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Acknowledgements
The author gratefully recognizes the research and writing advice of Professor Paloma Raggo at Carleton University as well as the technical support of Isolda Espinosa in Nicaragua. He is also thankful for the professional insight and personal support generously offered by his lovely spouse, Ivette Fonseca. The author alone is responsible for any errors.

Cover art
Eduardo Arias, Masaya, Nicaragua

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Table of Contents

Acknowledgements ................................................................. inside cover
Executive Summary ................................................................. 2
Introduction .............................................................................. 3
Definition of Terms .................................................................. 4
Background .............................................................................. 6
Methodology ............................................................................ 8
Literature Review ..................................................................... 9
Discussion of Findings ............................................................. 18

Part A – From Existing Standards of Practice to Collective Impact?
Part B – Key Informant Interviews and the Six Standards of Practice

Recommended Framework ....................................................... 32

Mutual Private Benefit vs Reciprocal Public Benefit
Standard 1 – Organizational alignment of mission with capacity and collaboration
Standard 2 – Sustainable and ethical organizational management
Standard 3 – Integrated design, preparation, and implementation
Standard 4 – Responsible marketing materials
Standard 5 – Protection of children, vulnerable populations, and environment
Standard 6 – Monitoring, evaluation, and measurement

Conclusion and Future Research ................................................ 43

Appendices ............................................................................... 46

Appendix 1 – 21 Existing Standards of Practice
Appendix 2 – Semi-structured Key Informant Questionnaire
Appendix 3 – Categorization of Key Informant Responses

References .................................................................................. 51

List of Tables and Figures

Table 1: Relationship between type of standard and role of organization .......... 18
Table 2: Relationship between status and location of organization .................. 20
Table 3: Representation of 14 key informant Interviewees ............................... 21
Figure 1: Mutual Private Benefit – the predominant behavioral standard .......... 34
Table 4: Comparison of coordination, cooperation, and collaboration ............... 35
Figure 2: Reciprocal Public Benefit – an alternative behavioral standard .......... 36
Executive Summary

With two million North Americans and Europeans spending US$5 billion a year traveling to Africa, Asia, and Latin America to engage in global service learning for a combination of private and public purposes, the lack of common foundational standards of practice by which sponsoring, intermediary, and host organizations operate is becoming apparent. Many are questioning whether or not these cross-cultural and citizenship-building endeavors live up to their promotional promise as educational or international development activities. There is increasing concern that these efforts perpetuate, not alleviate, neo-colonial patterns of exploitative behavior that disproportionately benefit Northern participants over Southern communities.

The demand for global service learning experiences as a legitimate educational endeavor, career formation step, or personal growth benchmark, has produced a range of Northern intermediary organizations – including travel operators, academic units, social enterprises, faith-based communities, and civic entities – to compete in an uncoordinated and complex space. Few organizations incorporate standards of practice that successfully distribute balanced benefits among all stakeholders over the long-term.

Through an extensive literature review of 145 sources, the examination of 21 existing standards templates, and 14 key informant interviews, this research report challenges the currently predominant habits of mutual private benefit. As an alternative, it outlines the unique features of collaboration for collective impact and positions the Southern intermediary – one staffed by resourced and competent nationals with knowledge, skills, and values aligned with cross-cultural learning, voluntary service, and their community’s development – as the prospective catalysts in the future of global service learning. This report focuses on six identified common standards of practice, each underlined with a theory of change, and presented in a user-friendly comprehensive framework – here introduced as reciprocal public benefit.

By uplifting the principles that reflect contemporarily acceptable ethical and practical behaviors in global service learning, this research report clarifies and raises the quality of performance expectations for practitioners and the public. It is an accessible tool to guide participation, partnership, funding and due diligence decisions. As well, it facilitates the organizational management, design, delivery, and evaluation of sustainable programs and projects.
Introduction

This research report will generate and present a standards of practice framework for global service learning (GSL) in four ways. First, by extensively reviewing literature to identify the contentious topics, issues, methods, and outcomes associated with standards in GSL; secondly, by examining 21 existing standard-setting templates to identify common and divergent categories and themes within the standards; thirdly, by comparing and contrasting responses from semi-structured interviews with 14 key informant practitioners from the North and South engaged in GSL; and finally, by recommending a theory of change framework of six common standards under the rubric of reciprocal public benefit.

Standards of practice are foundational principles and generally accepted norms used for the basis of judgment and decision-making. They are professional requirements that reflect acceptable ethical and practical behaviors within a particular field of work. When used in conjunction with other resources they are instrumental in determining the quality of expectations for practitioners and the public. Standards of practice provide common conceptual criteria against which performance is measured and improved.

The objective of this research is to design and articulate a standard of practice framework of use to sponsoring institutions, intermediary organizations, and host community partners seeking to ensure that the benefits of GSL are intentionally and systematically distributed among stakeholders. Referred to as the reciprocal public benefit framework, it could be used by students, staff, and faculty in academic institutions; commercial travel operators and bona fide intermediaries; leaders in faith-based mission organizations; private individuals and service clubs; civic and host community leaders; and, funders, journalists, policy makers, and researchers. It is an audit instrument by which individuals and organizations can assess and measure their own practices against. Based on an organization’s demonstrated adherence to the standards, it is a tool with which to make participation, partnership, funding and other decisions.

The reciprocal public benefit framework seeks to provoke further dialogue and research about the long-term objectives, roles and responsibilities of all individuals and organizations engaged in GSL. Ultimately, the framework may inform and inspire organizations committed to
excellence in GSL to identify, elevate, and adhere to an articulated and more widely held set of standards of practice.

By building upon extensive research and practitioner experience, this reciprocal public benefit framework adds value to the sector in four ways: (1) it is comprehensive, taking into account management, program, and project considerations from sponsor, intermediary, and host community perspectives; (2) it is accessible to a swath of individuals and organizations, deliberately outlining previously underestimated issues to consider; (3) it is measurable, using qualitative and quantitative descriptors to produce an assessment result intended to provoke better organizational planning from any angle; and finally, (4) it is sector-leading, intended to contribute new material and provoke further dialogue and research about the long-term objectives, roles and responsibilities of all individuals and organizations engaged in GSL.

Definition of Terms

Although the term international service learning is commonly used, here it is transposed for the term global service learning. ‘International’ connotes that the service and learning takes place only in a foreign location, whereas ‘global’ signals that it can occur universally (Garcia, 2013). Global citizenship is an assertion of individual rights and responsibilities locally as proxy for common global concerns. Furthermore, since few GSL experiences involve people from the South traveling internationally, it is an exclusionary term contrary to reciprocity.

To distinguish them here, mutual private benefit is characterized by the uneven distribution of separated and individualized benefits achieved through bilateral coordination or cooperation. In GSL, it implies an efficient divvying of roles and responsibilities using achievable criteria defined by access to resources and geographic and logistical convenience. Whereas, reciprocal public benefit is characterized by a balanced distribution of common benefits achieved through multilateral collaboration. In GSL, it implies a comprehensive sharing of risks and rewards requiring integration of design, decision-making, implementation, and evaluation steps.

For purposes of definition, sponsoring (sometimes called sending) organizations are typically formalized North American or European higher education, church, civic, or travel-related entities. They encourage students, members, or clients (collectively referred to as participants)
possessing a wide range of motivations and expectations to participate in international service learning activities as a means to achieving certain objectives. To help differentiate the activities, direct voluntary service addressing an issue of importance to a host community may be referred to as the *project* while cross-cultural learning addressing interests of primary importance to the participant may be referred to as the *program*. It is important to note that for the participant the project is just one aspect of an entire program experience, the remainder involving host family, language learning, cultural exposure, excursion, reflection, and other experiences.

*Intermediary* (sometimes called third-party providers, in-country or cooperating) organizations are located in the North and/or South and are non-profit or for-profit facilitating entities with staff and supply providers with their own blend of interests. They vary widely in their composition and may be involved in advocating for, negotiating between, and/or serving the needs of the sponsoring organization, the host community, or both.

*Host communities* (sometimes called receiving communities) are usually non-formal organizations composed of agencies, leaders, volunteers, and/or beneficiaries. The individuals representing a host community may be appointed, selected, elected, or natural arising members of their community who are paid or voluntary. Host communities are located in socio-economically challenged areas of Africa, Asia, or Latin America. It is important to note that for the host community individual the project is the main, if not only, aspect of their intercultural experience. Anything beyond the project that involves them in a deliberate learning, exposure, excursion, or reflection element is commonly at the discretion of others, not necessarily associated with the project or built-in to the overall program experience.

There are obvious, pre-existing, and systemic differences in political, economic, and social access to resources inherent to the relational dynamic between the three parties. Beneath the sense of propriety lie competing objectives and agenda-drivers that may or may not be cognizant to all. This research report seeks to identify standards of practice that could balance the distribution of benefits between sponsoring, intermediary, and host community organizations more intentionally. It does not seek to define or impose the particulars around these relationships, but to outline common standards that sponsoring, intermediary, and host communities could aspire to implement in order to generate more integrated and just results.
Background

Global service learning is known as the phenomena of individuals traveling from the global North to places in the South to purportedly serve public purposes while acquiring personal knowledge, skills, values, and insights in a cross-cultural context for a period of less than one year. It is also known as international service learning. It has different forms – shorter introductory stints of one to four weeks are often referred to as volunteering abroad or volunteer tourism and longer academic related experiences of one to eight months may be called a placement or practicum, or a gap year between levels of school or work. Their essence and the issues surrounding them is similar. While they have a voluntary aspect in common, GSL is distinct from non-governmental organizations sending capacity-enhancing or technical professionals overseas with objectives related to humanitarian relief and international development.

Empirical evidence shows GSL’s explosion in growth. Based on a survey of over 300 volunteer tourism organizations worldwide, market research in the United Kingdom estimated 2 million volunteer tourists spending upward of US$5 billion annually (Tourism Research, 2008). Reports six years ago conservatively estimated that 65,000 Canadians had experienced volunteer abroad programs since the 1960s (Tiessen, 2012 as cited in Ngo, 2013). The broad range of gateways might now suggest 65,000 Canadians are pursuing study and volunteer abroad opportunities annually. The popularity of GSL in the U.S. over the past decade has been steady with research stating 800,000 to 1,100,000 individuals volunteering internationally annually (Lough, 2013). While traditionally the purview of youth and young adults, one of GSL’s trend lines is that families and semi-retired persons are active participants.

The prevalence of GSL today may be loosely tied to three historical circumstances. First, individual activity and systems behavior was connected through the civil rights, anti-war, women’s, and environmental movements in North America. Local-global interdependence also became evident over the past 50 years with more travel, media exposure, and aid efforts. Recognition of impoverished living conditions in Africa, Asia, and Latin America propelled interest in finding solutions to preventable problems. Micro-lending, fair trade, women’s education, and mobile technology have sparked individual and institutional philanthropic. Interest in GSL, then, reflects some sense of global citizenship (Westheimer, 2004; Andreotti, 2010).
Secondly, while opportunities to volunteer abroad became available in the 1960s through the creation of non-governmental organizations like the U.S. Peace Corps, Canadian University Students Overseas (CUSO), and Canada World Youth, today a myriad of non-profit and for-profit organizations facilitate international volunteering. Adventure travel agencies with commercial interests, university units with in/outbound internationalization purposes, enterprises with a hybrid of social and business interests, and faith-based or service organizations with a range of goals all operate in an uncoordinated GSL space.

Finally, the simple prevalence of low-cost air transportation and internet technology has made GSL financially more accessible and psychologically less remote and less hazardous.

Due to these three circumstances, GSL has become socially accepted as a legitimate educational endeavor, career formation step, or personal growth benchmark at any age. However, the rise of uncoordinated intermediaries with conflicting interests to meet this demand has meant no common standards of practice have been adopted. The result has been a preponderance of intermediaries based in the North serving the short-term needs its travelers. Few intermediaries incorporate comprehensive standards of practice that result in an intentional distribution of balanced benefits among all stakeholders over the long-term. There is a noticeable lack of intermediaries based in Africa, Asia, and Latin America equipped with local staff competently prepared to manage the aspirations of visitors and host communities alike.

Despite a prevailing awareness that good intentions alone are not a legitimate threshold of entry into GSL, the absence of a clearly articulated set of standards of practice has allowed discordant entities lacking in qualification and competency, sustained sincerity, or operational ethics to take hold. Individuals, host communities, and the reputation of the field itself have been damaged. By design or default, the benefits of GSL are distributed disproportionately in favor of privileged sponsoring parties, not to host communities (Blouin, 2009; Butin, 2006; Dear, 2012; Larsen, 2014; Sharpe, 2013; Simpson, 2004; Smith, 2014). Under the rubric of ‘mutual benefit’ neo-colonial patterns of political, economic, and social behavior persist (Pluim, 2012; Tiessen, 2012). Therefore, a contemporary reciprocal public benefit framework that stimulates researchers and practitioners to define, mark, and promote what constitutes acceptable (and unacceptable) standards of practice is necessary.
Methodology

A list of GSL researchers, practitioners, organizations, and conferences was developed through existing networks and expanded through key-word searches and additional sources provided by colleagues and reference lists. This resulted in the accumulation of 145 sources. Documents included peer-reviewed journals, professional association publications, conference presentations, media reports, essays, books, and existing standards from the fields of international education, international development, ethics, and tourism.

First, documents were scrutinized for key words and concepts and were categorized according to GSL theory and practice, participant motivations and outcomes, intermediary and tourism industry performance, host community impact, and principles of fair trade. From the categories sub-topics related to standards of practice (or the absence of such) were extrapolated and listed for later use in the key informant interviews and recommended framework.

Secondly, 21 standard setting instruments, tools, guidelines, and principles ranging from two to seventy-one pages in length were also scrutinized (see Appendix 1, p. 46). 20 came from sources in the United Kingdom, the United States, and Canada; only 1 document could be found in the global South, from South Africa. 11 of these standards were generated by non-profits or charities; 6 were generated by academic institutions; 2 were generated by social enterprises; and, 2 were generated by faith-based organizations. Each standard was reviewed and cross-referenced to the key words and concepts derived from the documents to arrive at a common set of six standards of practice for GSL.

Thirdly, 14 key informants from a variety of organizations in Canada, the United States, and Nicaragua were asked in 45-75 minute semi-structured oral interviews on Skype to rate their degree of (dis)agreement with six common standards of practice for GSL gleaned from the literature review (see Appendix 2, p. 47). Comments by key informants pertinent to standards not already derived from the literature or existing standards were noted. Three open-ended questions regarding current standards, decision-making between entities, and the realistic vs rhetorical nature of balanced benefit were also asked. Although not a central topic of investigation, the final open-ended question probed hypothetical means of implementing a common set of standards of practice. In order to ensure that promising practices and lessons learned were
represented 6 key informants were located in the global North and 8 in the South; 4 were from sponsoring organizations, 6 were from intermediaries, and 4 were from host communities. Tabulated interview responses were compared and contrasted to establish common themes and divergences (see Appendix 3, p. 50).

The primary point of this methodological approach was to identify from a spectrum of perspectives the range of standards currently thought to be of importance to the practice of GSL; and secondly, to identify issues surrounding the standards that would need to be considered in a proposed framework.

Several limitations permeated this research. First, only literature and standards available in English were sought, thus obscuring research conducted in other languages. Secondly, the lack of standards of practice from the South created a comparison deficiency and limited the framework’s value orientation. Thirdly, the number of key informants was limited to 14 and although 8 were from the South, they were located in one country (Nicaragua), not from a sampling of frequented host community nations such as Guatemala, Ecuador, Ghana, Kenya, India, or Cambodia. Finally, the author’s long standing experience within an intermediary organization introduced positional bias.

Notwithstanding these limitations, the information collected generated several positive results. It assembled disparate concerns about GSL standards from a significant amount of literature in one document; it included the perspectives of a variety of stakeholders paying particular attention to those located in the South; it produced a more structured framework of principles and practices that can be used as an organizational audit or self-assessment tool; and, it provoked further dialogue about a cross-cutting and popular contemporary issue.

Literature Review

GSL has been investigated from many perspectives and a rich catalogue of references is available. Implicit in the research is the question of how interaction between the organizations, individuals, and communities involved may be formulated to have the best results. Identifying themes from previous research is an essential element of crafting standards of practice that could govern the aspirations of sponsoring, intermediary, or host community organizations.
In his well-known address, Ivan Illich (1968) directly challenged the notion of voluntary service outside of one’s own country suggesting it was fraught with paternalism and a pretentious imposition of values. One of GSL’s earliest pioneers, Robert Sigmon, demanded that it meet three principles – those being served control the service; those being served become better able to serve; and, those who learn have control over their learning (Sigmon, 1979). Few would argue those principles have been met to full satisfaction. Analysis of institutionalized service learning by Butin (2006) identified it as an over-burdened pedagogy with under-proven social justice outcomes. Despite those claims, Eliasoph (2013) maintained the act of volunteering itself, under any guise, is invariably political, for its opposite – isolation from civic action – is apolitically content with the status quo. Cousins, Evans, and Sandler (2009, as cited by Sharpe, 2013) observed the proliferation of private intermediaries and suggested the commodification of project work made distinctions between tourist, volunteer, and service-learner increasingly ambiguous. Garcia and Longo (2013) posited that the use of the term international in GSL reinforced the divide between nation-states by focusing on a distant, exotic location accessed through the privilege granted participants from the global North of low-cost travel and unfettered entry to other countries (an opportunity not afforded to most citizens of Southern sphere countries). They proposed the use of the term global service learning to emphasize the network of relationships, ways of thinking, and interconnectedness of the local with the global. The literature informs us, therefore, that the very framework of thinking about GSL is highly contested and ripe for standards that target its complexities.

Regarding the advantages and disadvantages of GSL as pedagogy, Doerr (2011) referred to the cognitive dissonance necessary to reconcile its risks and rewards to both participants and host communities. She underlined the difference between dissonance as one dimensional inconsistency occurring by default vis-à-vis dissonance by design where the inconsistency is an intended intermediate outcome from which the learner can extend to a place of often uncomfortable transformation, not comfort-seeking dissonance reduction. It was in failure to craft guided reflection through these stages for all parties involved, not just participants, that harmful stereotypes and attitudes were observed to be perpetuated. This research supports the notion that standards of practice must be pedagogically thorough and inclusive.
In a two-case study comparison O’Sullivan and Smaller (2013) concluded that despite different approaches to global education through critical pedagogy and liberal academic paradigms, high school students from two programs emerged from short-term experiences with more in common than apart. This suggested that while there is certainly a place for critical and liberal processes, both approaches tend to produce similar outcomes. Myles (2013) also emphasized the inclusion of reflective practice, guided learning, and intentional design as essential tools for increasing understanding and the application of intercultural skills by participants engaged in co-curricular and volunteer abroad opportunities. As well, he cited the ethical guidelines developed by sponsoring institutions to ensure the transfer of resources to host partners as a means of recognizing their contributions and the transactional aspect of the relationship. These questions of program design, then, have bearing on standards related to preparation and objective setting and the ways and means for achieving them.

In discussing theoretical foundations of GSL, Crabtree (2008) argued that while many intermediary organizations may be essential partners by helping participants connect more meaningfully to organized communities in developing countries, building bridges between cultures, and facilitating an understanding of multiple perspectives, in practice their encouragement of participatory development was still largely seen as a method to improve the effectiveness of externally determined projects, not as a method to challenge the root causes of poverty or local disempowerment. Much earlier, in a popular anti-racist article aptly entitled “Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack” McIntosh (1988) articulated the unearned and unseen privilege afforded white people that permeate their interactions with host communities. Given the central role of intermediaries, this suggested the degree to which they were aware of privilege in their own operations potentially affected the entire chain of social change. The issue of power and privilege appeared constantly in GSL literature (Biddle, 2014; Daly, 2013; Jeffress, 2012; Ngo, 2014; O’Sullivan, 2013; Pluim, 2012; Sharpe, 2013; Simpson, 2004; Stoecker, 2009; Tiessen, 2012; Williams, 2014; Zemach-Bersin, 2008) making the recognition of this dynamic a prerequisite component of any standard of practice framework.

While intermediaries were relatively adaptable and influential in determining the degree of a bilateral flow of benefits, research about the motivations of participants to engage in
GSL repeatedly indicated uni-directional self-serving purposes. Tiessen (2012) concluded from interviews with 68 Canadian young adults that their self-identified motivations centered on personal growth (academic and career exploration, skill and language acquisition, cross-cultural understanding/adventure, and volunteer fulfillment). In another well-known study, reporting from 108 short-form and 25 longitudinal interviews with returned volunteers expressed similar motivations (Tiessen, 2012). Fewer than half reported their impact as being ultimately beneficial to the host community, although the vast majority felt their publicly funded sojourns were justified for a variety of ‘soft global citizenship’ reasons (Andreotti, 2006, as cited in Daly, 2013).

In a theoretical reflection Pluim (2012) described thousands of volunteer abroad participants as the neo-colonial movement of people and benefits from the middle of power to the edge and back again, reinforcing dominant systems that favor the donor. Vague descriptions of cultural learning by returned participants echoed results found by Tiessen and Heron (2012) and a lack of specific political and economic knowledge gained during or after the experience in the host country suggested a lack of ability or readiness on behalf of many volunteers to grapple with or delve into contested issues. In a related fashion Stoecker and Tyron (2009) concluded that although post-secondary institutions were enthusiastic about expanding students’ civic capacity through a service-learning endeavor, evaluative comments from staff members of host community organizations indicated students lacked the civic capacity to efficiently meet their needs. Simpson (2004) acutely summarized a content analysis of commercial intermediary marketing materials and an ethnographic study of British gap-year programs as experiences void of social justice learning due to their simplistic geographic binaries, vapid good intention clichés, and disinclination for critical engagement with complex structural and international development issues. Given these findings, the urgency of raising standards that align the objectives and methods of the sponsoring and host community organizations is paramount.

From critical literacy perspective Jefferess (2012) offered an incisive critique of one particular Canadian voluntourism operator known for annually sending thousands of mostly white, female, upper-middle class, urbanized teenage participants through its high-priced, programs in Kenya, India, Ghana, Ecuador, and Nicaragua. Using its national name recognition, corporate sponsorships, celebrity endorsements, self-promoting stadium events, slick marketing, co-
opted clichés (‘be the change’; ‘make a world of difference’), and its own easy-cure consumer products, Me To We disengaged its participants entirely from root cause inquiry and completely sanitized any challenge to predominant political, economic, and social structures. From an in-depth examination of its phrasing, product marketing, use of images, and discourse values, Jeffress concluded Me to We was selling global education as a lifestyle brand and perpetuating the very problems it purported to solve.

Newbury (2010) summarized this approach as the corporatization of public power and Atkinson (2013) questioned the manipulative techniques used to sell ‘ethical’ products. Emphasizing the importance of standards around volunterourism marketing, Smith and Font (2014) used online content analysis to examine 8 commercial operators in the United Kingdom across 19 responsibility criteria. The study demonstrated that the status of the organization was no guarantee of responsible practice and that price and responsibility communication displayed an inverse relationship. More responsible organizations were transparent about their revenue and expense structure and tended to offer lower priced programs; whereas, less responsible organizations obscured cost structure and had higher priced programs. These various analyses point to the need for explicit standards of practice specific to marketing and imagery.

Participants as critical thinkers in GSL organizations lend a mix of first-hand perspectives. Some were indifferent to their GSL experience while others made paradigm shifts toward social change (Mundel 2002, Simpson 2005, Schwartzman 2007, as cited in Daly, 2013). Using Kiely’s transformational experience framework (2004), strong accounts of Canadian students converting their east African internship experience into thoughtful action up to six years after a reciprocal benefit and guided reflection experience were reported (Gough, 2013).

Zemach-Bersin (2008, 2009) seized on the paradox between the ideals of cultural immersion and foreign language achievement espoused by her study abroad program in Tibet only to find herself critically thinking about the commodification of her host family experience and the privatization of global citizenship marketed to her as an ‘adventurous’ American citizen ‘discovering’ an open and passive world that awaited her. After six years as a young adult traveling in numerous African countries Biddle (2014) renounced her status as a volunterourist having realized how misplaced she was in other countries, but how useful she could be in her own country.
Conversely, Williams (2014) used similar cross-cultural exposure to infuse her intermediary’s programs with educational components of privilege, positional relationships, and critical thinking. Bennett and Papi (2014) turned critical questions about the value of voluntourism in Cambodia - described as the most ethical form of tourism and the least ethical form of international development - into a novel conceptual framework called Learning Service. They contended that as opposed to purchasing volunteer experiences, participants should pay for an experiential critical inquiry course about all aspects of service. From that foundation people would be informed and inspired to acquire the appropriate knowledge, skill, and value sets to be later applied more effectively in a discerned local and/or global volunteer context. Again, these firsthand insights indicate not only a need, but desire for prominent standards that more reliably help participants judge their place (or not) in GSL.

Despite reservations or protestations, few researchers or practitioners saw GSL as lacking in merit nor likely to subside soon. An oft-noted longitudinal case study with a purposeful sample of 22 students by Kiely (2004) provided empirical documentation highlighting six forms of perspective transformation, subdivided into envisioning, transforming, and ‘chameleon complex’ categories. Although remaining conflicted about GSL at the end of her study, Crabtree (2008) articulated the intangible benefits that came to participants and host communities through shared witnessing, story-telling, accompaniment, and organizing activities. Some participants reported an increased assertion of their democratic rights and responsibilities upon return. Nelson and Klak (2012), used observation, interviews, surveys, and analysis of written reflections gleaned from a two-case study of experiential learning courses in South Africa and Dominicana to learn that returning students had gained significant emotional and intellectual benefits with long-term impacts on their global perspective, lifestyle choices, and commitment to volunteering that otherwise may not have materialized. Those seeking to prove the merit of GSL and withstand increasing criticism would be served by standards of practice that incorporate cycles of monitoring, evaluation, and measurement within programs and projects.

Of chief concern to many researchers were the standards of practice pertaining to the impact of GSL on host communities. In a concept review Dostillio (2010) contended that language around relationships involving host communities was often rhetorical with terms such as
‘mutually beneficial’ or ‘reciprocal’ used so frequently and interchangeably as to become meaningless. In a four month-long service learning language exchange program in inner-city Chicago, D’Arlach, Sanchez and Feuer (2009) found through interviews and observation that Spanish-speaking immigrant community members found their voice, felt increasingly equal to English-speaking university students, and gained agency with respect to social issues. They attributed the positive results to a program designed with intentional reciprocal goals. Dear (2012) probed the relevance of the charity to justice spectrum, the methods for better integrating host communities, the formation of international partnerships, and the overlap of development education with GSL. However, in their analysis of reciprocity during an GSL experience in Cuba, Sharpe and Dear (2013) showed how ‘agitated interactions’ suggested contradictions between the rhetoric and reality of GSL and the limited practicality of reciprocity as a framework. It was recommended that notions of reciprocity needed to shift to interdependence.

Raymond and Hall (2008) employed Appreciative Inquiry with ten voluntourism programs around the world and determined that the development of cross-cultural relationships should be a goal - not an assumed outcome - that sponsoring and host community organizations proactively facilitate. Blouin and Perry (2009) conducted 20 in-depth interviews with conventional mutual benefit town-gown organizations in the United States and found that while some benefits accrued to the host communities, most relationships with sponsoring organizations were hindered by issues related to participant conduct, the mismatching of objectives and organizational fit, and communication between parties. In a three case study in South Africa, Nelson and Klak (2012) interviewed host community members who did not know why white people came to visit them, what they were supposed to do with them, or how effective their volunteering could be. Displacement of energy, resources, and routines, combined with expectations to be accommodated and fed made some communities reluctant to accept voluntourists. Papi (2012) recounted extreme cases of exploitation by voluntourists in Cambodia’s orphanage tourism business, wryly noting more attendees at a wildlife protection session than at a child protection session at a responsible tourism conference. Prins and Webster (2010, as cited in Sharpe and Dear, 2013) described the ‘tourist gaze’ as penetrating people’s lives and upholding an asymmetrical power relationship between the tourist and the host community. Daly (2013) asserted
that a failure to engage host community organizations in reciprocal learning opportunities would likely result in the deepening, not diminishment, of existing stereotypes – a comment repeated in many post-colonial critiques.

All of these studies demonstrate the pertinence of intentional and thoughtful standard setting. A summary of research into the impact of GSL on host communities in India and Tanzania by the Irish NGO Comhlámh (2007) concluded participation by host communities in the selection, recruitment, development education, and training of participants was necessary. It also recommended greater relevance between participants and projects, articulated the need for host communities to be part of the monitoring and evaluation process, and advanced the formulation of a Code of Practice.

Larsen (2014), in looking at the impacts of GSL on a Tanzanian host community, highlighted the difficulties of delineating the host community given that over the course of an experience participants interact with a spectrum of people in a variety of political, economic, and social contexts all of whom could be considered direct and indirect hosts, facilitators, or beneficiaries. Questions of legitimate community engagement, shared decision-making, stratified local power and privilege quickly became complicated. Evans (2008) raised similar questions in her study of social enterprise, decision-making, and community participation in the UK, cautioning that community participation was often manipulated to legitimize unintended agendas. Stoecker and Tyron (2009) study bluntly asked whose interests were served by service learning? Drawing on three 12-person focus groups and 45 individual interviews with community members in five Nicaraguan villages interviewed by a local sociologist, O’Sullivan and Smaller (2014) identified obvious material benefits to host communities, but raised the perennial dilemma faced by host communities and in-country intermediaries, that is how to build continuous relationships yet not create dependency? O’Sullivan and Smaller (2013) also realistically outlined the methodological difficulties in obtaining valid information from host communities. Politeness-bias, fear of losing material benefits, suspicion of outsiders, and a lack of willingness or ability to be critical were cited as impediments.

Could the need for standards of practice that investigate, challenge, and reformulate the purposes and methods of GSL vis-a-vis host communities be any more clear? Yet given the
abundance of well-articulated critiques and exhortations referred to in this review and elsewhere, it remains noticeable how few alternatives have been studied. Citing British NGO Tourism Concern’s call for regulation of the burgeoning voluntourism industry and a desire to improve practices for all parties, Mdee and Emmott (2008) identified the rise of social enterprise and fair trade models within capitalism as opportunities to revalue social impact and ownership in enterprise activities. Acknowledged tensions between a financially viable operation and developmental impacts were reconciled through a proposed fair trade labelling system for organizations engaged in volunteer travel. Through a comparison of two cases in Haiti and Jamaica and a self-study of applied ideals in Ghana and Tanzania, Hartman, Paris, and Blache-Cohen (2012) addressed the challenges facing voluntourism and made a compelling argument for fair trade learning based on seven standards: dual community and participant objectives; community voice and direction; institutional commitment and partnership sustainability; financial viability and transparency; environmental protection; and, deliberate diversity and exchange. Hartman Paris, and Blache-Cohen (2014) expanded the case for fair trade learning by identifying in more practical detail seven community-centered standards and seven student-centered standards aimed at maximizing benefits and minimizing negative outcomes for both participants and host communities.

In considering fair trade GSL and taking a wider view of standards, Kiely (2013) set out the need for more research about engaging local knowledge, representing and reporting to multiple stakeholders, conducting collaborative and mixed-methods research, generating and applying useful data, developing program planning theories, reaching critical global engagement, and training counterparts. Hall (2013) connected the pursuit of knowledge co-creation, democracy, and action to GSL and proposed that GSL be designed primarily by target communities, linked to the participants own communities, be based in a strong understanding of self, and rooted in long-term partnership. Finally, using design and innovation language Fabian and Fabricant (2014) offered a nine-point ethical blueprint that bridged start-up technology and international development in a similar fashion: design with the user and understand the ecosystem; build for scale and sustainability; be data-driven and use open source; collaborate, improve and do no harm. These insights are directly transferable to a GSL reciprocal public benefit framework.
This extensive literature review identified numerous contested issues, such as: sponsor/participant motivations; white power and privilege; pedagogical approaches to service, citizenship and transformation; ethical assumptions and behaviors; private vs public purposes; marketing rhetoric vs reality; intermediary roles; and host community ownership, agenda, and interactions. The review highlighted the need for standards of practice to be developed and promoted to govern the actions and match the aspirations of sponsoring, intermediary, and host community organizations. Standards of practice would address these issues and structural inequities and move the language and mindset of GSL from short-term mutual private benefit to long-term reciprocal public benefit.

Discussion of Findings Part A – From Existing Standards of Practice to Collective Impact?

Existing standards of practice for GSL were disparately located in sponsoring and intermediary organizations in the global North and varied in intent and quality – ranging from ad hoc attempts outlining starting principles and giving guidance to comprehensive assessment and audit instruments. Only one standard of practice could be found that was produced by an intermediary in the South (see Table 1) and while conceptually clear, it lacked detail. Having said that, one key informant from a Canadian faith-based sponsoring organization reported having worked with self-sufficient host community organizations in Cuba, El Salvador, and the Philippines. While this research report could not prove or disprove the existence of a wider body of undivulged host community standards of practice it surmised that they were sparse due to limited access to resources, competing priorities, and a conscious or subconscious reluctance to challenge the underlying power and privilege dynamics which characterize the GSL enterprise.

Table 1: Relationship between status and location of standard-bearing organization

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>↓ Status of Organization</th>
<th>→ Location of Organization</th>
<th>→ Location of Organization</th>
<th>→ Location of Organization</th>
<th>total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>United States</td>
<td>Ireland</td>
<td>South Africa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Profit Charity</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic Institution</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faith-Based</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As Table 1 (above) shows, standard bearing organizations were predominantly from North America, with four different types of organizations represented. As detailed in Appendix 1 (p. 46), the *International Voluntourism Guidelines for Commercial Operators; Standards of Good Practices for Education Abroad* and *Code of Ethics and Conduct for Non-Governmental Organizations* provided rich material pertinent to a GSL framework. Two of the most elaborated audit instruments were from Scotland and Ireland and were referenced as leaders in the field by peer organizations, namely the *Code of Good Practice for Volunteer Sending Organizations* and *International Volunteering Organisational Code of Practice*. One key informant from a sponsoring organizations believed their level of excellence was made possible by government funding that helped volunteer sending organizations identify and address their weak practices through capacity-building workshops, professional development, and training opportunities.

While standards of practice in GSL have yet to be broadly adopted, their existence in a spectrum of organizations handling different types of participants suggested standards may become more commonplace. With quantitative research estimating 45% of overseas U.S. volunteers spending their time with religious organizations (Lough, 2013) it was apparent that faith-based organizations could play an important role in disseminating standards. Another important cohort to whom standards could be targeted was post-secondary study abroad students, calculated to be 290,000 per year from the U.S. (Open Doors, 2014) and 22,000 annually from Canada (CBIE, 2009).

Standards from academic institutions focused on service learning principles, campus community partnership models, short-term visit, study abroad and international education norms. Standards from faith-based organizations focused on leadership, mission-alignment, stewardship, effective community ministry and follow through practices. Standards produced by intermediary organizations were more numerous and less homogenous and could be subdivided into four types; elaborated audit instruments; organizational assessment tools; general statements of principles; and, issue specific guidelines.
### Table 2: Relationship between type of standard and role of organization

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>↓ Type of Standard</th>
<th>→ Role of Organization</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sponsoring</td>
<td>Intermediary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elaborated Audit Instrument</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizational Assessment Tool</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Issue-Specific Guideline</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statement of Principles</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As Table 2 (above) indicates, while sponsoring organizations showed some interest, intermediary organizations took the lead in promoting GSL standards of practice using audit instruments, assessment tools, guidelines, and principles. Some intermediaries had specific interests (e.g. study abroad) while others were more general (e.g. tourism). A few were merging their first-hand experience with the perils and pitfalls of GSL to distinguish themselves from unethical commercial operators and raise standards to commensurate levels (e.g. TIES, PEPY, Amizade, Break Away, and the authors’ organization Compañeros Inc). With their mission and funding centered on satisfying the interests of sponsoring and host organizations, these non-profit and for-profit organizations have a vested interest in protecting and legitimizing GSL.

An effective intermediary located in the host community country – one staffed by resourced and competent nationals with knowledge, skills, and values aligned with cross-cultural learning, voluntary service, and community development – can play a catalytic role in facilitating the distribution of benefits with more likelihood of success than a sponsoring and host organization could achieve independently at a distance from one another. The intermediary can mitigate the opaque tendencies of the Northern entity to over-power the Southern one and increase the host community’s capacity to assume responsibility for perceiving, thinking, and acting as an equal in the design, decision-making, implementation, and evaluation of GSL.

The micro- and macro- perspectives of an effective intermediary afford them a pivotal role of influence in articulating standards of practice between organizations. Unfortunately,
however, their inconsistent reputational status and inability to scale has inhibited them from implementing standards to their full potential nor disrupted the market significantly to date. The role of the backbone organization has been tested successfully in the collective impact model (Kania, 2011), but not yet applied in GSL. Characterized by diverse stakeholders who commit to a common agenda, shared evaluation, mutually reinforcing activities, continuous communication, and a facilitating backbone organization, might intermediaries deeply committed to transformation reinvent themselves and find standards of practice satisfied through a new model of collective impact? The paucity of Southern-based intermediaries with standards of practice suggests this is a possibility worthy of future investigation.

Discussion of Findings Part B – Key Informant Interviews and the Six Standards of Practice

As Table 3 (below) reflects, a convenience sample of key informants was selected from sponsoring, intermediary and host community organizations in Canada, the United States, and Nicaragua. All interviewees were currently active in GSL and had between 2-25 years of professional experience in at least one of the areas of cross-cultural learning, volunteer service, and community development. They and their organizations were granted anonymity in order to provoke more candid comments about broad standards, not individual organizations.

Table 3: Representation of key informant interviewees

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location of Key informants</th>
<th>Role of Organization</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sponsoring</td>
<td>Intermediary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>2 Academic</td>
<td>3 Non-Profit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 Faith-Based</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nicaragua</td>
<td>1 Non-Profit</td>
<td>3 Non-Profit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1 Unpaid Leader</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The distillation of 145 documents and 21 published standards of practice into a set of six common standards that could be used in the key informant questionnaire and for the production of a framework was a fluent process. Despite the variety of perspectives represented and
interests at play, the literature was consistent in its call for core standards of practice to revolve around the following six common themes.

**Standard 1 – Organizational alignment of mission with capacity and collaboration**

_A sponsoring organization’s capacity to operate programs shall be consistent with its mission and meet a legitimate purpose identified and driven by host communities._

This standard seeks to raise the threshold of entry into GSL well beyond good intentions and require an explicit alignment of a sponsoring organization’s mission with its capacity (not intent) to meet community purposes (not assumed always to be ‘needs’). The standard stems from the tendency of sponsoring organizations to use their position of power and privilege to meet demand-side objectives (e.g. education, evangelization, profit, adventure) that primarily satisfy the participants. As indicated previously, this tendency was referred to directly and indirectly frequently in the literature.

93% (13/14) of the key informants strongly agreed, while 7% (1/14) agreed. A respondent from an intermediary in the South recounted how over time their organization had gained the confidence and credibility to diplomatically resist sponsoring organizations that approached them with a specific project they wanted to do, as opposed to listening to what the community wanted. However, by building a relationship over time, and educating them about how they could facilitate working with the community sponsors would often return. It was reported that aligning mission, capacity, and purpose required extensive cross-cultural communication skills. Another respondent cited that getting sponsors to let go of their preconceived notions yet keep their commitment to project funding was an on-going and difficult balance. A third respondent said it was irresponsible for sponsoring organizations engaged in GSL not to have staff familiar with community development principles, suggesting a minimum standard of qualification required to sponsor GSL. Accepting funds for projects outside the community’s parameters had led to mission drift in at least one respondent’s organization. The singular respondent who did not strongly agree stated that while community purposes needed to be respected, it was just as important for the participant to be able to return to their own commu-
nity and follow-up constructively, therefore linking projects feasible to the sponsoring community’s context held merit. Overall, the alignment of mission, purpose, and capacity was considered essential to GSL.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Standard 2 – Responsible marketing materials</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Imagery and marketing shall reflect the balanced objectives of the partnership between sponsoring organizations and host communities. Imagery will not perpetuate stereotypes. Marketing shall not oversimplify complex problems nor make false claims about ‘impact’.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This standard seeks to reduce the use of phrases and images by sponsoring or intermediary organizations that perpetuate negative stereotypes and neo-colonial attitudes or exaggerate the difference the participant’s presence will make or the experience will have on lives. This standard requires that the community not be disempowered by preconceived notions, but that the objectives of the relationship be promoted realistically.

86% strongly agreed, 7% undecided, and 7% agreed. Although the majority of respondents saw the need for this standard, it provoked deliberation in light of a lack of critical media literacy skills and predominant images the general public holds in their mind about the Third World. If an overarching goal was to draw people into GSL experiences so that ultimately they became better citizens then marketing needed to start where they were at, reasoned one respondent. Keeping up with competition from less scrupulous sponsor organizations using glossy advertising techniques which focused on making the participant feel good about themselves and superficially ‘being the change’ was cited as a pressure. One respondent offered an extreme example of how damaging and manipulative imagery can become, relating the preference of a high school teacher/group leader not wanting to return to the same host community with participants two years in a row because it would reduce the romanticized view they had of the local people. Stereotyping of people from the North was also an issue to be confronted, although its roots were not necessarily related to marketing, added one respondent, more so their experience of neo-colonization and the impression left by too many careless travelers. The overuse and dilution of the word ‘impact’ concerned many respondents. While no one thought deceitful marketing should be tolerated, Standard 2 had more nuances than expected.
Standard 3 – Integrated design, preparation, and implementation

An intentional program and project selection and preparation process shall identify participants and host community members who understand and agree with each other’s objectives and the ways and means for achieving them.

This standard seeks to reduce the use of GSL as a random consumer item and/or as a personal or institutional branding exercise by requiring a degree of intentionality around the preparation, selection, and shared objectives. This standard requires an informed appraisal and guided approach to people, program, and project recruitment and partnership formation.

50% strongly agreed and 50% agreed. Of all six, this standard generated the most even separation of responses. On the one hand, half the respondents stated that if the alignment of mission, capacity, and purpose was met by the partnering organizations in Standard 1, then more leniency could be allowed in Standard 3 for individuals (thus they agreed, but not strongly with the standard). If GSL was designed to be a transformative process, then it would recognize the stage at which people enter it may or may not be informed. One respondent encapsulated this point by reporting that regardless of an extensive and intentional preparation process for participants within her sponsoring organization almost all stated in post-GSL evaluations that they were under-prepared. If we expect GSL to be an eye-opening experience then it must start with some blindness, another respondent said. An experienced staff person in an intermediary described it being easier to work with participants with soft rather than cemented objectives. It was suggested by another that it was more important for the host community to have clear goals to avoid being railroaded in unintended directions. This was congruent with another intermediary organization’s practice of having the project workers in the host community be regarded and referred to as the skilled labor and the participants as the unskilled or grunt crew and then discussing the power dynamic in end-of-day sessions.

On the other hand, two host community organizers stated that since participant fundraising success was tied to identification of a project, which was at the center of the host community’s purposes, then it was in everyone’s interest to focus on achieving those goals. Three respondents stated their institutions required clear, definable goals to approve and fund GSL.
If replies to Standard 1 revealed strong agreement about the importance of alignment between the mission, capacity and purposes of the organizations, then Standard 3 opened up differences in the degree to which organizations’ were willing to go into order to accommodate a wide spectrum of individuals who may or may not be aware of the larger themes in question.

**Standard 4 – Sustainable and ethical organizational management**

*Organizational management shall be transparent regarding legal and financial accountability; staff qualification and working conditions; and, program and project facilitation so that the distribution of design, decision-making, risks, and rewards is shared and sustainable with intermediary and host organizations.*

This standard seeks to decidedly reduce amateurism and exploitation among any of the three organizations in GSL by requiring sponsoring, intermediary, and host community entities to have legal status, financial transparency, qualified staff, and safe and fair working conditions. A shared, not divided, level of collaboration throughout all stages of the GSL is essential.

**65% strongly agreed, 14% agreed, 14% disagreed, and 7% undecided.** This standard generated the widest range of responses. Those strongly in agreement cited the paramount need for financial accountability and transparency to build trust and demonstrate responsibility to donors. Respondents situated in publicly funded institutions or non-profit charities cited their need to fulfill audit requirements with confidence. If GSL organizations wished to increase their reputational standing then they needed to be staffed by professionals capable of adding value to the program and project chain, stated one respondent.

Those who dissented agreed that while local, not expatriate, people were more sustainable, those less professional or academically qualified local people must be accommodated and provided with on the job training. If intermediaries were committed to raising the capacity of host communities then managing the gap in professionalism between North and South organizations would be necessary. On the other hand, an undecided respondent stated that the expectation to share design and decision-making tasks was not feasible given language, time zone, and communication limitations with rural host community organizations.
The debate around this topic demonstrated the need for more conversation and strategizing within and between organizations faced with implementing this standards across different working cultures. In fact, given the range of interests in the GSL space – including travel operators, academic units, social enterprises, faith-based, and civic organizations – the need for the entire area of organizational management to be brought above the surface was apparent.

**Standard 5 – Protection of children, vulnerable populations, and environment**

*Comprehensive measures of prevention to protect children, socio-economically vulnerable populations, and the environment from exploitation, accident, or natural disaster shall be employed to ensure safety and well-being of all parties involved.*

This standard seeks to protect minors, those living in extreme poverty, and the natural environment from damage or exploitation. It requires the formation of protocols and the attentive exercising of due diligence and duties of care to prevent exposure to harmful situations.

**50% strongly agreed, 43% agreed, and 7% undecided.** Respondents’ difference of opinion on this Standard revealed liability, cultural, and pedagogical differences inherent to even the most fundamental aspects of GSL. Obvious measures to protect children from harm were a given, and crude activities such as orphanage visits and poverty voyeurism were dismissed as unacceptable, but half of the respondents grappled with non-programmatic questions such as, to what lengths of due diligence inquiry must organizations go to meet the fiduciary duties of their boards of directors? How can the difference in technical and safety standards between the North and South be realistically bridged? Is it acceptable to insist on the exclusion of culturally normative behaviors if they contradict those of the sponsor (e.g. children working on a project site; riding in the back up of pick-up trucks)? Is part of the anxiety around topics of health and safety generated by subconsciously rooted perceptions of civilized and uncivilized societies?

Three respondents from in-country intermediaries suggested that insulating participants completely from risk was counter to the immersive methods necessary to gain a deeper understanding of the fragility of host community’s existence in the South. Another wondered if the expectation of safety is an extension of the expectation of privilege?
While key informants saw part of this standard as self-evident – protecting children – when they extended it to considering the minimization of risk to participants it unveiled conflicting feelings and thoughts related to decision-making processes in their organizations and the constant need to exercise discretionary judgment on the frontlines of GSL.

**Standard 6 – Monitoring, evaluation, and measurement**

_Cycles of monitoring, evaluation, and measurement shall be incorporated to highlight lessons learned, promising practices, and short/medium/long term outcomes that nourish and challenge constructive improvement._

This standard seeks to instill and integrate in sponsoring, intermediary, and host community organizations the value of continuous improvement and failing forward. It requires the resources to capture and express the intended and unintended results of GSL and all party’s collective impact.

**93% strongly agreed and 7% agreed.** Respondents across all organizations and locations were in accord with the need for monitoring and evaluation to be integrated into GSL. Perennial problems with limited funding and methodological questions such as what and how to measure outcomes were raised. One intermediary in the South recounted using repeat visits to variously funded projects in the same community to patch together a series of evaluations. Larger organizations regarded it as essential to learning and stakeholder relations; smaller ones with over-extended staff regarded it as a luxury.

Overall, key informants reflected a high degree of congruence in their replies to Standards 1 (Alignment), 2 (Marketing), and 6 (Evaluation). They were split on Standard 3 (Intentionality), deviated on Standard 4 (Organizational Management), and conflicted on Standard 5 (Protection). While the frequency of agreement was not surprising, the expressed nuances and implications of each of the Standards provided valuable insight for the framework.

After completing and commenting on the six standard-related questions using a Likert scale, key informants elaborated on the four open-ended questions below. Given their expertise, this provided an excellent opportunity to assemble valuable perspectives on GSL issues.
What criteria, codes of conduct, or standards does your organization use to assess the basis of its involvement with international service learning activities? (Question 7, Appendix 2)

To assess their engagement with GSL activities, key informants reported using four methods of discernment. In order of frequency, they were: (1) Written documents produced internally by their own organization such as partnership policies, regulations, and values statements; (2) Mission-alignment questionnaires which involved exchanges of information and meetings to tease out goals and methods of operational overlap; (3) Indirect screening mechanisms determined by a trusted third party such as a national membership association or local governing committee; and, (4) Episodic program-centered criteria that circulated around exploratory or short-term intentions. The majority of organizations with whom key informants are affiliated use more than one method. In all cases, subjective calculation of reputational value, site visit impressions, and progressive relationship building steps were part of the assessment process.

Only 29% (4/14) of the key informants had heard of or used three of the compiled 21 standard of practice documents (see Appendix 1, p. 46). Despite originating from different places and purposes, it was disconcerting that only 29% of key informants had heard of or used one of them. Over 71% of the sample rely on their own institutional practices; this reinforced the impression of people ‘doing their own thing’ and the need for this focused report.

Through what process are decisions made between your organization and international ones? What are the bridges and barriers to shared decision-making? (Question 8, Appendix 2)

All the key informants reported using a combination of written, oral, and in-person mechanisms to negotiate and navigate the flow of decision-making between sponsoring, intermediary, and host community organizations. The degree of formality and detail ranged from an outlining of shared principles to the exchange of work plans, itineraries, and budgets. The management of expectations was cited as an important component related to decision-making.

Collaborative and open attitudes, regular communication, local authority to make decisions, site visits, and true exchanges involving Southern partners visiting Northern partners were identified as bridges to shared decision-making. In one case the onus was placed on the
host community to initiate the agenda-setting process as a way of counter-balancing the tendency for outside organizations to exert too much influence, even inadvertently, on the direction of matters. The unintended consequence of this attempt to shift the power dynamic was that it raised the literacy and access to communication threshold required of community leaders, thereby excluding others with equally valid interests.

A number of common barriers to shared-decision making were identified: the centralization of decision-making by superiors or boards in the North; too many layers of decision-making and gaps between head offices and field staff; lack of sincerity, long-term commitment, or respect from entitled participants; political interference by local authorities seeking to control territory or distribute project benefits as political favors; limited access to technology in rural areas; and, time zone and scheduling issues.

More than one key informant mentioned self-perception and stereotyping of ‘other’ by participants and by host community members as an issue. Getting both parties to see beyond the tangible value of the service project and engage in more critical reflection affected decisions by facilitators about pre-experience preparation topics as well as in-country time use and itinerary planning. It was observed that if participants or host communities had previous GSL experience, they often carried over expectations without appreciating differences in intent or design. This sometimes obstructed earlier decisions made by organizers at a higher level.

**In light of unequal access to resources and different agendas, is the premise of balanced benefit between Northern and Southern organizations realistic or rhetorical?** *(Question 9, Appendix 2)*

This question provoked diverse answers. 43% of key informants essentially replied, no, the notion of balanced benefit is not based in reality and is a rhetorical premise. Significant differences in access to resources and people’s ultimate interests and limitations, as well as macro-political economic realities outside the control of the GSL endeavor, made the bridging of this gap too big. However, these respondents qualified their dose of realism by affirming the aspirational value of the aim as well as citing compensatory examples of supplemental benefits offered to host community members such as scholarships and internship opportunities.
29% of key informants were certain the premise was realistic based on the quality of policies and practices crafted in true collaboration, assuming the competency and capability of all parties involved to follow through. This viewpoint tended to see the macro-political and economic difference as obstacles that the exertion of rights and responsibilities could overcome, albeit it not necessarily immediately. One key informant from a host community reported a positive 30 year relationship with a Northern sponsor as the basis of their optimism.

The remaining 29% of key informants were undecided and stated various scenarios where the premise could or could not be interpreted as realistic or rhetorical. Half correlated a higher level of participant ignorance to a higher level of rhetorical possibility. The other half correlated host community willingness and ability to make better decisions, become empowered, and become agents of their own transformation to a higher level of realistic possibility. The harmonization of mission, values, and objectives was emphasized by a key informant as the path toward balance. Three questioned the definition of balance and benefit. One key informant said the answer might depend on the host community nation’s political experience, suggesting the premise might be considered more realistic in countries with left-of-center histories and more rhetorical in countries with right-of-center histories.

The lack of use of common standards gleaned from the previous replies and the disparate responses to the premise of balanced benefit suggested a thirst for more professional development and networking support with those engaged with GSL.

Through what means would standards of practice in GSL be best implemented? For example, voluntary adoption, a certification and trust mark process, criteria and/or evidence-based membership in associations, or other? (Question 10, see Appendix 2)

Voluntary adoption was favored by 36% of key informants. They uniformly placed the greatest value on organizations who would adopt standards aligned with their mission, vision, and values and saw more likelihood of the standards retaining their integrity if internally and intentionally adopted, rather than imposed by a body or swayed by competitive association.

Given the popularity of GSL and the need to bring attention to practices, a certification or trustmark process, such as popularized by the fair trade products movement, was seen as
the best means to adopt standards by another 36% of key informants. While it was agreed that such a process should not be located under the auspices of any government agency, the identification of a body wide enough to cover the sector was difficult. However, several possibilities emerged at the end of the recommended framework (see below p. 37).

14% of informants favored using member-based associations to disseminate standards. However, attempts by church bodies and conscientious tourism companies to implement a sign-on implementation system have had limited uptake results to-date. Finding language versatile enough to satisfy a highly dispersed and multi-lingual sector was another factor muting enthusiasm for this approach.

14% of informants critiqued voluntary adoption, a certification/trust mark process, and evidence-based membership associations by stating that they were equally meritorious and equally subject to greenwashing. They proposed a decentralized and non-uniform standards process whereby host communities would have the tools to determine their own standards and negotiate with intermediaries and sponsoring organizations according to their practice values and priorities. As an extension of this organic and power-tipping approach, a network of communities within a common region could form a reinforcing network, they suggested. This reiterated what Hall (2013) proposed about the pursuit of knowledge co-creation, democracy, and action around GSL – it being designed primarily by target communities and then linked to the participants home communities and rooted in long-term partnership.

Overall, the 14 key informant interviews revealed a pattern of value consistency with the literature that was not surprising given their familiarity with the topic from personal and professional experience. Questions around the unfettered growth of GSL, terminology, individual and organizational motivation, intended and unintended outcomes, the place and performance of juxtaposed interests and resources, and the role, viewpoint, and potential of host communities were universal.

There existed a generally consistent degree of adherence between the concerns of the key informants and the prevalence of the six common standards as derived from the 21 published standard of practice. While it cannot be quantified scientifically, a strong degree of agreement was found between the key informants, the literature, and three themes in particu-
lar – mission alignment, marketing, and evaluation. By no means was there less concern regarding the importance of standards related to intentionality, organizational management, and protection, but the strength of agreement was diluted by the presence of a higher number of credible nuances generated by deliberately approaching key informants from sponsoring, intermediary, and host community entities.

Notwithstanding the strength of agreement, in principle, between the literature, existing standards, and key informants, a gap between theory and practice was inevitably noticed. Limited time and funds, inhibiting governance structures, geo-cultural differences, and operational logistics make the comprehensive implementation of standards of practice in GSL an incremental proposition.

**Recommended Framework**

At this point in time, excluding atrocious and exemplary outliers, the predominant behavioral standard for sponsoring, intermediary, and host community entities engaged in GSL is mutual private benefit – that is, in spite of well-intended overlap, each party derives benefit mostly of their own making and attributed with their own meaning; each party divides and assumes roles and responsibilities along geographically convenient and logistical lines; and, each party hives off program and project priorities. This arrangement creates a structural imbalance in the quantity and quality of experience lived by participants and community members.

While the term ‘mutual benefit’ sounds acceptable, benefits remain privatized and perniciously reinforce pre-existing power differentials between the sponsor and host entities. It accounts for the stubborn presence of neo-colonial attitudes despite efforts to mitigate them. Regardless of the level of care paid to the implementation of these endeavors, they are unlikely to yield the broad transformations to which they vaguely refer promotionally. This is because sponsors and their participants have access to more resources with which they can multiply their share of long-term benefits while hosts have access to fewer resources that tend to add only short-term benefits. Without standards of practice that deliberately harness the sponsors’ exponential power and unleash conditions for the expansion of hosts’ power through built-in flexing mechanisms, GSL will continue to have temporary and segregating effects (Figure 1).
In practical terms, when organizations use a coordinated or cooperative approach to GSL they produce qualitatively different benefits for the individuals involved. For example, the sponsored participant has unrestricted access to international travel; visits striking destinations in the host country that their community counterparts cannot afford; is immersed in a hospitable communal or family, food, language, and ritual sharing environment; explores and satisfies a desire to learn and serve; meets informative and inspiring guest speakers; is provoked to consider their identity and place in the world; and, may leverage their experience into personal branding, academic credit, and career-enhancing reputational value. At its full potential, the participant may be transformed by the realization that they arrived with the persona of a giver, but departed with the character of a receiver. If they critically question the political, economic, and social structures that allowed such a surprising change of expectations, they can elect to exercise their citizenship and rotate their knowledge, skills, and values toward profound questions of power and privilege and the nature of charity, service, solidarity, and justice locally and globally. Without reflection, however, they may just buy a souvenir at the market and go home and post their photos on social media and add a line to their resume.

On the other hand, as opposed to being expansive, the host community member’s benefits are limited. Even if funded, their international travel opportunities will be subject to scrutiny and restricted; they will not often be included in programmatic excursions to sites in their own country or invited to hear compatriot experts speak; their living conditions and daily obligations will remain the same or be inconvenienced; they may gain a temporary increase in income if paid a fair wage by the sponsor or intermediary; their cross-cultural contact will consist mostly of foreign language exposure; they will have satisfied a desire to assist their own community, learned through the process, and increased their reputational value if they have deftly navigated local political complexities. At its full potential, the host community member may be transformed by the realization that they arrived with the persona of a receiver, but departed with the character of a giver. They may question the political, economic, and social structures that allowed such a surprising change of expectations, but due to the pressing need to subsist and/or a lack of access to critical educational and reflection resources they are less likely to be able to rotate their knowledge, skills, and values toward profound questions of power and privi-
Good to Go:

Standards of Practice in Global Service Learning

College and the nature of charity, service, solidarity, and justice. So, without a channel to exercise their citizenship locally or globally, they may just wave goodbye to the participant at the airport and go back to surviving the next day.

Figure 1: Mutual Private Benefit – the predominant behavioral standard in GSL

![Diagram](https://via.placeholder.com/150)

Source: Gonzalo Duarte, Compañeros Inc.

Is this the best we can do? Possibly not. Integrating the theory and practice of experiential education and international development, the ambitious citizenship aims of sponsoring, intermediary, and host community entities can come closer to fruition under another framework. The difference lies in the presence of a clearly articulated theory of change attached to specific standards of practice and a governing mindset of reciprocal public benefit. This approach borrows concepts from the field of collective impact (Kania, 2011).

Reciprocal is defined here as the sharing of a process to produce benefits of common value. Reciprocal benefit in GSL implies that sponsoring, intermediary, and host community entities undertake a comprehensive process that shares the risks and rewards that come from a multi-lateral integration of design, decision-making, implementation, and evaluation steps. Reciprocal GSL requires not coordination or cooperation, but collaboration (see Table 4). It aims to effectively create a learning and service experience that deliberately increases the host organi-
zation’s pool of benefits that may be leveraged into medium or long-term advantage. It is this characteristic which distinguishes it most from mutual benefit.

Table 4: Comparison of coordination, cooperation, and collaboration

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Coordination</th>
<th>Cooperation</th>
<th>Collaboration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Relationship</td>
<td>Independent</td>
<td>Independent</td>
<td>Interdependent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trust/Time</td>
<td>Low/Short</td>
<td>Medium/Medium</td>
<td>High/Long</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Process/Product</td>
<td>Product</td>
<td>Product, Process</td>
<td>Process, Product</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resources</td>
<td>Segregated</td>
<td>Allocated</td>
<td>Pooled</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decisions</td>
<td>Separate</td>
<td>Majority</td>
<td>Consensus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Objectives</td>
<td>Singular</td>
<td>Mutual</td>
<td>Reciprocal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge</td>
<td>Transmitted one way</td>
<td>Exchanged two ways</td>
<td>Generated new ways</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accountability</td>
<td>Own organization</td>
<td>Both organizations</td>
<td>All stakeholders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Risk/Reward</td>
<td>Low/Low</td>
<td>Medium/Medium</td>
<td>High/High</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Gonzalo Duarte, Compañeros Inc.

The principles behind reciprocal benefit harken back to one of service learning’s pioneers (Sigmon, 1979) who demanded that it meet three principles – those being served control the service; those being served become better able to serve; and, those who learn have control over their learning. Reciprocal benefit also builds on the principle of ownership; that is, to have ownership of something one must have the right to control it, the right to benefit from it, and the right to wield the first two rights for further benefit (Bowman, 2009, as cited in Young, 2009). Reciprocal GSL will not change the global political economic conditions that advantage sponsors and disadvantage hosts in the first place, nor eliminate all the practical inequalities inherent to mutual benefit. But formulating GSL along lines of collaboration and shared control and ownership can, at a minimum, mitigate the tendency for sponsors to exploit, however inadvertently, the hosts; and, at its best, produce useful and transferable capacity-building outcomes for host communities. Unlike mutual benefits, which accrue privately and exclusively to individuals on a one-time basis, reciprocal benefit focuses on producing public and unrestricted benefits that build upon continuing commitment.
Figure 2: Reciprocal Public Benefit – an alternative behavioral standard in GSL

A distinguishing feature of reciprocal benefit is the role of the intermediary. By this it is not meant a commercial travel or tourist agency, nor staff seconded from other duties in the sponsoring organization, or in-country individuals of goodwill drawn from other activities to fulfill a perfunctory go-between role. Intermediaries in reciprocal benefit are bona fide organizations located in the host country and staffed by competent, resourced, and networked nationals. Its mission is to align, integrate, and manage stakeholders in a sustainable fashion. It merges the agendas of the sponsoring and host communities, and negotiates and guides the process of collaboration toward the intended reciprocal public benefit. The intermediary derives its success from the success of other entities - its cause is other people’s causes (Malinsky, 2014). In collective impact it is known as the backbone organization because it channels the heads, hearts, and hands of stakeholders toward benefits of common value.

In order to achieve reciprocal benefit, a theory of change must be devised: “A theory of change is a specific and measurable description of a social change initiative that forms the base for strategic planning, on-going decision-making, and evaluation” (Center for Theory of Change, 2014). Theory of change is both a process and a product of action-planning and an evaluative method for gauging success indicators. It creates a common vision among stakeholders. It re-

Source: Gonzalo Duarte, Compañeros Inc.
veals assumptions, outlines cause and effect, and starts not with what is being done, but with what wants to be achieved. It allows others to see the route taken to achieve shared goals.

If a theory of change describes and measures a pathway of cause and effect toward an ultimate objective, then a logic model fills in details with an outline of inputs, activities, outcomes, and indicators. Building on the elaborated audit instruments and organizational assessment tools available from the 21 existing standards of practice (see Appendix 1, p.46), a concise and practical theory of change and logic model can be produced to facilitate sponsor, intermediary, and host organizations enacting the six common standards of practice more effectively.

Therefore, the following the framework of reciprocal public benefit demonstrates how the six common standards of practice can be constructed to produce citizen-building benefits for sponsoring entities and their participants and capacity-building benefits for intermediary and host entities. These models may be used as an instrument against which individuals and organizations assess and measure their own and other organizations’ practices.

The outlining of the six standards explicitly raises legitimate questions about the unique nature of partnerships as well as the broad spectrum of organizational and cultural contexts into which standards need to be considered around the world. In Canada, might the standards gain traction in TICO (the Travel Industry Council of Ontario) or Travel CUTS (the Canadian University Travel Service)? Could private intermediaries use the standards in conjunction with a benefit corporation trustmark like BCorps, or through Fair Trade certification, or raise the standards through a registered Community Contribution Company (in British Columbia) or Community Interest Company (in Nova Scotia)? Would national bodies like the Canadian Bureau for International Education or the Association for Universities and Colleges of Canada find them applicable? Could standards of practice in GSL be championed by social justice entities like the United Church of Canada, the ecumenical Canadian Church Forum, or the Canadian Council for International Cooperation? Given the ultimate intention of empowering host communities, do these standards belong in the hands of organizations in the global South?

Regardless of the route, the six standards are not prescriptive. User-adapted applications are certain to produce intended as well as unintended consequences. The promise of these practices exists in their replication and reconstruction, their significance demonstrated by
incremental improvement through reiteration. What is consistent, however, are the principles of reciprocal public benefit. It is an ethical, pedagogical, and developmental approach to the production of citizen and capacity-building benefits of common value. It is an integrated design, decision-making, implementation, and evaluation process that pools resources and claims interdependence and collaboration as a viable path toward collective impact. Those principles are both widely transferable and broadly needed in GSL at this juncture of its evolution.

The following framework for reciprocal public benefit used material compiled from existing standard-setting documents: (1) Code of Good Practice for Volunteer Sending Organizations by Comhlámh; (2) International Voluntourism Guidelines for Commercial Tour Operators by TIES & Planterra Foundation; (3) Standards of Good Practices for Education Abroad by the Forum on Education Abroad; (4) International Volunteering Organisational Code of Practice by NIDOS; (5) Rubric for Assessing Intermediary Organizations & Active Citizen Continuum by Break Away Alternative; and, (6) Code of Conduct on Images and Message by DOCHAS. See Appendix 1 (p. 46) for further information.

The Global Service Learning Framework for Reciprocal Public Benefit

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Global Service Learning - Standard 1</th>
<th>Organizational alignment of mission with capacity and collaboration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Objective:</strong></td>
<td>To establish a framework of reciprocal public benefit and produce results of common value.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Theory of Change:</strong></td>
<td>If sponsors, intermediaries, and hosts align their mission, commitment and capacity to collaborate, then reciprocal public benefit is achievable.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Antitheses:</strong></td>
<td>If organizations satisfy the demands of their own constituents at the expense of the others, then reciprocal public benefit is not achievable.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Sponsor</th>
<th>Intermediary</th>
<th>Host</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Inputs</strong></td>
<td>Prior experience/evaluations.</td>
<td>Reciprocal benefit resources.</td>
<td>Prior experience/evaluations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Strategic plan.</td>
<td>Stakeholder map.</td>
<td>Organize data.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Activities</strong></td>
<td>Analyse capacity to place Host purposes equal to own.</td>
<td>Dialogue with Sponsor+Host.</td>
<td>Identify purposes and personel.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Assess staff and $ resources.</td>
<td>Facilitate communication.</td>
<td>Identify opportunity costs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Examine alternatives.</td>
<td>Convene stakeholders.</td>
<td>Consultations with community.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Capacity training w/ Host.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Outcomes            | Dedicated resources.  
|                    | Common agenda.  
|                    | Consensus decision.  
|                    | Implementation plan.  
|                    | Leaning service tools  
|                    | Outline of aims, objectives,  
|                    | roles, responsibilities, budget.  
|                    | Stakeholder agreements.  
|                    | Logistical work plan.  
|                    | Multi-sector educational tools.  
|                    | Clear goals, priorities.  
|                    | Common agenda.  
|                    | Consensus decision.  
|                    | Implementation plan.  
|                    | Community organizing tools.  
| Indicators          | Established metrics.  
|                    | Signed MOU.  
|                    | Cyclical review, evaluation  
|                    | Pre-During-Post GSL work plan.  
|                    | Signed MOU.  
|                    | Collective impact evidence.  
|                    | Established metrics.  
|                    | Signed MOU.  
|                    | Cyclical review, evaluation.  

### Global Service Learning - Standard 2

**Sustainable and ethical organizational management**

**Objective:** To sustain reciprocal public benefit with ethical organizational management.

**Theory of Change:** If sponsors, intermediaries, and hosts transparently and competently manage their internal and external functions, then reciprocal public benefit is more sustainable.

**Antitheses:** If organizations lack legal status, financial accountability, or qualified, trained and resourced staff members, then reciprocal public benefit is not sustainable.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sponsor</th>
<th>Intermediary</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Inputs</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assigned staff with requisite knowledge, skill, and experience in reciprocal collaboration provided with adequate resources.</td>
<td>Staff Manual with explicit role descriptions, codes of conduct, financial procedures, human resource, crisis plan policies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Activities</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Earn social license to operate through relationship-building. Establish compliance norms with Host+Interm. Allocate sufficient funds to sustainable management. Attend GSL professional development conferences.</td>
<td>Open and share calculation method used in budget-making. Explain program, project, and admin expenses and revenue. Abide by fair wage, working condition, employment rules. Maximize financial benefit to local community and people.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Outcomes</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equipped and effective staff. Clear reporting expectations. Reputational leadership.</td>
<td>Professional national staff. Transparent accountability. Support to local economy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Indicators</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive audit findings. Peer consulting requests. Potential to extend or scale.</td>
<td>Staff retention, development, and promotion rates. Annual reports, Financial Statements, Infographics.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Host</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local customs, regulations and laws governing partnerships and community development. Code of conduct for contract hires and service providers.</td>
<td>Ensure public process for identifying representatives. Create working groups and communication channels. Meet with local officials and civic agencies; obtain permits. Leverage skills training and networking events.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Indicators**
- Positive audit findings.
- Peer consulting requests.
- Potential to extend or scale.
- Staff retention, development, and promotion rates.
- Annual reports, Financial Statements, Infographics.
- Income-earning opportunities.
- Support to unrelated initiatives.
- Potential to extend or scale.
### Global Service Learning - Standard 3

**Integrated design, preparation, and implementation**

**Objective:** To integrate and focus all aspects of global service learning on reciprocal public benefit.

**Theory of Change:** If sponsors, intermediaries, and hosts integrate their identification, design, preparation, and implementation steps, then reciprocal public benefit is efficient and effective.

**Antitheses:** If organizations segregate their functions by convenience instead of by shared objectives and processes, then reciprocal public benefit is inefficient and ineffective.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Sponsor</th>
<th>Intermediary</th>
<th>Host</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Activities</strong></td>
<td>Present and explain easily reciprocal public benefit. Screen/select for motivation, knowledge, skill, and attitudes. Enable regular pre-during-post GSL activities and opportunities online and in-person. Build program and project components with Interm. Connect local issues to global issues and opportunities. Enact follow-up strategy.</td>
<td>Regular all-party online meetings with Sponsor+Host. Build project and program components with Sponsor+Host Continually shape expectations of program and project. Manage all staff, service provider, and logistical aspects. Conduct arrival orientation sessions, language training. Connect global issues to local issues and opportunities. Enact follow-up strategy.</td>
<td>Present and explain easily reciprocal public benefit. Gather baseline data. Apply project assessment templates to identify focus. Build project and program components with Interm. Continually shape community expectations of project. Conduct community orientation sessions, language training. Enact follow-up strategy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Outcomes</strong></td>
<td>Common agenda, constant communication feedback loop. Overlapped and reinforcing roles and responsibilities. Prepared participants making local-global connection. Root cause analysis, reflection.</td>
<td>Intentional program and project selection and preparation. Participants and community members who understand each other’s objectives and ways for achieving them.</td>
<td>Common agenda, constant communication feedback loop. Overlapped and reinforcing roles and responsibilities. Prepared participants making local-global connection. Root cause analysis, reflection.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Global Service Learning - Standard 4

**Responsible marketing materials**

**Objective:** To inform and inspire reciprocal public benefit through responsible marketing strategies.

**Theory of Change:** If sponsors, intermediaries, and hosts use respectful and realistic images and phrases in marketing strategies, then accurate expectations of reciprocal public benefits are promoted.

**Antitheses:** If organizations perpetuate negative stereotypes, over-simply complex issues, or make exaggerated claims about impact, then reciprocal public benefit becomes obstructed by false impressions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sponsor</th>
<th>Intermediary</th>
<th>Host</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Activities</strong></td>
<td>Use diverse images, messages, case studies based on values of equality, respect, and justice. Media-literacy for participants.</td>
<td>Obtain bilateral images, messages, case studies with consent of Host+Sponsor. Media-literacy for staff.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Global Service Learning - Standard 5

**Protection of children, vulnerable populations, and environment**

**Objective:** To ensure reciprocal public benefit protects children, vulnerable groups, and the environment.

**Theory of Change:** If sponsors, intermediaries, and hosts protect children, vulnerable populations, and the environment from exploitation, then reciprocal public benefit is safe, healthy, and considerate.

**Antitheses:** If organizations fail to proactively protect people and the planet, then reciprocal public benefit is a source of risk and potential harm.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sponsor</th>
<th>Intermediary</th>
<th>Host</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
### Activities

- Require background checks.
- Country and issue specific educational sessions in pre-departure orientation.
- Do’s and Don’ts training.
- Perform risk assessment.
- Train staff adequately in supervision and intervention of situations involving children, at-risk groups, and fragile ecology.
- Employ local norms, laws, risks, and resources.
- Supervise situations involving children, at-risk groups, and fragile ecology.

### Outcomes

- Mindset to prevent/protect. Resistance to popular demand ‘to work with children.’
- Disciplinary measures ready for breach of code/policy.
- Carbon offset surcharge included in travel budget.
- Mindset to prevent/protect. Limitations of individual reflected in program, project. Itineraries involving orphange or poverty tourism shunned. Service provider agreements consistent with code/policy.
- Mindset to prevent/protect. Withdawal measures ready for breach of code/policy. Education and incentive initiatives to manage negative economic impacts.

### Indicators

- Evidence of due diligence and implementation of protocols.
- Risk mitigation, infringement, and improvement measures.
- Safe, healthy, considerate interaction observed, reported.

### Global Service Learning - Standard 6

**Monitoring, evaluation, and measurement**

**Objective:** To measure the efficacy and constantly improve the performance of reciprocal public benefit.

**Theory of Change:** If sponsors, intermediaries, and hosts monitor, evaluate, and measure their efficiency and effectiveness, then they can learn from and improve the experience of reciprocal public benefit.

**Antitheses:** If organizations decline to collect and use feedback data, then reciprocal public benefit is less able to correct its course, less likely to advance collective impact, and less credible.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Inputs</th>
<th>Sponsor</th>
<th>Intermediary</th>
<th>Host</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Shared monitoring, evaluation, and measurement metrics and resources.</td>
<td>Shared monitoring, evaluation, and measurement metrics and resources.</td>
<td>Shared monitoring, evaluation, and measurement metrics and resources.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activities</th>
<th>Sponsor</th>
<th>Intermediary</th>
<th>Host</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Devise oral, written, digital, creative mechanisms. Collect and track quantitative and qualitative data from staff and participants.</td>
<td>Devise oral, written, digital, creative mechanisms. Collect and track quantitative and qualitative data from staff, service providers, stakeholders.</td>
<td>Devise oral, written, digital, creative mechanisms. Collect and track quantitative and qualitative data from leaders, users, and observers.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcomes</th>
<th>Sponsor</th>
<th>Intermediary</th>
<th>Host</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Data for pre/post GSL knowledge, skill, attitude, interests, sense of agency.</td>
<td>Calculated deadweight, displacement, drop-off, contribution, attribution rates.</td>
<td>Differentiated short, medium, long-term results; and intended/unintended issues.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicators</th>
<th>Sponsor</th>
<th>Intermediary</th>
<th>Host</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
Conclusion

A mix of historical factors contributed to the rise of global service learning and propelled it to grow and become important to a significant number of entities around the world involved in the field today. However, the field has suffered from the absence of standards of practice that demand qualification and competency, sustained sincerity, and operational ethics. Despite intentions otherwise, the benefits of GSL continue to be distributed disproportionately in favor of the sponsor and participant under the predominant model of mutual private benefit.

This research report has used 145 sources of information, 21 standard setting documents, and 14 key informant interviews to arrive at a set of six common standards of practice underlined by a theory of change and logic model. By critically considering the roles of the sponsor, intermediary, and host community organizations, the report advances reciprocal public benefit as an integrated framework for achieving collective impact. Impact that is focused on building a sense of local and global citizenship and on building the capacity and agency of individuals and communities in both sponsoring and host nations.

Given that the experiences, resources, and aspirations of sponsor, intermediary and host communities is anything but homogenous in Africa, Asia, and Latin America, the results of this one research report cannot be extrapolated too far. Nevertheless, this comprehensive framework may be of practical use to those seeking to ensure that the benefits of GSL are intentionally and systematically distributed among stakeholders. Such as, students, staff, and faculty in academic institutions; commercial travel operators and bona fide intermediaries; leaders in faith-based mission organizations; private individuals and service clubs initiating international projects; civic and host community leaders seeking empowerment; and, funders, journalists, policy makers, and researchers. It could be used as an instrument by which individuals and organizations assess and measure their own and other organizations’ practices against.

It is hoped this comprehensive, accessible, measurable, and innovative reciprocal public benefit framework informs and inspires organizations committed to excellence in GSL to identify, elevate, and adhere to an articulated and more widely held set of standards of practice. May it also serve to provoke further dialogue and research about the long-term objectives, roles and responsibilities of all individuals and organizations engaged in the complex effort of
connecting people’s benevolent curiosity with the problems and potential of their local and global world.

**Future Research**

The popularity of GSL and the rapidly emerging body of work on its various facets makes it ripe for further research. Here are five potential areas of inquiry.

1. While many studies focus on the role of the sponsor and the experience of the participant, fewer delve into the impact on the host community. Notwithstanding the methodological challenges inherent to cross-cultural research, the very notion of who and what constitutes the ‘host’ could be investigated further. If a chain of actors – host families, service providers, guest speakers, guides, organizational counterparts, community leaders, and beneficiaries are located in the host nation, do they all constitute the host community? If the entirety of the sponsor/participant’s experience is encased in a program of reciprocal learning activities, then should not the definition of the host community be all-inclusive? Or, is the host community identified only by those directly connected to a project or geographical area? If so, does that reinforce polarization between sponsors, participants and host communities? How do these definitions affect the standards of practice?

2. Deep research into the existence (or not) of standards of practice in the South – both from a practical and theoretical point of view – deserves to be done. Assuming that the value orientation of people varies culturally as well as the way standards are formulated, expressed, encouraged, and upheld, results from this area if inquiry could have profound implications on our understanding of expectations and reciprocity.

3. Of practical interest to many is the generation of more robust theories of change and logic models in global service learning. What are the pedagogical models that achieve both program and project objectives? What kinds of institutional support positively affects outcomes? Would standards that included these components be promoted and advanced through voluntary adoption, a certification or trustmark process, or by virtue of membership in professional associations? What are the uptake, implementation, and adhesion issues associated with reciprocal public benefit? How could the endeavor of GSL disrupt and innovate?
Since many sponsoring organizations - academic institutions, faith-based organizations, and private individuals and civic entities – are engaged in service learning in their home communities, a fourth strand of research could compare and contrast interaction between the sponsor/participant and their local vs international host communities. Do standards of practice become more elastic or stringent with familiarity? Does proximity and continuity improve the accountability and overall effectiveness of service learning? How are the experiences and impacts of host communities different? Are the power and privilege variables different and does that change the complexion of mutual vs reciprocal benefit domestically and/or internationally?

Given the prominence of the intermediary as the backbone organization in the reciprocal public benefit model, a fifth area of investigation could critically probe the effectiveness of this approach over time. Are intermediaries and the role of collective impact more or less successful in countries with left-of-center political economic histories? Are intermediaries more necessary in right-of-center countries where the non-profit and social enterprise sector fills a gap for those disadvantaged by lack of access to capital? While intermediaries may create a fair and comprehensive platform for sponsors and hosts, could and should the role of the intermediary be to grow the sponsors and hosts into an independent relationship? What are the qualitative and quantitative differences in benefit distribution with and without intermediaries?

In sum, five fascinating topics – the constitution of the host community; the practical and theoretical existence of standards of practice cross-culturally; more robust theory of change models and the feasibility of widespread adoption of standards of practice; the comparison of local and global service learning relationships; and, the long-term position and role of the intermediary in multiple contexts of reciprocal public benefit – all await further research.
### Appendix 1 – Existing Standards of Practice

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>#</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Source Organization</th>
<th>Status Country</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Length</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td></td>
<td>Code of Good Practice for Volunteer Sending Organizations</td>
<td>Irish Association of Development Workers and Volunteers (Comhláth)</td>
<td>Intermediary Charity Ireland</td>
<td>2013</td>
<td>71 pp</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>International Voluntourism Guidelines for Commercial Tour Operators</td>
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Appendix 2 - Key informant Questionnaire

Part A: Introduction (3 minutes) – Please read and/or listen to the introduction

Name: Code #:
Date of interview:
Time start: Time end:

Thank you very much for your participation. The purpose of this research is to identify standards of practice that could balance the distribution of benefits between sponsoring and host community organizations. Previous research is being reviewed and many people are being interviewed to improve standards of practice. Your name, identity, title, and organization will remain confidential. Your answers will have no positive or negative effect on your relationship with other organizations.

Part B: Research Objective (7 minutes) – Please read and/or listen to the research objective

Many North Americans are participating in international service and learning [GSL] experiences operated by educational institutions, church bodies, private companies, and civic organizations. A lot of enthusiasm and goodwill has been generated by this interest, but inequality has been observed in the distribution of benefits.

For example, after an experience participants often claim that they “received more than they gave”. They are welcomed warmly by a local host family, visit exotic places and see cultural events, practice a foreign language, taste new food, cultivate relationships, learn through service, get satisfaction from contributing, earn academic credit, and gain new perspectives on their studies, careers, or personal values. They take home photographs and souvenirs and, for many, a new reality.

Host communities members may gain short-term employment, learn through service, and get satisfaction from contributing. But the opportunity to travel and leverage language, relationships, and new perspectives is significantly more restricted than participants. The service project may or may not have been designed, budgeted, decided upon, and evaluated with their participation. There may be a change in condition, but not in the political, economic, or social systems that created the conditions. They take home gifts and, for the most part, the same reality.

Definitions:

Sponsor – A sending organization in the North, formal or non-formal
> E.g. university, church, civic club, travel company
Participants have a variety of motivations and expectations
A community project is one aspect (40-60%) of a program experience

Intermediary – A coordinating organization in the North or South
> E.g. established non-/for-profit facilitating entity with capacity
Staff and service providers have variety of motivations and expectations
Coordinators of the program and project experience

Host Community – A receiving organization in the South, formal or non-formal
> E.g. appointed, selected, elected, or natural members of a community
Community members have a variety of motivations and expectations
A community project is the main aspect (60-100%) of their experience
**Part C: Structured Questions** (6 x 5 minutes each = 30 minutes) – Based on your professional context, please rank the importance of each of these standards on a scale of 1-5.

**Standard 1:**
A sponsoring organization’s capacity to operate programs shall be consistent with its mission and meet a legitimate purpose identified and driven by host communities.

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[Issue – Sponsor orgs tend to meet their own objectives (e.g. education, evangelization, profit, adventure) to satisfy the demand of volunteers, not to meet the needs of the community. This standard demands the sponsoring org has the capacity to operate programs that place the community’s needs equal or superior to their own]

**Standard 2:**
Imagery and marketing shall reflect the balanced objectives of the partnership between sponsoring organizations and host communities. Imagery will not perpetuate stereotypes. Marketing does not oversimplify complex problems nor make false claims about ‘impact’.

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[Issue – Sponsor orgs use images and marketing phrases that perpetuate negative stereotypes or neo-colonial attitudes of volunteers or exaggerate the difference the participant’s presence will make or otherwise subtly disempower the capacities of the host community. This standard demands that promotion fit the reality]

**Standard 3:**
An intentional program and project selection and preparation process shall identify participants and host community members who understand and agree with each other’s objectives and the ways and means for achieving them.

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[Issue – Random consumption of travel opportunity or globalization agenda without critical awareness of self or other and the intentionality and preparation required to cooperatively reach shared goals. This standard demands an informed appraisal and guided approach to recruitment and partnership formation]

**Standard 4:**
Organizational management shall be transparent regarding legal and financial accountability; staff qualification and working conditions; and, program and project facilitation so that the distribution of design, decision-making, risks, and rewards is shared and sustainable.

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[Issue – Sponsor, intermediary, or host com orgs lacking in competency and transparency harming the service learning sector through short-term unethical behavior. This standard demands a coordinated level of expertise]

**Standard 5:**
Comprehensive measures of prevention to protect children, socio-economically vulnerable populations, and the environment from exploitation, accident, or natural disaster shall be employed to ensure safety and well-being.

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[Issue – Intermediary or host com orgs lacking in protocols and practices of due diligence allowing exposure to harmful situations not tolerated in sponsor orgs country. This standard demands attentiveness to prevention]
Standard 6:
Cycles of monitoring, evaluation, and measurement shall be incorporated to highlight lessons learned, promising practices, and short/medium/long term outcomes that nourish and challenge constructive improvement and growth.

1 Strongly disagree  2 Disagree  3 Neither  4 Agree  5 Strongly Agree

[Issue – Sponsor, intermediary, or host com orgs lack accessible resources to capture and express the intended and unintended results of their collective impact. This standard demands that these findings become integral]

Part D: Unstructured Questions (4 x 5 minutes each = 20 minutes) – Based on your professional experience, please answer the following questions.

Question 7:
What criteria, codes of conduct, or standards does your organization use to assess the basis of its involvement with international service learning activities?

Question 8:
Through what process are decisions made between your organization and international ones? What are the bridges and barriers to shared decision-making?

Question 9:
In light of unequal access to resources and different agendas, is the premise of balanced benefit between Northern and Southern organizations realistic or basically rhetorical?

Question 10:
Through what means would standards of practice in GSL be best implemented? For example, voluntary adoption, a certification and trust mark process, criteria and/or evidence-based membership in associations, or other?

Part E: Conclusion – That concludes the survey. You will be offered the results of this research when they become available. Thank you very much.
Appendix 3 – Categorization of Key Informant Responses

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GOOD TO GO: STANDARDS OF PRACTICE IN GLOBAL SERVICE LEARNING
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