and provide them with the proper tools to successfully do their job.

She further emphasizes the duration of the six-month placement is just not enough to make a difference. She describes a model that IYIP should adopt:

You know what I thought was interesting? We met a lot of Americans part of the Peace Corps. I thought: That’s interesting how they do things. They do like an extended pre-departure training. It was extensive. I don’t really know what they did during the training. And their placements in Saint Lucia were longer as well and they were forced to live individually and they were scattered in Saint Lucia in order to immerse themselves in the culture. Even though it’s scary, obviously there are safety issues... at least they can be a part of the community. I think they were there for two years, or at least a year and a half. So I’m thinking: *that’s* great. Maybe it’s worth borrowing some positive things from Peace Corps. That’s a recommendation for them to look into that and incorporate into the IYIP placement.

When reflecting upon strategies to improve future IYIP programs, she also suggests reconsidering the positions of placements. Though she was a Program Planner, she felt a fundraising position would have been critical. Having no money, resources, or ability to raise money, made it challenging for her and the other Canadian interns to do their jobs. She bluntly claims, “I think we should have just been fundraisers.”

In regards to the purpose of research institutions and academics to improve international development practices, she believes in the importance of her experience and learning to help future IYIP practices of planning, by advising future St. Lucia interns about her cultural experiences and challenges. Potential IYIP candidates or other international development program planners, interested in developing a program in Saint Lucia should contact Claudia and the other Canadian interns for her knowledge and expertise. She believes her cultural learning is valuable and can be shared with future interns. “I’ve developed a relationship in that country so I would be able to help anyone wanting to do a program in the country.”

Claudia also suggests reflective learning exercises throughout the placements are critical for improving future IYIP. The purpose would be for the interns to stay connected to the placements in IYIP as well as the host organization. At least with someone in the host institution.

Towards the end of the interview, Claudia made it clear her experience has really shaped her personally, as well as her perspective on international development practices. As a Canadian, she considers herself privileged that the Canadian government has money to provide only a handful of Canadians with these internships. Though, she emphasizes, these opportunities are largely for participants’ personal development and not for the international development. Not every country has that opportunity. She elaborates, “international development is a great cause, but you know, how do we help locals develop themselves?”

Emanuela

“It’s especially my skills in developing relationships with people from other cultures is probably what I’ve applied the most.”

Once Emanuela graduated with a Master’s degree in Public Health (MPH), she was eager to build professional experience to begin a career in public health and international development.

Emanuela recalls the overall IYIP goals or objectives were to provide employment opportunities for youth to engage in international experiences and gain skills that will hopefully help them later on in their career.

Mandated to work as a Health Intern for an organization stemming from a partnership between her university in Canada and the University of Mbarara, located in Uganda, her role involved working on a maternal and child health initiative, focusing on the health center staff. A project involving community-level health practitioners with village health teams working with clinics, health centers with trained health staff, one of her tasks involved developing training materials for them and helping to coordinate the training sessions. She also sat through several of the training sessions, as well as helped to coordinate and facilitate them. Emanuela was also responsible for the health center mid-term evaluation and was involved in the coordination of a health center audit. She participated in developing the questionnaire and coordinating the teams conducting the field checks. Along with her colleagues, she went to all the health centers to complete the questionnaires. Moreover, she worked on developing maternal newborn child health guidelines. The Health Centre audit, being a demanding organizational group, kept her very busy as she even worked every holiday during her internship.

As opposed to Claudia, Emanuela considers she had a fulfilling experience. One of the elements she really enjoyed from her internship was the length. The longest time Emanuela had

previously lived overseas was five months, hence she enjoyed the six months IYIP in Uganda. The most fulfilling element for her was “navigating the cultural differences to develop positive personal and working relationships”, an area she found most engaging. Since Emanuela worked closely with the district health team, essentially the health branch of the government, she not only enjoyed, but found the process of developing relationships with those partners to be a rewarding experience. Emanuela truly enjoyed coordinating and facilitating the trainings and considered her experience at the health center audit to be satisfying.

While the Health Center audit was fulfilling, Emanuela also experienced unsatisfying moments through her placement. Her role was to ask university partners to complete evaluations for the audits. These partners, being doctors who were specialized in varied medical fields, were very busy with their patients. Therefore, many cancelled on Emanuela and left her running after them to complete their evaluations.

Another challenge for Emanuela involved ensuring the questionnaires were complete and then sent off to the main office. During this process, she later discovered the questionnaires went missing.

Emanuela, after understanding the university partner’s urgent priorities related to patient care, made suggestions for the Health Center audit to improve their process. Yet, she was disappointed when the Health Center rejected her suggestions, the old process continued.

When learning about Emanuela’s responsibilities, I was impressed to learn about the variety of tasks and responsibilities she had. Yet, she claimed although it “looks great on a resume” she did not find her work very challenging. For instance, though she was developing the training material, she was already provided with the resources to be included in the material. Her colleagues provided her their notes and resources based on their previous trainings. Her role

consisted of the very simple task of pulling resources together, transcribing them on Word, and formatting the training material. Unfortunately, she never knew if the Health Center audit used it, or even what the real purpose of it was. Although her internship description sounds good, and she did learn through that process, most of it involved just tedious work. If she had participated in the internship after her undergraduate degree, she claims she might have been satisfied with that. In fact, it was not challenging especially after she had already completed a MPH degree.

Another dissatisfying part of her internship for her was not so much with IYIP, but with the Canadian counterparts. She did not feel very supported or trusted by them. Emanuela's direct supervisor from the project was not clearly communicating with her when she required her guidance. She also worked with another project associate, who was not her supervisor, but belonged to the audit staff. This associate would question Emanuela's competency and ask her questions such as, "well how are you making sure that these questionnaires get back together?" These questions made Emanuela feel she was not trusted. That part of her experience left her feeling dissatisfied when she found there was a lack of faith from the local organization in trusting her capabilities.

Despite feeling dissatisfied, Emanuela learned tremendously. She believes IYIP gives a good opportunity for experiential learning. Having previously worked in other developing countries, such as Tanzania, Kenya, and Guyana, she believes the internship offers a valuable experience. Learning to adapt to a new culture was an important lesson learnt for her. She explains:

That goes both personally in terms of how you do your laundry, and how to cook your food. You know, when you have electricity and when you don't, and those sorts of things. So I think the experience provides a lot of personal learning for what you can put up with and what you can cope with and how you can adapt.

She further describes her ability to adapt when remembering her living conditions:

One of the places didn't have power for you know every Saturday and Sunday from 7 am to 7 pm. In another place they wanted us to move in without a kitchen. So we said, "you need to give us at least a fridge and a hot plate" so that we can, you know (cook). And there we didn't have water for a day or two.

She considers learning to adapt to be an excellent opportunity to truly learn about oneself when living out of one's comfort zones. Seeing and understanding how other people live is also meaningful as she learned to have more empathy, and understands how other contexts shaped her personally and professionally. As an intern, her role was to learn how to work and adapt to these changing structures.

Her internship also taught her to adapt to new techniques in her current work place. For instance, while working in Uganda, when she was unable to use Powerpoint for a presentation, she was prompted to be creative in using other presentation techniques. This process made her cross her boundaries of comfort as she needed to unlearn what she was taught and use alternative presentation methods.

One of the most valuable learning experiences for Emanuela is the ability to develop relationships. According to her, learning to build relationships and with people of completely different cultures is incredibly valuable as she has applied this learning to her job in Canada. Now that Emanuela works with Indigenous communities in the North, it all applies. Developing relationships with people from other cultures is what Emanuela has applied the most. For instance, she applied the little games or icebreakers that she learned during her Ugandan training, to icebreakers she used in a workshop during her current role in working with First Nations communities.

What really stood out to me was Emanuela's ability to adapt and apply a "think out of the box" perspective to her current work. This is understood as she describes her work with the public health system in Ontario:

There's legislation that dictates exactly what public health is and what it isn't. What you can do and what you can't do. In working in public health and international development abroad I've seen different approaches. Community health worker models like the teams our organization worked with, our organization's health centers training, and that sort of learning and examples of thinking outside the box have really helped me in this job. What I'm doing now is I'm developing a public health system for 31 First Nations communities. But we're not just looking at Ontario—cause the province of Ontario does not provide to communities in reserves, the federal government doesn't provide a lot and what they do provide often gets sucked into the acute needs and redirected. So we're looking at creating a unique, First Nations' governed model we've developed and now we're working on (implementing) it. So I think having those international experiences and seeing these different kind of approaches to health let me think outside the box, listen, and collect the information on what the First Nations wanted as opposed to saying, "no, this is what public health is and isn't", I've been saying, 'well why not do this? We can make it what it needs to be.'

Thus, Emanuela's international experience taught her to apply her meaningful knowledge to be resourceful in problem-solving issues towards equality and solidarity for First Nations communities in Canada.

In regards to IYIP work, as opposed to Claudia, Emanuela also believes these international experiences most likely lead participants to work in international development projects. In fact, according to her, people who seek entry into IYIP programs are already more likely to continue in international development because they're interested and have a global mindset. She continues to be interested in Canadian international development initiatives, even though right now, she is focusing on development work within Canada.

Emanuela believes IYIP's six-month time is enough time to get involved in a community, build relationships and begin working on projects. She also claims it encourages people who are fairly skilled and have something to offer. Despite the short-term, according to her, any

experience abroad creates a more global view for participants. It also gives people the “travel bug and lights a fire in them to do international work.”

In regards to whether her acquired learning will lead to increased funding for international development, Emanuela trusts it would increase people’s likelihood to donate to projects. In fact, IYIP experiences may lead to people being more educated and more cautious around the projects they donate to. A heightened awareness to diverse issues leads to more people being critical around certain types of funding for projects. As a result of her international experiences, other than the IYIP, she has gained an interest in working towards equality and solidarity. She continues to work in that direction and asserts this interest is precisely the reason she is currently working in First Nations communities.

Emanuela was unsure about promoting a great deal of Canada’s international development work in Canada and abroad. Upon her return to Canada, she made a presentation to an oil company staff in western Canada, resulting in positive responses, as people were very interested and engaged. Additionally, she kept a blog and wrote e-mail updates to her contacts who demonstrated interest in her work.

Emanuela’s experience led her to provide some recommendations to future IYIP participants. It is critical for future interns to ask more questions ahead of time to better understand the nature of the internship. When she applied to the IYIP, she only remembers having a short job description available. In addition, interns should do a good amount of research about the internship organization and country’s overall context. She also cautions prospective participants in assuring the placement fits with their interests and skills, rather than accepting a placement for the opportunity to live in an exotic country.

Based on Emanuela's lessons learnt, future practices of IYIP programs should provide on-going support, improved communication between IYIP and host organization, better funding, and emphasis on recruiting competent participants. She recalls IYIP was involved in her pre-departure and post-departure, though she does not remember much support throughout her internship. IYIP might consider building in some support that way, such as a mentor from the Canadian as well as host country institution or organization, or a meeting, to check in on how participants are doing.

In addition, improved communication between IYIP and the host organization is important. For instance, in regards to the money interns received, Emanuela's host organization did not seem to be aware of her low living stipend. Thus, they placed her in a hotel as her first accommodation she was expected to live there for the full six months, without being aware of the rent costing her 60% of her stipend. Increasing the stipend is another one of Emanuela's suggestions. She remembered, "It was not enough to make a significant contribution to the Canadian Pension Plan and Employment Insurance but they took out money for that and made my measly pay even less."

Other than a more pertinent pre-departure and post-departure training, Emanuela believes recruiting very competent people is important. Canadian institutions must support and trust interns with being competent enough to do a good job.

Noella

"I took my leadership skills and ran with it. I think I developed some good competencies in terms of my work capabilities. You know what's interesting to me about what I learned in St. Lucia is that I learned what I don't like to do...I always say, "if it wasn't for IYIP, I wouldn't have found this kind of path".

Upon graduating from her Bachelor's Degree from International Development, Noella applied to the IYIP. She knew a little bit on the IYIP's objectives youth employment within the international development field. As an International Development undergrad, professional development along with international development experience, were both at the root of her motivations to applying to the IYIP. Unlike the other participants she interned with, Noella was the only participant with a background in international development. Other Canadian interns had backgrounds related to social work. Therefore, Noella was highly motivated to begin the internship as she explained, "getting deployed somewhere for international development is definitely not bad for my resume."

Noella worked with Claudia in Saint Lucia as a Volunteer Coordinator. Primarily, her goal was to engage youth volunteers in Saint Lucia. Although, according to her, she and the two other IYIP participants shared several tasks, her role specifically involved the development of training programs for future volunteers. She additionally played a role advancing workshops for the children in the afternoon programming.

Noella knows exactly what she likes and dislikes in international development. Much like the other interns, her IYIP experience shaped her both personally and professionally. Though she is passionate about international development, she values her IYIP experience as it allowed her to understand which aspects about international development she likes and dislikes.

Despite her overall fulfilling experience, Noella remembered certain aspects of her internship she considered dissatisfying. Working for a youth organization in Saint Lucia, she encountered youth that was "not the cream of the crop". Coming from poor neighborhoods, bad families who lacked basic education, Saint Lucian children and youth required special attention. Noella, felt she could not help the youth who were experiencing issues beyond she could ever

imagine. Hence, dealing with them at the organization was very challenging. With no training, she used her gut feelings when was faced with having to mentor a young girl who revealed her sexual experiences, “my 26-year-old boyfriend is pushing me to do sexual things that I don’t want to do”. Needless to say, she found herself highly unprepared. She was also left wondering how to deal with violent situations with the organization. Children and adolescents escalating into violent behavior left Noella feeling hopeless. Therefore, Noella emphasized how she worked from her gut, rather than her actual academic training. She considered the experience “a huge learning curve” in how to deal with these cases without any training.

In addition, her experience was an odd situation as the IYIP participants started their internships with minor responsibilities, but with time, they coordinated the entire organization. When Noella arrived, her supervisor declared she was moving to Europe in three months. Her supervisor, being a very busy person, was almost never present. That became an additional lack of support, leaving Noella, as well as the other Canadian interns, to take control of the organization. She describes, “we came down to realize we needed to be disciplinarians and not just the friends and mentors [of the Saint Lucian youth].” Noella and the other two interns split their roles. She took on automatically a disciplinary role. Given the assigned mandates, by the end of the six months, she found herself disconnected from most of the female children and adolescents from the organization. As a consequence, the children and youth were hard on Noella for disconnecting herself. She explains:

I mean these were 12-year-old girls were teasing me and bullying me and I’m a 23-year-old adult and still have a hard time with it...I remember the girls saying “Oh Noella, you’re getting fat” and I’d go home and be so upset. So I’d go home crying, thinking, these are literally 12-year-old girls.

Having to deal with troubled youth became difficult for Noella. This frustration also caused tension between her and the two other Canadian interns. Therefore, dealing with a lack of proper training and mentorship from a supervisor greatly dissatisfied her.

Despite that, Noella believes she had an incredible learning experience. She reveals, intercultural learning, as an obvious learning she acquired. She also developed a great deal of openness, not only to the culture, to the community in Saint Lucia, but openness to everything and everybody, including the interns that she worked and lived with. Through her varied experiences, she developed relationships and strong bonds with Canadian interns.

Moreover, Noella really expanded her leadership skills. Proud of her achievement, she justifies how her obsession with trying to make order in her life, influenced her ability to take on a leadership role. Even her supervisor and the other interns thanked her and said, “thank god you were able to step up into that role and delegate tasks and move in and out we felt lost.” Being able to build on those leadership skills were valuable for Noella and she learned about herself and later applied that learning to her career.

Noella profoundly appreciated her experience as she was able to apply the acquired knowledge to her current role. As she describes it as, “I took my leadership skills and ran with it and I think I developed some good competencies in terms of my work capabilities.”

The IYIP program helped her identify the areas of international development she is no longer interested in. She explains, “I don’t want to work abroad and I don’t want to work with youth. I want to work behind the scenes, you know what I mean?” The experience truly guided Noella towards a career in international development she feels she is more suitable for. Once she returned from the IYIP, she became interested in how IYIP internships were even developed. She began to see the value in experiential programs and thought, “How can I get involved with a

different angle in international development and international relations and that type of work?” It was clear to her she no longer wanted to work in the field; instead she wanted to learn about international development partnerships. Accordingly, she directly applied to the IYIP experience to her current job working in a Canadian university’s International Program office. She is so happy to have finally found a job so close to IYIP, as she always tells people, “if it wasn’t for IYIP, I wouldn’t have found this kind of path.”

During her first few months at her current university job, she participated in drafting an IYIP proposal. After recognizing Noella’s significant IYIP experience, the team requested she take part in the IYIP proposal writing. She enjoyed that experience, especially when she was able to make suggestions. During that process, she recommended the Saint Lucian organization ought to create different roles. Rather than having a volunteer engagement role, she suggested that role be replaced with marketing and funding expertise. Her experience taught her Saint Lucia does not have a volunteer culture so the organization would benefit from other roles.

Upon her return home, Noella began her role as an Administrative Assistant, and has now been promoted to Partnerships Officer at the university. Now working for a higher education academic institution, she considers her internship to be worth the experience, as it is a good combination of building partnerships with governments and NGOs abroad, while still doing development work.

Despite disliking certain aspects of her IYIP experience, Noella trusts that those who participate in internship abroad programs are more likely to commit to a career in international development. Even those who do not work directly in the field, end up getting involved in other areas of international development, such as in her case. Moreover, Noella points out that the learning acquired by interns in international development does lead to more funding, as these

interns contribute in other ways. Interns develop an increased awareness and cultural learning. Interns are likely to be more hypersensitive of those issues, especially once they're back home.

When promoting Canada's international development efforts, Noella believes simply speaking to family and friends about her internship abroad is a good strategy in making people aware about the Canadian government's global initiatives. Some people were not even aware of Canada's international development efforts, so just speaking about her internship was a success to her. In Saint Lucia, she often heard members of the host organization say:

We could never pay for the expertise of Canadian educated people to come over and fill a space for six months. We could never pay for that because there's no financial amount that could be put on that'.

According to Noella, her presence, along with the interns, was significant for the locals in Saint Lucia. During the internship, she and the other interns were interviewed on a local television show, as well as for a local newspaper. Community members recognized the Canadian interns as "the Canadian girls are here to work for the children." Even if Noella understood the Canadian presence is very strong in local Saint Lucian communities, she felt uncomfortable as she did not consider herself an expert at that point.

Noella provides some suggestions for future participants based on her lessons learnt. According to her, as opposed to Emanuela, six-month internships are not nearly enough time to accomplish anything, especially when working for an NGO with barely any funding. Projects take time. Hence, when reflecting upon her internship, Noella required six months just to meet people and begin building relationships, therefore she believes a placement should last anywhere between one to three years.

Just as Claudia, in addition to the duration of the project, Noella also believes that interns must be given more resources. Without working Wi-Fi, Noella could not work from the office.

Other essentials, such as a printer, other supplies, no air conditioning in 40 degrees, were missing and therefore made her work difficult. “Paper—we had to go buy our own paper and CIDA claimed to have no budget for this.” Having no resources, Noella assumes the Saint Lucian organization has fallen apart and no longer exists today.

Noella also emphasizes the importance of a proper pre-departure training, mentorship ahead of time, (preparing to answer questions such as, ‘what am I getting myself into?’, ‘what should I expect?’).

Furthermore, an evaluation of these international internship placements is vital as she was shocked to learn no evaluation was ever conducted. “I was never asked deeply how my experience was or what could be learned.” She admitted to feeling lucky to contribute to the IYIP proposal during her current position at the university where she works. Evaluations are important, as she explains:

There *is* a gap in the literature. These things are happening all the time. Even in field schools. We have school clubs that we send out through our [International Education] office and I think: “how much do they know of what they’re getting themselves into?”¹

If evaluations are properly conducted, programs can be more efficient, addressing the needs of participants and host organizations.

Moses

“I was satisfied in a lot of ways. It’s funny, it’s not so much in a career satisfaction, but more in the lessons learnt...I came right out of the internship and then months later I got a job. I

¹ Noella refers to school clubs administered by the university office where she is currently employed. These school clubs send students to work on short-term development projects. Therefore, she questions how prepared the students are once they are on the field and how significant their work is to the host organizations. Hence, she emphasizes the importance of learning from students’ experiences by implementing an evaluation system.

would have never gotten that job without that internship. The job description required just all the different types of field techniques that I had done in Nicaragua. It was a really good fit.”

Upon graduating from a Bachelor's in Physical Geography, Moses had no professional experience. Without being sure which professional direction he wanted in his industry, he returned to school for professional geosciences and engineers designation. Right after graduation, he applied for an IYIP internship in Nicaragua. Moses applied to the IYIP to gain both professional experience and international development perspectives. Yet, during the interview, he emphasized his indifference towards the personal development and career development, and instead was enthusiastic about gaining international perspectives. This motivation is later illustrated throughout his interview.

Moses was mandated to work for a hydrogeological consultancy agency in Managua, Nicaragua as a Junior Hydrogeologist. The company, also affiliated with the university, funded Central American Master's students who conducted their research. Moses, along with another Canadian intern, were both providing support to the consultant agency. His work consisted of supporting consultants, as well as helping MA students with fieldwork research.

Thrilled about his experience, Moses considered his internship taught him many valuable lessons. Gaining new perspectives on cultures, behaviors, and attitudes are just a few examples that have shaped Moses' mindset. He was also intellectually challenged. According to him, helping the MA students with their research projects were meaningful experiences. Reviewing students' reports and going into the field with them, allowed him to gain insight into what kind of environmental issues were present in Nicaragua. In addition, he was struck by the social injustices in his immediate surrounding where he lived, as well as in the rural communities he

visited. It was by “seeing new places, experiencing totally new things but also understanding environmental issues”, that Moses understood his experience was highly rewarding.

Despite these valuable experiences, Moses was unsatisfied with certain areas. For instance, at the start of his internship, his proficiency of Spanish speaking and writing was limited, and he therefore often felt lost. Due to this challenge, he could not really participate as much due to much of the work required reading, writing and teaching others in Spanish. Since he was only going to intern for six months, the host organization refused to give him much work and consequently had prepared smaller tasks with less responsibility. Moses explains, “at times it was frustrating because it felt like they didn’t really want to give me too much and I felt that I didn’t really have so much to do.” However, once his Spanish improved, he became more involved and was busy with more work. Speaking Spanish allowed Moses to also gain a more profound knowledge on social issues, such as the gender inequities in the community he lived in.

He also learned about the Nicaraguan social issues once he moved into his apartment, a building with only local residents. He elaborates:

I had never been exposed to what I witnessed: People with family issues, adulterous husbands with multiple families and kids. They lived in my building so you would hear these things going on. So that was pretty intense. I learnt a lot just through that.

Moses then describes the importance of patience to be another significant learning. He observes:

In the Western world, we have everything at our fingertips. We never have to wait for anything. If a bus is late for 5 minutes, people are getting so angry. But down there you realize that nothing happens according to plan... The biggest thing was that no one seemed to really get upset by it. Sometimes things happen and you just have to get through it... It really taught me that you don’t have to get worked up about those things.

In relation to his work, Moses also gained insight on his profession through the Nicaraguan graduate students. Relative to the Nicaraguan standards, the graduate students were

very poor, but “were all extremely driven.” Working with the students allowed Moses to gain a greater appreciation of what hard work can do and became inspired by their passion in wanting to make a difference in environment. He claims, “it made me reassess why I did the things I was doing.” Reflecting upon those moments, he claims:

In the end, it gives the intern a totally different view of yourself and gives you perspective of what your priority is. There’s some definitely bad things that one experiences but it’s all just part of the IYIP experience.

What really stood out from my conversation with Moses was the treasured learning he had acquired. Upon his return home, when he applied for jobs, he quickly realized he had acquired all the different types of field techniques that he had practiced in Nicaragua. He found a job only a few months later, an opportunity he would have never had without the IYIP experience. Moses was hired by an environmental consulting company at the Vancouver office, and was then transferred to Whitehorse, where he currently lives. It’s been about two and a half years that he works for the same company.

Not only has the internship helped Moses acquire pertinent skills needed to begin in his career, but he also found a job precisely in his career. He unfortunately was unable to use any skills he acquired regarding social issues in Nicaragua and the Spanish he learnt. Though, he thinks having worked in Nicaragua provides him with a substantial amount of leverage to go back to Nicaragua or another Global South country and work on a development project. The experience gave him the confidence to work in a developing country with more stressful circumstances and apply his ability to easily adapt to new and foreign environments. His experience also influenced his decision to continue with international development work. In fact, Moses decided to study towards a one-year teaching degree with an international component, in

September. He plans to use that to teach Earth Science and Physical Geography in Canada and in international development contexts.

Though Moses believes in the value of his international development experience, it hasn't been a mantra of his to go out and promote it. Like Emanuela and Noella, before, during and upon his return home, he had conversations about his internship experience with friends and family in Canada. After indicating his internship on his LinkedIn profile, he often has questions about his experience with IYIP and then explains the purpose of the Canadian government sponsored program.

Moses claims he had an incredible experience, he believes some of his lessons learnt can benefit future IYIP programs. As Claudia and Noella note, he also asserts the internship should be a minimum of one year rather than six months.

I found that at five months, I just started to feel comfortable, get a good group of friends, and I started having a better understanding of how I could make an impact. Then just a month later I was gone so I feel like I was just getting up to speed and then it was over. So I think a year is better, so I could have personally made more of an impact and better experience in that way.

He also admitted IYIP ought to be more diligent, when recruiting participants, in requiring that they speak the language of the country of their internship placement. Moses arrived to Nicaragua with very little Spanish. He now believes a professional level of Spanish proficiency is important to be able to contribute to the host organization.

Moreover, Moses claims to have benefitted from having clear goals set by the host organization. Though, he is unsure if he should have made that his mandate, he explains "we could have established something from the get-go to see what we could do." He thinks it would be beneficial, in any kind of internship, to set goals and objectives with the supervisor.

When I asked him if interns should have the same kind of experience as he did, he confidently replies:

Solely based on learning experience for that person, it's phenomenal. You get so much exposure in environmental issues that are going on in the country that you're living in and you understand the people who are the victims of those environmental issues when you're in the field.

Having been positively shaped by his experience, Moses expresses his deep appreciation for the internship as he continues to combine his valuable lessons learnt to his new teaching career goals.

Keara

“For lessons learnt, from my position, we need to revise and rethink where we stand in the international sector... It's that they don't see the reality of the situation on the ground. They have the policy people in Ottawa that are saying what should be happening but they don't take account of the culture and to make sure they are implementing things that the local people want.”

Having graduated from her MA degree from a university Center for Military and Strategic Studies, Keara had already three experiences working overseas. She studied Japanese at Hiroshima University, then worked in Washington, DC as a Washington intern working in public policy with a lobby group advocating against nuclear weapons. She had additionally volunteered in Uganda where she also conducted field research by interviewing ex-combatant females in Northern Uganda. Keara also gained a substantial amount of experience working for refugees in Canada.

Yet, upon graduation, she had difficulty finding a job. Despite her relevant international experience, she was job hunting for approximately two years. Though she worked in some development volunteer projects, she could not secure full-time positions. When Keara read about

the IYIP program, she was motivated by the idea of gaining professional experience that would lead to permanent work and establish a career in Canada.

However, she wasn't so excited for the IYIP. She felt especially unhappy the internship was identified as an internship. After having accumulated a great deal of international experience before that, she felt she was taking a step back. Despite that, having no other opportunities, she applied. At that moment, she was particularly disappointed with the lack of government assistance for participants in late twenties. She explains, "A lot of the government graduate programs cap off at being 29. So that was one of my few opportunities I had available to me."

Her prior experience working with Calgary's refugee sector and Canada's citizenship and immigration through settlement work, gave her the desire to work in international development. Prior to that, she had only worked in grassroots organizations. Though a career in international development was what Keara was hoping to achieve, her experience in IYIP led her instead to remove her rose-colored glasses and understand the reality of the field. She explains:

Often you walk into development work and you do "voluntourism" and things like that, with this notion that you're going to make the world a better place. Everything matters: being a humanitarian, being a global citizen, but then the reality is that it doesn't. It's just a new form of colonialism half the time.

Her passion on the role of policy and international development issues stood out as throughout the interview, Keara expressed her experiences and critical view in Canadian international development.

Hired as a Policy and Gender Specialist with a Caribbean organization Saint Lucia, Keara was excited about the description of her mandate. As a Policy and Gender Specialist, Keara was mandated to work on the organization's gender mainstreaming policy. The project had two stages: the first being policy and development, while the second being the action plan. She was recruited to design and facilitate the action plan. Yet, her experience resulted in going through

the organization's documents, searching for the word "he" versus searching for the word "she", and then making note of gender terms with the intention to make them gender neutral terms.

The coordinator of the organization was very helpful to assist Keara in developing her work program; map out her intentions, outcomes, and expectations. Though her contract indicated her involvement with implementing the action plan, there was institutional resistance and delays in getting documents signed to have the policy passed. As a result of these obstacles, the policy was passed the last week of her internship in Saint Lucia. That meant, she could not work on anything related to the action plan.

Having barely any work to do, Keara created work for herself. During the six months, she developed an internal webpage for the staff to facilitate discussion on what gender mainstreaming is and write tips on how to implement these concepts. Once the policy was passed, only on the last week, Keara was able to train the staff. Essentially, what she was supposed to do for the six months there, she had one week left to achieve. Being greatly dissatisfied with her work, she felt highly unchallenged, and was working at a very slow pace of completing tasks due to institutional challenges.

Despite this, she enjoyed the moments when she could participate in focus group discussions on policy matters with gender specialists. During these discussions, Keara met an intelligent, insightful gender specialist who taught Keara about the gender mainstreaming field. As she describes, "the specialist exposed me to many issues in gender mainstreaming in development." For instance, she had been exposed to the importance of paternity leave in gender mainstreaming. Through her experience in focus group discussions, she remembers a male participant, an advocate for paternity leave, who argued a gender policy is needed not just a right for the mother to have it, but also the right of the father.

Keara considered the focus group discussion a profoundly valuable experience and the “most rewarding, unexpected experience I had in the program.” The male participant actually shaped her current perspective on gender. Keara explains:

Often, in gender mainstreaming, we always think about empowering women and you never think about the male dynamic. So that was a completely unexpected outcome. I was also satisfied with the opportunity to work with the gender specialist who developed the Gender Equality Mainstreaming (GEM) project I was to roll-out. Although she came in only for one day, I really valued the opportunity to speak to someone who was in the field for so long.

During Keara’s internship, one of the most significant lessons she learnt was the ability to be political. As a result of her varied obstacles, she became frustrated and learned how to respond to very difficult people and supervisors. She also had the opportunity to work with a gender mainstreaming specialist in a Caribbean context, an opportunity that positively influenced her perspective and future research.

Based on her combined international experiences, her perspective on Canada’s role in international development has shifted. According to her, NGOs, western civil society, and the foreign governments dictate to smaller countries how to behave and think in order to obtain project funding. Her experience in Saint Lucia really opened her eyes to that. She elaborates:

Realizing that I had to kind of check my [position] in the grander scheme...what do I actually want to do? Is this the right way for us to go about it? Is this the right way for Canada to be progressing as an international contributor? And so then that influenced completely what I’m doing. So that’s why I left development work and I don’t want to do it anymore.

When Keara returned to Canada, she was hired for some evaluation contracts through one of the contacts she met on the island. Hence, she was able to apply her IYIP work to those contracts. More importantly, she has applied the frameworks learnt through the gender specialist

and the overall gender and policy work in Saint Lucia to her doctoral dissertation research in Canada.

In terms of applying the learning acquired to contribute to international development in the long-run, Keara believes, whether good or bad experiences, the experience acquired by interns is vital for developing new and efficient programs. According to her, “one can’t develop anything without having experience under his or her belt.”

Keara claims the future of international development should shift away from the current Canadian development model. It should instead transition to education. “Instead of having CIDA or an NGO coming in from the West and running these programs however we see best fit, it would be better to see that money being contributed to local universities.” Most importantly, international development should focus on bringing in scholars from international to local universities. She also encourages the possibility of study abroad programs. Money should not be spent training Canadians to work in local contexts in the Global South. Instead, money should be allocated to train locals so they can train their next generations to move forward. As Keara elaborates:

Have the money go towards them². Have them write grants and have them write proposals in how they see their country developing and what they think they need in their country. Ask questions like, what is needed to develop it? That way, programs are that much more self-sustaining.

An upgraded model of international development will not have the Western groups leading projects in the Global South. “There will also be that much less pushback from these groups who are resenting the Western groups who are telling the Global South how to run their affairs; bettering your society, bettering your women, bettering your children.”

² ‘Them’ refers to the Global South individuals, communities, and organization.

Keara's experience led her to believe those who participate in internship abroad programs are not more likely to commit to a career in international development service. She explains:

I think many people who take part in international internship programs dream to work in that sector. However, once they do, they become either satisfied or dissatisfied of what international development is. I think many people have the dream to work in it, but it is more of an "idealized" image so when they experience it – their "rose colored" glasses come off.

When asked if she believes international development experience leads to increased funding for international development programming, Keara believes probably most people would support this. However, provided there is a different international development model, she argues there should be funding only if it is allocated towards local institutions, particularly, for instance, universities, to develop their programs and provide Western countries strategies and recommendations. Both Claudia and Keara support funding for local purposes, instead of through Canadian internships. "If it is to support "Ottawa" developed programs... I'd say no [to funding for international development programming]." Needless to say, she does agree that these IYIP opportunities lead to work toward equality and solidarity with the Global South.

In regards to promoting Canada's international development initiatives, she believes Canada maintains a certain image aiming to reproduce in international development. "Whether or not it does, is a different story." For instance, during Keara's internship, she found herself promoting Canada's international development image.

Canada has an outdated image of being a peace-loving, peace-keeping nation. We've been far from it under the last X number of years. Not only from the Conservative government, and that's the one thing I really want to emphasize. It hasn't just been Harper's government that took us away from this image. We've been away from it for a very long time. Despite that, in the CIDA program, it carries on this shadow, or this sort of ghost that we once were.

Keara's passion, yet disappointment, in Canadian international development led her to develop a critical outlook on Canada's international development programs. Her first recommendation is for the Canadian government to establish a call for proposals with the purpose to reach out to Canadian academics in global development work. Academics should be encouraged to develop their own projects and have these projects funded. She further explains:

From my position, we need to revise and rethink where we stand in the international sector. Canada has dedicated itself to do gender mainstreaming and global human rights. I sat in a conference a couple of weeks ago, they spent the whole time talking about gender, peace and security, but they're completely conflating gender (which means men and women together) and security. This is the kind of language and this is the kind of thinking that informs our international work that informs our international development programs. So, Canada needs to take a step back to square one, look at how they want to be in the international development stage, look at how we're wanting to contribute, and then really develop programs based off of that. Not this archaic notion of development work that's no longer applicable.

By moving away from the traditional notion of Canadian international development work, Keara emphasizes the importance of designing projects with academics. She argues:

If the Canadian government genuinely wants to hear from academics, Canada needs to actually legitimately hear from academics, and have us engaged. Not have this pat on the head, we want to hear from you, we want your projects to go forward, but if it doesn't fit with the framework of Canada's development work, it's not going to progress anywhere.

Having a critical view makes it difficult to progress forward in government work or development work. She considers her most valuable experience was not the IYIP, but her field research in Uganda due to the meaningful learning acquired when working directly with a well-established local organization. Her perspective on international development began shifting once she started to understand the higher up one goes, the less power and how little impact one makes. "You realize nothing is up to you. It matters what people think at the very top. If you don't play

the game, if you don't talk right, you're not going to be heard and you're not going to go anywhere."

Keara is disappointed and continues to describe her problem with international development:

[Global South countries think] they might not be challenging us, they might not be asking us, they might not be learning from us the same way they would from a local teacher. So we're [as Canadians] interfering with *their* education, depriving them of their own local needs.

Canada's international development needs to focus away from the West coming in and giving aid that we're able to remedy this issue. Once that's addressed, they can invite the West to experience what they're doing, without coming and teaching them. Based on her lessons learnt, IYIP participants need to recognize that it's a volunteer position: "To not give it the prestige that it actually has. To recognize that it is essentially a six-month volunteerism program". If Keara were to improve the program, it would not exist. She elaborates:

In the context of the IYIP program, you're catering to people with a certain amount of experience. They attracted me because they said they required me to have at least a MA degree. The problem is, if you're catering to people with a MA degree, you're still essentially doing "voluntourism" and not doing anything for people in these areas. [The host organization], at least in my situation, recognize that you are an intern. They see "intern" in it and people from different cultures see that differently. People from CIDA often neglect this.

Keara stresses the importance of nuances in language that is significant from one country to another. The word "intern" in other countries implies a volunteer position, or that the participant will be working for very low money. She explains:

So somehow, whoever is making the policies, up in Ottawa, are neglecting the fundamental principle of working internationally. It is that the language we use in our society does not translate onto these other cultures.

Data Analysis

Research data, a blend of participant interviews, my narrative, and the IYIP website, led to an analysis of results. Focusing on the main themes deriving from the research questions, the first section explores learning acquired by participants. Centered on the interview questions, participants were expected to answer two out of the three IYIP 2013 objectives: IYIP's preparation for future employment, and participants' success in promoting Canada's international development efforts in Canada and abroad. The second section comprises of other emerging themes based on the rest of the questions.

The IYIP participants were between the ages of 23 and 29 at the start of their IYIP. Interested to advance their professional experience in their chosen careers, they had either an undergraduate or graduate degree. With a range of experience, participants had anywhere between little professional knowledge to extended experience in their careers. All participants had varied academic backgrounds, specifically: social work, public health, international development, military and strategic studies, geology, and political science. Though they possessed diverse backgrounds, common experiences and concerns as well as diverging thoughts became apparent.

Overall Learning Explored by Interns

Regardless of whether interns had fulfilling or unfulfilling jobs, they were without a doubt inspired by their experiences. Having acquired both professional competencies, the learning consisted of a combination of personal and professional accomplishments. The participant learning themes are the following:

- Acquiring experiential learning on Canada's international development issues. Upon completion of the internship, their experience exposed them to some accomplishments

and challenges when involved with Canadian international development projects.

Experiential learning greatly influenced participants on professional and personal levels.

- An intercultural motivation, that is, a drive to learn about new surroundings, cultures and actively seek out learning opportunities in international contexts. Their intercultural learning flourished when all interns were willing to adapt to a new country, a town, a community, and an organization, and as a result were willing to learn and observe a new social, economic and political atmosphere.
- Needless to say, participants' international experiences led them to acquire a widened global perspective of world issues. This global perspective shifted their mindsets and influenced their personal lives and careers upon their return back home.
- An ability to adapt led participants to find solutions when faced with professional and personal obstacles. When almost all participants lacked resources during their work placements, they found their creative skills help them in low-resourced environments, as well as to adapt to new techniques or resources to achieve their goals.
- All interns found themselves in unexpected situations in their host organization and living in the community. Through this, they discovered valuable personal and professional skills, such as the ability to be patient or to develop leadership skills. Others prided themselves over their new or developed empathy skills, which led to building strong and more authentic connections with members of their local host community and organization.
- Participants' ability to learn a new language, particularly in Spanish, and use it in professional and social settings, gave them the willingness to work in other Spanish

settings, demonstrating their confidence to work well in an environment they are unfamiliar with.

- By working hard, participants developed a greater appreciation of finding the passion in their career.
- Participants learned about their respective specialties (example: health, gender, and hydrogeology) while collaborating with other experts in diverse global contexts. This expanded their knowledge in their fields and helped them apply their new knowledge in their careers back in Canada.
- While most participants found a great deal of job satisfaction, tedious tasks and barriers they faced in their host organization made some also feel unchallenged and unsatisfied.
- All interns learned about local social issues, encountered in their respective host communities. For instance, in countries such as Saint Lucia, Costa Rica, participants learned about common social issues where often adolescent girls were single female-heads of households. These difficult situations lead to certain kinds of behaviours that turn into a perpetual vicious cycle. In Nicaragua, though one participant had a technical role as a hydrogeologist, his role also taught him about rural communities and he became sensitized to social issues, leading him to reshape priorities and values in his life.

Employment Post-IYIP

As elucidated in the IYIP objectives, the purpose of the placement is to help youth gain professional experience. Experiential learning is understood as a valuable process through which participants bridge theory to practice and develop knowledge, competencies, and acquire values outside classroom walls. The 2013 IYIP provided participants an opportunity to develop

professional skills and decide whether they ought to pursue a career in Canadian international development.

All participants found employment related to their field after the internship. They either found employment directly related to their IYIP placement in the field of development in Canada, secured contracts in their field of expertise, continued on another branch of international development, or continued their studies as a result of their internship. For instance, before the internship, Claudia became interested in international education. The IYIP experience was an introduction for her to gain international experience. In my case, although my experience did not lead me to find a job in capacity-building on a community level, the internship exposed me to the importance of adult education in community development settings, and I pursued an MA in Educational Studies to further explore this interest.

Despite the varied learning results, the IYIP clearly resulted into employment opportunities or furthering interns' academic career path. Although two participants were unsatisfied with their IYIP experiences, the placements still led them to advance in their careers. One participant found a job in international education. Another intern, after discovering she was no longer interested in international development, decided to focus on her previous research in military studies.

Provided all participants also embarked on the IYIP for professional experience, their hopes were to find employment in the related field upon their return. Indeed, the IYIP did help the Canadian interns, who participated in this study acquire professional experience to advance them towards their career goals.

Promotion of Canada's International Development Efforts both in Canada and Abroad

All participants promoted Canada's international development efforts simply by virtue of being participants in the IYIP. As expressed in my narrative, I also participated in furthering these promotion efforts. In Canada and abroad, participants described their internship to their families, friends, and new people they met in respective host communities. Some participants, were invited to promote the Canadian government's IYIP initiative in their host community's local media through interviews. Other participants still promoted Canada's international development efforts when they would describe their IYIP experience to family and friends in Canada and abroad, even though in their interviews, they did not recognize they actively promoted Canada's global development work.

The following themes also emerged from the data: varied perspectives and curricula, depth of meaningful learning from shallow to critical reflections, preparation, support and guidance, motivation to gain professional experience, communication and change of heart about international development.

Varied Perspectives and Curricula

Though all participants are Canadians graduates who are relatively close in age, they had diverse backgrounds, ideas, and perspectives in their experiences. This diversity indicates there is no single way to create an experiential curriculum across disciplines. Participants did not all clearly define a singly agreed structure on designing and implementing all IYIP. This mosaic of perspectives is significant in understanding experiential internship curricula in Canada.

Depth of Meaningful Learning from Shallow to Critical Reflections

Whether participants had fulfilling or unfulfilling experiences, their learning had grown and shaped their future, one way or another. Depending on the depth of engagement in interns'

experiences, combined with their academic and professional backgrounds, learning varied from superficial to more profound reflections. For instance, most participants' experiences were satisfying due to personal reasons, in acquiring new cultural perspectives, greater appreciation for their Canadian lifestyles and opportunities, ability to adapt, just to name a few. Others had more critical perspectives on their internship and their position in Canadian international development. Though their learning led them to acquire professional experience, they questioned Canada's role in international development. Is it possible for Canadians to identify and find solutions for local community issues in other countries, or do IYIP programs simply lead to new processes of dependency and neocolonialism?

Preparation, Support and Guidance

All interns felt a great deal of isolation, in one way or another. Even the interns with international development experience found there was a lack of training, guidance and support, from both the Canadian and host organizations.

Motivations to Gain Professional Experience

Only one out of five participants knew exactly what the IYIP mission statement and goals were. Most participants, upon applying to the IYIP, were either unsure or did not know about IYIP's mission statement and goals. Since most participants could not remember the mission and goals of IYIP, it seems the aspect of contributing to Canada's international development strategy, was irrelevant to them. Instead, what seemed to be of greater importance to them, were participant motivation to gain both: professional experience and develop international perspectives. While some participants mentioned it was "another line on [their] resume[s]", participants were hoped to be truly engaged in an international development experience.

Though it was one participant's first professional experience, the majority of IYIP participants were already interested in and exposed to international development issues. Emanuela graduated with a MA in Public Health the year before, therefore her intention was to find work in her field on an international development level. Noella, with a background in international development studies, was eager to begin an international development career after the internship. Keara, the most experienced intern, already had a graduate degree and three experiences working abroad. Therefore, most participants had already gained skills due to previous experiences abroad.

Communication

A major lack of communication between the interns, Canadian mentors and the host organizations appeared to be a common obstacle among participants. Though some interns were provided with a great amount of responsibility, others were not trusted by the host organization. This lack of trust was for two reasons: the low Spanish language proficiency of the participants and the host organization's previous bad experiences with interns led to a deep lack of faith in the IYIP interns. As a result of poor communication, the interns faced an inability to advance their respective projects.

Change of Heart about International Development

The interviews, aimed at answering the research questions, provided fascinating results regarding Canada's role in international development. Though three out of five participants were satisfied with their international experience and their overall contribution to international development, two out of five interns emphasized the importance of a renewed IYIP and

Canadian international development strategy. A revised IYIP is then elaborated in the “Recommendations” section of the paper.

Recommendations

The following recommendations (see summary in Appendix E) for more effective future IYIP planning are put forth based on the narratives of participants along with my own story. It is important to recognize some changes have already been made since the 2013 IYIP structure.

Prolonged Duration

Since the six-month 2013 IYIP, the duration of the IYIP has increased and placements now last between six to eight months, depending on the administering Canadian organization. In the case of the Atlantic Council for International Cooperation (ACIC), interns are required to work for a Canadian host organization for seven months (ACIC website). The research data reveals placements ought to last a minimum of one year. The Peace Corps Volunteers model was suggested as an example to follow. This volunteer model requires interns to live with a host family throughout the duration of their projects, specifically for twenty-four months. It is therefore recommended to have a minimum one-year internship duration which will allow the intern to feel comfortable in the host community, adapt to the culture, create and build relationships with the host organization, begin and possibly complete a project. The minimum one-year model would encourage interns to feel connected to the local people, while gaining a profound understanding of the social, political and cultural aspects of their host community.

In-Depth Preparation

As the 2013 IYIP interns repeatedly expressed, the need for better pre-departure and post-departure trainings are critical for interns. Since the 2013 IYIP, a Self-Assessment Guide has been created (ACIC-CACI, “Self-Assessment”). Designed for prospective candidates, the guide sheet is a tool encouraging self-reflection on their values, skills, and experiences to help evaluate whether they would have a meaningful experience (ACIC-CACI, “Self-Assessment”). Based on the results of data collected in this study, the 2013 IYIP would have greatly benefited from this guide. Therefore, the new guide offers an excellent step towards improving the 2013 IYIP interns’ self-reflection and growth. As noted in the IYIP Self-Assessment guide, conducting research on the history and social reality of the host country is critical. As the data reveals, interns were highly concerned with their lack of knowledge on host community issues. It is recommended that interns’ academic and professional background is directly related to the IYIP role, in addition to a profound understanding of the host country’s social, political and cultural context.

It is also recommended that IYIP administrators prepare a mandatory pre-departure course, lasting between three to six months, to help interns build a solid knowledge on the host country. An example of a successful pre-departure course is the Concordia Empowerment Education Development (CEED) model, a non-profit organization located in Montreal and Gulu, Uganda, dedicated to social justice and community empowerment through organizing experiential learning programs. Every year, the program recruits up to fifteen students who will intern in Gulu, Uganda for three months (<http://ceedconcordia.org/en/>). CEED participants are required to attend a minimum of seven pre-departure training courses, aimed at expanding interns’ knowledge on internship details,

expectations, as well as educating them on the culture, geography, infrastructure and other pertinent information for a safe and successful internship (<http://ceedconcordia.org/en/>). A series of pre-departure training courses, similar to CEED's, would be highly valuable to future IYIP participants.

Enhanced Support and Mentorship

Several 2013 IYIP participants were frustrated over the lack of IYIP mentorship from Canadian and host organizations. Host organizations, relying on the interns, expect interns to be adaptable, reliable, and trustworthy. Interns, being adaptable and reliable, were hoped for more challenging tasks. Some participants did not have a good and trusting relationship with their supervisors. These scenarios made it difficult for interns to maintain a good relationship with their supervisor and feel comfortable to ask them questions. 2013 IYIP participants suggested to provide mentor support to future IYIP participants in the same host organizations or communities where they previously worked. It is therefore suggested once interns complete their internship, they have the option to participate with IYIP as a mentor for future participants as this role would help interns to continuously learn and improve their skills based on their previous intern's experience.

Institutional Global North and South Partnerships

As emphasized by all interns, there was a great disconnect between IYIP and the host organization. Several interns, after feeling frustrated with the lack of communication between IYIP and the host organization, were unable to follow their mandate properly. Some interns lacked basic resources to be able to properly conduct their work. For one intern, whose mandate required her to do research and prepare resources for families and youth, the

absence of internet became a barrier for her to fulfil the basic requirements of her job. In addition, the lack of office supplies required interns to buy the supplies from their already low salaries. If host organizations are clear about their needs, IYIP can help provide required resources and lead to more effective placements. As IYIP and other Canadian experiential learning programs are growing, it is suggested proper partnerships between Canadian and Global South institutions be established.

These partnerships would be co-created by experts, such as academics and researchers with advanced knowledge on the context in Canada and in Global South countries.

As some participants expressed, IYIP administrators must pay attention to important research projects, such as this present thesis. Valuing previous placement experiences and other related research is vital not only for IYIP planning, but the future of Canadian experiential learning programs, and to a larger extent, that of international development practices.

As suggested by one participant, the government should reach out to higher education researchers through a call for proposals. Researchers ought to develop their own projects that they would like to have funded, rather than IYIP already establishing the positions without having produced any research. Moreover, as highlighted by many educational researchers, there ought to be more critical reflection in experiential learning programs. This reflection must take place with participants, as well as host organizations and Canadian institutions. Therefore, creating curriculums for more critical analysis and reflection lies at the core of the recommendations.

Apply an Ethical Standard

IYIP programs, being experiential by nature, ought to have an established structure by respecting Canadian and Global South partners. The structure must seriously take into

consideration ethical standards of international development and must draw in students or university graduates for a positive learning experience abroad. Experiential learning curriculums must be carefully developed, managed and implemented with an ethical lens (Huish and Tiessen, 2014). Otherwise, study abroad and experiential learning programs will continue to contribute to processes of neocolonialism of “resource-poor” communities (Tiessen and Huish, 2014, p. 281). The next question to consider is, how can IYIP and other Canadian experiential programs address structural inequities (Tiessen and Huish, 2014)? As findings reveal, IYIP evaluations are crucial to measure progress and improve objectives. Therefore, to ensure an ethics standard is followed and continuously improved, evaluations can be distributed across the IYIP programs, including participants, Canadian and Global South institutions involved in the partnerships. Evaluations can focus on ensuring IYIP placements are grounded on a strong knowledge of ethics, language, and nuances that exist within international development structures.

An Enriched IYIP

While almost all 2013 IYIP participants made clear their experiences have led them to discover incredible personal skills, some are still wondering, “how do Canadians help locals develop themselves?”

On that note, it is important for Canada to reexamine its position in international development. Are we valuing the knowledge of local communities and asking them what they need to move forward? As one participant clearly stated, “Canada needs to take a step back to square one, look at how they want to be in the international development stage, look at how we want to contribute.” Ultimately, there should be a shift away from the Western countries “developing” the Global South. Canadians should stop believing in Canada’s peacekeeping values that give us the privilege to be able to remedy Global South problems.

It is recommended the IYIP restructures itself to create two separate programs. One program would be dedicated to helping participants successfully acquire professional experience to begin their careers. Indeed, the IYIP should continue to attract Canadian youth in need of this valuable and relevant learning opportunity. However, it is recommended the professional development program remain within Canadian boundaries. For instance, this IYIP-Canada program can partner with the Canadian non-profit organization, known as Katimavik. An organization providing learning through volunteer service programs for Canadian youth with a desire to positively transform themselves as well as their communities, the Katimavik offers programs for Canadian youth to develop valuable and applicable employable skills to enter into the workforce (“Katimavik”).

The second IYIP program can be focused on international development projects. Designed and implemented by academics, researchers and practitioners from Canadian and Global South partners, this program is open to those with valid and local community development experience. Those with little experience can participate in these projects on a minor level with no responsibility. In co-creating community projects, the goal of the program would be for Canadian and Global South academics and researchers to widen their global perspectives in facilitating discussions and alternative strategies for participatory community-led development practices. These practices must be linked to Canadian and Global South higher education institutions. Yet, higher educational institutions, traditionally being propellers of colonialism, must remember to question problematic patterns, use their knowledge and agency to promote education’s role in development.

Conclusion

This research project explored the learning attained by 2013 IYIP participants based on their own narratives. The findings reveal that the learning acquired by these participants was indeed worthwhile. Canadian interns acquired or developed valuable knowledge that has served them for starting their new jobs with career perspectives they have in mind. Notwithstanding fulfilling or not so fulfilling experiences, all participants in this study stated that they were moved by their international experiential learning opportunity. Being exposed to global issues, they acquired professional and personal skills and experienced growth. Upon their return home, they also found employment related to their internship placement: some had contract opportunities, and others discovered their interest in another field either related to or not related to the field of international development. In regards to promoting Canada's international development in Canada and abroad, participants claimed they did not actively promote Canada's international development work, but most participants had informal and formal conversations with family, friends and news media, about their experiences.

Recommendations for more effective future IYIP planning consist of: extending placements to a minimum of one year from the present six month duration; requiring interns to take part in a thorough pre-departure course prior to the start of the placement; providing participants with reliable support and mentorship; requiring IYIP institutions in the Global North and the Global South to develop institutional partnerships; involving local researchers in the co-creation of projects; applying an ethical standard to future IYIP placements; and finally, implementing an improved IYIP model restructured into two distinct programs: one for personal and professional skill development based in Canada and the other for community development projects with placements based on IYIP institutional partnerships.

The data collected illustrate that participants were motivated to apply to the 2013 Canadian IYIP based on a combination of eagerness to gain professional experience while at the same time engaging in international development work. Over and over again, the research emphasizes how there is no doubt experiential learning programs, such as the IYIP, are valuable experiences. The IYIP has provided participants with meaningful experiences that have marked their lives, shaping them personally and professionally. Seeing as participants embarked on the IYIP for professional experience, their hopes were to find employment in the related field upon their return. They either found employment directly related to their IYIP placement or continued their studies as a result of their internship. It is clear that internships abroad are widely beneficial to Canadians in securing employment.

In addition, the program also provides participants with a widened global perspective, an ever-increasing necessity in today's globalized world. The research also indicates that participants, though enthusiastic about their mandates, did not necessarily actively promote Canada's international assistance in Canada, as well as in their respective host communities. Despite these rather positive results, some interns have repeatedly questioned the motivations of Canada's international development projects. They wondered why Canada needs to send Canadians to help locals with their issues. Why can't Canadians fund local projects for local community development? These questions led to the conclusion that the structure of Canada's IYIP ought to be revised. If Canada ought to develop countries, rather than acting as a band aid for six-months timeline, it should encourage local communities to empower themselves.

My Reflection

In the spirit of experiential learning, I believe my process in interviewing previous interns, listening to their experiences, and sharing their insights, has allowed me to profoundly

reflect upon my role as an adult educator in international development. Though I always believed my 2013 IYIP participation to be a valuable learning experience, I have become even more critical about my experience and the impact I left in Pérez Zeledón. Though I have acquired transformative personal and professional competencies, have my local colleagues in Pérez Zeledón been as profoundly impacted?

Passionate about digging deep into the learning and international development work, this research led me to reflect upon my learning. There is value in this experience for Canadian interns. Can the same be said for the local community members? If we are temporarily “helping” a community and then going back home, how much of an impact are we making? Have they been profoundly shaped, and if so, in what ways?

My conclusions lead me to believe that not all help is helpful. As Mizzi and Hamm (2014) caution adult educators, it is critical we analyze and question the role of the “expert”. Through my internship, I have experienced privilege and inequality. In my case, the director of the organization and my colleagues in Costa Rica considered me the expert and provided me with exciting experiences in activities the locals would have never been exposed to. How can we stop reproducing structural inequities and begin setting standards of ethical practice? In continuously reexamining the work of adult educators in international development, it is vital to be critical of those “good intentions” that fuel our passion and purpose in teaching and learning in international development contexts.

Future Directions

There is a need to conduct further research to allow dialogue and strategies on structural challenges in international experiential learning programs.

Research time constraints have narrowed the thesis to solely examine Canadian IYIP interns' lessons learnt as well as my own. The intern interviews were then analyzed and filtered through my lens. Yet, the research could obtain a more detailed and thorough account of all twenty participants involved in the 2013 IYIP. In addition, further research could explore the learning of the same 2013 cohort in ten, fifteen and twenty years from now, with the purpose to gain knowledge on the long-term effects. Are these programs truly leading to learning for global justice, or are they simply "voluntourism" rather than volunteerism opportunities?

A more detailed and thorough understanding of IYIP placements ought to explore the learning of host organizations. Are Global South marginalized communities learning from us? Higher education institutions involved in the creation of IYIP and other experiential programs ought to take necessary measures to ensure an inter-institutional collaboration attained between Canadian and Global South partners. Are Canadian learning experiences replicated in Global South communities?

As adult educators in international development, ethical standards must be set to face existing challenges of IYIP placements. How does our work positively impact marginalized communities? Are we promoting and reproducing cooperative rather than neocolonial practices? How does the learning acquired in IYIP internships help us reconsider Canada's model of international experiential learning programs? What strategies can we follow in fostering authentic connections with the Global South while preserving local knowledge in Global South communities? What are the next steps we can take to develop curricula in higher education by addressing structural inequities in experiential learning programs? These are some of the questions motivating me to undertake new research projects as a student pursuing doctoral studies or as a practitioner in an international development related organization.

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Appendices

Appendix A

Letter of Introduction and Invitation to Participate in Research Study

RE: Research Study: Learning Beyond Borders: Exploring the stories of participants in a Canadian International Youth Internship Program (IYIP)

Greetings,

As part of a requirement of a M.A. in Educational Studies in the Department of Education at Concordia University in Montreal, I am undertaking a research study: *Learning Beyond Borders: Exploring the stories of participants in a Canadian International Youth Internship Program (IYIP)*. This study has received approval from the Concordia University Human Research Ethics Committee. I am writing to invite you to participate in the study and to encourage you to help me get in communication with others who have participated in the 2013 IYIP project out of the University of Calgary. I will be very pleased if you decide to collaborate in this study – I will need five volunteer participants to accomplish my data collection. The purpose of the study is to understand the experiences of participants in the IYIP program in achieving the goals set by the program and in building their knowledge base. Those who volunteer to participate will agree to a one time, one on one, individual face-to-face interview through Skype. The interview will last between 45 to 75 minutes. The interview will consist of two parts (See attached questionnaire). The Skype interview will be taped electronically and then transcribed. The transcript of the interview will then be sent to you for your review, revision and approval. You will have two weeks from the date of receipt of the transcript to return the approved transcript back to me.

If you are willing to help me in this study process, you will maintain the right to withdraw from it at any time - up to when you return the approved transcript of the interview – without negative consequences.

It is my hope that this study will help fill a gap in the research literature. There are no studies looking into the experience of IYIP participants and therefore your contribution to this study is highly desirable and welcome.

Kindly read the Consent form and advise me if you are willing to be one of five participants in this study. I would also appreciate if you can help me recruit four other participants from the 2013 IYIP cohort with whom you may be in communication.

Thanking you in anticipation for your precious collaboration,

Emilie Salvi

MA candidate – Education Department, Concordia University

e-mail: emiliesalvi@hotmail.com

Tel. 514-589-4127

Appendix B

Consent To Participate In “Learning Beyond Borders: Exploring The Stories Of Participants In A Canadian International Youth Internship Program (IYIP)”

This is to state that I agree to participate in a program of research being conducted by Emilie Salvi of the Department of Education of Concordia University as a requirement of a Masters of Arts degree.

I have been informed that the research is being conducted to gain insight into the perspectives of IYIP participants and that the thesis composed will be submitted to Concordia University and may serve as the basis of articles for publication in professional journals. I am aware that my personal information will be kept confidential. Pseudonyms will be employed whenever reference is made to names, institutions and locations, in the final research document.

I understand that the interviews will take approximately between 45 minutes and 75 minutes and will take place through skype at a time agreed upon between the researcher and myself. The researcher is willing to answer further questions for clarification if I have any and as a follow up after I receive the transcript of this interview. Once I receive the transcript of the interview, I will have two weeks to read, review and revise the transcript, delete what I do not want to be used, add any further information and clarifications and return the transcript back to the researcher. This will also be the last opportunity to withdraw from the research and to ask that the data I have contributed be withdrawn and destroyed without any negative consequences to me.

I understand that my participation in this research is confidential and is meant to enhance the overall IYIP learning experience for future IYIP participants in the program and that it is not being used in any way to assess my position as an employee or participant of the IYIP programme .

I understand that even if I decide to participate at this time, I can reconsider in the future and withdraw from the study if I do not wish to continue. I agree to personally inform the researcher Emilie Salvi (514-589-4127 – emiliesalvi@hotmail.com) and/ or the thesis advisor Professor Arpi Hamalian (514-848-2424 extension: 2014 and e-mail: ahamalian@education.concordia.ca) of any decision to do so. In such circumstance, all of the data I have contributed will be promptly removed from the study.

Date: _____

Print name (First name, last name): _____

Signature: _____

Appendix C

Sample Interview Questions for IYIP participants

A. General information about the experience

1. Tell me about the year and the place of your experience as an IYIP participant (also period, your age when you engaged in this experience, your stage of studies).
2. Can you tell me a bit about the IYIP's mission statement/goals?
3. Can you describe your role as an IYIP participant? What did/does your job involve?
4. Which aspect of your job took precedence: your role to enhance your professional development or your desire to be a participant in an international development project to further the promotion of Canada's international development efforts both in Canada and abroad.
5. In what ways was your role as an IYIP participant fulfilling?
6. -In which ways were you satisfied in your job.
-How about ways in which you were dissatisfied in your job?
7. Any recommendations to improve the IYIP experience for future participants?

B. Questions addressing the Learning Experience

1. What kind of learning is acquired during the IYIP program?
2. Have your learning experiences in IYIP, academic studies, and life experience helped you apply your prior knowledge to acquire new knowledge? If yes, in what ways?
3. How is learning achieved in the IYIP internship (if any) applied afterwards to help build professional experience? If it was not applied, why not, what are the reasons?
4. Do you think that the learning acquired will contribute to international development in the long-run? In other words:
 - a) Are you more likely to commit to a career in international development service?
 - b) Are you more likely to support increased funding for international development programming?
 - c) Are you more likely to work toward equality and solidarity with the Global South? "Global North" is broadly understood as a stable country with a large economy controlled by the state with a main formal sector whereas "South" and "Global South" usually and in this study refer to countries in Latin America, Africa, and Asia.
5. How do you evaluate your experience and success in the promotion of Canada's international development efforts both in Canada and abroad? Give some concrete examples in each case: in Canada and abroad.

6. How can your experience and learning help in:

- a) The future practices of IYIP programs?
- b) Institutions of research and academics concerned with international development?

Appendix D
Summary Table of Participants

Name	Degree	Previous Int'l Experience	IYIP context	Now living in	Type of interview
Emilie	BA Political Science-Human Rights	Uganda	Costa Rica	Montreal	Self-writing
Claudia	BA Sociology – Family Studies	Singapore	Saint Lucia	Alberta	Skype
Emanuela	MA Public Health	Guyana	Uganda	Ontario	Skype
Noella	BA International Development Studies	None mentioned	Saint Lucia	Alberta	Skype
Moses	BSc Physical Geography	None	Nicaragua	The Yukon Territory	Skype
Keara	MA Military and Strategic Studies	Japan Washington DC Uganda	Saint Lucia	Ontario	Skype

Appendix E

Recommendations for a revised IYIP Model and Process

Recommendation	Guidelines
1. Extend placements from six months to a minimum of one year	--Develop a more meaningful model allowing volunteers to feel connected to the people and their community and gain in depth understanding of their issues, concerns, strengths and capacities.
2. Offer interns a pre-departure course as well as an orientation course when they reach their destination in the field	--Offer a self-reflection tool such as ACIC-CACI. --Direct match with the interns' specialization and the internship context and expectations. --Mandatory pre-departure preparatory course – for example CEED as well as an orientation course upon arrival to the field institution.
3. Enhance support and mentorship	--Enhance mentorship both from Canadian and host organizations involved in the internship program. --Engage previous IYIP graduate interns as mentors.
4. Forge institutional partnerships between Global North and Global South participating institutions	--Obtain a better understanding of local institutional needs and make provisions for appropriate resources, accordingly. --Strengthen links between academic researchers from the Global North and the Global South who have developed an understanding of these types of development efforts. --Create appropriate and effective curricula for more critical analysis and reflection for each context.
5. Apply an ethics standard	--Establish guidelines for respectful relationships to avoid perpetuation of neo-colonialism. --Create on-going self-evaluation and program evaluation tools for the use of all participants at all levels of the internship process in Canada and in the context where the internship is taking place.
6. Re-examine Canada's position in international development	--Create opportunities to reflect about the value of the internship in enhancing collaborative, co-creation opportunities: Are we truly valuing the knowledge of local communities where the internship takes place?
7. Create two separate IYIP models	--First model: Keep the professional development aspect of the internship program within Canada and Canadian placement contexts such as Katimavik. --Second model: Develop international development internship projects co-constructed and designed collaboratively by academics and researchers from universities of the Global South and the Global North while questioning the traditionally established roles of higher educational institutions in perpetuating neo-colonial practices.