INTERNATIONAL CITIZEN SERVICE VOLUNTEERS AND THEIR

TRANSFORMATIVE LEARNING EXPERIENCES

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This dissertation titled *International Citizen Service Volunteers and their Transformative Learning Experiences* is submitted by Prashit Khanal for the graduate degree of *Master of Sustainable Development* in 15 September 2022 and approved by

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For the journey ahead.

AN ABSTRACT

Of the dissertation of *Prashit Khanal* for the degree of *Master of Sustainable Development* presented at Kathmandu University School of Education in 15 September 2022.

Title: *International Citizen Service Volunteers and their Transformative Learning Experiences*

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When something unexpected happens that causes people to re-evaluate their ideas or way of life, as well as when they attempt to make sense of the event and what caused it, transformative learning takes place. Volunteering organisations frequently assert that enduring cathartic experiences or novel exposures can lead to transformative learning. Volunteering has become a platform for volunteers to transform themselves by working in challenging situations. Nevertheless, it is unclear on how the process of transformative learning occurs. I address my research question— How do ICS volunteers experience transformative learning? —by applying a case study approach and speaking with eight former International Citizen Service (ICS) volunteers from Raleigh International Nepal. The research found that the ICS volunteering experience made volunteers' beliefs anew by challenging their uncritical presumptions about leadership, cultural stigmas,

perspective to see others, and to reassess their trajectory of career. This analysis was done using transformative learning theories of Mezirow, Taylor, and Dirkx via an integrated approach. Volunteers had to confront their naïve presumptions and conceptions of the direction of their lives. Volunteers revised their beliefs by utilising rational thinking, non-critical appraisal of beliefs, and by assessing their emotions. The research concludes that ICS elements such as living in a new culture, sharing space with peer volunteers, working in a team, and reinforcing systems of mentorship, passionate and fervent conversations, observing peers in action, and altruistic experiences ushers in the rational, non-rational, and extra-rational transformative learning.

Keywords: Transformative learning, volunteer, volunteering, International Citizen Service

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Finally, without the education and academic diligence I gained during my scholarship at the School of Education, Kathmandu University, this dissertation would not have been possible. I would like to thank all the professors and lecturers who challenged me, believed in me, and shaped my learnings.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Chapter Overview

Volunteers occupy a central role in bringing positive change in society. Volunteers are enticed with the benefit of personal development and transformative experiences to engage as volunteers in organisations. However, how these internal changes happen is still an unchartered process. In the first chapter, I discuss the background of the problem. I offer statements on the problem and point out the gaps in the literature by situating the International Citizen Service (ICS) programme in this study. After the purpose of the study, I pose the research question. At the chapter's end, I detail the significance of my research and outline how I have organised my dissertation.

Background of the Research Problem

United Nations Volunteers (2018) ascertains there are around one billion volunteers around the globe. Which is approximately equals 109 million full-time workers. Among these 30% are from formal volunteering sectors and the remaining from informal volunteering sectors. Volunteer work is valued at approximately US$ 1.348 trillion globally. Almost every society and culture, whether it be ancient or modern, have a concept of volunteering. In early societies and indigenous cultures, volunteers (were and) are helping hands employed for the benefit of others (Harris et al., 2016). Undoubtedly, the same essence of altruism can be found in contemporary volunteers and volunteering programmes. Nevertheless, modernisation and the birth of new economic regimes such as neoliberalism have had had an impact on volunteering. Volunteering has

become more about ensuring volunteers' self-advancement (Griffiths, 2015), personal development, and making them active global citizens (Griffiths, 2013). A more volunteer-centric approach has come into practice where volunteers are encouraged to learn from each other, their host community, and the project, to transform themselves into better and critically aware citizens. Yet, the process of how the transformation occurs has been truant from studies.

International volunteers leave their place of residence and travel to new places where they are subjected to many new stimuli. Especially in programmes such as ICS, volunteers work in a team of local and UK youths to fulfil their project goal (ICS, 2019). Akin to numerous volunteering programmes whose goals are to make reflective, sustainable, culturally aware, and socially conscious individuals (Coghlan & Gooch, 2011), ICS also shares its aim with them. ICS was conceived by the UK's former Prime Minister David Cameron in 2010 and the operation began in 2011. During the declaration of the programme, former Mr Cameron said:

> Today I can announce International Citizen Service, to give thousands of our young people, those who could not otherwise afford it, the chance to see the world and serve others. Last century, America's Peace Corps inspired a generation of young people to act, and this century, I want the International Citizen Service to do the same thing…. ICS will not only help the world's poorest communities, but it will be a life changing experience for our young people: giving them new perspectives, greater confidence, and higher aspirations' (UK, 2011, para 6).

Volunteers are 'employed' to strengthen the system of society, unleash their strengths, develop personal-professional capacity, and reflectiveness (Devereux, 2008).

In my experience with being and managing volunteers, volunteering is being used to bring out reflectiveness and understanding among volunteers from different regimes, volunteers with the community and vice versa. Learning among volunteers is encouraged by observation, interaction among peers and community, and reflecting upon it. Mezirow (1998) states that meaning is made through social interactions. It is through symbiotic exchanges, dispassionate discourse, and reflexivity, that fundamental shifts in adults' ideologies be envisaged. Noble endeavours can also be a platform for profound and life-changing events that urges us to rethink critical parts of lives (Dirkx, 2001a). Volunteering programmes are fertile ground to experience such transitions as volunteers are surrounded by new peers with eclectic ideas, novel drastic experiences and fresh communities with distinct cultures.

Volunteering also brings in cross-cultural competency benefits. Being in a new community and having to live and share rooms with people of different cultures often brings in adaptability and proficiency in multi-cultural ways (Taylor, 1994a). All ICS volunteers, whether they be national or international, need to intermingle with people from different cultures. Since most urban youths are unfamiliar with rural lifestyles and values, Nepali and UK volunteers reckon with a new culture. Furthermore, the volunteers must share rooms with different nationalities which also contributes to understanding and questioning each other's cultural mores.

Volunteering now has a common theme of experience and knowledge sharing among the volunteers themselves and with the host communities, and shepherd positive transformation in the volunteers to make them active citizens. The ultimate result of the programmes is to send critically and socially transformed individuals that have a different

outlook on life, development, culture, and knowledge into respective communities from where volunteers originally belong. Furthermore, volunteering programmes challenge their participants to 'think in another shoe', so that when they return to their respective places, they have a wider vision, perspective, and empathy. It also encourages the volunteers to see development and sustainability in new prospects.

International Citizen Service [ICS] (2021b) has deployed a total of 40,167 young volunteers in 32 countries from 2011 to 2020 in continents of Africa, Asia, and South America. The placement contributed to poverty reduction, sustainable development, personal and social development of each volunteer (ICS, 2021b). Furthermore, it empowered young people to act as agents of change in the placement and in their own country creating a cohort of active citizens (Burwood et al., 2019). From my nearly two years of experience in the ICS programme, I observed that community development activities were in the ICS projects to facilitate volunteers' learning and transform them into action-orientated citizens who cultivate different perspectives and ideas within themselves and each other. From the inauguration speech, ICS reports, and my experience. I find that ICS has been designed to instigate a transformative process in the volunteers with the aim to make aware, critical, empathetic active global citizens.

My Engagement as a Volunteer

I volunteered with Raleigh International Nepal for the ICS programme in the spring of 2019. When I first joined as a volunteer team leader, I did not have much expectation aside from ICS being a stepping stone to landing a full-time job. The opportunity was enticing and somewhat exotic for a fresh graduate for two reasons. Firstly, I would be working with UK volunteers in a UK government-funded programme

to help out in a rural area within the confines of a project. The opportunity was tantalising

for someone who wanted to get into the development field. Secondly, I studied

agriculture as my undergraduate degree and ICS offered a livelihood project and it meant

that I would be able to use my theoretical understanding into practice.

I did not expect the ICS experience to be transformative—In fact it was meant to

be just a stepping stone, a sacrifice for three months for the greater good of my career. I

was adamant about having a career in the agriculture field, I was conditioned to think that

since that was my subject of undergraduate, I had to pursue the same area. Nevertheless,

to my contentment, it indeed turned out to be life changing.

I was one of the three team leaders who were looking after a group of 10 young

volunteers from Nepal and the UK. While working with youths, I became increasingly

attracted to youth leadership and youth empowerment. I had seen my managers solve

incredibly difficult issues and I had been given a challenging team. The challenges that

we as team leaders encountered and how we overcame them, enticed me even more to

change my career path. The realisation I may not be interested in agriculture shocked me

and simultaneously made me happy. The shock stemmed from the knowledge that the last

four years of my life was spent doing something that I would not be using professionally.

Jubilant because after years of grappling with what I was expected to do from forces

beyond my control, I was beginning to understand the direction I wanted to take for

myself. I shared my predicaments with my counterparts and managers who encouraged

and supported me. After volunteering, I joined Raleigh Nepal as a staff and supervised

teams of volunteers for a year. During that I mentored numerous volunteers and I could

see 'changes' in them pre and post the programme. Changes that were sometimes similar

to mine and sometimes different. Nevertheless, I also met volunteers who were dissatisfied with the programme and felt they did not gain any constructive skill or knowledge.

I always used the term 'career change' when I was having conversations with what happened to me during ICS but I knew it was much more than that. While I was mentoring the volunteers in the ICS programme I could see 'changes' in them pre and post the programme. Changes that were sometimes similar to mine and sometimes different. But I also met volunteers who were dissatisfied with the programme and felt they did not gain any constructive skill or knowledge. I learnt that ICS, a single programme, cannot cater to the diverse need of everyone. My fascination was with the volunteers who experienced changes akin to I had.

While searching for my dissertation area, I stumbled upon Mezirow's transformative learning theory. It was an *eureka* moment as I knew it explained my process of transformation while I was a volunteer. My time as a volunteer and managing volunteers had an incredible transformative impact on me. It has guided my academic and professional career similar to many volunteers before and after me. In this study, I want to explore the process of transformation in volunteers and how ICS is situated to bring about such transformations.

Problem Statement

Volunteering programmes have made personal transformation their primary agenda. Personal development and transformation have been volunteering organisations' key selling points to attract volunteers. ICS's main motto has been "Challenge Yourself to Change the World" (ICS, 2021a), ascertaining that to bring change in the world people

must challenge themselves at a personal level (Birdwell, 2011). International Voluntary Service (n.d.) states "national and international volunteers experience a new reality which can challenge their habits and convictions. Our impact research proves that IVS provides enhanced self-confidence and strengthened personal, interpersonal and social competences, volunteers learn that through active participation" (The volunteers section). Energias de Portugal (2021) advertises increase in compassion, understanding, and knowledge among the volunteers. Similarly, the European Union volunteering programme Youth in Action (n.d.) states their project creates youths as agents of the change via transformative leadership harness from the youths themselves.

National volunteering organisations cite cross-cultural awareness and acclimatisation as one of the profits of volunteering. Volunteer Initiative Nepal (2013)name that volunteers will get to immerse themselves in Nepali culture, lifestyle, and learn local languages. Community Service Volunteer Foundation Nepal (n.d.) guarantees that volunteers will get to see and live in diverse cultures, and learn from the community directly for the volunteers' benefit. Volunteer Society Nepal (2022) enlist Nepal's biodiversity, cultural heritage, natural beauty, and developing cross-cultural skills as a bonus for volunteers. Similarly, "deepening of wisdom, judgement, and understanding" (para. 3) is a product of volunteering in a culturally rich and complex society with traditional values (Lovely Volunteers, 2022). While an array of benefits on a personal level are ascertained by the volunteering organisations, they come short of detailing how these transformations are achieved by the volunteers or how the organisations help to achieve the sea change.

Reports of ICS and other ICS volunteering literature hint that volunteers benefit from the programme. The latest ICS report states that 77% of the volunteers identified personal growth as one of their biggest achievements in the programme (ICS, 2021b). Bhattarai (2017) in her case study thesis concludes that ICS led the volunteers to build skills and self-confidence, cross-cultural relationship building, altruism, active citizenship, and being more inclusive of diversity. However, her conclusion stems from only one factor; volunteers being engaged in the community and gaining skill from that interaction.

While there are more than adequate works of literature in the area of transformative learning, the application of the theory in the realm of volunteering is an emerging field. Some papers have addressed the process of transformative learning in volunteers, yet they are all restricted to the realm of volunteer tourism. Mainstream volunteering programmes such as ICS are yet to be covered. For instance, Coghlan and Gooch (2011) reviewing several works of literature have shown how volunteer tourism can kick off a transformative learning process. The study is based on an extensive literature review on how the process of transformative learning might occur in volunteer tourism. Müller et al. (2020)'s study in Brazil shows that volunteer tourism, and the transformative process that is embedded in the volunteering, enables the participants' career sustainability. Müller et al. limit their study to only explore how the first process of transformative learning triggers overall transformation, thus not uncovering all the steps of transformative learning. Griffiths (2015) states that ICS volunteering has engendered affective growth among its participants. The author adds that such affective transformation is only capable through unsettling experience that can realise the scale of

physiological transformation. But the paper does not explore how the process of affective transformation is brought about by the ICS experience and does not interpret results through transformative learning lens.

Studies of transformative learning for intercultural competency focus on western citizens. The narratives of western citizens developing intercultural competence while their engagement in the east or other developing, underdeveloped, or despondent parts of the cities in the same country are abundant. Zahra and McIntosh (2007)'s participants were from Australia, New Zealand, and Canada. Prince (2017) focuses on Icelandic volunteers travelling to a rural part of their country. Muller et al. (2019) participants are from Brazil. Chiocca (2021) looked for intercultural aptitude in US volunteers travelling to Israel. Wilson et al. (2020)'s focus was again on cross-cultural transformative learning of US students travelling to Costa Rica for their service-learning experience. The studies miss out on volunteers from the east meeting western volunteers and the developing cultural competency in eastern volunteers. Moreover, the participants in most of the studies are not recruited form a single volunteering programme. Volunteers from multiple programmes are studied which makes analysis the transformative learning properties of volunteering programmes vague at best.

During my engagement in the ICS programme, I witnessed transformation in me and other volunteers, albeit not in all of them. Engaging with the literatures, I found that transformative learning in volunteers in context of volunteering has not been fully comprehended. Not every transformation in volunteers attest to one or two propositions. I apply an integrated lens of three transformative learning theories and apply those propositions in national and international volunteers alike. This study also tries to remedy

the problem of participant selection by studying volunteers from a single programme—

ICS of Raleigh International Nepal, and accounts individualists transformative learning

experiences of the volunteers.

International Citizen Service

ICS is a youth volunteering programme carried out by the UK Department of

International Development (DFID) (ICS, 2021b). ICS volunteers are young people aged

between 18 to 35 years old. ICS has two hierarchies of volunteers—volunteers and team

leaders. Team leaders (TL) from the UK are known as UKTL and Nepali TL are In-

country team leaders (ICTL). The same jargon is for volunteers; UKV and ICV. The

hierarchy is maintained by the age of the volunteers. To be a volunteer, the age is

between 18 to 25 and for a team leader, it is 23 to 35 (ICS, 2021b). ICS placement occurs

three times a year in spring, summer, and winter cycles (Birdwell, 2011) for 10 to 12

weeks per cycle (ICS, 2014).

ICS is not a form of voluntarism where volunteering is an activity while you are a

private tourist. UK volunteers are not permitted to overstay their time in placement and

are mandated legally return to the UK and the same is applicable for in-country

volunteers. ICS delivers its programme in partnership with INGOs. The consortium of the

INGO is led by Voluntary Service Overseas (VSO) and run by VSO, Raleigh

International, and Restless Development, collectively known as called ICS delivery

agencies. ECORYS (2013) states that the programme has three main outcomes. Firstly,

professional and personal volunteer development of in-county and UK volunteers.

Secondly, the development of the host communities where volunteers are placed. Finally,

active global citizenship; furthering advocacy, volunteering, and a sense of social action

in the volunteers and the host community. ICS has been temporarily closed since March 2022 due to the COVID 19 pandemic (ICS, 2021a).

Raleigh International Nepal ICS Programme

Raleigh International was a youth-led sustainable development charity that mobilised volunteers from all around the globe to deploy young people as agents of change. Raleigh International (2022) was established in 1978. It has till date, placed approximately 55,000 young volunteers across 100 under-resourced countries. Raleigh joined the ICS consortium from 2014-2015 and started its operation in Nepal shortly after 2015. Raleigh Nepal operated in two districts: Gorkha and Makwanpur, and ran the project named Inspiring Youth through Active Citizenship in three thematic areas WASH, Livelihood, and Youth Leadership.

Intensive training was provided to the volunteers in areas of project programmes, monitoring, evaluation, community interaction, emergencies, safety, safeguarding, first aid, team management, leadership, coaching, and so on(ICS, 2019). In Raleigh Nepal, each volunteer team consisted of 10 to 15 members, ideally in equal numbers of the UK and in-country volunteers. The team of volunteers are assigned broad and specific tasks that they had to complete in designated week numbers. Each week two weekly leaders— one UK and one in-country volunteer—were assigned. Within the supervision of the team leaders, weekly leaders were in charge of the daily schedule and tasks which they had madeup in consultation with the team. Raleigh International's preferred leadership style was pastoral care. Team leaders were trained to adhere to pastoral leadership practice under general circumstances and had certain standards in place to ensure that. For example, team leaders were trained to have a periodic comprehensive one-to-one talk

with each volunteer privately. These coaching conversations were in place to help identify and achieve the volunteers' personal-professional development goals, and any problems or conflicts are discussed too.

Regrettably, Raleigh International has ceased to exist due to problems engendered by COVID pandemic (Raleigh International, 2022).

Research Purpose

The purpose of the study is to explore the transformative learning experiences of national and international volunteers of the ICS programme from the Raleigh International Nepal agency.

Research Question

How do ICS volunteers experience transformative learning?

Significance of the Study

Transformative learning theory is slowly expanding to incorporate volunteers and their experiences (Bailey & Russell, 2010; Chiocca, 2021; Coghlan & Gooch, 2011; Coghlan & Weiler, 2015; Hullender et al., 2015; Müller et al., 2020; Walker & Ngara Manyamba, 2020; Zahra & McIntosh, 2007). Additionally, the number of volunteering programmes that cite personal rewards such as transformation and personal development is also high. Volunteers are also motivated to join programmes that give such rewards (Lee & Yen, 2015). My study will demonstrate to future volunteers how they might achieve such transformative learnings in volunteering programmes. It will also illustrate volunteering organisations the components that can incorporated into their projects to help volunteers reap the full reward of their experience

Cross-cultural transformative research focuses on the transformative learning experienced by western volunteers while in different volunteering programmes. I convey stories and shared experiences of Nepali and UK volunteers. Its significance lies in the fact that this, to my best knowledge, is the first study to explore Nepali volunteers' transformative experience alongside their western counterparts. Moreover, I will apply intercultural competence theory to Nepali and UK participants, showcasing that it is not only western citizens that have ground to develop multicultural accountability but the same onus can be applied to the people from the east. This will be of importance to volunteering organisations that are looking to expand their cross-cultural impact. Lessons may be derived from them by incorporating the findings of this study.

The Organisation of the Dissertation

I have organised this dissertation into six chapters; introduction, literature review, methodology, results, discussion, and conclusion. In the first chapter, I give an account of the problem and give a review of the problem. I also outline the purpose of the study and pose the research question. I end the chapter by outlining the significance and use that can be drawn from the study. In the second chapter, I have reviewed extant works of literature on the topic of national-international volunteering and the connection of different volunteering programmes with transformative learning. Then I venture into the theoretical review where I have reviewed the theories of Mezirow, Taylor, and Dirkx.

I lay out my methodological positioning in the third chapter by declaring my philosophical orientations of ontology, epistemology, and axiology under the interpretative paradigm. I also elaborate on how I employ case study design and how I selected my participants, conducted pre-interview steps, data collection, and organisation

process. I enlist the quality standards I have considered and the ethical issues I have addressed. In the chapter, I bring the experiences and accounts of transformation as my participants lived through various themes guided by their stories. In the penultimate chapter, I combine the literature and theories with the participants' lived experiences and interpreted them under the various themes guided by the theories of transformation. I conclude the study in the final chapter by providing my key insights, conclusion, and future implications for research and practical application.

Chapter Summary

Volunteers' contribution is significant to the economy and society. Explicating the background of my study, I have put forward why the topic is of significance and consequently I have pointed out where my research will sit and fill the knowledge gap from the extant literature. The current literature does not adequately encompass mainstream volunteers' transformative process and has neglected the study on cultural Nepali volunteers as well as volunteers from the east. My purpose is to explore the eclectic transformative learning experiences of the ICS volunteers. The study will be helpful to future volunteers who want to understand how transformative learnings can transpire in them. Volunteering organisations, in addition, can adapt their programmes by keeping in mind the components of ICS that help bring transformative learnings. The dissertation is organised in a six-chapter format: introduction, literature review, methodology, results, discussion, and conclusion.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

Chapter Overview

In this chapter, I describe the variegated types of volunteering initiatives that have been undertaken in Nepal and point out their transformative components. I then add on to how various kinds of international volunteering practices are vehicles for transformative learning. Finally, I elaborate on my theoretical proposition grounded in Mezirow (1978a)'s, Taylor (1994b)'s, and Dirkx (2012)'s transformative learning theories with an integrated approach suggested by Cranton and Taylor (2012).

Volunteers, Volunteering and Transformative Learning

Volunteers are people who give their time and effort of their own volition, in an activity they admire related to social welfare without expectation of full monetary compensation for the work they do, and their work is called volunteering activity (Cnaan et al., 1996; Coghlan & Gooch, 2011; Handy et al., 2000). From an extensive review, Coghlan and Gooch (2011) insist that volunteering has transformative properties as it benefits the volunteers with rewards such as "the potential to change a participant's perceptions about society, self-identity, values, and their everyday lives (Zahra & McIntosh, 2007, p. 116).

National Volunteering

Historically, volunteering activities in Nepal have transformative learning components. Yet, these programmes have not been duly studied through the lens of transformative learning theory. The first formal nationwide volunteering programme to

be studied in Nepal through the perspective of youth is the National Development Service (NDS) which was initiated in the 1960s for master-level students at Tribhuvan University (C. D. Bhatta, 2009). The author points out that the primary objective of the programme was to increase citizenship values such as sense of a duty, altruism, solidarity, and civic engagement. The NDS programme reached 2,927 student volunteers (Messerschmidt et al., 2007). C. D. Bhatta (2009)'s quantitative study finds that the programme increased volunteers' civic awareness, community service, leadership skills, nationalism, sense of belonging, and trust. Messerschmidt et al. (2007) report the unique experience of NDS led the volunteers to become prominent social actors who reported to have a heightened consciousness regarding injustices of society and worked in positions to ameliorate them. I acknowledge that it cannot be asserted that the programme had transformative potential in all of its members but it is evident through Messerschmidt et al. (2007) and C. D. Bhatta (2009)'s research that the few corps members of the programme did have transformative learning experience.

Nepal's history is filled with arcane volunteering practices that have their roots in indigenous cultures. It has been an innate ritual in such cultures where people pool human and natural resources to extend a helping hand to each other (Harris et al., 2016). In Nepal, volunteer mobilisation has been organised by the indigenous group as a community trust and formal organisations. In Newar and Tharu communities, systems of *Guthi* and *Barghars* is prepared, where resources are given to the *Guthi* and *Barghars* voluntarily to help the respective community or any individual in need belonging to the community (United Nations Volunteers [UNV], 2022). A similar system of community volunteering is observed in the Thakali community where the arrangement is called

Dhukari. This community volunteering system can be formal or informal but usually have a hierarchy inside that dictates the norms. Similarly, I witnessed *parma* when I was a volunteer in rural Gorkha. *Parma*, observed in agrarian communities, is when farmers from the village come and help their fellow farmers in the field culture. The *parma* system is without hierarchy. The UNV (2022) report makes it abundantly clear that these indigenous volunteering practices are making great strides in cultural preservation and fostering democratic values. In short, profiting the state. Yet, studies on direct benefits for the volunteers from such practices are scant.

Nepal-based volunteering organisations claim transformation and intercultural learnings that stem from immersing volunteers in Nepali culture, the scenic beauty, biodiversity and broadening of conscience (Community Service Volunteer Foundation Nepal, n.d.; Lovely Volunteers, 2022; Volunteer Initiative Nepal, 2013; Volunteer Society Nepal, 2022). The above-mentioned organisations service chiefly international volunteers, especially voluntarists. There are also organisations such as Himalayan Development Initiative, Creasion Nepal, Raleigh Nepal, VSO Nepal, Restless Development Nepal, Yuwa, Family Planning Association of Nepal, International Federation of Red Cross, Nepal SCOUT, Blue Diamond Society, and more, who deploy either all Nepali volunteers or a mix of Nepali and international volunteers. Still, there are no studies undertaken to comprehend the potential or the process of volunteers' transformative learning in the programme.

International Volunteering

Under the theme of international volunteering, I explore the settings and components of international volunteering that bring transformative learning. With

different volunteering systems and programmes, volunteers are exposed to different environments. In this section, I highlight how volunteering programmes have resulted in transformative learning.

Cathartic Experiences and Emotions

The transformative potential for volunteer tourism is well documented. Zahra and McIntosh (2007) describe volunteer tourism as a cathartic experience. Franz (2016) determines that environment to induce critical events is present in volunteering. Zahra and McIntosh (2007) exemplify that people from the western world, having never experienced the despondency of rural communities have an unanticipated encounter with a paucity of services. This encounter engenders heavy emotions in the travellers which the authors call cathartic experiences. Volunteers when they encounter poverty become aware of their privileged position which triggers reflection (Müller et al., 2020). Magrizos et al. (2021) on one hand agree that austerity is a strong predicament for volunteers to encounter but contends that volunteers can experience cathartic events just by facing the unknown, such as not being able to communicate needs due to language gap, or just trying to adjust in a new environment. Kedkaew and Ounvichit (2021) find that new experiences can be generated just by attending training, workshops, and campaigns where volunteers are subjected to new ideas. Hullender et al. (2015) add that disequilibrium can be experienced by volunteers even when they are subjected to critical dispositions on new ways of doing things, especially when volunteers had acquired their previous perspective uncritically.

Shan and Butterwick (2014) studying Canadian volunteers who mentor immigrants in Canada, present that cultural shock occurs when volunteers help out people

from other cultures to amalgamate into their society. Coghlan and Weiler (2015) recount that cultural mismatch occurs when volunteers from the UK, Belgium, Australia, USA, and Canada travel to Africa, Asia, and Australia, experience varieties of cultures that were unknown to them. Likewise, during international service-learning trips, it is not uncommon for the volunteers to question the dominant dogmas they inherited from their country of origin because they encounter a diverse group that they were unfamiliar with (Franz, 2016). Short-term study abroad, where students take role of volunteers to study outside of their area, has been shown to trigger disorienting events that create an environment for transformative learning and intercultural competency (Chiocca, 2021). Wilson et al. (2020) write volunteers from the USA were heavily challenged on the perception of their country during their travel to Costa Rica. The volunteers were "shocked" and "amazed" (p. 6) by encountering different perspectives and found the culture eye opening. The language barrier is one of the common and biggest obstacles that travellers face. In Costa Rica, the participants felt "left out, frustrated, and nervous" (p. 6).

Cousins et al. (2009) find that new experiences engender a range of emotions in volunteers such as anguish, exhilaration, frustration, awe, compassion, and disappointment. They conclude that it is not just low emotions that urge volunteers to assess how they are feeling but also the highs. Coghlan and Weiler (2015) express those volunteers exuded positive emotions of being happy and confident. I find it important to note that in both studies done by Coghlan and Weiler (2015) and Cousins et al. (2009) volunteers expressed positive emotions when working with animals and volunteers always experienced negative emotions (negative emotions mean shock, sadness, grief,

and so on and not ill emotions towards another culture) while dealing with people. Volunteers also reported a feeling of frustration stemming from unusual events (Müller et al., 2020).

Means of Knowing for Transformative Learning

When volunteers critically reflect on their position, belief, assumptions, and roots are transformative learning possible (Müller et al., 2020). Coghlan and Weiler (2015) delineate three self-reflective processes: content, process, premise, and relational, that volunteers undertake which are crucial for transformative learning. Coghlan and Gooch (2011)'s review supports the analysis that critical self-reflection is vital for perspective transformation. Kedkaew and Ounvichit (2021) expound further by believing that critical reflection is paramount to every step of transformation. Lee and Yen (2015) support the proposition in their quantitative study. Magrizos et al. (2021) argue that reflection enhances transformative learning outcomes. Bailey and Russell (2010) measure volunteers' openness, civic attitude, and wisdom with pre- and post-travel questionnaires and deduce that volunteers experienced positive significant average growth in all three aspects. Two primary predictors of growth were found in overall volunteers. Volunteers who were more engaged in leadership roles were found to have a higher level of growth in civic attitude. Likewise, volunteers who dedicated more time in self-reflection were found to be stronger in openness and wisdom.

Prince (2017) contends that volunteers' transformation can happen in conjunction with self-reflection and emotive experience. The affection that volunteers got from the community members in the forms of hugs, polite conversations, and exchange of jokes helped to build an intimate environment with the locals and facilitate change in

volunteers.Baillie Smith et al. (2021) elaborate that the notion of reciprocation that volunteering engenders in its participants is through "emotional and affective dimensions" (p. 18). Burns et al. (2015), similarly, attests that the emotions encountered by the volunteers while in community and within themselves, are open ground for changes that volunteers had not fathomed before. Moreover, Darley (2018) informs that emotive volunteering experiences help volunteers to construct the meaning of their experiences, especially when volunteers encounter sensitive topics. Griffiths (2015, 2018) and Griffiths and Brown (2017) extensively elaborate on the vital role of affective experiences of volunteers that are metamorphic.

Support Systems

Volunteering programmes have support systems that aid to usher positive changes. The placement community or the local culture volunteers are experiencing for the first time are primary support that brings in transformation. Zahra and McIntosh (2007) confide that the perspective of local community members is of incredible help to the volunteers' transformation. Kedkaew and Ounvichit (2021) ascertain that transformative learning is buttressed by fellow volunteers, activists, researchers, and practitioners as sharing of ideas and mores opened up volunteers' perspectives. Nevertheless, the support systems that are in place should not overpower volunteers ability to either make choice (Franz, 2016). Prince (2017) agrees that the structures of volunteering organisations such as volunteer coordinators, report writing, and experience-sharing sessions helped volunteers to reach necessary conclusions. Shan and Butterwick (2014)'s participants' transformative learning was propped by the immigrants from whom the volunteers learned. Hullender et al. (2015) volunteers' transformation was aided by

the elderly citizens that the volunteers were helping. Chiocca (2021) observes that

interactions with random local people provided the volunteers with perspectives that

opened their eyes to the topic volunteers were studying. Wilson et al. (2020) explain that

volunteers' group reflection and interaction with each other helped them to revise their

assumptions. The authors add that the environment of Costa Rica, the locals, and the

tribes helped the volunteers to reflect on their lives and values. Ibrahim et al. (2020)

discover that in a multicultural team hearty social interaction among the team members

lays the ground for intercultural competency.

Transformation in Volunteers

Müller et al. (2020) report a change in sociolinguistic meaning perspective after

volunteering. The volunteers developed a broadened view of responsibility and social

ownership. After returning from placement, volunteers demonstrated altruism, empathy,

and predisposition to social causes (Bailey & Russell, 2010; Griffiths, 2014; Magrizos et

al., 2021). Kedkaew and Ounvichit (2021) discovered that when actively exposed to

sustainable lifestyles, volunteers take in the learnings and adopt green lifestyles. The

uncritically acquired leadership skill was devolved and a critically evaluated leadership

skill was enrolled by the volunteers (Bailey & Russell, 2010; Hullender et al., 2015). The

transformative experiences gathered from volunteering can help marginalised and

troubled youth to reconnect with society and themselves (Judge, 2015). Volunteers

recounted that the experience broadened their view on new possibilities of employment.

Coghlan and Weiler (2015) in their research find a similar transformation in the

participants' career choices. The volunteering experience allowed participants to reflect

on their prior career choice and ventured into a new arena which enthralled them (Magrizos et al., 2021; Müller et al., 2020; Soulardet al., 2021).

International volunteering helped volunteers to understand themselves more and built-up intercultural understanding that they inculcated in their personal and professional life (Chiocca, 2021). Moreover, the experience engrained acute social awareness in areas of refugees and immigrants whereby participants inculcated a better perspective (Shan & Butterwick, 2014). Perceptions regarding culture and religion were also transformed (Prince, 2017; Zahra & McIntosh, 2007). The volunteers "personalised the others" wherein they internalised the stories, reflections, and experiences of the locals (Wilson et al., 2020, p. 7). In the end, the participants felt compassion for the plight of indigenous people, had a change in their outlook on society or changed their career paths (Chiocca, 2021; Wilson et al., 2020). Hullender et al. (2015) add that meaningful service to the elderly aided in the transformative learning of the volunteers.

Researches are reticent on the positive affective dimensions of volunteers and the studies that pertain to the emotional journey of the volunteers do not interpret the narrative through the lens of appositive transformative theories of Taylor or Dirkx. While significant studies are dedicated to uncovering the transformative learning of volunteers, they are limited in terms of theoretical application to Mezirow (1978a)'s proposition of transformative learning. Cranton (2016b) states that transformative learning is incredibly individualistic. Interpretation of such an individualistic path by application of either unit or binary theory that discounts the emotional nature of learning cannot give a holistic picture. Furthermore, the majority outcome of transformative learning is intercultural aptness and career change. These outcomes also get interpreted through rational cognitive

orientation when there are theoretical underpinnings of non-rational and extra-rational dimensions through which transformative learning occurs. In other words, current literature givea sparse collection of the transformative learning process in volunteers through the lens of different cognitive disposition. This study is situated to fill the space by observing how the volunteers of the ICS programme, which has a mix of national and international volunteers, experience transformative learning.

Volunteering Policy in Nepal

The policy practice for youth volunteers has always been governed by being a part of other existing acts or policies. For example, the earliest and still in effect volunteering law is the Nepal Scouts Act of 1952 (Adhikari, 2020). The act enables Nepal Scouts to function under the direction of the Ministry of Youth and Sports to carry out community development and personal skill development activities by mobilising youths. However, the act only regulates the functioning of Nepal Scouts and does not regulate volunteering practices other than scouts. Similarly, the NDS programme of the 1960s also came into force but the only area it invigilated was the master level course of Tribhuvan University (C. D. Bhatta, 2009), which is now defunct. Its replacement policy National Development Volunteer Service (NDVS) procedures 2000 only regulate this specific project (C. D. Bhatta, 2009).

The Constitution of Nepal (2015) explicitly and implicitly mentions the rights of young people. Part 3 Article 18 Right to Equality mentions that special provisions for the protection, empowerment or development of citizens including…youths can be made. Similarly, Part 4 article 51 clause J(7) gives the state legislature the authority "to create an atmosphere conducive to the full enjoyment of the political, economic, social and

cultural rights, while enhancing the participation of youths in national development, to make their personality development, while providing special opportunity in areas including education, health and employment for the empowerment and development of the youths and provide them with appropriate opportunities for the overall development of the State". These provisions of the constitution can be reasonably interpreted as creating room for a state-wide volunteering policy.

After the establishment of the constitution, *National Youth Policy* (2015) came into effect. The policy recognises youths as "pioneers and change agents of political, economic, social and cultural transformation" (p. 3). It also defined the age bracket of youth from 16 to 40 years. In addition, it also defined broad areas where youth volunteers should be mobilised and prioritised such as national development, nation building, social service, and rescue. For youths with advanced degrees provision to deploy them as volunteers in the village sector. The policy also makes space for providing paid volunteering opportunities for unemployed youths. Adhikari (2020) informs that the National Youth Council has initiated volunteering programmes such as litter picking, plantation, blood donations, and drug use awareness under the policy.

Similarly, the fifteenth five-year plan 2019/20 - 2023/24 by National Planning Commission (2019) has accommodated young volunteers in several of its working policies. To illustrate, it schedules to send graduate and post-graduate students as volunteer teachers for workplace experience. Its sixth strategy for youth is to develop a culture of volunteerism in young people and to mobilise them in economic, physical infrastructure, health, education, agriculture, environment, and social development in line with the National Youth Policy. It is commendable that youth volunteering is legitimised

as a critical development practice by policies. But, the policy to mobilise and safeguard their status under a single policy or act has not occurred yet.

Recent efforts have been made by the Policy Research Institute to assimilate a draft*National Volunteer Service Protocol* (2021) for the Ministry of Youth and Sports. The draft policy seeks to bring state-sponsored and private volunteering activities under the single policy framework. This policy seeks to remedy the risk of not having an enforceable policy that protected the interest of volunteers in private institution. that by enforcing a national standard that organisations must adhere to. It advises establishing a service-learning environment in the education sector. This not only will aid in learning but also convey the spirit of volunteering from a young age. The policy encourages corporate, private, and service employees to participate in volunteering activities which can be an egis of skill sharing. It is also creating avenues to formalise and ease the pathway to diaspora volunteering and volunteering tourism. Most importantly, it secures the rights and duties of volunteers by mandating equal opportunity, free from discrimination on any grounds, safety, security, safeguarding, and legal recognition of the volunteers and their efforts in private and public organisations.

Despite its impressive feat, the policy falls short in a few areas. Firstly, it lacks the provision of basic framework that public and private institutions must follow. For example, the National Youth Policy, fifteenth five year plan, and national volunteer service policy state that volunteers can be mobilised in infrastructure projects and disaster response but the policies do not mention basic health-accidental insurance and safe accommodation to guarantees their safety. Likewise, the policies state dignity to volunteers but are shy of mentioning basic mandates that institutes are obligated follow.

Although the volunteer service policy mentions indigenous volunteering service, it does not give an explicit mandate to ward governments to mobilise local young volunteers for service and skill delivery. Lastly, the policy has development activities, such as construction and aid, at the centre. It does not keep volunteers at the centre of the activities. The end goal is physical and economic development rather than expanding the capacity of the volunteers.

Criticisms of Volunteering and ICS

Criticisms of volunteering and volunteers have come from different directions. I find that three major arguments have been made against it viz.: promotion of neoliberalism, the aestheticization of social problems through uncritical reflection, and affective stagnation for social problems. Mostafanezhad (2013) reflects that volunteering has become a medium that has propagated neoliberalism in corners of the world by marking larger social inequities as a product of individual choices from volunteering opportunities. Crossley (2012) adds that volunteering formed a culture of perpetuating neoliberal agenda—making complacent citizens for an easily governable society through free market system (Griffiths, 2013)—within the self of volunteers and the global south.

Moreover, Crossley (2012) opines that volunteering opportunities have just become a place for volunteers to feel good about themselves and that they do not have such social equalities. The author adds that stereotypes and cultural conditioning that the volunteers have within them block the ability to perceive the larger social injustices of the community. Volunteering has become a ground to 'know' injustices by objectifying the harsh realities as an exotic condition that is needed for entertainment purposes

(Mostafanezhad, 2013). A separation of 'we' and 'them' is happening through volunteering.

ICS has its criticisms including the general concerns regarding volunteering. The first complaint that most ICS in-country volunteers make is the distinction in treatment between them and the UK volunteers. Moreover, due to the idea of volunteering being new to Nepali youths and challenges in recruitment of Nepali volunteers the number of UK and Nepali volunteers are not equal, oftentimes UK volunteers outnumber Nepali volunteers. The problem is resulting due to factors of a language barrier, cultural differences, and differences in work styles. The value for money or return of investment that the ICS programme provides is another (Department for International Development, 2011). ICS has two prongs: community and youth development. While community development is comparatively easy to track due to its tangible nature. Meanwhile, the youth and their personal development are intangible, therefore, proper quantitative estimates cannot be derived.

Theoretical Review: How Adults Learn

It is often said that a child is like clay to mould. In other words, they retain the shape that we form and adults are the manifestation of the shape we were given as children. After the mould is set and cast into the fire, the shape it holds is permanent and any external pressure to give another shape shatters it into pieces. However, the literal comparison is not entirely true. Mezirow and the adult educationist have found that the process of re-moulding is accomplishable, albeit much more complex and nuanced than we ever imagined. The following theories of Mezirow, Dirkx, Taylor, and Cranton give us a preview of the clandestine phenomenon of transformative learning.

Perspective Transformation

Mezirow (1978a) first defined transformation as "a process by which adults come to recognize culturally induced dependency roles and relationships and take action to overcome them" (p. 17). His refinement of the proposition continues when he adds "transformative learning refers to transforming a problematic frame of reference to make it more dependable in our adult life by generating opinions and interpretations that are more justified. Learners become critically reflective of those beliefs that become problematic" (Mezirow, 2000, p. 20). Kitchenham (2008) calls the definition of Mezirow (2003, p. 58) a definite one where he ascertains "transformative learning is learning that transforms problematic frames of reference—sets of fixed assumptions and expectations (habits of mind, meaning perspectives, mindsets)—to make them more inclusive, discriminating, open, reflective, and emotionally able to change".

Similarly, Taylor (2017b) defines transformative learning as a "paradigmatic shift" (p. 17) where the frame of reference is revised by reflection based on a particular experience encountered. The experiences that make us reflect can be personal, such as death, loss, disease, natural disaster, job loss, retirement, or of social nature such as war, political instability and such.

Collard and Law (1989) presented the very first critique of Mezirow (1978b)'s theory as "premature" and "fragments of adult or self-directed learning" (p. 105). In sum, stating that despite framing transformative theory as a critical theory and building from the theory of Habermas, it has insufficiently enveloped the central doctrine of critical school and emancipatory learning which is a collective social action (Tisdell, 2012). Mezirow (1989) clarifies that social action is an instrumental goal which is trusted upon

the reformed adult to act on. The process of transformation, although individualistic, is about recognising the constraints forced upon us by various uncritical norms, realising them, reframing them, and acting on the new worldview. To purport social action, we need individuals who are aware of oppressive forces that act on us. The goal of transformative education is to make people aware of oppressions within them and act to revise those. However, the freedom of collective action is on the onus of the people. Newman (2012) critiques transformative theory by stating "perhaps there is no such thing as transformative learning; perhaps there is just good learning" (p. 37). Indeed, transformative learning has been misinterpreted where just adding to an existing meaning perspective is defined as transformation, Cranton and Kasl (2012) insist on gingerly studying Mezirow (1978a, 1978b, 2000, 2003)'s definition of perspective transformation which is a revised meaning perspective and not just any change.

Frame of Reference

For perspective transformation, learners must revise frame of reference. It is through the frame of reference that learners understand and make meaning of their experiences (Mezirow & Associates, 1987). Frame of references are structured assumptions that learners carry that lets them understand experiences (Mezirow & Associates, 1990). Elaborating, frame of references includes "fixed interpersonal relationships, political orientations, cultural bias, ideologies, schemata, stereotyped attitudes and practices, occupational habits of mind, religious doctrine, moral-ethical norms, psychological preferences and schema, paradigms in science and mathematics, frames in linguistics and social sciences, and aesthetic values and standards" (Mezirow, 2003, p. 59).

Mezirow (2000, 2012) states that an individual's frame of reference is composed of two aspects: habit of mind and point of view. They are also named meaning perspective and meaning schemes respectively (Kitchenham, 2008). Meaning perspectives are a set of assumptions and expectations that give structure to an individual's point of view; actions, and beliefs (Mezirow, 1997). They are "a personal paradigm for understanding ourselves and our past relationships" (Mezirow, 1978b, p. 101). These habits of mind manifest themselves as a point of view or meaning schemes which are beliefs, actions, and judgement. Meaning schemes are tangible habits that manifest when learners encounter things or people that confirm or disconfirm their meaning perspective (Taylor, 2017a). Illeris (2014) elaborates on it as "how we do all the many things we are used to doing" (p. 157). Mezirow (2012) states that people are not always aware of their meaning schemes, especially when uncritically acquired.

Uncritical Assumptions

The central tenant of transformative learning is the revision of frame of reference which has been retained through uncritical assimilation. Mezirow and Associates (1987) view uncritical assumptions as the enemy of reason and learning. The limited perspective that learners have on various subjects and which prevents them from seeing the world with an open and encompassing view is manufactured by irrational assimilation of ideologies (Mezirow, 1991). It is, therefore, prudent that learners understand the origins of their uncritical assumptions. In his very first writing Mezirow (1978a) elaborates that learners inherit numerous suppositions from political, societal, economic, and religious institutes. In the very next paper, he broadly categorised them into cultural and psychological assumptions (Mezirow, 1978b). Mezirow (1991, 1994) often writes that

people inherit a set of meaning structures from people's childhood uncritically. However, the emphasis is more on uncritically acquiring meaning structures, thus it can also occur during adolescence or adulthood by the influence of political, social or religious affiliation, uncritical reflection, and distorted influence.

Critical Reflection of Assumptions and Reframing

For transformation, as defined by Mezirow to occur, it entails that the person goes through a period(s) of critical reflection. Critical reflection is important, Mezirow (1981) states, because it is the only way that learners are aware of presupposed socio-culturally inherited assumptions, question them, and modify them. These constraining ideologies stop learners from acting freely and being open-minded and critical reflection helps to make a more open and inclusive meaning of experiences (Mezirow, 1998). Hence, the more meditative and unbarred learners are to the different perspectives of people, the richer learner's imagination of alternative contexts for understanding will be (Mezirow, 2000) and is a gateway for "significant personal transformation" (Mezirow, 1997, p. 7).

Critical reflection is a problem-solving process which is an assessment of the premise, content, or process (Mezirow & Associates, 1990). Premise reflection is asking a 'why' question for a specific action being conducted (Baumgartner, 2012), for example asking 'why am I judging this person?' is premise reflection. Premise reflection is the most crucial form of reflection for perspective transformation. Learners comb their meaning structure through premise reflection. Similarly, Lundgren and Poell (2016) state that content reflection is thinking about the problem and asking the question 'what is making me judge this person?'. It is thinking about what and how happens (Taylor, 2008). Lastly, process reflection is reflecting on 'how' questions such as 'how am I

becoming judgemental towards this person' (Lundgren & Poell, 2016). In other words, learners analyse whether they have sufficient evidence to arrive at a conclusion (Taylor, 2008).

Phases of Perspective Transformation

Mezirow (1978a) details that transformation occurs in a cycle of ten steps. Mezirow (1991) adds a slightly affective realm to his original second step where self-assessment is done through "feelings of guilt or shame" (p. 98). However, Mezirow (2000) writes "transformations often follow some variation of the following phases…" (p. 22). The process of revision of steps continues and concludes in his paper *Understanding transformation theory* where he adds a new phase between his original eighth and ninth steps as shown in table 1 (Mezirow, 1994, p. 224).

Table 1

Mezirow's 11 Phases of Transformative Learning

S.N.	Transformative Step
1	A disorienting dilemma
2	Self-examination with feelings of guilt or shame, sometimes turning to religion for support
3	A critical assessment of assumptions
4	Recognition that one's discontent and the process of transformation are shared and others have negotiated a similar change
5	Explore options for new roles, relationships, and actions
6	Planning a course of action
7	Acquire knowledge and skills for implementing one's plans

8 Provisionally trying out new roles

9 Renegotiating relationships and negotiating new relationships

10 Building competence and self confidence in new roles and relationships

11 A reintegrate into one's life on the basis of conditions dictated by one's new

  perspective

The initiating step is a shocking event that disturbs the learner's internal harmony and makes them think (Mezirow, 1991) such as death, divorce, or loss of some kind. However, it can be an everyday experience such as reading a book or having robust discussions (Mezirow & Associates, 1990). When learners encounter such disorienting events, they are filled with emotional feelings of inadequacy and they self-examine their beliefs against such information. (Taylor, 2017b). After, the person critically reflects on their assumptions. The learner also sheds their prior assumption after reflecting (Mezirow, 1978a). To assess the value, rightness, and rationality of a new view, learners tend to share their experience of discontent and negotiate the new values by discussing it with others which Mezirow (2003) defines as discourse. These sharing experiences should be objective and without untoward pressure (Mezirow, 1994). Through rational discourse, the learner explores various ways of moving forward in their life with a new perspective (Taylor, 2008). In the sixth phase, the learner plans their way forward to accommodate their new frame of reference by thinking about their next step in life. To act according to their enlarged perspective the learner takes actions to know more about their new perspective and acts in new ways by getting a new job, taking training, reading books, and other learning actions (Taylor, 2008). Following, learners try out new roles. A

new role does not always literally mean a new job or a position but also includes the learner's new ideological stance in wider society. Learners then test out their new perspective on the relations and work out the new way these relationship function (Mezirow, 1991). The learner, with their new perspective, gains credence in this new role by taking in feedback and being open to improve and revise their stance. With competence in their new frame of reference, ways of acting, and relationships, learners integrate into society.

Taylor (1998, 2000) and Tisdell (2012) write about the rigidity enforced by the 10-11 phases presented by Mezirow (1994). Taylor in his several extensive literature reviews states that the phases are simultaneously not as universal or as inclusive as Mezirow would like us to believe. Cranton and Kasl (2012) implicitly suggest dropping the 10 phases as it indicates transformative learning is a finite process and does not exist in a continuum. Additionally, I find that the critiques of the phases also arise because Mezirow does not overtly present the phases as different themes and interprets his results likewise. Since, he first stated that the phases are cyclic at first and reneged it later by saying that they can occur with any variations, adds to the ambiguity and perceived restrictions of the phases.

Taylor's Model for Intercultural Competency

(Taylor, 1994a) proposes that when people travel especially in a new country or culture, the environment becomes very pertinent for them to encounter cultural norms, practices, or events that are new to them, out of their comfort zone. Kim (2017) names the event cultural shock defining it as "state of disequilibrium, a natural response to the dialectic of acculturation and deculturation necessary for adaptive change. Such stress

experiences are particularly acute during the initial phase of sojourn or immigration, as has been documented in "culture shock" studies" (p.5).

Following the event of disequilibrium, the stranger goes through a series of adaptations that will allow them to acclimatise to the new environment properly. Taylor (1994b) calls this phenomenon intercultural competency. Pointing to the insufficiencies in literature Taylor (1994b, 1994a) states that studies have defined the outcome that is indicative of an interculturally apt person such as a positive reaction to people from different cultures, ability to work successfully with others (Anderson et al., 2006; Lough, 2010), being more ethno-relative than ethno-centric (Marx & Moss, 2011), empathy, listening skills, tolerance for ambiguity, and more. However, these theories of competency do not elaborate on how or the process of how these outcomes come into fruition. Combining the theory of Mezirow (1978a)'s perspective transformation and looking for transformative learning experiences in extant literature, Taylor (1994a) proposes a new theoretical model for transformative learning through intercultural competency which elaborates the 'how' question.

It is also important to note that Taylor (1994b) points out the flaw in Mezirow and Associates (1990)'s perspective transformation as to why that particular model is not an exact fit to uncover intercultural competence through two points of view: critical reflexivity and western bias. Firstly, Taylor (1994a) points out that Mezirow values critical reflectivity as the epitome of knowledge and disregards different cultures where critical reflection is not an epistemic process. Thus, disenfranchising cultures by not assimilating them in the process of perspective transformation. Secondly, Taylor (1994a) points out that Mezirow's over-reliance on critical reflection comes from western

assumptions thus that they cannot be validly applied to non-western travellers exploring the culture of the west. This point is particularly apposite in my dissertation as I am applying intercultural competency theory to my Nepali participants as well. Having bargained through the lack of universal applicability of perspective transformation and meta-analysis of literature Taylor (1994b) proposes the model involving five steps.

Setting the Stage

The first step involves the readiness to embark upon an intercultural journey. It does not necessarily mean that an individual is looking forward to revising their meaning perspective but due to certain circumstances such as job or study requirement, personal goal, or former intercultural experience that serves as a catalyst for people to visit and work with people from different cultures.

Cultural Disequilibrium

Cultural disequilibrium is akin to a disorienting dilemma as described by Mezirow. Encompassing those aspects, these are moments of cultural or idealistic mismatch between the host and the origin culture that people encounter while living in different cultures or cultural shock (Taylor, 1994a).

Cognitive Orientations

Taylor (1994b, 1994a)'s step is divided into two categories: non-reflective and reflective. In a non-reflective orientation, people dive ahead in the process of adaptation since the need to acclimatise to the new environment is greater than making a rational connection to their evolution. However, in a reflective process, the person goes back and forth to the disequilibrium event and their prior assumption and consciously plans their step for adaptation.

Behavioural Learning Strategies

Taylor (1994b, 1994a)'s process of cultural evolution requires that people take steps to be a learner in the new cultural setting and equip themselves with skills that will empower them to fruitfully work in the new culture. The person can learn via being an observer, a participant, and a friend with the people of the host culture. These are broad categories in which detailed explanations are not provided. However, being an observer does not just mean looking at the host culture but active observation and immersion such as watching TV and being inquisitive. Secondly, the person actively gets involved in daily and unique cultural practices of the host community from eating food to attending and participating in cultural events. Thirdly, by forming meaningful relationships with the host community who can give constructive criticism on what the person is doing that is culturally inappropriate and make the sojourner's acclimatisation process meaningful.

Evolving Intercultural Identity

An evolving cultural identity means that the person is no longer connected to just one particular culture which is usually their culture of origin—ethnocentric. Rather they will take in ethno-relativism where they understand and empathise with the host culture. This enables the sojourner to look at the world through a new lens and behave in a more inclusive, discriminating, and accepting of diversities.

Dirkx: Mythopoetic Transformation

Dirkx (1997, 1998, 2000)'s theory of transformation is based on a psychoanalytic view of transformative learning which occurs through individualisation; knowing the Self (Taylor, 2017b). Dirkx (2000, 2012) describes his transformative learning as mytho-poetic transformative learning or Soul work.

Kovan and Dirkx (2003) follow that transformative learning should broaden the role of emotions, feelings, imaginations, spirituality, and not rely on rational processes. Dirkx (2014) demands bringing in the whole person in the learning process, advocating for bringing in the person's Soul in the learning process. A person is not just the product of their rational brain but also extrarational embodiments such as imagination, passions, feelings, and emotions. The risk of relying on rational transformation is that it relies on ego (Boyd & Myers, 1988). Despite most ardent critical thought, learners might end up doing things just for the sake of it because ego-based rational judgement might ask that they follow what socio-cultural and personal surroundings deem as a normative route to adhere to. Mythopoetic transformative learning enables learners to have a more faithful and authentic relation with themselves (Dirkx, 2006a).

The epistemic process of transformation in Dirkx (2000)'s transformation—which he calls Mythopoetic—happens when images and symbols learners have in Soul convey the meaning of their experiences to the outer self. In a talk between Dirkx, Mezirow, and Cranton, Dirkx elaborates that the mythopoetic transformation he talks about concerns itself with the nature of Self and the eclectic method through which learners have come to know and understand their sense of Self or identity. Moreover, he continues that the goal of mythopoetic transformation is to bring material experience with inner Self (Dirkx et al., 2006).

Dirkx (2000)'s mythopoetic transformation is the communication between the outer ego and the inner Soul. The conversation is enabled by the presence of images and symbols which are more powerful than the ego and unadulterated by the contents of the world. This facilitates the process of knowing the Self holistically; knowing the different

layered Selves that populate learners' unconscious. Knowing Soul becomes easy to the ego and then learners act authentically. Now, learners begin to see themselves in a new light. Not just as a separate entity with just an individual identity but able to see themselves coalesced with the universe and all the life within it. Dirkx, (1998) states that the end goal of transformative learning is freedom. Freedom from the confines of the previous contexts that hold from expressing true Self.

Soul: The True Self

Dirkx (2012) defines of soul as something intangible yet tangible. Intangible in the sense that unless confronted by a "surge of psychic energy of emotions" (p. 118) it remains un-understood. Tangible in the aspect that learners discern their Soul when they feel moments of pure joy, ecstasy, wonder, appreciation, or a sense of loss, grief, or sadness. These emotions well up in the learners through the depths of their Soul, the unconscious, the extra rational embodiment of the learners (Dirkx, 2018). It is the connection between the heart and the mind and mind and emotion (Dirkx, 1997). The substance that makes people who they are is the Soul. The part from where conglomerate of emotions rises is the Soul.

The Obvious and the Clandestine: Conscious and Unconscious

For a holistic understanding of the world, learners need to understand their layered Selves first. Dirkx (2001b) elaborates that although learners recognise the conscious self or the ego in the everyday world, their psyche is populated with these multiple Selves (the 's' in the conscious self is lowercase and 'S' in the unconscious Self is uppercase). These clusters of Selves reside in a person's unconscious but they are not aware of them. Nevertheless, learners multiple Selves interact with their consciousness

without them knowing and they act in the direction pointed by the unconscious. The interaction comes about when the conscious self of the learner comes in contact with an external stimulus such as texts, images, videos, sceneries, interactions, and such.

Dirkx (1997) importance is put on uncovering Soul because it is the source of enlightenment, creativity, and conscientiousness; the essence of a person and the source of life. A stronger argument for awakening the unconscious is that the conscious self is a manifestation from restrictions of socio-cultural and linguistic dimensions. Furthermore, the conscious is rational and that necessarily does not give a true indication of a person is and they want. It is pressed by a cocktail of societal factors, whereas unconscious is where true Self resides, the home of Soul (Dirkx, 2000).

Emotion and Feelings: Seeking Soul

Dirkx et al. (2018) and Dirkx and Espinoza (2017) posit that while critical reflectivity is indeed an important instrumental factor; however, they still limit the realm of learning to a rational perspective. There is a need to go beyond the technicalities and move to the "extra-rational"; role of emotions. Emotions and feelings play a very powerful role in how adults learn by either facilitating or retarding the learning process (Dirkx, 2001a; Tyng et al., 2017). To discount the necessity of emotions in transformation is to reduce their importance in how people perceive the world (Judge, 2015). Nevertheless, retardation of learning can occur if the learner encounters negative emotions such as fear and anxiety (Shuck et al., 2007). On the other hand, emotive experiences help the learner to recall events with lucidity and help to process events more effectively (Tyng et al., 2017).

Dirkx (2006b, 2018) states that when learner is involved in deep learning, they evoke emotions within themselves that transcend the rational dimension. Such deep emotions and feelings, while registering even to learners as a perfectly normative experience, are an indication of how they are constructing meaning in that particular context (Dirkx, 2012). Emotive experiences are distinct events that hint at something deep and inherently the self is being evoked inside which is unique to every person (Formenti & Dirkx, 2014) and an expression of Soul. And it is through this extra-rational emotion laden experience that learners know themselves, form meaningful connections with others, and essentially be human (Griffiths, 2014).

The communication between conscious self and unconscious Self does not just happen without a medium. It requires a bridge via which these two different realms of ourselves communicate. It is only then learner can know their true Self; know who they really are. Dirkx (2006a) contends that emotions and feelings are the bridges via which conscious and unconscious 'talk' to each other and know the true Self. Emotions are inherent to learners; therefore, an instrument to truly know themselves (Dirkx, 2001a). They form an epistemic pathway to understand the selves and the world around. Emotional reactions which learners encounter stem from their hidden selves (Dirkx, 2001b); hence, the more learners understand their emotions, they come to the revelation of they truly are and present their authentic Self to themselves and others.

Images and Symbols

The concept of images and symbols appears in Boyd and Myers (1988)'s writing as what has been ingrained in imagination through fictional and non-fictional myths learners know. They also refer to images and symbols as the stimulus from the multiple

selves which the learner engages for the act of knowing themselves. To further clarify, images are representations of affective and emotive dimensions that impulsively peek through unconscious to the conscious (Dirkx, 2006b). Learners are not always aware of their images and symbols. These images come about on the surface when they encounter emotionally laden experiences.

Dirkx (2000) uses the word 'image' in a poetic sense, writing it as images "are thought to represent powerful motifs that represent, at an unconscious level, deep-seated emotional or spiritual issues and concerns. They represent our imaginative engagement with the world, expressing what is not known or knowable through words alone in the self-world relationship" (para. 7). Thus, for each individual images and symbols manifest themselves differently depending on the transformative journey they are going through.

Integrated Approach

Taylor (2000) concludes that Mezirow's transformative theory does not holistically explain the different types of transformative journeys people experience. While people experience transformation, the process of experiencing transformative learning differs and is determined by the psychological type of the person (Cranton, 2016a). Taylor (2017b) elaborates on the multiplicity of theories that exist in the realm of transformative learning from perspectives such as rational, extrarational, and ecological. However, even though they bring complexity and abundance to theoretical propositions, studies tend to be binary when selecting the theory(Taylor & Cranton, 2012). Revisiting the established critiques of rationality, extra-rationality, rigidity, social action, and overgeneralization of transformation. Cranton and Taylor (2012) suffuse that all these different theories exist and be used in harmony.

Following this integrated perspective of transformation, I will apply the theoretical propositions that are befitting to my volunteer participants. As Cranton (2016b)and Cranton and Taylor (2012) acknowledge that even to a rational mind sometimes an extra-rational transformation might occur since transformative learning is dependent on the context of the individual. Integrating three different theories which rely on cognitive and affective realms and intercultural aspects will give me a holistic view (Cranton & Roy, 2003) of the transformative nature of volunteering and the transformative learning that my participants have experienced.

Chapter Summary

In this second chapter, I have reviewed pertinent literature to expand my knowledge on the subject of transformative learning and volunteerism. Volunteering has its roots in ancient indigenous cultures, it has grown into a formal enterprise devoted to bringing in personal transformation in volunteers while engaged in development work. Mezirow's transformative theory has been applied to volunteers' journeys. The theory depends on rational self-reflection and discourse to bring transformation. Whereas, Dirkx's theory relies on emotions and affective experiences. Taylor also offers his theory on how transformative learning can bring intercultural competency. In this study, I have applied an integrated approach by using the combination of the three theories.

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Chapter Overview

Research work is required to be guided by strong methodological foundations. Methodology accredits the research with deliberate planning, strong ethical and quality considerations, and makes the reader clear on how the entire work was carried out. In this chapter, I detail my philosophical foundation as interpretative with multiple realities as my ontological orientation and constructivist epistemology. I elaborate on how I employed case study research design and undertook participant selection. I end the chapter with ethical and quality standards applied in the study.

Research Philosophies

Neuman (2011) surmised that social science researchers adopt a theoretical-philosophical paradigm to place their research. Research is placed in a particular paradigm to better answer the research question. Hence, I describe my orientation in each philosophical stance.

Ontology

The transformative learning theory was posited with multiple realities in mind (Mezirow, 1978b). Similar to it, my ontological stance is that the world is material and peripheral to us, and concerning the world, meaning is constructed by individuals in accordance of their social and cultural context (Willis, 2007). Therefore, every person has their own reality so we have mixed realities (Guba & Lincoln, 1982). The outer material world does not play a drastic role in our internal realities. To understand people's

behaviour, we must delve into how they perceive the world rather than the outer things (Willis, 2007). The important aspect of transformative learning theory is how people make meaning by interaction, self-reflection, and discerning emotions. Cultural relativism means that it is people who create meaning to their experiences by interpreting them via social interactions (Aliyu et al., 2015). The volunteers actively construct and reconstruct meaning as per their subjective encounters, observations, and reflections (Ormston et al., 2013) and therefore make sense of their reality. (Creswell, 2014) defines that to unearth the nature of individual realities we need to report on our participants' different perspectives. To inform my research question and to explore how each individual goes through transformative learning, my ontological stance will give me the space to uncover my participants' perspectives through their subjective realities.

Epistemology

I employ a constructivist approach to my epistemic orientation because I am uncovering experiences of people and how they construct new meaning structures based on their interaction with a host of agents that they encounter in their placement life during volunteering. Rojon and Saunders (2012) detail that the constructivist approach will let me portray vivid and multifaceted realities that people construct. Since knowledge is bound to people with their values, beliefs, reasonings, and understandings (Aliyu et al., 2015), a constructive approach will let me uncover the context of my participants to understand how they uncritically acquired their meaning structures. Volunteers' emotions, experiences, and reflections has demonstrated the varied accounts of transformations that they undergo.

Epistemology also considers the relationship between the researcher and the participant (Aliyu et al., 2015). Ormston et al. (2013) state that by the virtue of being studied people are affected thus the relationship is interactive. As the authors suggest, findings are mediated through the researcher thus the values of the researcher also come into play and the researcher should bring empathic neutrality through the process of having a reflective conversation with the participants' accounts (Willis, 2007).

Axiology

Values are an integral part of qualitative research because human life is composite with their values and that is reflected in the research (Aliyu et al., 2015). Since qualitative research is value bound (Willis, 2007), Guba and Lincoln (1982) enlist four means through which different types of values situate themselves in our study. Firstly, values from the researcher. Here, my value of being a volunteer and having undergone a transformative learning experience during the volunteering programme has resulted in conduction of this study to explore the phenomenon. Second, I have placed value in the selection of research paradigm as well because to elaborately detail the phenomenon of the transformative learning and to bring my participants' experiences. I placed my ontological and epistemological assumptions into cultural relativism paradigm and research design as case study. Third, the choice of transformative learning theory by various authors was also selected based on my value to holistically showcase the transformation in the volunteers. Lastly, my participants and I have carried different values in them. I placed value in my participants due to their association with ICS and having gone through transformative learning and they have placed value in me due to our close association and mutual trust. Thus, my study is extremely value-resonant.

Interpretative Paradigm

The interpretative paradigm assumes that social reality is not ubiquitous for everyone. In other words, not everyone has the same set of experiences. Rather reality is shaped by human experience and social context, thus each individual has a unique set of experiences; reality (Bhattacherjee, 2012). Social constructivism states that individuals make subjective sense and meaning of the world through experience and reflection. And the meanings they derive are eclectic and layered (Willis, 2007). Thus, the objective of the researcher is to rely to the full extent on the participants' perspectives on the phenomenon that is being studied (Creswell & Poth, 2018). However, in accepting that the process of making knowledge or meaning-making is based completely on the assumption of an individual set of experiences, the hindrance of how two individuals can communicate is encountered. It is crucial to understand that while individuals have their reality, the process of meaning-making is done in a group (or social) setting where people construct meaning and can communicate (Willis, 2007).

Bhattacherjee (2012) states that the interpretative paradigm is well suited to understand clandestine reasons for layered and intricate social processes that the positivist or post-positivist approach cannot uncover. It is also helpful to build up on a theory, and most importantly is apposite to understanding context-specific events or processes. In interpretative research, the researcher interacts with the participants. The lived experience of the participants is also gathered. Then the stories of the participants are compiled to form a coherent narrative structure and lastly interpreted under our theoretical proposition.

I find interpretivism the most fitted paradigm for my research because the transformative learning process is subjective among an individual's experience. As the paradigm states that people derive meaning from being in a group or particular social context, volunteers remain in a group by interacting with a host of agents such as among themselves, the placement community, and the organisation they are in. The interpretative paradigm asks for close collaboration between the participants and the researcher while empowering the participants to voice their stories (Baxter & Jack, 2015). By collecting the participants' experiences and reflections, I have interpreted their stories within the realm of the transformative learning process.

Taylor (1998) argues that transformative learning literatures are littered with interpretative paradigm of study and states that to have a holistic vision of transformative learning research in a positivist approach—primarily suggesting employing a quantitative method—ought to be undertaken. Certainly, there are doctoral theses that have incorporated mixed methodology (Beckett, 2018; Fullerton, 2010). The theses demonstrate that a certain percentage of people experienced transformative learning. However, I find that just knowing that transformative learning has occurred does not give us a complete understanding of the process. Mezirow, Taylor, Dirkx, Cranton, and others, based transformative learning theory on a constructivist approach. Removing the distinct realities and the uniqueness of the experience of people from TL research confines our understanding. Transformative learning literature needs to bring human into the equation of research. Thus, I deploy an interpretative paradigm in my inquiry to divulge my participants' lived experiences of transformation.

Case Study Research Design

A case study is commonly used to examine an individual, social group, or a specific phenomenon in scrutiny. It is a detailed, complex, wide, and holistic understanding of the phenomenon under study that can be unravelled by deploying various methods (T. P. Bhatta, 2018). (Yin, 2018) while suggesting when to use a case study as research design gives twofold reasons. First, a case study should look to explain some social phenomenon work, specifically 'how' or 'why' questions. Moreover, Bhatta (2018) states that by trying to answer how or why questions we delve into a deeper and more nuanced understanding of the theme of the study. My study is tethered to explore how volunteers experience transformation in ICS, fitting the first criteria. Secondly, Yin adds, that case study methods ought to be deployed for an extensive and in-depth exploration of the phenomenon under study. My research aims to understand the transformation from different theoretical lenses and explore transformation bringing in rich lived experiences from my diverse participants.

Yin (2018) points out five components of case study research design: research question, proposition, defining and bounding the case, linking data to the proposition, and criteria for interpreting the strength of the finding. I have described the form of question my study takes on in the previous paragraph, clarifying the nature of the case study as explorative as it is trying to explore how volunteers experience transformative learning (Baxter & Jack, 2015; Zainal, 2007). Secondly, Yin suggests having a study proposition to guide the scope of the study. I have based my study on the proposition that volunteers' transformative learning, being an immensely individual experience, can occur via eclectic

means; therefore, I have envisaged transformative experiences with various theoretical lenses.

Thirdly, defining and bounding cases is the most important aspect of designing a case study. Yin (2004) defines a case as "the real-life set of events from which data will be drawn…and the 'case study' is the substance of research inquiry, consisting of your research questions, theoretical perspectives, empirical findings, interpretations, and conclusions (p. 14)". The main challenge of case study research is to define the unit of analysis or the case. Yin (2018) offers a two-step guide for it: defining the case and bounding the case. To define a case, Yin (2018) states to focus on the person or persons that we are trying to study. In my research, they are former ICS volunteers from Raleigh International. I have not analysed the staff or organisation of Raleigh International, the ICS venture, or the community of volunteer placement to bound my case (Baxter & Jack, 2015). I chose former ICS volunteers as my case since the ICS programme is designed for the volunteers and it is the volunteers that go through the transformative process.

Likewise, the boundary should be a substantive delimiting factor that plays a vital role in defining the case. Through this process of defining, the end unit of analysis should be "a real-world phenomenon that has some concrete manifestation" (Yin, 2018, p. 71). In my context, it is the phenomenon of transformative learning. Thus, my unit of analysis is Raleigh International's ICS volunteers that have undergone transformative learning and my case is ICS volunteers.

Fourthly, how our data has been analysed needs to be defined. I used coding to categorise the data and interpret the result based on various themes that have been derived from the result. A detailed description is provided in the data organisation section

of the study. Interpreting the case study's strength is the last requirement. Yin (2018) only elaborates on analysing the strength of a quantitative case study design. Since my approach is qualitative, my strength and quality of the research are elaborated on the quality standard theme of my dissertation.

Purposive Participant Selection

Defined by my ontological, epistemological, axiological, and research paradigm I have employed purposive selection of participants. Seawnght and Gerring (2008) write about the risk of adopting random sampling in a small sample where we might end up with participants that might not be the right fit as defined in our unit of analysis. I deemed purposive selection the most befitting for two reasons. First, it allowed to carefully select my participants based on my unit of analysis. Secondly, transformative learning is unique and incredibly personal. To establish a degree of comfort so that the participants, without hesitation and with trust, can share their experiences with me, I selected the purposive technique. Guba and Lincoln (1982) state that purposive sampling also lets the researcher get quality information, strengthening the quality of the research.

Merriam and Tisdell (2015) voice that there should be a method of selecting participants in purposive sampling. I selected the participant based on their previous sharing of their volunteering experience with me either as their manager or colleague. Johnson et al. (2020) call it critical case sampling as only a few participants that have been through the experience can provide pertinent answers. Additionally, prior relationships with the participant also helped the interview process to be a positive experience where participants felt comfortable and enjoyed reflecting on their volunteering experience.

Research Participants

In the ICS programme, volunteer teams are formed by a mixture of UK (United Kingdom) and Nepali volunteers so I have replicated that in my study as well. From a total of eight participants, four were from the UK and four from Nepal. Moreover, as shown in table 2 in the ICS programme the volunteers are divided into two hierarchies: Team leaders and volunteers; therefore, half of my participants are team leaders and half are volunteers. To maintain the balance between team leaders and volunteers, half of the participants are team leaders and half are volunteers. In addition, I have also maintained two tier gender balance; nationality wise and designation wise. From each country and position, I have selected equal number of male and female participants. The participants have been given pseudonyms to maintain their confidentiality.

Table 2

Volunteer Role and Gender Distribution of Research Participants

Nepali Volunteers					UK Volunteers
Pseudonym	Role	Gender	Pseudonym	Role	Gender
Dartmoor	Team Leader	Male	Lhotse	Team Leader	Male
Brecon	Volunteer	Male	Annapurna	Team Leader	Female
Ochil	Team Leader	Female	Makalu	Volunteer	Male
Cheviot	Volunteer	Female	Nilgiri	Volunteer	Female

Participant Introduction

My participants come from varied backgrounds and therefore joined the ICS programme for specific reasons. To get to know more about them, I elaborate on why they joined the programme and what they hoped to achieve out of the experience.

Dartmoor

Dartmoor was an In-Country Team Leader who volunteered in the summer of 2019 at Gorkha. During the time he was a recent master's degree graduate was looking for something new to do. He was in search of a new challenge when he came across Raleigh. "I thought that instead of sitting and doing nothing for 3 months it is better to do the programme and do something useful for the community and for my personal development"he added. Dartmoor's second level of motivation to pursue ICS was that he would get an opportunity to work with a diverse team of national and international volunteers in a team setting. With regards to his achievement goal, Dartmoor did not have any high expectations. He elaborated "I just knew I will get a new experience and get to work with new people, I will get to build new networks. The main reason was I will be able to go to community and work."

Annapurna

Annapurna was a UKTL in the spring of 2019. She decided to be a volunteer because she"wanted to be doing work that was giving back to the environment or society or the world". ICS was offering everything that she was looking for at the time; working abroad, short-term volunteering experience, and managing a team. Annapurna stressed that team management experience was crucial for her and was a reason why she joined ICS. She wanted a substantive output such as team management experience to keep on

her CV. Additionally, being an undergraduate in International Development, Annapurna wanted to get back into the development field and ICS was offering the best way to gain experience in the area. However, she stressed her final words on this matter by stating "(I wanted to) do something worthwhile as well. I just wanted a sense of purpose, really."

Ochil

Ochil, an In-country Team Leader, did her volunteering in the Fall of 2017. Having just finished her bachelor's exam, she was sitting at home and applying for government jobs. Feeling the need to take a break from mundane routine, she said to herself:

Ugh! it is enough for now, I need some refreshment, something different. And I saw the volunteering opportunity. Before that I had not travelled much, so through this, I will get to travel and explore, So I joined ICS to utilise my free time.

Ochil joined the programme with no expected outcome. She wanted to do something and Raleigh just happened to be offering the position of ICS volunteer for three months in the community. Seeing the opportunity, she applied and got selected.

Lhotse

Lhotse has done ICS twice. First time was in Malawi as a volunteer in 2017 and second time in Nepal during Fall of 2019 as UK Team Leader. My inquiry with him was only associated with his time in Nepal. The first time he volunteered for ICS was mainly to get into the charity sector. The motivation for the second time was for his professional development as a team Leader rather than a volunteer. He also wanted to bolster his position in the development sector. Upon inquiring about his expectation, he stated:

I wanted to selfishly better myself. I saw it as a sort of purification process where

you're going out, you away from the westernised environment (for) three months

and you are going and improving yourself, becoming a better person. But also, I

wanted to make some kind of impact in a community.

Brecon

In the Fall of 2017, Brecon, an ICV, was not looking for a change and having just completed high school was not in any urgency to get a job. His elder sister forwarded the Raleigh ICS vacancy and was encouraged to apply. He applied the vacancy after studying the website. He though the opportunity looked fun and he had time on his hand. After applying, he said, his motive was to learn and experience something new. Furthermore, being associated with sporadic volunteering as a scout he knew his time would be better utilised. He went in with just two expectations which he described as:

A Nepali youth working and living with UK volunteers for 3 months, it will

improve my English. My expectation was how will I work with them. Let us say

it was a fear factor. But I did not expect any drastic change, I had low

expectations.

Makalu

Makalu, a UKV, was on a gap year. He was plagued with questions of his life and future plans. He overheard about ICS from his friend and go to know that he would get to travel outside the UK and meet new people. The experience sounded like something he needed and would enjoy. He applied and became a volunteer for the 2019 Spring cycle. When Makalu first applied, he did not have any expectations of the programme. He elaborated

I was thinking I want to go travelling. I wanted to see more of the world. I

wanted, you know, uh, to have some independence from my family and from

what I am used to. Um, and I think I was sort of craving just like my own agency

a bit in, uh, in the world.

However, after being in Nepal he says to him the programme became about

connections with each other and making relationships.

Cheviot

Being a student of social work, Cheviot was involved in volunteering and social

work. When she first heard about Raleigh, she knew she had to do it. She said, "I had this

notion strongly in me that I wanted to be someone in my life and do positive things for

my community". Furthermore, hailing from the Terai part of Nepal, a Kathmandu-based

organisation and providing opportunities, especially for young people was a big deal for

her. She did her placement work in the Autumn of 2018. Cheviot had a lot of

expectations of the programme. Firstly, she wanted to improve her English skill but she

also wanted to be a leader and development professional. She accounted:

I thought by doing ICS I would learn something like how to communicate

properly and how to conduct programmes. I had never run any programmes, now

there is a difference between giving presentations in class and going to the

community and running sessions there.

Nilgiri

Nilgiri was familiar with Raleigh's volunteering programme owing to the fact that

her parents and family members had volunteered from Raleigh. From the stories she had

been hearing since childhood, she knew she had to join the programme for the

experience. She decided to take a gap year before starting her bachelors in the UK realising a need to take a break from studies and applied to be a volunteer. Nilgiri expected to meet young people like her in the programme. She deliberated

> I was kind of expecting to meet a lot of people who were quite like me in either a similar position, like transitioning from, um, secondary school to university, um, or kind of just young people, um, of my age, who were kind of had the same values and the same kind of passions. Um, so I kind of always knew that it would unite people who were quite similar.

Pre-Interview Steps

Before conducting the interview, I individually contacted my possible participants to inquire about their willingness, availability, and consent. I contacted them through phone calls and different social media such as WhatsApp, Facebook, and Instagram. I explained my research aim and how they can help with the research by being an interviewee for the semi-structured interview.

Informed Consent Form and Interview Guide

A detailed informed consent form and interview guide were sent to all participants via email. The consent form consisted of two sections. First, it informed about the research aim, objective, why the participants were selected, how the data confidentiality and privacy will be maintained, the process of giving and withdrawing the consent, and the complaints procedure. The second part consisted of the participant stating that they understand the first section and are willing participants in the research. Similarly, the interview guide was sent with a simple description of key definitions of terms I have used in my research so the participants can have a general understanding of the concept. It was

followed by a series of 17 questions that may come up in the interview process. However, it was reassured to the participants that since the interview is unstructured, it might not follow the sequence or that all the questions might not be covered or that they phrased differently during the interview. The interview guide was just a medium for the participants to reflect prior to the interviews and get comfortable with the type of questions that might come. The consent form and interview guide are found in appendices A and B respectively.

Context and Medium of Interview

My initial plan was to conduct physical interviews with all the national volunteers and virtual for the internationals. However, due to the sudden spike in COVID cases from mid-January 2022 till mid-February, government restrictions were imposed. Thus, I had to conduct all the interviews virtually. All the interviews were conducted via Kathmandu University's issued google meet to ensure data security. The university email also allowed me to video record the interviews directly with the written consent of my participants. But changes in Google's policy affected my final interview, which is why I could not video record the interview, and resorted to record audio through my smartphone. In the end, all the recorded interviews were moved to a secure file to which only I had access.

Pilot Interview

I carried out one pilot interview with a participant who was a former ICS volunteer but from a different ICS delivery agency. Since I did not have experience of conducting online interviews, the pilot interview enabled me to refine my questions that I posed to my participants and also helped me to gain confidence (Merriam & Tisdell,

2015). I also aided me to test and improve my digital technologies such as laptop and internet connectivity. No any data from the pilot interview was incorporated in this study.

Data Collection Process

Interpretivism and explorative case studies are based on participants' stories. Here, the data were gathered by deep and meaningful interaction with the participants. This was possible through in-depth interviews with the participants (Bhattacherjee, 2012). The interview was an in-depth, unstructured interview with guidelines based on the study's central idea. Since interpretivism requires us to understand the participants' experiences and the context of the experiences, an in-depth interview allowed me to interact with the participants to extract their stories and how they perceived certain events.

Unstructured Interview

Interviews become necessary when a study relies on understanding how people have experienced certain events in their life, or how they interpret their past or present life events (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). Interviews are a medium via which participants are given time to reflect on their experiences and tell their social reality as they experienced it (Zhang & Wildenmuth, 2009). Since I aimed to bring lived experiences from my participants and transformative learning as they experienced it with a plethora of lush stories, an unstructured interview was the best suited because it is not standardised and enables participants to share their experiences in any way they want. It also fitted with my interpretative research philosophy of multiple social realities formed by each individual.

Unstructured interviews rely on the relationship between the researcher and the participant and generally do not have a set standard or a predetermined line of questioning (Zhang & Wildenmuth, 2009). The questions evolve as how the participants answer the prior question which makes the interview similar to a natural conversation rather than a formal interview (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). Yin (2018) also calls for interviews under case study design to be "fluid rather than rigid" (p. 183). My prior relationship with the research participants helped to make the conversation more natural without requiring a long period of icebreakers and small talks. This also allowed me to ask nuanced questions about their volunteering experiences and initiate their sharing in the form of storytelling which started with why they decided to volunteer, their cherished memories, and their learnings. Nevertheless, an interview guide was sent to the participants before the interview as per their request. This also helped to curb any interview-related anxiety which often comes from not knowing the questions.

Document Analysis

I have employed document analysis as part of my case study research. Yin (2018) strongly recommends to use multiple sources of evidence to strengthen the findings of a case study. Merriam (1998)advocates for multiple techniques for data collection emphasising interviews, observations, and document analysis. Bowen (2009) defines document analysis as a systemic review of either offline (printed) or online to generate an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon under study. Document analysis also is a form of data triangulation (Merriam, 1998; Yin, 2018) and adds construct validity to a case study (Yin, 2018). Merriam (1998) and Yin (2018) define that any document that has been published such as magazine, newspapers, archival records, and more can be

included in the case study. Due to temporary closure and laws governing the internal ICS documents, I could not get of any unpublished institutionaldocuments. Therefore, in this study, I have reviewed two kinds of published documents that were available online; official impact reports published by the ICS and blogs from ICS's website. Keeping in mind the boundary of the case, the criteria for selecting blog were established as any blog that contained first person account, whether written by the volunteers themselves or volunteers' experiences written verbatim by others. I did not include any blogs that did not have first-hand account of the ICS volunteers. To select the blogs, I went through the ICS's website and read the blogs gingerly. Blogs that fit the criterion for selection were downloaded. A total of 23 documents were reviewed. Among them five were annual reports, one an overall programme report from 2011 to 2020, and 17 blog posts.

Data Organisation

I have used various tools to properly organise and present my data. In this section I describe how I have transcribed the interviews; the approaches of coding I have used for the interview and documents; and how I have categorised and thematised the data.

Transcribing

Transcribing is the first step in the analysis process (Lewis, 2019). I opted to transcribe the interviews as it is an essential part of generating analytical information from the narrative given by our participants (Nascimento & Steinbruch, 2019). I produced a full script of all the interviews. Transcribing the conversation by myself also enabled me fully immerse myself in the data which was useful (Hancock et al., 2009).

Nascimento and Steinbruch (2019) write that researchers must clarify the norms made during transcribing to truly capture the emotion of the conversation. The first

consideration I had to make was translating the interviews that were spoken in Nepali to English. Transcribing Nepali interviews took the most time as they had to be translated too. Moreover, the pauses, hesitations, and signals in Nepali are different than in English so I also had to contextualise and make them coherent in the English language. In general, when participants said something with a lot of emotions or emphasis, I capitalised the word(s). To further convey emotions and physical affectations, I have described how the sentence was said and what type of physical affectations was done by my participant. While reporting the participants' answers verbatim in my study, I have used a bracket to clarify any missing context. I have included fillers such as *um, ah* as used by the participant. I have corrected major grammatical errors that happened during transcribing and translating accounts from Nepali participants.

Coding

Code is a word or a phrase that has been assigned to a portion of the transcript that pertinently fits with the characteristic meaning (as defined by the researcher) of the section of the transcript (Saldana, 2016). Code gives a tacit summary of the idea or a particular theme that the transcript section is assigned to present. I engaged in three levels of coding for data from interviews and documents; attribute coding, open coding or initial coding, and axial coding (Saldana, 2016). For the attribute coding, I included basic descriptions such as pseudonyms (but not in case of document analysis for reasons mentioned in the ethical consideration subheading) of the participant, medium, nationality, gender, date and time of the interview, date, and area of volunteering. For the main body of the transcript, I used open coding by employing either a single word or a short phrase. The code words were, at first, directly selected from my theoretical

framework which allowed me to find patterns easily. Nevertheless, I also had to generate code words outside the words defined by transformation theories to incorporate a rich variety of answers. (Saldana, 2016) states coding as a heuristic process. I frequently added or edited the code as I interacted with the data.

Categorising and Thematising

Vaismoradi et al. (2016) write that categorisation is the explicit overlapping of the participants' stories on a descriptive level. Categorising data precedes thematising. Categories help to thematise the data and draw meaningful analysis. In my study, I have used three components for the process of categorisation viz. origination, verification, and nomination. For the organisation of categories, I relied on my readings of the accounts of the participants. Reading and analysing their accounts I divided parts of their stories that explicitly overlapped with each other such as their general experience in the ICS programme, moments of realisation or emotions and so on. Secondly, to support the creation of the categories I relied on rational reasoning and reflection by thinking if the categories are distinct, understandable, and whether they clearly convey the participants' stories. Finally, I used the accounts detailed by the themes to guide the process of nomination.

Similarly, to discuss the data, I engaged in thematic analysis using the salient features of the participants' accounts (Labra et al., 2020; Vaismoradi et al., 2016). Labra et al. (2020) describe five phases of generating a theme beginning with familiarisation with data, coding, looking for similar themes, reviewing them, naming, and finally discussing the results. I employed a mixture of the phases based on my intuition about what the data was telling me, since the storyline of the participants is of the utmost

importance to convey under the themes (Vaismoradi et al., 2016). I also relied on the theoretical propositions of transformative learning to develop themes and sub-themes.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

Guided by my interpretative paradigm, I have analysed the data under various themes and subthemes derived from the participants' accounts fitting with my theoretical propositions. I heavily engaged myself in critical self-reflection while checking and auditing the analysis of the data (Elliott & Timulak, 2005). The data analysis was assisted by the categories, codes, and themes that I had previously derived. I used Vaismoradi et al. (2016)'s method of developing a storyline to analyse my data. Willis (2007) contends that the storytelling method can fetch more perspective and reflectivity from the researcher. I have also richly narrated the stories of my participants to draw pertinent interpretations (Rose & Johnson, 2020). I ultimately depended on the transformative learning theories to generate valid interpretations. Since transformative learning experiences are subjective, I employed three primary theories of Mezirow, Dirkx, and Taylor and interpreted them under the umbrella of Cranton and Taylor (2012)'s integrated approach.

Quality Standards

An academic dissertation must have the highest level of quality or trustworthiness. Rose and Johnson (2020) define trustworthiness as "the overall impression of quality associated with a research endeavour" (p. 432). Qualitative research can maintain the highest level of quality through a robust process of data collection and analysis (Lewis, 2019). Rose and Johnson (2020) opine that the reliability of qualitative

research can be strengthened by subjectivity, positionality, critical reflectivity, and rich narration.

Critical Reflectivity, Subjectivity, and Positionality

Ormston et al. (2013) imply that the researcher's values can seep into the research. While a rationalist might try to be as objective as possible, I embraced the route of opening my subjectivity and position in my study. Willis (2007), borrowing words from feminist authors, says that to portray fully disentomb researcher's subjectivity, they need to make our race, culture, gender, beliefs, assumptions, behaviours, and choices clear. In other words, researchers or obliged make their position clear on matters that can affect the research. I have made my values associated with the research abundantly clear while elaborating on my axiology. Ngozwana (2018) states that subjective positionality in choosing research participants and areas should also be clarified. For my purposive sampling, I selected participants whom I know personally while they were employed or volunteered in Raleigh International's ICS programme. My reason for selecting Raleigh International was that I volunteered for Raleigh and was an employee for one and half years. The reason for conducting this study also stems from the value of my association. To uphold critical reflectivity, I have questioned my value, beliefs, and assumptions, and made my positionality transparent throughout the research (Baxter & Jack, 2015).

Rich Narration

Throughout my results, I have given a plethora of space for the voice of the participants. A rich narration is detail oriented and gives us an in-depth understanding of the research context, the participants, and the data (Rose & Johnson, 2020). From the data

I have collected I have extracted the participants' voices that are befitting to the interpretative paradigm.

Ethical Orientation

Academic rigour is also strengthened by the ethics of the research. In their literature review, Udo-akang (2013) identifies five pillars of research ethics: informed consent and no harm (Bhattacherjee, 2012); confidentiality and privacy; data handling and reporting; and plagiarism. I will be using the four pillars of ethics.

Informed Consent and No Harm

I took written and verbal informed consent from my participants prior to their interview. A consent form with research topics and possible questions were sent to the participants before the interview date. The participants were made clear that they could withdraw or stop the interview at any time or not disclose any information that they were not comfortable telling, or ask for withdrawal of their account before the interview data was anonymised (Bhattacherjee, 2012).

Confidentiality and Privacy

Confidentiality means keeping the research participants anonymous or keeping the privacy of the research participants (Udo-akang, 2013). To ascertain the confidentiality and privacy of my participants, I gave pseudonyms to participants and have not provided any specific identifying details of the participants, for example, their current location, in my dissertation. Additionally, the provision of anonymity was explained in the consent form. To ensure the privacy of the participants, the data analysis was done only by me and I ensured nobody else had (or has) access to the data (Bhattacherjee, 2012). However, in document analysis, it was harder to ensure

anonymityof the participants since in the documents the name of the author, and name of the volunteer whose experience has been accounted in the documents are explicit. In cases of most blogs, the writers and the volunteers are the same person. Thus, their last name is present while citing the document. Some were authored by the ICS staff. To ensure anonymity in the text (although access via link in the reference section can make the name of the volunteer explicit) I have not used the names but used the term volunteer. This provision was applied to blogs written by the volunteers and the staff, ensuring anonymity from the citation since that cannot be avoided.

Data Handling and Reporting

Udo-akang (2013) states that research ethics should be maintained while analysing, handling, and reporting the data. Moreover, cherry-picking the data, not reporting the data that conflicts with the researcher's understanding, and falsifying data (Yin, 2018) violates the ethical standard of the research. To ensure the quality standard I have reported stories that were told by my participants. I have not made any inference as to what they might or might not have said without proper clarification. To convey the true meaning of the answers given by my participants, I have used bracketing to add any clarifying words or phrases where meaning might be lost without the context.

Plagiarism

Yin (2018) writes that not plagiarising is an ethical standard that each researcher must follow; a universal quality standard that every academic work is held accountable to. Udo-akang (2013) links plagiarism with cheating and illegal activity. Here, I have followed APA 7th guideline and cited works diligently and true to my best knowledge to avoid plagiarism.

Chapter Summary

Under the interpretative paradigm, I have oriented myself with cultural relativism and constructivist epistemology. I have clarified the different values I vary as a researcher, the primary being that I was an ICS volunteer myself. I used purposive sampling and conducted unstructured interviews via a virtual medium with my participants whom I knew while I was volunteering and working with them at Raleigh International. I duly gathered their consent for the interview. After, I transcribed the data and coded them. The categorisation, thematization, and analysis of data were done by my rational reflection and guided by the theoretical proposition. To maintain the quality standards of the study I have used my reflectivity, brought in my subjectivity, and positionality, and richly narrated the participants' accounts. To maintain the ethical norms, I asked for participants' consent, used pseudonyms and avoided any identifying details. I also kept my data secure and was truthful while reporting standards of APA format.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

Chapter Overview

Bringing in the lived experiences, reflections, and emotions of my research

participants, in this chapter, I recount the stories guided by my central research question:

how do ICS volunteers experience transformative learning? I divide this chapter into two

major sections. First, I relay how my participants recall their general ICS experience.

Secondly, under the theme of the research question, I recount my participants' stories to

answer it. I fetch the stories of each participant and construct their narrative under the

interpretation of themes and sub-themes.

The ICS Experience

Under this theme, I bring the experiences of my participants on their ICS

placement. The themes envelop participants description of what transpired during their

ICS placement. Their feelings regarding to their roles and how they view the changes in

themselves after encountering the highs and lows of volunteering in ICS programme. The

theme is divided into two sub-themes. The sub-theme 'connections' assembles account of

participants that felt that their team or community or any other relation during ICS was

their best experience. The second sub-theme personal development tells the stories of

participants that feel that their improvement has been the highlight of the ICS.

Connections

Everyone felt somewhat differently about their ICS experience. Annapurna

described her experience as "mental" and explained that it was challenging in both

positive and negative ways but was an educational experience overall. She elaborated that ICS was "quite spontaneous, even though it was like quite sort of thought out"she closed and opened her hand to show that it was all planned and continued:

> Out and there was like a process you NEVER knew what was gonna happen from day to day. Like for, it was just, I guess, surprising, um… Like super interesting and just like, I guess, like living, learning to live in a community, um, and spending time with people who are so far apart from the world that you kind of live in and not being able. I think the, the, the most amazing thing for me was not being able to share the language, but yet form incredible bonds.

Reminiscing on the experience, it is clear that she valued the bond that she made during the ICS period, albeit they were full of struggles. Remembering her host father, Annapurna clasped her cheeks with both of her hands, signalling nostalgia. Even though she could never eloquently talk in Nepali with her host family and the conversation always flowed via her ICTL counterparts, she had formed a bond with the host family and that affection has not dwindled in four years. Even though she could never eloquently converse, Annapurna bonded with her host family.Adie (2017) and Mckee (2020b) mentioned that bonds between volunteers and their counterparts and community is formed during the course of the project.

Annapurna also valued her relationship with her counterpart team leaders. Volunteers have stated that they made friends for life with their counterparts (Mckee, 2020b). It gave Annapurna a new perspective on how people worked in different cultures. Working in a team made her feel "like, it was really, it wasn't about you...It was never really about us. It was always about the team, the project…". She indicated that while

being a team leader, she felt that she worked for something higher than just herself, although she admitted to her development and transformation, it was not just about herself, it was for others. This was the result of the altruistic pathway that she embraced using pastoral leadership style.

The importance of teamwork and kinship between team members was shared by Dartmoor as well. Dartmoor did not join ICS to make connections, instead, it was just utilisation of free time, community work, and personal development. He said, "I worked with a team, I lead a team and leading a team is not an easy task saying simply"he gave a knowing smile to me, indicating that it was a difficult task. I reciprocate as I knew the challenges he was speaking of from my experience as a team leader. He further added:

> They [Raleigh] have left a team in a community and said that the team is under you. And to lead a team without encountering major conflicts and arguments, I had not thought that I would be able to do it. At the end, when I saw other teams…I was surprised and that that is a major one.

He smiled and shook his head demonstrating that he did not believe that he was be able to accomplish that. Since there are restrictions on how team leaders can interact with volunteers and how much authority they have over them, Dartmoor contends that team leaders are given enormous responsibility for the general health and safety of volunteers. Even the most seasoned managers may find this responsibility to be daunting.

Furthermore, it is well known that managing multiple personalities, nationality, culturally, and ideologically diverse teenagers is demanding in a multitudinous way. Dartmoor had an additional challenge of management, he said:

To lead such a diverse team and we two team leaders were Nepali with no UK

team leaders. If we had another UK team leader, we would have a support. We

were just Nepali…and thefirst time leading such diverse team.

Not having a UK team leader in the team was a hurdle. Being new to international

leadership, it was not easy to navigate the requirements and culture of foreign youths for

him. Someone who understood the dynamic would perhaps have made him slightly more

confident in leading them. Nevertheless, he and his in-country counterpart had to

circumvent it no matter what may arose. Dartmoor was proud of his accomplishment

early on and realised his achievement during mid-phase review when he got to share and

hear team experiences and knew that he was managing the team well.

Team, counterparts, and community are indispensable part of ICS journey.

Volunteers must work in a united team and the project's financial beneficiaries are the

community members. This companionship must be intact for approximately three months

in very close quarters. I found that ICS's uniqueness is entrenched in this system of

companionship where without one pillar, the programme crumbles, and volunteers are

aware of the fragility it poses (I cannot make a blanket statement that all volunteers

respect the connections but the importance of these pillars are conveyed to volunteers

during training). There was a symbiotic relationship among the connections where each

supports the other(ICS, 2017).

Personal Development

Volunteers valued their personal growth immensely. ICS (2017, 2018, 2019,

2021b) reports and personal accounts Mckee (2020a, 2020b)have emphasised on the most

valued personal developed such as rise in confidence, self-ability, self-esteem, and

conviction to better self and world around. My participants, Brecon and Cheviot described their ICS experience as life-changing. Brecon told that by doing ICS he has become more outgoing and extroverted. He said:

> Before this [ICS], during 12 [high school] I was introverted and… did not have many friends, I had not gone out of my house. Now being confined in the house for 1 week [he was in COVID home isolation during the interview] I am tensed already.

He laughed trying to diffuse the tension while contrasting and confessing the difference between himself pre and post ICS. "This is the drastic change in my personality and attitude that I find in myself"he confessed. Personal development, especially outspokenness and boost in confidence is not a new phenomenon. ICS (2021b) overall report states that 77% of the participants stated personal development as the top three placement achievements. Furthermore, nearly 50% of the volunteers reported a drastic change in confidence level. Brecon valued his sea change in personality and could see the difference between the past and present self.

Cheviot's development followed a different path. She had always been confident and outspoken but lacked the necessary skill. She always felt that she was at a disadvantage being from Terai region. Her formal education, which should have equipped her to deal in project management, failed her. She recounted in a sombre voice, "People in my life who are extremely close to me have said to me 'you can't do anything'. They saw me with such a lowly eye…saying nothing will happen from you, nothing will happen from you." She felt that not only was geography and education against her, but so were the people that were supposed to support her. Through the

encouragement of other volunteers and team leaders she encountered and the accomplishments in the ICS programme, she realised that she was indeed capable of doing good things, regardless of what people believed.

Makalu called the ICS experience a "blessing of life!", he was proud of the achievements he accumulated during his placement "whether I grew or just developed or changed, you know…I think it was for the better… I could never be mad or upset that my perspective was, you know [changed], um, yeah, totally happy with it. Totally happy!" He experienced positive development in his attitude towards different cultures and brought multicultural learning into his daily life. He was jubilant for the changes that ICS ushered and does not regret any of the learnings of the time. Volunteers have described the experience as "…incredible, life changing" (Mccall, 2020, para 6) and "once in a lifetime experience" (Mckee, 2020a).

The ICS experience was unique but thoroughly challenging. Volunteers joined the programme expecting it to be somewhat difficult but the scope of duty and the randomness of the challenge made it unpredictable. Volunteers had to struggle through issues that they never imagined they would encounter. These random events made them appreciate different things and arguably added to it being a memorable experience. Teamwork and kinship between the volunteers were immensely important to make ICS an enriching experience. Volunteers found support in one another. They also challenged one another to expand each other's horizons. Furthermore, the kinship developed with community members and a leadership role helped in lessening the feeling of otherness and in drove a more selfless feeling in volunteers. They pushed one another to try new things and it expanded volunteers' confidence and personal development.

How do ICS volunteers experience transformative learning?

Under the umbrella of the research question, I draw my participants' lived experiences to answer it. The stories are categorised under five major themes: the reckoning of ideals, inheritance of assumptions, the overcoming, revision of attitudes, and knowing thyself. Each theme divulges the unique encounters of challenges, reflection, behaviour change, and emotions that the participants lived through. The themes coherently describe the moments where their assumptions were changed, what they did afterward, and the experiences that manifested their true clandestine self.

The Reckoning of Ideals

This theme brings stories of participants who had to deal with the unknown. The theme is divided into two sub-themes: first, the lens of perspective and second, what makes a leader. The first sub-theme brings experiences of participants that used to see other people from a limited point of view. Likewise, in the second sub-theme accounts participants who had a narrow understanding of leadership is relayed.

Lens of Perspective

ICS challenged volunteers' ideals in different ways. As team and kinship are major part of the ICS journey, Nilgiri was challenged by her peers but it was not an *ad hominem* attack. When a team's mutual understanding is low or when the team is ready to move a step forward in their bonding, Raleigh ICS team leaders are trained in a group tool called life shield. In life shield, a safe and compact space is created in the team where volunteers write down and share their past, present, and future aspirations along with what they want to work on themselves, what they love about themselves, and a life motto they recognise with. Nilgiri described the experience as, "…um, I found that that

was like a very, like, that was a very intense and very profound experience, I think for everyone."Nilgiri described herself as someone who had a very strong reaction to things. She saw situations from her perspective and had immense difficulty understanding why people behaved in some way and she did not account for how her reaction to events would affect other people. She let emotions get the better of her and affected her ability to deal with sensitive situations.

Bradley (2017) wrote that in ICS it is expected of volunteers to live with host family in the placement community and work and share room with fellow volunteers. This, for majority of volunteers is an entirely new experience where to fit in the new culture, volunteers need to talk with community members, organisational staffs, other volunteers. They also need to follow the cultural norms of the community such as eat the food that is staple to the region. However, just culture and language are not new area that volunteers have to get used to. The living situations can be dire in some communities with no electricity, bed, or housing damaged due to disasters (England, 2018). Additionally, UK volunteers have to rise above the identity of being "just more white people" (ICS, 2017, Growing unto the role section) and local volunteers have to make themselves known more than just translators for the UK volunteers.

Dartmoor had to deal with his cultural assumptions about the UK volunteers and how he generally interacted with other people. Having never worked with people from the west, he was sceptical about how they would treat Nepali volunteers. He said:

Firstly, [I felt] they would not listen to the stuff that we say. They come

from…um…developed countries; they have different ways of thinking. They

might not understand the local context and the issues of community, even after explaining they just might not want to understand.

He realised his assumption was faulty just after three-four days of reaching the community. Realisation dawned on him slowly. It was during team-building exercises and conversations he learned their reason for coming to Nepal and the approach they were bringing with them. "They came to learn things" he added, "to stay together and work in a team."He regretted his stereotypical assumption that the UK volunteers would grandstand. With pursed lips and an uncomfortable smile, he admitted "I felt like my thinking was narrow." He looked away from me, hiding his understated embarrassment of past assumptions. He also supplemented that during a one-to-one conversation with one of his volunteers, there was a moment where he questioned his interaction technique with other people. He realised that he had lacked the tact of understanding and communicating with his peers in a better way. Dartmoor lamented the fact that not understanding his peers' perspectives had cost him much of conversations that would have been fruitful to him and would have helped him understand them better.

Similarly, national volunteers when they encounter insufficiency in country such as UK, one of the richest in the world, are stupefied to see that poverty and despondency in form of homelessness exist in London too (Owino, 2018).Volunteers have testified to working with diverse group, despite diversity being low in international development, a positive because despite of seeing themselves as an outsider they are expected to "participate, share, and engage" with everyone in the team (Labeodan, 2020, para. 4).

Makalu revealed that his perspective and relationship with food and diet had a big clash. He remarked the contrast between food culture in the UK and especially that of

rural Nepal is glaring. It is extremely difficult even to get a fresh seasonal vegetable in the volunteers' placement area which means that every meal is cherished and getting fresh vegetables becomes a meal of joy whether it be a family meal or a party. Makalu added:

> It felt more humane and also the sharing of food in like a very much a community style, uh…, which is more than just about money. It's also about consuming food, how you feel when you consume food. Um, just the, the kind of spiritual nature of food, you know, thankfulness and, um, and um feeling…feeling as though it's more of a blessing…

In hindsight, Makalu felt bad and shameful that he was not treating the food culture in Nepal as he thought he should have treated. He accounted "it took me a REALLY long time to realise, like, I need to be responsible for what I'm eating." It had started to affect his health and created anxiety around food. Adding to the culture of openly discussing aspects of food such as how much you eat and candidly talking about weight, heavily contrasted with the indirect style of conversation he was accustomed in the UK. He said, "As soon as someone asks me a direct question, my back's up against the wall" he leaned back demonstrating how difficult the conversations around food it was for him and diffused the tension with a laugh. Community culture of food is contracting to the UK volunteers as Curry (2017) states, "In Nepal people share everything, especially food, which is a lovely quality" (para. 9), indicating that sharing of food in communal manner every day is not so prevalent in UK's culture.

The presuppositions that volunteers carry shaped their behaviour. These behaviours manifested themselves as a way of thinking, doing, or acting in certain

situations. Especially in circumstances that directly triggered volunteers' assumptions, volunteers' way of acting bubbled up to shield the volunteers from the new stimulus. I found that these stimuli were more active in a new environment of volunteering. Nilgiri had to live with strangers who were unfamiliar with her way of acting. Dartmoor had to live and manage a team of UK youths. Makalu's concept of food and his food related habits would be considered odd and something new in rural Nepal. Each volunteer's assumption came directly into play because the environment afflicted their ideals. This clash between personal ethos with a more comprehensive view of the world sparked a reckoning of their ideals and forced to re-examine them.

What Makes a Leader?

Having to lead a young team is an arduous task. Lhotse began to feel the burden of his own leadership approach and had a mental health issue. Lhotse had a picturesque view of how a team ought to be when he had to deal with the nitty-gritty of managing a diverse and difficult team. He revealed, "There were times where I struggled and it really taught me more about myself and how I work and how I should maybe, you know, not expect too much perhaps from my team." When a volunteer misbehaved and Lhotse lost his temper and he disciplined her in front of the team. Volunteers in his team raised questions to his leadership regarding unequal treatment of volunteers by Lhotse. Furthermore, Lhotse's counterpart, Kishor (pseudonym), had a very different style of leadership. While Lhotse always wanted to be in control of his team, Kishor had a *laissez-faire* attitude. It created a conflicting style among the team leader counterparts and the tension was picked up by the team. Lhotse felt more vulnerable and unsure of himself:

It made me feel like I did not have respect, you know, as a leader, it just made me feel like, um, I've come to be a team leader, but they, they're not respecting. Um, it made me feel like, should I be continuing on project? And it made me feel distant from the team.

Although being in a group he felt lonely and not understood by the team. He further added, "It was moving away from the goals of the project and moving away from passion for the project." He felt that the team was taking their time and it was delaying the project. Also, Lhotse's counterpart being "chill" made the team further away from the stipulated project goal. That made Lhotse more distant from the team which ultimately led to the decline of his mental health. Because of the decline in mental health, he was brought to the country office (Kathmandu) for a week's break, rest, rejuvenation, most importantly mental health counselling.

Cheviot told a similar story of her dilemma on how she thought a leader was supposed act. Being a weekly leader and coming face to face with the task of leading with all that entailed was her waking moment. Her concept of a leader was a single authority figure who "just tells people what to do" and someone who "just go and do it and watch the team."Cheviot gestured her hand as if dismissing someone, showing how egregious her presupposition of leaders was. After arriving at her placement community and seeing all the work that goes into making strategy, plan, and schedule, it was her moment of realisation. The nuances of leading a team were missed by her before, and she generally had a negative attitude toward leaders. Observing a pastoral leader in action made her pity herself and previous lack of opportunities to see such leadership in action.

Similarly, Annapurna had plethora of experience with a micro-managing leader. She explained her dilemma of encountering micromanaging leader:

We'd get asked to do something and then it, it just sort of like the constant check-ins or the constant, like feeling watched and it just makes, it does make you feel like you don't, you, you can't do your job properly.

She realised that she had been slowly inheriting the micromanaging style and did not want to turn into a micromanager:

To be fair. I think I was a bit like that during ICS as well, but but I think I did it privately. So like, I'd have my list that in my book that I carried around with me everywhere and just making sure I was ticking things off.

To quote Shakespeare's famous line from play Henry "uneasy lies the head that wears the crown". ICS was essentially a leadership journey where young people get to experience the cumbersome task of being a leader. Volunteers' perception of what a leader is and how they are supposed to act came into direct conflict with aspects of leadership that they have never practiced before or practiced without critical thoughts. The crash of a rigid concept of leadership with requirement of a more fluid one in ICS, caused distress within the volunteers. Since, leadership was the primary goal the two hierarchies of volunteers get to practice it in different ways. For team leaders, Lhotse and Annapurna, it was an everyday battle with their past and present. On the other hand, for volunteer Cheviot, it was while being a weekly leader, a circumstance where she had no option but to be a leader and reckon with her assumptions.

The Inheritance of Assumptions

To fill in the gap of the previous theme, how the participants acquired their particular worldview is explored here. Two overarching themes were found. Participants inherited their behaviour or way of thinking from family and larger national culture. Secondly, they were impressed by messaging on the mass media and leaders and leadership are portrayed in general.

Family and National Culture

Nilgiri's strong reaction to people came from her family dynamic. She attested it by laughing uncomfortably, denoting that it was a difficult topic for her to speak about:

Like, um, it's, you know, kind of arguing and things when I was growing up, like it was quite common. Um, so I think as a, um, that made me very comfortable with just kind of very out rightly expressing my emotions. Um, and I don't know. I think that that's, I kind of take after my mom, I think with that, cuz she's quite similar.

Growing up with a confrontational style of interaction around her household similarly shaped her conversation style. Copying her parents' regular method of dealings, especially during times of confrontation made Nilgiri comfortable with the style.

Dartmoor said his scepticism of the UK volunteers arose from the general stereotype that people in Nepal have about foreigners. He inherited habits and attitudes from larger national culture. Makalu affirmed:

For me in the west with my childhood. There's been a lot of, uh, input around weight and diet and like how you look...I was still attached to like similar ideals around food and like, uh, not having too much food.

He also added that the food culture around the UK is very grab-and-go style "if you have food on your plate, you can scrape it in the bin if you are full". Food is regarded as something that affects your weight in the UK. The food culture of the UK uncritically made him assume that he was in control of himself, which necessarily is not bad. But Makalu felt he had better control of himself, only if he went to bed hungry.

The saying "it takes a village to raise a child" imply that upbringing is shaped not just by the ideals of the family but by the wider society. Volunteers' beliefs that were challenged came from family practice and wider society. Nilgiri acquired her defensive conversational tactic from her mother, the first source of teaching and whose values influence life. Dartmoor's stereotype is pervasive in Nepali society. These views seeped into volunteers and moulded their actions and assumptions into adulthood.

Media and the General Culture of Leadership

Although this was the second time Lhotse was volunteering for ICS (the first time was from a different organisation) his idea of a team stemmed from mass media and communication materials:

> It's just a romanticised vision that you have, you probably see it in, you know, these advertisements or these, these on, you know, online or where you see that these projects or, or even advertisements for value or even advertisements for any, you know.

He laughed feeling foolish in hindsight and continued:

> They show you these things and you are expecting it to be like that all of the time, but it can't be, there's gonna be days with the team or team members have bad days. But, um, we, we did have those days where they were working together and

it wasn't perfect. Um, but it just wasn't that, that all of the time, and I think

definitely promotional material from Raleigh, definitely looking online at project

work and stuff. You just have this assumption. Okay. You know, these rose-tinted

glasses.

Lhotse's vision of how a team ought to be was not far-fetched from what media

and especially what the promotional materials from volunteering organisations are based

on. They had created a mirage of how a team should look and behave and how a leader

should act; pragmatic and on a pedestal. Lhotse framed his idea of leader and team

copying the lofty and unreasonable standards perpetrated by the media.

Thinking hard on how Cheviot acquired the concept of a leader who just dictates,

she pondered that her experience with a class monitor and how they were supposed to

keep the class in check reflected in her too. "Monitors were the don of class" she added,

"…Monitors always used to try to keep the class in their control. Not letting you talk.

And by saying I am the monitor they keep reinforcing that in front of everyone "she

puffed up her chest forward illustrating how monitors asserted their authority. Annapurna

acquired her concept of leadership from her previous job. She explained, "Like it's not so

much about the person being micromanaged more about the person doing the

micromanaging mm-hmm" in her previous job it was she that was being micromanaged

which is similar to the experience of Cheviot. Cheviot was being subjected to the

authority of the class monitor. Similarly, the image of leaders as "confident speaker,

someone to take the lead" have been found in other volunteers too (Weston, 2018, para

2).

However, Annapurna also suffers from anxiety and not knowing what comes next heightened her anxiety which in turn forced her to be in total control of her life. She attested that her need to know everything and be in control of everything also comes from her mental health.

Media has become inescapable. Advertising can be seen on every social media, news broadcast, newspaper, magazine, internet blog, and so on. It is not uncommon for volunteering organisations to paint a perfect picture of what a team is like and what working in a team will be, when the reality is drastically different. Similarly, even with the concept of what a leader should be like, volunteers learned from what they had seen previously. Close encounter with a leader shaped volunteer's image of a leader and they tried to replicate that. Moreover, the uncritical practice that volunteers inherited also formed a pattern of behaviour that they found consolation in and became a mechanism to soothe themselves.

The Overcoming

The participants' experiences of how they overcame their uncritical assumptions is explored in this theme. The theme covers how volunteers listened, observed, reflected, and gained competence on a different approach to their attitudes.

Listening and Reflecting

During the life shield exercise, there are certain rules that the volunteers must adhere to. Such as other volunteers cannot talk when the speaker is talking and volunteers are not supposed to judge the speaker. Volunteers open up about the adversities they have faced such as rape, abuse, abandonment, familial hardships, academic challenges, physical and mental health issues, relationships, and much more. Nilgiri stated that the

limitations imposed on the session made her listen to people more intensely and she has taken that as her lesson. ICS volunteers have emphasised that listening to others have broadened the way how they perceive others and have garnered new respect for people (Okorley, 2018). Presently, she allows herself to explore how she is feeling and the best way to communicate how she is feeling in a more empathetic way. She reflected on the situation more than just letting the heat of the moment get the best of her. She recalled one of her friends who was quick to react which would upset her and trigger her to react in the same manner.

Dartmoor shared his cynicism and the contrary evidence he faced with his team leader counterpart. His counterpart relayed that she had felt the same way and validated his feelings. He was not an alien in feeling unsure and was not alone in being confronted by the irrationality of it. With it came a change in how he interacted with his team members. He wanted to understand and support his team members better. He recalled:

> In ICS we have to conduct one-to-one. It happens daily. It became a good platform where we do 1-2-1 with someone each day trying to understand how they [volunteers] are, any difficulties they are facing, what are they learning...Having a regular daily conversation gave me a good opportunity to practise. Getting to do that I became proficient in the new structure of thinking from other perspective.

The repeated deep conversations helped him to know his peers well. He began to see people not just from his perspective but from the perspective of others.

Makalu took a long time to fit in with Nepali food culture that resulted in an internal conflict between the UK's and Nepali food culture. He sought help from his

peers. His first counterpart was not much help and assistance from other volunteers to ask for less food did not make him feel better. He was always riddled with feelings of guilt or shame towards his host family. Furthermore, the cultural clash of conversation around food did not help Makalu's case as his host mother's insistence that he eat more filled him with anxiety. However, realisation dawned on him slightly later after finishing ICS. He recounted, "That was a huge transition realising, you know, you have to take responsibility for how much food you can eat." He came to know that consuming food was in his hands and should not be influenced by the opinions or directions of others. He also said a huge change in perspective in his life was the respect he developed toward food and where it was coming from.

To overcome the invalid conventions volunteers employed strategies that saw to dissuade their held views. With the help of resources such as team sessions, mandatory individual checks, and having to assimilate into the host culture, helped to persuade against the volunteers' presuppositions. There were not any unique strategies that volunteers employed, in fact, they were just observations, heartfelt talking, and listening actively. The uniqueness existed in the sense that they were done without external force, malice, or judgement. Volunteers tried to learn and gain skill to make themselves better understand their surrounding by opening themselves to different perspectives by reflecting.

Mentoring and Reflection

ICS (2017) provides support to its volunteers and team leaders support in various form throughout the programme. Volunteers state that "safety net of great people and great support" enabled them to brave the challenges they encountered in the placement

(ICS, 2017). When (and before and after) Lhotse was at the country office, he received guidance, counselling, and constant feedback and support from his managers on how to approach situations differently. He said:

> And then having an open conversation with those, um, with the team about a the things that are setting us, the things that they're perhaps not happy with. And it was, it was candid, but it was tough at times to hear things. But it definitely helped me in that as well.

To remedy and alter his leadership style in a span of a few weeks was not an easy task. He asked himself "why am I like this? Why am I going through such struggles with sort of handling a project?"When he returned to the placement after a week break, he said he conducted a session where volunteers could write anonymous feedback about the team leaders on areas of improvement and what can be done differently, he began to see his team in a new light. "It became a natural process that I felt I could lead again because it be, I be, I, I valued them more. I think there was more value in the, the people rather than the project" he recalled excitedly. He began to enjoy the time spent with them and learned the value in people rather than the project alone. His more relaxed leadership style was noticed and appreciated by the team.

   Cheviot was gently mentored by her team leaders with the support of her teammates. She practised her leadership style while she was a weekly leader. Volunteers have stated that being a weekly leader was a platform for them to learn the "skill of being a leader" (p. 13). Cheviot confided:

> There was ICS and you had to be in team and there were team leaders and observed them how they are doing. You take example from them as well. We had

a UKTL and reallyyyyyy I really liked him. Personally, he was our leader but also after work was over, he used to talk with me and ask how I was, how I was feeling, If I was dissatisfied with something, if you are not [I was not] understanding anything, if there's something you wanted to share. He was very friendly!

She exclaimed as she observed something very new to her. "I realised a leader should be like that, they have to make a place in people's heart. They have to be the inspiration. That is a leader" she pointed her finger denoting that should be the standard of a leader. She further said, "I learnt that a leader means taking your team forward. And just because you are a leader does not mean that you have to be in the front"she moved her hand in front of the camera to demonstrate "it is also about taking a back seat" she retracted her hand back and continued:

And letting others lead too. And if someone ridicules someone's opinion and idea, a good leader solves those situations. Some people do not speak because they have fear of speaking, how to motivate those people to come and speak in the lead front, how to make them feel comfortable to share their ideas.

She implemented the ideologies she observed from her leaders and inculcated them when she was a weekly leader. It was her peers that helped her accomplish all the small tasks. Cheviot approached her friends in and out of the team to share her experiences and the lack of knowledge she had.

The confessed "massive control freak" Annapurna struggled to relinquish the control:

If I, if I don't think it will be done, like I, I always believe, and it's a really bad

way to be that if you can't like it's I have to do it. Um, cuz I'll be the one that does

it the best or the way I like it to be done.

However, at Raleigh team leaders are told that the volunteers should be in the lead

with team leaders gently guiding, mentoring, and coaching them. She attested to learning:

And I think it was, I learned like, I think, I can't remember where we read it or

where it was written, but, or what it might have been told to us in our training. But

the whole idea is to, um, for us to be made redundant by the end of the project.

So, like the team leaders are not gonna be needed and the project will be running

itself.

Team leader responsibility of leading from the back has been attested and they

have found that aspect to be difficult as well. (Sims, 2017) stated:

One of the best things about being a team leader is that you get the chance to

encourage and then witness young volunteers gaining new skills. The thing I

found most challenging in the beginning was taking a step back and allowing the

team to lead the project. Sometimes I have had to bite my tongue and allow the

team do things their way, even if it´s not the way I think things should have been

done.

Furthermore, when volunteers were not pulling on their weight and slacking off

Annapurna had to talk and explain their actions and way forward to them by being honest

and giving up the control to them:

I've never done this before, either…you'd need to be honest and transparent with

the volunteers to get the most out of them and like lead by example, um, and

create a culture. I think we were really good at creating a culture within the group where like they took it on.

Doing something that did not naturally come to her. However, the project demanded her to give up the control to the volunteers. She said that relinquishing the control helped her to learn more about leadership.

Annapurna also credited her counterparts, her managers and training that helped her to learn by doing. "I thought that was really important actually that we had our little, um, daily debriefs" she said emotionally recollecting the events where she and her counterparts gave each other feedback and discussed how they want to approach different situations. She recalled her training "I really like the way ICS teaches, cuz they teach you practically, visually you get into teams, you mix it up, you like swap about, and you're doing like activities."Annapurna began observing her managers during the training itself and recounted her process of learning:

> Like just watching them, they all had completely different styles. So, like learning
> by doing, by observing. Um, and then yes, just seeing how like, like what people
> do, how they do it and like taking bits from everyone and sort of, I think for me.

During the mid-phase review, she also got to observe and talk with team leaders of other teams and formed her opinion of her leadership style from there as well on what to do and what not to do.

For every tier of volunteers, there are mentors that are senior to them by designation and experience. The support is transferred via individual conversations, feedback, and training which is the backbone of the skill transference hierarchy. Managers of team leaders teach team leaders, team leaders teach volunteers, and

volunteers teach each other. However, skill transference is not just limited to the hierarchy. In fact, the lines of designations blur and the flow of learning is fluid.

Revision of Attitudes

After overcoming their inherited assumptions, this theme describes how the participants' worldview changed and how they have applied the changes to life after ICS. The theme is divided into two sub-themes where participants' perspective of seeing and empathising with other people is extrapolated and how volunteers have trusted people more in their leadership roles respectively.

Panoramic View

After the life shield session, Nilgiri had a profound shift of ideas on how to interact with other people. She opined:

Um...and I think ever since has made me a lot more tolerant of other people, um, and just kind of less quick to make, to form a judgement of someone… I feel like now I kind of like, I might be internally like upset with someone, but I won't let that come across in my communication with them before we've talked about the issue. Um, so I think it's just made my kind of approach to confrontation and conflict a lot healthier, um, because I can kind of, you know, salvage situations and kind of make amends with people, um, rather than kind of having a big argument and falling out or something like that.

Reflecting on three years, Nilgiri felt she acted very childishly before. Her responses are more measured now. She respects other people's feelings and situations, and does not resort to an emotional response.

Dartmoor's revised perspective on UK volunteers made it easier to work in a team. He explained that everything went smoothly and they became a close-knit team who shared everything. He asserted, "Everything went normally, there was no suspicion after that."His new perspective made understanding people and their roots better too, he explained:

When talking with the volunteers I used to know exactly what the person is thinking. If a volunteer was feeling down, I used to know the reason after a conversation. That has been a help for me now as well. People whom I work with I can discriminate where the person is from, how do they think, what are they thinking, how are they taking in the things I say. I always see from their perspective.

He smiled, proud of his accomplishment. He has applied the skill to see from another point of view in his general life and jobs after ICS and has made his interaction with people easier.

Bashir (2020) ascertained that volunteering as team leader helped to get a broad view of being a leader and the potential impact it would generate in community. A team leader said, "My experience being a team leader…helped me to see how I could be a leader, work in communications, present myself as an active citizen" (para. 9). This change in career vision, Bashir (2020) reported in volunteers as well who after acquiring skills in the ICS were "determined to stay involved" (para. 19) in various form of development.

Makalu's perspective and relationship with food have also transformed significantly. The healthy perspective toward food he gained during his ICS placement, he has applied in his current life. He ascertained:

I definitely have a new perspective on meat, meat industry, especially in the UK factory farming. I mean, we saw like such a raw and, um, uh, more, so much more humane relationships with, with meat [in Nepal] and you know, you are responsible for your food intake for whether whoever's cooking it for you. Whoever's providing you food. You're responsible for looking after it when it goes in your body. So that is a huge change in perspective in my life.

In the UK where the food comes in a tightly packed plastic bag to a more personal and homely relationship, Makalu's perspective shifted. He now inquires where his food comes from and has greater respect and appreciation for its producers. He knows that it is not just about people being slim but respecting the food, the producer, the cook, and one's own body when you consume it. Howson (2018b) stated that in ICS, after encountering the local community misconceptions, especially of the UK volunteers, regarding developing countries "have been challenged" (para. 9).

When volunteers hold a narrow perception of other people and that perception is challenged, it results in the opening of perspective. Widening of perspective brings in the internalisation of the problem of others. In other words, makes volunteers empathetic toward the plight of others. It cultivates reflexivity in volunteers which aids them in analysing the experiences, values, and cultures in a more rational light. The result of openness does not just limit to thinking for others but also volunteers cultivate healthy

relationships with themselves and others. They are no longer burdened by the values of the past.

Trust in People

Lhotse expected a team that always went above and beyond to do what was asked. If the requirement was to write one blog, he expected two, if the team was required to build 20 polytunnels, then he wanted 40. The erroneous level of undue expectancy was something he had to correct. After the break, he took on the role of an empathic leader rather than a manager, appreciating and rewarding his team. He understood where the team members were coming from and gave concessions where it was due. Before his break, he worried about every small foible of why the team was slightly late or why his twice multiplied target was not being reached. After the break he took "so much more empathetic approach "he added:

> I didn't feel like that bad guy anymore coming back…? If there's a situation, they probably did this because of this and because they had this, this reason and this experience and this problem…Like it's like maybe he did this because of this situation when he was younger and this and this…

Lhotse said that he was still learning and acquiring skills. He took a course of project management and tried a new job at Raleigh. In the new job, he attested, "That I was just an employer that I understood what it meant, meant to just be a worker again and what understood what it meant to be managed again."Later he took on a role of a manager at another charity where he is applying the things he learned and says is still learning.

Cheviot was recently a census supervisor in the 2021 Nepal census which was her advent into a position of a leader. "I felt it was a very big responsibility" she declared with a wide eye, somewhat still in disbelief and relayed:

Because it was on you to complete it. It is a leading role. There were 4-5 people that were working under me so I had to supervise them. But before that I had to prove myself…. I was always scared of one thing. I did not want to show that I was a supervisor. I have to show it through my work and not my position.

Her first instinct was not to rule by ordinance but to lead by doing. She recounted proudly on how she applied the skill in her life:

There were times that my team members did not take me seriously as their supervisor and that made me angry. But being a leader, I knew that I could not show my anger. My thinking was how to take this smoothly. It was really hard but I did it. I tried my best to treat everyone equally, not to hurt anyone's feelings and lead my team.

She took the lesson and training of patience and empathy from ICS and applied that in her new role. Volunteers have learned how to be a patient leaderin the ICS programme (Bashir, 2020). The new role for Cheviot was rife with difficulties but she pushed herself to be the best version that she could be. She called a team meeting to solve the problem of team member dropping out. However, she also had to meander through the uncooperative census office which did not extend any help.

"I learned a lot through ICS and now my approach would be like, just trust that they'll do the job right" Annapurna elaborated her new approach to leading a team "And support them where they need supporting, um, empower them to go to places they

wouldn't necessarily." Annapurna would have taken the route of focusing on the work rather than the people themselves. She realised that putting time into people and their personal development should be the focus of the leader "I'd make sure that like my team is trusted "she stated. Focusing on people and making sure that they are trusted to do their role and supporting them in carrying out their role is what makes a team work rather than solely focusing on work. In other words, "allowing people to shine is what being a leader means" (Weston, 2018, para. 9). Annapurna has taken the approach of having an exploratory conversation with people focusing on:

> Like how are you getting on? How are you finding things? Like, what's your, what are your next steps for your career? Like what can we do to help you get to where you need be, whether it's in this company or another company like that? We, I think a company or a manager that puts their people first, um, is a, a manager that will get, um, the best, best results.

> She has discovered a newfound value in people and her team members.

> Change, I discover, needs patience. To revise the habits that have been rooted for

years is a hard task. But when a positive change comes, and volunteers realise that it is a welcome change, it storms inside. The volunteers who had little trust in their team members started to trust the team more in completing the task. The team starts to flourish under emphatic leadership. Aleem (2017) also mentions that when volunteer's assumptions were confronted and began to see "people for who they are—people" (para. 2). When leaders start to trust in their team members, the same trust is reciprocated by the team. It not only corrects the unhelpful assumptions but ushers in a positive environment that helps in the volunteers' future.

Knowing Thyself

Brecon did not particularly have a direction in which he would take his education and career path. He was influenced by his friends during high school and went to the consensus that dipping his foot in business was the right path to take. "I had in my mind that I will study CA [Chartered Accountant]. But after ICS I realised that CA was not in my interest, I found CA useless "he laughed at the absurdity of the decision that he would have taken if he had not done ICS. He recalls the incident where he discovered "happiness and compassion was in my inner core."His placement area had a severe scarcity of water and being summer the drought was heavy. Further, the community was situated in high-altitude water dearer. He empathised with the community members in their ordeal of facing livelihood loss and health risks as a result of the scarcity. The team decided that it would be prudent to construct plastic ponds so the farmers could irrigate their fields during winter and summer. After finishing building a pond near a beneficiary house:

> The beneficiary's father called us near him and joining hands he thanked us saying to you it might feel like a small thing but it actually is a big deal for us. How he said it, made me very happy. I felt that getting such kind of happiness is difficult. Similar to the what happened with the grandfather, other community members started to share similar feelings while making their plastic ponds. Many even cried in front of us.

Brecon felt elated. He had not encountered such feelings regarding his work.He said excited:

Seeing such response of happiness, I felt like this is the kind of work that I should

be doing, it hit me. After that I felt if I incline my career towards development

work, I might not have much money but I will be happy, earning money is not a

big deal, my work should make me happy. This made me realise that I did not

want to study CA anymore.

Realising the elation that altruistic work can give him, he changed his career.

Rejecting offers of scholarship from Finland to study BBA, Brecon did his undergraduate

in social work and is currently working in a charity that empowers youth and fights

plastic pollution. He rested his case by saying:

I am very happy with my life now. Till now I haven't had any second thought that

what would happen if I had done CA. Or I could have gone to abroad I haven't

had such second thought till now. Haven't thought that did I make a mistake

coming into development field. I am enjoying whatever I am doing.

He had his friends and some family members tell him that he was making a big

mistake rejecting splendid offers, however, he finally knew what he wanted outside of the

influence of friends and family. Wholesome feeling in volunteers by the empathy of

community members is documented in ICS's blog. ICS volunteers have been inspired by

the generosity shown by the host families which in turn made volunteers feel "wanting to

do more" (Aleem, 2017, Challenging assumptions section). After a volunteer conducted

awareness session on disability rights, two disable community members approach the

volunteers and relayed their appreciation which inspired the volunteer to devote himself

to the cause of disability inclusion and support (Howson, 2018a). Similarly, when a

student expressed their gratitude towards a volunteer after conducting an effective session

in school the volunteer described the moment as "really high moment for me. I'll never forget that" (ICS, 2017, Growing into the role section).

Ochil recalled a similar story. Ochil came from a family of engineers and government jobholders and that was expected of her too. She joined BE in one of the prestigious engineering colleges in Nepal and was a good student. She wanted to work at NTC (Nepal Telecommunications) as it was regarded as a high prestige to work there. She was determined to get there and she laughed heartily while saying. A day after she got her bachelor's degree, she already had a job and she says she was a dedicated employee. "At that job I used to work like reach office at 10 bend your head down" she bent her head, chin touching chest "to see properly since I used to work in motherboards and they have very fine small components. And when there was a snack time at two o'clock then someone else had to call me" she shook her head as if someone is calling her from her deep reverie of work "I used to work that monotonously." To reach her destination as an engineer at NTC she started to prepare for the government examination but got bored and wanted a short recess where she decided to volunteer not knowing what was in store for her. She relived a crucial incident during her placement with me:

> Our team used to gather for bonfires and our cycle was autumn so during
> December UK volunteers used to teach us to sing carols. And there we used to sit
> and star gaze. From our community we could see milky way soooo so nicely. We
> used to take sleeping mat, lay down on it." She mimicked the action of laying
> down by lifting both hands, "we used to star gaze till 10-1 in that cold. At that
> time...uhh…you reflect back. What I did for this whole 3 years. Ohh I have come
> from where to where. How was I and how I have become?

She had found herself into a different person. She realised that she wanted to be involved in the development sector. Knowing what her heart wanted, she followed it and applied and got jobs in various development work and has not looked back ever since.

Chapter Summary

In this chapter, I have vividly narrated the lived experiences of my participants while they were a volunteer. The participants gave details on what they think about their time in ICS and the things they remember the most. Answering the research question, I categorised the narratives into themes where I detailed the incidents that made them question their assumptions, the range of emotions they felt, and from where they` inherited the presuppositions. Furthermore, how the volunteers overcame their prejudices, the actions they took, and how they reframed their thinking and behaviour are narrated. The profound emotional experiences of my participants and the subsequent transformation they experienced are given in detail.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

Chapter Overview

This interpretative case study explores how ICS volunteers under the egis of Raleigh International experience transformative learning. The study aims to find how the participants described their time with Raleigh's ICS programme and how the transformative learning occurred. Borrowing my participants' lived experiences and knitting them with the works of literature, in this final chapter I report how my participants experienced transformation. I present my discussion in five themes where different aspects and steps of transformation is discussed. I have done this by weaving through three different theories of transformation with my participant's account.

You Encounter the Unknown

The hallmark of a transformative event is an event that resonates something deep within us. Mezirow (1997) defines disorientating event as a life crisis that makes us think about our ways of life. When participants first joined ICS, they embarked on the journey without much expectation of a transformation. It was either to use their free time, get back to the charity sector, or learn about how projects operate. Nevertheless, they had their minds ready to learn something. As Annapurna said ICS was "quite spontaneous" and "you never know what was coming", which makes a perfect prerequisite for the volunteers to encounter something unknown. Magrizos et al. (2021) attested that novel experiences can inherently be cathartic an can disturb the individual's internal harmony (Mezirow,1991). The participants experienced dilemmas that discombobulated them and

what they knew about their world. However, how my participants encountered the dilemmas was completely different to individuals. Coghlan and Gooch (2011) ascertain that disorienting dilemmas depend on the person's personality and other life factors. Cranton (2016b) posits that transformative learning presents itself in distinct way that is dictated by people's disposition. Nevertheless, team leaders, who had the daunting task to manage and lead a diverse team with eclectic needs, was the disorienting for them which laid the ground for transformative learning.

Nilgiri experienced it during a structured session when she was not able to control the direction, as she was used to, and tone of the conversation. She just had to listen to others. Kedkaew and Ounvichit (2021) elaborated about structured events where participants have to abide by rules and have to listen to new ideas can be a disorienting event. Lhotse, Annapurna, and Cheviot experienced disorienting event during hands-on activity pertaining to leadership. But the moment of disorientation differed in them too; cratering their personality and assumption. Lhotse had a glorified idea of a team and had to confront his assumption when his team of volunteers did not behave in his. Cheviot and Annapurna had image of a strict fault-finding as a leader. They experienced dilemma when subjected to other styles of leadership. Hullender et al. (2015) testify that dilemmas are bound to occur when volunteers are subjected to new leadership styles when their previous acquired concept was faulty. Furthermore, leadership is a big theme in ICS (2021b) and much time devoted to making an empathetic leader. It is not surprising that the volunteers and team leaders found themselves in a quandary with their preconceived notion of leadership.

Participants also faced cultural conundrums that they had never encountered before. Meeting a diverse group of people and experiencing a new culture is a triggering event for most of us and ICS has a multicultural setting (ICS, 2021b). Dartmoor and Makalu experienced culturally challenging events during their ICS placement. Dartmoor, having never met a UK volunteer held the irrational assumption that they would be apathetic to the project but was confronted with his assumption when he had to be in a team with them and live with them. Sekerak (2020) writes that coming in contact with people of the "other" category can cause disorientation. However, Makalu when he was confronted different aspects of Nepal's food culture such as consumption and how people talk about food, found it in contrast with his held view which created a feeling of unease in him. Taylor (1994b) explains that usually when people encounter new cultures and new ways of doing things, they experience cultural disequilibrium; an incongruity between their ideals and the reality presented by the new culture. The event's significance lies in their aftermath as they are the precursor to examining their feelings, beliefs, and assumptions (Taylor, 2008). While rational self-examination is offered as the only path for transformation by Mezirow, Taylor (1994a) offers a non-rational path where the learner dives straight into the new culture to adapt to it.

Usually, the literature (Chiocca, 2021; Müller et al., 2020; Prince, 2017; Wilson et al., 2020; Zahra & McIntosh, 2007) focuses on the western volunteers who travel to underdeveloped or developing countries that experience such events, especially regarding the people of the later world. In this case, Dartmoor, a Nepali team leader had to deal with the perplexity of his cultural understanding of people from the west. Wilson et al. (2020) found that although the disoriented party were USA students, as with Dartmoor,

they "personalised the others". Another interesting outcome was the cultural predicament of Makalu. Usually, cultural shock is described as something that naturally astounds the observer of the new culture. However, Makalu had more of a cultural appreciation rather than shock. He described his encounter with food culture in Nepal as "spiritual", "thankfulness", and "a blessing" which is attested by Cousins et al. (2009).Kim (2017)'s and Taylor (1994a)'s definition of stress experienced, I find, does not encompass the full emotions and nature of cultural disequilibrium. It is not just cultural shock that precedes multi-cultural identities but also the emotional appreciation of it.

Nevertheless, Brecon and Ochil's dilemma was vastly different than rest of the participants. Brecon's and Ochil's experience defies the norms of transformation laid out by Mezirow or Taylor and relies on the emotive experiences expressed during moments of altruism, serenity, and powerful images (Kovan & Dirkx, 2003). Brecon and Ochil experienced powerful emotions that urged them to reassess their career direction. These emotions were engendered by different incidents. Brecon's emotions welled up when the beneficiary of the project thanked him. Whereas, Ochil's contrast with her different working environments; the former a closed and monotonous whereas volunteering a more open and dynamic space.

Reframing

For the change in world view, reframing our assumptions and attitudes is a key tenant. Reframing, for perspective transformation according to Mezirow (1998), occurs by reflection. Lhotse, Cheviot, and Annapurna had uncritical assumption regarding leadership. As Lhotse put it, he had a "rose-tinted glass view" of what leading a team would be like. He asked himself "why am I like this? Why am I going through such

stuggles…?". The why question or the premise reflection is the most crucial form of reflection (Taylor, 2017a). Cheviot asked herself what a leader should be like and heavily engaged herself in analysing her team leader's leadership skills. Lhotse and Cheviot's revision of values occurred via a rational process. Mezirow's proposition of paramount importance of critical reflection is supported by multiple studies (Bailey & Russell, 2010; Coghlan & Weiler, 2015; Lee & Yen, 2015; Müller et al., 2020)

Nevertheless, reframing did not just occur through rational reasoning. Makalu's reframing occurred through a non-rational cognitive orientation (Taylor, 1994a). He recounted how change in his view of food occurred, "It felt more humane and also the sharing of food in like a very much a community style, uh…, which is more than just about money…Um, just the, the kind of spiritual nature of food, you know, thankfulness…". Contrary to the rational or ego-based phenomenon, Makalu's reframing occurred by considerate action and inundating himself in a new culture. Being a part of it rather than just a passive observer. Taylor (1994a) contends that it can occur by both reflective and non-reflective orientation.

Annapurna's and Nilgiri's reframing occurred also by how they felt at the moment of encountering a disorienting dilemma. Parts of training and team sessions struck a chord in Annapurna and Nilgiri. Annapurna preferred how ICS taught her "I really like the way ICS teaches, cuz they teach you practically…". She also attested that receiving feedback from her counterpart team leaders helped her to learn. Annapurna's reframing was ensued when she had no option rather than to listen to other people and she found that instance to be very powerful to her and forced her to reassess how she saw other people. Nilgiri described the experience as "kind of profound exercise…um, and

kind of being really open with each other, um, and kind of not judging each other…I think it was just something that I'd kind of never experienced before". The participants exercised conscience and acted on their normative evaluation of either their action was 'good' or 'bad' and revised continued to revise their assumption.

Dartmoor's transformation was through an amalgamation of both rational and non-rational orientations. After he encountered and spent some time with the UK volunteers, the stereotype he had in him about foreigners being dismissive towards Nepali was challenged. The realisation dawned on him while he was spending time with his new team. "They came to learn things'' he said, "to stay together and work in a team." He regretted his stereotypical assumption that the UK volunteers would grandstand "I felt like my thinking was narrow" he added. He applied rational reasoning while he was building up skills for a more integrative perspective where he questioned how he had gained the assumptions and what he could do to circumvent those.

While Annapurna, Dartmoor, Cheviot, Nilgiri, Makalu, and Lhotse's reframing occurred via either rational or non-rational cognitive disposition. Brecon and Ochils relied on the message conveyed by their emotion laden experiences. Brecon and Ochil's career aspirations was shaped by influence of family and friends. Ochil contrasted the incident of gazing starts from her placement community to her previous work environment which was narrow. A very vivid difference in the working environment welled up different images in her. Images are the deep-seated concerns that are anchored within the self and only show up when deep emotions are jerked up by crucial events (Dirkx, 2006a). Likewise, Brecon was overwhelmed when beneficiary of the project thanked him with joined hand and the incident "made me very happy. I felt that getting

such kind of happiness is difficult." The intense happiness and gratitude (Judge, 2015) he felt were second compared to none. Baillie Smith et al. (2021) have elaborated that when community members are open about their feelings with volunteers, it can engender affective responses in volunteers.

Ochil reveals the power of images that she encountered during her ICS placement on two distinct occasions. Firstly, Ochil shows her bowed head working with the motherboard in her pre-ICS job and later recounts the experience of seeing the milky way during a team bonfire "from our community we could see milky way soooo so nicely. We used to take sleeping mat, lay down on it."She demonstrates herself laying on the ground and gazing at starry nights. A very vivid difference in the working environment. Boyd and Myers (1988) refer that symbol expresses our extra rational self and there we encounter emotional experiences. Similar to what Kovan and Dirkx (2003) describe when Peter encounters Lake Superior. Ochil's emotions that were deep within herself surfaced with the help of the image of the milky way and the contrast between her two working environments. Judge (2015) calls this an extra rational response that is rooted within our history and social structure. Dirkx (2018) states that extra rational responses reveal who we truly are and strong emotions signal that something deep within us has shifted.

In Brecon the image of the grandfather joining hands and appreciating the work that will make his life easier resonated deeply within him. Images are the deep-seated concerns that are anchored within the multiplicity of selves and only show up when people's deep emotions are jerked up by crucial events for them (Dirkx, 2006b). Emotions are the bridges to the self, they help communicate the true desire and meaning that people are making from the experience to the outer self (Dirkx, 2012). Images jerk

up emotions that link the inner self to the outer (Dirkx, 1997).Furthermore, other community members also expressed their gratitude and cried in front of the team. His emotions as he describes them "made me very happy. I felt that getting such kind of happiness is difficult."The intense happiness and gratitude (Judge, 2015) he felt were second compared to none. A revelation that came straight from his soul. Dirkx (2018) states that emotions reveal who we truly are and strong emotions signal that something deep within us has shifted. It is a method of communication that the soul—the extra rational—uses to communicate to the rational being (Dirkx, 2006a). Emotional signals can be anything, Soulard et al. (2021) found that even singing can lead to great emotional reaction. Brecon and Ochil both understood the meaning of their experiences and knew what their true and authentic self wanted. Once knowing their true self, they were not swayed by their friends' dissuasions. Both of them remember the moment very lucidly and vividly as professed by (Tyng et al., 2017). Ochil and Brecon clearly understood the meaning that the image and their emotions were trying to relay from their soul: their professional calling was neither engineering nor CA.

Team and Counterparts

The ICS team, the volunteers, and their counterparts have played a central role in reframing the assumptions. Dartmoor, when he first realised the unsoundness of his assumption, he turned to his counterpart team leader to share. Her reassurance that she had felt the same about the UK volunteers and realised that she was wrong created a comfort around him that made him agreeable to proceed to the next step of righting his wrong. Annapurna also talks about how important it was for her to share it with her counterparts "I thought that was really important actually that we had our little, um, daily

debriefs."The debrief that the counterparts have with each other comes together as a platform to support and buttress each other with confidence and without judgement. Wilson et al. (2020) ascertains that sharing within the team members can buttress transformative learning process in volunteers. Kedkaew and Ounvichit (2021) compound that open sharing of ideas and perspectives among volunteers has the influence to change and prop new learnings.

Similarly, for Lhotse talking with his team members about his leadership style and his feelings of how felt he was being treated was how he was able to move on from his previous style. He stated:

> Having an open conversation with those, um, with the team about a, the things that are setting us, the things that they're perhaps not happy with. And it was, it was candid, but it was tough at times to hear things. But it definitely helped me in that as well.

Cheviot provided a holistic vision of how to open conversation and sharing occurs in ICS. The team leader must conduct frequent one-to-one with their volunteers and it becomes a sharing platform for volunteers to talk openly and without the influence of their experiences. In chapter four's first theme the participants' experiences have well established how the team and mutual understanding have been of great value to the volunteers. Mezirow (2003)'s transformation is heavily rooted in sharing and having rational discourse. Discourse is the exchange of ideas and experiences in an unbiased territory where power influences are absent and the individual can share their discomfort and listen to the perspective of others (Mezirow, 2003). It is by this sharing of experiences and knowing that others are going through the same experiences people feel

that they are not alone in questioning those assumptions. In line with the criteria stated by Mezirow (1994) the discussions and sharing in ICS are not marred by undue influence. When Dartmoor, Annapurna, Lhotse, and Cheviot shared this discomfort they were supported and were open to the views of others. This weaved the path for them to further venture down the path of transformation. Studies have that intercultural competency occurs via talking with the community member. Here, I found that even among same team members, as Dartmoor confides, can bring transformative learning. Additionally, Dartmoor being an eastern resident went revised his presumption about people from other nations. Ergo, eastern candidates can also achieve intercultural competency.

Learning Strategies

It's imperative to pick up new talents so that you can adjust to your transformed self. Since the new road that transformed people desire to travel is uncharted ground, it is wise to pick up a new skill set in order to reap the benefits of the transformative learning. Mezirow (1994) highlights two steps of learning and implementing skills: acquiring a new skill and trying out the new role. Taylor (1994a) enlists three concrete learning steps for transformation; observing, participating, and creating meaningful relationships that are open for constructive feedback.

Dartmoor's engaged in team games and most importantly one-to-ones with volunteers that helped him learn new strategies of communication. In this case, he is engaged as an observer and as a participant (Taylor, 1994b). During the games, he was an active participant but got to observe the UK volunteer's commitment to the team. "Having a regular daily conversation gave me a good opportunity to practise "talking with them and understanding their point of view, emotions, and actions made him

"proficient in the new structure of thinking from other perspective.*"* The acceptance of cultural differences by actively engaging with people from new cultures, Chiocca (2021) especially highlights that the initial step is "listening more and talking less; feeling more joy during interactions" (p.48).

Similarly, with Cheviot, the one-to-one also was a turning point. Contrary to Dartmoor, Cheviot was the one who was being administered the one-to-one. She changed her behaviour as an observer, participant, and friend. "I realised a leader should be like that, they have to make a place in people's heart "she reflected on her team leader's leadership style by talking with him and observing "They have to be the inspiration. That is a leader." She got to see the behind-the-scenes task that goes into implementing a plan and making a team strategy. Got involved in the process herself and constantly took feedback from her peers to improve herself as well. The role of a weekly leader became a trying and new role for her (Mezirow, 1994).

Annapurna also engaged in her reframing and trying new roles. In her case, the role of a team leader was itself a new role as a pastoral leader. Reflecting on her training time she acquired most of the skills during it "I really like the way ICS teaches, cuz they teach you practically, visually you get into teams, you mix it up, you like swap about, and you're doing like activities."Annapurna also employed keen observational skills by seeing how her managers worked. To constantly improve herself she and her counterparts engaged in open discussion and feedback to each other. She also observed team leaders of other teams and discerned what they were doing and compared herself with them to ascertain the right way to lead her team. Lhotse engaged in a similar learning strategy by engaging with his managers for mentoring, coaching, and having meaningful constructive

feedback sessions with his team. When he returned from a week's break, he tried the role of an empathic leader who valued people rather than the project more. For team leaders, mentoring the volunteers, particularly in one-to-one sessions, was site to gain new skill and hone it, and also to revise their perspectives. While volunteers learned directly from the mentoring of team leaders and in some cases support of their peers.

Transformed Individuals

Volunteers in the ICS programme have transformed in varied ways. The most affinitive transformation among my research participants is that of their leadership approach. Cheviot, Annapurna, and Lhotse experienced transformation in their leadership style. From having a narrow view of what leadership entails, their perspective has expanded and formed a more empathetic and sustainable leadership style that focus on people and their needs instead of task completion. Cheviot views leaders with wary eyes thinking they just order you around to being an empathetic and pastoral leader herself. If she had not been an ICS volunteer, I think her approach to how she would have supervised at her census job would have been completely different. However, using her skills from ICS she led her team being an empathetic leader she finally says, "It was really hard but I did it. I tried my best to treat everyone equally, not to hurt anyone's feelings and lead my team."Akin to Cheviot, Annapurna and Lhotse also modelled their leadership style on what they learned during ICS. Sacred of already inheriting a micromanaging leadership persona, Annapurna shed those attitudes and instead has now evolved into a trusting and supportive leader:

I learned a lot through ICS and now my approach would be like, just trust that

they'll do the job right. And support them where they need supporting, um,

empower them to go to places they wouldn't necessarily. I'd make sure that like my team is trusted.

From a person who always worried about ticking things off from her checklist to believing in people and supporting them, Annapurna's leadership style was categorically changed. Likewise, Lhotse also grew to be an empathic and patient leader.

Transformation was also seen with regard to cultural competency. Makalu and Dartmoor built-in their cultural competencies concerning food and the concept of foreigners. Makalu's perspective on food was that of unhealthy apprehension. He saw it as something that would make him worry about his weight. Makalu reveals that his perspective and relationship with food and diet had a drastic change. He saw it more as a blessing rather than a curse, something that brings in celebration rather than anxiety. He now is more aware of where his food comes from and looks after what he eats. He is also conscious of the food industry in the UK. Finally, he reinstates the "huge change in perspective in my life "that has transformed his views and habit on food. Dartmoor's scepticism was also addressed during ICS. Having not worked with a foreign person before, he was riddled with stereotypes of what they would be like. He realised quite early on that his view was faulty and took measures to correct the assumption. During the course of acquiring the skills, he equipped himself with the skill of looking at things and situations through the lens of others, a component shared by Nilgiri. Lough et al. (2014) iterates that impacts of transformative intercultural experience ushers in social sustainability in form of respect for diversity and culture, understanding, and vibrant international relationship.

On the other hand, Ochil and Brecon experienced transformation from the soul. Ochil and Brecon were sure of their career choice. Ochil wanted to be an engineer and work at NTC while Brecon had his eye set on the business field, preferably being a CA. However, ICS happened to a life-altering event for both of them career-wise. Encountering heavy emotions deep within themselves when encountered with powerful motifs, they knew instantly that their chosen course of life was not for themselves but for their family and friends. Griffiths (2014) concurs stating that it is prudent that especially volunteers engaged in international development would encounter powerful emotions as volunteering is something that is not an ordinary job but rather a free will to serve a cause that transcends one person. Brecon says, "I felt like this is the kind of work that I should be doing, it hit me "referring to altruistic development work. A similar sentiment was reciprocated by Ochil who has ventured into development work. Career change is well documented in transformative literature. Participants venture into a sustainable career path (Müller et al., 2020) after experiencing transformative events (Magrizos et al., 2021; Wilson et al., 2020). Soulard et al. (2021) participants also had lifestyle changes where after realising that what they were doing was not true to themselves, left their job and took on guitar and started making music.

A larger sustainable implication is attached to transformative learning. While, it remains true that shift in behavioural sustainability in form of being empathic leaders, connecting to various cultures, and embracing a career in sustainability is found in transformed volunteers. Tisdell (2012) explains the transcendence nature of transformative learning which does not just limit itself to ecological sustainability but rather consciousness sustainability. They are not just connected to self but globally and

view life as a devotion to global cause of justice, peace, and love. It transcends the transformed individual to "larger consciousness" which allows them to live life "more deeply" (p. 34).

Chapter Summary

Knitting the literatures and the volunteers account, discussion chapter detailed by discussing the climatic events that volunteers encountered. The second theme highted the role of team members and mentors in volunteers transformative learning which was followed by how they reframed their uncritical world view. Strategies that volunteer undertook to right their irrational view is discussed. I have also discussed the roles of emotions in volunteers transformative learning.

CHAPTER VI

IMPLICATION, SUMMARY, AND CONCLUSION

Chapter Overview

In this final chapter, I have presented the key insights that answer my research question followed by the research and practical implications that the study carries. I put down the conclusion I have drawn from the research and finally present the summary of the dissertation.

Key Insights to Answer the Research Question

Franz (2016) administers three conditions for optimising transformative learning in volunteers; an environment that advances critical events, a diverse working group, and a team that "allows independence with interdependence" (p. 6). The participants' story paints a vivid picture of Raleigh ICS's structure that gives continuance to a volunteer's transformative learning. Firstly, ICS involves travelling which in itself is transformative Walker and Ngara Manyamba (2020). But to go further, it also clashes volunteers with their uncritical assumption by requiring them to perform even the simplest of tasks of just actively listening or having an uninterrupted conversation with team members among others. ICS groups by default have two diversities ensured—diversity of nationality and diversity of gender. The diversity within nationality such as volunteers are all over from the UK and Nepal, education, work styles, colour, caste, creed, and identity are beyond fathomable. This meant that team leaders and volunteers had different experinces of the events that have rise to transformative learning. Team leaders predicaments usually occurred due to the responsibilities of managing diverse team while volunteers'

disorienting events were varied. Concerning the final point, interdependence and independence is firmly established through the experiences of the participants. This not only helps in intercultural competence but also aids to attain different pertinent skills from each other to develop and realise it. Reliance is shown within counterparts and teams to share their feelings, thoughts, support, and constructive feedback. While independence is to act on the feedback through volunteers' own volition and without any undue influence from anyone.

Griffiths and Brown (2017) ascertain that volunteers' embodied experiences of the affective realm are a site for "transformation and transcendence" (p. 20). Often when volunteers encounter a situation that is new to them, the meaning-making of the situation is not done through deep critical reverie but rather through a primary response that is built in humans, emotions. These emotions tell us how to act. For example, when we see a lion, we feel fear first then the fear kicks the instinct to run. By the same token, volunteers make sense of their experiences through intense feelings (Dirkx, 2001a) of happiness, gratitude, awe, and others (Judge, 2015). Affective experiences in ICS help volunteers to discern who they truly are by taking them out of the disproportionate influence of others and connecting their outer persona with their soul by subjecting them to profound experiences.

Implications

I have divided the implications into two sections. I present, at first, the way for future research that can be conducted in the field of volunteers' transformative learning and communicated the practical implications that the organisations and practitioners in the field of volunteering, volunteers, and policymakers can use for betterment.

Implications for Future Research

The application of transformative learning theory in a pure volunteering setting is a new realm. For validation and knowledge addition, I believe, more research whether it be qualitative or quantitative is warranted. Moreover, the application of transformative learning theory in Nepali participants, to the best of my knowledge, has not been conducted before, therefore it would still be a novel area of research to track transformative learning in volunteering programmes that recruits just Nepali volunteers. While Mezirow's theory has an exalted place, I would recommend the application of Taylor's intercultural competency to ascertain whether Nepali volunteers when exposed to a new local culture such as a Brahmin experiencing a Limbu culture for the first time would develop intercultural competency. Similarly, change in career path or other life goals due to profound emotional experiences during volunteering can be explored too. Moreover, this study relied on participants reflecting on their volunteering period, a mixed method of pre-post survey and ethnography could provide new on-the-spot insights. Longitudinal research would also provide valuable data on the long-term impact of transformative volunteering opportunities. I find that it should be crucial to explore the neo-colonic risk among volunteers and determine whether as the result of transformative experience the volunteers used the transformation for the benefit of others or just for self-advancement. This study did not apply a feminist, gender, minority, and disabled perspective in regards to transformative learning while study design and analysis. Hence,I could not conclude any difference in experiences with regards to the demography mentioned. I believe it is important to unearth experiences that are unique to people with

intersecting identities which is imperative to give a holistic account of volunteering and varied transformative learning that different identities can engender.

Practical Implications

Volunteering organisations and programmes are proliferating at the national and international levels. Most of these organisations deploy volunteers due to cost effectiveness to run the project and especially international volunteering means a steady stream of funds for the project and the project is kept at the centre of the programme. However, volunteers are bigger resources to bring societal changes than just a few construction projects. Focusing on optimising their experiences while delivering a quality project should be the route. This study found that having a fixed team and having a counterpart is a big support system to bring transformative learning Moreover, having a diverse team and locating the team in a community whose culture is new to the volunteers can help in bringing intercultural competency. Mentors also have played a crucial role to bring transformation, volunteering organisations should have empathetic mentors who are trained in coaching and various leadership styles. This study also found that volunteers can have career-changing transformative events during their tenure and in some cases, volunteers can be on the verge of just starting their career, to those who require it career counselling on how best to approach their decision can be of great value to the volunteers.

The study also carries policy implications. As demonstrated by the Nepal government's fifteen-year plan, national youth policy, and the draft volunteer policy, it is evident that Nepal is on verge of passing a federal volunteering policy. While I cannot make a blanket statement that all volunteering programmes have a transformative

learning impact or that volunteers will experience transformative learning. It sufficiently demonstrates there are components in volunteering programmes that facilitate transformative learning. By centring the policies to encapsulate volunteer development, a larger change can be sown in society.

Conclusion

ICS is uniquely situated to bring transformation in its volunteers through its programmatic design. The ICS volunteers are Nepali and UK youths that live in a shared space and a unique community throughout the placement duration. This experience of shared living is vital in bringing cross-cultural competency in volunteers since volunteers have to grapple with their faulty cultural assumptions by seeing a foreign culture in practice. Since the cultural environment is new to Nepali and UK youths, volunteers of both nationalities, develop intercultural competency. ICS focuses on building empathetic leaders, and transformation is seen in volunteers' leadership assumptions and ability. Volunteers, in moments of altruism or peace, find their true selves by exploring their emotions. These transformative experiences are facilitated by a triggering experience. To make sense of the incidents volunteers sometimes seek answers by engaging in critical reflectivity or examining their emotions to find their true selves or dive into transformation without rational reasoning. Through holistic use of Mezirow's, Taylor's, and Dirkx's transformative learning theories, I found that these processes are not exclusive to each other, rather they occur in conjunction. Critical to bringing transformations are the support systems that volunteers can rely on in ICS such as their counterparts, team members, mentors, and the placement community. They are the

structures that bring transformative learning by challenging assumptions, imparting skills, and sustaining the transformation.

While it is clear that the volunteers that experience transformative learning can successfully review their uncritical assumptions, gain intercultural competency, and find their true selves, it is of critical importance to see if volunteers use these capabilities for just self-advancement or do they contribute to social good. Further research also needs to be taken to consolidate, validate, and generalise the findings since this study was conducted with only eight research participants. Exploration of cultural competency in only national volunteering programmes is also warranted to study inter-national cultural understanding. The components that supported volunteers' transformative learning can be used by practitioner, organisations, and policy to largen their impact to create more active citizens.

Summary of the Dissertation

The purpose of this study was to explore the varied transformative learnings experiences of the volunteers in the ICS programme. To gather the result to answer the research question I employed a case study research design under the interpretative paradigm. I interviewed my participants using unstructured interviews—which I conducted online due to the scheduled time being a high-risk COVID period—and transcribed, coded, and sorted the data respectively to form my analysis under the aegis of the research question. My participants were a diverse group of former ICS volunteers with equal representation of nationality, gender, and ICS designations.

ICS volunteers mostly come into the programme with the slight expectation of personal growth as in boost in confidence to publicly speak, to speak the English

language better, to do something during their free time, decorate their CV, and get an entry into the development sector being few among the several objectives. The volunteers did not join ICS so they could have life-altering encounters or they did not expect it to happen. After all, pivotal moments in life seldom come expected. But perhaps it is that aspect of ICS that it disguises as a simple volunteering opportunity that takes people by surprise with clandestine experiences. These surprises, or disorienting dilemmas, usually creep up on the volunteers rather unexpectedly. Here, I found that ICS is poised in such a way that volunteers encounter these dilemmas that are in stark contrast with their status quo. If volunteers have a habit of not listening, ICS urges you to actively listen, if you are sceptical of foreign individuals, you are required spend three months with them, if you have the wrong concept of leadership, you can adopt a new one. Similarly, it also provides space for volunteers to experience emotion-laden experiences that help them to understand and explore who they are truly. It brings in these spiritual experiences to volunteers who had not had such encounters with strong images before.

Another indisputable aspect that ICS facilitates transformation is its operating structure. Volunteers having to work in a team and each of them having a counterpart pair makes a buddy system that allows them to share their difficulties and apprehension. Furthermore, the structure also acts as a support system that enables volunteers to learn from each other. These acts of sharing and learning can occur in private sessions of counterparts or with the larger team. Additionally, the team structure also provides a good observational ground for volunteers to engage in critical analysis of behaviour, decisions, and actions. These observational reflections are crucial in developing competencies in multiple cultures. Likewise, ICS gives opportunities for volunteers to try

new roles—literally and figuratively—while in the programme. Volunteers can be weekly leaders and team leaders can change their leadership style by trying on a new leadership 'role'. When volunteers embark on new roles, there is a hierarchy of support system where volunteers are supported by team leaders and team leaders by their managers and via these hierarchies is mostly how feedback flows so volunteers can gain confidence in their new positions.

ICS also gives the perfect platform for volunteers to try new skills and experiment with them. The training, one-to-ones, and emphasis on personal development push volunteers to test their newly acquired skills in a safe and supportive environment. Moreover, the acquisition of skills is never a one-way street, team leaders can learn from volunteers and volunteers from team leaders. Learning can occur at any time whether it is just by observing, reflecting, talking, or during engagement in sessions. In ICS, volunteers are uniquely situated at the heart of the programme with every step whether it be training, community placement, or mid-phase review to constantly assess and reassess their assumptions without undue burden pressed by any external source.

Reflection on the Theories and their Application

As I finish my dissertation, I look back on the theories which have buttressed my study. They have occupied a central role from my introduction to conclusion. My initial inquiry began with perspective transformation and expanded to intercultural competency and mythopoetic transformation. During my proposal phase, I was quiet adamant on just interpreting the results with perspective transformation. But now, upon reflection, I realise that could have severely debilitated my findings and their subsequent

interpretation. I applied the theories to my participants' narrative on the basis of their transformative experience.

I found that rational reasoning was seldom used by the participants after encountering critical events. Mezirow's theory's limitation was evident in this aspect. While the gap was filled by Taylor's model which proposed a non-rational orientation, ergo a conscience-based approach. Nevertheless, even Taylor's theory could not comprehensively explain how some participants experienced transformation. Rather they relied on the emotive message conveyed by the critical incidents. Dirkx's proposition of emotion laden experience and their connection to the shadow or multiplicity of selves was better situated to explain the phenomenon.

On one hand, the different ways of knowing that different theorists propose helped me to make sense of the data. On the other hand, I cannot help but question the different ways of knowing. Mezirow's ego-based reasoning has numerous critiques and I agree with them. The transformative learning that I experienced, if had followed a rational direction, would not have happened. It just does not make sense to leave a field that I was involved for four years on a basis of a whim. Nevertheless, I would not have been happy if I had not done so. As to Taylor's model, I find that without questioning the cultural practices, one should not just blindly follow them. Additionally, what if a person adopts aspects of the new culture while they are living in the said culture just not to cause offence. Should that entail a transformative learning? Also, what if the cultural practice is inherently bad? Similarly, Dirkx's advocacy of emotions can also be misleading. Emotive experiences are common in human. In fact, it is a hallmark of being a human. Dirkx propounds that transformative learning can be when learners read something poignant or

anything happens that resonates deep within us which prompts us to act in a certain way. Such experiences are not uncommon. After wating a particularly good movie, people want to act akin to the performers. I have experienced such events numerous times and acting on each and every one of them would have been devastating. I find that some basic level of reflection on the question 'will acting on it be good for me?' is necessary to ensure that at least conscience and has a say in the process.

Wary of the limitations posed by each proposition, I presented my data in a single 'story' from each of my participants that were coherent and upon reflection they thought were a good step forward for them. I have only accounted the coherent narratives of transformative learning, for example evidence of a demarcated critical events, reframing of a single uncritical assumption, and the final altered view to absolutely ensure that the data presented true events of transformative learning experience which was vouched by the participants upon look back on the events.

Methodological Reflection

As a novice researcher, it was difficult to understand the case study research design. While I was initially planning to have three points of data collection; interviews, observation, and document review, I realised that perhaps interviews would only be the source of data due to two reasons. In case of observations, I found I have physically seen and had field experience with only four research participants. This would cause in disproportionate observation for four participants and neglecting the other four. Also, the four I had observed were all UK volunteers. In the ICS, most Nepali volunteers speak of the bias that is shown towards them and state that more favour and consideration is given to UK volunteers. Being aware of that, I did not want to create the same level of

disproportionate treatment in research. For document review, I wanted to utilise documents that were not published online and could give a more in-depth understanding of the programme. However, due to the pandemic both ICS and Raleigh International has been closed. Upon the feedback by the research committee, I went back to reviewing online published documents such as official reports and blog posts. While reviewing them, I became very aware of the limitations of the documents. There were two limitations that stood out to me. The most important one was that organisation rationale for publishing document are not created for research purpose therefore do not have sufficient details or have the rigour of research (Bowen, 2009). Due to this it cannot be ascertained that all the account of volunteers in the document are transformative learning experiences albeit they overlap with my experiences of my interview participants. Secondly, organisations only publish documents that portrays them in good light. Therefore, there were no any contrary evidence that could be found (Bowen, 2009).

Reflection on my Research Journey

As many novice researchers, I faced numerous challenges during the course of the study. During my proposal defence I received the feedback to frame my theoretical framework with theories in addition to Meziorw's. While I easily understood the other theoretical frameworks I have utilised, Dirkx's proposition eluded me for a long time. Even after reading numerous articles on mythopoetic transformation, I could not grasp it and it perhaps made be slight irksome. And to some extent I was confident that I would not get any data that would be explained by Dirkx's theory. However, as I went on interviewing candidates, narratives emerged of which I could not make sense. Upon talking with my supervisor, he helped to understand them. Upon reflection, it was the

participants account and my supervisor's guidance that aided me to comprehend the theory and bring clarity to my theoretical framework.

I also took considerable amount to time to understand the philosophical underpinnings of my research. Ontology, epistemology, axiology comes across as jargons to a novice researcher, and I often questioned myself on the need of them. I learnt that to create knowledge, it is paramount to know where the knowledge is being generated from. To properly understand the source of the knowledge, it is vital to comprehend the philosophical underpinnings in which we place ourselves and by extension our study.

While conducting the interviews with the participants, I had mapped out all the chapters of my dissertation and also thought of the headings and sub headings that could go on them. However, the interview data did not fit my preconceived notion of how I would analyse and relay the accounts. The error I made was to have a strong notion on how I would present and analyse the data. Looking back, I realise that while it is always a good idea to have a plan, it always pays to be flexible. Theme and sub theme are not product of the researcher but rather the participants and their lived experiences.

Finally, I had thought of research as a constant and has a one-way flow. For example, first introduction and literature review and so on. My presupposition was once I write a chapter, the concepts within the chapters are set in stone. I realised that I was wrong, and research, especially qualitative is iterative. The researcher has the flexibility to reconceptualise, revisit, or strengthen arguments. In fact, that is one of the requirements of qualitative inquiry, to reassess and revaluate what we have written.

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APPENDIX A: PARTICIPANT INFORMED CONSENT FORM

January 2022

Part I

Dear Participant,

You are cordially invited to participate in an unstructured interview to support the scholar of Kathmandu University School of Education's Masters in Sustainable Development dissertation (thesis).

1. **Dissertation title:** Transformative Learning in International Citizen Service Volunteers

2. **Name of the researcher:** Prashit Kumar Khanal

3. **Contact details:**prashit@kusoed.edu.np, +977-9861923405

4. **Degree title:** Master in Sustainable Development (MSD)

5. **Course title:** EDSD 559 Dissertation

6. **Degree awarding institution:** School of Education, Kathmandu University

7. **Purpose of this document:** This document's purpose is to state the aim of the research and take your consent to be a willing participant in the data collection process.

8. **Aim of the interview:** The aim of the interview is to listen and document your ICS journey. By collecting your stories and experiences of before, during, and after ICS programme, will help me demonstrate how transformative change occurs in the volunteers/alumni of the ICS programme.

9. **Why you have been invited?** You have been identified as a participant in this case study due to your association with the ICS programme. Your

experiences, views, and learnings will inform the research question and give insight into how volunteering programmes can be a vector for transformative change.

10. **Participation:** Participation is voluntary and you may withdraw at any time without reason. If you withdraw after the interview and the data has been anonymised, it may not be possible to withdraw that data.

11. **Interview structure:**

- The interview will be conducted as per the request of the participant.
- Due to the COVID pandemic the participant can request for an online interview or a face-to-face interview as they are comfortable.
- For international participant the only viable option is online interview.
- Face-to-face method will only be feasible if allowed by the existing COVID government guideline at the date.

12. **Confidentiality:**

- The content of the interview will be confidential and will not be shared with anyone else.
- Data will be stored electronically using password protected files.
- The interview notes will be stored in a safe cabinet inside my home.

13. **Privacy:**

- After data is collected the actual name or other identifiers of the participants will not be used.
- The names will be replaced by a pseudonym to maintain the anonymity of the participants.

- Direct quotes from the participants will only appear under the pseudonym.

- Participants can opt out of any questions they want or terminate the interview at any point they wish to.

14. Recording interview:

- If conducted via virtual medium (google meet), the interview will be recorded in the said virtual medium.

- For face-to-face interview, a voice recording will be used.

15. Notes: I will take notes during the interview and transcribe afterwards. Only the researcher will have access to these notes.

16. Data protection:

- Only the researcher will have access to your data, thus will be responsible for the safeguarding of the data and participant information.

- At no circumstance will the information of the participant will be made available to anyone.

17. Expiry of the confidentiality/privacy: There is NO expiry time that will lapse the confidentiality or the privacy of the participant and the data.

18. Consent Withdrawal:

- Participants have the freedom to withdraw their consent even after signing the consent form.

- However, withdrawal cannot be implemented once the participant data has been anonymised.

- The consent withdrawal notice has to be made in written format and emailed at prashit@kusoed.edu.np.

19. Complaints:

- To file any complaints/concerns/feedback regarding any part of the data collection, handling, and analysis process can be forwarded to the supervisor of the researcher: Dr Suresh Gautam, Assistant professor, Academic Coordinator at sgautam@kusoed.edu.np.

- If the participant feels that grievances is not being heard then contact Head of Department, Associate professor, Dr Prakash Chandra Bhattarai at prakash@kusoed.edu.np.

- If the grievances remain then contact Dean of School of Education, Professor Dr Bal Chandra Luitel at bcluitel@kusoed.edu.np.

20. Further information: For any further information/questions regarding the interview and data analysis/reporting process please contact before the conformed interview time at prashit@kusoed.edu.np phone number: +977-9861923405

Go to next page for the Informed Consent Form

Part II

Informed Consent Form

Dissertation title: Transformative Learning in International Citizen Service Volunteers

Researcher: Prashit Kumar Khanal

Please put the mark 'x' in the I agree column if you understand the statement and give your consent.

S.N.	Statement	I agree
1	I have read and understood the Part I of the document.	☐
2	I am voluntarily participating in this research as a participant.	☐
3	I understand that I can withdraw my consent at any time before my data is anonymised. (Point 13 and 18)	☐
4	I understand the consent withdrawal process and the complaint process. (Point 18 and 19)	☐
5	I agree to the interview being audio and video recorded. (Point 14)	☐
6	I understand that my privacy will be maintained and the confidentiality of my data will be handled by the researcher. (Point 12 and 13)	☐

To be filled by the participant.

Name of the participant:	Click or tap here to enter text.	
Date (AD)	Click or tap here to enter text.	In number year/month/day
Signature	Click or tap here to enter text.	Electronically write your name

To be filled by the researcher.

Name of the researcher:	
Date (AD)	
Signature	

APPENDIX B: PARTICIPANT INTERVIEW GUIDE

Dissertation title: Transformative Learning in International Citizen Service Volunteers

Name of the participant: **Location and Medium:**

Date:Nationality:

Time required for the interview: 60 to 90 minutes

Aim of the interview: The aim of the interview is to listen and document your ICS journey. By collecting your stories and experiences of before, during, and after ICS programme, will help me demonstrate how transformative change occurs in the volunteers/alumni of the ICS programme.

Key definitions

1.   Transformative learning:

Transformative learning is learning that transforms frames of reference—sets of fixed assumptions and expectations—to make them more inclusive, discriminating, open, reflective, and emotionally able to change (Mezirow, 2003 p. 1). Transformation can occur of any of your previously held beliefs or actions towards people, idea, world view, idea of development, sustainability and others.

2.   Transformative learning process:

Transformative process is catalysed when people experience events that are very out of their knowledge realm, comfort zone, or shock. The disorienting event causes emotional upheaval in people and they self-reflect about their prior held assumptions or beliefs. Since people derive meaning from group experiences, sharing and listening to other people's perspective and internalising those critical reflections urges the person to search for new roles and actions laid by the critical reflections. The person plans on how

to act and achieve the desired role or outcome. Then through feedback and reflections builds the skills relevant to achieve the new role and starts the new role. While trying the new role the person builds up self-assurance and poise in the role and finally reintegrated into society with a new frame of reference (Mezirow, 2000).

Questions for the participants

S.N.	Questions
1	Why did you join the ICS volunteer programme?
2	What did you hope to achieve out of the experience?
3	Describe your ICS experience in any way you like.
4	What do you feel is the most valuable thing you did in your ICS programme? Why? Describe.
5	Did you think you could value such work/idea before ICS? Why?
6	Would you say that ICS changed your perspective on some matters? Explain what the perspective (s) were? (The change could occur after ICS experience) OR What did you question most during your ICS programme? (About yourself, your beliefs, ideologies, anything)
7	How would you describe the process of thinking (reflection) that changed your perspective? OR, How did you come to new conclusion?
8	What did you used to think about the subject prior to ICS?
9	How do you think you acquired the prior perspective? Describe any specific event/moment or experiences that triggered your thinking?
10	Can you describe your emotions while realising the new perspective? How did it make you feel?

11	How did other people (ICS teammates, or out of ICS) add value to your new perspective? What was the process of interaction with them?
12	What did you do after your perspective was changed? Describe action(s) or thoughts that reflects the change in your perspective.
13	Was it difficult to be comfortable with your new perspective/role? How did you gain confidence in your new perspective/role?
14	How would you say your new perspective has changed your interaction/opinion towards other people (family, friends, teachers, colleagues, etc)?
15	What are you engaged with now? Did you expect to be here before ICS? Do you give credit to ICS's experience that you are here? How?
16	How would you say that ICS has made you a more active citizen?
17	Are there any other stories that you value related with your ICS experience that you would want to share?

Notes

1. During the interview process take your time to think back and reflect.

2. Due to unstructured nature of the interview there maybe additional questions depending on your answer and the questions may not be in the linear manner as written. The questions will evolve as per your answer and ICS experience.

3. No stories are of big or small importance. Feel free to share any experience that you value.