An Exploration of the Motivations and Career Development of Younger People going on Volunteer Self-Initiated Expatriation

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Abstract

Globalisation has fostered international mobility and subsequently, international careers. In New Zealand, international travel, or the 'OE' (overseas experience), has become a cultural norm and is a common phenomenon among younger people who want to explore the world.

In the international mobility literature, the motivations and career development of corporate expatriates are widely discussed; however, in the self-initiated expatriation (SIE) literature, these issues are less understood with studies focusing primarily on professionals (Dickmann, Doherty, Mills & Brewster, 2008). The SIE literature suggests that international volunteerism is also a valid SIE experience (Andresen & Gustschin, 2013) and although SIE remains under theorised (Doherty, Richardson & Thorn, 2013), volunteer self-initiated expatriation (volunteer SIE) is an even more limited field of research. While there is an emergent literature on the motivations and career development of volunteer self-initiated expatriates (Fee & Gray, 2011; Hudson & Inkson, 2006), the experiences of younger volunteer self-initiated expatriates are not specifically addressed.

This study explores the motivations and career development resulting from SIE undertaken by younger volunteers. As a qualitative study, a reflexive and interpretive methodology (narrative inquiry) was used to conduct and analyse seven in-depth interviews. A subjective epistemology, based on real world experiences, was fundamental to this research process and a three-phase analytical framework was developed, with findings presented in two sections: motivations and career development.

This study found that while altruistic factors were important, individuals were mainly motivated to pursue volunteer SIE for personal reasons, including a desire for new and authentic travel experiences, which included a drive to meet new people. A further motivating factor was participants' desire to escape as some felt confused as to which career path to pursue. Volunteer SIE provided the participants with space to further consider these crucial career decisions. Timing and context, such as having adequate funds and freedom from family commitments, were important enablers, freeing participants to engage in volunteer SIE.

Despite seeking an escape from career decision-making, most participants did not pursue volunteer SIE for career enhancement, although this accrued unexpectedly. The main

career outcomes discussed in this study related to the development of communication skills and networks, a new career outlook, and enhanced employability. In addition, personal development was also an important outcome and included a number of personal outcomes: an increase in motivation and confidence; greater resilience, adaptability and tolerance; gratitude; and greater self-awareness, factors which also support career enhancement.

This study addresses a gap in the literature and contributes to the wider SIE, international volunteering, and careers literatures. Firstly, it is one of the few studies on younger volunteer self-initiated expatriates. Secondly, this study provides further evidence that the international volunteer experience fits within the SIE construct. Furthermore, this study reports that volunteer self-initiated expatriates are more inclined to go abroad to escape their careers, as compared to their SIE counterparts who predominantly go abroad for personal reasons. Finally, the study confirms previous research on SIE that personal development is a major outcome for volunteer self-initiated expatriates.

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Attestation of Authorship

I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person (except where explicitly defined in the acknowledgements), nor material which to a substantial extent has been submitted for the award of any other degree or diploma of a university or other institution of higher learning.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Introduction

While globalisation facilitates international mobility and the development of international careers, younger people are also engaging in various forms of international work, travel, and volunteering (McNulty & Selmer, 2017; Scott, 2013). In New Zealand, this international experience is referred to as an 'OE' (overseas experience), whereas in the international careers literature the term SIE (self-initiated expatriation) is used (Doherty et al., 2013). During this period, individuals embark on a journey of self-discovery as they explore different cultures and countries (Jokinen, Brewster & Suutari, 2008). An OE is often viewed as a 'rite of passage' and has embedded itself into New Zealand culture. Self-initiated expatriation is commonly sought by (but not limited to) younger people, as it provides an opportunity to escape and undertake an international adventure and develop both personally and professionally (Bell, 2002; Inkson & Myers, 2003; Lough, McBride & Sherraden, 2009).

1.2 Why Younger People and Volunteer SIE?

My interest in this topic arose from my personal experience of education, travelling, and career development. Travel has always been a passion of mine, and as a younger person I also identify with the participants in this study. Although I have never engaged in voluntary work, after completing secondary school I lived and worked abroad, as I had not yet established my life in terms of further education and a career. It was not until I returned from this 'gap year' that I gained focus and began setting and achieving career goals. Therefore, I wanted to understand the motivations driving other younger people to engage in voluntary SIE, and explore whether their experiences of voluntary SIE proved beneficial, or otherwise, to their careers.

1.3 Background: Expatriation and International Careers

Careers in the 21st century offer a range of alternatives for younger people to pursue that extend beyond traditional forms or models characterised by linear and upwards movement and advancement (Andresen, Bergdolt & Margenfeld, 2013; Jokinen et al., 2008; McNulty, Vance & Fisher, 2017). Recent research on international mobility suggests that global careerists are increasingly opting for more autonomous forms of

careers such as that offered by SIE (Carr, Inkson & Thorn, 2005; Kirk, 2016; Shaw & Rowe, 2012).

While there is a rich literature concerning corporate expatriation (CE) and the motivations and career development of corporate expatriates (individuals who are sent abroad by their organisation), literature on the motivations and career development resulting from self-initiated expatriation (SIE) is less extensive and focuses primarily on professionals (Doherty et al., 2013; Dickmann et al., 2008; Thorn, 2009). To date, there is an abundance of research that differentiates these two terms (CE and SIE) (Al Ariss, 2010; Andresen et al., 2013; Briscoe, Schuler & Claus, 2009; Dorsch, Suutari & Brewster, 2013; Przytula, 2015). Furthermore, research on SIE suggests that international volunteer service is also similar to an SIE experience (Andresen & Gustschin, 2013) and although SIE remains under theorised (Doherty et al., 2013), volunteer self-initiated expatriation (volunteer SIE) is even less understood.

Self-initiated expatriation is defined as an international experience in which individuals initiate their travel across borders in pursuit of cultural, personal, and career challenges (Doherty et al., 2013; Inkson & Myers, 2003; Shaffer, Kraimer, Chen & Bolino, 2012). This contrasts with CE in which individuals are assigned a position in a foreign subsidiary of a multi-national corporation (MNC) and the expatriation and repatriation processes are managed by the MNC (Andresen et al., 2013). The unplanned nature of SIE contrasts with the more organised and structured experience of CE (Thorn, 2009).

In recent years, there have been several studies on SIE motivations (Thorn, 2009; Myers, Inkson & Pringle, 2017). There is also a developing literature on career capital (the development and accumulation of knowledge, skills, abilities, and competencies) in corporate expatriation (Dickmann et al., 2008); however, this is less discussed in the SIE literature (Shaffer et al., 2012). Although career capital is suggested to be an expected outcome of corporate expatriation, in contrast, SIE research suggests that individuals are usually not motivated to go on an SIE for career development, nor do they expect it to be a career outcome (Fee & Gray, 2011).

Despite the high level of interest in expatriation, research on individuals who volunteer for international 'not-for-profit' and 'non-governmental' organisations (NGOs) is limited (Andresen & Gustschin, 2013) and mostly considers organisational outcomes rather than individual outcomes (Wilson, 2012). International volunteers usually undertake some

form of social service in third-world countries (Smith, 1981), and receive minimal or no payment for their work (Andresen & Gustschin, 2013; Hudson & Inkson, 2006). While there is some focus on the motivations and career development outcomes for volunteer self-initiated expatriates (Fee & Gray, 2011; Hudson & Inkson, 2006), the experiences of younger volunteer self-initiated expatriates are not specifically addressed, signalling an important gap in the volunteer SIE research.

1.4 Overview of this Research Study

This study seeks to contribute to the SIE literature by studying seven younger people who undertook volunteer SIE. The research questions framing this exploratory study were twofold. First, what were their motivations for undertaking a voluntary SIE, and second what career development resulted from this SIE experience?

Chapter 2 focuses on the relevant SIE and careers literatures to help understand younger people's motives for participating in volunteer SIE and whether there are any resulting career outcomes. The chapter opens with a discussion on global mobility and discusses the various expatriation types, highlighting SIE as a distinct area of research. This is followed by a discussion on corporate expatriation (CE) and more specifically expatriates' motivations and subsequent career development. The chapter concludes with a discussion on self-initiated expatriation (SIE), and the less-researched phenomenon of volunteer self-initiated expatriation (volunteer SIE) (Doherty et al., 2013).

Chapter 3 outlines the research process used to conduct the research. This discussion covers aspects of ontology and epistemology which inform this study. Narrative inquiry, signalling a subjective and interpretivist approach, is highlighted as the chosen methodology to research the lived experiences of the seven participants. As part of the research design, in-depth interviews were carried out to gain a deeper understanding of the participants' experiences and outcomes from volunteer SIE. A three-phase analytical framework was implemented to analyse the participants' stories.

In Chapter 4, findings are presented after an extensive analysis of the seven participants' stories. Participants' names and any identifying information were changed to ensure confidentiality. This chapter is divided into two sections reflecting the research questions: volunteer SIE motivations and career development. Participants' pre-SIE experiences were also analysed to better understand their motives for participating in volunteer SIE. This is followed by a section that reports findings relating to whether volunteer SIE

facilitated career development amongst participants. In Chapter 5, these key findings are discussed in relation to the relevant SIE and careers literatures.

Conclusions are confirmed in Chapter 6 and are discussed in relation to the research questions. While personal motivations dominated participants' reasons for going on volunteer SIE, many sought an escape from their careers; however, they did not do volunteer SIE for career enhancement. Unexpectedly, career development was an outcome of the volunteer SIE. Participants' personal development was, however, more prevalent. This chapter also discusses the contributions to theory, the limitations of the research, as well as recommended areas for future research. The chapter concludes by arguing that volunteer SIE is a viable and beneficial short-term career option for younger people who are unsure about which path to follow.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

This chapter explores the literature necessary to understand the phenomenon of volunteer self-initiated expatriation (volunteer SIE). More specifically, this chapter outlines relevant articles that consider the motivations for, and the career development resulting from, the SIE experience. Given that the majority of research on self-initiated expatriation (SIE) has occurred more recently (within the last 15 to 20 years), in contrast to corporate expatriation (CE) which has a longer history, I obtained information from electronic databases and other relevant books and sources as far back as 1981. Through these databases, key words such as expatriation; self-initiated expatriation; corporate expatriation; global mobility; international mobility; SIE motivations; SIE career development; international volunteerism; and international careers were all used as part of the process to obtain resources. The selected literature discussed in this chapter has been organised thematically, opening with an overview of the international mobility literature which describes and differentiates the various types of expatriation. A review of the widely-researched concept of CE follows, and with specific reference to the research question this section explores the motivations for accepting a CE assignment and the resulting career development/outcomes. The discussion on CE provides a basis to explore similarities and differences to SIE in terms of motivations and career outcomes. This is discussed in the following section, which also highlights how SIE has developed into a distinct area of research in its own right. The final section focuses on international volunteering and its relationship with the SIE literature. This chapter concludes by highlighting the gaps within the literature to identify and justify this study.

2.2 International Mobility

International careers have become increasingly prevalent, with evidence suggesting that people are engaging in a range of overseas experiences (Andresen, Bergdolt, Margenfeld & Dickmann, 2014; Caligiuri & Bonache, 2015; Inkson & Thorn, 2010; Thorn, 2009). Younger people in particular are participating in experiences such as student exchange, summer camps, gap years and internships (Scott, 2013; University of Otago, n.d.). Furthermore, with continuing globalisation and saturated domestic markets, careers have become more geographically mobile (Groysberg & Abrahams, 2014; Kirk, 2016). The literature has sought to explain this phenomenon through a discussion on international

mobility, which is described as a type of 'expatriation' and 'expatriation experience' (Andresen et al., 2013; Groysberg & Abrahams, 2014; McNulty & Selmer, 2017; Selmer & Lauring, 2011).

Currently, there is no data which accurately depicts the number of New Zealanders that are engaging in international mobility. However, a report by Finaccord (2014) states that in 2013, the estimated number of expatriates worldwide was in excess of 50 million and is expected to reach 57 million by 2017, with students being the most rapidly growing category in an increasingly complex global economy (Al Ariss & Crowley-Henry, 2013).

Expatriation is the term used to describe the voluntary act of leaving the home country and residing in another country, either temporarily or permanently, and an 'expatriate' refers to any individual who participates in this process (Andresen et al., 2014; McNulty & Selmer, 2017). Employment in the host country, whether obtained prior or post-arrival, is essential for an individual to be considered an expatriate (Briscoe & Hall, 2006). Expatriation currently encompasses a range of international experiences. Firstly, there is the broadly established group of corporate expatriates who are assigned to work overseas by their organisation. The self-initiated form of expatriation has more recently been defined as a distinct group within the expatriation literature (Bjerregaard, 2014; Doherty, 2013; McNulty & Selmer, 2017). Although international mobility and expatriation are broad terms covering a range of expatriate experiences, this chapter focuses mostly on self-initiated expatriation (SIE) and more particularly literature on SIE motivations and career development, arguing that international volunteering, referred to in this study as volunteer SIE, sits within the SIE domain (Myers, 2016).

Within the international mobility literature, migrants are also discussed. While Farcas and Goncalves (2017) concluded that the term 'migrant' is separate and different to an expatriate, Andresen et al., (2013) suggested that 'migrant' was the umbrella term for the varying expatriate types (CE and SIE). Migrants are individuals who travel across national borders to obtain work or better living conditions and ultimately settle into the foreign country (Al Ariss & Crowley-Henry, 2013; Briscoe et al., 2009; Przytula, 2015). The management literature associates the term 'migrant' with individuals from lower socio-economic backgrounds and under-developed countries who are less educated and unskilled (Al Ariss & Crowley-Henry, 2013; Przytula, 2015).

Self-initiated expatriates, in contrast to a migrant, are expected to repatriate. However, SIE can be viewed as a means to bridge the time period before deciding whether or where to migrate (Andresen et al., 2014; McNulty & Selmer, 2017). While there are links between self-initiated expatriates and migrants (both are commonly employed once abroad whilst having citizenship in another country), they are also different in that migrants are often from less developed countries and they either choose, or are forced, to move abroad due to unemployment or other less desirable circumstances (Andresen et al., 2014; Farcas & Goncalves, 2017). While self-initiated expatriates usually go abroad temporarily, migrants aim to reside in the host country long term (Briscoe & Hall, 2006; Przytula, 2015). An analysis of the literature on migrants falls outside the scope of this study and will not be discussed in this review.

2.3 Corporate Expatriation

Corporate expatriation has long been the focus of contemporary expatriate literature and international careers literature (McNulty & Selmer, 2017; Richardson & Mallon, 2005; Suutari & Brewster, 2000). Also referred to in the literature as assigned expatriation (AE) (Andresen et al., 2013), international assignments (IA) (Dickmann & Harris, 2005) or organisational expatriation (OE) (Froese & Peltokorpi, 2013), corporate expatriation (CE) is identified as a structured form of international work experience that is managed by a multi-national corporation (MNC) and is the preferred term used in this study (Dickmann et al., 2008; Caligiuri & Bonache, 2015; Selmer & Lauring, 2013). This section reviews corporate expatriates' motivations for accepting a CE assignment and the resulting career development, in order to differentiate the CE experience from the SIE experience (which is discussed in the following section).

The decision to participate in CE sits with the organisation who use CE as a means to further develop their organisation (Caligiuri & Bonache, 2015). Corporate expatriates are often highly skilled, middle-senior level employees within an MNC from developed countries. Companies are increasingly using CE as a developmental tool to transfer knowledge throughout the global organisation. Multi-national corporations also use CE to develop their employees' managerial skills, build a common organisational culture and develop global inter-organisation relationships (Brewster, Bonache, Cerdin & Suutari, 2014; Caligiuri & Bonache, 2015; Dickmann et al., 2008; Dowling, Festing & Engle, 2013).

Individuals consider a range of factors before accepting an international assignment. Research shows that the development of career capital and future career prospects are major factors influencing individuals to accept an overseas posting (Dickmann et al., 2008; McNulty & Selmer, 2017; Shaw & Rowe, 2012), as well as the financial incentive involved (Richardson & Mallon, 2005). Typical considerations also include opportunities that the posting provides for new experiences, learning and career advancement; personal interest in the international experience; family and domestic issues; and moving to an attractive location. Corporate expatriates are also driven by the desire to increase their human capital (skills, experiences and networks), and international assignments are a proven means to do this, deepen experiences and widen social networks (Katzell & Thompson, 1990; McNulty & Selmer, 2017; Groysberg & Abrahams, 2014).

The most common outcome following CE is career success (Brewster et al., 2014; Jokinen, 2010; McNulty et al., 2017). Corporate expatriation, as expected, has been found to foster a global mind-set (Brewster et al., 2014) and global leadership competencies (Jokinen, 2005), widen one's social network and provide a range of new career options (Dickmann & Harris, 2005; Reiche & Harzing, 2010). Corporate expatriation increases opportunities for promotion and salary increases for those aiming for top management positions (Cerdin & Le Pargneux, 2010; Farcas & Goncalves, 2017).

2.4 Self-Initiated Expatriation

This section explores the development of SIE and how this form of expatriation differs from other expatriation types (McNulty & Selmer, 2017). With specific reference to the research question, this section discusses the literature necessary to understand the motivations and career development of self-initiated expatriates, focusing particularly on younger people. Furthermore, this discussion draws on recent research that has highlighted international volunteering (volunteer SIE) as a valid, but under-researched form of SIE (Andresen & Gustschin, 2013; Myers, 2016).

In recent years, researchers' understanding of SIE has increased significantly (Al Ariss, 2010; Andresen & Gustschin, 2013; Cerdin & Le Pargneux, 2010; Crowley-Henry, 2012; Doherty & Dickmann, 2013; Doherty et al., 2013; McNulty & Selmer, 2017). The SIE experience has been identified as a powerful form of international mobility within the increasingly varied and expanding global labour market and is becoming a more common career experience (Dickmann & Doherty, 2010; Doherty et al., 2013; McNulty & Selmer,

2017). Despite an increase in the number of studies on SIE, a lack of clarity around the SIE construct remains (Andresen, Biemann & Pattie, 2015; Doherty et al., 2013) as the literature primarily focuses on skilled professionals travelling from developed countries (Bjerregaard, 2014; Crowley-Henry, 2012; Jokinen et al., 2008; McNulty & Selmer, 2017; Tharenou, 2010; Thorn, 2009).

An earlier assumption surrounding expatriation in general was that these individuals were a homogenous group (Glassock & Fee, 2015; Myers, 2016; Przytula, 2015). The first study to identify and categorise the self-initiated expatriate was by Inkson, Arthur, Pringle and Barry (1997) who focused on the experiences of young New Zealand 'self-initiated foreign expatriates' (SFEs). Since then, an array of terms have been used to describe the 'self-initiated' experience of working and travelling abroad. The term 'self-designed apprenticeship' was utilised by Arthur, Inkson and Pringle (1999), followed by Inkson and Myers (2003) who studied individuals embarking on an 'OE' (overseas experience). 'Self-selecting expatriates' (Richardson & McKenna, 2003), 'self-initiated foreign work experiences' (Inkson & Richardson, 2010; Suutari & Brewster, 2000), 'free-travellers' (Myers & Pringle, 2005) and 'self-initiated movers' (Thorn, 2009) are all terms which foreshadowed the more universally accepted term currently used, that is, 'SIE' (Al Ariss & Crowley-Henry, 2013; Doherty et al., 2013; Jokinen et al., 2008).

Corporate expatriates and self-initiated expatriates represent two distinct groups of internationally mobile employees whose experiences differ in various ways. The literature describes two distinguishable principles separating SIE from CE: 'initiative' and 'decision of employment', that is, whether the individual or organisation made the expatriation decision (Andresen et al., 2013; Doherty, 2013; Przytula, 2015). Self-initiated expatriates often operate as an 'expert' in the host country on a lower hierarchical scale, whereas corporate expatriates tend to work in leading positions within an MNC (McNulty & Selmer, 2017; Suutari & Brewster, 2000). In addition, CE is often restricted in duration (usually ranging from 3 months to 5 years); however, it is common for corporate expatriates to go abroad for 3 to 5 years due to the range of additional factors, such as family circumstances, that are part of the decision-making process to expatriate (McNulty & Selmer, 2017; Peltokorpi & Froese, 2009). The time perspective for SIE, however, is less clear and often not predetermined (Andresen et al., 2013; Howe-Walsh & Schyns, 2010). While there are similarities, SIE differs to CE and recent literature has

shed greater light on these distinctions (Al Ariss, 2010; Andresen et al., 2013; Briscoe et al., 2009; Doherty, 2013; Dorsch et al., 2013; McNulty & Selmer, 2017; Przytula, 2015).

2.4.1 Characterising self-initiated expatriates

Self-initiated expatriates are said to comprise a major portion of the expatriate population and play a significant role in the international workforce (Doherty, Dickmann & Mills, 2010; Froese & Peltokorpi, 2013; Jokinen et al., 2008; Selmer & Lauring, 2013). The SIE experience is often a sporadic and unplanned pursuit of cultural, personal and career challenges and is just one pathway to achieving an international career experience (Dickmann & Doherty, 2010; Doherty, 2013; Shaffer et al., 2012). Self-initiated expatriates move freely across national borders and are generally employed as a local in the host country (Briscoe et al., 2009; McNulty & Selmer, 2017). In comparison, corporate expatriates are sent on international postings by the MNC (Andresen et al., 2015; Crowley-Henry, 2012). A self-initiated expatriate is neither a short-term traveller or a migrant (Richardson & Zikic, 2007); rather, they are individuals who temporarily live ex-patria by their own initiative, with no definitive time frame for how long they are abroad (Tharenou, 2010). For example, self-initiated expatriates in the study by Suutari & Brewster (2000) went abroad for shorter periods than corporate expatriates. Other studies, however, found corporate expatriates returned from their international experience earlier than self-initiated expatriates, particularly older expatriates (Doherty et al., 2010; Jokinen et al., 2008).

A wide range of individuals participate in SIE and differ significantly to corporate expatriates. (Selmer & Lauring, 2013). While 80% of corporate expatriates have been identified as being male professionals, self-initiated expatriates represent a more diverse demographic group (Tharenou, 2010). In Froese and Peltokorpi's (2013) research, corporate expatriates were found to have participated in more foreign work experiences than self-initiated expatriates. Conversely, Jokinen et al. (2008) found their self-initiated expatriates had engaged in a higher number of overseas assignments. It has been noted that self-initiated individuals are more inclined to embark on their first SIE journey at a younger age; however, research on this younger age group is limited. This is potentially due to younger people's preference to travel with minimal planning, for an undefined duration, whilst in a mode of exploration (Myers & Pringle, 2005; Suutari & Brewster, 2000). Younger people in Vance's (2005) study, took up immediate expatriation as they were more mobile due to fewer constraints (i.e., family obligations). Many were not

committed to their employing organisation in the longer term (Biemann & Andresen, 2010; Froese & Peltokorpi, 2013). Self-initiated expatriates often have a personal interest in the host country and yearn for adventure, whereas corporate expatriates are more driven by organisational and some career and personal factors (Doherty et al., 2010; Froese & Peltokorpi, 2013; Shaw & Rowe, 2012).

2.4.2 Motivations for undertaking SIE

There are a range of reasons why individuals choose to expatriate, each of which can differ considerably (Doherty & Dickmann, 2013; Richardson & McKenna, 2003; Thorn, 2009). The term 'initiative' within SIE indicates an individual who actively seeks and chooses some form of international experience (Andresen et al., 2013). Being a 'self' initiated experience, self-initiated expatriates are often motivated to travel abroad to enhance their own personal development, signalling independent movement (Baugh & Sullivan, 2015). This is opposed to corporate expatriates who are sent abroad to achieve an organisational goal with support from the home company (Andresen et al., 2013).

Self-initiated expatriates are driven by a range of factors in their quest to uncover new and different ways of living (Doherty & Dickmann, 2013; Glassock & Fee, 2015; Richardson & McKenna, 2003). Individuals who engage in SIE are mostly seeking an adventure, cross-cultural experiences and opportunities for self-development (Doherty, 2013; Lough et al., 2009; McNulty & Selmer, 2017; Myers & Pringle, 2005). Other motivations that have been identified include income, career development and the establishment of new contacts; however, these are less prominent (Myers & Pringle, 2005; Farcas & Goncalves, 2017). In a study by Richardson and Mallon (2005), self-initiated expatriates who had completed higher education believed that an international experience would enhance their career capital and marketability. Findings by Selmer and Lauring (2011), who focused on younger self-initiated expatriates from Northern Europe, found that their younger participants were motivated to go abroad in search of adventure and travel, career developmental opportunities, and financial incentives.

Other common factors attracting or driving self-initiated expatriates to work and travel abroad relate to life changing events; financial and career advancement issues; poor employment situations; and personal and family problems. Individuals seek SIE as an opportunity to reduce or eliminate these hindrances and improve their lifestyle and quality of living (Al Ariss & Crowley-Henry, 2013; Inkson & Myers, 2003). Self-initiated expatriation can therefore be viewed as an escape from their perceived boredom and

sometimes negative environments. The SIE experience in Richardson and Mallon's (2005) study was described as an opportunity that presented itself suddenly; it was not a pre-planned assignment and participants did not tend to have a job arranged for their return. While some motivations are 'push' factors that drive individuals out of their employment and home country (Myers, 2016), in the SIE literature they are also discussed as opportunities or pull factors, encouraging individuals to go and explore new career and life directions (Crowley-Henry, 2012, Myers et al., 2017).

The 'gap year' has been associated with the younger population of self-initiated expatriates, but career development is not their main or only motivation. Individuals who choose to take a gap year often initiate their own experience abroad between studies or prior to starting their career (Inkson & Myers, 2003). Self-initiated expatriation can also fill the gap before deciding where to migrate (Andresen et al., 2013). In the New Zealand context, this experience is referred to as an 'OE' (overseas experience) and has embedded itself into the society of many developed countries (Doherty et al., 2013). An OE is often seen as a 'rite of passage' for younger people who wish to experience a range of development opportunities, both professionally and personally, and to fulfil a sense of curiosity as to 'what is out there' (Bell, 2002; Doherty & Dickmann, 2013; Hudson & Inkson, 2006; Inkson & Myers, 2003; Simpson, 2004). The stereotypical 'OE' is associated with younger people in search of new experiences who end up working in a 'London pub'. As well as taking part in this stereotype, many young travellers follow seasonal work, that is, in snowfields or fruit picking, or they go to visit countries of their ancestors (Bell, 2002; Inkson & Myers, 2003).

Despite an increasing number of studies on what motivates people to undertake SIE, the field remains under-researched and particularly in the area of younger people.

2.4.3 Career development resulting from SIE

Self-initiated expatriation exposes individuals to a range of experiences that could result in the development of career capital (the development and accumulation of knowledge, skills, abilities and competencies) (Cao, Hirschi & Deller, 2012; Kirk, 2016; Rodriquez & Scurry, 2014; Shaw & Rowe, 2012). Career competencies are encapsulated in the broader term of career capital and the more capital there is, the more development there is. Career capital is commonly used when discussing CE and more recently SIE (Jokinen, 2010; Kirk, 2016). DeFillippi and Arthur (1996) discussed career capital as being potentially the most applicable metaphor in the context of international careers as it is

tradeable in global careers and can be used to achieve future career goals (Carr et al., 2005; Inkson & Myers, 2003; Kirk, 2016; Myers & Pringle, 2005; Shaw & Rowe, 2012). The SIE experience is increasingly perceived as an opportunity for career and personal development, particularly for younger individuals (Doherty et al., 2010; Kirk, 2016; Myers & Pringle, 2005). This study focuses on participants perceived career development.

Perceptions on what constitutes 'successful' career development and career outcomes are increasingly changing as individuals benchmark their career success on the attainment of career capital which can take them across companies and borders, as opposed to the traditional perceptions of career development which consists of upward movement or 'climbing the ladder' (Biemann & Andresen, 2010; McNulty et al., 2017). Consequently, individuals increasingly take responsibility for their own employability, as career management is a lesser priority for organisations (Crossman & Clarke, 2010; Van den Bergh & du Plessis, 2012; Vaiman & Haslberger, 2013).

The career success gained from SIE is often described as being more intrinsic (i.e., increased feelings of job satisfaction) and is typically the preferred outcome for self-initiated expatriates as opposed to gaining more extrinsic benefits such as power, money or prestige (Al Ariss & Crowley-Henry, 2013; McNulty et al., 2017). Furthermore, the SIE experience has been found to enhance personal and professional skills, deepen one's experiences and widen networks (Groysberg & Abrahams, 2014; Mendenhall, 2001). Self-initiated expatriation provides an important learning platform for self-initiated expatriates to enhance their human capital through knowing why (values and motives), how (skills and competencies) and whom (contacts) (Al Ariss & Crowley-Henry, 2013; DeFillippi & Arthur, 1996; Kirk, 2016; Shaw & Rowe, 2012). While these are valuable, and often unexpected, outcomes of the SIE, career outcomes are not the only factors motivating individuals to pursue an SIE (Cao et al., 2012).

Career development resulting from the SIE experience is generally unexpected but substantial for most (Fee & Gray, 2011; Inkson & Myers, 2003; Rodriquez & Scurry, 2014). Individuals who participate in SIE are able to shape their own career rather than allowing themselves to be moulded by corporate environments (Inkson et al., 1997; Richardson & Mallon, 2005). In the study by Inkson and Myers (2003), participants did not pre-arrange a job before they embarked on their overseas experience (OE), nor did they have expected career outcomes in mind. They were predominantly motivated by

personal rather than career factors. The result of their SIE experience, although not planned, provided them with unique and valuable career development. This study therefore suggests that the SIE experience may be a useful short-term career option for young people who have yet to take action or make a decision regarding their career (Doherty et al., 2010; Inkson & Myers, 2003).

Self-initiated expatriates are a valuable human resource due to their familiarity with culture, language and markets locally and internationally. There is a significantly lower cost involved employing a self-initiated expatriate compared to a corporate expatriate (Al Ariss & Crowley-Henry, 2013; Peltokorpi & Froese, 2009) and while SIE is typically long in duration, self-initiated expatriates are less likely to achieve significant career benefits from their expatriation (Al Ariss, 2010; Andresen et al., 2013; Briscoe et al., 2009). It is suggested however, that they develop a greater sense of self-confidence and more career focus (Inkson et al., 1997; McNulty & Selmer, 2017).

The increase in SIE experiences over the last 10 years is largely due to more people rejecting the 'one assignment' approach and instead opting for a 'career approach' by joining assignments together to meet long-term personal and professional goals (McNulty & Vance, 2014). This is known as a 'global career' and SIE is another mode of expatriation that enables an individual to increase their career capital and ultimately become part of a global talent pool. The approach involves individuals working with a variety of people from different backgrounds in a flexible and dynamic manner. As self-initiated expatriates have greater autonomy regarding their career, SIE supports a new and exciting environment for global careers to grow (Carr et al., 2005; Shaw & Rowe, 2012) and the potential for individuals to achieve wider life development. While various authors have focused on the competencies required to work effectively in a global environment, these discussions have mainly centred on CE. Self-initiated expatriation also provides a valuable form of international exposure, particularly for those who are much younger in age, by developing valuable cross-cultural competencies (Van den Bergh & du Plessis, 2012; Vaiman & Haslberger, 2013).

2.4.3.1 Modern careers
Self-initiated expatriation resonates with the features of a boundaryless or protean career where individuals move freely, transferring their skills between organisations and countries. This is a result of individuals no longer being bound long term to their employers, and careers being free of geographic constraints. This concept, also known as

'new careers' or 'contemporary careers' (Arthur et al., 1999; Myers, 2016), encompasses individuals who are more proactive, internationally mobile and reliant on improvisation, and less attached to one organisation (Richardson & Mallon, 2005; Weick, 1996). Self-initiated expatriates no longer wait for organisations to manage their career progression, instead they take control of their own career pathway and professional development (Cao, Hirschi & Deller, 2013). While self-initiated expatriates have greater organisational mobility than corporate expatriates, there is less difference in terms of their boundaryless mind set (Andresen et al., 2015; Doherty et al., 2010; Hall, 1996, 2004).

The concept of a protean career was first introduced by Hall (1996) who claimed that 21st century careers would be people driven, not organisationally driven, and would be reinvented by the individual in response to a changing environment. Hall's protean career theory has significantly impacted the development of career theory since and is relevant for organisations and employees as they adapt to the changes of the modern workplace. The protean career theory is also relevant for self-initiated expatriates as the holistic nature of protean careers is similar to the integration of personal and career factors motivating SIE (Andresen & Gustschin, 2013; Briscoe & Hall, 2006; Crowley-Henry, 2012; Howe-Walsh & Schyns, 2010). As self-initiated expatriates take responsibility for their own career outcomes, career success is therefore determined by the accumulation of knowledge and learning experiences, in contrast to CEs who assume excellence once a higher salary and senior status has been acquired (Doherty et al., 2010; Inkson et al., 1997; Banai & Harry, 2004).

Many self-initiated expatriates do not generally travel with the expectation of developing their career. For some, however, the opportunity to accumulate career related competencies to assist with their career progression is a motivator pulling them abroad. Often, these individuals find difficulty acquiring the necessary career related skills in their home country. As the protean career concept recognises that individuals' personal values influence their career related decisions, this may be an appropriate theory to understand SIE (Briscoe & Hall, 2006; Cerdin, 2013; Doherty et al., 2010; Hall, 2004).

The boundaryless career theory provides another outlook on modern careers (Arthur, 2014; Arthur & Rousseau, 1996). Individuals who follow a boundaryless career do not rely on organisations and do not commit themselves to a single employer. As people are increasingly open to global and organisational movement, particularly within the wider international context, self-initiated expatriates have been found to seek a boundaryless

career in search of new cultural and occupational experiences (Arthur, 2014; Bjerregaard, 2014; Crowley-Henry, 2012). A boundaryless career is a preferred option for individuals who seek a non-linear career pattern as it allows individuals to take responsibility for their own career and life development (Van den Bergh & du Plessis, 2012; Vaiman & Haslberger, 2013). The SIE experience represents a form of 'boundaryless career' as it is characterised by autonomy, independence, adaptability, transience, self-directed learning and multiculturalism (Inkson & Myers, 2003). Guo, Porchitz and Alves (2013) and Doherty et al. (2013) also studied SIE outcomes referencing the boundaryless career concept and identified the following key outcomes: autonomy, increased creativity, sense of community and individuality, and a long-term social perspective (Van den Bergh & du Plessis, 2012).

While many studies agree that the SIE experience leads to career success (Doherty et al., 2010), there are some critiques of the link to boundaryless careers. The boundaryless career model concentrates on physical and psychological career limitations; however, some authors believe the concept is theoretically and empirically underdeveloped and does not encapsulate the less explored modes of career movement (i.e., moving sideways or exiting the labour market) (Inkson, Gunz, Ganesh, & Roper, 2010; Pringle & Mallon, 2003; Sullivan & Arthur, 2006). Furthermore, Pringle and Mallon (2003) maintained that this theory encourages the deconstruction of organisationally driven career development. Researchers have also noted that the boundaryless career concept favours educated professionals and disadvantages minority groups such as women and low-skilled workers (Inkson et al., 2010; Pringle & Mallon, 2003).

2.4.3.2 Career development during SIE

Learning is fostered in various ways for self-initiated expatriates as they face differences in culture, experiences and social settings. Recent studies have revealed that self-initiated expatriates often experience a transformational process as they forego certain behaviours and mind-sets to adapt in a new cultural environment (Bjerregaard, 2014; Mendenhall, 2001). Consequently, this fosters the development of cross-cultural skills and knowledge. Communication and management skills are also increased through SIE, including levels of tolerance, supervision skills, living with ambiguity and uncertainty, and obtaining greater knowledge of the host country and the international business environment (Fee & Gray, 2011). In Inkson and Myers' (2003) study, participants gained an increased sense of independence, open-mindedness, communication skills, people skills and a global

mind set. Since this study, there has been limited research specifically on younger people undertaking SIE. More recent studies tend to focus on professionals of all ages with findings that include major personal and career outcomes (Groysberg & Abrahams, 2014).

There are few studies on how self-initiated expatriates learn, develop and overcome barriers whilst on assignment (Mayerhofer, Hartmann, Michelitsch-Riedl & Kollinger, 2004; Froese & Peltokorpi, 2013). It is assumed that self-initiated expatriates take responsibility for their own training and development with the majority of their learning occurring on the job. Often, they learn through experimentation as they receive greater autonomy and responsibility (Fee & Gray, 2011). Subsequently, SIE is seen to provide participants with a rich cultural context and an opportunity to take risks outside their normal lives, thereby increasing their self-confidence, self-esteem, cross-cultural skills, flexibility and adaptability (Brewster et al., 2014; Fitzmaurice, 2013; Myers & Pringle, 2005). However, in contrast, it is noted that international work experiences can also be non-developmental if work tasks are too similar to home (Fee & Gray, 2011).

Cultural adjustment is an important issue as self-initiated expatriates often receive little to no cross-cultural training. Many self-initiated expatriates, therefore, face organisational and institutional barriers to their career development (Vance, 2005). Research by Stalker and Mavin (2011) focused on self-initiated expatriates from the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and revealed that they did not receive any formal support towards their learning and development. This drove the participants to undertake their own professional development initiatives through education and professional networks, relying heavily on informal learning (Froese & Peltokorpi 2013).

While abroad, self-initiated expatriates can encounter low job satisfaction as sometimes they engage in less desirable forms of work. This is because geographically, self-initiated expatriates tend to move from developed countries to less developed countries that are experiencing issues such as famine, crime and natural disasters. The result of deep immersion in the local environment enables self-initiated expatriates to achieve greater interaction adjustment than their corporate expatriate counterparts as they have higher community involvement (Froese & Peltokorpi, 2013). Some studies suggest that younger self-initiated expatriates can adapt faster and more easily to new situations (Bjerregaard, 2014; Selmer & Lauring, 2013). While overseas, self-initiated expatriates can experience transience and precariousness which can be draining for the individual. Some have jobs

which are insecure and losing them could force them to face financial strain or return home. Most self-initiated expatriates accept the precariousness as being a key element of the adventure and they are aware of this prior to expatriating (Richardson & Mallon, 2005).

International assignments can also provide less desirable outcomes. Self-initiated expatriates risk failing in the host country as well as weakening their existing professional and personal relationships back in the home country. There is also a major concern that others do not see the SIE experience as being a valuable career development opportunity. Employers may perceive these individuals as lacking commitment and focus on their career as they believe they are out of touch with current business practices (Jackson et al., 2005; Myers, 2013). This occurrence is more common among younger people who are just entering their career as prospective employers may not value the SIE experience to the same extent as the participant (Jones, 2000; Parker & Inkson, 1999; Richardson & Mallon, 2005). To reduce these risks, self-initiated expatriates must adapt to language and local culture and aim to maintain relationships in the home country (Groysberg & Abrahams, 2014; Rolles, 1999).

2.4.4 Volunteer SIE

International volunteering appears to be a growing trend in response to televised and documented realities of global disadvantage, that is, natural disasters, poverty, cruelty and the increasing gap between the rich and the poor. This has resulted in more individuals choosing to reach out and assist by offering their services in a voluntary capacity (Brown & Morrison, 2003; Clary, Snyder & Stukas, 1996; Grimm & Needham, 2012; Yeung, 2004). Recent studies have placed the phenomenon of international volunteering within the SIE literature, arguing that international volunteering shares many features with SIE (Andresen & Gustschin, 2013; Myers, 2016). This section defines volunteer SIE and highlights individuals' motivations for participating in international voluntary work and how these motivations align to that of an SIE. Furthermore, this section provides an insight into the career development resulting from volunteer SIE.

Volunteerism encompasses any activity whereby time is given freely to benefit another person, group or cause (Andresen & Gustschin, 2013). Furthermore, the international aspect of volunteerism involves an organised length of engagement and contribution given by individuals travelling to another country (Lough, Sherraden, McBride & Xiang, 2012). International volunteers are typically from developed nations who aim to

undertake some form of social service in less developed countries (Smith, 1981), receiving limited to no remuneration for their work (Andresen & Gustschin, 2013; Hudson & Inkson, 2006). Numerous volunteers are paid 'development workers' however remuneration is substantially less than they would earn for their experience in their home countries and while the financial gains are not a factor attracting volunteer workers, the learning outcomes are invaluable and not all of those who apply to be a volunteer are successful (Pearce, 1993; Khalil, 2004). International volunteers in Smith's (1981) study were differentiated into two distinct categories: 'pure volunteers' who received no income for their efforts, and 'quasi-volunteers' whose compensation was minimal.

Recent expatriation literature suggests that international volunteerism is an expatriate experience and is more similar to SIE than CE, in that individual volunteers generally initiate their own involvement with the international organisation. Furthermore, the motivations for going abroad are closely aligned to the self-initiated experience in contrast to the corporate experience (Andresen & Gustschin, 2013). These motives are wide ranging and include altruism (Smith, 1981), religion (Wilson, 2012), adventure, escape and some more instrumental motives relating to work and career (Barron & Rihova, 2011). Fee and Gray (2011, p. 538) argued that volunteer SIE operates as an "accidental skills factory" which helps to develop valuable professional skills and abilities. Furthermore, they pointed to the constant challenges and dynamic work context of international volunteering and suggested that this accelerates an individual's skill development resulting in long-term career outcomes (Brook, Missingham, Hocking & Fifer, 2007; Hudson & Inkson, 2006; Lyons & Wearing, 2008; Thomas, 2001). There is also an emergent literature on 'volunteer tourism' whereby individuals incorporate aspects of volunteering, such as humanitarian aid or conservation, into their overseas holiday (Chen & Chen, 2011; Lo & Lee, 2011; Otoo & Amuquandoh, 2014; Pan, 2012; Wearing, 2001).

Research on self-initiated expatriates who offer their services to 'not-for-profit' and 'non-governmental' organisations (NGOs), remains limited (Andresen & Gustschin, 2013; Brewster, Dickmann & Sparrow, 2008) with studies focusing more on macro or organisational outcomes rather than at the level of the individual (Wilson, 2012). While there is an emergent literature on the motivations and career development outcomes for volunteer self-initiated expatriates (Fee & Gray, 2011; Hudson & Inkson, 2006), this area is still neglected with no studies to date on younger people self-initiating international

volunteer work. For this study, I agree with Andresen and Gustschin (2013) and consider the international volunteer experience as a valid example of SIE due to the similarities in motivations and experiences reported in the literature.

2.4.4.1 Motivations for undertaking volunteer SIE

A variety of motivations have been identified determining why people self-initiate a volunteer experience abroad (Fitzmaurice, 2013; Wilson, 2012). A traditional view is that those who engage in volunteer SIE receive no personal gain except for finding increased satisfaction and meaning from their work (Fee & Gray, 2011). This is known as altruism and has been identified in some studies as the essence of volunteering, although generally individuals volunteer for many different reasons (Andresen & Gustschin, 2013; Haski-Leventhal, 2009; Hudson & Inkson, 2006; Rehberg, 2005; Smith, 1981). Like self-initiated expatriates, volunteer self-initiated expatriates tend to seek adventure and have a desire to live in another culture, while some also choose to go abroad as an escape (Andresen & Gustschin, 2013; Lough et al., 2009). This coincides with the study of Fee and Gray (2011) who discovered that although their participants sought a challenging experience, it was in fact an adventure in another culture that they pursued.

In general, the motivations of volunteer self-initiated expatriates are diverse and complex (Rodriguez & Scurry, 2014). Some possess strong values and strive to help others and go abroad for religious purposes (Andresen & Gustschin, 2013; Wilson, 2012; Yeung, 2004). Others who hold more instrumental motives relating to work and career choose to volunteer abroad as they aim to increase their understanding or gain skills in their field, an opportunity that otherwise may not be available to them if applying in a paid capacity (Barron & Rihova, 2011). Inversely, those who become dissatisfied with their careers may choose to utilise volunteer SIE to gain new skills and experience, ultimately aiming to 'find themselves' (Wilson, 2012). Volunteer self-initiated expatriates are relatively free from family ties and sometimes go to countries to distract themselves from personal issues hindering their day-to-day life (Hudson & Inkson, 2006). Many of these motivations are also consistent with Inkson and Myers' (2003) study on younger people undertaking SIE.

The first New Zealand study on international volunteers was by Hudson and Inkson (2006) who focused on 48 individuals going abroad to do voluntary work. The individual assignments were typically two years long with the volunteers going to different locations. This longitudinal study explored the motivations, experiences and impacts that the volunteer experience had on the individuals' personal and professional development.

The ideas that come from Hudson and Inkson's study are highly relevant to this piece of research as it is a New Zealand based study with a robust and rigorous qualitative research design. As with my study, Hudson and Inkson utilised narrative techniques to allow their participants to articulate their experiences before, during and after the volunteer SIE. The participants, however, were selected from a single organisation (Volunteer Service Abroad [VSA]) and the ages (29-67 years old) differed to those within this study. Although their findings contributed significantly to the wider body of knowledge as does a more recent study involving volunteer self-initiated expatriates (Myers, 2016), there is still much to discover about this vastly unexplored group.

2.4.4.2 Career outcomes of volunteer SIE

Organisations who facilitate voluntary work aim to create change. In countries where change occurs slowly, it is often difficult to implement. Communication and active listening is vital to create relevant strategies as there are multiple approaches and positive results that often occur through trial and error. In a voluntary environment, it is common to focus on an individual's strengths as opposed to correcting their errors. As they continue to learn, they are able to better contribute, making volunteer SIE a valuable option to build one's capacity while making positive contributions in a global context (Brook et al., 2007; Ceric & Crawford, 2016; Hudson & Inkson, 2006; Thomas, 2001).

While research on the outcomes of volunteer SIE is limited, some studies have highlighted the benefits, both personally and professionally, resulting from volunteer SIE (Brook et al., 2007; Fitzmaurice, 2013; Powell & Bratovic, 2007). While career development is not a dominant motivator, volunteer SIE is said to enhance or accelerate the development of valuable global skills and capabilities and alter one's career aspirations and outcomes (Inkson & Myers, 2003); however, to date no research has offered an explanation as to why this is (Fee & Gray, 2011). Existing international volunteerism literature has focused mainly on project outcomes rather than on the individuals who work on the projects (Andresen & Gustschin, 2013).

McNulty and Selmer (2017) provided an analysis of the literature on the learning outcomes of aid and development expatriates. These were divided into personal development; decision making and problem solving; and cultural skills and understanding. The personal development analysed included enhanced self-efficacy, self-sufficiency and self-confidence (Bell, 1994; Ceric & Crawford, 2016; Thomas, 2001); resilience, persistence and the ability to overcome adversity (Hudson & Inkson, 2006;

Thomas, 2001); tolerance and patience (Cook & Jackson, 2006); changed personal values (Fee & Gray, 2013; Hudson & Inkson, 2006); and stronger ethical values (Cook & Jackson, 2006). There were a few reasons attributed to individuals' enhanced personal development. Firstly, participants had to adjust to new and challenging situations and cope with greater work responsibilities in the host country. They also had to maintain patience when dealing and networking with locals from other cultures. When assessing the decision-making and problem-solving outcomes, McNulty and Selmer (2017) noted how individuals learned to be more innovative and creative, manage complexities, lead effectively and to be resourceful and adaptable. Reasons for these learnings were credited to dealing with unstable political environments and funding arrangements, working with limited resources which requires improvisation and having to adapt to sudden and unpredictable work situations (Cook & Jackson, 2006; Fee & Gray, 2013; Thomas, 2001).

Volunteer self-initiated expatriates often live in immensely different conditions beyond their level of comfort as they are immersed in significantly different economic, political and demographic structures than that of their home country. Furthermore, the environments that they work in are usually known to be friendly and trusting as locals often praise and seek out ideas that are put forward by expatriates. This provides an opportunity for volunteer self-initiated expatriates to develop certain capabilities that will serve them greatly in the "lower altitudes of the domestic workplace or the global business arena" (Fee & Gray, 2011 p. 531).

Volunteer self-initiated expatriates usually live among the local people and act as their trainers, mentors and coaches, enabling a greater sense of purpose within the workplace. Duties are typically hands-on with the expatriate playing the role of an "expert" in the absence of hierarchy and formal authority (Suutari & Brewster, 2000). This allows volunteers to experience greater levels of autonomy, freedom and scope in the duties that they perform as they learn to take risks and use what limited resources they have (funds, human resources, expertise and job specific tools) to get the job done, or make a difference within the local community (Brook et al., 2007). There is also security in knowing that they are not likely to face serious consequences in the event of failure (as they would in the corporate world). Volunteers therefore feel relatively safe to experiment and attempt tasks which they are not familiar with. Thus, volunteer self-initiated expatriates develop valuable problem-solving abilities, and they feel more proactive, constructive and purposeful in what they do (McBride et al., 2012). Volunteers also

become more courageous and adventurous as they are not afraid to voice their opinions or push the boundaries as they are seen to be providing a free service or kind gesture.

Fee and Gray (2011) argued that volunteer SIE often results in the unexpected development of valuable professional skills and abilities (Hudson & Inkson, 2006; Thomas, 2001). Furthermore, they pointed to the constant challenges and dynamic work context of international volunteering and suggested that this accelerates an individual's skill development resulting in long-term career outcomes.

An extensive array of competencies that individuals gain from the volunteer SIE experience is highlighted within multiple studies (Hudson & Inkson, 2006; Powell & Bratovic, 2007). These studies, however, have predominantly focused on the positive outcomes of international volunteering. Some of the greatest outcomes that have been identified are heightened communication skills (including team work) and collaborative skills (Fee & Gray, 2011). Additional skills and competencies that have been noted are often transferrable and include managerial skills (coaching and mentoring), field specific knowledge and greater self-awareness (Lough et al., 2012; Fee & Gray, 2011). These individuals benefit from greater global awareness as they develop a more sophisticated view of the world and themselves.

Personal development resulting from the volunteer SIE is a drawn-out process, beginning with acceptance of the limited amount of control individuals have over organisational outcomes. As individuals begin to resolve issues, uncover available resources and share information, they become confident in addressing uncertainty and ambiguity and removing any problems. Personal development also extends beyond the workplace when volunteering abroad. Learning outcomes can arise by observing the differences in everyday life, witnessing the goodness of those who are less privileged or by experiencing negative situations such as crime or illness which provide a learning opportunity to become more adaptable and aware. Often working under shocking circumstances, it is common for volunteer self-initiated expatriates to learn via observation and participation (Fitzmaurice, 2013; Lough et al., 2012; Powell & Bratovic, 2007).

The cultural development that volunteer self-initiated expatriates gain is significant. Voluntary experiences tend to foster a greater understanding of cultural skills and knowledge as volunteers are deeply immersed in the language, culture etiquette, practices and customs of the host country (Fitzmaurice, 2013; Lough et al., 2012). Due to this, they

become more aware, stereotypes are broken down and their ethical values strengthen as part of their personal development. When residing in their home country, these values are often governed by laws and regulations in contrast to the host country, where expatriates must remain aware for the protection of themselves and others.

Volunteer self-initiated expatriates often experience a lack of the right tools and facilities to do their work and become creative to utilise the available resources to achieve successful outcomes. This is often done by drawing on approaches from their home country and in the process, learning to become more resilient, flexible and self-sufficient (Brook et al., 2007).

Numerous learning outcomes are considered to be 'soft skills'; however, it is these skills that are hard to acquire. It is yet to be fully understood why the volunteer SIE experience provides a rich opportunity to learn as there is a lack of studies on how professional skills are incorporated, and the contribution that international volunteering provides to international business is often disregarded (Fee & Gray, 2011).

2.5 Conclusion

What is clear from the literature review above is a general agreement that further research is required into the less traditional forms of expatriation (McNulty et al., 2017). The concept of younger people participating in volunteer SIE remains under-researched and under-theorised. Furthermore, the motivations and the career development resulting from this form of expatriation have yet to be fully explored (Sherraden, Lough & McBride, 2008). While there is an increase in research on the SIE experience, studies that explore the motivations and subsequent career outcomes of SIE remain limited (Al Ariss & Syed, 2011; Froese & Peltokorpi, 2013; Richardson & Mallon, 2005; Selmer & Lauring, 2011), particularly when addressing volunteer SIE. While there are a few SIE studies that have included younger people in the sample (Hudson & Inkson, 2006; Inkson et al., 1996; Jones, 2000; Tharenou, 2003; Suutari & Brewster, 2000), they mostly examine well-educated individuals travelling between developed countries (Al Ariss & Crowley-Henry, 2013). To date, it appears that there are no studies on the motivations and career development of younger people participating in volunteer SIE. The next chapter discusses the methodology that frames this research project.

Chapter 3: Methodology

3.1 Introduction

Qualitative research is an explorative form of social inquiry that focuses on the individual's processes of interpreting and making sense of their experiences and the world in which they exist (Mack, Woodsong, MacQueen, Guest & Namey, 2005). This chapter outlines the qualitative interpretive research approach that shapes this study on the volunteer SIE experiences of seven young women and men. Epistemology, ontology and methodology are discussed in relation to the study and narrative inquiry is determined as the most appropriate methodology to explore this little know SIE phenomenon (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990). Next the research design and process is documented. This includes a discussion on ethics, recruitment and selection of participants, data gathering via in-depth interviews, transcription and a more detailed account of the method of analysis (Fraser, 2004). The chapter also includes a reflective section on 'my development as a researcher' which discusses the importance of reflexivity when using a narrative inquiry methodology to explore the deeper meanings that the participants attached to their volunteer SIE experiences (Johnson, 2001).

3.2 Research Philosophy

Individual researchers are guided by their belief system or world view, also referred to as a research paradigm (Crotty, 1998). These paradigms are informed by the researcher's ontological and epistemological perspective which in turn shapes or determines the framework for a research study (Grant & Giddings, 2002). Ontology refers to one's perception of being and the nature and structure of reality. Epistemology, which is influenced by the researcher's ontological perspective, is about the nature of the relationship between the researcher and the researched and includes the researcher's beliefs about what counts as genuine knowledge, and how knowledge can be obtained and communicated (Crotty, 1998; Gray, 2013; Scotland, 2012). In any paradigm, there are a number of appropriate research methodologies that can be employed. A methodology is the strategy or framework influencing one's decision to follow a specific research process and adopt particular research methods. It must be aligned with the researcher's ontological and epistemological stance and linked to the desired research outcomes (Crotty, 1998; Grant & Giddings, 2002; Lincoln & Guba, 2005). In this study, I draw on the work of Crotty (1998) to clarify my ontology and epistemology and develop a coherent and aligned methodology and research process. As part

of this clarification and learning process I also look to other SIE exploratory studies (Hudson & Inkson, 2006; Inkson & Myers, 2003; Myers, 2016).

My ontological belief that individuals construct multiple meanings of their reality through social interaction and contextual understandings, informs this study (Grant & Giddings, 2002; Gray, 2013; Lai, 2010; Riessman, 1993). Consequently, a subjective epistemology, based on real world experiences that place the researcher in the "world" they are studying, is required. By entering the natural setting of their subjects, the researcher attempts to understand or interpret a certain phenomenon, in this case young people who go on volunteer SIE (Crotty, 1998; Scotland, 2012; Treloar, Stone, McMillan, & Flakus, 2015). Subjectivism is fundamental to this study, therefore a methodology that can accommodate social and contextual understandings is important. In this study, I have identified narrative inquiry as a suitable research methodology. A narrative inquiry methodology recognises that different groups have diverse experiences, and through the gathering of lived stories (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Fraser, 2008), it is possible that multiple realities may emerge (Riessman, 1993).

This study subscribes to the interpretive paradigm (Grant & Giddings, 2002) to enable individuals to make sense of different realities experienced during volunteer SIE. Furthermore, as Grant and Giddings (2002, p. 16) explained, the interpretive process aims to "discover what it is to be human and what meanings people attach to the events of their lives". The interpretive paradigm differs from the positivist paradigm, in which researchers believe in objective truths. In conducting their study, a positivist researcher will obtain knowledge by validating theories through objective and measurable methods, and aim to be independent of researcher bias. Under this assumption, the researcher is the expert and observes the subject from the 'outside', therefore, producing knowledge which is valid and reliable (Grant & Giddings, 2002; Guion, Diehl & McDonald, 2011; Riessman, 1993). As a result, numerical data which can be analysed statistically is collected (Crotty, 1998; Mack et al., 2005; Mitchell & Egudo, 2003). As this study is interpretive and takes a subjective position to provide trustworthy, as opposed to truthful results, positivist notions of objectivity and empirical facts are not applicable (Fraser, 2008; Grant & Giddings, 2002; Nadin & Cassell, 2006).

3.3 Methodology

I decided to conduct this study using a narrative inquiry methodology as it focuses on capturing rich data within stories. Narrative research is generally multidisciplinary and focuses on the stories of people's lives (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990; Fraser, 2008; Mitchell & Egudo, 2003; Polkinghorne, 1988). As discussed in the previous section, narrative inquiry, as part of a qualitative study, differs from quantitative methods as it studies human reality through narratives to represent the world 'as it is' (Savin-Baden & Van Niekerk, 2007; Treloar et al., 2015).

Narrative inquiry does not assume objectivity but instead privileges subjectivity, placing the individual within the social context (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990; Riessman, 1993). As the term 'inquiry' suggests an exploration into events and how individuals make sense of them, interaction between the researcher and the researched is encouraged in order to draw out narratives, referred to as stories throughout this thesis (Fraser, 2008, 2004; Treloar et al., 2015). These stories are then analysed by the researcher to identify 'themes' which are patterns that emerge across data sets, and are vital to describe the phenomenon (volunteer SIE) being studied (Polkinghorne, 1995). Drawing out themes from the data is one of the most fundamental tasks in qualitative research and, to ensure interpretations are trustworthy, narrative studies require the researcher to be highly reflexive in their processes (Bruner, 1987; King & Horrocks, 2010)

Storytelling dates back to the earliest record of human existence and, with the greater acceptance of postmodern research methods, storytelling is now viewed as a valid means to produce knowledge (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990; Fraser, 2004; Lai, 2010; Riessman, 1990, 1993). The telling of stories is a very common and natural way to convey an experience. Using stories as data can add value to a qualitative study as they provide evidence for the general point, while keeping in sight the individual voice of each participant. Stories also put the experience into a time frame and encourage the reader to understand the decision-making processes and events experienced which construct the individual's identity (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990; Gibbs, 2007). When telling these stories, research has illustrated that individuals will use the interview process as a platform to reflect on their experiences and in doing so make sense of their experiences to the researcher (Savin-Baden & Van Niekerk, 2007). Therefore, there is greater recognition that empirical research can better understand the hidden depths of human behaviour (King & Horrocks, 2010).

As individuals possess their own set of predispositions on how they interpret the world, narrative studies collect stories that represent a person's experiences or understanding of an experience. While these stories are told in the present, they are usually representations of past or future events, and regardless of how long it takes an individual to describe these events, the story will not contain every detail, nor will the participant be able to re-tell the exact story twice (Alasuutari, Bickman & Brannen, 2008; Fraser, 2008; Paiva, 2008). In the telling of these stories, individuals modify and smooth them to perform and reaffirm a preferred self, through conscious and unconscious selection from their memory (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Riessman, 1993).

Researchers working with narrative inquiry methodology must take particular care to qualify their interpretations and ensure credible results. A narrative inquiry researcher often relies on ambiguous representations of the participant's story as expressed by the individual themselves as the researcher was not physically present during the participant's lived moment. The researcher's interpretive role is challenging as it is not realistic for the researcher to be neutral and objective during the collection and analysis of stories (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990; Riessman, 1993; Treloar et al., 2015).

Criticism of narrative research has been prevalent among some qualitative researchers (Riessman, 1993; Atkinson 1997; Atkinson, 2007; Atkinson & Silverman 1997). Narrative is a slow task which requires attention to subtle nuances of speech and the analytical detail can seem excessive to a researcher who views language as a transparent medium (Savin-Baden & Van Niekerk, 2007). Language is a fundamental part of reality; it allows the researcher to understand the meanings that people attach to reality and understand how context shapes their experiences and the re-telling of their stories. The following section discusses the research design and the chosen method used to gather narratives.

3.4 Research Design

There are many ways to conduct a narrative inquiry (Lieblich, Mashiach-Tuval, & Zilber, 1998; Mishler, 1995; Pinnegar & Daynes, 2007; Spector-Mersel 2010). Researchers have stated that while there are similar elements between some studies, each piece of research tends to differ in nature. With this understanding, the researcher must be able to develop and defend a strategy tailored to their study (Savin-Baden & Van Niekerk, 2007). This section discusses the research design for this study and the rationale for choosing the various methods. Discussion on aspects of rigour and reflexivity which are essential to an

interpretivist study are included in a later section in this chapter – 'my development as a researcher'.

3.4.1 Ethics

After obtaining approval for my research topic, and given that my research involved participant interviewing, an application was submitted to the university's ethics committee. This was an extensive application where information about the rationale for the study was included on a form. This application outlined every aspect of the research design, including the research topic, background, justification of the study, recruitment and selection information and how the research addressed the key principles of the Treaty of Waitangi (participation, partnership and protection). Further documentation was submitted including a consent form, interview discussion guide, confidentiality agreement, a researcher safety protocol, a participant information sheet and a statement of psychological support for participants from the Health, Counselling and Wellbeing Centre at the Auckland University of Technology (AUT). This information was included in the participant information sheet. Ethics approval was granted and the recruitment for potential participants commenced.

3.4.2 Recruitment and selection

To qualify for inclusion in this study, participants should have met the following criteria: have participated in volunteer SIE for a duration of between two months and two years and; have been between the ages of 18 and 35 years whilst on SIE. Anyone who met these criteria was welcome to participate in the study.

Various volunteer websites commonly advertise various placements of between two-month and two-year durations (ACVE: Aotearoa Cultural & Volunteer Exchange, n.d.; IEP, n.d.). When recruiting participants for this study, a two-month threshold was more common among potential participants who had participated in volunteer SIE. In contrast to the three-month period initially outlined within the research proposal, two months was considered a realistic length of service to provide valuable data.

In this study on younger people, the term 'younger' is open to interpretation depending on the social circle and culture; however, the 18-year minimum was considered appropriate for this study as it is the school leaving age in New Zealand. A variety of volunteer programmes typically offer placements to younger people between the ages of 18-35, making this age range (i.e., 18-35) suitable for inclusion in this study (ACVE: Aotearoa Cultural & Volunteer Exchange, n.d.; Contiki, 2014; Education Counts, 2010; Fronteering, 2011; IEP, n.d.).

Snowball sampling was the chosen technique to source participants, drawing on my current personal and professional networks. There is an assumption that snowball sampling is a self-propelled phenomenon which proceeds on its own once it has started (Mack et al., 2005; Woodley & Lockard, 2016); however, this was not the case for this study. Studies emphasise a requirement for researchers engaging in snowballing to play an active role in identifying and developing their sample (Biernacki & Waldorf, 1981). As I was collecting data within a smaller sample size, it was important not to limit my study to a particular group or circle of friends (Guest, Bunce & Johnson, 2006). Locating participants proved challenging as the target population did not have a high level of social visibility, a common meeting place or scene where they could be located (Biernacki & Waldorf, 1981; Mack et al., 2005). The recruitment process in general took four months.

During the snowball sampling process, potential participants were contacted by email. This initial contact included an introduction of myself as an AUT Masters student, the details of my study (participant information sheet) and the criteria of eligibility for inclusion. Once an individual agreed to participate, I made a conscious effort to build rapport by thanking them, asking them for a small description of their experience and reiterating my contact number (also identified in the participant information sheet) should they have any questions. At this point, I also secured an interview date and time, and attached another copy of the participant information sheet and the consent form. Where possible, I aimed to use AUT study rooms to conduct interviews and when this was not convenient for the participant, we agreed to meet elsewhere.

There was a total of 10 individuals who expressed interest as a result of sending emails; however, only three qualified for inclusion. It was at this point my supervisor and I re-examined the three-month minimum threshold and deemed two months to be a suitable length of service, resulting in seven participants being eligible for this study. Thus, I met the upper limit of my recruitment pool outlined in my proposal (five to eight participants) as all who were eligible were included in this study. Five participants were obtained through personal contacts, one individual came as a result of my contact with Rotary, and another participant was referred to me by an existing participant. An eighth participant was also referred by an existing participant; however, he left the country prior to being included in this study. There were two participants who showed interest in the study but were not included as one did not meet the two-month minimum criteria and the other was living in New Zealand on a visa.

3.4.3 Method: In-depth interviews

As part of this study, in-depth interviews were identified as the most suitable method to generate meaningful stories from participants. With a specific focus on younger people, this study explores the voluntary aspect of SIE. Whereas Inkson and Myers' (2003) study focused on younger people undertaking SIE which involved participants in paid work instead of volunteer work, in my study I wanted to understand the participants' motivations for undertaking volunteer SIE, as opposed to an SIE that involved paid work. I also sought to identify the career development, if any, younger people gain from these volunteer experiences.

In-depth interviewing is a method which is widely used among researchers in the narrative field. There are two main qualitative interview designs: unstructured or semi-structured (Mack et al., 2005). Taking an unstructured approach often consists of asking a single, planned question to encourage conversational responses in a non-directing manner. I opted for a semi-structured interview process with the use of open-ended questioning as this method allows a descriptive dialogue of stories and human actions to emerge (Johnson, 2001; McCormack, 2004). I also developed a discussion guide to facilitate the collection of stories and ensure that key issues were raised (Gillham, 2000).

When conducting an in-depth interview, it is important to be flexible and allow the course of the interview to be led by the participant. The information sought is usually deep, concerning matters such as personal histories, experiences, values, decisions or perspectives (Mack et al., 2005). The in-depth interview tends to be longer in duration as it seeks to build a high level of rapport and trust between the researcher and the researched to facilitate mutual self-disclosure (Minichiello, Aroni & Hays 2008).

During an in-depth interview, the researcher takes on the role of the 'student' and the participant becomes the 'teacher' (Treloar et al., 2015). By asking open-ended questions and giving the participant a voice, the researcher can actively listen to and acknowledge the participant's stories (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990; Gibbs, 2007) and facilitate meaning-making during an interview. It is the researcher's moral and ethical obligation to examine their own assumptions, ideologies, common sense and emotions as they are vital resources for what is seen or heard during the data collection process. For the researcher, what is 'heard' is a reflection of their own intellectual processing of the information being told. The researcher creates and constructs meaning based on their own common sense or "stock of knowledge". The researcher's aim is therefore to achieve the same depth of understanding

about a phenomenon as the participant and they use in-depth interviews to achieve this (Johnson, 2001; Mitchell & Egudo, 2003).

3.5 Doing the Research

In the present study, face-to-face in-depth interviews were conducted one-on-one by the researcher (myself). The duration of interviews ranged between 1 hour and 1.5 hours, following a semi-structured format.

An interview discussion guide was developed and comprised three broad areas. Section one explored the participant's life before undertaking voluntary SIE, looking specifically at their motivations for going. The second section focused on participant experiences of voluntary SIE, with a particular interest in the stories around work, travel and their social interactions. The final section explored what has happened since the participant's return to New Zealand and any potential career development as a result.

A range of five to eight in-depth interviews was established as being appropriate for this qualitative study in order to reach theoretical saturation. Theoretical saturation is achieved when no new themes or areas of relevant significance emerge, thus any further data collection would simply be confirmation (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006; Guest et al., 2006; Johnson, 2001). Theoretical saturation is the criterion which adequately justifies sample sizes in a qualitative study; however, there are no set guidelines to justify the size of the sample needed to reach saturation. Many authors maintain differing views on when theoretical saturation is reached, though they acknowledge it will vary from study to study. For example, Guest et al. (2006) undertook in-depth interviews with 60 African women, and when analysing these interviews, theoretical saturation was achieved after 12 in-depth interviews with 73% of the meta-themes uncovered within the first six. This study also examined the existing literature to identify how many interviews other researchers conducted before reaching theoretical saturation and found that there are only a few who mentioned their saturation point, and results among these studies were inconsistent. Some phenomenological researchers believed saturation occurred after six in-depth interviews (Morse, 1994). These findings were similar to a study by Kuzel (1992) who achieved saturation after six to eight interviews. However, Creswell (2007) had a much larger scope, identifying a range of five to 25. As my research focused on the individual as part of a narrative study, eight interviews appeared to be a suitable number in line with the sample sizes discussed by Guest et al. (2006) and in line with the purpose and methodology of my study.

All interviews were conducted in the Auckland region. The first interview was held in an AUT study room, and the other seven in places requested by the participant. As I began to organise the interviews, I was conscious of the researcher safety protocol, therefore avoiding interviews in the home of the participant or myself. The researcher safety protocol was formed to establish boundaries regarding the research process. This included what the interview would focus on, the approximate length of the interview, the post-interview information that would be available to the participant and safety measures as mentioned above. Each interview was conducted in a similar manner, consisting of one sitting which lasted between 1 hour and 1.5 hours.

The process of collecting data depended on careful timekeeping and planning in order to foresee possible complications. As I continued to engage with the participants, I developed strategies to make efficient use of my time and to be flexible when arranging meetings with them. I also endeavoured to maintain an appropriate amount of time between interviews for reflection upon the stories collected. I also organised interviews several days apart to allow time for me to reflect upon previous interviews.

I started the interview process anxious and excited at the same time. I arrived early (usually 15 minutes) at our agreed meeting place and greeted each participant upon their arrival while making some general conversation to create a friendly and relaxed environment and to help build trust and rapport (Seidman, 2005). I also took time to go through the participant information sheet again before gaining their signature on the consent form. I began the interviews by re-stating the purpose of the study, reassuring confidentiality and asking permission to use my recording device (Guion et al., 2011).

The interview data was collected via an audio recording device on my mobile phone, whilst taking minimal (handwritten) notes during the course of the interview. As qualitative research aims to capture words and perceptions, it was essential that I obtained verbatim records as the human memory is not capable of storing and recalling exact information (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

A simple, planned question was asked to "get the ball rolling". This was a general question regarding what was going well in their life before going overseas. A generalist and open-ended question allowed for an establishment of rich stories and meant that I could slowly and easily transition into questions relevant to the research topic. This transition is important for a trust to emerge between the interviewer and the interviewee, allowing for self-

disclosure. Research shows physical ques such as eye contact, facial expression, body language (including posture and position) signal a level of trust (Cavana, Delahaye & Sekaran, 2001) as does the sharing of feelings, stories or reflections of the topic in question (Seidman, 2005).

In some instances, it is inevitable that the participant does not have an immediate connection with the interviewer or the interviewer feels they know little about the topic (King & Horrocks, 2010). When conducting my research, I experienced these issues with a participant who was well educated in international development and had volunteered overseas multiple times throughout her life. As this was one of my earlier interviews, I felt somewhat intimidated and fell into a more reserved position as an interviewer. This impacted my ability to ask follow-up questions and keep the interview on track at times.

I was able to build good rapport with the other participants. Having no personal volunteer SIE experience, I shared my thoughts on travel and the countries I have visited. To further develop mutual trust, I often drew on the experiences from other participants and their feelings towards similar circumstances. Sharing the thoughts of other participants during my interviews began the process of verification, allowing me to check my data and validate my understanding. However, it was important to uphold boundaries between what participants had shared by not disclosing any information which may uncover their identity. This also helped to build trust as a participant may have become wary of what they told in fear that I would share their personal stories with a future participant (Guion et al., 2011; Mack et al., 2005).

Being self-aware during an interview is crucial as the questions asked by the researcher guide and influence the answers given by participants. Having an interview guideline helped keep the interview on track and enabled me to stay close to the purpose of the research question. I was also aware of taking a role as the listener and let the participant be more active as the speaker (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Although I had interview guidelines, this was more so to ensure the essential questions were asked, relevant to the study. Naturally, interviews followed their own path, tone and trajectory based on participant responses and interests. Following the lead of participants makes for fruitful territory as participants used the interview setting for self-reflection to increase their own understanding of their lived experience.

Interviews were concluded with a recap of the key points expressed during the course of the interview. I also had a list of questions relating to the specifics of my topic (motivations and

career development) to reiterate these key points, for example, "Can you describe three key motivators for participating in volunteer SIE?" These questions ensured I had grasped the individual's point of view and their relation to life, in order to realise their visions of the world and validate previous responses. Once I ended the audio recording, I thanked the participant for sharing their stories and made general conversation so as to "debrief" with mutual self-disclosure (Josselson, 2007). This was typically informal as a way to end the meeting and acknowledge what I had learnt from them (Myers, 2016). It was then that participants often acknowledged the unexpected benefits they had gained from sharing their stories. Most expressed how they had enjoyed reliving their experience and that they did not realise how much they had gained or how much they had done during their SIE experience. I then proceeded to give the participant a small gift, in the form of a gift voucher, in appreciation of their time.

3.6 My Development as a Researcher

Narrative researchers aim to provide trustworthy results by making explicit their biases, as in-depth interviewing involves a greater expression of the interviewer's self than other types of interviews (Johnson, 2001). My research journey in particular, has been one of continual learning. Prior to this study, I had limited knowledge of narrative inquiry and the research process, and how methodology and methods need to align. Furthermore, I had no experience researching the field of SIE. In preparation for this study I completed the "Introduction to Research Methods" and "Qualitative Research Methods" papers as an AUT Masters student. As part of these papers, I completed a smaller scale research project whereby a single one-on-one, face-to-face interview was conducted and was self-transcribed. Data was then utilised along with two additional transcripts to code and conduct a qualitative analysis. Being a novice researcher can be beneficial to this study as I do not possess pre-established assumptions about how to conduct this type of research (tabula rasa) (Johnson, 2001). I also do not have previous experience in researching volunteer SIE, nor have I participated in this phenomenon myself. I do, however, have experience travelling as an unaccompanied minor, and have been a solo traveller to four different countries including the USA, Canada, Australia and India between the ages of 18 and 24, and I worked for six months in the USA whilst on a gap year.

It was important that first I explore my 'world view' as an interpretivist researcher and my understanding developed once I delved into the literature, focusing on the key elements that frame the research process, that is, assumptions of ontology, epistemology, methodology and

methods. I considered the opportunity to do this study as an honour and through my readings I became aware of my responsibility to work with the participants and their stories with integrity and fairness (Pinnegar & Daynes, 2007). Furthermore, I came across the concept of rigour and how this can be established in an interpretivist study. Rigour, in the context of my study on young volunteer self-initiated expatriates, is based on establishing trustworthy and credible research processes and results. I set out to produce not only descriptions of participants' lived experiences, but also to understand them and, to some degree, construct their reality. In addition, theoretical rigour was achieved by maintaining a fit between the research question, methods, methodology and the underlying theoretical perspective (Crotty, 1998).

To further aid my learning, discussions with my supervisor and further reading allowed me to recognise the importance of reflexivity in line with a narrative study. Reflexivity is the act of reflecting on the way research was conducted, aiming to understand how the research process forms its outcomes. The research process is susceptible to a range of influences that can affect the interpretations generated; therefore, a reflective stance is necessary to identify and understand these influences (Gibbs, 2007). Reflexivity involves a critical self-analysis to "think about our own thinking" (Fraser, 2008; Nadin & Cassell, 2006 p. 209). Being a reflective researcher, particularly when conducting a qualitative study, increases the trustworthiness of the data and the overall integrity of the research process. By taking this approach, researchers form a solid basis to make claims regarding the recorded human actions and interactions.

Reflexivity acknowledges the inevitable influence that the researcher has on the research outcomes (Nadin & Cassell, 2006). While quantitative researchers believe that truthful knowledge is objective, accurate and unbiased, researchers who stress reflexivity suggest that no researcher can guarantee such objectivity (Sullivan, 2002). Through reflexivity, qualitative researchers acknowledge the shared values they may have with the individuals in their study. Explicating the process used to evaluate and interpret these stories partially shows the nature of the researcher's representation of reality and the multiplicity of these competing versions of reality (Gibbs, 2007; Nadin & Cassell, 2006). This includes noting any interpretations, conclusions or assumptions (Fraser, 2008).

As a novice researcher, difficulties can arise when collecting data as part of a narrative inquiry. It can be difficult to see nuances or layered meanings contained in the interview conversations, and it can take a lot longer to learn than a researcher who has actual lived

experience (Johnson, 2001). To reduce potential barriers, I remained open and asked questions to gain a detailed insight so that I understood what is important to the topic. A researcher who has experience in what is being studied may also have pre-determined assumptions based on their own experience. On the other hand, having a bias or knowledge is considered a benefit and is sometimes sought out (such as in an ethnographic study). Whether one is a novice interviewer or not, in-depth interviewing is an interactive process, in which both the researcher and the participant use their common sense to create some intelligible understanding of the posed questions and raise discussions about them (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006). The novice researcher is prone to making mistakes which allows them to learn, draw on their strengths and compensate for their weaknesses (Johnson, 2001). In the early stages of data collection, I struggled to disengage from previous beliefs that interviews were an impersonal task and I avoided offering personal information, values, beliefs and opinions that may have influenced respondent's answers. I soon learnt that this is not realistic in in-depth interviewing as the nature of my research question required a deeper level of mutual self-disclosure and trust building (Seidman, 2005).

As part of a reflexive process, I used a research diary to record my initial impressions in order to review and critique my own research practice and explain how the data was interpreted (Al Ariss & Crowley-Henry, 2013; Nadin & Cassell, 2006). I took this diary to my interviews to write notes for follow on questions, and immediately after each interview I reflected upon this experience and wrote down my initial thoughts. The act of writing my thoughts, assumptions and reflections after each interview provided a systematic record to look back on during the data analysis process. This level of deep thinking fostered an environment for continual learning throughout the research process. Prior to each interview, I reviewed my notes to ensure questioning and probing remained progressive and focused. This allowed me to confirm what has been learned in previous interviews, thus beginning the process of verification.

At the outset of my research, I adopted a narrative inquiry methodology with the understanding that a thematic analysis, as part of an 'analysis of narrative', would be undertaken to draw themes out of the data. As my interviews concluded and I began designing this analysis framework, I felt it appropriate to keep the individual story of each participant at the front of my mind. Designing the analytical framework was an ongoing learning process, as I wanted to uncover the best possible way to analyse each story. I soon

learnt that there was no one way of doing this and I developed a framework which is outlined below.

3.7 Analysing the Stories

The analysis process occurred as early as the interview stage, where I aimed to understand and begin to interpret what the participant was saying (Bruner, 1991). As part of a narrative study, it is common for interviewers to paraphrase back what is said to confirm an accurate understanding and address ambiguity and uncertainty. It was at this stage that I first used my research diary to aid the initial process of interpretation by documenting initial thoughts for future use.

Once the data collection phase concluded, a more focused analytical process began. Narrative inquiry creates an open field for researchers to design their own analysis. There are, however, two main approaches: analysis of narrative, and narrative analysis (Bruner 1987, 1991; Polkinghorne, 1995; Savin-Baden & Van Niekerk, 2007). An 'analysis of narrative' is conducted by drawing themes out of transcribed texts (Savin-Baden & Van Niekerk, 2007) and is the primary mode of analysis in this study. However, some elements of 'narrative analysis' were also used (discussed in phase one below), which uses storying as a process to analyse and present findings (Polkinghorne, 1995). Both types of narrative inquiry produce valuable insights; however, these insights are different in cognitive form (Polkinghorne, 1988).

As part of a narrative study, an inductive analytic approach (developing concepts from the stories) was used to explore the individual stories and uncover common themes (Brinkmann, 2013; Gibbs, 2007; Mitchell & Egudo, 2003; Polkinghorne, 1995). There are three key approaches to interpret narrative text: holistically (looking at the entirety of the text), selectively (looking at statements which reveal its essence) or detailed (analysis of each sentence to determine meaning) (Savin-Baden & Van Niekerk, 2007; Treloar et al., 2015). I chose to work with all of three modes of interpretation.

As my research question focuses on the motivations for participating in volunteer SIE and any resulting career development, I wanted to describe the participant's experience in their own words. Therefore, drawing on Fraser's (2004) seven-phase narrative analysis process, I developed a three-phase analytical framework as outlined below:

<u>Phase one: Initial steps</u>

      Step one: writing the transcript

      Step two: writing an overview of the participant's story

<u>Phase two: Analysing the written text: the individual's experience</u>

      Step one: line-by-line thematic analysis – general themes

      Step two: line-by-line thematic analysis – framed by the research question

<u>Phase three: Drawing out themes from across the participant group</u>

3.7.1 Phase one: Initial steps

3.7.1.1 Step one: creating the transcript

The first official step of the analysis was to transcribe the audio recordings in order to break down the conversation into units to form the basis of the analysis (Mitchell & Egudo, 2003). Transcribing is the process of transforming information from one medium (spoken word) to another (written text) (Brinkmann, 2013). Some researchers choose to surpass the transcribing process and analyse the data directly from the sound recording, while other researchers such as Van Maanen (1988) believe that only textualised forms of data yield analysis.

One of the key debates surrounding transcription is whether this process should be carried out by the researcher or a third party. Arguments supporting researcher transcriptions suggest that the process of careful listening and re-listening facilitates the close attention and interpretive thinking needed to gain a deeper understanding of the content (Gibbs, 2007; Skukauskaite, 2012). It is understood that this immersion has a significant influence on the research as it yields important insights and the ability to generate new ideas, forming the basis of analysis (Gale, Heath, Cameron, Rashid & Redwood, 2013; Gibbs, 2007; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Therefore, the argument is that the transcribing process is as much a form of analysis and interpretation, as it is a technical activity. (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006).

Some researchers choose to have their transcript created by a third party. Professional transcribers typically have a certain skill set and understand the meticulous process and formatting required to type transcripts, a skill which the researcher may not possess. Professional transcribers also tend to use transcribing equipment to simplify and speed up the process (Fraser, 2004). If the researcher does not have a strong touch-typing ability, then

this process will become extensive as transcribing is a tedious and time-consuming activity. It requires the listener to be completely attentive to the spoken word and often takes four to six times longer to transcribe than it did to collect the data (Gibbs, 2007). Furthermore, researchers who choose to send their recordings to an external transcriber risk losing control over the work, thus affecting the end product (King & Horrocks, 2010). This is because it can be difficult for an unfamiliar audience to accurately relay what is spoken into text form.

The decision to complete the transcription process myself was predominantly due to the context of my research and my inexperience as a researcher. As this is my first research project, I thought it was important to understand and reflect on what was said in each interview, forming the basis for my analysis. By undertaking the transcription process myself, I was able to re-emphasise confidentiality and ensure consistency in the quality of work produced among all transcripts (Gale et al., 2013; Guion et al., 2011). One of the biggest advantages of doing this process myself was that I was familiar with the context of the interview, the accents spoken and the subject matter, all of which can be a barrier to an external transcriber (Gale et al., 2013; Gibbs, 2007). Furthermore, I included transcribing in the analysis process; whereas some researchers would consider this to be separate, that is, as part of the interview process (Atkinson, 2007), I believe this provided a greater insight into each individual's story.

When a participant is telling their story during an interview, the text is constructed through conversation and the story is influenced by the researcher's responses. When transcribing, there is a possibility that non-verbal communications are omitted; therefore, certain emphases will not be included in the written version. This can impact the participant's story since highlighted moments may not be evident. Although the aim is to provide an accurate account of what was said, narratives are ultimately our own worldly creations. Meaning is fluid and alters according to context, it is not fixed and able to be used universally. The researcher must use what they have (audio and text) to partially, selectively and imperfectly represent reality (Reissman, 1993).

 The degree of what can be learnt about human activity depends on how audio data is represented into written texts (King & Horrocks, 2010). I began the transcribing process by saving each interview recording to my OneDrive cloud storage, securing the data with a password and removing the file from my phone (this audio file will be destroyed upon completion of this thesis). I used Microsoft Word to type each transcript as it is a software I am familiar with. As there is no guideline or set way to conduct this process, I proceeded to

transcribe verbatim (word for word) to portray reality in the form of transcribed text (Gale et al., 2013; Gibbs, 2007). Common practice when transcribing verbatim is to preserve all the dialect words and grammatical expressions, but not the actual sound of the accent it was spoken in – for example, spoken as 'wanna' but written as 'want to'. Maintaining a consistent level of spelling made the transcript easier to read, and during the coding process it also allowed me to search key words. I proceeded to transcribe the entire interview including laughter, pauses and other spoken aspects of the conversation to allow for an interpretive analysis of the data (discussed in the following chapter). I did not make field notes regarding body language during the interviews, and therefore I did not include tone or non-verbal observations in the transcripts (Flick, 1998). I kept participants' real names in the transcripts until the very end of the analysis process so I did not get confused.

Participants were given the option to receive a copy of their completed transcript by selecting the appropriate option in the consent form, signed at the time of each interview.

3.7.1.2 Step two: overview of the participant's story

Immediately after the completion of a transcript, I created a written summary as my first interpretation of each individual's story. I based this piece specifically on the research question (motivations and career development). Although storying sits within the 'narrative analysis' approach, rather than the 'analysis of narrative' approach (Savin-Baden & Van Niekerk, 2007), the development of these individual stories was important because it allowed me to describe the individual in a meaningful way as well as see the "big picture" (Gibbs, 2007).

The process of writing an overview of the participant's story allowed me to pay attention to the individual context and what their core message was. Some participants made their points obvious, while for others this was subtler (Fraser, 2008). This overview helped me to recognise and reflect on any biases I may have had during each interview (Savin-Baden & Van Niekerk, 2007).

I decided phase one and phase two (discussed below) would be conducted consecutively for each interview. This allowed me to concentrate on one participant story at a time directly after completing the transcription of the same participant (Gale et al., 2013).

3.7.2 Phase two: Analysing the written text: the individual's experience

Once interview transcripts were completed, and I was fully immersed in what the participants had 'said', a thorough thematic analysis of each participant's story was conducted. Due to the smaller sample size (seven participants), I conducted the thematic analysis manually. Analysis and interpretation of the narrative involved coding long stretches of transcribed data (whole interview text), and regrouping key words and common phrases into themes, therefore documenting patterns of the individual's lived experience to make sense of events (McCormack, 2004; Paiva, 2008; Treloar et al., 2015).

This phase of analysis provided a deeper insight to highlight key points in the transcript. Firstly, general themes from each participant's story were identified (phase two, step one), and then a more focused analysis drew themes out of the transcript that related directly to the research question (motivations and career development; phase two, step two below). Set out below is the step-by-step process used to conduct this phase of the analysis.

3.7.2.1 Step one: line-by-line thematic analysis – general themes

I started the line-by-line thematic analysis whilst keeping an open mind and being alert to important references which otherwise may have remained invisible (Fraser, 2008; Treloar et al., 2015). I conducted this analysis by reading the transcript carefully and using the margins of the transcript to apply a paraphrase or a key idea to best describe what I had interpreted. The process of drawing out these key points aimed to classify all of the information so that it could be systematically grouped and compared with other parts of the data set (Gale et al., 2013). I began the line-by-line thematic analysis by highlighting anything that I thought might be relevant and approaching the stories with an open-mind so I could capture the unexpected.

Due to the subjective nature of in-depth interviewing, completing a line-by-line thematic analysis allowed me to expand my analytical views and increase my familiarity with the text. Taking an open approach to the data set, I searched for key points in the text such as events that happened; individual experiences, feelings, thoughts, meanings, explanations or excuses; types of travel, activities and work; the relationships built; the use of metaphors or rhetorical language; contradictions which may or may not have been conscious, or deliberate; stories which seemed well rehearsed, or difficult to explain; and any other words or phrases which sparked my interest. I also searched for literal conversations such as 'it all began when…' or declarations signalling that a subject was ending such as 'that's when it all went

downhill…' (Riessman, 1993). I did not want to get too specific in this initial phase as I wanted to keep my mind open to emerging ideas.

As the key points from the individual transcript emerged, I began to group these findings into themes. The process of grouping the information into themes allowed me to go back to the stories more easily when drawing out themes within this group (phase three).

3.7.2.2 Step two: line-by-line thematic analysis – framed by the research question
In this step, I narrowed my focus onto the key constructs of the research question (motivations and career development). I went through each transcript again, but this time only highlighting notions which specifically related to the research question. This allowed me to focus on the desired outcomes and filter out off-topic stories.

As discussed earlier, the interview guidelines were arranged chronologically to allow participants' stories to flow naturally from pre, during and post-SIE. This allowed me to analyse the pre-SIE conversations in order to uncover participants' motivations, and uncover potential career development that may have occurred during their SIE and if their experience at all related to their post-SIE careers.

3.7.3 Phase three: Drawing out themes from across the participant group
After an analysis of each individual's experience (phase one and two), this step moved onto the more general level of analysis which drew out themes across all participants. This phase was conducted by categorising the themes identified in the individual transcripts by highlighting the similarities and differences in terms or phrases. It is in this phase that patterns or themes surfaced that were worth exploring (Todorov & Weinstein, 1969; Treloar et al., 2015). By comparing the stories, I was also able to check the consistency and accuracy of a theme whilst being alert for differences and emerging themes.

In this study, I avoided over-generalising and using untypical examples to make an overall point (selective anecdotalism). I used phrases such as 'some say...' opposed to 'participants say…', thus increasing the credibility of results (Gibbs, 2007 p. 100). I also kept the development of themes within the group that I was studying. To check the themes that had now emerged, I referred back to my research diary to further reflect on my initial interpretations and ensure nothing had been missed (Nadin & Cassell, 2006).

3.8 Conclusion

This chapter documented the qualitative interpretive research approach that frames this study on the volunteer SIE experiences of seven young women and men. I discussed my ontological and epistemological perspectives, emphasising multiple realities, contextualism and subjectivism. I also outlined narrative inquiry as my interpretive methodology and then documented my research approach to the collection and analysis of participant interviews while stressing the importance of rigour and reflexivity to ensure that research outcomes are credible and trustworthy.

The following chapter presents the research findings which were drawn out of the seven participants' stories. Following thematic analysis, themes are arranged into 'motivations' and 'career development' in order to address the specific research questions.

Chapter 4: Findings

4.1 Introduction

The objective of this chapter is to analyse and report the findings that emerged from the seven participant's stories. To address the research question, findings are arranged into three main sections. The first section provides an overview of the participants and the type of work they undertook as part of their volunteer SIE. The second section identifies the motivations that influenced participants to engage in volunteer SIE. The final section outlines the development of career related competencies that participants gained from their experience of volunteer SIE. In the next two chapters (Findings and Discussion) I use the terms SIE and volunteer SIE interchangeably when referring to participants' volunteer SIE experience. The main themes which emerged in relation to the research questions are outlined in sections two and three of this chapter and are also listed in an overview summary (see Table 4.1 below). In order to support the findings identified in this chapter, illustrative participant quotes are used and written in italics.

Table 4.1: Overview of the Key Themes

Motivations	Career Development
Escape	Communication skills and widened networks
Altruism	New outlook on their career
Search for adventure and new authentic travel experiences	Increased employability
Timing and context (enabling factors)	Personal development

4.2 Overview of the Participants' Volunteer SIE Experience

This section provides an overview of the volunteers' SIE experiences. The table below highlights key information regarding the seven volunteers who participated in this study, including how they obtained voluntary work, the types of work they did, and SIE locations. This section then draws on the information outlined in Table 4.2 to highlight similarities and differences between participants' experiences, focusing on the degree of choice participants had when selecting their destination, and the type of work they participated in, to assess whether there were links between the work participants did pre-SIE and during their SIE.

For definition purposes, many participants referred to the length of time they served on their volunteer SIE as being 'long-term volunteering' as compared to a short-term 'volunteer tourist'. They were passionate about distinguishing themselves from this subgroup and held negative perceptions towards this line of volunteering. *Volunteer tourism that's really bad like foreigners going into communities and thinking that they're going to make them so much better it's just this colonialism, it's this superiority* (Tom).

Table 4.2: Participants' Details

Name	Host countries	How work was obtained	Type of work
Karina	India, Spain and Thailand	WWOOFing (willing workers on organic farms)	Farming and community development/assistance in Ashrams
Tom	South America	WWOOFing	Farming (plants and animals)
Emily	Fiji	International volunteer organisation	Building and construction
Lacey	Northern Thailand	International volunteer organisation	English language teacher
Anna	Africa	Family friend	Training local teachers and creating curriculums
Chloe	Cambodia	Internship	Women's violence and empowerment
Liam	Ukraine	Internship	Travel blogging

As outlined in Table 4.2 above, participants volunteered in a variety of countries all with differing cultures and languages. The only common country visited was Thailand, although the types of work undertaken differed (for example, teaching and WWOOFing). Only two participants had multiple volunteer SIE experiences. Karina volunteered in a range of countries during her volunteer SIE, whereas Anna volunteered in one country several times between the ages 18 to 30. The other participants were embarking on their first volunteer SIE and remained within one country for the entire duration.

The majority of participants had considerable freedom when selecting their volunteer destinations. Typical considerations influencing their choice of destination included the cost of living, types of available volunteer work culture, language, and the overall kind of experience they wished to have. For Lacey and Emily, their selection was limited to the countries offered by their chosen volunteer organisations. Liam's trip to Ukraine was planned for many years and he selected a volunteer organisation when the opportunity

suddenly presented itself. Chloe also had the location pre-determined so she could gain first-hand experience of working in the country she had based her studies on. Overall, participants had an idea which locations they would like to visit and some were able to freely choose their location. Only two participants mentioned that they had selected a country based on what their chosen organisation provided as options.

As shown in Table 4.2 above, two participants opted to volunteer as WWOOFers or community workers. The aim was to exchange their service for free meals and accommodation in order to lessen their travel expenses. Tom focused on farming in South America where he visited two farms in total. Karina opted to volunteer for numerous communities and farms across India, Thailand, and Spain so she had a stable base from which she could explore. Tasks commonly included cooking, cleaning, planting, farming, and assistance in local Ashrams.

Lacey and Emily opted to volunteer through pre-arranged international volunteer organisations. They engaged in different work to each other (e.g., English language teaching and building and construction). Given that they were the youngest participants in this study and that it was their first volunteer SIE, paying to volunteer abroad provided a sense of security in knowing everything was pre-arranged and there was support available when needed. Anna, however, also volunteered through a pre-arranged volunteer organisation, but she was not expected to pay fees to work there. Anna worked in a teacher training college in Africa that was owned and organised by a family friend. Liam and Chloe obtained unpaid internships for their volunteer SIE. Liam was involved in creating a travel blog to promote Ukraine as a tourist destination, whereas Chloe's internship related to raising awareness about women's violence by working in an empowerment programme and increasing membership and support for the programme.

For some participants, the volunteer work they participated in overseas was similar to their occupation in New Zealand and they were therefore able to transfer some of their existing skills. Anna, for instance, was a primary school teacher in New Zealand and she was therefore able to utilise her knowledge of New Zealand educational curriculums to implement a Diploma in Teaching in the community where she volunteered in Africa. Lacey was able to utilise the skills she had gained from her degree in Teaching English as a Foreign Language to teach children from three years old to university-aged students in rural Northern Thailand. Chloe had researched women's harm in Cambodia for her

thesis and was able to strategise and identify areas for empowerment when working in the field. For the remaining participants, the type of work they volunteered to do was different to the work they did in New Zealand, which allowed them to acquire new practical skills. Emily, for example, went abroad directly out of high school to help build a medical centre. As this was not something she had done before, she therefore attained practical skills in basic building and construction as well as how to work as part of a team:

> *We had two leaders and they had done projects in the past. We also had a building coordinator guy so they just like showed us what to do and then we all did it together. I think it was pretty sound by the end [hahaha] it looked pretty good!* (Emily).

4.3 Motivations

This section identifies participants' motivations to undertake volunteer SIE. While there were a variety of factors encouraging participants to do volunteer SIE, these are summarised into four key themes: escape motivations; altruistic motivations; search for adventure; and new authentic travel experiences. In addition to these motivations, there were other factors that did not directly motivate the participants to do an SIE, but they enabled them to enact the SIE. These relate to timing and context and are referred to as enabling factors and discussed later in this chapter.

Participants remained open-minded going into their volunteer SIE and did not appear to have pre-determined expectations other than to enjoy themselves and experience something completely different. Chloe, for example, approached the volunteer SIE with an open mind and limited expectations: *I don't think I really knew what to expect. I went in like open to new experiences* (Chloe). One participant, however, expressed that he expected a personal change following this experience: *My expected outcome was that I'd come back a changed person with a very different view of life* (Liam). However, he also went on to say he had not expected the experience to have impacted him personally to the extent that it did, which suggests this expectation was an afterthought to what development actually occurred.

4.3.1 Motivated to escape

An important theme that resonated among participants was the motivation to 'escape'. The desire to escape certain personal situations was discussed in several ways. Some participants felt lost and without purpose in their life, whereas other sought to escape from

a personal crisis such as a negative workplace. Due to the participants' life stage, they had reached a period in their life where they needed to make a decision regarding their career but they did not feel they were ready as yet. They were typically seeking separation from their jobs, peers, family, or their lifestyle in general in New Zealand. Volunteer SIE enabled them to take a step forward and break away from their mundane lifestyle, without having to make concrete decisions for their future at that time:

> *I thought about [what career path to pursue] and knew like I really need to keep my options open because I really have no idea what I wanted to do so I decided to go overseas to get away from it all and then I could decide when I came back [hahaha]* (Emily).

Disengagement from their careers in their home country was a significant issue causing many participants to feel lost and without purpose. No participants mentioned any positive factors about their work that was encouraging them to stay and they viewed the volunteer SIE as a viable option to get out. *I kind of went there predominantly just to… get away from my job* (Tom). Some participants had been in their role for a few years and either did not foresee progression, or they had lost interest in the actual work activities. Karina, for instance, worked as a nurse for a number of years before reaching a point where she needed to escape the constant cycle of death and sickness that she was surrounded by in a hospital environment. She was adamant that she would no longer be a nurse and she decided to volunteer in countries that she believed would provide some form of spiritual enlightenment:

> *Towards the end [of my pre-SIE nursing job] I was like no, I'm not going to do nursing anymore… I was really quite over nursing and ready to go overseas… India seemed to have everything that I wanted… it seemed very spiritual, it seemed to be very different, it seemed, like, just full of colour and life which I felt New Zealand at the time didn't really have* (Karina).

Stress in the workplace in their home country was also a common factor causing participants to seek new opportunities offshore. This stress often developed due to high levels of pressure and the intensity of their workloads. Anna expressed how her job as a teacher had become unstable and unsafe as the children were violent towards her (physically and verbally) and she felt a lack of organisational support. *I had a really stressful job… really violent children and no support* (Anna). This caused her to resign and return to Africa to participate in her second volunteer SIE.

Some participants felt their jobs at home had become boring and that they had already outgrown their passion for their career. As many had put a lot of time and effort into

building their career, either by working their way up in the industry or through tertiary education, this lack of motivation left them feeling lost and without career direction. All participants were indecisive and flailing, trying to grasp their next move, ultimately utilising this time to take on volunteer SIE:

> *I didn't want to work, well I didn't know where I wanted to work. I didn't know if I wanted to do what I was doing before because I was really stressed out. I was thinking, I don't know if I can do this forever, maybe I need to change my career, maybe I need to go back into education, I have no idea* (Tom).

Six of the participants in this study had recently completed an undergraduate degree, several of whom had continued to pursue post-graduate studies. These participants explained how during their studies their grades were under considerable pressure, either by themselves or their parents, causing some participants to lose interest in their area of study. Liam, for instance, was pressured into pursuing post-graduate education by his parents and due to his lack of motivation and his urge to travel, his grades began to suffer. He therefore decided to take a break and volunteer abroad. Emily was the only participant in this study who had not been to university prior to her SIE. She was indecisive as to which study option she should pursue and she lacked a clear career direction. She was not yet willing to commit her time to completing a degree when she did not have clarity on which career path to pursue. *I wasn't really doing anything exciting and I was trying to decide whether or not I wanted to go to Uni or what I wanted to do… I just had no interest at all in going to Uni* (Emily). Volunteer SIE provided all participants with an opportunity to have a gap before "getting back on track", allowing the time and space to de-stress and think about their future career.

Only one participant in this study (Chloe) viewed volunteer SIE as a means to fast-track her career development. Upon the completion of her degree in International Development, Chloe had difficulty securing employment due to her lack of practical skills and experience in that field. As her thesis topic focused on domestic violence and women's empowerment in Cambodia, she was attracted to the promise of employment in her field of education and expertise. She viewed the volunteer SIE as a means to quickly gain an in-depth insight into international development and to learn the operational requirements of working in international development and women's harm to aid the process of finding paid work in New Zealand. She chose volunteering over paid work as there were more opportunities available to her, she felt the work would be more meaningful, and she was able to obtain a role more quickly than in New Zealand.

Furthermore, she believed that it would have been difficult to find paid work in Cambodia as they did not have the resources and relied heavily on volunteers. While skill development was an important motivator for Chloe, a more in-depth discussion of the accrual of individual knowledge, skills, and abilities follows in the next section on 'Career Development'.

Aside from Chloe who opted to volunteer abroad predominantly to enhance her career, the remainder of the participants did not express career development as a factor pulling them abroad. They did, however, seek opportunities to gain new personal insights and some sought opportunities for a change in career. In this study, I refer to the participants' 'careers' as either the industry they worked in pre-SIE or post-SIE or their field of study. For example, I consider Chloe's career to be in the health sector as this was her field of study, even though she had no work experience prior to her SIE.

A few participants expressed a desire to break free from social pressures regarding careers, particularly to have a "successful" career. Liam sought an escape from his parents who placed a lot of pressure on him to excel in his studies, whereas Emily wanted a break from her high school peers and the judgement and pressure that came with not attending university immediately on leaving school. Emily decided to travel after the completion of high school as she was not interested in following the expected career path of going directly to university and then straight into a career. These participants wanted to experience something different to their peers where they could express themselves in new ways, in a country where no one knew who they were:

> *I think in leaving to go overseas you immediately become more open minded, you immediately are much more open to new ideas and experiences and much more willing to like take on what you are and you don't have to be who you are there as well, you can sort of take on who you want to be* (Tom).

Despite the various influences from friends and family, either encouraging them to go or enticing them to stay, the constant pressure from society ultimately drove them abroad: *All my school friends were going to Uni… I was like, "Well no… I'm not going to Uni" and everyone was like, "How are you not going to Uni?"… I really just needed to break up from my friend's circle* (Emily). However, the actual decision to undertake volunteer SIE was that of the participants; they were not pressured into going nor were they made to stay home and not volunteer abroad, although at times their decision was questioned by others (i.e., parents or peers): *I'm quite a driven person so I knew I wanted to do it [volunteer SIE] and I made it happen. Like no one else was going to do it for me* (Lacey).

The participants in this study were young and at a crossroads in terms of career and personal directions. Volunteer SIE encouraged participants to escape as they simply did not know what to do. While negative feelings associated with this period of their life were significant factors driving participants to seek a new experience and escape their New Zealand lifestyle, they were not the only reason.

4.3.2 Altruistic motivators

Many participants expressed altruistic motives for participating in volunteer SIE. They were interested in "giving back" to society and had a strong empathy for people who were less advantaged than themselves. Some participants discussed how they had been influenced to help due to various marketing efforts documenting people in need, such as by World Vision. Other participants aspired to be like individuals that they had seen on television programmes and in travel blogs who were making significant contributions in impoverished countries: *I watched [television] programmes where young people go on a volunteer work exchange project to a third world country where they get to make a difference* (Liam). Anna was influenced by her religious upbringing. Furthermore, the type of work many participants selected to engage in during their SIE signalled altruistic motivations.

Participants who expressed a great deal of empathy towards residents of war-torn or disaster-stricken countries were highly influenced to make a difference in the lives of others. As residents from these areas did not typically have the same opportunities as those in countries such as New Zealand, participants were aware of their privilege and were driven to give back and make a difference in the lives of people who did not have the same opportunities as the volunteers had experienced:

> *I want to try and support people who haven't had what I've had… I guess a big motivation for me is like realising that I'm in this very privileged position and I'd like to support people who have been unlucky with the way they've been born, where they've been born and yeah their chances, especially I think medical things, so many people there die from very invasive things, or diarrhoea* (Anna).

Most participants were interested in volunteering and contributing to society. While only a few participants had volunteered in the New Zealand context, many participants discussed how they had always endeavoured to engage in voluntary activities, particularly overseas, but they had not yet made the time or had the opportunity to do so. For some, however, the decision to volunteer abroad was an afterthought to their ambition to travel and their desire for a new experience led them towards volunteering. Participants were

interested in sustainable work that supported the development of the host community or environment and they wanted to participate in work that 'felt good' and had meaning. Undertaking volunteer SIE allowed them to combine their passion for travel and their desire for new experiences with their interest in volunteering and helping others: *I think I've always wanted to do some volunteer stuff… I can get a nice balanced trip if I go do some volunteering, go travelling and work or something* (Emily). Lacey was drawn to the volunteer aspect of her trip and went abroad to teach children English. As she had a degree in Teaching English as a Foreign Language, she was easily able to pursue English teaching in a paid capacity; however, she felt as though earning money would have defeated the purpose of what she aimed to achieve whilst there:

> *A lot of people said, "You know you can go over there, because you have an English language degree, and get paid?" but that wasn't the point for me. I wanted to go over there and give something, I didn't want to get paid, like that would have just defeated the purpose, like I wanted to go over there and do some good for these kids* (Lacey).

To ensure they were participating in work that was meaningful and valuable to the community, many participants put a lot of time and effort into selecting a volunteer organisation or community that they felt was reputable. Emily, Liam, and Lacey chose well-known and established volunteer organisations that had headquarters in New Zealand. They sought advice from friends who had participated in similar volunteer SIEs and went through a lengthy process to obtain a volunteer role and ensure they too would be a good fit and capable of doing the work. Anna selected an organisation that was run by a family friend as it focused on equipping local teachers with the skills and knowledge necessary to effectively teach children in the community and set them up for a future career. Anna returned to the same organisation on three occasions as she believed in investing time, energy, and resources into one community to continue their development as opposed to volunteering short term in multiple countries and leaving less of an imprint. Tom, however, did not put much thought into his choice and selected a farm purely because his sister had volunteered there before, while Chloe took the first opportunity available to her that aligned with what she had studied.

While participants' motivations appeared to predominantly be driven by empathy and a desire to help others with little to no compensation, participants were also aware that there would be some personal benefit from undertaking an SIE: *I'm not actually going over there like, "Oh I want to go over there and help this community"; it's like I want to go*

and help myself! (Karina). Those who did not go abroad through a volunteer organisation worked for places such as Ashrams or farms with the expectation that they would exchange their work for free accommodation and meals to lessen the cost of their travels.

4.3.3 Search for adventure and new authentic travel experiences

A search for adventure and new authentic travel experiences were also important SIE drivers and the decision to volunteer abroad was predominantly to experience something new and challenging that would fuel participants' sense of adventure. Part of that adventure was the opportunity to push their boundaries and immerse themselves in a foreign culture by living with locals. Lacey described the urge to volunteer abroad as being deep, a calling that she had to answer for herself. Although she had been longing to re-visit France, once she decided to volunteer, that passion overruled all other experiences she wished to have:

> *I wanted it so badly, I wanted this more than the France thing, like it actually turned around that I just wanted to do that, like I just felt like I needed to do this for some reason like I don't even really know why, I just got it in my mind that that's just what I needed to do* (Lacey).

Although participants were at a life stage where they had to make important decisions regarding their future, they were not yet ready to settle down or curtail their travelling: *I still didn't want to stop travelling* (Tom). As travel was one of their main priorities, participants typically planned their life events and career choices around what would best enable them to travel: *I knew the degree I was doing would help me travel, so I was like well at least if I do this… it can help me travel, and at that stage that's all I really cared about* (Lacey).

Participants' passion for travel seemed to have developed from a young age: *All through my life all I wanted to do was just travel* (Karina). Tom explained how travelling had become so deeply embedded into who he was as a person that it had become part of who he was: *I mentioned I travel a lot and so it's a big part of my identity and I felt like I hadn't done it for so long* (Tom). Furthermore, participants spoke about how international travel, in particular the 'OE', has become a norm for young New Zealanders and that the desires they had to travel are common among others in their age demographic.

All participants volunteered in countries that were less economically developed. Emily opted to volunteer in a more familiar location (Fiji) while the other participants (such as Tom), went to very different countries, indicating that the more challenging the

destination in terms of language, culture, and geographical location, the more authentic the SIE experience was expected to be. Often, the SIE was sought as an opportunity to visit a unique or exotic location: *Just going to really beautiful places, really different places, as different as I can get generally like Asia and India* (Tom). However, for some, the appeal came from travelling to a country that people typically did not visit. This gave them an opportunity to set themselves apart and gain experience that fewer people could say that they had experienced: *I want something very off beat that not many people would do… [this was] very different because not many people from New Zealand go to Ukraine* (Liam). Emily chose to volunteer in Fiji as it was geographically close to New Zealand and she felt more familiar with the culture and customs due to Fiji's cultural presence and similarities with New Zealand: *It seems like New Zealand is quite linked to Fiji with helping them out in the past so seems to make more sense than going off to Africa or something, we don't actually have that much of a link* (Emily).

Participants' desire to seek an adventure and experience something 'new' included an aspect of authenticity where they were drawn to the unfamiliarity of being immersed in foreign countries: *Something completely different to anything I'd ever known and that's what I really wanted, I wanted to feel out of my comfort zone* (Lacey). While most participants chose to volunteer in countries they had never travelled to before, others sought a new experience in a country that they had visited previously. For some participants, it had been a while since their last trip abroad and they were eager to go again: *I love travelling and I hadn't been overseas for a couple of years so I was keen to get back into the world* (Chloe). However, other participants had just returned from a holiday and were eager to continue travelling.

Those who had travelled alone in the past were driven towards having a new solo experience: *I really just wanted to get out there again and travel by myself again* (Chloe). However, for some, the experience of solo travel was new and exciting: *I've never really travelled on my own to a completely unknown country and that's what really appealed to me* (Liam). In contrast, some participants sought the security of having someone to travel with or knowing someone in the host destination given that they were travelling solo. This provided them with reassurance in their decision to go abroad and ultimately allowed them to take risks and be less fearful of the foreign destination: *I wanted to go and my brother wanted to go… having my brother there meant I felt safe enough to travel through four countries* (Anna).

The volunteer SIE also provided a slower-paced travel option for participants to discover and learn as opposed to their previous trips overseas as a tourist. Karina explained how her previous trip to India was fast-paced, hopping from city to city, and involved many tourist type activities. Participants chose volunteer SIE so they could spend time and interact with locals and volunteers from different parts of the world: *Meeting new people so just not the locals but other travellers as well* (Lacey). The volunteer SIE was a desirable travel option for many due to the array of activities that they could participate in that aligned with their interests. While many of these activities were also available to them in New Zealand, there was a certain novelty in participating in them overseas as it felt more authentic. For example, Karina's passion for yoga and meditation led her to India due to the status India has on the global stage in terms of its yoga and meditation practices. While these activities were available to her in New Zealand, she sought an experience outside the typical yoga studio where she could immerse herself in the history and culture and learn from individuals who practice these rituals daily: *I was into meditation and yoga… I'm very interested in yoga and meditation and it seemed like home land for that in India so yeah* (Karina).

Volunteer SIE was also seen as a means for deep cultural immersion, which was heavily desired by participants who had learned, or who were learning, the native language of the host country. They viewed volunteer SIE as an opportunity to enhance or develop their foreign language speaking skills by volunteering and living amongst the locals of countries who spoke the language that the participant had studied. While Liam was quite advanced in his ability to speak foreign languages prior to the SIE, he felt that he did not have the opportunity to utilise these skills in New Zealand due to limited interaction with tourists:

> *I learnt all these languages and I thought I need to make good use of them, I don't get that much of an opportunity to engage with the tourists in Auckland so I thought – oh, maybe I'll travel abroad and meet people there* (Liam).

4.3.4 Timing and context (enabling factors)

This final subsection discusses timing and context in relation to the participant's volunteer SIE. While timing and context are not specific motivations, they are important factors that enabled participants to volunteer abroad. While individuals spoke about a range of motivations, they did not go until they had organised adequate financial support and the

time was right to go. They also discussed their security as being an important factor when deciding to go, or where to go.

Timing was one of the major factors enabling volunteer SIE and played a key role in participants' decision-making process when considering volunteer SIE. Typically, the decision to travel had been established prior to them organising the time to go. Anna, for example, quit her job specifically to volunteer abroad. Others made the decision to go abroad because they had no responsibilities keeping them in New Zealand: *I was pretty free at that stage. It was good timing* (Emily). As most participants were in a phase between work and university, they were not restricted to an employer or a lengthy degree*: You've got nothing to lose, you're in the in-between period. I think when I did it was the perfect time because I was finished with studies, I didn't have a job to go into* (Lacey). Furthermore, none of the participants had attachments in terms of children or a family that may have restricted them: *No attachments here, like I didn't have kids or a partner or anything* (Anna). They often felt as though it was 'now or never' and they did not want to miss the opportunity: *Being in a situation where I can, you know maybe in two or three years I can't… just perfect time* (Karina). Tom took the opportunity to go as the timing worked well with his partner who was completing year one of a nursing degree. Tom knew he would not have the time to go within the next few years as his partner would need his support towards the end of his degree and he therefore took the opportunity to go then: *My partner is studying and I thought it would be a really good time to go away now because he's studying… [he's] in his first year, and I sort of needed to help support him in the next few years* (Tom).

As well has having the time to volunteer abroad, participants were also financially able to travel and work for little or minimal payment, for an extended duration: *My career was on the side and I could financially afford it* (Anna). Some had parents who were supporting them financially: *My parents helped me with like my major flights just to Europe and things like that and then I paid for the rest* (Emily). In contrast, others had saved enough money themselves to permit their experience: *I just had the money and I could just go and do it* (Emily). Furthermore, having saved enough money meant they did not have to seek paid work whilst overseas to fund their travels: *I didn't need to [get paid work] because I had saved ya know so I preferred not to really* (Karina). Many participants also chose destinations where they received greater value for their money (i.e., exchange rates, cheap food, and accommodation) so their money would go further

and their experience would last longer: *Asia's cheap so that's definitely why I wanted to go to Asia* (Karina). Anna, however, who had become accustomed to the location, people, and culture of the host country, discussed money as being a barrier to her staying there permanently. She also said that her plans to return to volunteer were on hold until she had established the funds. This is an example of how financial freedom is necessary to be able to act on one's motivations to volunteering abroad: *I really enjoyed being there, I've always wanted to go back but for me it was about funding… I've told my boss if you can get me a salary I'd go back because you can't live off a dollar a day* (Anna).

Participants also considered their safety when travelling abroad. As mentioned, some participants selected destinations they felt were closer to home (in terms of distance or culture), travelled with a friend or family member, or volunteered through a volunteer organisation which had a base in New Zealand. The final choice to go abroad was made once participants felt secure and comfortable with their decision. As many participants had travelled previously and had some experience in adapting to different cultures, the idea of volunteer SIE seemed less risky and allowed participants to feel secure in their choice of destination:

> *It wasn't something completely new for me to go somewhere where I didn't know the language, like I'd already experienced that so it wasn't like a huge shock. Obviously there was the culture shock, it was completely different, but it was like I'd been there before but in a different way… I knew what it was like to discover a new place and I think that I always just wanted to [do it again]… I knew that I wanted to travel and I always enjoyed like discovering a new place and actually like living and learning the culture… I always enjoy like not being a tourist but actually like living there* (Lacey).

Some individuals felt comfortable travelling once they had support from their parents. For instance, Lacey's decision to volunteer in Africa shifted following a terrorist attack in the local community she was set to visit. Her family objected out of fear for her safety which caused her to re-route to a country closer to home to put her parents at ease:

> *I told my mum I was like, "Ok, so I'm not doing it but not because you don't want me to do it but because I've made that decision myself", because I want them to support me… and my parents have been to Thailand and I wanted them to support me in what I do… it was good to have them behind me* (Lacey).

The security of knowing people who had visited the chosen destination, or who had participated in the same volunteer programme, also helped them make the decision to go abroad: *A family friend had done the exact same programme as I ended up doing… I just*

did that one because you know a friend suggested (Emily). Typically, participants were interested in the travel stories of their friends or family and wished for an experience of their own:

> *I was always kind of inspired by my dad because he did you know the old like hippy trail back in the 70s and 80s… hearing his stories about going to the Middle East and you know India and Pakistan and stuff like that probably inspired me* (Karina).

4.4 Career Development

The aim of this section is to analyse the impact that volunteer SIE had on the careers of participants. While participants were predominantly driven to volunteer abroad for personal reasons, after analysing the participants' stories, it was apparent that a range of unexpected career development outcomes resulted from the volunteer SIE experience. While career development is one of the main foci of this study, participants also reported on personal development as an important outcome of the SIE. In addition to providing insight into career development resulting from volunteer SIE, this section also highlights several aspects of personal development which indirectly aid career development.

Table 4.3: Work Experiences Pre, During, and Post-SIE

Name	Pre-SIE careers	Type of work on SIE	Post-SIE careers
Karina	Nurse	Farming and community development/assistance in Ashrams	Nurse (same company, higher position)
Tom	Quantitative data analyst	Farming (plants and animals)	Quantitative data analyst (new company)
Emily	High school student	Building and construction	University student – environmental planning
Lacey	University graduate – Teaching English as a Foreign Language	English language teacher (3 years to university age)	Cellar hand (winery)
Anna	Primary school teacher	Training local teachers and creating curriculums	International development worker
Chloe	Master's student. Thesis topic: Women's Harm in Cambodia	Women's violence and empowerment	Women's sexual health
Liam	Post-graduate student in Business	Travel blogging	Post-graduate student. Worked in in-flight catering. Also worked for a volunteer organisation to sign up students

Table 4.3 above provides an overview of participants' work experiences pre, during, and post-SIE. As shown above, some participants went into post-SIE occupations where the work was similar to what they experienced while on SIE, or chose to study something which was inspired by their SIE experience. Karina and Tom went back to their existing careers. Others found work in a different area to their SIE; however, the confidence and personal skills developed as a result of the SIE enabled them to apply for different types of positions. Lacey became a cellar hand after she returned home. This was partly influenced by some paid SIE employment undertaken in France after her volunteer SIE and by the confidence that these SIE experiences engendered in her:

> *I was really interested in the wine industry like especially after working on the vineyard and just being exposed to wine so much through the French culture, and then yeah, I found this job as a cellar hand and I applied for it. They wanted somebody that had worked in a winery before which I had done. They wanted somebody that had a degree, and they didn't really care what the degree was in, they just didn't want someone in that was stupid I think, so I applied thinking oh well I've got nothing to lose and then they called me in for an interview and I got the job* (Lacey).

The type of work that participants were involved in as part of their volunteer SIE was often physically and mentally laborious. Tasks such as building, gardening, cooking, cleaning, and teaching led to the accumulation of skills that were typically viewed as basic and fundamental forms of work prior to the rapid increase of globalisation and technology. Many enjoyed working outdoors where they were closer to nature and could take a step back from their typical city lifestyle: *Getting my hands in the earth in whatever way either digging a hole for a tree or whatever* (Karina). They sought instruction, advice, and learning opportunities from the local workers as they were well-experienced in what they were doing: *The awesome thing was you could learn off them ya know… you could learn how they plant their trees and what's effective for the environment* (Karina). Participants also learned a lot more about themselves by being involved in tasks that they normally would not do. They came to identify areas of strength, weakness, interest, disinterest, and an overall greater appreciation of themselves by engaging in this physical work and having the time to reflect on their experiences and life plans:

> *You're working a lot so you've got a lot of time in your head to think. When you're travelling you're constantly like beautiful temple, beautiful city, nice food, but you don't really have time to think introspectively. When you are working, especially*

when you are doing manual labour, you are thinking about life and thinking about things the whole time you know (Tom).

4.4.1 Communication skills and widened networks

Participants' communication and language skills improved as a result of their volunteer SIE experience. While many participants learnt to communicate in new and effective ways, they were also able to draw on their experiences on their return to New Zealand. Due to the number of people from around the world they met during their volunteer SIE, participants established wider networks and created strong international friendships.

Participants developed their communication skills as a result of volunteering in communities where English was limited. They learnt to communicate in new and different ways as they dealt with communication barriers in the host country. Tom felt that he returned to New Zealand with greater expertise on how to approach and speak to people appropriately due to his experience: *[I] have the expertise on like how to approach people in the right tone and stuff like that* (Tom). Participants typically acknowledged that they were going to face barriers prior to the SIE and they therefore were less overwhelmed and found ways to communicate through means other than language. They also tended to become more attentive to those who did not share a common language, enabling them to interpret what the speaker was trying to express: *Travelling in Asia has really strengthened my communication abilities and it worked really well in my favour as you are able to pick up what people are trying to say to you a lot faster which are really good skills* (Tom). Liam struggled with the communication barriers and found it frustrating: *Not [being] able to communicate in Russian and Ukrainian because I don't speak those languages that was a big barrier* (Liam).

Two participants had studied the language in the host country and were able to further develop their abilities by constantly conversing with the host country locals. By sharing a common language with the residents, these participants were able to develop deep bonds as they had the ability to connect and get to know them on a more personal level: *I ended up bonding a lot with my host family because I had the ability to speak Spanish to them* (Liam). Anna decided to learn the local language (Swahili) following her first volunteer experience as she found a second home within the African community and sought the ability to share a deeper connection with the locals: *I actually went to a university in London and I studied Swahili [because I wanted to] get a skill and then focus on one*

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place not just travel heaps of places, invest in a community, learn the language, know the people (Anna).

The other participants in this study had no prior experience speaking the host country's language; however, they were able to gain new language skills and pick up on words and phrases: *I learnt a lot when I got there [haha] so I could say hello, how are you* (Chloe). These participants seemed to cherish the moments where they were interacting and communicating with local people more so than engaging in tourist activities: *Having like the coconut man that I saw every day and like spoke to in my very rough Khmer, those experiences were sort of more special, and having colleagues to talk to were sort of more special than just travelling* (Chloe). Furthermore, participants were able to pick up on words and phrases the longer they remained in one place. Oftentimes they could rely on the locals to translate:

> *In terms of communicating with the locals… yes it did have its barriers, but you find a way to communicate… others are able to interpret… and it's amazing like the stories that you could weed out even with just the translation or just with you know muttering words here and there* (Karina).

Participants also built strong friendships and an array of professional networks during their volunteer SIE. Being in a country they were not familiar with, meant they relied on others for friendship, advice, travel companionship, emotional support, accommodation, work opportunities, and translation. As discussed by Tom, the volunteer experience was heavily based on the connections that he made and the trust that was placed in people when sharing information about future goals and past experiences:

> *I think that a lot of volunteering overseas is about making the connections with the people you are with… you create these amazing connections with people and you're just sitting outside and you are talking about your past you are talking about home and you know like you create these really great connections with people* (Tom).

The majority of participants expressed how the bonds they made with locals, as well as with other volunteers whilst on volunteer SIE, were deep due to the depth of conversations held. The connections they made felt genuine as they often shared their life stories and aspirations: *You make these really strong like really quick ties to people and I really liked that. Like they need to be your family for you* (Chloe). Sharing the volunteer SIE with a group of individuals provided some participants with a strong network of supportive people who essentially shared similar emotions and experiences during and after their SIE. This meant that they had a network of people who understood their feelings and who

they could confide in for guidance and understanding when needed: *I think just people to talk to that understand where you're coming from and just the support of those people because we've had this like experience together so we all understand where each other are coming from* (Lacey). Emily, however, didn't build as close bonds with her host family as the other volunteers as she felt more reserved so as not to offend them:

> *Compared to the other people on the trip who got like way stronger connections to their families and stuff which I didn't really and I think, I don't know if that's just my family or not, I don't really know how to word it… Maybe like I held back a little bit, and I don't know if that was like me not wanting to offend people or what but like I didn't get as much of a connection compared to other people* (Emily).

Participants also learnt how to utilise their networks to gain preferred outcomes. For some, their connections provided further travel opportunities, oftentimes this meant they could receive free accommodation and a more personal and in-depth travel experience upon their return to their SIE location:

> *I met such awesome people there… when I went back and visited the south you know I visited them and I stayed with them and they took me around the town and everything and you get such a different view of the place when you are there with people who are from there, who are locals* (Karina).

4.4.2 New outlook on their career

This subsection focuses on the various career and study paths that volunteers considered, or pursued, post-SIE. While most participants did not shift their career to engage in work that related directly to the work they participated in during their SIE, they did establish a greater drive and focus towards work and their career. This widened the scope of employment and education opportunities available to them and for some, re-ignited existing passions: *Opening my mind to other options and like I mean I didn't know that these things were literally out there and around and stuff* (Emily).

With the added focus, participants set new short and long-term goals: *[Volunteer SIE did not affect] my immediate life, but definitely in my goals and how I think about my future* (Emily). For some, this meant furthering their education. Emily's experience, for instance, inspired her to pursue a career in environmental planning which aligned to some of the work she did whilst abroad. To achieve this, she decided to go to university to study that field. She credited her volunteer SIE for giving her the necessary space to gain clarity and make decisions regarding her future career: *You're doing something you're actually interested in and you've actually taken a little bit more time to think about it instead of*

just doing like a random degree to get some paper at the end (Emily). Liam also gained the motivation needed to continue pursuing his post-graduate studies of which he mentioned his grades had improved. He had greater clarification of his career direction and he was setting out with more certainty and confidence that this was the right path.

Participants gained a better understanding of themselves during their SIE and the types of work they wanted to do, or avoid, when assessing their future career choices: *I was looking at sales jobs and I was like that's not really me you know, I'm not really an office person after all this stuff I had done* (Lacey). Liam's aspirations shifted from working for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT) to seeking an entry level role in a university after he published his travel blog: *I know what I want. The strategy is to get into a university and work in an academic environment like student services or something I really love… education is a really great way to change a person's life* (Liam). Karina's SIE journey was one that heightened her spirituality which in turn altered her views on working in the service of others:

> *The work you are doing is not for yourself, it's for a higher good and… I try to bring that into my life and I feel like I need to as a nurse to do that. Like I'm not there because I'm being paid to do it, otherwise you don't care so much… it's not about my ego it's about trying to take that out of the job and just sort of devoting yourself to your job… being very mindful as you do those things… it is something I have learned from my travels which I like to try* (Karina).

When analysing Anna's story, it became clear that her change in career focus was a result of undertaking several volunteer SIEs. Following her first two volunteer SIEs, she was awarded a full university scholarship as a direct result of her international volunteering experiences: *I applied for this 80-thousand-dollar scholarship and then when I was in Tanzania I found out I had won it so that was quite amazing and I felt like after all that free work you know it was just a reward* (Anna). After completing this degree, Anna returned to Africa to participate in a number of other volunteer SIEs. She then decided to change her career and work in international development as her heart was in this area and continuing to volunteer was not a sustainable option for her: *Now I'm changing my career out of being a primary school teacher to international development* (Anna). Without her prior experience volunteering abroad, she may not have been a suitable applicant for a paid role in this field: *I just got a paid position doing what I was doing in Tanzania but this time in East Timor… it's just really exciting to get a paid position and I can put a big NGO on my CV, before it was like a grassroots charity* (Anna). This led to future aspirations of obtaining paid work in a New Zealand charity.

Volunteer SIE also helped some participants to re-ignite their passion for their pre-SIE career. Although the work they did whilst abroad was different to the work they were doing prior to the SIE, this experience allowed the necessary time to think and re-assess their career and set some goals regarding their future. For Tom, this meant finding a new employer within the same industry (research), whereas Karina decided to return to her existing job as a nurse in her local hospital but in a new management role which gave her greater autonomy and authority. This decision was typically based on their need to generate income and returning to work they were familiar with was an easier option. However, they were now refreshed and able to approach their work with an open mind:

> *I left and thought I never wanted to go back to nursing again you know, I want to do something completely natural, or not shift work... I come back and I'm like hmmm... I need money and like I know how to do this job and I have good connections at my old hospital so yeah* (Karina).

Given the time needed to re-think their careers, some participants were able to reconsider the reasons why they chose their pre-SIE jobs and identify areas that were no longer of interest to them and re-direct their efforts towards new aspects of their career. Lacey was able to learn early into her English teaching career that it was not what she wanted. As she was teaching students across several age groups, she was often faced with difficult and uncooperative children and she learnt that she did not have the patience for it and therefore did not pursue it further as a career: *I actually found it really hard, the kids were so naughty and I think it put me off... I don't want to do it again for a career because I just don't have the patience unfortunately* (Lacey). Moreover, Karina came to re-value her career in nursing and she learnt new ways to cope with certain aspects that she was not happy with prior to her volunteer SIE: *I definitely had better ways of coping with shift work and coping with nursing and seeing the beauty in nursing after going away* (Karina). Karina initially became a nurse to work in international aid or with natural medicine and following her SIE, she was able to distinguish which area she actually wanted to specialise in based on her experience of both during her volunteer SIE:

> *I got into it [nursing for] two reasons... to either do overseas work so to do aid work or to get into the more natural [fields] of health... Both aspects were nurtured by doing this type of volunteer work because to be honest I think I realised that I don't want to do a lot of aid work... just from what I've seen with travelling... and then the second one I realised that I'm definitely into more natural [fields] of health* (Karina).

Many participants also decided to continue volunteering upon their return to New Zealand, thus continuing the pattern of contributing to society beyond their paid employment: *It's definitely in my mind that I want to do more volunteering, something like much bigger and I think like definitely have that as part of my career kind of thing* (Emily). Some participants wanted to get involved in larger community projects either voluntarily (Chloe), or as a career (Emily): *I'd like to do whole community projects and more community stuff* (Chloe).

While participants gained direction and new career insights during their SIE, some participants expressed that they still felt lost regarding their longer-term career goals. Karina for instance, re-ignited her passion for nursing and established what areas of health she was most interested in; however, she felt very unsure as to whether she had made the right decision returning to her existing company. She further noted that she was heading in the right direction and making decisions regarding her career: *Definitely not where I want to be right now but I'm building those… I'm on track* (Karina). Liam also went through a similar phase where he had no clear longer-term career direction. Although he was more aware of the different fields he could pursue as a career, and he was more focused on his studies and was achieving good grades, he had not found a job in any of the industries he was considering (academia, MFAT or journalism). While he had greater direction, he had still not received any opportunities or made a decision as to which career path to pursue. While volunteer SIE did not provide participants with the sudden knowledge on what their next career move would be, or which company they would next be working for, they learnt other important values relating to work. The understanding that work is important in people's lives was mentioned by a few participants, as well as the importance of pursuing work that made them happy, combined with a work-life balance:

> *I kind of hoped that I would leave knowing what I wanted to do but all I really found out was that like work is so important in who you are and it's so important for changing your mood because you do it all the time and you have to do something which doesn't make you feel like shit… like doesn't make you feel bad. You know, work that is sustainable, that allows you to be who you are, that allows you to enjoy things, and see other things, and to relax, and you know like it's important, and actually I think you do better at your job when you've balanced out your free time, you know when I was working 8 to 8 I was so inefficient and I was like I had so much to do* (Tom).

4.4.3 Enhanced employability

Volunteer SIE was a useful experience in increasing some participant's employability. While many participants mentioned the positive response they received by listing the SIE in their CV and when networking, this subsection mainly focuses on Chloe who went abroad specifically to develop her career, and a few other participants who enhanced their existing career-related skills-set by engaging in work that related to their pre-SIE roles.

In terms of securing work, participants utilised their volunteer SIE experience as an interesting conversation point when engaging in job interviews, to provide a positive edge over other applicants: *Going into a job interview saying you've done a voluntary experience abroad I think that always raises eyebrows* (Liam). Furthermore, participants enhanced their CV by displaying the positive personal qualities and the unique life experience that volunteer SIE provided them with:

> *People when they look at my CV they can see what I've done, as somebody who is 23 years old, and I've done all this stuff, and I've had all this life experience. I think it's definitely helped my career because people can see I'm like a generous person and that's not why I did it either, like to put it on my CV, but it definitely does look good on your CV* (Lacey).

No participant had drawn upon their newly established networks for job opportunities, although they intended to do so in future. They were, however, able to discuss their experience when networking in New Zealand which helped some participants obtain work. As mentioned, only one participant (Chloe) went abroad specifically to develop her career and secure work within her field in New Zealand. Her experience of working in the women's empowerment sector broadened her understanding of how work in international development actually functions, as opposed to theorising and conducting research on it: *Learning what all the mechanics of it were opposed to learning what all the various components of it are* (Chloe). The volunteer SIE provided Chloe with some vital practical skills which aided her theoretical understanding. She was able to uncover similarities and gaps between the actual work that is required in international development and what was taught to her theoretically during her post-graduate degree: *[I learnt] how to do funding reports, results log frames, that sort of stuff. Yes, they are a component of the degree, but that was a sole task of mine. So there was sort of this like disconnect between the two* (Chloe).

Chloe also discussed the numerous career related skills that she gained from her volunteer SIE which helped her secure a role in New Zealand. As her main role was to work with

women in need, Chloe engaged in strategic planning and reached out to as many women in need as possible. Chloe came to understand what tasks were vital to meet her key performance indicators and how to execute those tasks. Some of these tasks included strategic planning, sourcing funds, reporting, networking, research, and collaborating with NGOs. She also learnt how to conduct herself in a work environment that is culturally and emotionally sensitive. Many of these tasks aligned with the work she undertook post-SIE:

> *It was a very good lesson for me to learn what international development actually looks like on the ground instead of sitting around theorizing about what empowerment looks like, what this theorist says about it and stuff. It's like we need to do our funding reports, we need to do our strategic planning kind of thing so I think that's kind of one of the main things I got out of it* (Chloe).

Chloe was also able to learn new techniques appropriate in dealing with each woman's situation. She learnt the importance of trust, quick thinking, and decision-making because when she did not do these things, there was potential that the women would become disinterested and lose trust in the organisation's ability to help and protect them: *The international development area is a really critical area of development but when you are on the ground you like have to try things, you can't just sit around and think, "What are the unintended consequences of doing that?"* (Chloe).

Participants who went abroad to teach (Anna and Lacey) enriched their teaching abilities as they worked with a range of individuals from different cultural backgrounds: *It helped me to develop my teaching skills* (Lacey). Anna developed her confidence in running workshops and learnt how to work and produce teaching material that was culturally sensitive: *I had to run a lot of workshops which I was kind of nervous about but that was a really good skill. I became good at running workshops that were interactive and also culturally sensitive* (Anna). Anna's career in teaching benefitted from volunteer SIE which saw her obtain a paid role in another country where she would be doing similar work to what she did while on her SIEs. Lacey, however, decided against pursuing a career in teaching. However, had Lacey chosen to continue in this line of work, or if she decides to teach English as a foreign language again, it is likely that her experiences and abilities will help to secure other teaching work.

4.4.4 Personal development

This subsection identifies the personal outcomes gained from participating in volunteer SIE. During the analysis of participant's stories, it became apparent that participants'

personal development was more extensive in comparison to their development of direct career related competencies. The list of personal outcomes was considerable and these are discussed under four key themes: increased motivation and confidence; resilience, adaptability and tolerance; gratitude; and heightened awareness. Personal development is important to aid career development and is therefore discussed within this chapter.

4.4.4.1 Increased motivation and confidence

A key area of personal growth was participants' added motivation and confidence. For some, the increase in motivation was an impact of having the time away from their New Zealand lifestyle, career, family, or friends to refresh their mind-set. For others, they simply met their 'itch' to travel and felt they could now relax and focus on setting and achieving new goals. A potential reason for the increase in motivation is because participants were in countries where the residents had so little, but they still appeared to be happy: *More motivated… I think just seeing these people working so hard and you're like if they're working hard then I should be working hard* (Lacey).

As all participants returned to New Zealand without a pre-arranged or existing job, they had become more proactive in their efforts to find work. This was particularly noted among the participants who did not have a steady job prior to their SIE because before their SIE they were not motivated to work; instead, they focused solely on their travel plans. When successful in obtaining work, some participants expressed how they worked more efficiently than prior to their SIE in order to settle into a career. Liam focused on working his way up the ranks of his new company: *I flew over there with the intention that I was really going to break records and sign up as many students as possible and become a regional director for them* (Liam).

Volunteer SIE had a positive impact on participants' mind-set and their proactive outlook on life. Participants felt more willing and capable of achieving goals and completing tasks: *You can do it! You can achieve all these things if you just put your mind to it.* (Liam). In Liam's case, this was portrayed through his continuous efforts to get work: *Yes, I was very actively looking, I think I submitted 90 to 100 CVs* (Liam). Participants who returned to work in their pre-SIE careers perceived that they were working smarter, harder and now enjoyed the work they were doing: *You have these realisations, and you see what you really should be doing or what you really want to do and it really gives you strength to do that* (Karina).

As the type of SIE work some participants were involved in was physical and laborious and unlike the work they were doing at home, they gained a greater sense of accomplishment and pride in themselves upon the completion of certain tasks: *Definitely cleaning up that human toilet was a real rewarding one, because I did it you know, it was this human toilet and I cleaned it like that's insane that I could do that* (Tom). This ultimately increased their motivation and attitudes towards work as they learned perseverance:

> *Milking goats was really rewarding too. In the beginning I was like doing it and I couldn't get anything, I was like, "I can't do this I'm really bad at it"… Well at the end I was so good I could get all the milk and I was like phew!… Like a few other things that were like really tough and I did it, I felt like I had achieved* (Tom).

While many participants experienced an increase in motivation, for some, their return to New Zealand was anti-climactic. Liam in particular remained lost in terms of his career and struggled to find work. He found himself feeling depressed due to feeling like he had failed: *I struggled a lot to find a job… I wasn't really feeling too good. I was a bit depressed because I wasn't getting anywhere in life and I was kind of failing for the first time* (Liam). These feelings were typically brought on by not having a plan in place for what he would do career-wise upon returning to New Zealand: *[My return from Ukraine] was definitely a let-down, definitely anti-climactic sort of thing… I did feel very let down about it because I didn't really have a concrete plan, I wasn't quite prepared* (Liam). He was hoping that his life plans would "fall into place"; however, he soon found that would not be the case and he decided to put his efforts into finding a job:

> *I was secretly hoping that I was going to be snapped up as an English-speaking journalist or something like that and maybe someone would recognise my work and employ me in their multi-national organisation and that didn't happen… it kind of took me a while to come to terms with my failure* (Liam).

While many identified themselves as has having an outgoing attitude prior to the SIE, they noted that this experience boosted that confidence and encouraged them to be themselves and be less concerned of others opinions: *I'm stronger mentally and not afraid to really give things a try. I don't really let something that I think is going to be hard or stressful stop me. I don't need to be like fitting in with everyone I guess?* (Emily). Being surrounded by people they did not know and having to communicate is a potential reason for their confidence boost, also allowing the participants who were shy to "break out of their shell" and become more outgoing in social settings: *I used to be extremely shy… I think it's given me a lot of confidence and I didn't even realise* (Anna). These participants

expressed how they felt more comfortable in their ability to approach and interact with people, particularly those whom they did not know: *Just being able to go into any situation and talk to anybody no matter where they're from or who they are* (Lacey). Participants were able to draw on their volunteer experience when conversing as it provided them with an interesting conversation point among friends, acquaintances, and even in job interviews: *It's always a nice point of conversation with someone you've just met* (Liam). Furthermore, the cultural exposure meant participants were now able to relate to a wider range of individuals and carry out more in-depth conversations: *I'm able to really relate to people a lot better and talk about things that I don't think they would really expect me to talk about* (Chloe). For Anna, this added confidence led her to many public speaking roles: *I now do public speaking and just tell stories sometimes, and everyone is like crying and stuff* (Anna). Chloe also mentioned how her confidence in her ability to network also increased, which was vital for her career in order to establish connections and find work in her field in New Zealand. She attended numerous events and conferences which she did not do previously. Karina gained confidence to speak up in the workplace:

> *I'm ok with asking what I want, so I've gone back to my same job, but I don't work night shift… I'm also more strong in what I know is good for me because I've learned these different techniques while I've been travelling… this is what's good for me so this is what I have to make work* (Karina).

4.4.4.2 Resilience, adaptability and tolerance

Participants learned to adapt more easily and quickly to their surroundings, not only in terms of travel, but also in various social settings and new or unfamiliar environments such as a new workplace. Although some individuals struggled with culture shock when they first arrived in the host country, participants soon adapted and become comfortable in their surroundings.

With regard to adaptability, participants learned to fit in to their surroundings, whether that be adapting the clothing worn, the gestures and body language used, culturally, or simply their way of living: *The ability to settle into a foreign environment, I've become much more easily adjusted* (Liam). Emily did not adapt very well initially as she felt overwhelmed with feeling of anxiety, doubt, and home sickness. *I cried like every time our leader would ask us how we were doing… and every time I would burst into tears and I was like, "I don't even know why I'm crying I'm so stressed"* (Emily). However, at the

end of her trip, she learnt how to adapt in the foreign environment and gained valuable personal strength and knowledge as to how to deal with new situations: *I think [I've gained] personal strength of like getting through different situations, you don't just go home and cry to mum about it [hahaha] like you have a little break down about it and you'll be ok when you wake up the next day* (Emily).

The purpose of adapting was to remain respectful to the locals and to fit in. Naturally, this made the experience more enjoyable for participants. Furthermore, they learnt to better adapt back into their home environment, even though they were now more aware of their privilege:

> *A big thing for me has been learning to live in whatever culture you are in. So I think it's really important that I don't come back and be like, "Oh, I'm going to come back and not spend my money" and it's like well you actually live in this culture now so you know, you can have things but I think it's important that you don't just go in there and be like, "Oh, I'm not going to buy clothes anymore" or, "I'm not going to do this and that", and that's taken me time* (Anna).

However, some participants had adapted to the host environment to such an extent that they ended up experiencing reverse culture shock when they returned to New Zealand. Lacey explained an experience where she felt uncomfortable returning to a westernised country as she was so used to the gestures and people within the host country. Karina also struggled to fit back into her work environment. She felt that it was very grim and challenging to begin with; however, she learnt to adapt and enjoy the work she was doing.

Once of the potential reasons why participants learnt how to adapt and become more resilient was because their tolerance had increased. Delving directly into a very different environment, in an unfamiliar country, lessened the fearfulness of going into an unfamiliar environment back in their home country. For some, it taught them valuable lessons as to how to manage undesirable aspects of their career so that it could be enjoyable once again: *After working there [South America] I realised it wasn't what I did that I hated, it was the place, maybe working over there helped me decide that… and I'm really glad because I actually really love what I do. I think it's so interesting* (Tom). Some participants also expressed how their experience helped them to better deal with different situations at home; however, they did not mention how: *Travelling and volunteering have helped me deal with whatever is happening at home* (Karina).

4.4.4.3 Gratitude

Participants returned home feeling a great deal of gratitude for their lives and the privileges they had growing up in a country such as New Zealand. Some things that participants witnessed whilst on their volunteer SIE were life-changing, such as poverty, as they opened their minds to how others live and how people can live happily and contentedly despite having what they would consider to be so little: *They're just always so happy over there, like always smiling and they've got nothing from our point of view but for them they've got like their family living all around them and like life, and they're just so happy* (Lacey). As a result, participants were more appreciative of what they had, where they were raised, and the opportunities they had had as a result: *It made me really appreciate my upbringing and New Zealand as a country and how lucky we are* (Emily). However, some participants also became more questioning about aspects of poverty and volunteer tourism that they witnessed during their SIE: *I was more impacted in terms of being cynical about a lot of things I saw, so I came home with more questions than answers* (Anna).

Gratitude also changed participants' mind-set around work. Liam learned to work without the expectation that he would receive praise or reward in return: *I work with the idea of no reward. Sort of lower my expectations and always be grateful for what I have* (Liam). Others chose not to take their privilege for granted and made the most of it by pursuing opportunities where possible. Anna achieved this by aiming to effectively help others whenever her financial situation allowed her to do so: *How can I actually be effective… focus on one community, learn the language… invest in a community and know the people enough that you're not just doing your little white magic for your own self which I think happens a lot* (Anna). She gained a lot of inspiration to lead a life driven by volunteering and "giving back", not only from her previous experience with volunteer SIE, but in particular from a woman she met whilst on one of her SIEs. This woman was a solo mother who grew up in poverty; however, she was resilient and worked hard her entire life until she could provide herself with greater necessities such as a nice home and a career. For some participants, it was the appreciation that in New Zealand we are lucky to have the tools and resources available to work and live a healthy lifestyle. Participants mentioned that prior to their SIE, they took for granted privileges such as health care, sanitary items, knowledge, education, and so on:

> *[I am] so grateful to have what we have in New Zealand… there's a lot you take for granted and like in my job, in terms of people's literacy and resources available,*

and sexual reproduction itself, it's relatively open conversation in our society and living in a foreign context sort of emphasized that we are lucky to have those kind of things (Chloe).

As participants became more open minded and grateful for their upbringing, they in turn became less judgemental:

> *What it taught me for sure is just not to judge anybody. You know, like you see somebody and it's just like human instinct to just judge somebody maybe by what they look like or their situation or maybe like where they live and you just don't know. I think that like everyone has an interesting story to tell and you just need to let them like tell you that story which is something like everyone knows like yeah you shouldn't judge people, but I think until you're actually faced with that situation you don't really know what it means* (Lacey).

4.4.4.4 Heightened awareness

Participants' awareness heightened in various ways following their volunteer SIE. Self-awareness and cultural awareness were their key areas of improvement. They became less naïve and more mature as they learnt how to conduct themselves in various settings to ensure their safety, to enjoy themselves, and to respect the local culture. This mind-set appeared to remain once back in New Zealand.

As participants learnt to be more self-aware, they also gained a better understanding of themselves and how they conducted themselves in the presence of others. Volunteer SIE highlighted various strengths, weaknesses, and future direction for most participants. Karina discussed an insightful event where she learnt a lot about herself and the ethics of team work during a silent work exercise whilst on SIE:

> *We did a work session and we couldn't speak while doing the work session. The work session was moving sand from one pit to cover the ground. I realised that I was getting angry at people who couldn't do it as quickly as me, I was trying to go really quickly to like show everyone, "Oh yeah! Check me out! I can do this so quickly, I'm amazing at moving sand" and like being really grumpy like, "Why can't you move sand like this?" Then I was like, "Oh my god, is this how I am at work? This is awful! Because that is in no way team work". Team work is like, "Ok, cool, so that was cool you're not lifting but you're great at like giving encouragement or great at like you know seeing where the sand should go or something you know". That period was like incredible to become a team player and it definitely showed my weakness and that's what happens in my job you know, because you tend to be very negative to people who are new and when you do that you don't see their strengths and so that definitely showed my weakness in that situation* (Karina).

Tom explained how he was now aware how important it was for him to take time out for himself in order to succeed at work: *I'm very aware that I need my own me time now. I'm*

much more carefree about that, I think it's just better, I get into work and I try and focus on my job and I try and work efficiently (Tom). Chloe also explained how she learnt the importance of taking care of herself first. Many participants discussed how they had become more aware of the need to conduct themselves differently in the workplace, particularly when working in different countries or with people from different cultural backgrounds: *I'm aware that I'm going to have to be really careful in the way that I relate to people and so yeah, it's just going to be really different and I'm aware of that* (Anna).

Participants gained a greater understanding as to how to deal with or discuss delicate situations such as poverty, or traumatic or political events. They also learnt to judge their situation or surroundings and to be more cautious when placed in negative, unethical, or corrupt circumstances. Liam, for instance, was able to identify that his new employer was not following ethical practices:

> *Had I not travelled and had I not met a lot of people in my life, I think in my travels I think I probably would have been blind to all of this that was happening. My friend figured out a little too late in the game, whereas I had figured out quite a while back… I knew something was up… As soon as I landed at Sydney International airport I knew I had made a mistake* (Liam).

Naturally, participants also became more culturally aware following their lengthy immersion in a foreign country. Participants learnt that to become socially accepted into a community that was very different to what they were used to in New Zealand, they needed to understand their norms and customs so as not to offend. They developed this knowledge by being around different people and working within the local communities as opposed to working in westernised corporate organisations. Important cultural learnings included appropriate dress, etiquette, language, body language, and an overall more informed understanding as to how to present themselves in a different cultural setting. Chloe, for example, found that it was not culturally appropriate for a woman to participate in certain tasks at work and therefore out of curtesy she stayed within these cultural barriers:

> *My job was kind of about doing the reporting and report writing and that suited me quite well because as a white person, as a white woman I should have never been doing front line stuff because that's not culturally appropriate, that's not the right role for me, especially for short term. Writing reports for the Khmer staff and stuff, that's like the right place. But yeah, it was kind of just like yeah, the self-acknowledgement that just because I speak English, like these people are the experts here in their subject and I need to like know what my role is* (Chloe).

Tom provided an insight into one of his learning experiences where he realised the purpose of taking responsibility and the consequence if he did not. He also aimed to share his newfound learning experiences with others:

> *You know sometimes I find myself… doing things half-heartedly and… I would try and not. I think it's really common, we will try and do something and do it really fast and do a bad job at it and think, "Oh, it's fine" and I think occasionally I would do that and so I didn't want to be like, "Oh, I can't be bothered giving all these plants this water, it's just really heavy and I'm just shaking and it's hard" and then I wouldn't. I would then think about it and I would feel really bad and I would worry that I had not given these plants enough water and they weren't being watered until like four days later and then I felt responsibility for that and I would stop and you know go give them this bunch of water. Then there was this French-Canadian girl who was my friend and she used to come in and she was really young and she didn't give a shit and she used to pour this water on like really fast and I used to tell her like, "Come on! They're not going to be watered for like another week so you have to do a good job".* (Tom).

Overall, the volunteer SIE shaped participants' world view and allowed for a personal change. Participants' exposure to traumatic or culturally different events led them to become more reflective and introspective thinkers with a greater focus on the bigger picture of life and what is happening in the world: *It did change how I think about the world and that's sort of what I wanted without really knowing it… It just changes the way I think about everything* (Lacey). Physically, participants appeared to be the same as before they left on their volunteer SIE and they returned to the same physical space – friends, family, and so on. However, internally, they had changed:

> *You have all these grand plans when you're travelling and it's like alright, I'm going to do this and that but, when you get, if you return to the same place and also specifically for me the same job, to be fair not a lot changes, but… I think things do change, you just don't realise if the things don't change on the surface they have changed, it's in the way that you deal with certain situations you know, you've had to deal with all these things you wouldn't have to deal with otherwise* (Karina).

Participants learnt the value of acceptance, of themselves and others and also of situations surrounding them. Some identified their own shortcomings and embraced them and some experienced failure and came to terms with it:

> *Accept things for how it is and accept people for who they are, don't try and change them and don't be trapped by this sort of dogma of feeling, no, you can't do this and you can't do that, you can do it! You can achieve all these things if you just put your mind to it* (Liam).

Participants were proud of their volunteer SIE experience and all the valuable learnings they gained from it: *Being young, I saw that as a reflection of myself like yeah, I can go*

to a completely foreign environment… I feel like I've grown into the person I'm supposed to be and I will just become more of that person (Chloe). It also taught them that they were capable if they set their mind to it:

> *I think definitely made me realise that I can. I used to think I was really bad at making things and doing handy work. I've never really done it, I just thought I was bad at it but actually, I'm not that bad at it and nobody really is, you just have to think and try it* (Tom).

4.5 Conclusion

This chapter analysed the main themes that emerged from the seven participants' stories. The first section provided an overview of the volunteers in this study and the work they participated in during SIE. The following section was separated into 'motivations' and 'career development', reflecting the research questions regarding the motivations and career outcomes of younger people participating in volunteer SIE. Furthermore, an unexpected outcome of their volunteer SIE was the significant level of personal development. This was discussed as an important theme in that personal development also underpins the development of career capital. The following chapter will further explore and discuss these themes in relation to the relevant SIE and careers literature.

Chapter 5: Discussion

5.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the main themes identified in the findings in relation to the SIE and careers literatures and is divided into three main sections: background, motivations, and career development. The first section reminds the reader of the more significant research findings and discusses the existing literature surrounding definitional and construct issues pertaining to the term 'volunteer self-initiated expatriation'. The second section on the participants' motivations reflects the complex nature of the SIE decision-making process while the third section discusses the extent to which volunteer SIE impacted on the professional and personal change and development of the younger people in this study.

5.2 Background

5.2.1 Overview of the findings

This paragraph reiterates the findings established in the previous chapter. The themes are separated into two broad categories: 'motivations' and 'career development'. Within each theme there are a number of key points that emerged from participants' stories and these are listed in Table 5.1 (below) and discussed more broadly in parts two and three of this chapter.

Table 5.1: Overview of the Findings

Motivations	Main points
Escape	- Disengaged from careers - Stressful workplaces - Break from education - Fast-track career development - Social pressures
Altruism	- Personal interest in volunteering and "giving back" to society - Influenced by marketing campaigns (e.g., World Vision) and travel blogs - Religion
Search for adventure and new authentic travel experiences	- New and challenging experiences - Desire for deep cultural immersion - Enhance language skills - Not ready to settle down - Solo travel experiences - More foreign in terms of culture, language, and location means greater authenticity - Slower paced option to explore and discover compared to previous vacations as a tourist
Timing and context (enabling factors)	'Right time' - Financial freedom - Secure in their decision to go abroad - No ties to New Zealand holding participants back (e.g., children)
Career development	Key points within the theme
Communication skills and widened networks	- Developed new and effective ways to communicate - Developed strong personal and professional connections - Utilised networks to gain preferred outcomes
Greater career focus and a new career outlook	- Increased focus to set and achieve goals - Better understanding of themselves and what they want in their career - Further education - New work opportunities - Re-ignited passions for pre-SIE careers
Increased employability	- Greater ability to secure work - Hands-on experience to aid future education/education background - Specific career related skills and new techniques in their specialist field
Personal development	- Increased motivation and confidence - Resilience, adaptability, and tolerance - Gratitude - Heightened awareness and broader world view

5.2.2 Defining the volunteer self-initiated expatriate

Many studies note the lack of clarity in defining who a 'self-initiated expatriate' is (Andresen et al., 2015; Doherty et al., 2013; Tharenou, 2010). This study suggests, along with others, that international volunteering fits within the broad scope of the SIE model (Andresen & Gustschin, 2013; Cerdin, 2013).

Most participants were free to volunteer in a destination of their choice, with the exception of Emily and Lacey who were limited to the options offered by their volunteer organisation. Furthermore, most participants initiated their own involvement with an international organisation once they were abroad, as opposed to being sent abroad by an employer (Andresen & Gustschin, 2013). This suggests that while participants knew they wanted to travel, the decision to volunteer was self-driven and serendipitous (Inkson & Myers, 2003) as they were mainly focused on having a new and challenging experience (Doherty, 2013; Shaffer et al., 2012). Karina, for instance, opted for a less-planned approach as she travelled to several countries and found work WWOOFing as she moved between locations. As participants engaged in different types of work, in a range of countries and for different lengths of time, this study concurs with the literature that SIE is a broad term as it is difficult to isolate the characteristics of a self-initiated expatriate as the nature of the experience is so varied (Crossman & Clarke, 2010; Myers, 2016).

An important insight that emerged from the interviews was the participants' desire to distinguish their volunteer SIE from volunteer tourism. There is some literature to date on this topic (Chen & Chen, 2011; Grimm & Needham, 2012; Lo & Lee, 2011; Otoo & Amuquandoh, 2014; Wearing, 2001), yet participants were very firm that the motivations and experiences of volunteer SIE were not the same as for those who embarked on a volunteer tourism experience. Participants believed that they (self-initiated expatriates) were working to make a significant contribution to disadvantaged communities and they felt that was not possible through what they considered to be 'volunteer tourism' (Hall, 2007). Furthermore, the participants wanted to live amongst the locals and gain a more authentic experience of life within another culture, arguing that this was in contrast to volunteer tourism which they saw as standing on the outside and looking in, that is, witnessing life without connecting to it:

> *I saw heaps of America tourists giving the kids like lollies and stuff and the kids were like really bratty and I was like, "Man, these kids are turning into brats." And then I also saw like 500 kids in a massive orphanage for tourists to look at and I was like, "Hmm, I don't know if I agree with this" so I saw things that made me*

think, and I guess for me I went home with the question, like I was really moved by the poverty and all that, so how can I actually be effective? (Anna).

This perspective is consistent with Richardson and Zikic (2007) who suggest that a self-initiated expatriate is not a 'short-term traveller'; rather, they are individuals who live abroad temporarily by their own initiative, with no definitive time frame for how long they are abroad (Tharenou, 2010). Andresen et al. (2013) and Howe-Walsh and Schyns (2010) also discuss how it is less clear as to how long a self-initiated expatriate will work abroad for. This was evident in this study as many participants booked a one-way flight and did not have a definite return date. Only two participants planned their return after the completion of their volunteer programme or internship.

While it is argued that short-term volunteering, similar to what is offered by organisations promoting volunteer tourism, can be more harmful than beneficial to a host community (Devereux, 2008; Simpson, 2004), researchers on volunteer tourists have found similar findings relating to the motivations of the broader group of volunteers. Volunteer tourists hold both altruistic and self-serving motives for volunteering abroad. Commonly, volunteer tourists seek authentic travel experiences, opportunities to gain new experience and have an adventure, cultural exchange, and personal and professional development (Chen & Chen, 2011; Grimm & Needham, 2012; Wearing, 2001). Although there have been some studies on the motivations of volunteer tourists, most of these have examined altruistic and self-serving motivations which predominantly push individuals to participate. In a study on volunteer tourism motivations by Chen and Chen (2011), three clusters of motives were identified. The first were personal factors (such as having an authentic and challenging travel experience) followed by interpersonal factors (such as altruism and participants' desire to help and interact with people from different cultures). The third set of factors related to time and money, as well as the unique style of the trip (Pan, 2012). Similarly, Lo and Lee (2011) uncovered five key motives for individuals to volunteer: deep cultural immersion; desire to give back and display love and concern; religion; escape from everyday life; and a shared family experience for children to learn. Thus, it is interesting to note that while the participants in this study made a distinction between their type of volunteer SIE and volunteer tourism, the literature does not support this distinctive difference to such an extent.

Some participants in this study chose to undertake volunteer SIE as part of a gap year between studies or prior to starting their career. Inkson and Myers (2003) explained how

it is popular for younger New Zealanders to take a gap year between their education and careers, and that venturing out on an overseas experience (OE) for the sake of career enhancement is not the core focus for many self-initiated expatriates during that period of their life. While an OE is stereotypically associated with working in a 'London pub', that was not the case for any of the participants in this study. Participants predominantly engaged in unpaid work in more culturally different locations, although some did engage in seasonal work in search of personal development (such as Karina and Tom who went WWOOFing) (Bell, 2002). Many participants also spoke about their views on how travelling was considered a normal pursuit for many New Zealanders. Doherty et al. (2013) also noted that for some societies, travel has become a means to fuel individuals' curiosity about what the world has to offer (Bell, 2002; Simpson, 2004).

As younger individuals tend to travel with minimal planning, for undefined periods, whilst in a mode of exploration, it is not surprising that they choose to participate in SIE during this life stage (Myers & Pringle, 2005; Suutari & Brewster, 2000). As this study focused solely on younger individuals, it was also found that limited planning was involved prior to the SIE. Similar to Vance's (2005) study, the younger participants were found to be more mobile as they did not typically have commitments such as a family. Furthermore, as with the participants in Vance's study, the participants of this study were not committed to their jobs (Biemann & Andresen, 2010; Froese & Peltokorpi, 2013). In this study, all participants had a passion for travel and were eager to get out and see the world. This is consistent with Hudson and Inkson (2006) whose participants had longed to do volunteer SIE.

The participants in Fee and Gray's (2011) study also volunteered in very different cultural contexts; however, in contrast to this study, the younger female participants in Myers and Pringle's (2005) study opted for more secure options by living in countries similar to home. Participants in my study were more adventurous in their choice of destinations, mostly because the destinations they chose were cheaper, offered volunteer programmes, and were seemingly able to provide a new and authentic experience. Furthermore, none of the participants faced issues (i.e., in obtaining visas) in getting abroad, with some receiving help in obtaining a visa from their volunteer organisation. The participants did not want to simply travel; instead, they wanted to experience living and working alongside individuals from different cultures and backgrounds.

5.3 Motivations of Volunteer Self-Initiated Expatriates

The first main part of this study explored the motivations of younger volunteer self-initiated expatriates. The motivations were diverse and many related to personal rather than career factors, which is consistent with the literature on self-initiated expatriates (Andresen et al., 2013; Cerdin, 2013; Doherty, 2013; Inkson et al., 1997; Myers, 2016). Participants also shared similar motivations to individuals in the more recently established literature on volunteer tourists (Chen & Chen, 2011; Lo & Lee, 2011; Pan, 2012). However, their purpose for travel differs in that volunteer self-initiated expatriates seek a longer-term, in-depth cultural experience and a volunteer tourist travels for vacation whilst incorporating some form of short-term volunteering into their holiday (i.e., a day at an orphanage).

Although there is literature on the motivations of self-initiated expatriates, there is less known about volunteer self-initiated expatriates (Andresen & Gustschin, 2013; Brewster & Suutari, 2005; Doherty et al., 2013; Haski-Leventhal, 2009; Myers, 2016; Thorn 2009). While the majority of SIE research focuses on professionals, it is important to note that personal motivations are more important for a self-initiated expatriate than a corporate expatriate overall, although the significance of personal motivations vis a vis career motivations can vary within the SIE population (Inkson et al., 1997).

It is suggested that individuals' motivations to do an SIE may differ with age (Myers, 2016; Selmer & Lauring, 2011). However, there are few studies which discuss the correlation between age and SIE (Thorn, 2009). Pan's (2012) study on the motivations of school-aged children volunteering abroad has some resonance with this study. Firstly, the children wished to challenge themselves by uncovering new ways of living and experiencing life in a foreign culture. They wanted to make new friends and get to know the locals. Secondly, they were eager to escape and saw this experience as an opportunity to relax. Finally, the participants displayed altruistic motives as they aimed to 'give back' to a less advantaged community. These children, however, did not resemble the typical 'self-initiated expatriate' as the decision to go abroad was not entirely theirs; they were encouraged to go by their school, parents, or religious groups. Due to them being younger in age, however, Pan's research provides some interesting insights into my study.

In this study, the motivations that guided participants' decisions were separated into four main categories: escape; altruism; the search for adventure and new authentic travel experiences; and timing and context (factors that enabled participants to pursue volunteer

SIE). Inkson et al. (1997) suggested that it is common for self-initiated expatriates to prioritise personal motives over career motives when considering to pursue SIE. Other studies have also found similar motivations (Carr et al., 2005). Participants in Doherty and Dickmann's (2013) study possessed a desire to see the world and have an adventure and while they were confident in their ability to live and work abroad, altruism did not play a major role in their decision to expatriate. These motivations are discussed further in the following sections.

5.3.1 Motivated to escape

One of the main themes established in this study was the participants' desire to escape certain personal and professional situations. Most of the participants had reached a period in their life where they had to make important life and career decisions and they were not yet ready to settle down and make lengthy commitments regarding their career. It is not surprising given the age of the participants (18 to 30 years) that they were at a crossroads where they felt lost and overwhelmed by which direction to follow. They were aiming for a life change as they faced important decisions such as what study option to pursue; what industry they wanted to work in; whether or not to change jobs; whether or not to change industries; and how to obtain the skills necessary to obtain work in the industry that they were qualified to do.

While there are a limited number of studies which discuss individuals at this life stage, factors relating to lifestyle change, timing, and a need for independence are identified in the literature as encouraging one to escape (Andresen & Gustschin, 2013; Doherty et al., 2011; Carr et al., 2005; Tharenou, 2010) and to improve the quality of one's lifestyle, rather than travelling for financial gain (Richardson & McKenna, 2003; Tharenou, 2010). Furthermore, Myers (2016) discussed an escape from personal factors, such as relationships, boredom, and a lack of excitement and challenge, as well as career factors, such as boredom and frustration with work and a lack of interesting and challenging work opportunities. While participants in this study related to most of these factors, none of them mentioned an escape from loneliness, isolation, or family trauma. Furthermore, other studies which address negative personal factors have often focused on the comparison of CE (corporate expatriation) and SIE (Andresen et al., 2013; Andresen & Gustschin, 2013; Cerdin, 2013; Doherty, 2013; Doherty et al., 2011). While there were personal factors that some participants aimed to escape, the majority of the participants in this study aimed to escape their professional settings.

Disengagement from careers was common among participants. This was mostly discussed as being bored or stressed due to intense workloads. According to Tharenou (2010), when individuals become disengaged, it is common for them to leave an organisation in search of a lifestyle change. Some of the participants sought a way out of their current job (Lough et al., 2009). The anticipation of freedom opened more opportunities for the participants to explore, one of which was volunteer SIE which they viewed as a viable and worthwhile option to escape their career. For other participants, however, the disengagement was caused by a lack of job opportunities, mostly because at their age, they lacked relevant work experience required by New Zealand employers. In the study by Myers (2016), participants also experienced a range of career related issues (i.e., a lack of suitable work opportunities) which caused them to lose interest in their work and pursue SIE as an escape; however, her participants were older and at the later stages of their career.

An SIE experience has also been viewed as an individual's escape from perceived boredom and an 'ordinary lifestyle' and negative environment; that is, the individual aims to venture out and go on a life changing adventure (Lough et al., 2009; Richardson & Mallon, 2005). The participants of this study sought a break from their mundane lifestyle, with a desire to ignite new passions, meet interesting new people, challenge themselves and have an adventure. Furthermore, participants felt they were taking a step forward in their development by allowing the necessary space to re-evaluate their lives and make important career-related decisions upon their return (Tharenou, 2010). Volunteer SIE seemed to provide an opportunity for the participants to take a break in order to 'get back on track'.

Career challenges are often discussed as a secondary motive in the SIE literature (Doherty et al., 2011; Farcas & Goncalves, 2017; Myers & Pringle, 2005; Richardson & Mallon, 2005). While some identify career enhancement as being a positive pull factor to go on an SIE (Jackson et al., 2005; Thorn, 2009), the majority of the participants in this study were not going abroad in search of career advancement (except for Chloe). They did, however, want a break from their careers but were uncomfortable with society's ideas on what is the "right" path to follow. As the participants were younger in age, they often found that older people (such as parents or teachers), as well as their peers who were facing the same pressure, were questioning and judgemental if they did not follow a more conventional path of attending university, then establishing themselves in a career.

5.3.2 Altruistic motivators

In this study, altruism played a significant role in influencing individuals to embark on volunteer SIE. Within the international volunteering literature, altruism is believed to be the ultimate essence of volunteering (Andresen & Gustschin, 2013; Hudson & Inkson, 2006; Rehberg, 2005; Smith, 1981). However, in line with Smith's (1981) study, the participants of this study did not appear to have purely altruistic motives as their participation was also somewhat egoistic. This is also consistent with a number of other studies (Rehberg, 2005; Yeung, 2004), in particular the study of Rehberg (2005) in which he labelled these individuals as 'reflective' volunteers. Some studies base the combination of altruistic and self-serving motives on the perception that people are born egoistic and adapt through social interactions during their up-bringing (Pearce, 1993; Wilson, 2012). As both parties (the participants and host-country locals) in this study benefitted to some extent from the volunteer SIE, some authors would claim this as being an example of cooperation as opposed to altruism (Sigmund & Hauert, 2002). Altruism in this study is, therefore, the perception that individuals give their time freely, with an awareness of some sort of personal reward (i.e., satisfaction, praise, social approval, or prestige) (Rehberg, 2005; Smith, 1981).

Contrary to the belief of there being an altruistic personality, individuals' behaviour, values, beliefs, and world views seem to be shaped by their social surroundings and interactions during volunteer SIE (Haski-Leventhal, 2009). Religious activity is a good example of this as it is linked closely to 'giving', as most religions encourage altruistic behaviour and values. While religion was not a question directly asked during the interview process of this study, only one participant (Anna) expressed religious motives as being a fundamental driver in her initial volunteer trip. Growing up in a Christian family, Anna was influenced by her parents' continuous volunteering efforts and often devoted herself to community-based efforts. She sought to continue this internationally, which lead her to pursue volunteer SIE. Furthermore, as volunteering is a socially adjusted activity, an individual's involvement in such activities, and the development of such norms and values, can be significantly influenced by like-minded individuals surrounding her/him (such as family, friends or religious congregations) (Terry & Hogg, 1996). Rehberg (2005) explained that altruism is a common aspect of religion and individuals feel a strong sense of duty to foreign and under-privileged communities. Wilson and Janoski (1995) explained that individuals with religious parents are more likely to develop a habit of volunteering and will continue to do so throughout their

lifetime. However, there is no indication in their study that individuals raised in religious households are more likely to volunteer than those raised in non-religious households. Furthermore, the authors suggested that individuals who begin to volunteer in adolescence are more likely to volunteer as adults. Factors which lead to younger people volunteering include socialisation, school, church, and parents' influence (Wilson & Janoski, 1995; Jones, 2000; Sundeen & Raskoff, 2000). While altruistic motives relating to religion influenced Anna to pursue volunteer SIE initially, the decision to continue pursuing volunteer SIE seemed to be based on the cost of travel and the benefits she would gain from her work (Andresen & Gustschin, 2013).

In this study, several participants were influenced by various marketing campaigns (e.g., World Vision) and travel blogs that focus on people who are making valuable contributions overseas to the lives of people in need (Andresen & Gustschin, 2013; Clary et al., 1996). Volunteer SIE appears to be a growing trend due to the number of televised and documented realities of global disadvantage (i.e., through travel blogs and the websites of volunteer organisations), and this has resulted in a large population of expatriates reaching out to offer their services (Brown & Morrison, 2003; Grimm & Needham, 2012).

While participants of this study explained their empathetic drive and altruistic motives for engaging in volunteer SIE, they were also aware of the tangible benefits they could gain. Benefits such as low-cost travel, free food and accommodation, and unique travel experiences were some of the named benefits that participants sought by volunteering. This ultimately enabled them to explore and to have a more genuine and authentic experience by living amongst the locals. This is consistent with the literature, which states that the idea of volunteering as a free service is typically untrue as volunteers often receive minimal remuneration or payment in other forms (such as food and accommodation) for their work (Andresen & Gustschin, 2013; Hudson & Inkson, 2006; Smith, 1981). Furthermore, participants aimed to establish international contacts who they could draw on for accommodation and support for future travels. This relates to the idea of reciprocal selection whereby individuals choose to help others who may reciprocate and serve to benefit them in the future (Fehr & Rockenbach, 2004; Haski-Leventhal, 2009; Sigmund & Hauert, 2002).

The expectation of obtaining tangible or intangible benefits by helping another person is described as a mixture of altruism and egoism (Clary et al., 1998; Yeung, 2004). Self-

rewarding expectations deter against the idea of 'pure altruism' (Clohesy, 2000; Khalil, 2004) and disregard feelings of empathy and sympathy that drive the volunteer to help. In some studies, characteristics of altruism such as compassion, sacrifice, and the desire to help others, are viewed as a means to improve self-image and social appreciation, as opposed to being a purely altruistic act with no expectation of gaining anything in return. If this is true, it does not explain why individuals act to help another person instead of leaving this to others. Furthermore, it is not clear as to why individuals endanger their lives to help another person if altruism is based purely on self-satisfaction (Haski-Leventhal, 2009).

Lacey referred to her desire to volunteer abroad as being such a strong intuitive urge that she felt she had to do it for herself. In the SIE literature, this is known as a "calling". It is a pull stronger than altruism whereby an individual engages in work that is meaningful and that significantly contributes to a society (Coles, 1989; Keyes, 2011; Myers, 2106). Furthermore, some studies refer to a spiritual connection whereby individuals feel summoned by a greater power to pursue work where they can make a difference, therefore participating in SIE as a response (Coles, 1989; Keyes, 2011; Weber, 1958). From a career perspective, a calling relates to the passion individuals feel towards the work they do (Duffy et al., 2012; Hall & Chandler, 2005).

There is an overriding consensus within the volunteerism literature that a structural change has occurred from traditional, long-term forms of volunteering that are typically influenced by religion (Hustinx & Lammertyn, 2003; Rehberg, 2005), to new, more modern forms of volunteering that are project orientated, where expectations are placed on the volunteer in terms of their involvement. Hustinx & Lammertyn (2003) also discussed a form of "new" volunteering whereby individuals aim to work on projects where there are specific organisational expectations to adhere to. This type of volunteering has been found to be common among younger participants in other studies (Hustinx & Lammertyn, 2003; Rehberg, 2005), as younger individuals are commonly more selective of what tasks they will perform and they expect personal gains from their volunteering. This form of volunteering was also found in my study, as a number of participants went abroad through volunteer organisations for the purpose of completing a project.

5.3.3 Search for adventure and new authentic travel experiences

Another significant motivator when deciding to travel overseas was the participants' desire for an adventure. The type of adventure participants wanted to experience was something new and authentic, where they could push their boundaries and immerse themselves in a different country and culture (Richardson & McKenna, 2003). There are a number of other studies that identify adventure and authenticity as important components when considering SIE. Key motives in Richardson and Mallon's (2005) study for example, included adventure and challenging new travel experiences, as did the younger self-initiated expatriates in Selmer and Lauring's (2011) study. However, authenticity was not discussed in either study.

Participants sought deep cultural immersion in their SIE as they believed that living alongside the locals provided a more authentic experience (Andresen & Gustschin, 2013; Barron & Rihova, 2011; Fee & Gray, 2011). Researchers have discussed culture in various ways, and the desire to experience new cultures, to see what is out there, is a common SIE motivator (Andresen & Gustschin, 2013; Doherty, 2013; Inkson et al., 1997; Richardson & Mallon 2005; Tharenou 2010). The participants in this study were similar to those in the study by Thorn (2009), where culture was placed in the category of 'adventure'; however in some studies, culture has been shown to be a more dominant driver (Doherty et al., 2011). According to the literature, the main goal of having an adventure is to explore new ways of living (Richardson & McKenna, 2003), gain international contacts (Myers & Pringle, 2005), and enhance confidence and broaden skills sets (Doherty et al., 2011; Inkson & Myers, 2003). Al Ariss and Syed (2011) also found that self-initiated expatriates wished to experience new cultures; however, family and career factors were more evident than in my study. In Richardson and Mallon's (2005) study, travel and adventure was the most influential theme driving participants abroad. This motive was further separated into a desire to see more of the world; a search for new experiences; and the desire for adventure and a challenge.

For the participants of this study, authenticity was a central part of having an adventure, along with new travel experiences. The fact that participants travelled to countries that were less developed economically indicated that the more challenging an experience was in terms of language, culture and location, the more authentic they felt that experience to be (Cerdin, 2013). In the SIE and careers literature, authenticity is often discussed as being true to oneself and gaining independence and belonging (Baugh & Sullivan, 2015;

Myers, 2016; Tharenou, 2010), whereas in this study, participants sought something 'new' as they were drawn to the unfamiliarity of a different country and cultural context. Participants also discussed authenticity in relation to the activities available to them in the host country. While many activities (for example yoga) were available to them in New Zealand, they perceived the experience of undertaking these sorts of activities in the country of origin, where they were a part of daily life, as a more authentic and novel experience. Furthermore, for participants who knew, or who were learning a foreign language in a local context, the deep cultural immersion was additionally appealing. While the SIE literature discusses individuals' desire for new experiences (Myers & Pringle, 2005; Thorn, 2009), the aspect of authenticity is not commonly discussed. Furthermore, SIE studies do not commonly mention participants' attraction to undertaking local activities.

Participants were mainly attracted to the locations where they believed the locals would benefit the most from their help, and destinations that offered the most authentic experience, that is, different to anything they had done before. Volunteer SIE provided a slower-paced option for participants to explore and discover these destinations; they were not interested in touring but instead desired to experience and understand life as a local (Myers, 2016). In their study, Doherty et al. (2011) discussed individuals' perceptions on how attractive a host country and its culture is. The importance of location and individuals' ability to adjust into the host country has been mentioned in the literature as being an important part of the SIE decision-making process (Doherty et al., 2011). These studies however, commonly refer to the attractiveness of the host country relative to the ease of obtaining employment, which ultimately reflects economic motives that were not apparent in this study given that participants were volunteering.

For some participants, friends and family were positive influencers encouraging their participation in SIE. Some heard about parents' or friends' past experiences and aimed to have a new and challenging experience of their own. In his study, Rehberg (2005) found that various relationships are especially important in influencing individuals to volunteer abroad through the sharing of knowledge and volunteer experiences. Over half of the participants in Rehberg's study had a friend or family member who had been on volunteer SIE. In this study, however, the ultimate decision to volunteer abroad was that of the individual participants. They were not forced to go in any way, nor were they held back, although some had their decisions questioned by relatives or peers. Doherty et al. (2011)

explained how individuals gain excitement and the drive to explore once prompted by family or social connections. They also pointed out that self-initiated expatriates make the choice through their own initiative, hence distinguishing them as 'self-initiated' expatriates.

5.3.4 Timing and context (enabling factors)

While there is a growing abundance of literature on the motivations of undertaking SIE (Cerdin, 2013; Dickmann et al., 2008; Doherty, 2013; Doherty et al., 2011; Dorsch et al., 2013; Thorn, 2009) and more recently motivations for volunteer SIE (Doherty & Dickmann, 2013), authors do not tend to focus on the importance of timing and context and its importance during the decision-making process leading up to the SIE. In contrast, this study reveals how timing and context were important factors which enabled the participants to volunteer abroad. While participants were motivated to volunteer abroad for a range of reasons, it was not until the timing was appropriate, and they had considered all the contextual factors (i.e., finances and safety), that they were able to proceed with their involvement in volunteer SIE.

While timing was mainly described as having freedom from work or studies, participants also described other contextual factors that freed them up to volunteer abroad for an undefined duration. Most participants reached a period in-between university and work when they were not tied to an employer or lengthy degree studies. Furthermore, they did not have constraints in terms of children or family commitments. Those who had commitments put their SIE plans on hold until they were free to travel. Lacey, for instance, sought her parents' approval prior to actioning her volunteer SIE plans. As several participants still lived with their parents, parental approval to go on an SIE was important. Anna, in contrast, discussed how her travel plans were constantly on hold until she had the finances to go abroad. This is an example of how financial freedom is necessary to volunteering abroad for an extended duration as volunteer self-initiated expatriates do not travel for financial gain (Hudson & Inkson, 2006; Tharenou, 2010). However, only a few references have been made in the literature to finances and how they can create a barrier pre-SIE (Andresen et al., 2014; Hudson & Inkson, 2006; Tharenou, 2010). Once the participants overcame the various circumstances that prevented them from travelling, they embraced the opportunity to go abroad as they believed it was now or never (Hudson & Inkson, 2006). The OE literature discusses how it is common for individuals to travel abroad during these in-between phases that release them from

commitments. Furthermore, travelling is a common activity in New Zealand and younger individuals often endeavour to have some form of an overseas experience to fill the gap between study and work, especially when they are unsure as to which path to take (Lyons & Wearing, 2008).

Most participants regarded international volunteering as an inexpensive and therefore a more viable travel option. Individuals typically aimed to volunteer their services in exchange for accommodation and meals, thus decreasing their living and travels costs. Furthermore, as most participants lived with their parents, they did not have mortgage or rental obligations at home. This ultimately enabled participants to be abroad for an extended period. It also meant participants did not require paid work as they could financially afford it. Their choice in destination not only reflected a desire to help those in need, but it also supported their low-cost approach to travelling, a factor that has not been highlighted in the extant literature. Therefore, participants visited destinations where they believed they could receive good value for their money.

Although volunteer SIE is typically associated with the desire to extend personal boundaries and challenge oneself (Lyons & Wearing, 2008), participants also wanted to ensure their safety before going abroad. Whether it was visiting a destination close to home or that they deemed as being safe, travelling with a friend or family member, or volunteering overseas for a New Zealand volunteer organisation, participants took precautions when planning their volunteer SIE, although it was not an over-riding concern. This is consistent with Myers and Pringle's study (2005), which also focused on young people going on SIE, where safety was mentioned but not a main factor in the SIE decision-making process.

5.4 Career Development

Career development was the second main foci of this study. The accumulation of knowledge, skills, and abilities which serve as career capital were unexpected outcomes of volunteer SIE as most participants did not seek volunteer SIE as a means for career enhancement (Fee & Gray, 2011; Jokinen, 2010; Rodriguez & Scurry, 2014; Shaffer et al., 2012; Thomas, 2001). The main career outcomes noted in this study relate to improved communication skills and widened networks; a new outlook on career; increased employability; and personal development. Although career development is the main area of focus in this second part of the research study, the level of participants'

personal development facilitated through volunteer SIE was significant and is included in this section of the chapter as it also underpins and contributes to the development of career capital (Myers, 2016).

Volunteer SIE proved to be a learning platform for these younger self-initiated expatriates to enhance their career capital (Al Ariss & Crowley-Henry, 2013; DeFillippi & Arthur, 1996; Kirk, 2016; Shaw & Rowe, 2012). Career capital is often discussed as the accrual of career competencies through work and education (Arthur et al., 1999). However, as international careers are becoming increasingly popular and diverse (Brewster et al., 2014; Inkson & Thorn, 2010), and more individuals are made aware of global disadvantage (Brown & Morrison, 2003; Grimm & Needham, 2012), a wider range of individuals are engaging in expatriation (Al Ariss, 2010; Andresen & Gustschin, 2013; Doherty, 2013). While numerous SIE studies suggest that individuals aim to capitalise on their careers by working abroad (Dickmann & Doherty, 2010), the majority of participants in this study did not seek career development, nor did they expect to gain beneficial career competencies as a result.

An abundance of career competencies are listed in the expatriation literature; however, they are mostly categorised generically (i.e., social skills, general management, leadership) (Brewster et al., 2014; Dickmann & Harris, 2005; Jokinen, 2005, 2010). While career competencies have been widely researched in the CE literature, career capital resulting from SIE has been less explored (Jokinen et al., 2008; Kirk, 2016; Myers, 2016; Rodriguez & Scurry, 2014; Shaffer et al., 2012). Participants in this study did not accrue the higher-level career competencies (i.e., managerial skills and global leadership competencies) that the SIE and CE literature often identifies, mostly because the work involved in volunteer SIE is more basic and typically excludes work in large organisations. As a result, participants developed other competencies not as explicit in the literature, such as basic human skills (i.e., cooking, cleaning, gardening, and building), which resulted in extensive personal development.

While there is an emergent literature on the accrual of career capital resulting from SIE, studies primarily have looked at professionals despite the existence of a number of other SIE subgroups (McNulty et al., 2017; Rodriguez & Scurry, 2014). As global mobility increases, a greater number of expatriates are believed to be highly educated, skilled (i.e., trade workers), or able to perform managerial roles (Doherty et al., 2014). While most of my participants were university graduates, they were not working in management roles

before or during their SIE, mostly because of their age and limited experience. The career type of these self-initiated expatriates aligns with the concept of 'modern' careers which do not conform to the traditional ways of thinking about employment (Arthur et al., 1999). This is consistent with Rodriquez and Scurry (2014) who refer to the complexity and diversity of individuals who create global careers.

Despite an increase in the number of SIE studies that acknowledge personal development as a major outcome of the SIE experience, studies on career capital have mainly centred on professionals working in large multi-national corporations (MNCs), as opposed to exploring the various SIE subgroups. As most of these professionals are highly educated and globally mobile, they are also more likely to be working in higher, managerial roles and therefore accrue greater career development than personal development (Doherty et al., 2013). Some studies, however, have analysed the work experiences of individuals in volunteer organisations such as NGOs, the United Nations (UN), or charities (Andresen & Gustschin, 2013; Brewster et al., 2008). Fee and Gray (2011) identified a range of career outcomes from their review of the international volunteerism literature. These outcomes were ultimately grouped into eight categories: personal development; decision-making and problem solving; cultural skills and understanding; high-level communication skills; strategic understanding; self-awareness; role performance; and management skills. The accumulation of such skills is similar to the career outcomes expressed by the participants of this study, more particularly aspects of personal development. Hudson and Inkson (2006) also noted a range of interpersonal, as well as technical and career related skills, that individuals develop from volunteer SIE. This study also resonates with mine in that both samples were from New Zealand and participants in both studies were driven by personal, rather than career factors. This is consistent with other studies that have found self-initiated expatriates are less likely to achieve objective career benefits (Al Ariss, 2010; Andresen et al., 2013; Briscoe et al., 2009); instead, they develop numerous subjective outcomes from their expatriation (Al Ariss & Crowley-Henry, 2013).

The career outcomes of volunteer SIE, however, have been under-explored. As participants volunteered in challenging physical and cultural environments, skill development was accelerated (Fee & Gray, 2011; Hudson & Inkson, 2006; Thomas, 2001). Participants took their careers into their own hands rather than being managed and shaped within corporate environments (Inkson et al., 1997; Richardson & Mallon, 2005).

This is not unexpected given that younger individuals are able to engage in career and life exploration more freely than older individuals (Kirk, 2016; Myers & Pringle, 2005). The career outcomes identified by the participants also have some commonalities with studies on the volunteer tourist. The developmental outcomes in Pan's (2012) study on child-aged students engaging in volunteer SIE included improved communication skills; ability to manage stress; greater appreciation for what they have; more generous and empathetic; the willingness to hear and respect others; appreciation for a slower pace of life; and open-mindedness. While not all of these themes are highlighted as main themes in my study, they were nevertheless mentioned in passing by the participants and thus incorporated into the main themes.

5.4.1 Enhanced communication and widened networks

A major theme that emerged when analysing the career development resulting from participants' volunteer SIE was the enhancement of their communication skills and widened personal and professional networks. Participants discussed how they had learnt new and effective means of communication in situations where language was a barrier, either through interpretation or by being more attentive and picking up on cues. Participants who understood the language prior to their SIE were able to further improve their language skills. Furthermore, these individuals felt that they made deeper connections with the local people as they spoke their language and could therefore hold frequent conversations. Participants also expressed how they developed strong bonds and friendships with other volunteers. This appeared to be a result of the in-depth and genuine conversations held. Volunteers could relate to what others were going through and provided guidance and support in a foreign environment. Some participants were also able to draw on the local networks that they had established post-SIE to gain preferred outcomes such as travel opportunities and free accommodation when returning to the SIE location.

Participants learned to communicate in new and effective ways as a result of living in a country where English was limited. In these locations, communication is more than just language (Howe-Walsh & Schyns, 2010; Peltokorpi & Froese, 2009). As they dealt with these barriers, participants gained greater knowledge on how to approach and speak to a range of individuals and to be more culturally sensitive (Crossman & Clarke, 2010). This is consistent with Fee and Gray (2013) whose participants learnt an array of communication skills such as persuasion, negotiation, questioning, consulting, and

greater flexibility in their communication as they learnt to cope with uncertainty. Other studies also have pointed to various communication skills that volunteers develop whilst abroad: listening skills; cross-cultural communication; conflict resolution; honest communication with peers; interpersonal relations; and collaboration skills (Barrett, Cox & Woodward, 2017; Fee & Gray, 2011; Hudson & Inkson, 2006; Powell & Bratovic, 2007).

The ability to speak the host-country language was a significant achievement for some participants who had no prior understanding of the language and were able to pick up words and phrases during their stay. The longer the self-initiated expatriates worked in one location, the more skills they acquired. Some also gained a passion to learn the language and undertook classes on the completion of their volunteer SIE. The two participants who had studied the host-country language prior to their SIE were able to further develop and fine-tune their skills through constant communication with the locals. For the remaining participants, however, language often proved to be a barrier and they did not mention the development of such skills (Fee & Gray, 2011; Hudson & Inkson 2006; Selmer & Lauring, 2011).

Numerous studies on self-initiated expatriates and volunteers have found intercultural competence and language skills to be SIE outcomes (Andresen et al., 2014; Fitzmaurice, 2013). Fee and Gray (2013), for example, discussed the development of language skills as providing a deeper cross-cultural understanding, as did Fitzmaurice (2013). Fee and Gray (2011) also found that self-initiated expatriates who were immersed in the host-country culture and language developed cross-cultural communication and language skills (Hudson & Inkson, 2006; Brook et al., 2007). The development of language, problem solving, and communications skills prepare individuals to work and live in a knowledge based-global economy (Sherraden et al., 2008). Critical thinking has also been cited as an important developmental outcome when working in a foreign environment that presents considerable cultural challenges (Sherraden et al., 2008; Brook et al., 2007).

Participants also formed an array of international networks and friendships from the volunteer SIE, both with the host-country locals, and fellow volunteers. This is consistent with many SIE studies which have pointed out that because volunteers are in an unfamiliar environment, they meet like-minded individuals and establish social support networks (Andresen et al., 2014; Ceric & Crawford, 2016; Fee & Gray, 2011, 2013; Selmer & Lauring, 2011; Sherraden et al., 2008). As described by numerous participants,

the connections they made with other volunteers were genuine and they became like a second family to them (Barrett et al., 2017). Participants relied on these connections for friendship, advice, travel companionship, emotional support, accommodation, work opportunities, and translation. This is also consistent with the study of Myers and Pringle (2005) who found that participants' communication whilst on SIE was greater than "just talking" and involved more meaningful discussions which led to deeper connections and lasting friendships. Furthermore, cross-cultural connections resulted in the development of greater understanding, trust, and empathy as participants learned to appreciate individual differences while also becoming more independent and autonomous. In the limited research that has been conducted on shorter (two-week) volunteer experiences, individuals' attitudes were not found to have changed, suggesting that this type of development can require additional time (Powell & Bratovic, 2007).

Participants' networks also provided a system of support post-SIE as they could relate to one another, share feelings, and seek guidance from each other on their return. Expanded networks can also benefit individuals in terms of future employment; however, this study did not focus on long-term career outcomes. Establishing networks and connections, that is, 'knowing whom' (DeFillipi & Arthur, 1996), is acknowledged as one of three core components of the boundaryless career. While abroad, participants utilised their new networks to gain preferred outcomes such as free accommodation and further travel or work opportunities (Andresen et al., 2014; Ceric & Crawford, 2016).

Networking and the establishment of new connections may also benefit the host-community as volunteers draw on their existing networks to support the local community through funding, donations, or other actions (Fee & Gray, 2011). Furthermore, the involvement of volunteers may improve international understanding and cooperation across borders (Sherraden et al., 2008).

5.4.2 Greater career focus and a new career outlook

With a greater focus on their careers, participants developed a new outlook which saw them setting and achieving new short and longer-term goals. They also developed a better understanding of who they were and what career path they wanted to pursue (Inkson et al., 1997; McNulty & Selmer, 2017). This newfound clarity meant that they were more open to an array of educational and employment opportunities, with some re-igniting their passion for their pre-SIE career and others developing new career goals. Volunteer SIE

provided these individuals with an opportunity to broaden their horizons and extend their career scope (Andresen et al., 2013; Bell, 1994; Powell & Bratovic, 2007).

Participants returned to New Zealand ready to consider their next career move. They returned with a global mind-set, and while all participants remained in New Zealand after their volunteer SIE, most sought other travel experiences and a few sought international job opportunities at a later date. To ensure future travel opportunities, participants kept in touch with the people they had met during their SIE, with many expressing interest in returning if the timing was right and they had the finances to go (Lough et al., 2009).

Numerous participants decided to engage in multiple volunteer SIEs following their first SIE experience. Anna, in particular, created a career around such activities. As individuals are increasingly rejecting the 'one assignment' approach and instead utilising SIE as a means to develop their career, it is common for self-initiated expatriates to undertake multiple assignments (McNulty & Vance, 2014). This ultimately allows individuals to create a global career and meet their long-term personal and professional goals. After their initial SIE experience, participants frequently sought work where they could interact with a variety of people from different backgrounds to encourage knowledge-sharing by sharing their stories and experiences. As self-initiated expatriates are more autonomous in their careers, the SIE experience fostered an environment for the participants to learn and grow (Shaw & Rowe, 2012).

The skills that the participants gained on their volunteer SIE may contribute to establishing 'lifetime employability'. However, as self-initiated expatriates become used to the freedom and autonomy of their global careers, they can encounter difficulties adjusting back into the traditional organisational work context and processes surrounding career advancement (Crossman & Clarke, 2010; McNulty & Vance, 2014). The SIE experience does, however, provide individuals with valuable international exposure and leads to the development of cross-cultural capabilities that are particularly useful for younger individuals embarking on their careers (Van den Bergh & du Plessis, 2012; Vaiman & Haslberger, 2013).

A number of participants decided to pursue a new career by studying something related to the work they undertook on SIE. One participant received a full scholarship as a direct result of her international volunteering which enabled her to continue her global career with greater knowledge and insights about international development:

I don't know if you'd call it your life story or what, but I guess I feel like I've made these decisions and I've been to these places and I've ended up like I've won a really big scholarship as a result of this volunteering so I felt like that was like a really amazing thing (Anna).

Another participant (Liam) gained the motivation needed to finish his post-graduate degree as he gained confidence in his abilities and certainty that he was on the right career path. By returning to his studies with a greater focus, his grades significantly improved compared to what he was achieving pre-SIE. Obtaining a greater education added to the participant's career capital (Arthur et al., 1999; Myers & Pringle, 2005). Fitzmaurice (2013) stated that nearly 80% of international volunteers make a conscious effort to expand their professional understandings and qualifications each year to adapt to industry changes and remain competitive. Furthermore, he acknowledged how international volunteering is more commonly being perceived as a valuable source of career development and thus New Zealand universities actively promote involvement in such events. This is due to the contribution international volunteering provides to students' employability and career potential.

Other research also attests to the suggestion that volunteer SIE improves employability and the uptake of further university education. Volunteers in the study by Lough et al. (2009) described their experience as life changing and transformational in relation to their formal education and career direction. Furthermore, their volunteer SIE experience increased their commitment to a range of developmental projects. Some researchers also found that participants made significant career changes after their volunteer SIE (Bell, 1994; Brook et al., 2007; Powell & Bratovic, 2007; Lough et al., 2012). Sixty one percent of participants in the study by Brook et al. (2007) reported significant career changes. Many obtained a new job in their pre-SIE industry, or changed careers completely. Volunteer SIE can also be a means to test potential career prospects, thus contributing to the decision-making process of individuals' future careers (Powell & Bratovic, 2007). Lough et al. (2012) found career or study changes undertaken after volunteer SIE were due to the exposure to different career options, international service, and new networks. Bell (1994), however, also found that the likelihood of this happening increased over time; that is, the longer the participants were involved in volunteer SIE, the more likely they were to change careers.

Although participants returned with an array of exciting memories, new friends, and a different world view (Inkson & Myers, 2003), some also expressed anti-climactic feelings

upon their return. Participants had changed fundamentally as they had experienced what the world had to offer. While this made them appear more exciting to their friends, family, and employers at home, participants found it harder to relate to them. Participants felt at times a sense of disjuncture, even though their career aspirations had altered and they were more aware of their options. To date, research lacks an explanation as to why this is (Fee & Gray, 2011); however, culture shock and reverse culture shock may have contributed to participants' initial sense of confusion when they returned home (Presbitero, 2016)

5.4.3 Enhanced employability

Greater employability is one of the benefits of career development (Fitzmaurice, 2013). Volunteer SIE is a unique international work experience which participants perceived as helping them secure employment upon repatriation. Initially, the SIE experience was included to enhance their CV, which allowed them to stand out during early recruitment processes. Participants also drew on their experience whilst networking and in job interviews. Thus, participants believed their experiences provided them with a positive edge over other applicants. As a result of volunteer SIE, some participants had gained hands-on experience and learned new techniques in their field of study. They gained greater confidence in their professional and technical abilities and a greater sensitivity when working with individuals from different cultures (Crossman & Clarke, 2010).

Employability refers to the set of achievements, personal attributes, and knowledge likely to be required by future employers (Crossman & Clarke). Employability is enhanced by an array of factors which have been shown to be attainable through volunteer SIE (Rothwell & Charleston, 2012). The development of personal and work-related skills as a result of volunteer SIE contributes to an individual's employability. Combined with a greater understanding of cross-cultural communication and an understanding of cultural diversity (Brook at al., 2007; Cook & Jackson, 2006; Richardson & Mallon, 2005), volunteer self-initiated expatriates can be highly valuable to an employer as they are well-prepared to work in a globalised environment (Brook et al., 2007; Sherraden et al., 2008).

It is not unusual that greater employability is an outcome of volunteer SIE as self-initiated expatriates determine and pursue their own career goals based on their personal measures of success, thus placing value on their employability. This often leads them to numerous learning opportunities. This is also an example of a protean career attitude in that self-

initiated expatriates are generally adaptable, resilient, and self-directed (Briscoe & Hall, 2006; Ceric & Crawford, 2016).

While there are not many studies that have addressed how self-initiated expatriates learn, grow, and overcome barriers whilst overseas (Mayerhofer et al., 2004; Froese & Peltokorpi 2013), the assumption is that these individuals take control of their own training and development, whereby most of their learning occurs on the job (Fee & Gray, 2011). Subsequently, individuals have more opportunities to take risks, therefore enhancing their confidence, adaptability, and cross-cultural abilities (Brewster et al., 2014). Should their SIE work tasks be too aligned with tasks that they perform at home, volunteer SIE may not be as beneficial for the individuals' development (Fee & Gray, 2011).

There are several studies that have highlighted the relationship between volunteering and increased employability (Cook & Jackson, 2006; Crossman & Clarke, 2010). Findings in these studies indicate that volunteer SIE is a useful experience to develop networks, language abilities, and experiential learning. Additionally, personal development such as intercultural adaptability and global competency can lead an individual to be more open-minded, flexible, empathetic, co-operative, and to show initiative, which all enhance an individual's employability. Thus, volunteer SIE can be seen as a beneficial learning platform to prepare graduates for employment. In their study, Powell and Bratovic (2007) also found that volunteer SIE increased participants' potential to find employment. However, although the volunteer SIE had a positive impact on their ability to gain work, the authors noted personal development (i.e., maturity, independence, confidence, and self-esteem) as being a more dominant outcome.

There is, however, some concern over the lack of perceived value that SIE provides to an individual's career. Employers have been known to look upon self-initiated expatriates, particularly younger self-initiated expatriates, as lacking commitment and career focus as they can appear to be out of touch with usual business practices (Myers, 2013). Furthermore, some employers do not recognise the value that volunteer SIE provides (Brook et al., 2007; Richardson & Mallon, 2005; Thomas, 2001) and some do not know how to capitalise on the employee's new skills (Andresen et al., 2013). This was noted with some participants in this study as they interrupted their education or employment to go abroad. This may have adversely impacted potential promotions and other developmental opportunities due to their absence from the organisation (Rolles, 1999;

Cook & Jackson, 2006). To overcome these concerns, self-initiated expatriates need to make an effort to maintain their relationships in the home country (Groysberg & Abrahams, 2014). There are some studies which have called on employers to recognise the value of volunteer SIE, and that have encouraged individuals to consider the career benefits that international volunteering can provide (Cook & Jackson, 2006; Fitzmaurice, 2013). However, while volunteer SIE may not yet have gained recognition from all prospective employers (Parker & Inkson, 1999), many do recognise the positive changes individuals experience such as increased self-confidence, maturity, and awareness. Fitzmaurice (2013), in particular, found such great value from volunteer SIE that he advocated this experience as a career-enhancing strategy within New Zealand universities. As with the participants in this study, he believed it is a particularly useful strategy to enhance students and graduates' employability. As individuals who experience volunteer SIE undergo a transformational process, they generate a range of "tough skills" (Fitzmaurice, 2013, p. 23) and generic employable skills that are not easily trainable in a formal setting, but are sought after by employers (Fee & Gray, 2011).

It has been argued that international voluntary work may contribute towards individuals' employability by helping them qualify for more meaningful and interesting positions in both the private and public sectors (Schulz & Kelly, 2008; Sherraden et al., 2008); however, to reap these opportunities, individuals may need to participate in longer volunteer assignments (Powell & Bratovic, 2007). This appeared to be the case with Anna who received a full scholarship to complete a Master's degree in England, followed by a paid opportunity in the international development sector overseas as she has been volunteering abroad for over 10 years.

In contrast to all the other participants, Chloe was the only one who went abroad with the intention of developing her career. In her volunteer assignment, she gained a practical understanding and the skills required to work in the international development sector, which consolidated her theoretical and academic studies. Ultimately, her strategy paid off as she secured a paid role in New Zealand which she had unsuccessfully applied for prior to her volunteer SIE experience (Barron & Rihova, 2011).

A few of the other participants also enhanced their technical and professional skills through their volunteer SIE. These participants were teachers, or had studied teaching, before going abroad to teach English as a foreign language. As they taught individuals from various cultural backgrounds, their confidence in their teaching and academic

planning skills increased, and they learnt to produce material that was culturally sensitive. As a result of this, Anna obtained a paid teaching role following her return to New Zealand in another overseas non-profit organisation, and Lacey's was able to clarify that teaching was not a suitable long-term career for her.

5.4.4 Personal development

An important finding emerging from this study is that participants' personal development was more extensive than their career development in terms of SIE outcomes. These outcomes are discussed below under four main categories: increased motivation and confidence; resilience, adaptability, and tolerance; gratitude; and heightened awareness.

The personal development that participants accrued is discussed in the literature as 'soft skills', which are considered difficult to acquire (Al Ariss, 2010). While SIE has been acknowledged as a vehicle for personal growth and transformation (Jokinen et al., 2008; Mendenhall, 2001), particularly for younger people (Doherty et al., 2010; Kirk, 2016), there are only a few studies which have focused on the personal aspects of younger individuals (Hudson & Inkson, 2006; Inkson & Myers, 2003), and in the wider careers literature there is even less of an understanding of the personal development acquired by this group (Rodriguez & Scurry, 2014). Nevertheless, volunteer SIE is believed to enhance or accelerate the development of skills that are useful in a global environment (Fee & Gray, 2011). Furthermore, by developing such skills and cultural competence, volunteer self-initiated expatriates gain the confidence needed to alter, and be more certain, of their career aspirations (Al Ariss & Crowley-Henry, 2013; Peltokorpi & Froese, 2009).

The expatriation literature touches on some aspects of personal development, however, as mentioned, it focuses mainly on professionals and therefore on more direct career outcomes (Rodriguez & Scurry, 2014). Even so, the discussion on personal development falls within the wider discussion on career outcomes (Brewster et al., 2014; Dickmann & Doherty, 2008; Doherty et al., 2013; Jokinen, 2010; Jokinen et al., 2008; Rodriguez & Scurry, 2014). Personal development is more commonly acknowledged in the international volunteer literature as there is less of a focus on career outcomes due to the nature of work undertaken which creates a richer environment for individuals to learn (Bell, 1994; Fee & Gray, 2011; Hudson & Inkson, 2006). In Myers and Pringle's (2005) and Myers' (2016) studies, the authors related personal development to not only work experiences, but also to the non-work experiences of SIE; however, there has been limited

research that explores the impact of both work and non-work experiences on individuals' personal development.

5.4.4.1 Increased motivation and confidence

The participants in this study were more motivated and confident to set and achieve new goals following their SIE experience. Numerous studies have suggested that SIE leads to a greater sense of self-confidence (Ceric & Crawford, 2016; Fee & Gray, 2011; Fitzmaurice, 2013; Hudson & Inkson, 2006; Inkson et al., 1997; McNulty & Selmer, 2017; Myers & Pringle, 2005). A reason for this is that individuals are given the space to be open to new ideas and ways of being.

Volunteer self-initiated expatriates learn to work with what limited resources are available to them, which increases their confidence in working in new and uncertain environments (Lough et al., 2012). These learning outcomes also extend beyond the workplace. As the individuals observe differences in everyday life, such as the goodness of those less privileged, or alternatively, they experience crime or illness, their awareness and adaptability is increased, and ultimately their confidence in dealing with a range of situations (Sherraden et al., 2008).

Participants in this study typically volunteered for grassroots, non-profit organisations and worked alongside the local people in countries that were poor and lacked adequate infrastructure. The vast majority of these organisations were under-resourced and under-staffed, a very different experience to working within a large MNC. Compared to a corporate environment, the environments that SIE volunteers work in are likely to be considered as an impairment to individuals' motivation and learning (Fee & Gray, 2013; Katzell & Thompson, 1990). However, the experiences of participants in this study suggested that these challenging local conditions had an opposite effect in that participants were motivated to achieve positive outcomes despite the difficulties encountered. This way of learning allowed the participants to experience greater autonomy as they learned to utilise the tools and resources available to them to make a difference in the local community. Furthermore, the participants did not fear failure and therefore felt more freedom to experiment, which enabled them to be more courageous and able to solve problems (Lough et al., 2012). This was particularly useful as the participants in this study were younger and had limited experience in expressing authority and making decisions.

After repatriation, participants were more confident in seeking work (Sherraden et al., 2008). Participants gained a great sense of accomplishment from volunteer SIE, often due to the nature of the work they engaged in overseas, which taught them the value of hard work and perseverance. Once they were employed post-SIE, they believed they worked smarter and harder with some aiming to climb the ranks in their new company (Fitzmaurice, 2013).

The added confidence also helped participants to feel less self-conscious. Those who initially identified as being shy, felt that their volunteer SIE experience enabled them to be more outgoing. This is consistent with the literature which explains how the social aspect and different approaches to communication within the SIE setting place individuals in new social settings which encourage interaction with a wide range of individuals from differing cultural backgrounds (McNulty & Selmer, 2017; Sherraden et al., 2008).

While enhanced confidence is commonly discussed in the literature, increased motivation is less mentioned. In Fee and Gray's studies (2011, 2013), numerous learning outcomes were identified, and while increased motivation was certainly relevant, it was not recorded as an outcome as it was not able to be measured. While the participants in this study viewed volunteer SIE as a very positive experience overall, there were some less positive outcomes on their return. Some still felt unclear about their career direction and experienced some readjustment difficulties to life back in New Zealand (discussed in the next section). However, these were short-term setbacks.

5.4.4.2 Resilience, adaptability and tolerance

The volunteer SIE experience taught the participants how to better adapt to unfamiliar surroundings when travelling and when interacting with others and in the workplace (Froese & Peltokorpi, 2013). Some participants experienced culture shock at the beginning of their SIE; however, they quickly adapted and learned to fit in and be comfortable in their surroundings. Being younger in age, this was to be expected as most still lived at home and had limited experience being on their own. An outcome of being able to adapt to a foreign environment is that the participants gained valuable insights and strength in how to deal with new situations. Learning to adapt in foreign environments was also helpful on repatriation as they were better able to adapt back into their home environment (Froese & Peltokorpi, 2013). Bjerregaard (2014) explained that because self-initiated expatriates face cultural differences, they learn in various ways as they undergo

a transformational process and let go of their existing mind-sets and behaviours to adapt into a foreign environment. Some studies have also revealed that younger self-initiated expatriates adapt more quickly and easily to new circumstances (Bjerregaard, 2014; Selmer & Lauring, 2013). This is also a characteristic of a global career which involves individuals working flexibly with a range of people from different backgrounds, which fosters greater life development (Shaw & Rowe, 2012). Participants developed a resilience and tolerance as they learned to adapt to environments that were immensely different and outside of their comfort zone (Fee & Gray, 2011). This also minimised the participants' fears when experiencing unfamiliar situations post-SIE.

Reverse culture shock was also a factor experienced by participants on their return as they had adapted well to the host environment (Presbitero, 2016). They believed this may have been due to the lack of planning for their repatriation as they thought that life would fall into place, a finding that is not uncommon in the repatriation literature (Tharenou & Caulfield, 2010). However, participants further mentioned they were able to adapt quickly to these life and career changes.

5.4.4.3 Gratitude

Gratitude was an important thread in participants' stories. The literature discusses gratitude as being a fundamental part of altruism, motivating individuals to participate in volunteer SIE, but does not identify it as an outcome (Wood, Froh & Geraghty, 2010). As a result of SIE, participants spoke about becoming aware of their privilege and being more grateful for what they had as they witnessed the lives of locals living happily despite poverty and health challenges. This led participants to ask further questions as to how they could help the local community, which for some like Anna, resulted in engagement in more international volunteering as well as a different mind-set regarding the privilege of work (Lough et al., 2009). Ultimately, the development of gratitude and new perspectives on life meant participants became more open-minded and less judgemental (Wood et al., 2010).

5.4.4.4 Heightened awareness

Greater awareness in a number of forms was also a common outcome of participants' volunteer SIE (Lough et al., 2012; Fee & Gray, 2011). This included self-awareness, cultural awareness, and an overall awareness of their surroundings. As participants developed a significant cultural understanding and a global awareness, they established a

more open-minded and sophisticated view of themselves and the world around them (Brewster et al., 2014; Lough et al., 2012).

Participants learned to be more self-aware as a result of their SIE experiences. They developed an understanding and respect for local culture and values including how to dress, act, and speak appropriately. They also learned that certain tasks were not culturally appropriate (e.g., women's participation in some work-related tasks was not seen as appropriate). Furthermore, they were more aware of their own needs; that is, they learned when to take time out for themselves, how to keep themselves safe and the importance of taking responsibility for their actions and reactions in a different cultural and work context.

Overall, participants believed that volunteer SIE changed them. Participants were particularly proud of what they had experienced at such a young age and believed their personal and cultural awareness grew and that they matured through the SIE experience. Additionally, participants were more aware of their strengths and weaknesses, which they considered helpful when applying for new jobs (Jokinen et al., 2008; Myers 2016) and working with others in both their professional and personal lives, and they were better able to develop further in their personal and career competencies (Hudson & Inkson, 2006; Thomas, 2001).

5.5 Conclusion

The findings highlight an extensive array of SIE motivations in that not all individuals are driven by the same factors, nor is there just one main reason influencing their decision to go on an SIE. Furthermore, it is argued that timing and context are important when exploring SIE motivations (Myers, 2016), as they are enablers that allow the individual to actually undertake the SIE. Furthermore, volunteer SIE facilitates not only career development but also considerable personal development which in turn underpins and supports career development. The following chapter provides an overview of this research study, highlighting conclusions and identifying the contributions of this study, limitations and areas for future research.

Chapter 6: Conclusions

6.1 Introduction

This concluding chapter discusses the overall study and highlights the main findings. Furthermore, this chapter states the contribution this study makes to theory, discusses the study's implications and limitations, and suggests areas for future research.

6.2 Overview of the Research

The purpose of this study was to explore young individuals' experiences with volunteer SIE. More specifically, the study explores the motivations for engaging in volunteer SIE, and whether career development was facilitated by the SIE experience.

This study is qualitative and interpretivist and draws on narrative inquiry as the chosen methodology. This methodology privileges the participants' voices in order to uncover previously undocumented volunteer SIE lived experiences and the meanings that participants' attributed to them.

The findings show that participants decided to pursue volunteer SIE for various reasons. These motives were mostly positive and more related to personal, rather than career factors. These factors included a desire for new and authentic travel experiences and the ability to meet new people, as well as various altruistic motives. In contrast, it was also evident that many participants were at a formative life stage where they had become lost or uncertain about their career direction and sought to go on volunteer SIE as a means of escape. The idea of an escape also related to other factors such as society's views on what constitutes a successful career and pressure from family and friends. Thus, participants believed that taking some "time out" would give them the space needed before making important career decisions. Despite this lack of an immediate career focus, the majority of participants did not pursue volunteer SIE as a means to develop their career (with the exception of one participant), although this was certainly an unexpected outcome of their experience. Considering participants were just entering their careers and they did not have commitments (such as family), they had the freedom to engage in an extended and indefinite period of work and travel. Timing and context therefore played a vital role in participants' SIE decision-making process.

The career outcomes discussed in this study were consistent with the literature on self-initiated expatriates in that participants did not necessarily expect such development. The

development of career related competencies reported by participants in this study, however, were less extensive than those reported in other SIE studies, primarily because they engaged in more basic forms of work (i.e., cooking, cleaning, gardening, teaching, and building) as opposed to working in larger MNCs (Andresen et al., 2015; McNulty & Selmer, 2017). The main career-related outcomes discussed in this study included enhanced communication and widened networks; greater career focus and a new career outlook; and enhanced employability. A more significant theme was the degree of participants' personal development brought about by the depth of cultural immersion involved in volunteer SIE. These outcomes included an increase in motivation and confidence; greater resilience, adaptability, and tolerance; gratitude; and a heightened awareness, all of which also support career development. After repatriation, participants became more aware of the potential career paths that they could pursue and although some expressed feelings of uncertainty on their return, they began to set new personal and career goals to work towards. Volunteer SIE opened an array of new opportunities and for some, re-ignited passions for their pre-SIE careers, which ironically had been a negative factor pushing them towards volunteer SIE in the first place. It would seem that individuals who are prompted to undertake something new and challenging due to early career uncertainty can go on to achieve career success and significant career and personal development. Therefore, this study argues that volunteer SIE is a particularly useful short-term alternative experience for younger people who are undecided about their career (Doherty et al., 2010).

6.3 Contributions to Theory

6.3.1 SIE and international volunteering contribution

Self-initiated expatriation has increasingly become the subject of research attention (Doherty et al., 2013), although studies have typically focused on professional mid-career SIE experiences. This study contributes to the SIE literature from two general perspectives. Firstly, there have been few studies specifically on younger self-initiated expatriates. While Inkson and Myers (2003) investigated young New Zealanders undertaking volunteer SIE, their study is now 15 years old. This study is a more recent exploration of the SIE experience in a rapidly changing global context. Secondly, the argument that international volunteerism is a valid SIE model has not been widely established, although the case was argued by Hudson and Inkson (2006), Andresen and Gustschin (2013), and Myers et al. (2017). This study contributes to this stream of

research and makes a unique contribution in that it focuses specifically on younger international volunteers. Additionally, the study contributes to the wider international volunteer research that has predominantly focused on project evaluation outcomes rather than on the individuals who do the work (Lough et al., 2009).

Within the extant literature, this study makes an important contribution to research on SIE motivations. Participants identified a range of motivations which led to their participation in volunteer SIE, highlighting career enhancement as a less important driver. An additional contribution of this study is the finding that negative career situations were a major factor pushing these younger self-initiated expatriates towards volunteer SIE, as opposed to personal factors. This is in contrast to the broader SIE literature which has argued that personal factors play a more important role in terms of motivations. Similarly, participants' breadth of personal development accrued through volunteer SIE superseded the development of direct career competencies. Thus, the findings in this study both support and extend existing SIE and careers literatures while raising the issue of whether life stage plays a part in shaping SIE motivations.

While many SIE studies have suggested that self-initiated expatriates utilise SIE to develop their careers by working abroad (Dickmann & Doherty, 2010), the younger self-initiated expatriates in this study did not. Subsequently, the participants developed various other competencies (i.e., basic human skills) due to the work that they engaged in, which contributed towards their personal development. This study builds on the existing SIE research which has acknowledged the importance of personal development and suggested that personal development is not only a major outcome of volunteer SIE but also underpins and contributes to the development of an individual's career capital (Brewster et al., 2014; Doherty et al., 2013; Jokinen, 2010; Rodriguez & Scurry, 2014).

6.3.2 Methodological contribution

Narrative inquiry is an open field in that there is significant scope for researchers to devise their own process of analysis. While researchers tend to adopt one of two analysis processes, that is, analysis of narrative, or narrative analysis (Bruner 1987, 1991; Polkinghorne, 1995), this research makes an important methodological contribution to the process of analysis in a narrative context. This study used a process of storying (narrative analysis) to not only analyse but also to present findings and in that process salient points and insights emerged which shaped and informed the identification of themes. This integration of both approaches in the 'analysis' process is a contribution that

builds on the work of other narrative theorists (Polkinghorne, 1995; Savin-Baden & Van Niekerk, 2007).

The three-phase analytical process developed for this study also provides a model or guidelines for future researchers, particularly narrative researchers whose main objective is to explore the unspoken and undocumented experiences of individuals' lives.

6.4 Implications of the Study

6.4.1 Employers

The key findings presented in this study have significant implications for employers. Firstly, the study found that negative careers and workplaces are a major factor pushing individuals to exit the organisation and go abroad. Employers who are aware of this can change their company culture and retention strategies to reduce the loss of employees. Alternatively, they can embrace the SIE experience as a part of employees' development and support and encourage them to return to the organisation on completion of SIE.

Therefore, another implication for potential employers is the need to gain a greater understanding of volunteer SIE and the value that this experience provides. Employers seeking independent, skilled, and capable employees for project-based work that requires minimal training, or for permanent work, could consider repatriated volunteer self-initiated expatriates for employment. This is due to the significant personal and professional development that volunteer self-initiated expatriates gain that makes them a valuable organisational employee (Brook et al., 2007; Sherraden et al., 2008). Volunteer self-initiated expatriates are described as being well-educated and resilient with the ability to adapt to numerous environments and situations (Froese & Peltokorpi, 2013). Due to their international mobility, volunteer self-initiated expatriates possess a range of transferrable skills (Lough et al., 2012; Fee & Gray, 2011). Organisations aiming to retain these individuals should encourage individual career planning by offering a range of personal development opportunities and support. Lastly, as volunteer self-initiated expatriates in this study demonstrated altruistic and value-driven motives for volunteering abroad, these individuals will most likely seek work in companies committed to sustainable and socially responsible practices and outcomes. In turn, these organisations may look to volunteer self-initiated expatriates as a potential pool of employees.

6.4.2 Non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and other international organisations

The findings that resulted from the analysis of motivations also provides implications for NGOs and other international organisations. These types of organisations are an attractive and compelling source of adventure and employment for younger people who are seeking a more authentic and socially responsible early career break or gap year type of experience (Inkson & Myers, 2003). Potential volunteer self-initiated expatriates, like the participants in this study, are looking for more than 'just' a tourist experience. They are looking to engage in a meaningful experience in a different culture where they can make a contribution to the local community (Brook et al., 2007). This "in between" life stage, that is, when individuals have completed school and university and before career decisions are finally made, is a stage that international volunteer organisations and NGOs can benefit from. While volunteer SIEs by younger people are not a new phenomenon, they are not well documented and understood (Hudson & Inkson, 2006; Tharenou, 2003; Suutari & Brewster, 2000). By offering programmes that not only cater to young individuals' altruistic motives, but also create opportunities for their personal and professional growth, NGOs and international volunteer organisations may gain additional support and engagement from young individuals who wish to combine altruism and adventure.

6.5 Limitations

This exploratory study provides several insights into the motivations of volunteer self-initiated expatriates, and the career and personal development resulting from their experiences. Nevertheless, there are limitations in this study.

Firstly, there were several limitations in the qualitative research methods and snowball sampling technique used to recruit participants. The sample in this study was relatively small as only those who met the criteria, and who were interested, were chosen to participate. Recruitment was also limited to individuals in Auckland, New Zealand. It may be beneficial to recruit participants from a larger national scale as it is possible that individuals outside of Auckland have had different experiences.

In this study, care was taken to ensure the snowball sampling technique did not limit the pool of participants to connected groups or networks. Only two participants were obtained through existing participants, meaning the majority of participants had no relation to each other, allowing for a more diverse sample. Furthermore, the sample was limited to

younger individuals who had repatriated back to New Zealand. Previous studies on younger self-initiated expatriates have found that a certain number of self-initiated expatriates remain overseas (Hudson & Inkson, 2006). Therefore, the experiences of those who continue travelling, or who remain working overseas, are not captured in this study. Although the study attempted to include an equal number of male and female participants, in the end there were five female and two male participants. There appeared to be no significant differences pertaining to male and female participants; however, it is possible that there may have been differences that the small sample could not detect (Fee & Gray, 2013).

The sample was also biased in that most of the participants had obtained a university or similar tertiary degree and were at the beginning of their careers. Given the participants' age and educational backgrounds, this study is unique to this particular group of self-initiated expatriates and should therefore not be used to generalise across other groups of self-initiated expatriates. Future studies on SIE should take care when linking these insights to self-initiated expatriates in other countries, particularly those in different age groups.

This study is also limited to the participants' experiences and perceptions as it does not explore notions of career development from an employer's perspective. Finally, all seven participants were highly positive about their volunteer SIE experience, despite some minor negative incidents. The fact that this study sample included only those who had had an overall positive volunteer SIE experience, and not an overall negative experience, may limit or bias some of the findings.

6.6 Future Research

Wider research on the volunteer self-initiated expatriate and the volunteer SIE experience is needed to further clarify the terms and to understand the experiences of different individuals. The findings from this study can be used as a basis to further investigate the motivations and career development of this under-researched group of self-initiated expatriates. Further studies on volunteer SIE are needed to identify the impact that factors such as age, gender, and life stage have on careers (Myers, 2016; Selmer & Lauring, 2011; Thorn, 2009).

An additional suggestion is to conduct longitudinal studies to further analyse the longer-term career impacts volunteer SIE has on younger individuals. Similarly, a longer-term

follow-up of the volunteers in this study would allow for a more accurate understanding of their career development and the role volunteer SIE played in their life decisions (Powell & Bratovic, 2007). A larger sample size would also further contribute to and clarify the findings that are highlighted in this study as it would allow for a more comprehensive understanding of the motivations of volunteer self-initiated expatriates and the role of volunteer SIE in individuals' careers. A further gender-based analysis would also provide an understanding of whether there are differences in experiences and outcomes.

As noted in a number of studies on SIE, there is a need to expand organisational views regarding career development and the perception of some employers that international mobility is a national loss (Jones, 2000; Parker & Inkson, 1999; Richardson & Mallon, 2005). Ultimately, there is a need to further educate employers on the potential career capital and organisational contribution that self-initiated expatriates can provide following an SIE experience.

Researching the experiences of volunteer self-initiated expatriates both in, and from other countries, could challenge or support the findings outlined in this study. Additionally, most research on the volunteer SIE has assessed the positive aspects of this experience, with less known about the negative implications volunteer SIE has on the individuals and the host communities. Researchers should also aim to use other methods that allow for a wider range of possible outcomes to extend existing knowledge on this subject.

It is also important that the literature focuses on exploring constructs, common terminology and definitions, as well as rigorous research processes to allow comparisons and contradictions (Doherty et al., 2013). The definitions of 'volunteer SIE' and 'volunteer self-initiated expatriates' are emergent. Furthermore, as the participants in this study distinguished their SIE from that of a volunteer tourist, future studies comparing these two groups are needed.

6.7 Conclusion

This study addresses a significant gap in the literature concerning younger people engaging in volunteer SIE. It provides an insight into volunteer SIE and adds to the existing body of knowledge on SIE, international careers, and international volunteering. This study supports existing research (as well as highlighting some contradictions) in its finding that the motivations and career development of international volunteers are

similar to those of self-initiated expatriates and thus, categorising the international volunteer experience as a valid SIE type. More importantly, this study focuses on the younger population of volunteer self-initiated expatriates to provide a broader understanding of this under-researched group. This study argues that volunteer SIE is a powerful and positive experience for young people. It is an experience that facilitates individual transition and change, while delivering the adventure of a life time!

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Appendices

Appendix A: Ethics Approval

AUTEC Secretariat

Auckland University of Technology
D-88, WU406 Level 4 WU Building City Campus
T: +64 9 921 9999 ext. 8316
E: ethics@aut.ac.nz
www.aut.ac.nz/researchethics

7 March 2016

Barbara Myers
Faculty of Business and Law

Dear Barbara

Ethics Application: **16/52 An exploration of the motivations and career development of younger people going on volunteer self-initiated expatriation.**

Thank you for submitting your application for ethical review. I am pleased to confirm that the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee (AUTEC) has approved your ethics application for three years until 1 March 2019.

AUTEC suggests that the Information Sheet would benefit from a grammar check.

As part of the ethics approval process, you are required to submit the following to AUTEC:

- A brief annual progress report using form EA2, which is available online through http://www.aut.ac.nz/researchethics. When necessary this form may also be used to request an extension of the approval at least one month prior to its expiry on 1 March 2019;

- A brief report on the status of the project using form EA3, which is available online through http://www.aut.ac.nz/researchethics. This report is to be submitted either when the approval expires on 1 March 2019 or on completion of the project;

It is a condition of approval that AUTEC is notified of any adverse events or if the research does not commence. AUTEC approval needs to be sought for any alteration to the research, including any alteration of or addition to any documents that are provided to participants. You are responsible for ensuring that research undertaken under this approval occurs within the parameters outlined in the approved application.

AUTEC grants ethical approval only. If you require management approval from an institution or organisation for your research, then you will need to obtain this. If your research is undertaken within a jurisdiction outside New Zealand, you will need to make the arrangements necessary to meet the legal and ethical requirements that apply there.

To enable us to provide you with efficient service, we ask that you use the application number and study title in all correspondence with us. If you have any enquiries about this application, or anything else, please do contact us at ethics@aut.ac.nz.

All the very best with your research,

Kate O'Connor
Executive Secretary
Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee

Cc: Cassidy Hale cassidy.hale@live.com; Candice Harris

Appendix B: Participant Information Sheet

Participant Information Sheet

AUT
TE WĀNANGA ARONUI
O TĀMAKI MAKAU RAU

Date Information Sheet Produced:

29 January 2016

Project Title

An exploration of the motivations and career development of younger people going on volunteer self-initiated expatriation

An Invitation

Hello, my name is Cassidy Hale, I am a student at AUT University undertaking a Master of Business degree (MBus) in the Human Resource Management and Employment Relations discipline. I wish to invite you to participate in this research study which contributes towards the completion of my thesis. Your participation in this study is voluntary and you may withdraw at any time prior to the completion of data collection (10 June 2016).

What is the purpose of this research?

The purpose of this research is to obtain qualitative data needed to explore the motivations and career development of younger people undertaking volunteer SIE. The research aims to contribute new insights to SIE and career theory for younger people (18-35) who have experienced volunteer SIE for a minimum of 2 months and no more than 2 years. This research will result in a Thesis. There is also a chance it may result in a research article, journal article and/or conference article.

How was I identified and why am I being invited to participate in this research?

You have been identified personally by myself, or by a third party, as qualifying to participate in this research. You have been selected as a possible candidate who meets the selection criteria (aged 18-35, and have been on a voluntary SIE for a minimum of 2 months, and not exceeding 2 years).

What will happen in this research?

The research project involves 5-8 face-to-face interviews conducted by myself (the researcher), and you (the participant). If you choose to participate in this research study, you will be invited to attend an interview lasting approximately 1-1.5 hours. In this interview, you will be asked questions relating to your volunteer SIE experience and some demographical questions relating to your gender, age and work history. Questions will be open ended to allow for a full discussion of your experiences. The interview will be held in a location mutually agreed upon. The data will be recorded by a voice recording device. All data will be kept in a secure location and may be used for additional post-thesis purposes relating to this study. I (the researcher) will be the only person to have access to the recorded interview. The anonymous transcript may be shared with my supervisors, Barbara Myers and Candice Harris for guidance in the data analysis process. All data collected will be stored securely at AUT, separate from the consent forms.

What are the discomforts and risks?

I do not expect any risks to come from your participation. As questions are open-ended regarding your personal experience of voluntary SIE and feelings towards the research agenda, please feel free to answer in your own time and to a comfort level which suits you. You may stop the interview at any time, or ask to move on from any question. I do not believe any questions will take you outside of your comfort zone, however if they do, a free, professional, face-to-face counselling service is available, up to a maximum of three sessions. Details of this service are as follows:

- To utilise this service, drop into any center WB219 or AS104 or phone 921 9992 (city campus) or

  921 9998 (north shore campus) to make an appointment.

- Let the receptionist know you are a research participant.

- Provide my contact details as mentioned below and the research project you are involved in to

  make your appointment.

- You can find out more information regarding the counsellors and counselling on their website

  http://www.aut.ac.nz/students/student_services/health_counselling_and_wellbeing

- Current AUT students also have access to the counselling services and online counselling as part of

their normal service delivery.

- Should you require any further information please do not hesitate to ask myself or any of the
  supervisors involved in this research project. Contact details are provided below.

- This counselling provision cannot accommodate crisis work, so in that situation you would need
  to access your own health provider or Community Mental Health Services as soon as possible.

What are the benefits?

The benefit of participating in this research is to give you an opportunity to provide data which has the potential to increase the existing body of knowledge and literature on young volunteer self-initiated expatriates. It will also assist me as it contributes towards the completion of my Thesis as part of the AUT MBus programme.

How will my privacy be protected?

As mentioned above, the details of the interview will remain confidential. You will not be identifiable in any way. You have the option to obtain a copy of the transcript resulting from this interview, by selecting the appropriate option in the 'Consent Form'.

What are the costs of participating in this research?

There are no financial costs. The interview could take 1-1.5 hours of your time. Transport time to the interview location and getting comfortable may extend that time.

What opportunity do I have to consider this invitation?

Participants will be given 2 weeks to consider their participation in this research. You may accept or decline prior to this time frame.

How do I agree to participate in this research?

I will provide a consent form at the time of interview, or prior as requested, for you to sign and return to me.

Will I receive feedback on the results of this research?

You will be given the option of receiving a copy of the summary of findings on completion of the research study. You also may choose to receive a copy of the transcript once the interview has been transcribed. These may be obtained by selecting the appropriate option on the 'Consent Form'.

What do I do if I have concerns about this research?

Any concerns regarding the nature of this project should be notified in the first instance to the Project Supervisor, Barbara Myers, barbara.myers@aut.ac.nz, +64 9 921 9999 ext 5366.

Concerns regarding the conduct of the research should be notified to the Executive Secretary of AUTEC, Kate O'Connor, *ethics@aut.ac.nz* , + 64 9 921 9999 ext 6038.

Whom do I contact for further information about this research?

Please keep this Information Sheet and a copy of the Consent Form for your future reference. You are also able to contact the research team as follows:

Researcher Contact Details:

Cassidy Hale

Cassidy.hale@live.com

Project Supervisor Contact Details:

Barbara Myers	**Candice Harris**
+ 64 9 921 9999 ext 5366	+ 64 9 921 9999 ext: 5102
barbara.myers@aut.ac.nz	candice.harris@aut.ac.nz

Appendix C: Statement of Psychological Support for Participants

AUT

Memorandum

To	Cassidy Hale
From	Paul Wedge
cc	
Subject	AUT Counselling services for research participants
Date	16 February 2016

Dear Cassidy

As the Head of Counselling of AUT Health Counselling and Wellbeing, I would like to confirm that our counselling service is able to offer confidential counselling support for the participants in your AUT research project entitled:

"An Exploration of the motivations and career development of younger people going on volunteer self-initiated expatriation"

The free counselling, for participants who require it, will be provided by our professional counsellors for a maximum of three sessions and must be in relation to issues arising from their participation in your research project.

Please inform your participants:
- They will need to drop into our centres at WB219 or AS104 or phone 921 9992 City Campus or 921 9998 North Shore campus to make an appointment
- They will need to let the receptionist know that they are a research participant
- They will need to provide your contact details to confirm this
- They can find out more information about our counsellors and counselling on our website http://www.aut.ac.nz/students/student_services/health_counselling_and_wellbeing

Current AUT students also have access to our counsellors and online counselling as part of our normal service delivery.

Yours sincerely

Paul Wedge
Head of Counselling

From the office of: Paul Wedge, Head of Counselling,
AUT Health, Counselling and Wellbeing
e: paul.wedge@aut.ac.nz | p: 09 921 9999 xtn 6045

Appendix D: Consent Form

Consent Form

Project title: **An exploration of the motivations and career development of younger people going on volunteer Self-Initiated Expatriation (volunteer SIE)**

Project Supervisor: **Barbara Myers (Primary) and Candice Harris (Secondary)**

Researcher: **Cassidy Hale**

○ I have read and understood the information provided about this research project in the Information Sheet dated 29 January 2016

○ I have had an opportunity to ask questions and to have them answered.

○ I understand that notes will be taken during the interviews and that the interviews will be audio-taped and transcribed by the researcher (Cassidy Hale). If individual quotes are used in the final report, names will be changed to maintain confidentiality.

○ I understand that I may withdraw myself or any information that I have provided for this project at any time prior to completion of data collection, without being disadvantaged in any way.

○ If I withdraw, I understand that all relevant information including tapes and transcripts, or parts thereof, will be destroyed.

○ I agree to take part in this research.

○ I agree that my contact details may be stored and used for post-thesis applications by the researchers and supervisors involved in this study.

○ I wish to receive a copy of the summary of findings once completed (please tick one):   Yes○   No○

○ I wish to receive a copy of the Transcript once available (please tick one):   Yes○   No○

Participant's signature: ....

Participant's name: ....

Participant's Contact Details (if appropriate):

....

....

....

Date:

Note: The Participant should retain a copy of this form.

29 January 2016   page 1 of 1

Appendix E: Discussion Guide

An exploration of the motivations and career development of younger people going on volunteer self-initiated expatriation.

Discussion Guide.

Introduction.

Firstly, I wish to take this time to thank you for taking part in this study. Please be reassured your contribution is confidential and is also much appreciated.

This interview will consist of four parts. The first will explore your time in New Zealand prior to your overseas experience, paying particular attention to your motivations for choosing to volunteer abroad. We will then discuss multiple aspects of your time overseas including work, travel and other activities and experiences you were involved in. The third part looks into the activities you participated in since your return to New Zealand and finally I will ask you to reflect on your experience and consider any subsequent impact or influence this had on your personal and professional life.

Please remember if at any time you wish to take a break or end the interview you are free to do so. If you do not want to answer any questions you do not have to and we can move on. Just for clarification I may refer to the term 'SIE' during the interview, this means self-initiated expatriation which basically means your travel overseas to participate in voluntary work.

Are you happy to proceed?

Part A. Before Departure.

1. Tell me about your life situation before you left New Zealand.
    a. What was going well?
    b. What wasn't going so well?

2. Tell me about your work/employment/unpaid work situation before you left New Zealand.
    a. Occupation pre-SIE
    b. Education pre-SIE

3. What prompted your overseas travel/work plans?
    a. Was there a specific trigger?
    b. Why volunteer work and not paid work

4. Did you have a plan before setting out?
    a. Did you have a job pre-arranged?
    b. How long did you plan for before going? Tell me about this planning stage.
    c. Did you have any expectations?
        i. If so, what were your expected outcomes in terms of work (paid or unpaid), cultural activities, travel, sequence, timing.

5. Had you visited this place before?

6. What made you choose this destination?

7. Were there any pressures placed on you in terms of your career prior to your travels i.e.: to go to university?

8. What role did travel play in your life previous to this experience?

9. Why volunteering over paid work?

10. How long did you expect or think you might be away from New Zealand? Probe - definite and open ended plans

11. Tell me about the people in your life at that time.
    a. Were they doing similar things as you?
    b. Were they encouraging you? How?
    c. Why do you think you were self-motivated to do this?

12. What do you think was your key motivating factor(s)?

13. What motivated you to take the first step/commit yourself to international volunteering?
    a. What enabled you to travel?
    b. Were there any people who influenced your decision to go overseas?
    c. Did you experience any issues getting abroad?
    d. What was stopping you?

14. Were there any barriers to going i.e. anything holding you back or concerning you?

Part B. Time away.

Now please tell me in your own words and in your own way about your time overseas. I am interested in learning about the various aspects of voluntary work, the places you visited, experiences gained and anything else that was of significance or interest to you.

8. Did you travel alone, with partner, friend or group?

9. How long were you away for?

10. Work. Probe sequence, types of work (including paid/unpaid), reasons for doing it, time spent.
    a. What company did you work for? And did you remain with that company the entire time?
    b. Did you pay to participate in this voluntary work?
    c. What tasks were you required to do?

11. Which job(s) (or aspects of a job) were most significant/rewarding and why?

12. Travel. Probe sequence, geography, types of work reasons for doing it, time spent.

13. What other experiences did you have? Probe significance.

Part C. Returning to New Zealand.

Now let's talk about your life since you have returned to NZ.

14. When did you return to NZ?

15. How long had you been away?

16. Was this longer or shorter than planned? Probe.

17. Why did you return? Probe.

18. Tell me about your life subsequent to this?
    a. Education post-SIE
    b. Occupation post-SIE
    c. Experiences in paid and/or unpaid work

19. What types of careers were you influenced to do either offers or interests while you were away or upon you return?

20. Does what you are doing now relate at all to what you experienced overseas?
    a. Career wise
    b. Paid/unpaid work

21. How did your experience help get you to where you are now, if at all?

22. Did you expect this experience to have had this impact on your career prior to going on SIE?

Part D. Reflecting on the Volunteer SIE

This final section asks you to reflect on your time away and consider how this experience has impacted/influenced your career since your return.

1. Has this experience enriched/added value to your professional life? Probe.

23. Has this experience given you an opportunity to discover or develop any abilities, skills, capabilities, strengths, weaknesses? Probe - significance?

24. In what way(s) has this experience been positive?
    a. Probe key benefits, learnings, changes and significance?
    b. Did you expect these outcomes?

25. What would you say were the negative experiences/outcomes? Probe.

26. Anything you would do differently?
    Probe

27. Do you feel you are now where you want to be due to this experience?

28. How do you think you career benefitted from this experience (if at all)?

29. How do you this it disadvantaged your career (if at all)?

30. What would life today look like had you not done this?

31. How has your perspective towards your career changed since undertaking volunteer SIE?

32. What was the most beneficial learning outcome for you? Was this expected?

33. Any other comments, concerns, issues relating to your volunteer SIE experience that you would like to raise? Probe

34. Are there questions you thought I would ask?

35. Coming here today, what questions did you think I would be asking you?

Additional General Questions to go through if not answered throughout the interview

- ☐ Age pre-assignment/Age post-assignment
- ☐ Was money an issue or did the organisaion/other support you?
- ☐ Working career – pre, during, post
- ☐ Marital status pre-assignment/post-assignment
- ☐ Can you tell me about your family? Did they have a history of travel?
- ☐ What was the highlight of your experience? Why?
- ☐ What was the lowlight? Why?
- ☐ What was your most memorable experience? Why?
- ☐ What would you do differently? Why?
- ☐ What would you do again? Why?
- ☐ What was your key learnings from this experience?
- ☐ Can you tell me 3 ways this experience has helped you in your career?
- ☐ Do you feel more or less motivated towards work following this experience?
- ☐ Overall are you happy you went?
- ☐ What would you advise someone else who is deciding whether to do this or not?
- ☐ What do you feel was the most important influencer in making the decision to do this?
- ☐ Would you consider this to be a 'life changing experience'? How?
- ☐ What are your feelings on voluntary SIE as a career option?
- ☐ Career capital
- ☐ Social capital
- ☐ New skills/developed skills
- ☐ How would you describe yourself before and after
- ☐ What influence do u have in the workplace now that you didn't before
- ☐ Which aspect of your job or a particular task did you find most rewarding and why
- ☐ What experience really made you question your life to date
- ☐ Was there a turning point
- ☐ What did you do in your spare time

Thank you for your time. Please be reassured that all aspects of this interview are confidential.

Appendix F: Researcher Safety Protocol

Researcher Safety Protocol

Project title: **An exploration of the motivations and career development of younger people going on volunteer self-initiated expatriation.**

Project Supervisor: Barbara Myers (Primary) and Candice Harris (Secondary)

Researcher: Cassidy Hale

At times, research requires that researchers undertake interviews or other activity in situations that put them at risk, e.g. interviewing participants at the home of the participant.

In these cases, the researcher (Cassidy Hale) will make suitable arrangements for her safety as per the AUT guidelines. When conducting research in participants home the researcher (Cassidy Hale) undertakes to:

- arrange for colleagues to be aware of travel plans and/or interviewing schedules
- have suitable contact networks in the field and ensure that there is some sort of confirmation process before and after an appointment. This may include actions such as the researcher ensuring that she is reporting to a colleague when entering and leaving a participant's home, or ensuring that a colleague has a schedule of her visits for a particular morning or afternoon
- act in a culturally and socially sensitive way, remembering that she is a guest and that it is the participants who are doing the researchers the favour by agreeing to participate and share their homes
- not interview participants in her own home.

Researcher's signature:......................................

Researcher's name:..

Date:

Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on 07th March 2016 AUTEC Reference number 16/52.