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# Study Abroad Participants' Reflections on Relationship Development: The Role of Context, Curriculum, and Community Engagement

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## Abstract

University students often share that studying abroad was a life-changing experience. We explored how one short-term, faculty-led study abroad, Tanzania Study Abroad Program (TSAP), contributed to the participants' lives after their experience. Through a web-based survey, we collected responses from 82 former TSAP participants. We used corpus and thematic analysis to determine prominent themes of participants' memories and perceptions of how TSAP impacted their lives. Respondents reflected on the people they interacted with throughout their study abroad experiences, both with those abroad and their peers. Furthermore, the program leaders' intentional actions in the planning of the context, curriculum, and community engagement informed participants' opportunities to develop relationships that were non-transactional in nature. Participants also reported that their cross-cultural relationships with Tanzanians positively influenced their subsequent interactions with people from diverse communities. Prioritizing relationships with host community members and peers on study abroad shows promise for supporting participants' intercultural development.

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**Introduction**

Study abroad programs have long been promoted as opportunities for students to experience another culture, develop as global citizens, and “make a difference” in the world. While extant research has supported these outcomes (e.g., Dolby, 2008; Marx & Pray, 2011; Palmer & Menard-Warwick, 2012), a more nuanced understanding of the impact of study abroad programs has emerged. Studies have suggested that various aspects of these programs, including program duration (Coker et al., 2018), context (Chhikara et al., 2021), and activities (Wood et al., 2011) are important factors that impact the outcomes and that unintended consequences can also occur. For example, without intentional action and programming that celebrates and works to develop understandings of host communities, U.S. students may exhibit American exceptionalism (Breen, 2012). Service-learning can also be a self-promoting experience if the projects are not sustainable or beneficial to the community; the input and needs of the community often come last (Eby, 1998). In light of these challenges, purposeful community engagement through international service-learning with a goal of intercultural learning has shown promise for supporting students’ nuanced understandings of Globally Southern contexts (Mogford & Lyons, 2019). An understanding of both intended and unintended consequences is important as the number of university students participating in study abroad programs continues to grow, increasing by nearly 38% since the 2006–2007 academic year (National Center for Education Statistics [NCES], 2019). Within this growth, 4,850 more students—an increase of approximately 50%—studied abroad in Sub-Saharan Africa in the 2016–2017 academic year than in 2006–2007.

In this article, we report findings from a survey of participants of one university-level study abroad program, referred to in this article as the Tanzania Study Abroad Program (TSAP), over a nine-year period. We sought to explore the connections between U.S. undergraduate students’ intercultural learning and their experiences abroad in the Global South. Anecdotal evidence suggests both that the program was impacted by students’ pre-program experiences and that it impacted their post-program activities. Thus, we investigated these

connections and documented participants' journeys, including how TSAP fits within their other life experiences.

## Review of Relevant Literature

Studying abroad has provided numerous benefits to undergraduate students. After studying abroad, students have demonstrated increased critical awareness (Palmer & Menard-Warwick, 2012), intercultural competencies (Nguyen, 2017), and empathy for others (Marx & Pray, 2011). These experiences have often provided undergraduate students with opportunities to be “outsiders” in partner communities to reflect on their own privilege and the relationships between the United States and host countries (Trilokekar & Kukar, 2011). We focused our review of the relevant literature on the defining characteristics of TSAP: (a) short-term, faculty-led undergraduate study abroad programs; (b) Global North participants on study abroad in Globally Southern contexts; (c) opportunities for intercultural learning; and (d) community engagement and service-learning experiences.

### Short-Term, Faculty-Led Programs

Open Doors (2020) categorized study abroad programs as short-term (eight weeks or fewer), mid-length (one academic quarter or semester), or long-term (one academic or calendar year). In this article, we focus primarily on short-term study abroad programs—those that are less than eight weeks in length or take place over the summer.

Short-term study abroad programs are often associated with positive educational experiences and strong relationships among peers, faculty, and staff. These relationships are often reported to be even stronger for semester-long study abroad experiences (Coker et al., 2018). Many short-term, faculty-led study abroad programs have found that students develop critical global competencies (e.g., Nguyen, 2017; Schenker, 2019) and characteristics of global citizenship (e.g., Dolby, 2008). Development of global citizenship has had a direct relationship to international service-learning (Coryell et al., 2016; Mogford & Lyons, 2019). Malewski and Phillion (2009) reported that during a short-term, faculty-led study abroad in Honduras for preservice teachers, study abroad participants challenged and altered their views of social class, gender, and race through immersion in a community that differed greatly from their own. Students further expanded their role as educators, recognizing the necessity of

being involved in their students' communities. Mule et al. (2018) called for more intentional programming toward global citizenship, and Tarrant et al. (2014) focused on the location and academic programming of the study abroad program. Short-term study abroad program leaders' attention to the contextual, curricular, and community engagement components of the program enhances study abroad participants' experiences (Chhikara et al., 2021).

Along with the numerous benefits of short-term, faculty-led study abroad programs, there are also potential pitfalls. For example, some study abroad participants hold a deficit perspective of their host community members as needing the study abroad participants' assistance (Cook, 2008; Palacios, 2010), and increased faculty involvement in the students' experiences may limit study abroad participants' opportunities for cultural immersion (Kinger, 2010; Ogden, 2007). In related work, Sharpe (2015) illustrated the potential for colonialist tendencies to be asserted during short-term study abroad programs. Thus, program leaders have a responsibility to confront deficit views of host communities and prioritize multicultural learning opportunities throughout their short-term experiences.

### Globally Southern Context

The instructors' choice of study abroad destination informs and contributes to the learning objectives and outcomes for the participants (Chhikara et al., 2021). Regions of the world that capture underrepresented minorities' ethnic and historical backgrounds (i.e., non-European) are less popular among study abroad destinations for U.S. students (Institute of International Education [IIE], 2019). The trend (i.e., most participating students attending a program that takes place in a European country) was stagnant, with minimal changes over the reporting period (2013-2018). Notably, only 4% of participating U.S. students attended programs in African countries; this rate was also consistent across the timespan. Similarly, Horn and Fry (2013) found that most countries with "medium" and "low" levels of development hosted less than 1% of U.S. study abroad students. Given that 55% of undergraduate students enrolled in degree-granting postsecondary institutions were White in 2017 (NCES, 2019) and 70% of study abroad participants in the same year were White (IIE, 2019), programs that aim to provide students with multicultural experiences should consider contexts that offer experiences with people from cultures different from their own.

At the same time, however, Breen (2012) problematized American study abroad programs that send privileged and affluent “First-World” students to culturally different contexts. While more opportunities exist than ever before for temporary relocation to the Global South to unmask and challenge assumptions held by Americans, there is also a risk of reinforcing and promoting American exceptionalism through educational consumption. Breen referred to this as academic tourism, or “travel that occasions connections with academic programmes whose intended outcomes are the reproduction of existing perspectives on the state of things, against claims for the creation of critical thinking” (p. 84). To combat this, Ramírez (2013) called for program leaders to explicitly focus on preparing responsible and respectful study abroad students through mindful messaging and promotion of their programs, as well as through intentional engagement in conversations about the power relations between the United States and their Globally Southern study abroad destinations.

Prazeres (2017) found that traveling to the Global South as part of a short-term study abroad provided undergraduate students with opportunities to challenge and expand their comfort zones as part of their journey to discover their sense of self. In this program, participants sought out experiences drastically different from their own and engaged in cultural risks and discomfort, seemingly enduring stereotypes of living situations in many Globally Southern destinations. Engagement in mundane, albeit seemingly exotic, everyday practices while abroad contributed to participants’ feelings of in- and out-of-place discomfort, and ultimately a sense of belonging in a novel context. These experiences abroad in the Global South contributed to participants’ self-discovery and feelings of accomplishment.

Investigating the impact of a study abroad program in Honduras, Rahatzad et al. (2013) and Phillion et al. (2008) found that preservice teachers’ participation in the short-term study abroad program reinforced feelings of White privilege. Some short-term study abroad program leaders from the Global North have worked to interrogate and support preservice teachers’ understandings of social justice through studying abroad in the Global South and using explicit social justice instruction (e.g., Newton et al., 2020; Dockrill et al., 2016). Consequently, studying abroad in the Global South has provided opportunities for deconstructing cross-cultural inequities and challenging

preservice teachers' dominant views to establish deeper understandings of diverse ways of knowing and being.

## Community Engagement

Head (2007) summarized community engagement as collaboration and partnership with members of a given community and framed six challenges for people who seek to participate in community engagement. These included learning how to:

- (1) develop and refine common directions and objectives;
- (2) build relationships and trust over time;
- (3) make mutual adjustments and give up some demands for control;
- (4) develop a facilitative and enabling style of shared leadership rather than a directive form of leadership;
- (5) deal with reform fatigue and the need for renewal of commitment; and
- (6) deal with the 'two hats' problem of role conflict; that is, members learning to reconcile their role within the shared partnership and their different role inside their 'home' organization. (pp. 451-452)

In recognition of Head's second challenge, students who participate in short-term and semester-long study abroad programs can be provided with opportunities to develop lasting relationships with community members. Notably, participating in study abroad programs, especially those that incorporated service-learning opportunities, has been shown to support students to develop more robust relationships with community members than when completing studies on campus in their home countries (Love et al., 2022). For instance, after studying abroad for a semester in Denmark, U.S. participants reported building strong relationships with host community members, and they were given opportunities to challenge their own beliefs about education systems at home and abroad (Vandermaas-Peeler et al., 2018). They reflected on their living situations (i.e., home placements) as being one of the most influential aspects of the program. U.S. undergraduate students in Wilkinson's (1998) study of students' immersion in France also reflected on their relationships with host families. These relationships proved to be the most consistent and frequent points of contact with French nationals and played a role in how the participants viewed the larger community. While some students reported feeling as though they were welcomed as members of the family, others shared that they were more isolated when their host families seemed detached from getting to know the students on study abroad. These host interactions were central to students' experiences abroad, specifically when developing relationships with community members, since there were few opportunities to get to know other

students from France due to their classes being taught at an international school with no French students.

In a study of university-sponsored international trips and participants' impacts on host communities, Schroeder et al. (2009) found that considerable planning and orchestration was necessary to ensure that practices were put in place to reduce the risk of harming host communities. While relationships between travelers and hosts are encouraged, program leaders with cultural knowledge of the partner communities and U.S. relationships with the host nations are essential. Participants must be adequately prepared and debriefed about interactions with community members, including explicit and implicit messages sent through cross-cultural communications. Finally, Schroeder et al. recommended that students seek out study abroad programs that provide extensive cultural education about the host country prior to departure. Thus, community relationships must be built for the long term to develop mutual trust between partner communities.

### International Service-Learning

One way that study abroad program leaders and participants have partnered with local communities is through international service-learning; that is, a combination of academic instruction and international community-based service (Crabtree, 2008). Often seen as an aspect of experiential learning (Dewey, 1986), international service-learning pairs university students with international host communities to engage in acts of service. Wessel (2007) summarized the goal of service-learning as connecting theory to practice through active learning in addition to, or in place of, traditional classroom experiences. In focus group interviews, Wood et al. (2011) found that study abroad programs with international service-learning components influenced local communities through economic means (e.g., money spent at businesses, gifts, grants). While these communities may have benefitted from the immediacy of the resources and financial assistance, there were questions as to whether members of the host community had developed a dependence on the aid. Similarly, Wood et al. wondered if the larger community (i.e., host country government) had a net loss due to the money spent to develop relationships with the sponsoring country. Wood et al. continued to problematize the notion of international service-learning; as one participant shared: "groups of students... [go in] with the mindset that we have all the answers,...we know what...it takes to help this community, to help this country" (p. 7). The authors also raised concerns over how wealth disparities or the need for heightened security might negatively impact the host country community members' perceptions of their

own cultures and lived experiences. This highlights the need for study abroad leaders to establish strong and sustainable relationships with host community members to establish reciprocity between the two groups. Program leaders referenced how students were positively representing their own countries while gaining an understanding of other cultures and building relationships with host community members.

In a meta-synthesis of research on service-learning, Conway et al. (2009) explored outcomes of four types (i.e., academic, personal, social, and citizenship) for K-12, higher education, and adult learners. Higher education students who participated in service-learning had positive changes in all four outcomes. Students who engaged in structured reflections alongside service-learning generally had larger effects on the four reported outcomes. These findings were supported by university participants in two separate international voluntary service organization programs that ranged in duration from four weeks to eleven months (Lough et al., 2009). Participants reported that international service-learning increased their cross-cultural understandings and had a major impact on their lives and career paths. Furthermore, participants shared that their contributions (e.g., financial, time, and skills) to the community had a positive impact. Many study abroad participants benefit from opportunities to engage in service-learning opportunities in collaboration with host community members throughout their international experience.

## Intercultural Learning

Bennett summarized intercultural learning as “acquiring increased awareness of subjective cultural context (world view), including one’s own, and developing greater ability to interact sensitively and competently across cultural contexts as both an immediate and long-term effect of exchange” (Bennett, 2009, p. S2). Through an analysis of study abroad participants’ pre- and post-test scores on the Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI), Anderson et al. (2016) found that “frequent and spontaneous facilitation [of intercultural learning] emerged as the most important variable to guide students’ intercultural learning” (p. 12, emphasis in original). Furthermore, participants who went on study abroad in “high challenge destinations” (p. 13) had the greatest gains on pre- and post-IDI scores when paired with frequent and purposeful instructor facilitation of the course and cultural content. It is important to situate these gains of students from the Global North in the context of the call from Wood et al. (2011) for intentional, symbiotic, and long-lasting relationships with partner communities. While on short-term, faculty-led study abroad programs, participants benefited from debriefing about challenges with



their peers. Anderson et al. (2016) offered additional direction, suggesting that peer mentoring should be monitored by program leaders to ensure students are not misguided.

Short-term, faculty-led study abroad programs have also been shown to be effective in supporting participants' cultural and lingual understanding and awareness. Gaia (2015), in a survey study of 136 respondents in 10 programs representing six continents, found that after studying abroad, participants demonstrated an increased willingness to interact with people outside of their direct communities. These experiences "may increase cultural awareness and engagement and the likelihood that participants will realize they are part of something beyond the local context, as well as encouraging students to examine their own cultural identity" (p. 28). Participation in a short-term study abroad program can provide opportunities for undergraduate students to develop intercultural learning and reflect on their role in the global community.

In the next section, aspects of the TSAP are described, including attention to context, curriculum, and community engagement. These program components are often complex and overlap with one another. Many names of people and places are pseudonyms to provide anonymity.

## Program Description

The TSAP is a four-week study abroad program in which undergraduate students live and work in rural Tanzania. The program leader (i.e., Newton), a teacher educator on the faculty at a large research university in the Midwestern region of the United States (hereafter, Middle State University), received a grant to develop a program in Tanzania. Newton prioritized Tanzania as a study abroad location after teaching there for a year upon completion of her Peace Corps service. Newton's goals as the program leader were to provide a "mini-Peace Corps" experience in which participants were immersed in a culture quite different from their own and to promote Peace Corps service as a viable option upon graduation. Interestingly, Newton's vision of TSAP as a mini-Peace Corps experience has come to fruition as, at the time of publication, seven program participants had served, or were currently serving in, the Peace Corps (including four in Africa), and three more were in the application process. Besides serving in the Peace Corps, seven additional TSAP alumni taught abroad after their experiences in Tanzania.

In the beginning, Newton primarily recruited mathematics education students; however, the program was quickly expanded to include students in

other teacher education programs and even students outside of the College of Education. For the first 2 years of the program, the participants lived in Arusha, Tanzania and worked in nearby local English-medium, primary, and secondary schools. Beginning in Year 3, the program was based in a village near Tanga, Tanzania. In the new location, the participants lived at the Tanzania Coastal Lodge (TCL), an eco-friendly resort on a remote stretch of coast on the Indian Ocean, and they worked in rural schools. In Year 3, students worked in two schools, but that number has since grown to five schools (three primary and two secondary). Lessons in the primary schools were taught in Swahili, and the program participants primarily taught English as a subject, while lessons in the secondary schools were taught in English, and those participants taught a range of subjects (e.g., biology, civics, English, mathematics, physics). Students at each school had the opportunity to develop their Swahili through conversations with teachers, which supported Tanzanian teachers' further improvement of their English skills. About half of the students rode bikes to school, and the other half traveled by boat and walked to school on the other side of the bay.

As Chhikara et al. (2021) described, program leaders' intentionality about context, curriculum, and community engagement was important for ensuring that program participants have opportunities to explore relationships between these dimensions and the program goals. Here, we highlight these three dimensions.

## Context

The program leader selected Tanzania as the site of the study abroad program for several reasons. First, Tanzania offered a culture quite different from that of most U.S. university undergraduate students; therefore, most relationships developed in that context would be considered cross-cultural. The Tanzanian villages where the participants lived were small, and—much like small towns in the United States—most residents knew one another, so developing a network of relationships was easier than in a larger city. In addition, most TSAP participants were White and Christian and grew up in communities with these demographics, while the population of the rural Tanzanian villages in which the program was located were majority Black and Muslim. Added to this contrast were language differences; that is, most Tanzanians are multilingual with some level of language proficiency in a village tongue, Swahili (the national language), and English, while most U.S. undergraduate students are English-speaking monolinguals (Palmer, 2013). If we conceive of race, religion, and language as cultural components, the intercultural opportunities are enhanced for students participating in TSAP.

The program leader was also intentional about the participants spending a significant amount of time in schools since most of them were prospective teachers. Study abroad participants spent approximately eight hours each day for three weeks working in local primary and secondary schools, with three to five participants at each school. By placing students in schools for 120 hours, this schedule gave them time to interact with teachers and students inside the classroom, before and after school, and during breaks. They taught a range of subjects, often co-teaching with their peers or Tanzanian teachers for about half of the day. The rest of their time was spent working with teachers, grading students' work, helping individual students, and playing with students. The study abroad leader intentionally did not go to the schools except for the first and last day; this was in an effort not to be available to negotiate issues (e.g., scheduling, teaching). Without the leader present, the participants collaborated with one another, the Tanzanian teachers, and the students to make and implement a plan for their unique experiences. Given the full days immersed in Tanzanian culture in the schools, the program leader did not seek out host families; instead, the leader prioritized opportunities for participants to debrief and develop community among themselves without imposing additional hardships on community members.

The final week of the program was more relaxing, including a four-day wildlife safari, during which participants camped in the Serengeti for two nights and stayed at a lodge on the rim of the Ngorongoro Crater for one night. During the last 2 days of the program, participants had opportunities to shop at the local markets for keepsakes, attend a class to try their hand at Tanzania's famous Tingatinga painting style, and play with the children at the Ukarimu Orphanage.

In addition to the official TSAP program, East Africa offered opportunities for additional excursions and program extensions. For example, some participants traveled to a conservation project in Kenya for five days, where they participated in environmental education experiences in local schools and villages, took Kenyan students on safari, organized school sports days, and engaged in tree-planting initiatives. Groups of participants also stayed in Tanzania after the program for a seven-day climb to the top of Mt. Kilimanjaro—an experience that enhanced their connections to Tanzania, their Tanzanian guides, and one another.

## Curriculum

The program leader designed TSAP experiences to extend beyond the four-week period of the trip, beginning with a one-credit, pre-program seminar

taken the semester before travel, and continuing after the experience with the TSAP learning community which brings together former TSAP participants for social and service opportunities. Table (1) summarizes the activities of TSAP participants in each of these phases.

Pre-TSAP Experiences	TSAP Experiences	Post-TSAP Experiences
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Begin to learn Swahili from program leader</li> <li>• Research and present information about Tanzanian history and culture</li> <li>• Plan service-learning projects with Tanzanian counterparts</li> <li>• Interrogate their stereotypes and conceptions of Africa and its peoples</li> </ul> <p>Begin TSAP coursework (e.g., independent study research, lesson planning)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue Swahili learning in courses (taught by participants) and in situ</li> <li>• Work in local rural schools for approximately 120 hours</li> <li>• Participate in courses (e.g., African Literature, International Education in Tanzania)</li> <li>• Implement service-learning projects with Tanzanian counterparts</li> <li>• Engage in community activities (e.g., soccer game, village camping)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aid in recruitment of future participants by sharing information and stories in classes and meetings</li> <li>• Attend social gathering to share experiences with one another and new participants</li> <li>• Collaborate with new participants to write service-learning grant proposals</li> <li>• Plan annual RunWild 5K to raise funds for service-learning projects</li> <li>• Participate in ad hoc fundraising efforts for specific projects</li> </ul>

TABLE (1): ACTIVITIES BEFORE, DURING, AND AFTER TSAP

We further describe these activities and experiences in the following sections.

### Pre-Program Seminar

Preparation for TSAP began in the pre-program seminar, which originated as one meeting each month for four months prior to the trip and has evolved into a semester-long required course for program participants. During the seminar, TSAP participants began learning basic Swahili, including greetings and vocabulary related to schools, family, food, and everyday conversations. Each week, they read articles related to Tanzania's history, culture, and education system; they also read several chapters of *Mistaking Africa* (Keim, 2014), which addressed common myths and preconceptions held by many Americans and promoted in popular media. With partners, participants presented information about various aspects of Tanzania (i.e., food, culture, history, religion, politics, geography, wildlife, tribes, community, and education) to their classmates. Additionally, participants worked in teams and in collaboration with Tanzanians to write service-learning grants (more about

this in the Community Engagement section). This preparation served as a foundation for communicating with and learning from Tanzanians.

### Coursework

TSAP participants earned 6–9 credits during the month-long experience. While Newton worked to develop plans of study that fit individual needs through collaborations with other professors to cofacilitate independent studies (e.g., “Interactions Between Sickle Cell Anemia and Malaria: Focus on East Africa,” “Teaching Mathematics to Multilingual Students,” and “TSAP Film and Video Production”), most students enrolled in International Comparative Education, African Literature, and Global Studies Seminar. Throughout each of these courses, students reflected individually and collectively on the connections between their coursework and experiences in Tanzania and the United States.

### International Education in Tanzania

Nearly all students selected the international comparative education course because they were majoring or interested in education. Course readings, reflections, and discussions focused on access and equity in education, addressing issues related to gender (e.g., possible barriers for girls), language (e.g., decisions about language of instruction), and school funding (e.g., rural vs. urban resources). TSAP participants were encouraged to critically investigate these issues in Tanzania, especially through discussions with Tanzanian teachers, as well as to consider parallel issues of social justice in the U.S. educational system.

### African Literature

Approximately half of TSAP participants enrolled in African Literature and explored African histories, cultures, and languages through a series of readings, including novels such as *Facing the Lion* (Lekuton & Viola, 2009), short stories, book excerpts, and Tanzanian poetry. Participants then drew upon their personal experiences in Tanzania to extend their learning through a series of activities. For example, in the “Growing Up” activity, they worked in groups to interview individuals from three generations in both the United States and Tanzania, asking questions related to topics such as family, food, school, and entertainment to investigate cross-cultural similarities and differences. As a culminating assignment, participants wrote their own poems about their experiences in Tanzania and shared them with their classmates.

### Global Studies Seminar

For many participants, the Global Studies Seminar fulfilled a requirement to earn a Global Studies minor. While in Tanzania, they met twice each week to discuss readings that addressed intercultural learning, global citizenship, international education, and the Global North-South divide. Students reflected on how these issues were portrayed in their experiences in Tanzania and the United States and on their individual and collective agency to impact change locally and globally.

### Community Engagement

Newton identified community development as a critical component of TSAP from the beginning, including nurturing participants' engagement in a cross-cultural community with Tanzanians and the TSAP participant community.

### Tanzanian Community

TSAP participants had many opportunities to engage with Tanzanians, both before departure to the program and during the program. Before departure, participants engaged in a service-learning project that required communication with Tanzanian community partners. While staying at TCL, program participants were encouraged to interact with staff—most of whom lived in nearby Bandari Village—through organized activities (e.g., photo scavenger hunts, village camping, and staff party), and informal opportunities such as school transportation (i.e., biking, boating, walking, and riding in trucks), sport activities (e.g., playing soccer, kayaking, snorkeling), and for practicing Swahili and curating vocabulary and phrases to teach their classmates.

Service-learning became an increasingly important aspect of the program over the years. As noted in the previous section, Newton intentionally created opportunities for participants to engage with Tanzanian community members before departure to Tanzania. In the first six years of the program, students wrote and were awarded one or two service-learning project grants each year; however, four and eight grants were awarded in Years 8 and 9, respectively. After observing the potential for developing relationships with Tanzanians, Newton made it a requirement for all TSAP participants to engage in a service-learning project.

Newton worked closely with the students to plan and implement their projects, emphasizing (a) the importance of input from and collaboration with Tanzanians throughout the process, (b) cultural and contextual relevance, and (c) the sustainability and long-term impacts of the projects. For example, nearly

every year, the students purchased rainwater tanks—likely the most important service project—as the available ground water in Bandari Village is saline and unhealthy for drinking. The largest project to date is the ongoing “Books for Bandari” initiative, which was organized by Students for Africa (SfA), a student organization started by TSAP participants. The SfA members collected 10,000 books, shipped the books to Tanzania, and are in the process of funding the building of a library to house the books. These projects supported community development between TSAP participants and Tanzanians as well as among the participants. Over nine years, program participants applied for and were awarded more than \$20,000 in service-learning grants; more than 20 participants wrote proposals, and most program participants have engaged in the service-learning associated with these grants.

### TSAP Learning Community

The TSAP Learning Community is both an official entity (i.e., an established university organization in which students engage in academic and social activities) and an informal collaboration among past TSAP participants and those who either were currently participating or considering participation. These interactions took many forms, including (a) past participants’ active role in program recruitment (e.g., distributing flyers in classes, attending informational sessions to tell stories, working at tables to answer questions for interested students); (b) service-learning projects as described earlier, involving both present and past participants, who had knowledge of, and established relationships in, the orphanages, schools, and villages; (c) an annual 5K run planned and implemented by the TSAP learning community to raise additional funds for service projects; and (d) monthly TSAP community dinners where 20-30 past and future participants ate together, asked questions, and told stories. These collaborations were intentionally designed by the program leader as ways to develop support for the program while at the same time continuing learning opportunities for participants. To build community across all participants, the leader purposefully discouraged cliques and isolation by shuffling individuals as much as possible. For example, participants went to school with different people than they shared a room with, participants were randomly placed for long bus rides and safari, and collaborative partners and groups for academic and social activities were purposefully mixed.

As was demonstrated in this section, the program was complex and multifaceted, and in some ways unique for each participant as they attended a particular school, worked on a selected service project, and took an individualized set of courses. Many aspects of the program were common (e.g.,

20 full days working in schools, accommodations at TCL, and learning Swahili). The program leader had ideas about what she hoped the students would learn from the program while, at the same time, she acknowledged that learning is constructed in different ways by each participant. Provided the unique and shared experiences, we were motivated to explore the following question: *What are participants' memories and perceived impacts of the Tanzania Study Abroad Program?*

## Methods

After completion of the program, most of the 146 former TSAP participants were living and working in many locations across the United States, and several were living abroad. In order to explore the program experiences and their influence on participants' lives, we developed and distributed a web-based survey.

### Survey and Respondents

The survey included 30 questions of several types: (a) multiple choice/select (e.g., Which of the following impacted your decision to participate in TSAP?); (b) Likert (e.g., To what extent do you agree or disagree with this statement: Participating in TSAP increased my empathy for people with different backgrounds than my own.); and (c) open-ended (e.g., In what ways did the local Tanzanian communities have an impact on you?). The complete survey is included in the Appendix. After the survey was initially distributed, we sent two additional e-mail reminders 2 weeks apart to maximize our response rate; 82 (56%) of the participants responded to at least one question, and 46 respondents (32%) completed the entire survey. This response rate is similar to the 34% average response rate for web surveys reported by Shih and Fan (2008) in a meta-analysis of survey modes. Of the 82 responses, the majority identified as female (65, 79%) and White (74, 90%). A few of the respondents identified with historically marginalized racial and ethnic groups, including Asian (3, 4%), Latinx (2, 2%), African American (1, 1%), or did not self-report (2, 2%). The respondents' majors included elementary education (29, 35%), mathematics education (18, 22%), other education majors (19, 23%), and non-education majors (16, 20%). Eighty-two percent of the respondents participated in the program as sophomores or juniors. The survey respondents were representative of the overall TSAP participant population in terms of gender, race, major, and year in university. The respondents represented participants from each year of the program: Year 1[8 respondents], Year 2[6], Year 3[6], Year 4[15], Year 5[7], Year 6[3], Year 7[13], Year 8[10], Year 9[17]; three individuals



participated in TSAP for two years. It was important to have representation across the years as the program evolved over time in several ways (e.g., change in location, requirement for engaging in service-learning).

In an overview of our survey findings (i.e., Chhikara et al., 2021), we reported how TSAP fit into participants' life journeys by synthesizing responses related to what led them to select the program, their experiences during the program, and how the program subsequently impacted their lives. For this article, we explored the answers to five open-ended questions in which participants were asked to reflect on their TSAP experiences. In Table (2), we present the five questions along with the number of responses for each and the average number of words per response.

Question	Number of Responses	Average Number of Words Per Response
What is most memorable from your time in Tanzania?	63	39
In what ways did TSAP participants have an impact on the local Tanzanian communities (e.g., orphanages, Bandari village, schools, TCL, Arusha)?	59	35
In what ways did the local Tanzanian communities have an impact on you?	55	61
What and/or who from TSAP had the greatest impact on you?	56	35
In what ways has your participation in TSAP impacted your life?	46	35

**TABLE (2):** SURVEY QUESTIONS AND RESPONSE DATA

Forty-six respondents answered all five questions under study. The participants were significantly more verbose when asked about the Tanzanian communities' impact on them than the other questions (e.g., their impact on the Tanzanian communities), using at least 150% more words in the average response length than the other questions. We were interested in which themes would emerge if we analyzed participant responses to these questions, in which we asked participants to reflect on their memories of the program and how they both impacted community members and were impacted by their experiences, as one whole data set. As such, we treated all respondents as one collective case to identify themes across all responses rather than to make comparisons between participants' experiences.

## Data Analysis

Two researchers individually analyzed each open-ended question to identify response themes using thematic analysis, which Braun and Clarke (2012) described as “a method for identifying, analyzing and reporting patterns (themes) within data” (p. 79). The six phases of thematic analysis were followed: gaining familiarity with the data, generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and producing the report (Nowell et al., 2017). Next, themes were compared and coding further refined until consensus was reached. As we developed and revised themes, we copied the responses to all five open-ended questions into a document. We then used a corpus analysis tool to find the most frequently used words and phrases in the text; the tool ignored all common function words (i.e., stop words). Other than these common words, the two most frequently used words in the corpus were “people” and “students,” appearing 103 and 98 times, respectively. Given the human aspect of these two words, we decided to further investigate the relationships developed during the program and the impact that relationships had on study abroad participants’ experiences. The findings from the corpus analysis were well supported by our thematic analysis of the open-ended questions. For these five questions, 21 total themes were identified: 4, 4, 3, 6, and 4, respectively. For a topic to be identified as a theme, at least 10% of those responding to the question needed to reference it. The questions and themes are outlined in Table (3).

Question	Themes	Frequency (%)
What is most memorable from your time in Tanzania? ( <i>n</i> = 63)	<i>Teaching/Students/Teachers</i>	39 (62%)
	<i>People/Relationships</i>	25 (40%)
	Safari	14 (22%)
	<i>Cultural Exchange</i>	10 (16%)
In what ways did TSAP participants have an impact on the local Tanzanian communities (e.g., orphanages, Bandari village, schools, TCL, Arusha)? ( <i>n</i> = 59)	<i>Service-Learning</i>	51 (86%)
	Physical/Monetary Resources	25 (42%)
	<i>Relationships</i>	12 (20%)
	<i>Cultural Exchange</i>	9 (15%)
In what ways did the local Tanzanian communities have an impact on you? ( <i>n</i> = 55)	<i>Hospitality/Kindness/Generosity/Love</i>	23 (42%)
	<i>Cultural Exchange</i>	17 (31%)
	“Perspective”	16 (29%)
	<i>Kids/Students</i>	18 (32%)

Question	Themes	Frequency (%)
What and/or who from TSAP had the greatest impact on you? ( <i>n</i> = 56)	<i>TSAP Leader</i>	14 (25%)
	<i>Teaching/Teachers</i>	11 (20%)
	<i>Tanzanians</i>	11 (20%)
	<i>TCL Staff</i>	10 (18%)
	<i>TSAP Participants</i>	10 (18%)
In what ways has your participation in TSAP impacted your life? ( <i>n</i> =46)	<i>Lasting Relationships</i>	13 (28%)
	Openness to Other Cultures and New Experiences	12 (26%)
	Informed Teaching	8 (17%)
	Travel	8 (17%)

TABLE (3): THEMATIC ANALYSIS OF OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS

Participants repeatedly reported relationships they formed during TSAP that impacted their experiences. In addition, when TSAP participants were asked in the survey how they have maintained a connection to Tanzania since the trip, the most common answers of the 64 respondents who answered the question were maintaining connections with other TSAP participants (50, 78%) and Tanzanians (36, 56%); it is noteworthy that maintaining connections with Tanzanians living in rural areas is challenging given limited technological resources.

As we continued our exploration of the impact that relationships had on participants, it was important to identify aspects of the program that provided opportunities for relationship development among TSAP participants and with Tanzanians; therefore, we conducted an analysis of the TSAP curriculum. Many of these opportunities were detailed in the “Program Description” section earlier.

## Findings

To recap, preliminary findings from a thematic and corpus analysis of five open-ended questions related to participants’ memories and perceived impacts converged in a focus on people and relationships. In particular, “people” and “student” were the two most frequently used non-stop words, and all 63 respondents mentioned people affiliated with the program (e.g., staff, peers, students) in at least one of their open-ended responses. Here we describe the findings from these analyses. First, we summarize the people and relationships reported by the respondents. Next, we describe the context, curriculum, and community engagement in which these encounters took place, and finally, we highlight several additional themes that emerged from this analysis.

## People and Relationships

Although not asked directly, several participants described cultural differences between Tanzania and the United States, emphasizing their perceptions of the enhanced importance of people and relationships in Tanzania:

- (1) *It made me sad that as Americans we expect so much and we are given so many opportunities and live life in high speed all the time we often miss the whole purpose of living. I think they [Tanzanians] really understand how important human interaction is as well as sharing that with others.* – Lila, Year 9
- (2) *America moves fast, always striving for more of everything. Africans move slowly and the focus is on relationships.* – Ashley, Year 4
- (3) *I think that seeing how Tanzanians truly appreciate each other and what they have has impacted me the most. It has made me make gradual changes in the way that I personally try to live since I have returned.* – Brittany, Year 8
- (4) *People [in Tanzania] are very willing to help you and take time out of their day to do so. They valued relationships more than anything, but you don't see that in America. American culture values independence and getting to your destination or task on time, even if that means not helping someone in need.* – Jean, Year 9

All participants, either implicitly or explicitly, referenced their cross-cultural interactions and relationships with Tanzanians as an important aspect of their experience:

- (1) *Set me on my path to going the Peace Corps, first real international travel experience sets the tone for a lot of future travel, and grateful to have interacted with another culture which gave me a very different perspective on the world.* – Aria, Year 5
- (2) *Singing songs and dancing with students at the schools. Learning traditional dances at the camp out in Bandari Village and on the beach at Tanzania Coastal Lodge.* – Eloise, Year 8
- (3) *Being able to spend time talking with locals about their family narratives has changed my life goal's trajectory, steering it towards the preservation of folklore and cultural anthropology.* – Trevor, Year 6

The particular people and relationships described by participants included: (a) Tanzanian teachers and students, (b) TCL staff and other Tanzanians, and (c) program leader and peers.

### Relationships with Tanzanian Teachers and Students

Nearly all respondents mentioned their connections and relationships with teachers and students as impactful; this was not surprising, given that the participants spent a majority of their time working in schools:

- (1) *Teaching at the secondary school and getting to build relationships with the students and staff [was the most memorable].* – Josh, Year 3
- (2) *Going to school was by far the most amazing part of the trip and I will never forget all of the interactions I had with both the students and the teachers at Hekima Primary School.* – Louise, Year 9
- (3) *I loved making such wonderful connections with students.* – Amelia, Year 1
- (4) *Spending every day with the kids and teachers at school. I loved every minute of school, from teaching English to singing, dancing, and playing games. The relationships I built with the kids, my teachers, and the staff are by far the most memorable.* – Charlotte, Year 9

Respondents also commented on the reciprocal nature of these relationships, writing about what they were able to contribute or teach, what they were taught, and what they gained from the experiences:

- (1) *They taught us and we taught them. I think we impacted them through friendship and learning about different cultures just as much as they helped us with similar topics.* – Julia, Year 7
- (2) *We have a story to tell! They have a story to tell!* – Kristen, Year 4
- (3) *I think the biggest impact on the local Tanzanian communities was the exchange of perspectives, stories, and ways of life.* – Brittany, Year 8

Participants also mentioned the collective support provided by Tanzanian teachers at the schools:

- (1) *The teachers at Hekima Secondary School had the most impact on me. We spent the majority of our time with them and were able to learn so much about Tanzania and its culture through them. I learned how much they value their language, customs, and families.... I left Tanzania with an appreciation for the culture and people, but also left me feeling more motivated to bring my experiences into my future classroom.* – Jean, Year 9

- (2) *I had a few very impactful conversations with Tanzanian teachers. Each of them had a passion for education and felt called to be teaching in the small village schools. This goes along with the fact that there are children around the world who are eager to learn and who are in need of passionate teachers.... I know that there are students in my classroom who are eager to learn and succeed who need passionate caring teachers like me. – McKenna, Year 4*

In addition to these general references to interactions and relationships with teachers, respondents also mentioned conversations with and support from particular teachers:

- (1) *One of the teachers at Maarifa Primary School, Richard, had the greatest impact on me because he really took the time to talk to us at any time of the school day. During breaks he would go on walks to show us around the community, he loved to joke around, and he was an awesome teacher. I could tell that the students learned a lot from him and he had a good relationship with them as well. He cared deeply about his family and friends and made me feel excited to become a teacher. – Audrey, Year 9*
- (2) *Mr. Salim was the biology teacher I worked alongside, and we were able to share much about our lives and differences with each other. – Lila, Year 9*

The participants also described many aspects of their experiences with students:

- (1) *So much of the trip is memorable for me, but I loved working with the students!! Getting to know them was a highlight! – Sydney, Year 2*
- (2) *The students!! I was in a unique position for I had already been teaching in the U.S. for 8 years. I have never had classes so excited to see me or want to learn.... I had a class of 65 students and only 7 textbooks and yet, students made it work. Students were eager to help and were actually smiling during a math class!! – Mia, Year 1*
- (3) *The one day we waited a few extra hours for the truck to pick us up after school would probably be my most memorable moment. It gave us the opportunity to see our students outside of the school environment, play with them, learn from them, and just really enjoy*

*each and every moment spent with them and their families.* – Ella, Year 8

### Relationships with TCL Staff and Other Tanzanians

In addition to relationships with teachers and students at school, many participants described interactions and relationships with Tanzanian staff at TCL and residents of surrounding villages:

- (1) *One of the most memorable moments I had was our last night at TCL. We were able to have dinner with all of the TCL staff and it really helped solidify the connections we were able to make in a short three weeks. Even though it was Ramadan at the time, all of the staff and [TSAP participants] formed a large dance circle and everyone participated. Not all of us are comfortable dancing or being in front of people (myself included), but we all participated because dancing is a part of their culture.... We were all just one large group of people who were connected by three weeks of memories and wanted to celebrate that time together.* – Jean, Year 9
- (2) *As my first international experience, I learned so much. The people of Tanzania embraced us with love, despite our differences. I learned about a new culture and gained an appreciation for their outlook and approach to life.* – Sophia, Year 1

Respondents also described the impact of particular Tanzanians:

- (1) *One of the TCL staff, who helped us with the bikes, helped me get back to the resort after... I fell off my bike. He and the students, that were following us from Bandari Primary [School], helped me up and back on the bike. He rode the bike with me on the back of it, hanging onto his shirt. They were so concerned about me and it had only been a week into our stay.* – Heather, Year 4
- (2) *Matthew, an employee of TCL [had the greatest impact on me].* – Eliana, Year 5
- (3) *I will always remember the warm welcome we received at the airport from Wakili and then receiving that same warmth from all the people we would meet on the trip.* – Sophia, Year 1

*[Most memorable was] when a man I never met before taught me his name and I taught him mine before he gave me a bracelet he tucked into an envelope with his name spelled out. – Faith, Year 7*

### Relationships with Program Leader and Peers

Finally, participants described relationships that they developed with one another, mentioning adventures shared and support provided when facing challenges. These close bonds were not surprising given the amount of time they spent together during the intense four-week international experience. Respondents also mentioned relationships with the program leader and teaching assistants, which continue in many cases today. Because romance is often inevitable, several participants even mention meeting their future spouse.

- (1) *I met my husband, best friends, and made memories that will last a lifetime! I am forever grateful! – Blair, Year 4*
- (2) *The other Middle State University students had an impact on my trip; some of the students brought out the best in me and reminded me [to] appreciate this experience even when things were hard. – Molly, Year 9*
- (3) *I made lifelong friends on the trip and was introduced to my wife. It changed my worldview and reaffirmed my decision to be an educator. – Noah, Year 4*
- (4) *Jill! I still call her Mama Jill. She would tell us stories of her travels and other life experiences while making our own experiences in Tanzania. I would have the desire to travel, but not so much the will if I didn't go on this program. – Sadie, Year 5*

### Context, Curriculum, and Community Engagement

In addition to investigating those involved in the relationships, we wondered how the participants developed personal and professional relationships; that is, which aspects of the program supported these opportunities. If relationships were so often mentioned by respondents, and intercultural communication, collaborations, and friendships are important factors for learning, which program components enabled, promoted, or encouraged these relationships?

Given her own experiences living and working abroad, Newton was intentional about developing such opportunities in the design of the program by



creating experiences with both breadth and depth; many of these opportunities were detailed earlier in the Program Description, including particular attention to context, curriculum, and community engagement. Here, we highlight sample participants' responses related to these three areas.

### Program Context

The Tanzanian context undoubtedly made the cross-cultural aspect of many of these relationships possible. Respondents often highlighted the importance of these interactions:

- (1) *Although I remember the safari fondly, I most often look back and remember the people we met at school and TCL and the value of experiencing the culture.* – Brooke, Year 7
- (2) *There was a cultural exchange between the Middle State University students and local Tanzanian communities. While we did bring supplies, I think that the interactions we had with them was of greater impact. We could exchange stories and traditions and learn from each other.* – Alexis, Year 6

### Program Curriculum

Several aspects of the curriculum, including working in schools and learning Swahili, facilitated interactions with Tanzanians:

- (1) *Our time in the schools also allowed us to connect with the students and teachers, which built relationships of community building. We shared our culture and made friendships even outside of school (attending a local soccer game and a pub night out with fellow teachers).* – Sophia, Year 1
- (2) *I was teaching at Maarifa Secondary School, Form 1 English, and I co-taught some math classes for some other grades too. It was so hard, but I so badly wanted to make an impact on my students and help them with anything that could mean they got even just 1 more question right on their exams.* – Lucy, Year 7
- (3) *The teachers at the school provided me with the most insight as to what living in Tanzania was like - we had daily unscripted and uninterrupted conversations with all of the teachers during tea time. This allowed us to discuss everything from teacher training to dating in our own communities.* – Ryan, Year 1

## Program Community Engagement

Also mentioned by participants as important to the development of relationships were the opportunities to engage in community activities—some formal and organized, and others ad hoc and spontaneous:

- (1) *My favorite memory is from the night we camped in Bandari Village. After sharing a meal, some folks built a huge fire and brought out drums. Before we really knew what was happening there was a huge circle around the fire and we were all dancing under thousands of stars. I've never felt so fully immersed in another culture, yet so comfortable at the same time. There were several times I remember thinking to myself, "This can't be real life."* – McKenna, Year 4
- (2) *Everyone, from the elders in the community to the tiny ones who weren't even in school yet, showed us nothing but love and welcomed us all with open arms and hearts.* – Ella, Year 8

The TSAP context, curriculum, and community engagement also featured prominently in participants' responses to a survey question about what impacted their decision to participate in the program. In terms of the Tanzanian context and community engagement, 79 respondents (96%) selected "Being immersed in Tanzanian culture," and 39 respondents (48%) selected "Service-learning projects." Curricular aspects of TSAP were also chosen, including teaching (71, 87%), course credits (43, 52%), and learning Swahili (34, 41%).

## Summary

The focus of this findings section was on the types of relationships that developed during TSAP, and the context, curriculum, and community engagement that supported their development. The prevalence of responses that addressed relationships was consistent across all years of TSAP participation, the schools in which the participants worked, and characteristics of the participants (e.g., gender, major). These findings established the importance of program leader intentionality around experiences that facilitate social interactions, both cross-cultural opportunities and those among study abroad participants.

## Discussion

*Joy. The culture, the people, the landscape-- it all brought me so much joy. It is a beautiful country that will forever have my heart.*

– Amy, Year 3

*Frankly I think I was the happiest I've ever been when I was there.*

– Julia, Year 7

We sought to explore how participating in the Tanzania Study Abroad Program (TSAP), a short-term faculty-led study abroad program which situated undergraduate students from the Global North in the Global South, informed participants' journeys and lived experiences. Participants reflected on TSAP through a web-based survey. Respondents' perceptions of the most impactful elements of the program highlighted the influence and importance of their relationships with Tanzanians and one another. This finding is supported by the social network perspective situated in study abroad programs, which acknowledges that relationships among participants inform each individuals' experiential outcomes (DeJordy et al., 2019). Dewey et al. (2013) found that participants on study abroad in Egypt and Jordan most often developed their social networks, or relationships, with host-nationals through the context of the program (e.g., housing near a university campus) or curricular expectations (e.g., requirement to speak in Arabic for a minimum of 2 hours each day). In another investigation of relationship development during a short-term study abroad to the Global South, Castañeda and Zirger (2011) found that participants also relied on the programs' context (e.g., host families) and curricular elements (e.g., service-learning locations). Through our investigation, we identified two takeaways related to participants' reflections on relationships developed through TSAP: (a) Newton's intentionality (i.e., context, curriculum, and community engagement) informed participants' opportunities to develop relationships, and (b) Prioritizing relationships in the context of Global North/South partnerships informed their future work when partnering with diverse communities, particularly in educational contexts.

### Instructor Intentionality

Building on earlier research related to instructors' intentional actions toward the development of social justice-focused study abroad programs (Newton et al., 2020), we recognized how Newton's decisions around the

contexts (e.g., Sub-Saharan Africa, Tanzania, primary and secondary schools), curriculum (e.g., predeparture seminar, coursework, Swahili), and community engagement (e.g., school placements, service-learning, excursions) provided opportunities for TSAP participants to develop short- and long-term relationships. As highlighted earlier, centering the program on developing relationships cut across Newton's intentionality and served as an anchor for participants' experiences and reflections up to 10 years after completion of their time in Tanzania. Prioritizing relationships throughout TSAP—before, during, and after participation—provided opportunities to engage and connect participants and their families to Tanzania and Tanzanians. Focusing on a study abroad context in the Global South encouraged participants from the United States to broaden their global perspectives and challenge their preconceived notions of non-Western cultures and societies. This further underscored the importance of including frequent, recurring experiences with host community members, such as daily teaching alongside local teachers, and co-planning and implementing service-learning projects.

## Future Work

After developing relationships with community members, many participants felt a sense of responsibility to represent their Tanzanian counterparts and experiences in positive and nuanced ways upon return to the United States. This was evidenced by the stories that participants chose to share about their experiences and by how participants reported challenging dominant stereotypes with their families and friends in the United States. Some participants shared that they reflected on their experiences abroad as motivation for developing relationships with diverse groups of students in their current classrooms:

- (1) *I currently teach 2nd grade and have the (English as a Second Language [ESL]) cluster. I have 12 ESL students- 8 Spanish-speaking, 2 Arabic-speaking, one Chinese-speaking, and one Vietnamese student. I have a passion for connecting with families of my ESL kids. I want to know about their culture. I want to teach them about ours. –Kristen, Year 4*
- (2) *As a teacher I try to teach my students to be Global thinkers. This has become a strong emphasis in my teaching philosophy as a result of this trip. – Isabelle, Year 7*

(3) *I have been eager to learn more about my students who come from diverse backgrounds. I've learned to see their experiences as a strength and added diversity to my classroom.* – McKenna, Year 4

Centering TSAP and other international learning experiences on relationships can help develop sustainable study abroad programs. Developing relationships between Global North and South partners through study abroad can be important for disrupting traditional power dynamics and transactional interactions between participants and community members. In the case of TSAP, developing relationships through a short-term study abroad program provided participants with opportunities to challenge dominant perspectives of Tanzania and, more broadly, Africa. This continues to inform participants' interactions with people from communities and cultures different from their own.

### Implications for Practice

Informed by the importance of relationships, especially with host community members, we recognize future iterations of TSAP need to provide additional opportunities for better understanding the prominent local religions of Islam and Christianity. As many TSAP participants were from predominantly Christian communities, it is likely that few have had opportunities to witness or experience the religious traditions of Islam. For two years of this study, Ramadan coincided with participants' time in Tanzania. Yet, few participants reflected on the importance or influence of learning about another religion while engaging with community members. This indicates that further intentional programming toward supporting participants' understandings of Islam is needed and should be incorporated in both the predeparture seminar and while abroad.

Building from findings in this study, TSAP is continuing to evolve. We are hyper-aware of the disproportionate representation of White students to Black, Latinx, Indigenous, and Asian American and Pacific Islander students engaging in study abroad programs across the United States and within TSAP. Thus, we are actively working to recruit and engage more diverse populations of students to participate in TSAP through collaborations with college-level offices of diversity, equity, and inclusion. Additionally, we recently designed an elective mathematics course centered on social justice for students to engage with through TSAP (Newton et al., 2020). This course was designed to challenge

participants to think critically about how mathematics can be used to model and reimagine global social justice issues. Finally, the program leader codeveloped a new course to facilitate conversations about social justice issues and collaborations with preservice teachers across seven countries, four of which are in Africa, including Tanzania. Before traveling abroad, future TSAP participants will be encouraged to participate in this intercultural course to gain knowledge of cultures represented in each community and identify global (i.e., non-European) sources of knowledge, specifically as they relate to global social justice issues.

### Implications for Research

This study informs efforts to understand the role of relationships on participants' short-term study abroad experiences. Since our initial investigation did not seek to explore how participants developed relationships with other program participants or Tanzanian community members, we look to further investigate how the relationships were developed through TSAP and how these relationships have developed over time. Additional research is also required to explore how host community members, Tanzanians in our case, understand relationships and their role in supporting our ongoing collaborations.

### Concluding Thoughts

When designing a short-term study abroad, program leaders do not always know what aspects of the program will be the most impactful for students. In the case of TSAP, for example, many students reflected on interactions with teachers and students, learning another language (i.e., Swahili), and cooking or trying new foods. These reflections support the need for ensuring study abroad programs provide various ways for participants to engage with host communities. As reported by the respondents, the most influential aspects of TSAP were the relationships they developed with Tanzanian community members and their fellow program participants. Program leaders can provide study abroad participants with opportunities to develop sustainable and reciprocal relationships by prioritizing them throughout the context, curriculum, and community engagement aspects of their programs.

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## Appendix: Tanzania Study Abroad Participant Survey

1. Name
2. Gender
  - Male
  - Female
  - I prefer not to answer this question
3. How would you describe your ethnicity?
4. Year of trip
5. What year at [Middle State University] had you finished before traveling to Tanzania?
  - Freshman
  - Sophomore
  - Junior
  - Senior
6. What major did you graduate with at [Middle State University], or what is your current/final major?
7. Did you begin with this major?
  - Yes
  - No
8. What occupations have you had since [TSAP]? Include duration and/or dates.
9. What service organizations have you been affiliated with (e.g., Peace Corps, Big Brother Big Sister, Habitat for Humanity)?
10. What languages have you studied? (Select all that apply)
  - English
  - Spanish
  - French
  - German
  - Mandarin
  - Other
11. What were your experiences travelling prior to [TSAP]? (Select all that apply)
  - Only in [Middle State]
  - Fewer than 10 states
  - Extensively in the U.S.
  - International family vacations
  - Other study abroad trip(s)
  - International service trip(s)
  - Traveled international with friends or solo

- Other
12. How did you hear about [TSAP]? (Select all that apply)
- Heard from a friend
  - College of Education advertisement
  - Flyer
  - Call-out
  - Other
13. Which of the following impacted your decision to participate in [TSAP]? (Select all that apply)
- Teaching
  - Safari
  - Learning Swahili
  - Being immersed in the culture
  - Service-learning projects
  - Living on the Indian Ocean
  - Course credits
  - Other
14. Did you help write a service-learning grant for an activity related to the trip? If so, please provide a brief description.
15. Which of the following course(s) were you able to get credit for through the program? (Select all that apply)
- African Literature
  - Teaching Mathematics in the Secondary School
  - Courses towards a Global studies minor
  - Independent Study (include topic)
  - Other
16. What is most memorable from your time in Tanzania?
17. To what extent do you agree or disagree with this statement? (Likert scale)
- Participating in [TSAP] increased my empathy for people with different backgrounds than my own.
18. In what ways did the [Middle State University] students in your group have an impact on the local Tanzanian communities (e.g., orphanages, [Bandari] Village, schools, [TCL], Arusha)?
19. In what ways did the local Tanzanian communities have an impact on you?
20. What and/or who from [TSAP] had the greatest impact on you?
21. Did your experience in Tanzania impact your view of American culture? If so, explain how.
22. Did your experience with Tanzanian schools impact your view of the U.S education system?

23. What have been your traveling experiences since [TSAP]? (Select all that apply)
- Only in [Middle State]
  - Fewer than 10 states
  - Extensively in the U.S.
  - International family vacations
  - Other study abroad trip(s)
  - International service trip(s)
  - Traveled international with friends or solo
  - Other
24. Since [TSAP], in what ways have you engaged with people from other cultures?
25. To what extent do you agree or disagree with these statements? (Likert scale)
- I share stories of my experiences in Tanzania on a regular basis.
  - Participating in Maymester in Tanzania has impacted me professionally.
  - I reflect on my cross-cultural experiences in Tanzania when interacting with people from a background different than my own.
  - I reflect on my own life differently since participating in [TSAP].
26. In what ways have you maintained a connection to Tanzania since the trip?
- Helping with the Books for [Bandari] project
  - Donating through GoFundMe
  - Participating in [SfA] club
  - Maintaining connections with Tanzanians
  - Maintaining connections with people you traveled with
  - Returned to Tanzania
  - I have not maintained a connection
  - Other
27. In what ways has your participation in [TSAP] impacted your life?

## Author Biography

**Michael Lolkus** earned his doctorate in Mathematics Education at Purdue University. Michael develops and explores the promise of culturally sustaining and social justice-focused mathematics curricula for an educational nonprofit organization. His research centers on social justice mathematics and site-based professional learning communities with Tanzanian teachers.

**Laura Duke** is a secondary Social Studies Teacher in Central Indiana and is currently pursuing a masters degree in Curriculum and Instruction at Purdue University. After traveling to Tanzania with Dr. Newton in 2018, Laura became interested in international education and service-learning when she was introduced to this research. She hopes to continue and expand her research as she pursues her graduate degree.

**Jill Newton** is a Professor of Mathematics Education at Purdue University, where she teaches undergraduate and graduate students and leads a study abroad program. Her research focuses on secondary mathematics teacher education and study abroad programs. She earned a B.S. and Ph.D. in Mathematics Education at Michigan State University and an M.A. in International Education at George Washington University. She taught mathematics in Bulgaria, Democratic Republic of Congo, Papua New Guinea, Tanzania, and Venezuela.