

# **Beyond 40 Hours: Meaningful Community Service and High School Student Volunteerism in Ontario**

by

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## **Abstract**

This study explores whether students in the mandated Ontario high school community service program consider their service requirement to be meaningful; the relationship between meaningful service and subsequent service; and other factors related to a meaningful experience and future service. A secondary analysis was conducted using a survey of 1,341 first-year university students, collected by a research team led by Steven Brown of Wilfrid Laurier University. The main finding is that meaningful service is a predictor for subsequent service and can contribute to individual and social change. Meaningful service opportunities help address a gap in service learning literature, which is the impact of service on communities, perhaps by underestimating the capacity of youth to contribute to social change. Three policy recommendations emerge: curriculum should be created to enable students to serve more effectively; program structure is necessary for reflection; and nonprofit agencies can meet both of the above needs.

## Acknowledgments

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## **Chapter 1**

### **Introduction**

In the fall of 2006, a group of friends, youth between the ages of 11 to 13, from the same neighbourhood in north Toronto gathered periodically to study and serve their community. For many, service was synonymous with delivery of the kind a waiter provides. For others service was a novel idea especially in the context of their own community, and involved a struggle to understand why we had a responsibility for the wellbeing of others. After much discussion the majority agreed that service could be anything done in the spirit of helping others, and in that vein, set off to organize their first “service project”. The group decided on a food drive to complement a community meeting happening in their building and created flyers and a donations box. That evening few donations came through, and the group decided to go door to door to increase what they had thus far collected, albeit with a degree of trepidation.

All hesitation and fear to speak at the door melted when the people answering recognized their faces and greeted them warmly. They appeared to know more people than they thought. And to their surprise, their community gave so generously that two tall mountains of food formed in the front lobby of their building. As the youth excitedly counted their collection, a minivan pulled into the driveway. A smartly dressed mother and her two young boys, dressed in uniforms, hopped out and each carried wrapped Christmas gifts. Silence and a bit of tension filled the room as conversations gave way to long stares at the young woman and her two young sons walking awkwardly behind her. One of the girls mumbled something indiscernible under her breath, and the mentor, unable to do or say much at the sheer irony of the situation, only watched as the group grew more uncomfortable by their presence, or more specifically, at the implications of their presence on the group and their community. Minutes later, attention fixed back to the task at hand, and the mentor remarked to the group how good they must feel to have been able to contribute in some way to the problem of hunger in their community.

This small act of service by the group, which later grew in complexity as they got older, was a profound experience although few had the language to articulate why or how at the time. Coming from a socioeconomic background that would pit them as “service recipients” they in fact were

taking small steps to create a culture of service within their own community, an undoubtedly empowering process for them. It marked the beginning of a discourse centered on service, and set the stage for subsequent action in their community, which carries on to this day. The notion of charity also came into question that evening, and how we view those who we seek to serve. But for the mentor, and countless others in the field of youth engagement, it also raised the question of how to include larger numbers of young people in a process of community development through service.

Approaches designed to introduce and foster sustained community involvement among youth fall within different paradigms such as community service, youth volunteerism or service learning. Irrespective of program type, the goal of fostering community service among youth is strengthened and translated into action as a result of various factors and forces; a mentor or role model who challenges us to scale the heights of excellence; parents who instill a sense of social responsibility through their own example and encouragement; a meaningful experience that teaches us the power of human potential to create change; and a program that gives space to explore reality, ask questions, reflect and act.

One program that does reach every high school student in Ontario is the mandatory community service program, introduced in 1999 by the Ministry of Education. The program required 40 hours of community service over the course of 4 years as a requirement for graduation, and in doing so, Ontario became the first province in Canada to introduce community service as a complement to its curriculum. The policy aimed to “encourage students to develop awareness and understanding of civic responsibility and of the role they can play and the contributions they can make in supporting and strengthening their communities”; and set a precedent in Canada of how to incorporate service within the school system in Canada (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2009, para. 1). For example, Newfoundland adopted components of the Ontario policy to introduce 30 hours of mandated community service in 2006 and British Columbia introduced a 30-hour requirement that included both paid and nonpaid work in 2004 (Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, 2006).

## **1.1 Rationale**

There are a number of reasons why learning to better engage youth in service and thus creating more effective programs is important, especially in the context of Ontario. Firstly, there is

consensus in the literature, that will be explored in greater detail in subsequent chapters, that youth engagement in community service has several advantages, not only for the moral, cognitive, social and intellectual development of young people, but also for the development of our communities and neighbourhoods (Billig 2004; Giles & Eyler, 1994; Kraft 1996; Shumer, 1994). However, although much is said of the efficacy of the program on individual development, less is said of the impact of service on the communities it wishes to serve, and thus the potential for the program to contribute to social change as well as individual transformation is unrealized (Claus & Ogden, 1999).

Secondly, the program initiated by the Ontario government has every indication of being a fixture of secondary education, at least in the foreseeable future. Therefore, it seems worthwhile to strengthen the program so that it meets its objectives. Thirdly, mandated community service, where Canadians perform community service in response to requests from schools, employers, nonprofit and charitable organizations, amounts to a significant input of time and energy to beneficiary organizations. For example, Canadians who completed mandated community hours contributed approximately 119 million volunteer hours in 2007 (Hall, Lasby, Ayer, & Gibbons, 2009). For the age group 15 to 24, 13% participated in mandatory community service compared to 7% overall who volunteered in other ways (Hall et al., 2009). Of these youth who completed mandatory service, 61% did so because their school required it. However, the outcome from this input is not always explored and merits greater attention, given its the potential to affect change in the communities in which these volunteers serve.

Fourth, by focusing on one particular aspect of the program, the need for a meaningful service opportunity, the potential for change is more tangible because its implementation can focus on the quality of the service that students engage in. Those who accompany or co-ordinate the work of youth volunteers have greater agency to create the necessary changes, whether conceptual or structural, to enable a more meaningful service experience, one that contributes both to individual and social change.

This is especially because the ministry and the majority of school boards have done little to reform or further enhance the program since its inception. The nonprofit or voluntary sector is more flexible and can be more responsive to needed changes, and adapt according to the conditions and realities of each locality. Moreover, the lack of structure in the Ontario program

opens the possibility to redefine the program so that equal emphasis is placed on both the individual learner and the communities they seek to serve.

Youth-oriented service initiatives and programs have grown as reflected in increased research and greater funding. For example, over the past five years, the Ontario Trillium Foundation has invested \$15.2 million in initiatives “encouraging civic youth engagement and increasing youths’ capacity to become leaders and volunteers in their own communities” (Cardozo, 2010, p. 1); and on average more than one third of all grants funded by the Foundation supports initiatives benefiting children and youth.

## **1.2 Research Questions**

To explore whether a meaningful service and volunteer placement can be a catalyst for subsequent or sustained service beyond high school, I took the opportunity to draw upon the research of a multi-disciplinary research team led by professor Steve Brown of Wilfrid Laurier University as well as colleagues from the University of Waterloo, Guelph and Edinburgh. My study undertakes a secondary analysis of an online survey completed by 1,543 first year students at four post-secondary institutions in Southwest Ontario. Professor Brown kindly allowed me use the data set in order to explore my research questions. The following questions guide my data analysis in order to better understand the relationship between meaningful service and subsequent community involvement:

1. Do students consider their mandated community service requirement to be meaningful?
2. What is the relationship between a meaningful community service requirement and subsequent community involvement?
3. What other factors are related to a meaningful experience and subsequent service?

## **1.3 Situating myself as a Researcher**

My interest in community service stems from a conviction that service is the arena in which individual development and societal change can flourish. In the field of action, directed towards the benefit of others, service enables young people to develop their potential and contribute to the betterment of their communities. This form of experiential learning was integral to my own

upbringing and to the lives of many of young people I encounter on almost a daily basis, who devote their time, energy and love towards acts of service intended to better the conditions, in either the individual or collective life of society.

One form of community service that I am especially familiar with is the act of providing mentorship, loving counsel and a safe space for the exploration of reality, for those between the ages of 12 – 14 years of age. Many older youth, including myself, have had the privilege of working with this age group, and their learning is a testament to much of the literature that points to the personal growth one experiences in the field of service. Even greater is the impact the youth and the junior youth are making to the community, a benefit that is often overlooked in the literature on youth and community service.

When I first came across the Ontario government's decision to introduce community service as a part of the completion of high school, my initial feeling was that of optimism that all youth have an opportunity to identify a service commensurate to their abilities and interests, which could contribute to their communities. Over time, I consistently came across youth with a range of challenges and experiences with the program. Some seeking to fill out their "hours", some asking if I could sign off on their hours even when they have not completed any, others bragging about how they duped their school by thinking they had done something, and those who confided that they didn't know where or how to serve, and that most of their tasks were just that. A combination of fragmenting their 40 hours into a series of smaller jobs, not being given real responsibility, and an underestimation of their capacities seemed to be the norm. It appeared that in the absence of structure, reflection, and meaningful service opportunities, the completion of 40 hours appeared more problematic and functional, rather than instructive, change-oriented and experiential.

The notion that community service programs should be structured is well documented within the literature, but less is said of the impact of a meaningful service opportunity, the focus of my thesis, and on young people's subsequent community involvement. It is evident from my own experience that young people can be inspired by the prospect of contributing meaningfully to something larger than themselves, but only if they have such a vision and corresponding opportunity. Youth need meaningful opportunities, not menial. In order to examine more closely my own observations in the field, I took the opportunity to conduct a secondary analysis on a

substantial data set that explores program impact in the hopes to learn how to explore quantitatively the notion of meaningful service as a predictor for future service and community involvement.

## **1.4 Organization of the Thesis**

The thesis comprises five chapters. Chapter two explores the literature of service learning and community service programs in order to identify common themes and practices, implications, as well as points of departure; and also, to introduce the literature on Ontario's high school community service program in order to explore how meaningful service can not only inspire but create conditions for students to engage in more significant and sustained involvement in society.

Chapter three explains the methodology adopted for this study and the data set used to conduct a secondary analysis. I discuss the participants and the procedure, as well as highlight the limitations of the research methodology. Chapter four presents the results generated from this research, and chapter 5 presents a discussion on the implications of the study for the research on community service. The chapter also includes a brief discussion on potential programmatic changes and presents a case study of the *Preparation for Social Action* program as example of a structured program for youth that develops their capacities for social change, a potential complement to the mandated hours students must perform.

## Chapter 2

### Literature Review

Ontario's community service program falls within a larger discourse that seeks to understand the relationship between service, education, adolescence, and to a lesser extent, social change and transformation. From theorization to practice, the field of service encompasses a range of approaches and programs that produce little consensus over its philosophies, purpose, defining terms, and best practices (Furco, 1994). The range in purpose and practice has given rise to a diversity of research and evaluation that amounts to a lack of solid, consistent evidence on the effects of such programs (Kraft, 1996). Notwithstanding this, service and its role in education has captured the imaginations of government, policy makers and educators, and represents an important direction in the pursuit of educational and social reform that is worthy of exploration (Claus & Ogden, 1999).

The purpose of this chapter is twofold: first, to explore the literature of service learning and community service programs in order to identify common themes and practices, implications, as well as points of departure; and second, to introduce the literature on Ontario's high school community service program in order to explore how meaningful service can motivate as well as create conditions propitious for students to engage in more significant and sustained involvement in society.

The first section will examine prevalent approaches to service programs for youth, in particular, community service, because it is the model for Ontario's program; and service learning, because it is a popular pedagogy to draw from when developing service programs for youth. I note that service learning is limited in its ability to contribute meaningfully to social change and suggest that a meaningful service experience can contribute to social change. I then examine the literature on Ontario's mandated high school community service, outlining its history, purpose, and the literature related to programmatic impact and policy recommendations. I conclude by suggesting that although recommendations on Ontario's program suggest a model similar to service learning, the lack of structure in Ontario's program is an opportunity to go beyond the pedagogy of service learning towards an approach to service that is transformative for both the

individual learner and community. As a first step, creating spaces for meaningful service can enable students to see the potential of service for social change.

## **2.1 A Snapshot of Service in Canada**

Although the integration of service-based programs within the school system is a relatively new phenomenon in Canada, Canadians have long channeled their energies and contributions both as ‘volunteers’ with nonprofit organizations, but also directly through acts of service to others within their communities. This involvement, which is tracked statistically by the Canada Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating, is a defining characteristic of Canadian culture.

The most recent publication of the Survey (Hall et al., 2009) provides a snapshot of volunteering activity across the country. Hall et al. found that almost 12.5 million Canadians, or 46% of the population aged 14 and over, volunteered during the one-year period preceding the survey, this rate remained largely unchanged from 45% that was reported in 2004. The highest rates of volunteering were Canadians, those with higher levels of formal education and household income, those with school-aged children in the household, and the religiously active (Hall et al., 2009).

Hall et al. (2009) found that young Canadians aged 15 to 24 were more likely to volunteer (58% volunteered) than Canadians in any other age group, and those aged 15 to 19 were more likely to volunteer than 20 to 24 year olds (65% vs. 47%). The volunteer rate for 15 to 19 year olds has been steady since 2004, with a 9% decline in the average annual hours that youth volunteered.

Although young Canadians report similar barriers to volunteering as the rest of Canadians, 15 to 19 year olds are more likely to report that they did not volunteer more because they were not asked (45% of 15 to 19 year olds vs. 39% of 20 to 24 year olds and 27% of those 25 and over) or because they did not know how to become involved (35% vs. 21% and 11%). This age group is also more likely to feel dissatisfaction with a previous volunteering experience (13%) (Hall et al., 2009).

Hall et al. (2009) also found that 15 to 19 year olds were much more likely to volunteer for education and research organizations (28% vs. 9% for 20 to 24 year olds and those 25 and over) and sports and recreation organizations (15% vs. 10% for 20 to 24 year olds and 11% for those



25 and over) and somewhat more likely to volunteer for social services organizations (15% vs. 11% vs. 10%). Additionally, 15 to 24 year olds were most likely to help others directly (90%), while seniors were least likely to do so (70%).

Thus, young volunteers differ from the rest of the population with respect the likelihood of becoming involved, barriers to involvement and the kinds of service they perform. It appears that youth would benefit from more direct calls for service and greater access to opportunities to serve and are two areas that could potentially be addressed formally through the nonprofit sector or informally through networks and within the community.

## 2.2 Types of Service Programs

Service in education is often traced back to the work of John Dewey (1938) and his concept of experiential education, where experience is educative and that learning must be rooted in experience. Today, there are a myriad of programs and initiatives that animate Dewey’s conception of learning, especially in the United States. From among these, Furco (1994) identified three predominant forms of school-based service programs with distinct dimensions and characteristics. They are community service, service learning and service-based internships programs. Table 1 provides a summary of the major distinctions between the program types.

Table 2.1

*Distinctions Among Three Types of Service Programs*

	Community Service	Service-Learning	Service-Based Internship
Primary Intended Beneficiary	Recipient	Recipient and Provider	Provider
Primary Focus	Service	Service and Learning	Learning
Intended Educational Purposes*	Civic and Ethical Development	Academic and Civic Development	Career and Academic Development
Integration and Curriculum	Peripheral	Integrated	Co-curricular/Supplemental

Nature of Service Activity	Based on a Social Cause	Based on Academic Discipline	Based on an Industry or Career
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Reproduced from Furco 1994

\* This also includes personal and social outcomes

Community service programs may be mandatory or voluntary, and are intended for students to perform acts of service that are of benefit to the community. Community service does not have a particular curriculum designed for it, it is not integrated within existing school or classroom curricula nor does it have classroom objectives. This stands in contrast to service learning, an educational pedagogy that seeks to marry academic learning and community service with explicit learning objectives. Acts of service are integrated into an academic course or curriculum, and opportunities exist within the classroom for reflection and critical analysis of the experience.

Lastly, service-based internship programs are intended for students who wish to gain experience or exposure to a potential field or industry in order to define career prospects. In these settings, students are able to apply their academic knowledge and skills for the agency or organization they are interning for. This form of service serves primarily the interests of the student and the employer, focusing on the career development of the student, and often serves as an entry point to the labor market.

Although service programs can be categorized a number of different ways, Furco's categorization is useful because it highlights the most prevalent programs in school settings. For the purpose of this study, the literature on service learning and community service programs is explored for two reasons. Firstly, Ontario's high school community service falls under the 'community service' program, and has much of the same characteristics of other community service programs. It is also the most prevalent type of program in high schools across Canada (Brown, Meinhard, Ellis-Hale, Henderson & Foster, 2007a). Second, existing literature on the Ontario program draws heavily on service learning or its distinctive characteristics, not only to assess Ontario's program but also for policy recommendations because of the sheer size of research on service learning in the United States especially. The experience of the United States can also serve as a comparison to that of Canada.

## 2.3 Service and Society

At a societal level, educators have long explored the potential of service as a cure for civic ills (Billig, 2004; Giles & Eyer, 1994; Niemi, Hepburn & Chapman, 2000). Declining civic engagement in areas such as political participation, voter turnout, participation in local organizations and associations as well as newspaper readership, have created a sense of urgency from educators and policy makers to provide youth with opportunities to participate more fully in the affairs of society (Hodgkinson & Weitzman, 1997; Keith, 1994; Verba, Schlozman, & Brady, 1995). A common response to this analysis of society is service because of its potential to promote a general sense of social responsibility, build strong social ties, and contribute to a healthier society (Putnam, 2000).

A perceived crisis in society and young people's participation within it can inadvertently lead to the assumption of a crisis in the period of adolescences. Problems such as the exacerbated split between the rich and the poor, dramatic changes in the labor market and burgeoning immigration have created a sort of social unease and tension about the future (Youniss & Yates, 1997); and in this social context, youth are portrayed as disconnected from society and in a state of crisis (Giroux, 1996). Within this model, young people are portrayed as problems and present potential harm to both themselves and society (Damon, 2004). The portrayal of young people could be yet another factor that contributes to lack of space to meaningfully contribute to the wellbeing of society.

While it is true that youth suffer from the negative influence of a worldview that is individualistic and materialistic at its core, rejecting a sense of collectivism and community, educators must guard against creating a negative stereotype of youth as self-absorbed, rebellious, and apathetic. It is also a time of great opportunity and the spirit of the age stirs within people, especially the young, to work towards the betterment of the world. One school of thought that stems from dissatisfaction with negative views of young people that focus on perceived deficits, and rather seeks to look towards young people's true capacities is "positive youth development" (Damon, 2004). Developed by Peter Benson (1997) and his colleagues, their positive human development model recognized that every young person possesses talents, energies, strengths, and constructive interests. From this perspective, youth are characterized by a commitment to learning, positive values and social skills.

The emergence of the youth-led sector in Ontario over the past few years is a testament to this, where youth are beginning their own programs and organizations as a response or critique to what is happening in their own communities (Ilkiw, 2010). In Ontario, 93% of youth identified the reason why they volunteered was to help a cause in which they personally believed in (Febbraro, 2001). Thus, efforts to expand service opportunities to youth for greater participation within society should be framed as building upon young people's demonstrated strengths and capacities, rather than counteracting their deficits (Youniss & Yates, 1997).

## **2.4 Service and the Individual**

Whether it is to counteract perceived deficits, or to enhance inherent qualities, the literature and research on the individual benefits of service for young people is vast, touching on almost every facet of moral, cognizant, social and psychological development. But, this may not be surprising given that within both community service and service learning programs, service is understood as an educative experience for the student. In an attempt to synthesize the individual implications of service, Kraft (1996) reviewed a number of evaluative studies of service learning programs and concluded that it was difficult to evaluate given the lack of agreement over what service learning programs are supposed to accomplish. Despite this, he categorized the impact of service learning programs into 5 areas, with varying degrees of success in achieving the desired impact: social growth; psychological development; moral judgment; academic learning and community served (the impact on the community).

Each of Kraft's categories involves substantive research examining the implications of service. For example, among the most commonly cited implications of service for the student is that service programs promote identity development; political and social awareness; as well as enhancing social responsibility and agency (Eyler & Giles, 1994, 1999; Youniss, McLellan, & Yates, 1997); at a psychological level, research cites the benefits of service in reducing risk factors among youth such as course failure, school dropout, school suspension and teen pregnancy (Allen, Philliber, Herrling, Kuperminc, 1997; Moore & Allen, 1996); and scholastic or academic achievement of the students participating is yet another commonly cited impact (Bridgeland, Dilulio Jr., & Wulsin, 2008; Markus, Jeffrey, & King, 1993; Scales, Roehlkepartain, Neal, Kielsmeier, & Benson, 2006; Schine, 1999; Shumer, 1994).

Undoubtedly, the purpose and conception of what service learning and community service is

supposed to achieve shapes research focuses and outcomes. In surveying the literature, in most cases, service learning seeks to meet the needs of the students involved (Cipolle, 2004). For example, an analysis of the National Service Learning Clearinghouse data found that service learning is most commonly understood as being a methodology that enhances the personal growth of students, especially in areas of self-esteem and social responsibility (Shumer, 1996). In this light, emphasis is placed on what the individual accrues from the service experience rather than the impact it is making on the communities they are serving. What's more, the overemphasis of the individual as the primary unity of analysis has implications for how we engage and understand the role of communities in service.

## **2.5 Service and the Community**

While the literature on the personal implications of service abound, there is a notable gap with respect to the impact of service on communities, and its role in defining service learning or community service objectives (Ward & Wolf-Wendel, 2000). Service programs, irrespective of their type, are often implemented with a singular focus on the potential benefits for the student, with marginal or no emphasis on potential long-term impacts on the broader community (Mitchell, 2008; Robinson, 2000; Ward & Wolf-Wendel, 2000). In this context, initiatives fail at harnessing the potential of service to facilitate social change (Chupp & Joseph, 2010).

For example, Toledano & Lapinid (2010) argue that a commonly neglected dimension in service learning pedagogy is the community's perspective in the development of projects. Areas such as the community's needs and problems, perceived roles and participation, and the community's suggested activities and projects are often not taken into consideration when implementing service programs. When communities are nearly invisible in the planning and implementation of such programs, there is a greater tendency for students, who are potentially already in a position of privilege in relation to the communities they seek to serve, to operate under an orientation of doing for the communities rather than doing with them; this approach is reflective of notions of charity, rather than fostering collaboration and mutuality (Ward & Wolf-Wendel, 2000). In this light, communities are perceived as a beneficiary of service rather than collaborators in identifying causes, problems and solutions (Ward & Wolf-Wendel, 2000).

This limitation of service learning has led to a distinction between "traditional service learning" and "critical service learning" so that service has an explicit aim towards social justice and social

change (Cipolle, 2004; Mitchell, 2008; Robinson, 2000). This distinction characterizes “critical service learning” as an approach that seeks to redistribute power, to promote “authentic” relationships between individuals defined by reciprocity and interdependence in order to build shared understanding and goals, and to work towards the amelioration of social conditions (Mitchell, 2008). By not taking social theory into account, service learning initiatives can lead participants to objectify community residents and blame them for their own problems (Hironimus-Wendt & Lovell-Troy, 1999).

In neglecting the community and focusing on the individual as a the primary unit of analysis, in both research and practice, there is the possibility that unidirectional relationships can perpetuate existing forms of injustice and a sense of paternalism that inhibit capacity building and collaboration. Service initiatives must transcend the inclination to emphasis on individual edification and become more conscious of humanity’s interconnectedness, and the role service can play in strengthening bidirectional relationships to in order to elevate the human condition.

But what accounts for such a notable gap in the literature? I suggest that part of the answer is that service is situated within a larger cultural context that defines our relationships with others in a particular way, and secondly, youth are also defined within a context that tends to underestimate their capacities and potential. Karlberg (2005) suggests that community service pedagogies “... run against the grain of our highly competitive and individualist culture. Within this culture, we structure virtually every significant public activity as a contest between self-serving rather than other-serving” (p. 20). The education system is no exception and Karlberg notes that it too reinforces a culture of contest and competition. He argues that fields such as service learning should be re-defined as pedagogy to cultivate an orientation towards the welfare of others, characterized by a sense of mutual interdependence rather than competitive individualism. This sense of mutual independence would serve well in protecting the field from assumptions of affluence and privilege that can creep into the work of those who serve.

Another set of assumptions that limit service programs from reaching their potential for social change is our conception of the role of youth in society. Kurth-Schai (1988) presents a convincing analysis that the role of youth in Western society fails to recognize their capacities to take meaningful action in the world:

Contemporary images of childhood are united in their failure to acknowledge the potential of young people to contribute to the social order. Youth are confronted with confusing and contradictory patterns of protection and pressure, with conflicting perceptions of their abilities and inadequacies, rendering their social presence inconsequential and their social power invisible. Goodman refers to this phenomenon as the “underestimation fallacy” and contends that it represents a serious misconception concerning the nature of childhood, reflected in the minimal expectations provided for children in modern industrialized societies. (p. 116)

Kurth-Schai goes on to argue that the “underestimation fallacy” indicates to young people that they are not expected to contribute to the welfare of the family or community. She notes that cross-cultural research reveals that the major and often only responsibility assigned to young people is academic achievement, an objective pursued primarily for the benefit of the individual rather than of society. She draws upon the work of Toffler (1974) to further examine this point:

Toffler proposes that due to widespread preoccupation with individual academic achievement, contemporary youth are required to spend many years isolated from the realities of community life in artificial environments called schools. In this manner, they are deprived of “participation either in significant community decision-making or in socially approved productive work”. (Toffler, 1974, cited in Kurth-Schai, 1988, p. 116)

The irony of service learning is that it seeks to remedy the disconnect between the time spent in school and society, but yet acts of service carried out within communities are still done with the intention of enhancing academic achievement. Service, it seems, is caught within an academic bubble, and consequently, is limited in achieving significant or meaningful change, because action is still carried out within a paradigm that rejects the capacity of youth to contribute meaningfully to society.

This analysis has given way to an approach within in the fields of education and social work to recognize youth as competent community builders who can play a fundamental role in seeking solutions to the social issues impacting them and future generations (Finn & Checkoway, 1998; Hancock, 1994). For example, revolutionary societies such as Nicaragua and Cuba have engaged youth as promoters of social change and as tutors in an effort to increase literacy rates in their countries. In Nicaragua, literacy tutors reduced the illiteracy rate from 50.2 percent of the

population to 12.9 percent within just 5 months (Hanemann, 2005). Fifty-five percent of the young volunteers were secondary and university students who spent 5 months in the rural areas of Nicaragua, teaching literacy and sharing the life and work of peasant families in their homes and fields (Hanemann, 2005). What's more, the campaign was also expected to have an impact on the youth who served as volunteers; according to the crusade's director, "it gave the young people who had fought and suffered the traumas of the war a channel for their energy and enthusiasm. Their participation as volunteer teachers helped them make the transition between the violence of war and the challenge of transformation." (Cardenal & Miller, 1981, p. 7-8). Thus, the campaign not only contributed decisively to the development of its people, but also became the arena where young people developed their capacities in the field of service to others.

In Canada, there are programs that send groups of youth nationally or internationally with the intention of promoting community development. However, the objectives among these programs can be more or less focused on the communities they seek to serve. For example, Katimavik, a national youth volunteer program that sends teams of youth into communities within Canada, defines a threefold objective: to positively impact youth, communities and Canadian society (Katimavik, 2009). Youth live in communities in groups over an extended period of time in order to contribute to its development and are billeted and supported by the communities themselves. The Katimavik website contains little over-glorification of the individual experience or benefits that accrue, although it recognizes the impact such an experience can have on young people.

In contrast, Canada World Youth, another well-known organization in developing international educational programs for youth, places greater emphasis on the student experience, with programs designed "to help youth experience the world for themselves, learn about other cultures and diverse Canadian communities while developing leadership and communication skills" (Canada World Youth, 2008). Their website, notably flashier than that of Kitimavik, is replete with promises of personal fulfillment and enjoyment from the service experience. The difference in discourse manifests itself in the experience of the youth as well as how the organization assesses its impact through the use of testimonials. For example, the testimonials on the Canada World Youth site speak about the individual benefit from the experience, and assess the success of their time based on what they did and what they learned:



Canada World Youth was a great experience for me at this point of my life and acted as a real stepping stone for my interest in international and human development ... Most of us were working in tree nurseries, planting grass or putting up fences. Although this work sometimes lacked challenges for me, the cultural experience was truly amazing: getting to learn a different language [and] staying with a host family for three months (Canada World Youth, 2008, para.1).

Interestingly, although Kitimavik also has testimonials of student experience, it also tries to learn from the communities and organizations that these youth serve with in order to learn their perception of the impact of the youth. One organization shared that they “are short on manpower and work on limited funding” and that “Kitimavik is a great asset to our overall project” (Katimavik, 2009, para. 4). Another organization spoke about the impact the youth had on the perception of young people within society: “our clients are really impressed with Katimavik and see how youth can make positive contributions to society” (Katimavik, 2009, para. 3). Thus, by focusing on both the social impact of the service youth perform; one is able to learn about how the act of service shapes society.

Kurth-Schai (1988) writes that international youth exchanges programs like Canada World Youth, have a common set of limitations in their ability to contribute to community wellbeing and develop young people’s capacity for social change. These initiatives have limited responsibility for youth since adults or ‘experts’ maintain responsibility for program direction, desired results are framed as contributions to participants’ personal growth rather than the welfare of society, and are inaccessible to the vast majority of young people (Kurth-Schai, 1988). One way to address the issue of accessibility is the introduction of service programs within school systems, an initiative that has recently increased in Canada through mandated high school community service programs.

## **2.6 Community Service Programs: the Canadian Experience**

Generally, service programs in the United States are firmly rooted in US culture and school system compared to that of Canada. For example, in 2004, 83% of public high schools were offering some kind of community service program, and 44% of all schools were mounting service learning programs (Scales & Roehlkepartain, 2004). There have also been several nation-

wide school-based initiatives such as *Learn and Serve America* and the *Corporation for National and Community Service*, in order to better coordinate and integrate the program nationally.

In contrast, most programs in Canada fall under the “high school community service” category; and are not structured to provide students with an ideal service experience (Brown et al., 2007a). In fact, the structure of some programs inhibit schools from developing service learning initiatives and there is little evidence to support that Ministries of Education have invested the additional resources needed to enhance their initiatives; features such as purposeful reflection and integration within the curriculum are lacking (Brown et al., 2007a).

One of the challenges of community service programs in Canada is that education is a provincial/territory responsibility, producing thirteen distinct programs, and unlike the United States, there is no comparable effort in Canada to coordinate programs or assess its overall impact (Brown et al., 2007a). A lack of coordinated effort in program delivery leaves fragmentary information about the many programs operating throughout Canada. Despite these limitations, Brown et al. (2007a) contacted about 90% of the public and separate school jurisdictions in the country and secured interviews with personnel at about 60% of them. This research led to a relatively comprehensive database.

Brown et al. (2007a) concluded that community service and service learning programs are not prominent features in high school curricula across the country and that there are provincial differences in approach. Even though most programs are a variation of the Ontario’s model of mandated community service required for graduation, Brown et al. (2007a) cautions against generalizing, as there is a distinctive character to the programs in each province and territory. For example, the Alberta Ministry of Education has not mandated high school community service, and is thus left to the discretion of individual school boards, creating considerable variation in how boards have responded.

With some exceptions, differences within programming tended to be greatest between schools rather than between school boards or school divisions or between provinces (Brown et al., 2007a). Brown and his colleagues concluded that faith-based schools are more likely than non-faith-based schools to promote community service among their students and that private schools tend to take a much more active role than public schools in promoting community service to their students.

## 2.7 What Accounts for the Differences in Impact?

Researchers have reported mixed results regarding the efficacy of service programs; there are probably just as many reports that cite no effect and even negative effects of programs as those that cite positive effects (for example: Coles, 1994; Melchior, 1997, 1998; Newman & Rutter, 1983; Scales and Blyth, 1999). What accounts for the lack of consistency in the results? One factor is the difference in approach of service learning compared to community service. For example, a longitudinal study of over 22,000 university students participating in both programs found that students involved in service learning scored higher on scores related to academic skills, leadership and future plans in community service than students who completed what they termed “generic” community service (Vogelgesang & Astin, 2000). Biling (2010) states: “service learning is a promising practice, but like other instructional practice, it must be done well to produce positive outcomes” (p. 1), and outlines five rules that separate “high quality” service learning from community service, such as meeting a real community need and being visible in support to students.

Metz, McLellan and Younnis (2003) also confirm that differences in program implementation will yield differences in results. They also suggest that another likely explanation for conflicting reports is that researchers often do not distinguish between the types of service youth perform as well as the various uncontrolled factors that inevitably impact student lives. They explain that a number of studies use outcome measures that gauge political engagement, such as the intention to vote or enhanced trust of the political system, and note that one can reasonably question whether singular events such as car washes, peer tutoring or fundraising should instill “fervor for political processes” (p.48).

Other studies comparing program types found that differences in measurements such as academic, social and ethical were statistically significant but actual difference was minimal (Furco, 1994), and that factors such as meaningful service placements and working towards a cause they believed in, often a social cause such as homelessness or health awareness, had greater influence.

It is likely that all of these factors contribute to some degree to the variation found in program impact: key characteristics of service learning can lead to greater program results, and outcomes should be commensurate to the indicators researchers wish to measure. However, it is interesting

to note that no matter how structured or connected to the classroom, if the service being performed lacks meaning or a real impact on the communities being served, there is a risk of diminishing the program's potential impact (Metz, McLellan and Younnis (2003). Moreover, these explanations for evaluation variability do little to address the paradigm that both programs still function within, which is to promote the development of the individual learner, with less thought to the communities that these programs wish to serve. I suggest that these two points are related: a meaningful service opportunity helps students contribute to meaningful social change, which in turn produces a profound effect on the individual learner, who is then more likely to continue in their service.

## **2.8 A Meaningful Service Opportunity**

In defining what is meant by service, two interrelated characteristics merit discussion. The first is the spirit or intention of the action and the second is the nature of the act itself (Basic Concepts, 2010). The following example from an educational text, "Discourse on Social Action" (Basic Concepts), developed by the Fundación para la Aplicación y Enseñanza de las Ciencias (FUNDAEC), helps clarify the first point:

Take the example a professional – say, a doctor, a lawyer, and engineer – who is motivated in his or her work by a spirit of service. Consider another, at the same level of competence, who is basically driven by a passion for financial gain. Do you believe that the fruits of the work of such professionals will be the same? (Basic Concepts, pp. 38-39)

In this way, when one's actions are characterized by a "spirit of service", qualities and attitudes that reflect the nobility inherent in humans, such as love, justice, kindness and compassion, bear great influence on the outcome of the work carried out.

The second interrelated aspect is the recognition that not all work contributes to the betterment of the world or to the transformation of society. Another example from the educational text, "Discourse on Social Action", sheds light on the matter:

The daily work people perform in the proper spirit in order to earn a livelihood clearly ranks as service to humanity. But such work, even when indispensable, may or may not contribute to the transformation of society. The discourse in which we are engaged

focuses on acts of service that we undertake, usually with likeminded people, with the explicit purpose of translating our ideals into action in order to effect change. (Basic Concepts, p. 39)

This conception of service points to the need for action to contribute towards the transformation of society. Although there may be a number of other outcomes when engaged in service, such as the gaining of new experiences and the development of skills and capacities, the essence of the act itself is characterized by two main factors: the motivation or spirit in which service is performed and the explicit aim of affecting change in society.

Within this context, community service and service learning programs have the potential to move beyond their current aims to be empowering and transformative for both the individual and the community. An approach to service that recognizes the inseparable relationship between social and individual transformation is one that is meaningful. Shor (1992) describes it as a critical-democratic pedagogy for self and social change that he calls “empowering education” (p. 15). Freire (1970) spoke of “reflection and action upon the world in order to transform it” and education as the means by which “men and women deal critically and creatively with reality and discover how to participate in the transformation of their world” (Shaull, 1993, p. 34). Noguchi, Hanson & Lample (1992) speak of a twofold purpose directed at the development of one’s vast potentialities, and on a societal level, “expressed through dedication to promote the welfare of the human race” (p. 4). Banks (1991) wrote that empowered students are engaged in a process transforming self and society, and Claus & Ogden (1999) define an approach to service learning where “individual development occurs as a consequence and within a framework to working to create a better world” (p. 70).

A meaningful act of service can be transformative for both the student and the community because it gives young people the opportunity to develop their capacities and expand their consciousness as they carry out action that impacts the communities they seek to serve. Through a process of action, reflection, discussion and study, our understanding and reading of the world evolves, and in turn what students consider “meaningful action” relies on how they increasingly understand through experience and reflection on what it means to build a better world (Vanderdussen, 2009). In this way, service can start small, but has the potential to grow in size

and complexity as learning occurs; it no longer becomes about the magnitude of the act itself, but whether that act is a catalyst for individual and social change.

Claus & Ogden (1999) draw on the work of Ira Shor (1992), who builds on the ideas of Paulo Freire and John Dewey, among others, to present a series of interconnected ideas that foster an empowering and transformative approach to service learning. They define them as: situated learning, where learning is rooted in the themes and concerns of the student; dialogical discourse, dialogue and discussion that is participatory and democratic; teachers as problem-posers, encouraging educators to generate, critical questions to frame the learning experience; critical thought and consciousness, awareness of social structures through questions and analysis; activist learning, action based on the knowledge gained through research and reflection. The implications for service learning, Claus and Ogden concludes, should be the pursuit of constructive change, where an act of service becomes a transformative steps in community development, and in the process, students develop qualities and capacities needed to build a better world.

These guiding principles, although not always explicitly stated, influence the outcome or impact of service programs for youth. For example, in *Principles for High Quality Service Program*, the Corporation for National and Community Service (1994) emphasize that service activities should address real needs and consider the unique qualities, including age of participants. Newmann and Rutter (1983) identifies features such as “having responsibility to make decisions, identifying and reflecting upon one’s personal values, working closely with adults, face new and challenging situations, and receiving appropriate blame or credit for one’s work done” (p. 2). Moore and Sandholtz (1999) found that direct contact with the communities students sought to serve was critical in service learning programs. They cite that although face-to-face contact was not the norm among the projects studied, those projects that included this aspect showed higher student attitudinal scores. Thus the degree to which service opportunities address the needs of their community and give students direct contact with community members has an impact on how meaningful the service is perceived to be.

Others note that although meaningful service can become a key sustaining factor in subsequent service, it is a time-consuming endeavor that requires support from schools, teachers and families alike, so that young people have access to opportunities, training and accompaniment to

carry out acts of service commensurate to their abilities, talents and the needs of their environment. Karlberg (2005) suggests that institutions must also reorient faculty expectations, so that professors have the time needed to nurture students through a process of empowerment, and not at the expense of their own academic or personal development. Shor (1992) believes that educators must undergo a paradigm shift in order to create a culture of empowerment by reinventing the cultures they learned in an unequal status quo; this will undoubtedly take time and a redirection of one's purpose and place in this world.

Initial studies, however, find evidence that meaningful service as well as support and accompaniment can sustain young people. For example, Pancer and Pratt (1999) suggest that there are two classes of sustaining factors that come into play during volunteering. The first is a supportive social milieu, which is the accompaniment and support individuals receive from family, friends and organizations for doing their volunteer work. The second refers to "positive outcomes" that volunteers experience during their service. This includes the feelings of satisfaction they derive from "making a difference" in people's lives and the extent to which they learn new skills in the course of doing their volunteer work. They also found that the most powerful experiences recounted by youth they interviewed involved direct contact with those who were being helped and those that helped them develop useful skills.

More recently, Taylor and Pancer (2007) found that if new volunteers have positive experiences within a supportive social milieu, they should be more likely to continue their community work even after they have completed the mandatory requirements of the program. The need to supporting youth in identifying and carrying out meaningful acts of service is further confirmed by McLellan and Youniss (2003), who found that if students are left unaccompanied, they will most often choose work that "demands less physical, cognitive, or emotional investment compared with social service" (p. 56).

## **2.9 Ontario's Experience with Meaningful Service**

In Ontario, educators are concerned that meaningful placements are not the norm and that the wide range of acceptable placements under the policy (the only limiting characteristic is that service must be non-paid), results in many service experiences characterized by functional tasks rather than "transformative" placements that put students in personal contact with other

community members (Meinhard, Foster, & Wright, 2006). There are a number of studies that validate this claim.

For example, prior to province wide mandated high school community service, Meinhard and Foster (1998, 1999) initiated a series of surveys in Toronto high schools in 1996 and again in 1999 to determine the prevalence and experience with community service programs. Their study sought to discover the characteristics of community service activities, whether students found their work meaningful, whether they took their service seriously and lastly, what were the perceived benefits, if any, for both students and for the community. They found that almost 45% of students reported working in placements that directly helped other people, such as tutoring or mentoring, while 40% participated in activities that indirectly helped other people, such as raising money or collecting food for people in need.

Generally, student perceptions of their community service scored low on the survey. Less than half of students (45%) reported having real responsibilities and challenging tasks in their volunteer placements. Only one-third felt they made important decisions, 44% felt their placement involved doing things instead of merely observing others, 42% felt they had the freedom to use their own ideas, 39% were able to explore their own interests and 47% reported having a variety of tasks to do (Meinhard & Foster, 1999). Another study of youth in grades 9 to 12, conducted prior to mandatory program, found that 50% completed their community service hours with a nonprofit organization compared to only 6% in a neighborhood (Ontario Network, 2006a).

According to the National Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating, youth between the ages of 15 to 19 are more likely to work for organizations rather than directly with their community, limiting the ability for students to make personal contact with other people in the community (Hall et al., 2009). For example, almost half (47%) of all Ontario youth volunteers reported that they helped to organize or supervise activities or events for an organization (Hall et al., 2009). Febbraro (2001) found that the most common activities for youth between ages of 15 to 24 included canvassing, campaigning or fundraising (42%), teaching or coaching for an organization (31%), serving as an unpaid member of a board or committee (29%), and collecting, serving, or delivering food (26%). The most common activity engaged in by 15 to 19-year-olds is canvassing, campaigning, and fundraising (52%) (Febbraro, 2001). These activities, far from



connecting to community patterns to community life, appear almost business like in nature, as students are canvassing, fundraising for a particular organization.

It is possible that a poorly planned placement that does not truly channel the energies of young people towards meaningful action has an opposite effect of what is intended. Instead of an increased desire to serve, students will be left with negative feelings and experiences. Meinhard and Foster's findings support this theory, as almost one third of the students interviewed did not describe their experience in positive terms (Meinhard & Foster, 1999). Brown et al. (2007b) also found that most students did not feel their service experience to be significant and positive. This has implications for whether youth will engage in subsequent community service after graduation and whether the mandated program introduced in Ontario ultimately increases civic engagement.

## **2.10 The Introduction of Ontario's Mandatory Community Service Program**

In 1999, the Ministry of Education mandated that every student must complete 40 hours of community service prior to graduation. Much like other programs, the purpose of the community service component is to encourage students to develop a greater awareness and understanding of civic responsibility and the role they can play in supporting and strengthening their communities (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2009). Although the requirement benefits communities, the ministry's primary purpose is to contribute to students' development through opportunities to learn about the contributions they can make to the community (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2009). Such an experience, combined with the opportunity to engage in extra-curricular activities are intended to encourage students to use local recreational facilities, to preserve the local environment, and to take an interest in local concerns (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2009).

School Boards delegated this responsibility to individual high schools, and thus virtually all high schools in the province have adopted practices for administering the program (Henderson, Brown, Pancer, & Ellis-Hale, 2007). In larger schools, the task of assisting students with their community service hours is assigned to a guidance counselor or some other staff member.

Service can be completed any time during the 4 years of study. Students themselves decide how they will complete the community service component, which can take place in a variety of

settings including businesses, nonprofit organizations, public sector institutions (such as hospitals), and informal settings. The requirement is completed outside student's normal instructional hours. Most schools provide some written advice on how to search for a potential volunteer placement and facilitate the process by posting placement opportunities sent by agencies and maintaining student records of community service hours logged (Henderson et al., 2007). Students present a plan of their activities and submit it to the principal, who decides whether the student has met the requirements of both the ministry and the board.

Although the Ontario program falls under the category of a high school community service program, rather than a service learning program, the new Ontario high school curriculum did establish a new compulsory civics course, which includes among its objectives to foster a sense of civic purpose, community responsibility, and active citizenship. Some have pointed to this civic course as an opportunity for a service learning component; however, there is little evidence that the civic course has been linked to the mandatory community service program for students (Henderson et al., 2007).

## **2.11 The Debate over Mandated Service**

The introduction of mandated community service has sparked debate over the meaning of who can be considered a volunteer, and the nature of mandated volunteer work itself. While the term "volunteer" may seem intuitive, there have been both subtle and substantive challenges to its definition over time, in part because of changing practices, emerging new realities and social trends (Graff, 2006). What's more, there are widely used definitions of the term that range from broad definitions such as work done to help others for no monetary reward (Adams 1985), to specific ones such as "a person who, out of free will and without wages, works for a non-for-profit organization which is formally organized and has as its purpose service to someone or something other than its membership" (Jenner, 1982, p. 30)

In order to define the term volunteer in a way that is both clear and consistent, Cnaan et al. (1996) used content analysis to identify four dimensions common to a number of definitions that define the term volunteer, and in doing so proposed a continuum from pure to broad definitions of volunteer. The four key dimensions are: free choice, remuneration, structure and the intended beneficiaries. Thus, the voluntary nature of the act, the nature of the reward, the context or

auspices under which the volunteer activity is performed, and the beneficiaries are all central to defining who is a volunteer.

Each dimension contained certain categories that are accepted and not accepted as relevant in defining someone as a volunteer (Cnaan et al., 1996). For example, in the dimension of free choice, which is most pertinent to mandated community service, three categories are identified: (1) free will, the ability to voluntarily choose, (2) relatively un-coerced, and (3) obligation to volunteer. Using this framework, only a broad definition would define mandatory community service as volunteering, and a pure definition of the term would contest the obligatory or coerced nature of mandated service.

Viewed in this light, mandatory community service “involves substantial force applied from a source of power outside of the individual performing the service” (Graff, 2006, p. 6). In this context, students are compelled to serve by the threat of significant penalty of being denied high school graduation, and not because students freely choose to do so. However, there is a question of whether the presence of any degree of coercion would be sufficient to disqualify an activity as “volunteering”. Schugurensky & Mundel (2005) note that:

... a certain degree of coercion is often present in some volunteer activities, sometimes expressed through legal requirements, social and religious mandates, workplace commitments, community expectations and the like. Where to draw the line between ‘genuine’ and ‘coerced’ volunteer work is not easy, and the decision probably varies from context to context. (2005, p. 6)

Thus there is a question on whether creating parameters for action, especially if that action leads to overall wellbeing, is really coercion at all, but rather something akin to what a loving parent would do by setting parameters for their children.

Some studies state that making service compulsory may undermine people’s intrinsic motivation to volunteer (Taylor & Pancer, 2007; Warburton & Smith, 2003). Interestingly, a gender-based analysis of mandatory school-based community service found that male students react more negatively to compulsory programs than female students. They were more likely to focus on the perceived injustice of the proposed method whereas their female counterparts were more likely to focus on the motive of encouragement underlying the message (Miller, 1994).

Stukas, Snyder & Clary (1999) found that feelings of being externally controlled by the mandated program eliminated an otherwise positive relationship between prior volunteer experience and future intentions to volunteer. By comparing the mandated group of students to a controlled environment study, they found that mandated service have a greater negative impact on individuals who feel less inclined to volunteer of their own free will. This is a population that Ontario's program is trying to activate. Still others consider mandatory service programs to be a form of forced student labor that detracts from a primary goal of academic achievement (Hurd, 2004; Sanchez, 1998).

However, others cite the perceived benefits outweigh coerced service and found evidence that such program have no negative effects on motivation (Metz & Youniss, 2005). Planty et al. (2006) show that youth who participate in mandated community service are more likely to volunteer in early adulthood than theirs who did not participate. McLelland and Youniss (2003) argue that if the likelihood of youth participation in community service is predicated on "action that follows from available resources" (p. 56), then mandatory school-based programs offer all youth an equal opportunity to become more involved in their community. Thus, mandatory community service helps eliminate one of the greatest barriers to youth involvement, lack of knowledge of available opportunities.

McLellan and Youniss (2003) shed light on this debate arguing that the key factor is not whether the program is mandatory, but the way in which community service is offered and the way in which schools organize required service. They conducted research on two schools whose mandatory community service program differed in structure and form. School A integrated the service component into its curriculum, assisted their students in finding placements and offered space for reflective discussion. In school B, students were left on their own to find placements and the service component was not integrated into the curriculum. McLellan and Youniss (2003) demonstrate that the difference in structure and support significantly affected the students experience and service outcomes, especially with respect to the kind and quality of service students perform. For example, school A's program was closely connected to the curricular goal of exemplifying religious principles through action in the name of social justice. The school also hired a service coordinator who helped teachers and students better understand the purpose of service. Thus, purpose and structure were key elements to the program and students with no

support were less likely to engage in social service and more likely to choose functional work in order to complete their credit.

## **2.12 Findings on Ontario's 40 Hours of Community Service**

Since its inception in 1999, much of the research on Ontario's community service program explores its' impact and student response. A common finding from the research is that solely mandating community service is not sufficient to create subsequent, sustained community service (Henderson et al., 2007; Meinhard, Foster, & Wright, 2006; Padanyi, Baetz, Brown, & Henderson, 2010; Taylor & Pancer, 2007). In one study of university students who were involved in a community service field placement, Taylor and Pancer (2007) concluded that it is not just doing community service that, in itself, produces positive outcomes, but:

The nature of the service and the extent to which those doing service perceive that they are supported, respected, and appreciated by their friends, family, and the organizations for which they work may be critical factors in determining the kind of impact these experiences will have on individuals' development and the likelihood with which they will become committed, lifelong volunteers. (p. 341)

Thus, the nature, experience, and perceived impact of the service can all constitute as factors in determining whether students become committed, lifelong volunteers; as does the degree of support and accompaniment a young person needs in overcoming challenges in the path of service.

A multi-university team of researchers led by Steven Brown of Wilfrid Laurier conducted three studies over 2007 and 2008 that collectively address two key areas of concern:

### 1. Basic program impact:

- a. Does the program result in exposure to community service for high school students who would not otherwise become involved?
- b. Does exposure to community service through Ontario's mandatory high school program affect subsequent civic engagement?

### 2. Student response:

- a. Do students consider the service they undertook to fulfill their high school requirement to be significant and positive?

- b. Do students vary in their response to community service and, if so, why?  
(Padanyi & et al., 2010)

All three of the studies confirmed that the mandatory high school community service program in Ontario is “somewhat successful” because it exposes more students to the voluntary sector than would have otherwise been exposed without the program (Padanyi et al., 2010). The study also found that the students who probably would not have volunteered while they were in high school if they were not required to, which is the population of students the program was most intended for, were no more likely to volunteer after the completion of high school than students who did no volunteering whatsoever in high school. Thus, the current Ontario program may not be effective at all with its key target population. Additionally, the findings suggest that the qualitative aspects of the service placement – especially the enjoyment factor – are important predictors of future volunteering. The study points that the ineffectiveness of the program is because the Ontario program is very weakly structured and does little to facilitate student placements that are suitable and satisfying. This supports earlier research on the subject (Meinhard et al., 2006; Padanyi et al., 2010). Thus, volunteering, by itself, is not an effective means of mobilizing young people to become more active and engaged citizens. In the short to medium term at least, the high school community service experience will have an impact only if it is a satisfying experience for the student.

## **2.13 A Summary of Key Recommendations**

The findings of a number of studies have led to similar recommendations with respect to Ontario’s mandatory service program:

1. All recommendations comment on the need for a more formal structure and support for high schools students. High schools, principals and their boards must become involved with helping students find suitable and satisfying placements in order to deliver positive experiences to students (Brown et al., 2007b; Meinhard et al., 2007; Meinhard et al., 2006; Ontario Network, 2006a; Ontario Network, 2006b; Padanyi et al., 2010).
2. There are recommendations to include a reflective piece, as found in service learning programs, to create opportunities for consultation and feedback (Meinhard et al., 2006; Meinhard et al., 2007).

3. Another recommendation is to integrate the Community Service Program more formally into the high school curriculum, possibly even in the Grade 10 Civics Course that students are now required to take (Ontario Network, 2006a; Ontario Network, 2006b; Padanyi et al., 2010).
4. Some studies have found that student's experiences were enhanced when they make a longer-term commitment to one organization; unsatisfied volunteers are less likely to commit to long-term service. Thus, some have recommended the need to explore whether the forty-hour requirement over four years of high school is sufficient (Brown et al., 2007b; Ontario Network 2006a; Mienhard et al., 2007).
5. Positioning the Community Service Program as a form of service learning (Padanyi et al., 2010)

Thus, most research on the current policy of the Ontario government seeks a fairly substantial shift in its current functioning and implementation, even stating that it should adopt a new pedagogical approach (with service learning) in trying to motivate youth towards civic engagement.

## **2.14 Conclusion**

The emergence of the community service program within the Ontario school curriculum has widened the discourse on service and the role it plays in the development of communities and the student learning experience. However, the relatively simple and unstructured approach to engaging youth, which is premised upon the assumption that 40 hours of any form of service can result in a greater and potentially subsequent commitment to community life, has led to questions in the research literature on how the program can further be enhanced in order to achieve its aims.

This thesis seeks to synthesize the research on service learning and mandatory community service. There is a growing body of research on mandatory community service that questions whether it achieves its primary objective of introducing students who have not yet volunteered to that experience in such a way it is likely to increase their commitment to volunteering in the future. This thesis seeks to build upon this research by focusing upon the meaningfulness of the volunteering experience, and whether current conceptualizations of service facilitate social change. The research questions, as outlined in Chapter 1, address the issue of whether students

Ontario high school's community service program find their experience meaningful and whether meaningful service in high school is related to subsequent service.



## **Chapter 3**

### **Methodology**

This chapter consists of the following sections: an overview to the research; participants; measurement apparatus; and procedure for data analysis. The purpose of this study is threefold. It seeks to determine whether students consider their mandatory community service requirement to be significant and meaningful; the relationship between a meaningful service requirement and subsequent community service involvement; and what other factors are related to meaningful service as well as subsequent community service.

This study undertakes a secondary analysis of a data file that was collected by a research team led by Steven Brown of Wilfrid Laurier University. This data file was created specifically to analyze the effects of the Ontario government community service program, and is part of a larger study conducted from 2007 – 2008, which collectively addresses both basic program impact as well as student's response to the community service program. Specifically, the studies sought to determine whether the program exposed students to community who would not otherwise have become involved; whether such exposure affects subsequent civic engagement; and whether students considered their community service requirement to be significant and positive, and if response to community service varied, what accounted for the difference (Padanyi et al., 2010).

A secondary analysis of existing data has both strengths and limitations. Using already existing data is unobtrusive, making reactive and investigator effects very unlikely. It also provides useful grounds for corroboration (Johnson & Christensen, 2008). On the other hand, the research may be incomplete and possibly be representative of only one perspective. For example, the survey being used primarily seeks to explore the relationship between civic engagement and community service. Access to some types of content is limited, especially when the analysis uses a survey that was constructed with a broader range of aims in mind (Johnson & Christensen, 2008).

Because the research being undertaken is secondary analysis, formal permission of the participants was not required.

### 3.1 Participants

The research participants were 1,341 students among all first-year university students at four mid-sized post-secondary institutions in Southwestern Ontario (University of Guelph, University of Waterloo, Wilfrid Laurier University and Conestoga College). Just over two thirds of the respondents, 67.8%, graduated from public high schools, another 27.4% from a Catholic schools, and 4.2% from a private high schools. Respondents came from a wide range of first year classes, majoring in fields within science, business and arts. The participants ranged from 17 to 33 years of age, with an average age being 19 ( $SD = 0.88$ ). Of this sample, 70% were female, and 86.1% of the participants were born in Canada. Lastly, the total family incomes of the respondents are summarized in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1

<i>Total Family Income - 2005</i>	
	Percent
Less than \$40,000	9.2%
\$40,000 to \$59,999	11.1%
\$60,000 to \$79,999	15.3%
\$80,000 to \$99,999	14.1%
\$100,000 to \$150,000	16.5%
More than \$150,000	9.4%
Don't know	24.4%

Students completed their community service requirements in a wide variety of settings: 21.9% within the school sector (i.e. tutoring, school fundraising projects); another 20.7% in the sports sector (i.e. coaching, officiating or organizing in a club or league); 15.1% in religious or cultural settings and programs (helping at a church, synagogue, mosque or ethnic organization); and lastly, about 20% within other nonprofit service organizations such as the Humane Society, food banks or service club projects. The remaining students completed most of their placements in a variety of health and political settings, summer camps, as well as informal helping such as unpaid childcare or hosting community events.

Data were collected from university students rather than from high school students in order to ensure that the respondents reflected upon complete rather than partial experiences with mandatory community service. It should be noted that the principal researchers conducting the survey acknowledged some limitations arising from their research methodology, limitations which also influence this present study (Henderson et al., 2007):

- The sample is probably not representative of Ontario's general high school population with respect to variables relevant to civic engagement. Usually, students entering university tend to be from backgrounds that are more inclined towards high achievement and motivation, and thus of stronger civic engagement. Thus the conclusions from the study should be limited to the population of university-bound high school graduates.
- Not all universities surveyed in the study represent typical schools by Canadian standards. For example, respondents from Wilfrid Laurier University, a small university located in Southwestern Ontario which is predominantly a liberal-arts university, have a more homogeneous ethno-cultural background compared to the province as a whole, and the average income is higher than the national average (Brown et al., 2007b). Therefore, caution should be taken in generalizing the findings to other larger, ethnically-diverse universities in Ontario.
- The study examines only the short-term impact (within 14 months of high school graduation) of mandatory high school community service, and as such, cannot generalize findings to the long term.

### **3.2 Apparatus and Data Analysis Procedures**

A 98-question online opinion survey was created by the research team and administered to students, who answered questions regarding their attitude towards society, helping others, and volunteering; the nature and amount of previous volunteering; current service involvement as well as other measures of civic and political engagement. The survey also contained standard demographic predictors of civic engagement such as gender, religious observance, community income and levels of parental involvement (Henderson et al., 2007). The survey included locator information such as date of birth and postal code that allowed researchers to ensure that individuals did not complete the survey more than once (Henderson et al., 2007).

The respective Registrar's offices of the four post-secondary institutions participating in the survey recruited participants. The survey was administered online in response to an email invitation sent to students in January and February 2007. The survey took about 15 minutes to complete. Follow-up reminders and the use of an incentive increased participation. Upon the completion of the survey, participants were given a free music download. The survey produced 1,533 completed responses. After removing respondents who did not complete high school in Ontario or a high school community service requirement, a usable sample of 1,341 respondents was obtained. The size of the original sampling frame is difficult to estimate because the respective Registrar offices for the four institutions handled the approaches to all first year students and did not provide the numbers of first-year students who were actually contacted; however, it is estimated to be about 14,000 (S. D. Brown, personal communication, November 1, 2010).

Conscious that students have varied experiences with service, I first examined whether the program introduces high school students to community service who would not otherwise have had that exposure. Students were asked how much of their community service in high school was done to satisfy their graduation requirement (question 6 of the survey) in order to categorize the students into groupings based on how much more service was done outside the high school requirement. A frequency analysis of the responses to this question was conducted. The question had the following response options:

- I only did enough service to satisfy my high school requirement
- I did more than my high school requirement, but the requirement constituted most of my experience in high school
- I did about as much community service on my own as I did for my requirement
- I did a lot more service than was required, so the requirement constituted only a minority of my community service experience in high school

To determine whether students consider their mandatory community service requirement to be significant and meaningful, an Index of Meaningfulness (IOM) scale was constructed. Students responded to a number of statements related to their service by indicating their agreement or disagreement on a five-point Likert scale ranging from "strongly agree" (1) to "strongly disagree" (5). The statements were:

- "I would volunteer to do this kind of work again if the opportunity presented itself"
- "I became friends with new people through my volunteer activity here"
- "I didn't really get to do anything meaningful/interesting in my volunteer work here"

- “I felt part of the organization I volunteered with”
- “I didn’t really learn any new skills through my volunteer experience here”
- “I felt that my volunteer work here helped me to make a difference”.

This 7-item scale had a Cronbach’s alpha of 0.852, indicating adequate internal consistency (Nunnally, 1978). The two questions that expressed a negative volunteer or service experience were reversed scored (“I didn’t really get to do anything meaningful/interesting in my volunteer work here” and “I didn’t really learn any new skills through my volunteer experience here”). IOM scores were computed by averaging the responses on 7 items. The scores ranged from 1 to 5, with 1 indicating a less meaningful and possible negative community service experience, and 5 indicating a more meaningful and positive community service experience

In order to explore the question of whether a meaningful service experience affects a positive outlook on service and possible subsequent community involvement, an Index of Subsequent Involvement (ISS) was created from statements related to whether they would become involved in service to the community in the future. The following statements were used:

- “I plan to do some volunteering work”
- “I plan to become involved in my community”
- “In the future, I plan to participate in a community service organization”
- “I plan to help other who are in difficulty”
- “I am committed to making a positive difference.”
- “I plan to become involved in programs to help clean up the environment”

Participants responded to these statements by indicating their agreement or disagreement on a five-point Likert scale ranging from “strongly agree” (1) to “strongly disagree” (5). The 6-item scale had a Cronbach’s alpha of 0.902, indicating adequate internal consistency. ISS scale scores were computed by averaging responses to the 6 items. These scores range from 1 to 5 and are reverse scaled so that 1 indicates a low likelihood of future service, and 5 indicates a stronger commitment to future community service.

To determine whether the amount of community service is related to a more meaningful experience for students, a one-way Analysis of Variance was conducted with the index of meaningfulness as the dependent variable and the groups of students defined by the amount of community service as the independent variable.

Lastly, to determine what other factors contribute to a more positive experience towards service, as well as subsequent community service, potential predictors of the positive experience were

identified and a one-way ANOVA and multiple regression analyses were conducted. To determine if specific placements impacted whether students considered their experience to be meaningful, a one-way ANOVA was conducted based on the survey question “in which sector did you complete your requirement?” with the dependent variable being the Index of Meaningfulness. To determine whether other factors contribute to subsequent service, predictors such as frequency in attending religious services, gender, parental involvement in community service, the category of high school students graduated from (i.e. private, public, catholic), whether they were born in Canada, the population of the community in which they lived most of their lives, and total family income were identified and a multiple regression analysis was conducted.

## **Chapter 4 Results**

The results presented in this chapter are covered in five sections. The first section determines whether the program exposes students to community service who may not otherwise. The subsequent three sections present the results in relation to the research questions. The final section of this chapter presents a brief summary of the results.

### **4.1 Demographic Characteristics of the Sample**

To assess whether students considered their experience to be meaningful, students were first grouped by the amount of service completed during high school. Grouping the survey participants by the degree to which they are involved in service recognizes that high school students are a heterogeneous population, with varying experiences as well as varying backgrounds. It is also possible for subgroups within the overall population to have a greater or lesser likelihood of being impacted positively by the mandatory community service program. A frequency analysis was conducted in order to create three distinct groups:

- Group 1: Mandatory service only – students who only completed the 40-hour high school requirement ( $n = 210$ , 15.7% of respondents)
- Group 2: Mandatory service plus some additional service totalling less than 40 hours ( $n = 485$ , 36.2% of respondents)
- Group 3: Mandatory service plus a lot of additional service – those who did more than 40 hours of additional service, so that mandatory service was less than half of their community service hours in high school ( $n = 646$ , 48.2% of respondents)

Groups were then tested for differences in variables known to be key characteristics of individuals who engage in community service, such as gender, parental involvement in community service, and participation in religious activity. These variables were identified because other studies have found them to be key characteristics of volunteers (Padanyi et al., 2010 Niemi et al., 2000). Table 4.1 demonstrates that those who volunteer more tend to be women, have parents who also volunteer, attend religious services more frequently and formal religion is stressed at home.

Table 4.1

*Group Demographics*

	Group 1	Group 2	Group 3
	High school requirement only	Required and some additional service	Required and a lot of additional service
Total	210 (15%)	484 (36%)	644 (48%)
Parents volunteer	23.3%	43.0%	53.1%
Gender (male)	39.5%	30.0%	27.0%
Formal religion stressed at home	15.2%	17.6%	25.3%
Attend religious services few times a month	5.3%	8.3%	11.9%

## 4.2 Do Students consider their Mandated Community Service to be Meaningful?

The first objective of the study was to determine whether students consider their mandated community service to be meaningful. This analysis was done for each group of high school students. Table 4.2 demonstrates that Group 1 was less likely to feel that their service made a difference and was meaningful or interesting. They were also less likely to feel that they learned any new skills. These three items were included in the scale to assess meaningfulness of the volunteer experience, and the average meaningfulness scores increased in relation to the amount of volunteer service, that is, Group 1 (school requirement only) was the lowest and Group 3 (school requirement plus a lot of additional service) was the highest, with Group 2 (school requirement plus some additional service) in the middle. Figure 4.1 illustrates the mean and range differences of the Index of Meaningfulness scores between all three groups.



Table 4.2

*Service Experience by Groups*

	Group 1	Group 2	Group 3
	High school requirement only	Required and some additional service	Required and a lot of additional service
Total	210 (15%)	484 (36%)	644 (48%)
Strongly agreed that their volunteer work helped make a difference	14.6%	25.0%	48.8%
Strongly agreed that their volunteer work was meaningful/interesting	39.0%	52.5%	70.4%
Strongly agreed that they learned new skills through their volunteer experience	25.6%	40.7%	58.4%

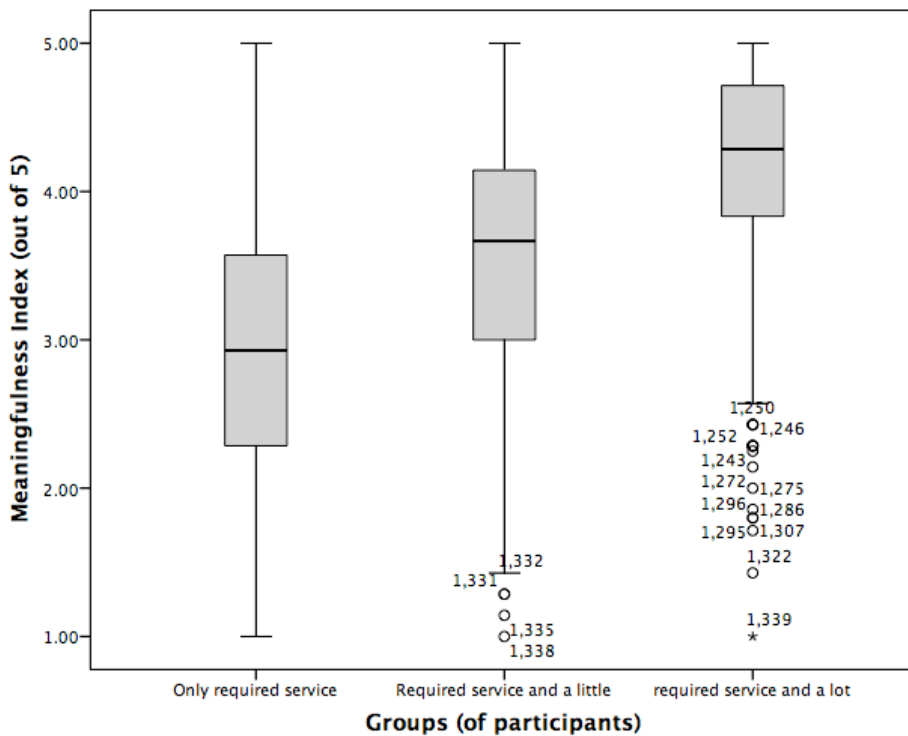


Figure 4.1. High School Groups and Meaningfulness Index Scores.

A One-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was conducted to evaluate the relationship between meaningfulness of the volunteer experience and group membership. The independent variable, group, had the three levels of service, based on number of completed hours, and coded as Group 1, 2 and 3. The dependent variable was how much they perceived their service to be meaningful. The results of the One-Way ANOVA were significant,  $F(2, 1334) = 14.495, p < .001$ . The strength of relationship between the groups and meaningful service, as assessed by  $\eta^2$ , was moderate, with the meaningful service accounting for 24% of the variance of the dependent variable.

Follow-up tests were conducted to evaluate pair-wise differences among the means. The Levene's test of homogeneity of variances was significant, and the Dunnett's C test was chosen, which assumes unequal variances among the three groups. There was a significant difference in the means between all three groups. The more students serve outside of the required 40 hours of service, the more meaningful is the experience. Table 4.3 presents data for the three groups, with confidence intervals for the reported means.

Table 4.3

*Meaningfulness Index by Group based on Amount of Service*

Group	N	Mean	SD	95% Confidence Interval for Mean	
				Lower	Upper
1	208	2.93	0.05	2.82	3.03
2	483	3.60	0.04	3.53	3.67
3	646	4.17	0.03	4.11	4.23

### **4.3 What is the Relationship between a Meaningful Community Service Requirement and Subsequent Community Service?**

A linear regression analysis was conducted to evaluate the prediction of subsequent service from a meaningful service experience during high school. The scatter plot indicated that the two variables are linearly related such that the likelihood of subsequent service increases as the meaningfulness of the service experience increases. The 95% confidence interval for the slope,

0.434 to 0.524 does not contain the value of zero, and therefore meaningful service is significantly related to the intention of subsequent community service. As hypothesized, students who had a meaningful service experience tend to have a higher likelihood of committing to future service.

The correlation between meaningful service and subsequent service was 0.50 ( $p = 0.01$ ). Approximately 25% of the variance in subsequent service was accounted for by its linear relationship with meaningful service scores. It should be noted that this correlation also generated a number of outliers within the group that did a lot more community service, and the implications will be explored in Chapter 5.

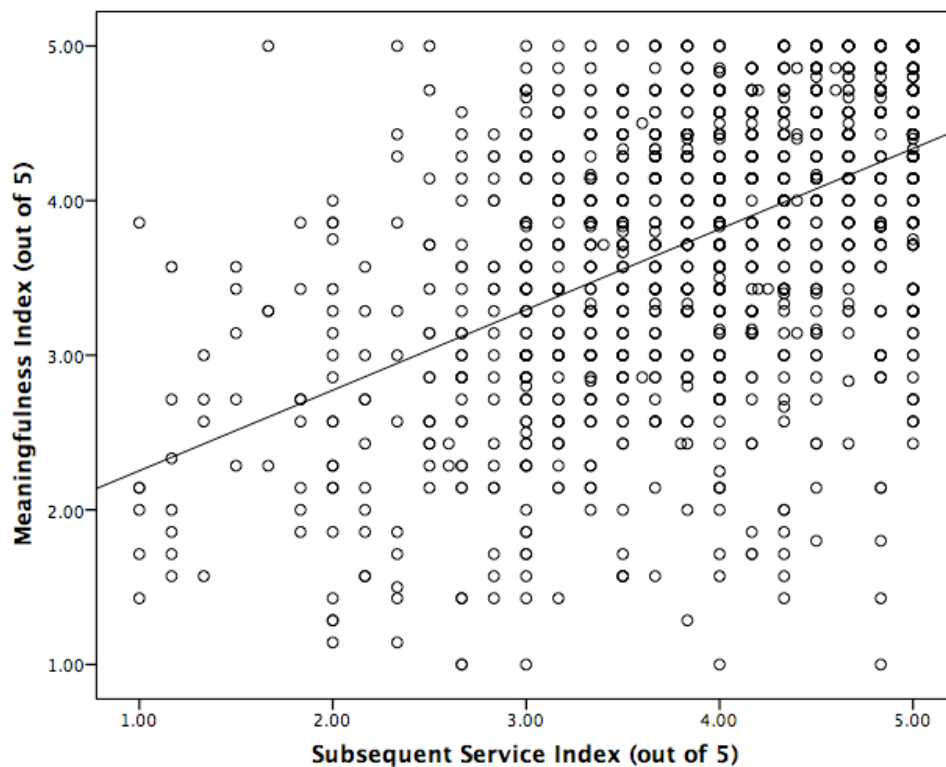


Figure 4.2. Scatterplot for Correlation between Meaningfulness and Subsequent Service.

A One-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was conducted to evaluate the relationship between the three types of groups and their commitment to subsequent service. The independent variable, groups, included three levels coded as Group 1, 2 and 3, the same groups as referred to in the earlier analyses. The dependent variable was whether they commit to future service. The results of the One-Way ANOVA were significant,  $F(2, 1330) = 21.612, p < .001$ . The strength of

relationship between the groups and meaningful service, as assessed by  $\eta^2$ , was moderate, with the meaningful service accounting for 19% of the variance of the dependent variable.

Follow-up tests were conducted to evaluate pair-wise differences among the means. The Levene's test of homogeneity of variances was significant, and the Dunnett's C test was chosen, which assumes unequal variances among the three groups. There was a significant difference between the means of all three groups. The more service students completed in high school, the more likely they are to commit to future service.

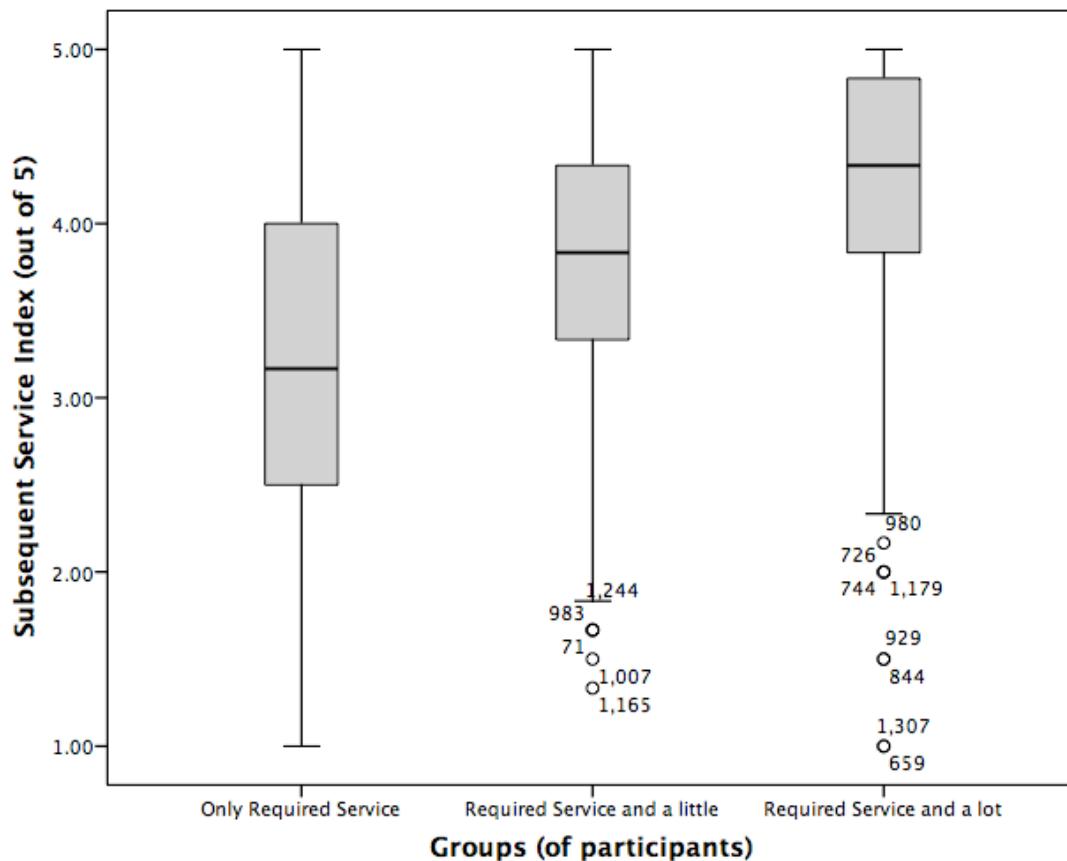


Figure 4.3. High School Groups and Commitment to Subsequent Service.

#### 4.4 What Other Factors are related to a Meaningful Experience as well as Subsequent Community Service?

A Two-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was conducted to evaluate whether specific sectors in which students completed their mandated service enable a more or less meaningful experience for students in the three groups. The means and standard deviations for the Meaningfulness Index of the two factors are presented in Table 4.4. The Two-Way ANOVA indicated significant main effect for Sectors,  $F(5, 1214) = 2.92, p = .01$ , partial  $\eta^2 = .01$ , a significant effect for Groups,  $F(2, 1214) = 141.26, p < .01$ , partial  $\eta^2 = .19$ , and a significant interaction between the Groups and Sectors,  $F(10, 1214) = 2.30, p = .02$ , partial  $\eta^2 = .02$ . Since the interaction effect is significant, it means that the difference between the three groups of students varies by sector, and, therefore, the main effect of sector cannot be interpreted.

Table 4.4

*Means and Standard Deviations for Meaningfulness Index*

Sector	Groups	Mean	SD
School	Only required	3.00	0.99
	Required and a little	3.67	0.75
	Required and a lot	4.19	0.70
	Total	3.82	0.87
Health	Only required	2.91	0.84
	Required and a little	3.20	0.87
	Required and a lot	4.31	0.63
	Total	3.72	0.96
Other Nonprofit Sectors	Only required	2.68	0.87
	Required and a little	3.48	0.89
	Required and a lot	4.08	0.81
	Total	3.62	0.99

Religious/Cultural/Political	Only required	3.12	0.66
	Required and a little	3.62	0.81
	Required and a lot	4.18	0.60
	Total	3.90	0.77
Sports	Only required	2.97	0.98
	Required and a little	3.70	0.78
	Required and a lot	4.23	0.71
	Total	3.80	0.90
Informal Helping	Only required	2.95	0.95
	Required and a little	3.72	0.90
	Required and a lot	3.72	0.72
	Total	3.51	0.91
Total	Only required	2.92	0.91
	Required and a little	3.59	0.83
	Required and a lot	4.16	0.71
	Total	3.76	0.90

Because the interaction effect is significant, to further explore the difference of meaningfulness between sectors, a One-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was conducted for each of the three groups of high school students.

The results of the ANOVA for Group 1 were not significant,  $F(5, 187) = 0.975, p < 0.435$ . The strength of relationship between the sectors and meaningful service, as assessed by  $\eta^2$ , was weak, with the sectors accounting for 2.5% of the variance of the dependent variable. Follow-up tests were not conducted because completing the service requirement in particular sectors did not make a difference on whether the service was considered meaningful for this group.

The results of the ANOVA for Group 2 were significant,  $F(5, 446) = 3.033, p < 0.011$ . The strength of relationship between the sectors and meaningful service, as assessed by  $\eta^2$ , was weak, with the sectors accounting for 3.3% of the variance of the dependent variable.

Follow-up tests were conducted to evaluate pairwise differences among the means for pairs of sectors. The Levene's test of homogeneity of variance was not significant, and the Bonferroni test was chosen which assumes equal variances among the sectors. There was a significant difference in the means between school and health sectors, with the school sector offering a more meaningful experience than the health sector; and a significant difference between the health and sports sector, where the sports sector offered a more significant experience than health. Thus the health sector for Group 2 does not provide as meaningful of an experience compared to that of the school and sports sectors.

The results of the ANOVA for Group 3 were significant as well,  $F(5, 581) = 3.273, p < 0.006$ . The strength of relationship between the sectors and meaningful service, as assessed by  $\eta^2$ , was weak, with the sectors accounting for 2.7% of the variance of the dependent variable.

Follow-up tests were conducted to evaluate pairwise differences among the means. The Levene's test of homogeneity of variance was not significant, and the Bonferroni test was chosen which assumes equal variances among the sectors. There was a positive significant difference between the school and informal sector, the health and informal sector, the religious/cultural/political and informal sector and the sports and informal sector, which means that from among the sectors, the informal sector provided students from group 3 with the least significant meaningful experience.

Finally, a multiple regression analysis was conducted to evaluate how well a combination of factors predicted subsequent community service after high school. The predictors were: frequency in attending religious services, gender, parental involvement in community service, the category of high school students graduated from (i.e. private, public, catholic), whether they were born in Canada, the population of the community in which they lived most of their lives, total family income and the meaningfulness Index, while the criterion variable was the intention for subsequent service index. The linear combination of service variables was significantly related to the subsequent service index,  $F(8, 999) = 54.05, p < 0.001$ . The sample multiple correlation coefficient was 0.55, indicating that approximately 30% of the variance in the

subsequent service index can be accounted for by the linear combinations of subsequent service variables.

Table 4.5 presents a summary of the multiple regression results. The results suggest that from among the 8 potential variables, gender, attendance in religious services, parental involvement in the community and the meaningfulness index were statistically significant predictors of subsequent service ( $p < .005$ ). The strongest predictor was the Meaningfulness Index ( $\beta = .46$ ), followed by parent involvement ( $\beta = -.12$ ), gender ( $\beta = .10$ ), and attendance of religious services ( $\beta = .08$ ). In contrast, the variables related to family income, immigration, size of community the students were raised in and the category of high school they graduated from were not statistically significant predictors in determining subsequent service.

Table 4.5

*Summary of Regression Analysis for Variables Predicting Subsequent Service*

Variable	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	$\beta$
Category of high school graduation	0.02	0.04	0.01
Parent's total income 2005	-0.02	0.01	-0.04
Population of community lived in	0.00	0.01	0.00
Whether they were born in Canada	0.10	0.08	0.04
Attendance in religious services	0.04	0.02	0.08**
Gender	0.19	0.05	0.10*
Parental involvement in service	-0.21	0.05	-0.12*
Meaningfulness Index	0.46	0.03	0.46*

\*  $p < .001$ , \*\* $p < .005$

## 4.5 Summary of Results

The results indicate that high school students can be grouped into 3 groups based on the amount of service completed in high school: 1) those who serve only 40 required hours, 2) those who serve 40 required hours plus a little, and 3) those who serve 40 required hours plus a lot more.



Students in the third group tend to be women, have parents who also volunteer, attend religious services more frequently and have formal religion is stressed at home. Students in Group 1 were less likely to feel their service made a difference or was meaningful, compared to Group 2, and to Group 3, which had the highest likelihood of citing a meaningful service experience. The more students serve outside of the required 40 hours of service, the more meaningful is the experience, and as hypothesized, students who had a meaningful service experience tend to have a higher likelihood of committing to future service. The results of the One-Way ANOVA per Group demonstrate that differences in where students complete their service (i.e., what sectors) are only a factor for students completing more than the required 40 hours of service, and accounts for a small percentage of the variance. Finally, the results from the multiple regression suggested that from among 8 predictors of subsequent service, the meaningfulness was the strongest predictor and of the 8, four predictors were not statistically significant.

## Chapter 5 Discussion

This thesis explored the impact of Ontario's community service program; the introductory chapters drew from service learning and community service literature to better understand its purpose and intended outcomes. In doing so, I concluded that although the pedagogical approach of service learning contains a number of helpful aspects that educators can draw upon to enhance the Ontario model, such as space for reflection, it lacks in its ability to orient students to understand that service is a twofold process that is transformative for both the community and the individual. I suggested that service has the potential contribute to social change, rather than be limited to another pedagogical tool in a teacher's toolbox for academic success; and that a lack of meaningful service opportunities is perhaps an underestimation of young people's capacity to contribute meaningfully to society.

In order to determine whether meaningful service is a significant predictor for future service and community involvement I did a secondary analysis of the results of a survey conducted with first-year university students at Wilfrid Laurier University. This chapter examines the evidence from the secondary analysis for each of my research questions, offers possible explanations for the results, and makes connections to the literature. I draw on this analysis in order to suggest how it might contribute to the literature on service and offer three recommendations to enhance the efficacy of the Mandatory Community Service as well as an illustrative case study. I present an alternative model for consideration and introduce the program *Preparation for Social Action*, developed by the Fundación para la Aplicación y Enseñanza de las Ciencias (hereafter: FUNDAEC), as a potential complement to the mandated hours students must complete. I describe the model's pedagogical and methodological approach as well as how it enhances student's capacity to work for the progress of their communities, and suggest that such a program can be introduced in Ontario to learn more about helping students develop capacities for service. Finally, I conclude by discussing some of the limitations of the study and possible directions for future research.

## 5.1 Discussion of Results

In chapter 1, three research questions, which guided the data analysis, were posed:

1. Do students consider their mandated community service requirement to be meaningful?
2. What is the relationship between a meaningful community service requirement and subsequent community involvement?
3. What other factors are related to a meaningful experience and subsequent service?

The results related to each of these questions were presented in Chapter 4. The evidence bearing upon each of these questions is now discussed.

1. Do students consider their mandated community service requirement to be meaningful?

The number of students engaged in service for the first time through the mandated program (15%) is much smaller than those with previous community service (85%). Students enter high school with previous service experience and tend to build on that experience throughout their time in high school. Students from Group 1, those students who completed only the mandated 40 hours of service, were the least satisfied with their experience and were less likely to cite a meaningful experience. If the program is intended to introduce students to community service, the number of students in this category is relatively small and it is questionable whether simply mandating students to do service will foster a commitment to service over the long term.

The higher number of students completing more than the required 40 hours throughout high school is an indication that young people are more involved in community life than is often assumed. Almost half of these students (50%) did well beyond the 40 hours of community service, and the mandated hours only amounted to a portion of their service. Of that percentage, 58% strongly agreed with the statement of being committed to making a difference and 61% strongly agreed with the idea that if the opportunity presented itself again they would continue serving in the particular sector they did their community service hours in. These results question the notion that youth are in a state of crisis and require programs that activate their participation in society. Additionally, it also raises the question of whether the current standard set for students, which is 40 hours over 4 years, is high enough, and reflective of their capacity and even inclination. This conclusion is similar to other studies that found 40 hours over high school to be insufficient (Brown et al., 2007b; Meinhard et al., 2007; Ontario Network 2006a).

Whether students found their service experience meaningful depended on the group. In general, students in Group 3, whose service exceeded the required 40 hours in high school, were more likely to cite a positive service experience. There are a number of possible explanations for this correlation. One is that the meaning they derive from the act of service itself motivates the student to continue their service. It is not solely action itself that motivates students to serve, but the understanding of the implication of that service on the life of the community and their own development. Another possible explanation is that meaningful service opportunities often require a longer commitment than just 40 hours. For example, volunteering at Sick Kids hospital in Toronto, a opportunity that enables students to have direct contact with children and their families, requires candidates to commit 3 hours a week for one year and commit to the same day each week for the 3-hour shift, which totals to 166 hours a year (Sick Kids. 2011). Much like other studies that found student's experiences to be enhanced when they made a longer-term commitment one organization (Brown et al., 2007b; Meinhard et al., 2007; Ontario Network 2006a), it is likely though that as students commit to one path of service over time, the service they are performing will evolve and grow and increase in complexity and responsibility.

Several outliers were observed for this correlation, where students indicated that their service experience was not as meaningful, although they served a great deal during high school. One possible explanation is that the students were referring specifically to the 40 hours completed for the mandatory program, and not necessarily the totality of the service they performed throughout high school. In this case, an individual who served a lot more than 40 hours of service, could still rate their experience with the mandated program as negative, or lacking in meaning.

2. What is the relationship between a meaningful community service requirement and subsequent community involvement?

As indicated, there is a moderate correlation between whether students consider their experience meaningful and whether they are committed to future service. This supports the central argument of the thesis, that meaningful service opportunities can foster greater commitment to subsequent service, and can play a critical role in determining not only the kind of impact the service has on the individual, but the perceived impact the service has on the recipient, such as the community or organization. These results support earlier research that asserts that a positive experience will likely result in further commitment to service in the future (Brown et al., 2007b).

There was also a correlation between the groups and their commitment to subsequent service. Group 3 was mostly likely to commit to future service, while group 1 was least likely to do so. The results demonstrate that the mandated program does little to help students commit to future community service. The students who were most likely to be involved in service after high school were those who would have volunteered even if they were not required to.

There are a number of outliers in when correlating between groups and their commitment to future service that merit discussion. Some students who completed a lot more service than the 40 hours during high school were less inclined to future service. One possible explanation is the increasing pressure and competition, in North America especially, that inclines or motivates students to use service as a way of resume building as an entrance to use university or for receiving awards of scholarships (Crosby, 1999). Other potential factors could be less free time in the first year of university compared to high school, or that they are living away from home are not familiar with their new surroundings or opportunities on how to become involved. For example, within group 3 (those who did a lot of community service), 44% strongly agreed with the statement “I plan to participate in a community service organization” compared to 58% who strongly agreed with “I am committed to making a positive difference.”

### 3. What other factors are related to a meaningful experience and subsequent service?

The experience of students within different service sectors varied according to the three groups that they were in. For group 1, completing the service requirement in particular sectors did not make a difference to whether the service was considered meaningful. For group 2, the health sector did not provide as meaningful of an experience compared to the sports and school sectors, and for group 3 health, school, religious and cultural sectors were all more meaningful than informal service. Although not a focus of this present study, an area of future research could be what sectors or social spaces enable a more meaningful experience for youth and why.

Lastly, the regression analysis demonstrates that the quality of the service experience, gender, attendance in religious services and parental involvement are predictors for intentions to serve in the future, with meaningful service as the strongest predictor statistically from among them. The variables related to family income, immigration, size of community the students were raised in and the category of high school they graduated from were not statistically significant predictors

in determining subsequent service. These results are consistent with the central theme of the thesis, that a meaningful service opportunity is a significant predictor for future service.

## 5.2 General Discussion

The main finding from this study is that meaningful acts of service are a predictor for subsequent service, and have the potential to contribute to individual and social transformation. Based upon this finding, I make three policy recommendations, and then present a case study of the *Preparation for Social Action* program, that I came across during the research for this thesis, that ably addresses the limitations in current approaches to service, encompasses the recommendations put forth in this thesis, and provides a structure that enables students to engage in meaningful service in the context of their communities.

The first recommendation is concerned with where service is placed in the context of the educational process and why. In the Ontario case, service is a complementary activity done outside of the classroom. In other cases, such as with service learning, service initiatives are integrated into existing courses or school curriculum, often with a civics course or social justice class (McLellan & Youniss, 2003). Although the experience tends to enhance the content or topic being explored in class, the course content itself does little to prepare students to engage with the community or its members, with an attitude or posture that promotes dialogue and understanding. Consequently, service is geared towards the needs of the student (Cipolle, 2004), and little emphasis is placed on the impact or needs of the communities they seek to serve (Mitchell, 2008; Robinson, 2000; Ward & Wolf-Wendel, 2000).

To address this gap in the literature, curriculum or course content should be created or adopted to enable students to serve their communities with greater efficacy, rather than pegging service activities on to the current school system. In this way, students are trained and are better able to accurately identify the needs in their community and work together with their peers to meet them. Also, service is carried out with a twofold purpose: that of developing one's capacities as well as contributing to the betterment of their communities. This requires an educational approach that cultivates the relevant qualities, attitudes and abilities for service as well as a re-conceptualization of service for 'others-serving' rather than 'self-serving' (Karlberg, 2005). By understanding that personal development is a natural outcome of service to others, the question of motivation and intention that students often grapple with (Coles, 1993), whether their actions

are sincerely for the service of others when they are benefiting from them personally, is answered and such tensions are lessened.

The need for curriculum that builds capacity for service is closely related to the second recommendation, which is the need for structure so that students have a space for reflection and consultation on what they are learning and experiencing, as well as a structure for support in identifying and carrying out acts of service (Brown et al., 2007b; Eyler & Giles, 1999; McLellan & Youniss, 2003; Meinhard et al., 2007; Meinhard et al., 2006; Ontario Network, 2006a; Ontario Network, 2006b; Padanyi et al., 2010). This reflection, however, must go beyond the mere description of what happened and how it made the student feel. Rather, structure for reflection is required so that such an act can transform thought and behavior, and reconstruct knowledge so that the student can take action towards bettering the condition of their communities (Freire, 1970; Shor, 1992).

Thirdly, I recommend stronger collaboration and partnership with organizations that can provide training and structure to students, by virtue of their field experience and relationships with community members and particular populations they are seeking to serve. Service agencies can provide the needed follow up and accompaniment outside of the classroom, and students can learn from their specific learning processes they are engaged in.

One educational initiative that has shown promise is the *Preparation for Social Action* program developed by FUNDAEC. I provide in the following section, the methodology and approach to the program because it embodies not only the recommendations made in this thesis, but also addresses the gaps identified in service learning literature, which include: the need for community involvement (Ward & Wolf-Wendel, 2000), more direct contact with communities (Moore & Sandholtz, 1999), adequate attention to both processes of individual and social development, a dialogical and participatory approach to service, learning and social transformation (Freire, 1970; Shor, 1992) and directed towards the pursuit for constructive change and community development (Claus & Ogden, 1999). I conclude the case study by examining the possibility of introducing the *Preparation for Social Action* program to Ontario high schools as a complement to the mandated community service requirement.

### **5.3 Case Study: *Preparation for Social Action Program***

FUNDAEC is a non-profit organization based in Cali, Colombia, established in the mid-1970s by a group of scientists and professionals who were trying to “find a more appropriate role for science technology, and education in the development of rural areas.” (Arbab, Correa, and de Valcárcel, 1990, p. 3). They were “searching for approaches to promote autochthonous development of rural areas in Colombia” (FUNDAEC, 2011, para. 1). A central concern was the matter of participation; that the local population arise as protagonists of their community’s development.

Rather than seeing people as problems in need of assistance – social, economic, moral – FUNDAEC viewed the masses of humanity as a vast resource of talent and capacity that could be released for the betterment of their communities and the world as a whole. What was needed was to ensure that all had access to knowledge and to education that would nurture their capacities to generate and apply knowledge in the context of service to their communities. FUNDAEC rejected theories that viewed the human being as an empty glass to be filled with information, a “blank slate to be written upon”, “as well as those at the other pole that claim that each individual is born with all the necessary characteristics to be developed in a state of unfettered liberty.” It viewed the human being as “a mine rich in gems of inestimable value”, but believed that “inherent potentialities could only become manifest through education” (FUNDAEC, 2009, p.15).

Social action, FUNDAEC holds, provides the context for education. This last point should be emphasized as FUNDAEC holds that individual talents and capacities can only be fruitfully developed in service to others and the community:

In order to act effectively... individuals must, above all, be imbued with a strong sense of purpose that impels them both to transform their own selves and to contribute to the transformation of society. On a personal level, this purpose is directed towards the development of one’s vast potentialities, comprising both those virtues and qualities that should adorn every human being and those talents and characteristics that are the individual’s unique endowment. On a social level, it is expressed through dedication to the promotion of the welfare of the human race. These aspects of the twofold purpose are fundamentally inseparable, for the standards and behavior of individuals shape their environment and, in turn, are molded by social structures and processes. Unless the transformation of both individual character and environment are addressed



simultaneously, the full potential of humanity's age of maturity cannot be realized (Basic Concepts, 2010, p. 12).

The *Preparation for Social Action* program, while not carried out as part of a school curriculum, is designed in the context of formal education and its participants are generally between the ages of 15 and 25. Youth are trained to become “promoters of community well-being” and develop a series of capabilities and advance in their understanding of concepts that help them address community problems and their causes. The program stresses the development of language so that youth are able to describe their local context with greater clarity, and the texts encourage them to investigate and generate the relevant knowledge needed to address the challenges their communities face. This is done by working with other members of the community to bring change that contributes to the material and spiritual prosperity of their region (FUNDAEC, 2009).

The ongoing dialogue between the student, the tutor, the authors of the text, and as group progresses, with the community and institutions of society, is a distinguishing feature of the program's pedagogy, and the textbooks are a record of that dialogue that are revised from time to time to reflect the evolving nature of the discourse. The textbooks used in the program are not organized around what could be thought of as traditional subjects but according to their contributions to specific “capabilities” of the participants to serve their communities. FUNDAEC distinguishes that “the term capability is used in a very specific way, as an instrument for the integration of knowledge in the development of curricula”, and each text seeks to help the participants develop the “qualities, attitudes, concepts and skills needed to enhance their capacity to work for the progress of their communities” (FUNDAEC, 2009, p. 16).

The material is studied and service designed and carried out in a tutorial approach, carried out in small groups with the assistance of a tutor. The tutor is a trained teacher and almost always from the same social and cultural background and the participants. While the tutor may know more than the student, she is also a learner who seeks to guide the participants in their study and assist them in their service. The tutor operates not by using arbitrary authority but by raising questions, clarifying obscure matters and encouraging reflection on real-life experience. The work of the tutor goes beyond classroom activities to include the practice of what is being learned and the promotion of development projects in the community (FUNDAEC, 2009).

FUNDAEC identifies service as the axis around for the curriculum and the program but does not elaborate on what meaningful service is. It does, however, make two points fundamental to what it means by service. One is consideration of “the spirit in which we carry out an activity determines whether it merits to be called service.” The other distinguishes from others those “acts of service that we undertake, usually with like-minded people, with the explicit purpose of translating our ideals into action in order to effect change” (Basic Concepts, 2010, p. 38).

Each text seeks to enhance the qualities, attitudes, concepts and skills needed to work for the progress of the student’s communities. For example, each capability that the texts are organized around prepares students to engage in particular acts of service to the community such as educating children, promoting the environment and fostering healthy living. Explicit in its methodology for service initiatives is the requirement to actively involve members of the community in its activities and to foster ownership of the activity by the community. Lastly, while students carry out progressively more complex acts of service as they move through the texts and build on their own experience, they are also engaged in a process of reflection, to develop the attitudes “characterized by a posture of learning that does not condemn the choices of others, and the qualities that enable participants to interact and accompany the community with love, kindness, respect, and community” (FUNDAEC, 2009, p. 17). Guarding oneself against feelings of superiority and paternalism is paramount in the field of social action, and engaging in earnest dialogue with members of our community in order to help it progress, requires a conscious refinement of one’s own interactions with others. Freire (1970) spoke of love, humility, faith, trust, hope and critical thinking as necessary if true dialogue is to happen. For example, on love, he writes:

Dialogue cannot exist, however, in the absence of a profound love for the world and for people. The naming of the world, which is an act of creation and re-creation, is not possible if it is not infused with love. Love is at the same time the foundation of dialogue and dialogue itself ... Because love is an act of courage, not of fear, love is commitment to others (p. 89).

Similarly, in the text that helps students work with young children, qualities such as love, faith, kindness, sensitivity to the needs of others, respect, patience, trustworthy, diligence and humility are explored and introduced; these qualities have been proven to be indispensable to effective

service. Far from a moralizing fashion, the texts draw from the reflections of other youth who have studied in their programs to explore their meanings and implications on their service. For example, on love, a student writes:

I think love is essential to service. We must love humanity and care for everyone with whom we associate in the community. We can easily love others, if we learn to see their good qualities. But this is not enough. We also have to help them to better themselves. One way to do this is to encourage them when they do well ... Service should never be something we just do as a duty. It should grow out of a genuine love and concern we have for our neighbours and communities, and our desire to see their progress (To Describe the World, 2009a, p. 2).

In this way, students are engaged in acts of service contributes to some form of change or betterment at the local level, such as organizing classes for the education of children at the neighbourhood level. As students advance in the process of study, action and reflection, their qualities and attitudes will further develop and significantly influence the outcome of their activities. After all, in developing the quality of patience, study can create a consciousness of its implications, but it is in the field of action, where it is tested, strengthened and developed.

The *Preparation for Social Action* program is an innovative approach to education and development. It offers those seeking to better the Ontario model extensive experience with training and mobilizing youth to better their communities through acts of service as well as access to trained tutors through organizations that FUNDAEC collaborates with to offer the program in diverse settings around the world. In this context, individual schools or school boards can partner with organizations to offer the program in flexible settings. For example, the program can be done as a complementary activity between or after school hours. Groups can meet at school or in neighboring community centres so that youth from various schools but living in the same neighborhood could attend during the evenings and weekends. In short, the program's implementation in a North American setting is something that needs to be learned about, and its possibilities are yet to be explored.

## **5.4 Limitations of the Study**

It should be noted that this study has a number of limitations that impact the ability to make wide generalizations from its results as well as limitations in gaining true insight into the nature of service for social change. Because the study is correlational in nature, there should be caution in assuming a causal link between meaningful service and subsequent service. Further research is needed to examine other variables that explain sustained service. For example, an attitude towards the community and social wellbeing is a factor that was not explored in this study, nor was the degree to which students were accompanied and encouraged by others such as family, friends or institutions such as schools, faith groups or clubs.

As stated in Chapter 3, the survey used for this study only measures short-term impact, and the sample consists of volunteers from a population of first year university students from a relatively higher-income segment of the population. In addition, the survey itself is structured in such a way as to measure the individual benefits of service and how it contributes to a student's civic and social development, rather than questions that seek to explore the impact on the communities. There are no questions related to what students are currently doing, but only measures of their future intentions; often intentions do not translate into practice. Further, the notion of service as social change in the context of Ontario's community service program can best be explored with apparatus or case studies that are trying to achieve such as aim. At present, the intentions of the service participants of this study are not explicit.

## **5.5 Directions for Future Research**

Presently, there is consensus among the literature between parents, students, schools and researchers that the program lacks certain elements that could enhance its impact. Thus, any further research on this topic would benefit greatly from asking how these deficiencies in the program can be corrected, rather than what is missing and why. For example, rather than conducting further research that points to lack of support for students or space for reflection, examining how these two recommendations can be actualized or what has been learned to date in attempting to do so, could be highly instructive. In the context of the recommendations put forth in this study, research examining the implications of service aimed at change at the local level could propel the discourse further and, more importantly, beyond the realm of self-serving service, to that of service for others. In doing so, it could be useful to draw from the insights and

learning of individuals and organizations committed to education for development. To this end, partnerships or collaborations between schools and nonprofit organizations like FUNDAEC, where aspects of the *Preparation for Social Action* program or the program in its entirety are implemented at a neighbourhood or school, could further advance the discourse on service in Ontario.

In examining the impact of such endeavors, it would be beneficial if studies were qualitative as well as longitudinal. Although statistical techniques can detect significant patterns or relationships between factors, interviews and focus groups give students the space to reflect on their learning process and allow us to understand possible reasons and motivations for the studied outcomes. As well, longitudinal studies can assess the impact over time.

## 5.6 Conclusion

The Ontario community service program set a precedent in trying to integrate service in the school curriculum on a larger scale, and in doing so, recognized that youth could play a role in community life and learn from the experience. In surveying the literature on community service and service learning, it became clear that service can be directed towards meaningful social change, if students were seen as capable contributors to the community building process and given the opportunity to address community causes and their problems. By affording students with meaningful rather than menial service opportunities, they are more likely to engage in subsequent service initiatives and activities beyond high school. At present, the more engaged students are in community service, the more likely they are to consider their experience to be meaningful. The Ontario community service program created a space for educators, youth and service providers to learn how to better enhance the program for both students and communities; and the research findings have implications for all stakeholders to take greater responsibility in creating meaningful service opportunities for youth. The *Preparation for Social Action* program can further strengthen a commitment to service beyond high school by characterizing all one's endeavors and relationships by a spirit of service, so that service to others is not an isolated event performed on a weekly basis but an orientation towards all endeavors, that is concerned with more than just the self.

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## Appendix A: Survey

### LISPOP 2007 Student Opinion Survey

#### Instructions

Thank you for participating in this student survey project. Please Answer questions as they relate to you. For most answers, check the boxes most applicable to you or fill in the blanks. If you would prefer not to answer a question, check "No Answer" for that question.

**Note:** If you are using Internet Explorer, there may be a bar at the top of this page which is blocking ActiveX controls necessary for this survey. Click on the yellow bar above, and select "allow blocked content".

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(hidden)	(hidden)	(hidden)				

1. Please enter your six digit identification code (found on your email invitation).

#### 1.1.1

2. Thinking back to your high school years, do you recall during those years any volunteer activity you were engaged in - required or otherwise, either in your community or in your school? By volunteer activity, we mean helping others at no pay.

- Yes (Skip to Q. 4) ([Skip to Q. 4](#))  
 No  
 Don't Recall  
 No answer

3. (If "No" or "Don't Recall") Is there any particular reason why you did not

**become involved in volunteer activity?.. Please check any of the reasons listed below that apply to you.**

**(Select all that apply.)**

- Too busy with other activities
- Because I lived in a rural area, and transportation was a problem
- I'm not a very social person
- Nobody asked me to
- I wasn't aware of a need for volunteers in the community or at school
- No particular reason
- No answer

**4. When completing high school, were you required to volunteer or do community service to get your diploma? By volunteer or community service activity, we mean helping others at no pay.**

- Yes
- No (Skip to Q. 31) ([Skip to Q. 31](#))
- Don't Recall (Skip to Q. 31) ([Skip to Q. 31](#))
- No answer

**5. How much of your requirement did you actually manage to complete?**

- All of it
- Most of it
- About half
- Only a small portion
- No answer



**6. How much of the community service that you did in high school was done to satisfy your graduation requirement. Which of the following statements comes closest to your experience.**

- I only did enough community service to satisfy my high school requirement
- I did more than my high school requirement, but the requirement constituted most of my experience in high school.
- I did about as much community service on my own as I did for my requirement.
- I did a lot more community service than was required, so the requirement constituted only a minority of my community service experience in high school
- No answer

**In what volunteer sector or sectors did you complete your requirement? For each of the following volunteer sectors, please indicate if you volunteered there to complete your requirement, and if so, how much you volunteered there. Please choose the appropriate response for each sector.**

	Did not do any required work here	Volunteered Once or Twice	Volunteered Regularly for Part of a Year	Volunteered Regularly for a Year or More	No answer
<b>7. (a) School Sector (e.g., tutoring, school yard clean-up, school fund-raising projects)</b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>8. (b) Health Service Sector (e.g., hospital, retirement home)</b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>9. (c) Other non-profit helping organization (e.g., Humane Society, Foodbank, Service Club projects)</b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>10. (d) Political Sector (e.g., worked for political party or candidate, circulated petition)</b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

<b>11. (e) Religious or cultural Sector (e.g., helped at church, synagogue or mosque, helped organize activities in an ethnic organization)</b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>12. (f) Sports Sector (e.g., coached, officiated or organized in a league or club)</b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>13. (g) Informal Helping (e.g., visited or helped people who were sick, childcare on an unpaid basis, helped new immigrants, helped organize community or neighbourhood events)</b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**14. (h) If the sector you volunteered in was not listed in the table above, please type it in below.**

**15. If you answered the above question, please indicate how much you volunteered there:**

- Did not do any required work here
- Volunteered Once or Twice
- Volunteered Regularly for Part of a Year
- Volunteered Regularly for a Year or More



<b>was met.</b>						
<b>22. (f) I completed most of my required hours in my last year of high school</b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>23. (g) I would volunteer to do this kind of work again if the opportunity presented itself</b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>24. (h) I became friends with new people through my volunteer activity here</b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>25. (i) I didn't really get to do anything meaningful/interesting in my volunteer work here.</b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>26. (j) I felt a part of the organization I volunteered with.</b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>27. (k) I didn't really learn any new skills through my volunteer experience here.</b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>28. (l) I felt that my volunteer work here helped me to make a difference.</b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>29. (m) My volunteer experience here helped me to clarify my career ambitions.</b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>30. (n) I had a lot of fun volunteering here</b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



**31. During high school, how involved were you in school activities (school clubs, student government etc.)?**

- Heavily
- Moderately
- Not very much
- No answer

**32. Have your parents been involved in volunteer activities over the past five years - that is, working to help others without pay?**

- Yes
- No (Skip to Q. 42) ([Skip to Q. 42](#))
- Don' Know (Skip to Q. 42) ([Skip to Q. 42](#))
- No answer

**If so, what kinds of activities were these? Please check as many activities as apply for each of your parents. If your parents were not involved in that kind of activity, check "Neither"**

	Mother	Father	Both	Neither	No answer
<b>33. (a) School (e.g, Parent Committee, monitoring, classroom assisting, fund-raising)</b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>34. (b) Health Service Sector (e.g., hospital, retirement home)</b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>35. (c) Other non-profit helping organization (e.g., Humane Society, Foodbank, Service Club projects)</b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>36. (d) Political Sector (e.g., worked for political party or candidate, circulated petition)</b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>37. (e) Religious or cultural Sector (e.g., helped at church, synagogue or mosque, organized activities in an ethnic organization)</b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>38. (f) Sports Sector (e.g., coached, officiated or organized in a league or club)</b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>39. (g) Informal Helping (e.g., visited or helped people who were sick, childcare on an unpaid basis, helped new immigrants, helped organize community or</b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



**48. Sometimes politics and government seem so complicated that a person like me can't really understand what's going on.**



**49. In general, how closely would you say you follow Canadian politics?**

- Very closely
- Fairly closely
- Not very closely
- Not at all
- No answer

**50. In general, how closely would you say you follow international politics?**

- Very closely
- Fairly closely
- Not very closely
- Not at all
- No answer

**51. When you get together with your friends, how frequently do you discuss political matters?**

- Frequently
- Occasionally
- Never





<b>55. This country would have fewer problems if there was more emphasis on traditional family ties.</b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>56. Same sex couples should be allowed to marry.</b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>57. People who don't get ahead should blame themselves, not the system.</b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>58. In our society, you should be responsible for your own welfare, and others should be responsible for theirs.</b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**59. Generally speaking, would you say that most people can be trusted or that you need to be very careful in dealing with people? In which box on the following scale would you place yourself?**

- 1 Most People can be trusted
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5 Need to be very careful
- No answer

**60. Do you think most people would try to take advantage of you if they got a chance, or would they try to be fair?**

- 1 Would take advantage
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5 Would try to be fair



long.						
67. The efforts of the feminist movement have made us a better society.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
68. A society that has a variety of ethnic and cultural groups is more able to tackle new problems as they occur.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

For each of the following statements, please indicate how much you agree or disagree by clicking on the appropriate box.

	1 Strongly Agree	2	3	4	5 Strongly Disagree	No answer
69. I plan to do some volunteering work.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
70. I plan to become involved in my community.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
71. In the future, I plan to participate in a community service organization.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
72. I plan to help others who are in difficulty.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
73. I am committed to making a positive difference.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
74. I plan to become involved in programs to help clean up the environment.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Finally, we would like to know a little about your background.

75. What is your religious affiliation?

- Protestant
- Catholic
- Jewish
- Muslim
- Hindu

- Sikh
- Chinese Religion
- Other
- None (skip to Q. 13) ([Skip to Q. 77](#))
- No answer

**76. How often do you attend religious services?**

- Never
- At most a few times a year
- Once a month
- A few times a month
- Once a week or more
- No answer

**77. Was formal religion stressed at home during your youth and adolescence?**

- A great deal
- Somewhat
- Not very much
- Not at all
- No answer

**78. What is your sex?**

- Male
- Female

No answer

**79. What is your year of birth?**



**80. What month were you born in?**



**81. To better understand the rural/urban composition of post-secondary students, what are the first three digits of your family home postal code (e.g., N2L)?**

**82. In what year did you graduate from high school?**



**83. What category of high school did you graduate from?**

- Public
- Separate (Catholic)
- Private
- Other
- No answer

**84. If you answered "other", please indicate the category of high school you graduated from:**

**85. Was the high school you graduated from in Ontario?**

- Yes
- No
- No answer

**86. If you answered "no" to the above question, please indicate the province/state where you graduated high school from:**

**87. During your high school years, did you participate in a high school co-op program?**

- Yes
- No
- No answer

**88. During your high school years, did you complete a civics course - a course dealing with government and politics?**

- Yes
- No
- No answer

**89. During your high school years, did you complete a course which included a community service component - that is, a course which required you to volunteer in the community to enhance the class-room experience?**

- Yes
- No
- No answer

**What is your major field of study at University? Please select from one of the four following drop-down menus which corresponds to your college/university:**

**90. For Conestoga College Students:**



**91. For University of Guelph Students:**



**92. For University of Waterloo Students:**



**93. For Wilfrid Laurier University Students:**



**94. What is your current year of study?**

- 1st year

- 2nd year
- 3rd year
- 4th year
- 5th year
- Other
- No answer

**95. If you answered "other" to the above question, please indicate your year of study:**

**96. Were you born in Canada?**

- Yes
- No
- No answer

**97. What is the population of the community in which you have lived most of your life?**

- Under 10,000
- 10,000 - 50,000
- 50,001 - 100,000
- 100,001 - 250,000
- 250,001- 500,000
- Over 500,000



No answer

**98. To the best of your knowledge, what was your total family income in 2005?**

- Less than \$40,000
- \$40,000 to \$59,999
- \$60,000 to \$79,999
- \$80,000 to \$99,999
- \$100,000 to \$150,000
- More than \$150,000
- Don't know
- No answer

**Important:** Before hitting submit, visit this [link](#) to ensure that you have the latest version of Macromedia Flash Player installed on your computer (clicking on the link will open a new window). If you do not have Flash Player installed on your computer, problems may occur when attempting to retrieve your codes.

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