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# Students' Perception of a Required Community Service Program in Kenya

Rispa Achieng' Odongo  
*Walden University*

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# Walden University

College of Education

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Rispa Odongo

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2017

Abstract

Students' Perception of a Required Community Service Program in Kenya

by

Rispa Achieng' Odongo

Doctoral Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Education

Walden University

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## Abstract

The use of community service to promote learning and civic responsibility in higher education has blossomed since the 1980s. The problem addressed in this study was that although the X University initiated the required community service program in 2004, it had not assessed the effectiveness of the program from students' perspectives. Using Kolb and Kolb's conceptual framework on experiential learning, a qualitative case study was used to evaluate the perceptions of 13 4th year students who had participated in the required community service program during their 1st year of study. The research questions were focused on students' perceptions on how community service influenced their attitudes towards philanthropy. Data were coded and themes developed using key words from the interviews. Findings from 1-on-1 interviews revealed 4 themes: support for effective community service programs, students' personal growth and development, giving back to society with gratitude, and students' self-awareness in attitude towards the needy. The study results indicated that, the required community service program made a change in participants' lives and influenced their attitudes towards being sensitive to people with need. It is also likely to make them more philanthropic and affect positive social change. The resulting project consisted of an evaluation report recommending the reassessment of how the program is introduced to 1st year students. Potential social change impacts include improved student experiences, as well as helping other universities in Kenya to learn from X University's experience to introduce similar community service programs.

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## Dedication

I would like to dedicate this project to my late parents, Nathan J. Odongo and Zilpa A. Odongo, who treated their children equally irrespective of gender, and made sure I got the best education possible, and inculcated in me Christian principles, a sense of hard work, and service to others.

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## Section 1: The Problem

### **Introduction**

The purpose of higher education has shifted from human development, to the development of skills and capabilities, and from individual career development to global citizenship and contribution to a just society (York, 2010). Community service in higher education and the use of service learning or community service in higher education has blossomed since the 1980s; but there is need for quality research on service learning (Steinberg, Bringle, & William, 2010). Community Service Program is a form of service learning, a teaching and learning approach that integrates community service with academic study to enrich learning, teaching of civic responsibility, and strengthening of communities; service learning should be tied to scholarly activities, academic goals, and it should be incorporated into the disciplinary structure of the university (Hanover Research, 2012). Education in Kenya is structured into what is referred to as the 8:4:4 system, comprising 8 years of primary education, 4 years of secondary education, and 4 years of university education (Republic of Kenya, 2015). The X University was established in 2002 as a nonprofit, private university in Kenya offering both undergraduate and postgraduate business oriented academic programs. It has an average student enrolment of about 6,000, with a mission to “provide an all-round education for students in an atmosphere of freedom and responsibility.” The university provides a required community service program to undergraduate students during their first year of study. The goal of the community service program (CSP) is to foster a culture and habit

of concern for, and service to others, and make students aware of the needs of others and what they can do to help them find solutions to those needs. Community service is a part of the public good of the university. Community service at X University involves staff, students, and alumni; however, the CSP is specific to students and is intended to build on the 200 hours required for community-based attachment that all students must fulfill. Currently, the coordinators of the CSP program at school or faculty/institute level report to the management board of the university on the progress of the program every quarter and assessment is done against identified outcomes as stated in the strategic plan.

### **Definition of the Problem**

The X University attempts to foster a culture and habit of providing service to others. Therefore, the university initiated the CSP which requires all students to complete 200 hours of service to the community before graduation. However, since initiating the CSP in 2004, the university had not assessed the effectiveness of the program from students' perspectives. The 200-hour requirement for graduation is consistent with Hanover Research (2012), which recommended that effective service learning should be linked to scholarly activities and academic goals. Currently the school coordinators of the program present reports to management every quarter; but, the reports may be insufficient to assess program effectiveness and the long-term impact on students' attitudes (Carson & Domangue, 2010; Leisey, Holton, & Davey, 2012; Pike, Kuh, & McCormick, 2011). Furthermore, students' perceptions of ideal and actual experiences have never been examined, particularly how the CSP influenced students' attitudes to be philanthropic and

affect positive social change. An in-depth study exploring the program at the local university is necessary to understand the state of the program as perceived by the students, which would be helpful in understanding the influence of the program on students' attitudes to be philanthropic and contribute towards addressing community problems (Pike et al., 2011; Tumuti, Mule, Gechaga, & Munguriu, 2013).

## **Rationale**

### **Evidence of the Problem at the Local Level**

Stimulation of socioeconomic and political development of a nation is dependent on the knowledge and skills that are normally generated by the university as an educational institution (Ondigi, 2011). Higher education systems in Africa have undergone transformation due to the challenges associated with globalization (Ondigi, 2011). In Kenya, the challenges have been evident since the 1980s by expansion in both the number of universities, and student enrollment, as well as by a marked move towards privatization (Tumuti et al., 2013). The expansion rose from one university at independence time in 1963, with student enrollment of about 7,000, to 68 universities with student enrolment of 443,783 in 2014/2015 academic year (Republic of Kenya, 2015) and to 512,924 in 2015/2016 academic year (Republic of Kenya, 2016). Kenya government in its Vision 2030 challenged universities to prepare graduates who will be absorbed in the market and who will contribute to Kenya's socioeconomic development, and improve the country's global standing by being conscious of others' welfare (Republic of Kenya, 2013). Each student at X University is required to spend a minimum

of 200 hours in community service activities during their first year of study. The university has about 6,000 total student enrolment per year, of which over 4,000 are undergraduate students. Of the 4,000 undergraduate students, about 1,000 are in fourth year, and they are expected to enter the market each year and affect positive social change in communities. In its 2014 institutional audit, the university reported that as a result of engagement in the CSP, students had learned three significant values: the value of time shared, the joy it can bring, and the essence of investing time with the less fortunate in the society. However, the audit did not include data on students' perceptions of whether social responsibility is maintained beyond first year and into career life.

### **Evidence of the Problem from the Professional Literature**

Although universities have adopted university-community partnerships as a common practice, the positive impact of these partnerships on either the community partner or the university has not been proven. Most researchers have not questioned the context under which universities engage; but, they make assumptions on how engagements fit into the bigger picture of higher education purpose (Leisey et al., 2012). The use of service learning as a pedagogical tool has been studied and proven as effective, especially in teaching the fields of food, agriculture, nutrition, community development, psychology, and teaching environmental science. However, there are few articles that combine both service learning and pedagogy at university level (Aftandilian & Dart, 2013). Although learning communities improve student achievement, learning, and success (Kuh, 2008), it is not clear whether student engagement persists or even



grows over time after learning community participation (Pike et al., 2011). It is, therefore, important that research is undertaken to address the actual long-term career effects of service learning programs (Carson & Domangue, 2010).

Service learning programs have been adopted since 1980s and are being implemented in higher education institutions under various strategies. However, despite many studies on learning communities little is known about the context in which learning communities are most beneficial. There is a need for institutions to understand the environments in which such programs are being implemented in order to appreciate the results. Understanding students' perceptions of the required community service and how it influences students' attitudes to be philanthropic and affect positive social change is significant in understanding the long-term impact of CSPs in Kenya.

### **Definition of Terms**

In this study, community service and service learning are used synonymously.

*Community engagement:* Community engagement can be defined as a symbiotic relationship between higher education institutions and their communities for the purpose of sharing knowledge and resources for the benefit of all parties (O'Meara, Sandmann, Saltmarsh, & Giles, 2011).

*Community service:* Community service is a type of experiential learning in which students apply their knowledge and skills to solve problems in the community, often working collaboratively with others as a team (Kolb, 1984).

*Community service learning program:* A form of experiential education in which students combine the carrying out of needed tasks in community with intentional learning goals and with conscious reflection and critical analysis (Seider, Gillmor, & Rabinowicz, 2012). Any definitions that include institutional collaboration with community, the importance of reflection, active learning, and the development of a sense of caring is considered CSP (O'Grady, 2000).

*Kenya Vision 2030:* The national development blue print that is anchored on three development pillars: social, economic, and political. These pillars are expected to ensure high quality life for all citizens, thereby moving Kenya to a newly industrializing middle-income nation (Republic of Kenya, 2013).

*Service learning:* Service learning is a pedagogical approach that integrates community service with academic study to promote students' reflection, critical thinking, and creative problem solving (Plummer, Buchanann, Rouse, & Pine, 2011).

*The National Society for Experiential Education (NSEE):* An organization that supports the creation and improvement of experiential education opportunities.

### **Significance of the Study**

Teaching, research, and public service are three core mission statements of higher education institutions (Weisbrod, Ballou, & Asch, 2011). Community service ensures that students are educated not only to increase their earning power, but also to contribute positively to society (Weisbrod et al., 2011). Universities in Kenya are expected to offer service to communities by finding solutions to societal social, political,

cultural, and economic problems as a part of university education (Ondigi, 2011), which is critical for addressing the high poverty levels, recorded at 49.8% in 2013 (KIPPRA, 2013). Public universities in Kenya engage in community outreach through cocurricular activities, such as encouraging students to develop entrepreneurial projects with the objective of solving community problems. However, such activities are not integrated into the curricula of most academic programs. At some private universities, however, the objective of community service is to develop a culture of community among students. As a result, each student is required to undertake a community service attachment with nonprofit organizations such as schools, hospitals, and community-based organizations, working in the informal settlements (Tumuti et al., 2013). Students in Free Enterprise (SIFE) International (renamed Enactus in 2012) was established 40 years ago to help university students create community empowerment projects with the advice and support of academic and business leaders. SIFE in Kenya was launched in 2003 to encourage students to develop social entrepreneurial projects to solve community problems (Tumuti et al., 2013), and X University is part of the SIFE, Kenya.

The required CSP is part of the mission statement of X University, and it was initiated in 2004 with a goal of fostering a culture of philanthropy among students for the purpose of affecting positive social change. The program is also reflected in the university's strategic plan 2015/2025 with stated CSP projects as inputs; activities undertaken by student, alumni, and staff as process; and addressing social challenges as outputs. The activities include tree planting, visits to children's homes, fundraising for

scholarships for needy students in secondary schools, empowering prisoners wishing to study accountancy, mentoring needy students from the neighboring underprivileged areas, and working in camps. According to Ondigi (2011), only a small fraction of students enrolled in Kenyan universities participate in community-based, cocurricular activities. In addition, CSPs in Kenya have not been studied to assess their effectiveness in helping solve the socioeconomic challenges facing the country and how students feel about the programs. Exploring how the CSP at X University has influenced students' attitudes to be philanthropic and affect positive social change will ensure that the CSP goes beyond rhetoric into practice and that it meets the objective of the university and requirement of Kenya government (Republic of Kenya, 2014). The study may help demonstrate that the CSP is making a change in students' lives (Martinez & Wolverton, 2009).

### **Guiding Research Question(s)**

The central research focus was on exploring students' perceptions on how the CSP influences their attitudes towards being philanthropic and affecting positive social change. The three research questions that were addressed in this study were the following:

RQ1. What are students' perceptions of their involvement in identifying CSP activities?

RQ2. How do students describe their experiences with CSP?

RQ3. How do students describe the influence of the CSP on their own philanthropy and affecting positive social change?

### **Review of the Literature**

In order to have a deeper understanding of required CSP from students' perspectives, I conducted a review of literature for key concepts for this study. The key concepts concerning community service or service learning included, work by Kolb and Kolb's (2008) four fold conceptual framework on experiential learning, which comprises, concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization, and active experimentation. To complete the literature review to saturation, I used the Walden University Library and Google Scholar, and databases such as ProQuest, EBSCO, ERIC, Education Research Complete, and SAGE, to review community service in higher education. The search terms used included, *community service, service learning, student engagement, experiential learning, learning community, higher education, colleges, universities, conceptual framework, students' perceptions, and benefits, principles, ethics, good practice, challenges*. The literature review was organized according to the following topics: historical context, conceptual framework, definitions of community service, principles and ethics of good practice, benefits, challenges, and areas for further research.

### **Historical Context of Community Service or Service Learning**

The use of service learning in higher education has blossomed since the 1980s (Steinberg et al., 2010); but there is a need for quality research on service learning

outcomes across institutions, faculty, students, and communities (Bringle & Hatcher, 2000). The development of discourse on community engagement (CE) emerged in the 1980s when a third university mission evolved, namely, to contribute to the socioeconomic development of society (Pienaar-Steyn, 2012). A World Bank Report made the case for African higher education to help accelerate growth (as cited in Yusuf, Saint & Nabeshima, 2008); and the same idea was declared by UNESCO and other UN agencies as part of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Some literature on service learning /community service learning are cited to support the study on the required CSP at X University in Kenya.

Service learning is a pedagogical strategy that makes use of community service and reflection on service to support students in meeting academic learning goals and in developing greater community and social responsibility, to bridge the gap between theory and practice (Campus Compact, 2010; Mitchell, Donahue, & Young-Law, 2012). Faculty incorporate service learning because they want to bridge theory and practice, encourage active learning, and provide opportunities for students to develop skills in leadership, communication, cultural understanding, and critical thinking.

Universities are established to educate their citizens and to serve their communities (Titlebaum, Williamson, Daprano, Baer, & Brahler, 2004). Titlebaum et al. (2004) indicated that the philosophy of service learning comes from the social reform movement of the 1980s as spearheaded by philosopher John Dewey in the 1900s. In the 1940s and 1950s, many universities in the United States adopted the student volunteer

experiences to serve communities, which led to the civil rights movement and the inception of Peace Corps movement in 1960s. This movement later sparked the growth of community service in college campuses in the 1980s and 1990s (National Service-Learning Clearinghouse, 2008), establishment of the Campus Outreach Opportunity League in 1984, the National Campus Compact in 1985, and enactment of the National and Community Service Act in 1990, leading to creation of academic-community initiative (Titlebaum et al., 2014). Higher education institutions are, therefore, obligated to promote moral and civic virtue so that students can benefit from a renewed focus on democratic practice, and service learning can play a role in helping prepare students for citizenship (Colby, Ehrlich, Beaumont, & Stephens, 2003; Jacoby, 2003).

Lowery et al. (2006) introduced a conceptual model for supporting the continued development of service learning as pedagogy of engagement that also identified tensions and issues that merit discussions on continued development of service learning in higher education. Research in service learning has grown in the last 20 years and it was practiced in a number of colleges and universities and was moving from the periphery of the academy to the center stage of higher education institution as they assess their role in democracy. Between 1980s and early 1990s, higher education was often criticized for not extending adequate resources to relevant community, social, and national issues. In response, universities began applying their teaching, research, and expertise to local, national, and regional problems collaborating with communities in symbiotic partnerships (O' Meara et al., 2011). Consequently, many learning communities by universities

require that students are involved in and associated with out-of-class activities (Pike et al., 2011). In the United States, by 1980s, institutions of higher learning had come to value service to community and an engaged community model (Metzger, 2013).

Although university-community partnerships are a common practice in many institutions of higher education, little empirical evidence exists on the impact of such partnerships on the community, and little is known about the context in which learning communities are most beneficial (Leisey et al., 2012). Additionally, although service learning as a pedagogical tool has been shown to improve teaching and learning, there are few articles on projects that combine the two approaches at the university level (Aftandilian, 2013). The most common examples of service learning in the United States, as summarized by Carson and Domangue (2010), include placing future teachers in school setting or community-based field setting and involving teachers and K-12 students themselves in the design and implementation of service learning assignments at local schools.

Higher education has been called upon to prepare its graduates to be civically engaged community members, and since the 1980s, faculty have taken up this call and now it is a common strategy that educators have adopted to stimulate civic engagement in students (Prentice, 2011). Prentice (2011) stated that, service learning students and nonservice learning students from eight community colleges were given precourse and postcourse surveys on civic engagement and the results showed significant increase in service learners' civic engagement when compared to nonservice learners. Seider et al.



(2012), reported that the number of students participating in community service and community service learning programs in the United States increased from 2.7 million in 2002 to 3.3 million in 2005 out of 18 million students in higher education. Metzger (2012) reported that in the United States, institutions of higher learning had come to value service to community and an engaged campus community model (Bloomgarden & O'Meara, 2007). The spread of service learning among universities in the United States started in 1980s when the presidents of the three universities (Brown University, George Washington University and Stanford University), founded the Campus Compact to encourage other universities to facilitate their faculty members, students, and staff to engage in service activities; the membership to the Campus Compact increased from 1985 to over 1,000 in 2007 (Rakicevik, 2008). Since the year 2000, U.S. students have been engaged in projects with overseas clients. For example, students of George Washington University offered legal counsel on employment in Bulgaria, while other students offered assistance to a television station in Somalia in terms of developing a journalistic code of ethics and materials for process improvement of that TV station (Rakicevik, 2008).

By 2012, the Association of American Colleges and Universities had identified service learning as a high impact educational training that stimulates student learning. Additionally, in 2015, a total of 361 universities and colleges received the Carnegie community engagement classification up from 121 in 2010, because such institutions had demonstrated their engagement with local, national, regional, and international

communities (Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, 2015). Through the ethics of community service, people in the United States express their belief in the importance of individual efforts and concern for others. This value had been passed on to the younger generation as reflected by the increase in volunteer services among youth aged between 16 and 19 years from 13% in 1989 to 28% in 2005; by 66% of college freshmen showing concern for others in 2005; and by 94% of K-12 schools arranging community service opportunities for their students (Spring, Grimm, & Dietz, 2008).

Umpleby and Rakicevik (2008) reported that other countries had embraced and were practicing service-learning based on the U.S. model and that it was expanding the involvement of universities in their communities stimulating civic and moral development of students. However, in many countries, university curricula do not include service learning and are only added as additional requirements. Zivkovic (2013) stated that the leadership of the American University of Nigeria was committed to creating the university's presence in the community as an institution that provides holistic education and works to uplift and better humankind. In Kenya, the United States International University (USIU) is one of the universities that had adopted the U.S. model of service learning.

Some leaders in the engagement movement are, however, concerned that many of the institutional change efforts represent shifts in rhetoric only and not in the ways in which faculty collaborate with community members, diluting the ideal of reciprocal, mutually beneficial partnerships with communities (Doberneck et al., 2010). A lack of

focus on the process dimensions of engagement may “leave some campuses and their leaders with the impression that they are involved in engagement when in fact they are not” (American Association of Community Colleges, 2012).

The objective of universities in Kenya is to prepare individuals to fit in the market place, contribute to the country’s socioeconomic development, and improve the country’s standing in the global arena, and that one strategy to achieve this is through community service (Ondigi, 2011; Tumuti et al., 2013). Some private universities in Kenya require each student to undertake community service attachment with not-for-profit organizations, which include schools, hospitals, and community-based organizations working in the informal settlements. Public universities also have community outreach programs through cocurricular activities, although community service is not integrated in the curricular of most degree programs (Tumuti et al. (2013). For example, SIFE programs at all universities in Kenya encourage students to develop social entrepreneurship projects to solve community problems; however, only a small fraction of students enrolled in Kenyan universities participate in community-based, cocurricular activities (Tumuti et al., 2013). Therefore, the importance of community service cannot be overemphasized.

### **Conceptual Framework of Community Service or Service Learning**

The theoretical framework of service learning can be traced to Dewey in which the purpose of education was linked to promoting democratic instructional practices for a more fully democratic society; pedagogy and epistemology are related in such a way that

knowledge is driven from citizenship and democracy (Dewey, 1916). Some researchers have based the theoretical perspective of service learning on the dual constructs of acquisition of knowledge and reflection (Castellan, 2012). The first construct, the acquisition of knowledge, is significant because it is the result of the central construct, reflection; and that experience is also an essential element of education (Dewey, 1944). Dewey (1944) reported that the acquisition of knowledge occurs when both the body and the mind work together for meaningful learning. Aristotle also held the view that the body and mind work together, using inductive and deductive reasoning processes to acquire knowledge (Ozmon & Craver, 1990). Reflection is the catalyst that cultivates connections and results in new knowledge (Dewey, 1944). Contemporary theories of constructivism describe the assimilation and accommodation of new information into existing schema of prior knowledge to construct new knowledge (Brooks & Brooks 1993; Piaget, 1970; Shulman, 1999). However, Liu (1995) argued that the teaching philosophies of justified belief and duality limits the process of investigation and promotes realism as another form of pedagogy that anchors service learning. When teachers and students come together through a process of discussion, argument, and reasoning that are open to modification, then new knowledge is generated. Carver (1997) stated that the learning experiences acquired by students during their involvement in community activities become beneficial to them in their future endeavors. This is related to Dewey's theory, which explains that learning can be acquired through student involvement in community service and also through the curriculum. Lowery et al. (2006)

reported that service learning contributes to three academic scholarships: the scholarship of engagement, the scholarship of teaching, and the scholarship of discovery. Lowert et al. (2006) proposed a logic diagram to serve as conceptual map, focusing on the impact on students and the community, that (a) starts with inputs or capacities at the bottom of the logic comprising tangible and intangible resources or assets to deliver the program or service; (b) then the key activities undertaken or a process; (c) followed by outputs, which are units of service, conformance to specifications, client satisfaction, and timelines; and (d) finally outcomes, which are cognitive or affective changes – changes in thinking, perception, understanding, and commitment, that are converted into immediate outcomes such as change in behavior or action

Early researchers on service learning always refer to the work of Dewey as the philosophical and pedagogical basis for experiential, democratic, and civic education whereby people reflect and use prior knowledge from experiences for further growth (Giles & Eyster, 1994; Stanton, Giles, & Cruz, 1999). Kolb (1984), drawing from Dewey's work, shows that learning occurs following reflection from several perspectives. Additionally, Kolb and Kolb's (2008) four-fold conceptual framework on experiential learning that involves concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization, and active experimentation also draws from Dewey's work. The framework was used to direct the study. Aftandilian and Dart (2013) introduced social justice, civic engagement, and personal responsibility as key concepts of service learning that can be used to teach students about positive social change. The connection between

academic institutions and community organizations has many challenges, because of the conflicting and often different purposes or interests. Consequently, it is not easy to align the mission and purpose of universities with community development agenda (Vergee, 2010). Therefore, community service experience, as both process and outcome, is central to students' learning. Generally, conceptual frameworks serve three main purposes: (a) identify who will and who will not be included in a study, (b) describe what relationships may be present based on logic, and (c) provide the researcher with the opportunity to gather general constructs into groups (Baxter & Jack, 2008).

Although the significance of providing service to others is documented, the theory behind what motivates people to help others is not understood. Feigin et al. (2014) reported that human motivation is directed towards the end goal of increasing another's welfare and feelings of self-reward; such motivations include empathy, guided by norms of appropriate behavior, and a tendency to experience cognitive and affective empathy, which involves feelings sympathy and a desire to relieve another person's suffering. Feigin et al. (2014), however, cautioned that human altruism lack precision and are subject to misinterpretation. Therefore, researchers should be open-minded and inclusive when trying to develop models on understanding the underlying motivational forces of human altruism. This study on students' perception of a required community service program in Kenya was based on Kolb and Kolb's (2008) four-fold conceptual framework on experiential learning that comprises, concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization, and active experimentation.

### **Definitions of Community Service or Service Learning**

There are several definitions of community service or service learning depending on the aspect and application. The American Association of Community Colleges (AACC) (2012) stated that there is no one definition that is appropriate for everybody; however, some selected definitions are presented here to emphasize their diversity.

A number of researchers have defined service learning as a credit-bearing learning activity when students are involved in a structured service that addresses community needs. When this is followed with reflection, the students are able to develop further comprehension of course content, have a broader appreciation of the discipline, and cultivate a sense of civic responsibility (Bringle & Hatcher, 1996; Dukhan, Schumack, & Daniels, 2008; Scott, 2008). Others have defined service learning as a hands-on experience that simultaneously fulfills a local community need and the learning goals of an academic course. Service learning provides purposeful civic learning, preparing students to be future contributors to their communities, by applying their knowledge and skills to solve problems in the community, often working collaboratively with others as a team (Carson & Domangue, 2010; Kolb, 1984; Stanton, 1990). However, Eyler and Giles (1999) explained the crucial of reflection in the process of learning through community experience; therefore, in order to portray holistic definition, service learning should include a balance between service to community and learning. Consequently, the definition of service-learning is characterized as any activity that tries

to link academic study with service, which includes noncourse-based programs that have a reflective component and learning goals. The Alliance of Service-learning in Education Reform define service learning as a method of learning in which students learn and develop through participation in activities designed to meet the needs of communities for mutual benefit of both parties. Vergee (2010) reported that service learning refers to contribution in and to the community with the objective of improving the welfare of individuals, groups or communities. Plumber (2011) defined service learning as a pedagogical approach that integrates community service with academic study to promote students' reflection, critical thinking, and creative problem solving. Seider et al. (2012) gave the definition of community service learning program as a form of experiential education in which students combine the carrying out of needed tasks in community with intentional learning goals and with conscious reflection and critical analysis. There are also other terms which are used to describe service learning like public work, community development, social capital, and community action (Howard, 2001). In Canada, the service is called community service learning, which builds on the U.S. service learning movement (Smith, 2010). According to Tagg (2012), many higher education institutions offer service learning programs; yet some students do not participate in them. To avoid disparity in students' experiences at an institutional level and to enhance successful implementation of the programs, the principles of service learning should be captured in the mission and curricula of the university. Although, many universities have university-



community partnerships, there is little research on the impact of such partnerships on the community partner or the university (Leisey et al., 2012).

There are several definitions of service learning that exist in the literature, but, all have commonalities that include: students participate in a project beneficial to the community that reinforces and expands classroom learning through the merging of theory and practice, while placing emphasis on reflection and reciprocity (Brzozowski, Homenda, & Roy, 2012). Library information science (LIS) literature, view service learning as a way of exposing students to the diverse audiences they will serve in their professional lives (Eyler & Giles, 1999; Herther, 2008; Pierce, 2006; Witbodi, 2004). The LIS view is consistent with the definition of academic service learning by Bringle and Hatcher (1995), that it is,

A course based, credit bearing educational experience in which students participate in an organized service activity that meets identified community needs and reflects on the service activity in such a way as to gain further understanding of course content, a broader appreciation of the discipline and an enhanced sense of civic responsibility (p. 112).

In this definition, service learning incorporates three main elements: (a) experiential learning, (b) contribution to the community, and (c) reflection (Bishop, Bruce, & Jeong, 2009, p. 18). In experiential education literature, field experiences, or fieldwork are often included in discussions of service learning. However, service learning is unique from fieldwork, in that, service learning involves providing a service to a community. The

National Society for Experiential Education (2013) argued that for service learning to be considered experiential learning, it must be monitored, and students must have intentional learning goals and engage in active reflection on, what he or she is learning throughout the experiences (p. 9).

Service learning is, therefore, defined as a form of experiential education in which students combine the carrying out of needed tasks in community, with intentional learning goals, conscious reflection, and critical analysis (Seider et al., 2012a).

### **Principles and Ethics of Good Practice in Service Learning**

The National Society for Experiential Education (2013) proposed eight principles of good practice for implementation of experiential learning programs, to ensure that the learner receives both quality experience and pedagogical support. The principles are: (a) *intention* - all parties must be clear from the outset why experience is the chosen approach; (b) *preparedness and planning* - participants must make sure that they have adequate background information on the subject before they engage in the activity for successful experience; (c) *authenticity* - the experience must have a real world context; (d) *reflection* - for adjusting the experience, and measuring outcomes by testing assumptions and hypotheses about the outcomes of decisions and actions taken against the past learning and future implications; (e) *orientation and training* - the learner and the involved partners should be conversant with the mission and objectives of each party, as well as, the setting in which the program is to be implemented; (f) *monitoring and continuous improvement* - all parties must be responsible for ensuring that the experience

provide the richest learning possible, therefore a feedback mechanisms necessary; (g) *assessment and evaluation* - there should be a clear system of keeping records of outcomes and processes; and (h) *acknowledgment* - all parties should be included in the recognition of progress and accomplishment.

The National Society for Experiential Education (2009), provided the following seven principles for ethical behavior in experiential learning: (a) the pursuit of truth, freedom of students to express their viewpoints, ensuring critical thinking and reflection; (b) use of recognized quality standards and practices in the placement and supervision of students, maintaining privacy and confidentiality; (c) recognition of the responsibility in teaching and required values, skills, and relationships that foster a spirit of inquiry and fairness; (d) being informed and guided by a recognized body of knowledge, research and pedagogical practices; (e) commitment to excellence through affiliation with networks and organizations that advance experiential learning; (f) creation of informed learning contexts; and (g) being aware of and sensitive to recognized legal, ethical and professional issues.

Students in any type of service learning should be encouraged to reflect on their activities in terms of personal development, content learning, and sense of civic responsibility, in helping address community needs through the service, and to be conscious that healthy relationships with the community is built on and maintained by shared understanding and reciprocity (Stewart & Alrutz, 2012). Dorfman (2012) proposed three principles to ensure that community service achieves its full potential to

realize integral and catalytic change: (a) putting the problem at the center; (b) recognizing that volunteers are the means, not the end; and (c) ensuring that form follows function.

Dorfman (2012) stated that the task in service learning is to create opportunities that benefit communities in the moment, and catalyze change over a long time, because it is both in the moment and over the long period, that systemic change takes place.

Vaknin and Bresciani (2013) reported the following characteristics that make up quality service learning programs:

1. Diverse collaborative partnerships, to bring to the process varied resources, talents, knowledge, and skills (Mintz & Hesser, 1996); partnerships to reflect the mission of both of these institutions, which was consistent with Jacoby (2003); partner institutions to have access to numerous types of opportunities to create collaborative partnerships; and having the knowledge, dedication, and the logistics to make it work for the mutual benefit of all of the entities.
2. Connecting curriculum and curricular experiences, and offering a variety of service learning opportunities to connect curricular and co-curricular experiences.
3. Providing reflection activities that have emerged as characteristic of quality programs; feedback and assessment from all of the entities in service learning programs, sharing information to make improvements to promote learning outcomes.

4. Ensuring sustainability through support from administration; stability in staff and funding; and proper training and orientations; and mentorship opportunities for of all the entities in the partnership.

### **Benefits of Community Service or Service Learning**

The benefits of service learning, or community service, are many as have been reported by several researchers. Service learning helps students have a better understanding of the connection between course material and the real world and have improved critical thinking skills (Castellan, 2012; Golberg & Coufal, 2009; Nelson & Crow, 2014). Community service help students build connections that can later be drawn upon to address other issues of concern to the community, develop good citizenship and community-building skills, become aware of other people's struggles, and learn different ways of helping people (Aftandilian & Dart, 2013). Community engagement ensures that students get real-life application of academic work, provides a way of telling the untold or underrepresented stories about communities and helping unheard voices be heard, which is a way of giving back to communities (Franz, Childers, & Sanderlin, 2012).

Additionally, service learning helps students to appreciate that people examine the world from different perspectives, broaden their critical lenses for examining issues deeply, and find the root cause of problems; students connect what happens in community placement with the theories learned in the classroom (Kajner et al., 2013). As they engage in service learning, students find significance in the work they do and recognize important strategies and skills for working with other vulnerable groups

(Carson & Domangue, 2010), they feel empowered and have increased awareness of the social realities of their communities, and develop solutions to those problems (Lattanzi, Campbell, Dole, & Palombaro, 2011; Prohaska, 2013). Other positive influences of community service are that, students develop tolerance and trust in others, appreciate racial, cultural, and economic diversity (Johnson, 2013; Simmons & Cleary, 2006), and have a sense of pride in their communities (Flanagan, Levine, & Settersten, 2009; White & Nitkin, 2014). Furthermore, students come to appreciate that teamwork is effective when based on collaboration and trust, and that leadership qualities are essential attributes of good team work (Plummer, Buchanan, Kennedy, Rouse, & Pine, 2011). Students receive real-life experiences of responsibilities, frustrations, and the rewards and benefits for the community partner, the university, and for themselves (Lardner, 2014; Leisey et al., 2012).

Strong university-community partnerships can strengthen social capital, provide a means to accomplish a task that is difficult to address alone; and ensure service to recipients' voices, enable sharing of resources, skills, funding, and knowledge, and ground higher education institutions in community realities and interest (Stewart & Alrutz, 2012). The change in students' attitudes that occurs during service learning is sustained after the service, and likely to be long-lasting, because by forcing students to reflect on what they saw, heard, and felt, they become more aware of their own attitudes, identities, and sensibilities (Golberg & Coufal, 2009). The experience from service learning is of value to all parties; the service has a greater impact when collaboration

between the service provider and the community is of a long duration (Beran & Lublin, 2011).

Prentice (2011) reported that, service learning is a flexible method that can spur civic engagement development in students; it enable students to link theory learned in the classroom to the political and community issues that are associated with the academic program, and can be applied in almost all academic fields of study or course; and it fosters the connection between earning a higher education and the greater responsibility for being involved civically in the community. Prentice (2011) stated that, during the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, when more people than ever before are entering higher education, institutions are perceived as a place in which civic engagement can be developed and sustained throughout a graduate's lifetime. Smit and Tremethick (2013) reported that students: (a) appreciated the personal and professional resources available to them in their home setting; (b) began to examine their own lifestyles in contrast to the positive aspects they discovered in the community way of life; (c) were affected by the needs of the people with whom they worked; (d) were struck by the warmth and joy of the people they worked and lived with, the joy, that at times seemed to be lacking in the students' own lives, the people were not focused on their lack of resources; and (e) found that working and living with one another during the service learning experience helped them to value one another, and that the sharing across disciplines enriched their learning and promoted respect and collaboration among themselves and with the community partners. Taylor and Raykov (2014) reported that, students believed that their community service learning

(CSL) experience was beneficial for making further education decisions; career decisions; influenced their thinking about their university programs and influenced their career plans. Taylor and Raykov (2014) further reported that, a number of community-based respondents continued to volunteer with their CSL partner organizations after their course ended; and more than half regarded CSL participation as important for the development of their leadership skills, and approximately two-thirds believed that their engagement had significant impact on the development of their ability to respond to complex real-life, social issues, and ability to work effectively with others. Many students continued to volunteer with their CSL partner organizations after their course ended (Hatcher & Studer, 2015; Taylor & Raykov, 2014). While all types of service experiences were positively related to civic engagement, extra-curricular civic engagement had the most impact (Whitley & Yoder, 2015).

The impact of service learning on different partners are as follows: (a) the impact on students are in terms of personal outcomes, social outcomes, learning outcomes, career development, and stronger relationship with faculty; (b) the impact on faculty include satisfaction with quality of students learning, increased level of integration of service learning into courses, and encourages faculty to be innovative and creative in their teaching; (c) the impact on institutions include increased institutional commitment to service learning as a pedagogy, increased student retention, enhanced community collaborations and partnerships, improved contribution to institution's outreach efforts to communities, and sharing resources; and (d) the impact on communities included



satisfaction with provision of service to them, enhanced university-community relations, and contribution to community education (Eyler, Giles, & Stentson, 2001). Service learning, therefore, results in mutual empowerment of the student, faculty, university, and the community (Crabtree, 2009).

### **Challenges to Community Service or Service Learning**

In spite of the many benefits, there are challenges associated with implementation of service learning programs at both ideology and program levels. There seems to be no ideology behind service in education, because most service learning programs reflect a missionary philosophy, which promotes caring for others or doing something for the less fortunate based on the concept of charity (Vergee, 2010). Service learning falls within two paradigms. The first one, is the charity status quo paradigm, which teaches students to be responsible members of the society, providing service and caring for people by addressing their needs, with the goal that such service learning programs will instill civic learning in students and contribute to a solid foundation for democracy, and where the higher education institutions usually decide what is best for the community. However, such programs do not necessarily study the root cause of community problems. The second paradigm, is the transformative or social justice paradigm, which emphasizes scholarship of engagement and collaboration with communities to address the cause of community problems, and so teaches students to investigate how members of the community define their problems, therefore, the paradigm requires equal input from both the higher education institution and the community partners (Vergee, 2010). Vergee

(2010) reported that, collaborations between higher education institutions and community organizations always have problems because the mission, purposes, and interests of the two partners are often in conflict. The question often asked is, if service learning should be pursued for the sake of the community, or for students. One view is that, service learning should address social and community needs (Stoecker, 2003); that service learning can serve as a catalyst for civic and moral education, because students often experience satisfaction in helping others and express commitment to engage in other kinds of service in future (Payne, 2000). The other view holds that, service learning should focus exclusively on traditional goals of education, because teaching may diminish when it is linked too closely to service (Leeds, 1999). However, the two objectives can coexist, because concrete learning experiences are strengthened when students are first exposed to service learning activities (Kolb, 1984).

Other challenges are that, students tend to focus more on personal benefits of expanded learning as a result of engagement, rather than how engagement could fit into teaching or research; universities need to find mechanisms that can bridge these gaps to enhance engagement (Franz, Childers, & Sanderlin, 2012). In some community service initiatives, students change service projects after a few weeks because of the lack of hands-on opportunities provided by the community partner. Partnerships that are not properly planned often fail to meet the goals of faculty, students, and those of the community partner (Prohaska, 2013). Service learning puts pressure on the already

packed curriculum and, therefore, implementing a service learning component in such a curriculum is challenging (Dukhan et al., 2008; Selingo, 2006).

Communication difficulties between community partners, students, and/or faculty are a challenge; and misunderstanding of the scope and goals of the service learning partnership between community partners and students or educators. However, the challenges can be overcome by involving the partners in all stages of the service learning program (Cipolle, 2011). Additionally, university-based community service learning programs that include teaching and tutoring, seem to be susceptible to counter productivity of high expectations (Seider, 2012a). Lack of recognition in institutional reward system is a challenge to the implementation of many community service programs (O'Meara et al., 2011). In addition, there are tensions caused by funding issues, timetabling, room availability, and the nature of the programs as a project rather than a guaranteed financially backed policy (Frohman, 2012).

### **Implementation Strategy of Community Service or Service Learning**

For service learning to be fully effective, it should have the following elements:

- (a) meet the needs of various kinds of students;
- (b) engage a broad range of community partners;
- (c) reflect full appreciation of community assets and understanding of its needs;
- (d) mirror the institution's mission, vision, and strategic objectives;
- (e) enjoy full support of the leadership of the higher education institution;
- (f) benefit from institutional robust support system;
- (g) engage the support of faculty, staff, students, and interdisciplinary entities;
- (h) draw effectively from the various state and national support system that

provide service-learning; (i) reflect a sound theoretical foundation; (j) fully engage the human resources of the institution; (k) draw on incentive system that recognize the value of service learning and its relationship to the institution's mission; and (l) be funded adequately (Boyer, 1990). Effective service learning programs should be based on long-term view projects (Aftandilian & Dart, 2013); the activities should be well coordinated, and universities should adjust their curricula to respond to significant events in their communities (Prohaska, 2013). University-community partnerships must incorporate an evaluative process, to understand the outcomes for both partners (Leisey et al., 2012).

### **Areas for Further Research**

Although a lot of studies have been undertaken on service learning, there are areas that need further investigation. Research should be done to address the long-term career effect of service learning on students (Carson & Domangue, 2010). The long-term consequences of learning community participation remain unclear, because for some activities, there is inconsistency among institutions in the degree of relationships, and for others, senior students seems to develop stronger and longer lasting relationships than first-year students (Pike et al., 2011). Research should be done to explore the experience of service learning, with a focus on the key service learning outcomes that distinguish it from other educational methods. Examples include: increased civic education, and offering structured civic education engagement opportunities for students after course completion; assessment of those who participated and those who did not; and capturing the impression of the community before and after course completion to determine

whether the service learning had any impact (Byers & Gray, 2012). Golberg and Coufal (2009) identified several factors that need to be addressed to explore the effects of service learning: (a) measuring the effects of serving learning experiences longitudinally, as well as, within a semester; (b) having skilled instructors to address both reason and emotion in a systematic reflective learning process, and to measure taking into account non-linear development of critical thinking skills; and (c) analyzing both quantitative and qualitative data to capture the full extent of students' learning experiences, and to evaluate the role of service learning in facilitating critical thinking and cultural competence. Survey research should differentiate among service learning, community-based research, and outreach/extension (O'Meara et al., 2011). To improve leadership skills in students and to produce community-sensitive and global citizens, universities have adopted inclusion of community engagement in their undergraduate programs, but, it is not yet clear which type of educational experiences are most effective in achieving this goal (Whitley & Yoder, 2015).

Effective service learning pedagogies need to be based on long-term projects, and the activities should be well coordinated. Organizations or community partners should continue to provide opportunities for community service or service learning and for supporting community efforts (Aftandilian & Dart, 2013). Scholars should continue to adjust their curricula to respond to significant events in their communities, for student learning opportunities, and for civic responsibility (Prohaska, 2013). Although the benefits outweigh the challenges, the success of university-community partnerships must

incorporate an evaluative process to understand the outcomes for both partners, and the differences that partnerships and projects make (Leisey et al., 2012). Exploring students' perceptions on how the required CSP has influenced their attitudes towards being philanthropic and affecting positive social change will assist in appreciating the long-term impact of CSPs.

### **Implications**

Exploring students' perceptions of the CSP at X University in fostering a culture and habit of helping people with needs will strengthen understanding how the CSP can influence students' attitude towards being philanthropic and affecting positive social change in the community; and it will also demonstrate that the CSP is making a change in students' lives (Martinez & Wolverson, 2009). The results of this study can be used to make recommendations on improving the effectiveness and success of the CSP by X University, for the benefit of students, the university and partnering communities. In addition, other Kenyan universities might benefit from the study and improve effectiveness of their community service programs. Kenyan government might use the results and require that all universities have regular review of their curricula in order to incorporate service into their programs to ensure that university graduates are sensitive to community needs (Prohaska, 2013; Tumuti, et al., 2013), and affect social change. This may move community service from the periphery to the core of universities mandates (Douglas, 2012); universities will focus on generating knowledge with the communities (Olowu, 2012). Education researchers may appreciate the long-term impact of

community service on students' careers and undertake further studies on the subject (Carson & Domangue, 2010).

### **Summary**

Community service is a form of service learning, which integrates service and academic study to produce graduates who have an attitude of philanthropy. Literature review showed that the benefits of community service outweigh its challenges, but its long-term impact on students is yet to be fully proven. A case study of the CSP at X University sought to address the research questions on how students describe their experience with the CSP, and students' perceptions of how the CSP has influenced their attitudes towards being philanthropic. The results of the study might ensure that the CSP goes beyond rhetoric to practice, and demonstrate that it is making a change in students' lives (Martinez & Wolverson, 2009, p. 21). In Section 2, I outline how using a qualitative case study research methodology allowed me to have a deeper understanding of the CSP at X University from the perspective of 4<sup>th</sup>-year students who had taken the community service in their first-year of study, and which will be dictated by the research questions, and the conceptual framework of experiential learning.

## Section 2: The Methodology

### **Introduction**

In this section, I provide the rationale for the research design and a detailed presentation of methodology. It also includes an overview of the population, sample, and a justification for the sample size. Further, I describe ethical issues that may arise from the research and my responsibilities as the principal researcher. This is followed by a section on data collection procedures and an overview of data analysis. The section also includes discussion of the qualitative credibility, dependability, and transferability of this research study.

The X University initiated the CSP in 2004 to foster in students a culture and habit of providing service to others. However, the university had not assessed the effectiveness of the program from students' perspectives. An in-depth study of the university's CSP, as perceived by students, will be helpful in increasing understanding how it influenced students' attitudes to be philanthropic and contribute to positive social change.

### **Research Design**

The study was a qualitative case study design, which is consistent with analyzing the local problem: to have a deeper understanding of how students perceive the CSP in influencing their attitudes towards being philanthropic and helping people with need. The case study was appropriate because it allows researchers to focus on an individual, or individuals within a group, to document the group's or individual's experience in a



specific setting, a single unit, or a bounded system (Lodico, Spaulding, & Voegtle, 2010, p. 35). Although, there are several types of qualitative designs, namely case study, critical qualitative research, narrative analysis, phenomenology, ethnography, and grounded theory, each has the goal of understanding the human experience. I chose qualitative case study because it is appropriate for attempting to gain a deeper understanding of a phenomenon, which was students' perceptions of a CSP (Creswell, 2012). A single holistic qualitative case study was employed, because the conceptual framework itself, which was based on experiential learning, is holistic in nature (Baxter & Jack, 2008; Merriam, 2009; Yin, 2014). The qualitative case study was useful in helping me to have a deeper understanding of X University's 4<sup>th</sup>-year students' perceptions of the CSP in influencing their attitudes towards being philanthropic, as these students had participated in various types of community service activities in different environments during their first year. Such activities included helping at homes for abandoned children, rescue centers for girls, homes for the elderly, teaching and mentoring students and children in primary and secondary schools in impoverished areas, kindergarten school for needy children and helping in churches, hospitals, and community library. The method enabled use of one-to-one, in-depth interviews with a special group, 4<sup>th</sup>-year students, to address the three research questions for the study (Creswell, 2012). The qualitative case study allowed detailed examination of one setting, a university campus, and it was feasible to accomplish in light of the limited time allocated for this study (Baxter & Jack, 2008; Creswell, 2012). The intent of the study was to better understand students' perceptions of

the CSP, which was not necessarily a representation of CSPs in other Kenyan universities, nor was it meant to understand an abstract construct or generic phenomenon, or build a theory, or illustrate a theory (Baxter & Jack, 2008; Merriam, 2009). Therefore, the case study did not include any propositions because it was a unique CSP at X University with a unique goal. The nature of the case study may have shifted during the course of the study without the researcher being aware, which may lead to emergence of a different orientation of the study questions (Yin, 2014), however, this was not the case in this study.

### **Population and Sampling**

The case study involved use of maximum variation principle in identifying students with the greatest possible diversity of extreme experiences (Lodico et al., 2010), based on the quarterly reports from the director of CSP. The purposive approach was used which ensured my collaboration with the participants, enabling them to tell their stories and describe their views of reality (Baxter & Jack, 2008). The one-phase approach was employed where possible students who served as cases was limited to 12 or fewer, and to those who were likely to provide rich data sources, especially students who had reported positive perception of the CSP from the quarterly reports. The University had an average undergraduate student population of about 4,000, with almost equal gender distribution (46.4% males and 53.6% females in 2015). Out of the total student enrolment, about 1,000 were 4<sup>th</sup> -year students spread across 13 undergraduate academic programs in five schools. Purposive selection procedure was used to identify 4<sup>th</sup> -year

students at X University who had participated in the CSP during their first-year of study, with the focus of developing an in-depth understanding of their perceptions of the CSP. Because students had participated in the CSP during their first-year, they had had time to reflect and know if their attitudes had been influenced towards being philanthropic and helping people with needs. The 4<sup>th</sup> -year students, hereafter referred to as participants, were purposively identified to represent gender, academic programs, and different CSP activities, so that the fewer number of participants allowed deeper inquiry per participant.

### **Participants' Profiles**

During the process of recruitment of participants, 17 4<sup>th</sup> -year students of X University responded to the e-mail invitation requesting them to volunteer to participate in the qualitative case study on their perception of the required CSP (Appendix D). Thirteen students (eight females and five males) participated in briefing session and subsequent one-to-one interviews. The 13 students ensured the diversity in gender, program, and community service activities (Table 1). The number of participants was adequate for my planned sample, so I did not have to explain to any participant why he or she was not included in the study. The highest number of participants was from two largest schools in the university, the school of commerce and the school of financial economics.

Table 1

## Participants' Profiles

School	Number	Male	Female	Percent of Total
School of Commerce	4	4	0	30.7%
School of Law	2	0	2	15.3%
School of Information Technology	2	0	2	15.3%
School of Financial Economics	4	0	4	30.7%
School of Hospitality & Tourism	1	1	0	7%
Total	13	5 (38.5)	8 (61.5%)	100%

I noted that female students easily volunteered and participated in the research study (over 60%), while the male students took some time to decide whether to volunteer or not (about 40%). However, the gender representation was consistent with gender enrolment ratios at X University, which was 53.6% Females and 46.4% Males in 2015/2016 academic year for undergraduate programs. One of the participants responded that it was not surprising that female students easily volunteered, that even in class, female students were more likely to volunteer for class responsibilities. This was attributed to the over emphasis by the Government of Kenya on the girl child in the last 10 years in an endeavor to achieve gender parity in all economic activities, however, this is a debate that has not been resolved and needs further research (Chang'ach, 2012).

### **Types of Community Service Activities**

The community service activities that students engaged in included, homes for abandoned children; rescue centers for girls; kindergarten schools for needy children; primary and secondary schools for the needy in slum areas; homes for the elderly;

helping in churches; hospitals; and community libraries. In terms of CSP activities, there was no direct link between gender, academic programs and the choice of community service sites by students (Table 3). Most students chose working with children in one form or another, and so children's homes and rescue centers had the largest number of students because of availability. In Kenya, there are a number of people who have established children's homes to help solve the issue of street children, because such homes tend to attract external support in terms of donations (Sorre & Oino, 2013). Table 2 shows the types of community service activities in which students were engaged.

Table 2

## Types of Community Service Activities

Type of Activity	No. of Students	Male	Female	Program,
Children's homes, Rescue centers	4	2	2	B.Com, BB Finance, IT, Hospitality & Tourism
Kindergarten for needy children	2	1	1	Law, B.Com
Primary and secondary schools for needy children in slum areas	2	1	1	B.Com, IT
Homes for the elderly	1		1	Actuarial Science
Helping in Churches	1		1	Law
Hospitals	2	1	2	BB Finance, B.Com
Library	2		1	Actuarial Science
Total	13	5	8	

### Data Collection Instruments and Procedures

The basis for a qualitative case study is the use of multiple data sources, which is a strategy for enhancing data credibility, and developing an understanding of the phenomenon (Creswell, 2012). The primary data sources resulted from interviewing 13 participants. Students were asked to volunteer to participate in the research study through

e-mail (Appendix D). Interviews were conducted using an interview protocol (IRB approval No. 01.18.17.0446637), The interviews are appropriate in qualitative case studies that include few individuals from a large number of people representing diverse ideas as in the case of CSP. The interview protocol contained questions based on the research questions and other predetermined interview questions (Merriam, 2009), which was in a semi-structured format to allow for additional questions and comments (Appendix B), and to encouraged participants to define their world in unique ways (Speight et al., 2012). Interview questions were open-ended and flexible (Merriam, 2009). The interviews were audio-recorded.

### **Research Questions Alignment**

I prepared and used the interview questions and aligned them with the guiding research questions and sub questions as discussed in Section 1 of this study. Although the interview was guided by prescribed research questions, flexibility was maintained in asking follow-up questions contained in the research alignment tool and Interview protocol (Appendix B) to ensure comprehensive data collection.

In addition to responding to the interview questions and sub questions, probing questions were also asked depending on how a particular participant responded, which enabled me to have a deeper understanding of the required community service program at X University. Table 3 shows the relationship between the research questions and interview questions and major sub-questions.

Table 3

## Relationship Between Research Questions and Interview Questions

Research Questions (RQ)	Interview Questions (IQ) and Subquestions
<b>RQ 1:</b> What are students' perceptions on their involvement in identifying CSP activities?	<b>IQ 1:</b> What was your experience with the process of identifying CSP activities? a. Explain why you were involved in this community service program b. What was your experience with identification of the activity? c. What would you describe as typical day at the community service site.
<b>RQ 2:</b> How do students describe their experience with the CSP	<b>IQ 2:</b> How would you describe your experience with participating in the CSP? a. Describe to me what you considered your best experience. At the site. b. What did you learn by being involved in this experience? c. How did your participation in the community service program affect your understanding of the course
<b>RQ 3:</b> How do students describe the influence of the CSP on their attitude towards being philanthropic	<b>IQ 3:</b> What is your perception of how the CSP has influenced your attitude towards being philanthropic and affecting positive change? a. Tell me about the most significant aspect(s) of your community service experience b. How have you changed because of your involvement in this community service program? c. Following your experience with this community service program, how do you understand community service in your life, what sense does it make to you.

From the interview sessions, I gathered that there were three types of CSPs at the university. The required community service, the focus of my research study, was referred to by the university as community-based attachment (CBA), which was done in the first year. There was also a mandatory industrial attachment (IA), which was linked to academic programs and was done in the third-year of study. Additionally, there was a voluntary community-based outreach program (COP) for students, staff, and alumni. Students could participate in COP activities, which were carried out on Saturdays. The activities of COP included, tree planting in primary and secondary schools in

impoverished areas, mentoring in such schools, visiting children's homes, and visiting inmates in prisons.

The goal of the interviews was for the participants to give as much information as possible about the case study, and for me to establish a good level of rapport and trust with participants in order to obtain information (Merriam, 2009). The advantages of interviews in qualitative research are the following: (a) they provide information when the researcher cannot directly observe participants, (b) they permit participants to describe detailed personal information, and (c) the researcher has better control over the type of information received by asking specific questions to elicit the information (Creswell, 2012; Merriam, 2009). However, I recognized and appreciated limitations of the interviews, which included the following: (a) they provide only filtered information through the views of the researcher; (b) they may be deceptive and provide the perspective the interviewee wants the researcher to hear; (c) interviewees' responses may not be articulate, perceptive, or even clear; and (d) equipment required for recording may not be functioning properly to organize recording and transcribe information. These limitations were kept in mind during interview sessions and data analysis. I ensured that the audio-recorder was working by testing it before start of each interview session; I also played back the first 2 minutes of each interview before the participant left to confirm that the interview had been recorded.



### **Interview Process**

I conducted one-to-one interviews in one of the private mentoring rooms at the university's student center. Before the start of the interview, I took each participant through the IRB approved consent form, and after which the participants signed the form, and I retained the signed copy, and gave them a copy for their future reference. I also reminded the participants that the interview was voluntary and they could stop at any time, and that their privacy would be observed.

### **Ethical Issues and Participant Protection**

In order to protect participants, I developed and used an interview protocol (Appendix B) on which the three open-ended research questions were typed, providing adequate room for recording respondents' responses, and similarly providing room for any follow-up questions to ensure that all the research questions were comprehensively addressed (Creswell, 2012). I obtained approval to interview participants from both X University and the Walden IRB to ensure that the potential benefits of the research outweighed the risks and that the research met institutional standards (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007). I adopted the following procedure: (a) obtained approval from Walden University IRB; (b) ensured equitable purposive identification of participants was appropriate to case study; (c) obtained approval and consent from X University and students; (d) using the university management, I identified a gatekeeper, a staff from the research office, who provided access to the interview site and to participants; (e) guaranteed participants and the university of minimal disturbance of study schedules; (f) guaranteed participants

and the university confidentiality by observing privacy; and (g) informed the university and participants about the purpose of the research (Creswell, 2012). All participants signed the consent form for voluntary participation in the research, and I briefed them on the content of the consent form as follows:

1. They could withdraw at any point of the study;
2. There was no compensation for participating in the research;
3. Preserved participants' dignity by ensuring that interview questions and design did not expose them to any danger;
4. Negotiated time and length of interviews per participant to about one and a half hours each, and informed them of additional interviews if required;
5. Protected participants' identities so that the information collected did not cause any embarrassment or harm to them; and
6. Treated participants and the site with respect by informing the participants and the university leadership of possible risks (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007; Creswell, 2012).

My role as the researcher did not affect data collection, because I had no professional relationship with X University and the CSP. Because I conducted the research study on the required CSP at a private university in Kenya, there would have been conflicts of interest if I was still for the Commission for University Education, a quality assurance body for universities in Kenya. However, I retired from the services of the commission at the end of December 2015, therefore, I did not have supervisory role over the university. I made my status known to the university before data collection, and

to the participants during the briefing session and before each interview session. I used the research design alignment tool and the interview protocol to ensure comprehensive data collection and analysis.

### **Data Analysis Results**

#### **Data Analysis Strategies**

In analyzing and interpreting the data on the CSP, I observed the following procedure: (a) transcribed verbatim responses from audio-recorded interviews with participants, and made notes to record first impressions of the CSP based on the three research questions; (b) read the transcripts several times to get the general meaning of transcripts to understand what participants said that answered the research questions; (c) divided the transcribed text into segments to identify the general themes as patterns emerged from participants' responses; (d) labeled the segments as codes to build themes, that answered the major three research questions, and which were aligned to the conceptual framework; (e) reduced codes overlaps and redundancy by deciding which specific data to use and which ones to disregard; (f) collapsed the identified themes and grouped them into fewer themes; and (g) summarized the themes by indicating how the themes reflected or differed from experiences reported in literature (Creswell, 2012).

I used an interview protocol (Appendix B) that was aligned with the three guiding research questions as outlined in Section 1. While the proposed research questions guided the interview, follow-up questions were used, as approved by IRB, to clarify participants' responses. Data management and analysis was done by manual manipulation using the

following strategy: juxtaposing data from different respondents, putting information into different themes, making a matrix of themes and placing the evidence within such themes, creating data displays using different colors for different participants, tabulating the frequency of different themes, and putting information in order of interviews, consistent with recommendation of (Yin, 2014).

### **Coding and Themes Development**

I coded data using Braun & Clark (2006) thematic analysis, and employed the following steps: (a) I read the transcribed data several times to become familiar with data, and to get meanings of responses from participants; (b) I generated 70 initial codes by identifying passages of the transcribed texts, that were linked with common ideas, and arranged them into groups to establish a thematic idea around them, these were level 1 and level 2 codes (Appendix F); (c) I organized participants' statements and grouped repeated statements together in clusters using different colors for each participant, which led to reduction of initial codes to 35 basic codes (Table 8); (d) the basic-codes were further reduced to 16 final sub-themes to represent close ideas (Table 9); (e) the final sub-themes were organized in line with Kolb and Kolb's (2008) four-fold conceptual framework on experiential learning, which were reduced to four final themes. The four themes were: (a) support for effective CSP implementation and challenges; (b) students' personal growth and development; (c) giving back to society/gratitude; and (d) students' self-awareness and change in attitude towards the needy (Table 10).

## **Data Analysis Procedure**

The thematic analysis was driven by Kolb and Kolb's (2008) four-fold conceptual framework on experiential learning. The framework comprise: (a) concrete experience, the stage during which the student actively participates in a new activity, or experience in order to learn from it; (b) reflective observation, the stage where the learner consciously thinks about the experience gained in the activity, or experience before making any decisions as to what the experience means; (c) abstract conceptualization, the stage in which the learner comes up with concepts or principles to explain the experience; and (d) active experimentation, the final stage where the learner puts into practice what he or she has learned to solve problems, or affect change (Kolb 1984; Kolb and Kolb, 2008).

Thematic analysis is more of a method and not a methodology, it is flexible because it is not tied to a particular epistemological, or theoretical perspective. Braun and Clarke (2006) argued that thematic analysis can be done in many different ways; thus, it may prove challenging to define clear guidelines for doing it. However, thematic analysis is simple to use and is appropriate for novice researchers who may not be familiar with the complex qualitative data analysis methods; it was appropriate in my case study. Additionally, whereas other methods of qualitative data analysis are tied to specific theories, thematic analysis is flexible with any theory or conceptual framework, because it allows for rich detailed description of the data.

Coding is an important part of thematic analysis whose purpose is to: (a) move methodically to a higher conceptual level; (b) ensure that items that seem to be essentially

similar are assigned the same code; (c) enables the researcher to later sort the items from different records; and (d) enables examination of related features of the groups and gain insight into them (Yin, 2011).

In conducting the thematic analysis of this study, I used Braun and Clarke's six steps guide of conducting thematic analysis, becoming familiar with the data, generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming final themes, and producing the report (Braun and Clarke, 2006). However, reference was made to Yin (2011) who proposed five similar stages, compiling, disassembling, reassembling, interpreting, and concluding.

**Step 1 – Becoming familiar with the data.** All the participants' responses were recorded and transcribed verbatim and filed under each participant's identity, labeled A, B, C to M in order of the time of interview, which was compiling data (Yin, 2011). I read the transcripts several times to understand their meaning; noted down any ideas about the data that had similar meaning; and familiarized myself with the data to get the meaning of the units/sections, and to develop distinct groups that became obvious from participants' responses to the research and interview questions (Appendix B). This was done by highlighting samples of participants' responses to the various research questions and interview questions as indicated in Tables 4-7.

***Responses to RQ 1: Participants' experiences with identification of CSP sites.***

Table 4 shows samples of the participants' responses to research question 1, and interview questions on participants' perceptions on their involvement in the identification

process of community service sites. The participants were also asked to explain why, where and when they took the community service, the nature of the activities that were done, and what each day's event entailed, including the total number of hours spent at the site:

Table 4

## Sample Participants' Responses on Experiences Identifying CSP Sites

Context / Program	Sample Responses
Respondent E (Male) B.Com	...Apart from it being a requirement, I felt I needed to give back to society since there is a lot the society has given to me considering what I have gone through. I have gone through education from scholarship, even at X University.
Respondent F (Male) B.Com	....Even if it was not a requirement by the university I would have chosen to do it because of my personal experience since I am what I am because of the efforts people put in my life.
Respondent J (Female) Bachelor of Law	....Apart from being a requirement, I like volunteering because it is a way of networking, and it keeps me occupied. When I saw that my community church was on the school's list, I opted to go there as a way of giving back to the Church
Respondent C (Female) Bachelor of Law	....CBA is meant for students own growth, development of interpersonal skills, it is supposed to make students morally aware, it is targeted towards students as persons, not as students, and it is meant to build Character.
Respondent G (Female) Bachelor of Business Science in Finance	....The objective of CBA is to instill the aspect of giving back to the community, and knowing the society and people who are less privileged.
Respondent A (Female) Bachelor of Business Science in Actuarial Science	...My perception of it is that it was important for me to do it personally because it was insightful.
Respondent L (Female) Bachelor of Telecommunication	...I found out that even though there were hardships I enjoyed my experience, because I was doing something good, which gave me a good feeling.
Respondent D, Male B.Com	....If it was not a requirement I don't think I would have done it.
Respondent K, Male B.Com	.... From the School side, students fill an online form indicating where you are going to do the CBA, and the School gives you a letter of introduction indication that the student will spend not less than 200 hrs.
Respondent A (Female) Actuarial Science	....Students have two supervisors, one from the attachment site, who ensures that the student is exposed to as much experience as possible. The student reports to her / him on a daily basis. A Supervisor from the University is allocated to a student, but the Supervisor only comes once, during the middle or at the end of the attachment when the student has gotten some experience and the list of what is going on.

Table 4: *continued**Sample Participants' Responses on Experiences Identifying CSP Sites*

Context / Program	Sample Responses
Respondent H (Female) BBS Finance	At the beginning instead of it being something driven by care for the human person, it ended up being like a requirement, do or die. Later after settling at the site, I understood the reasoning behind it which I could not see at the beginning.
Respondent A (Female) Actuarial Science	I think CBA is something necessary in a person's everyday life. If it was not mandatory I don't think the experience would have reached many people, assuming that people were moved in the degree that I was moved, so it wouldn't have been effective because few people would go for it. The fact that it is mandatory makes it work, because it makes people evaluate who they are.
Respondent I (Female) IT	It was hard finding a place to volunteer at, so my parents had to get involved, because the time was too short, like you apply in November and start in January.
Respondent K, Male B.Com	My dad helped me get the attachment at hospital because he supplies water to them.
Respondent A (Female) Actuarial Science	So you go searching for the site as if you are looking for a job. There is also a time period so if you don't find attachment during that period you would probably not graduate, so the stakes are high. So, at the beginning instead of it being something driven by care for the human person, it ended up being like a requirement, do or die. Later after settling at the site, I understood the reasoning behind it, which I could not see at the beginning.

***Responses to RQ 2: Participants' description of their experiences with the CSP.***

Table 5 indicates samples of participants' responses to research question 2, and interview questions, on descriptions of their experiences with the required CSP. The participants were asked to reflect on their experiences while carrying out the CSP activities in the field. They were asked to link service to academic programs they were pursuing at the university. Additionally, they were asked to discuss the lessons they learned about themselves as they engaged in the activities at the CSP site, their best and worst



experiences at the community site, as well as, lessons learnt about other people and their experiences.

Table 5

## Sample Participants' Response on Experience with the CSP

Respondent / Program	Sample Responses
Respondent B (Female) Actuarial Science	....children are very innocent people, they talk about innocent things, they can annoy but they don't mean to annoy you. Taking care of children makes you feel younger but responsible.
Respondent M (Male) Hospitality and Tourism	...I found that working with children was such a humbling experience but a good experience, because you want to make someone else's life more comfortable (M).
Respondent M (Male) Hospitality and Tourism	...My best experience was getting socially interactive, improvement of interpersonal and intrapersonal skills and self-discovery through associating with people from different backgrounds.
Respondent I (Female) IT	...I learnt to relate to people for different backgrounds, although there was a language challenge working in a rural area.
Respondent D (Male) B.Com	...Whenever I am free I always go back to interact with the children. There is always a reason for me to go back, they are with me on phase book, I bake cakes and take to them and they always invite me for birthdays (D).
Respondent C (Female) Law	.....there was no direct linkage between the CBA and my course.
Respondent J (Female) Law	My law was not applied, nothing legal or law-related, just my service.
Respondent G (Female) Business Finance	....there was no relationship between CBA and my course (Finance).
Respondent I (Female) IT	...it helped me to understand development studies unit in terms of interacting with people and relating to other cultures.
Respondent D (Male) B.Com	The CBA helped me to appreciate corporate social responsibility from the contribution of some CEO to the children's home.
Respondent E (Male) B.Com	I related activities of CBA with Social Entrepreneurship unit in B.Com, a unit that deals with handling social problems in society, and it was a way that the university was giving back to society.
Respondent F (Male) B.Com	..the CBA helped a student in understanding practical aspect of the idea of common good in Commerce program.
Respondent E (Male) B.Com	When I went there (CBA) and then people still chose me as a leader, it kind of opened my eyes, and since then I have taken part in many other programs being a leader in many being a leader.
Respondent E (Male) B.Com.	It changed my mindset, I was going astray, it actually brought me back to my senses and I realized that this is the way you are supposed to do things.
Respondent D (Male) B.Com	I learnt that when you are doing work, you have to do it with passion then you will achieve your goal, it will make an impact on the children.

***Responses to RQ 3: Participants' description of change of attitude.*** Table 6 represents sample of participants' responses to research question 3, on participants' descriptions of change in their attitudes towards being philanthropic, and interview questions on participants' self-awareness of community service. The participants were asked to reflect on the impact of the CSP on their philanthropic life, the significant aspects of the CSP, their experiences before and after the CSP engagement, and the challenges and frustrations, and lessons learnt while undertaking the CSP activities.

Table 6

## Sample Participants' Description of Attitudes Change and Self-Awareness

Respondent / Program	Sample Responses
Respondent, A (Female) Actuarial Science	I joined the Environmental Club, where students come together and plant trees and flowers in neighboring primary and secondary schools; and I want to be part of charity, a foundation where I can help kids who are in need and mothers who are struggling.
Respondent M (Male) Hospitality and Tourism	I changed my way of life, I started becoming humble and stopped being flashy, and try to help people on the streets by giving them money if I can.
Respondent E (Male) B.Com	After CBA in 2014, I became part of an initiative, Minawe ( <i>me and you</i> ), whose members contribute monthly to buy items for children's and we spend time with the children.
Respondent F (Male) B.Com	After CBA I have joined an outreach program (Macheo) that provide help children's homes and young people from slum areas where I dedicate my time to teaching and mentoring.
Respondent H (Female) BBS Finance	CBA made me to be more empathetic and challenged me to help more, and so I contribute to my church in terms of used clothes for distribution to the needy, and I do that at the end of every year.
Respondent I (Female) IT	I am planning to pursue a community development degree after my BBIT so I can join an NGO and also start initiatives for helping children in need.
Respondent J (Female) Law Student	I am in the process of joining Red Cross because they provide humanitarian services.
Respondent K (Male) B.Com	My mum has realized that I am more willing to join organizations related to giving when I joined the COP at the university, which is voluntary, and its activities include visiting the needy in children's homes, prisons and others.
Respondent L (Female) Telecommunication	Because of CBA I have become more approachable, and my friends say so.

Table 6 (Continued):

*Sample Participants' Description of Attitude Change and Self-Awareness*

Respondent / Program	Sample Responses
Respondent C (Female) Law	I am a member of AIESEC Club, whose activities involves visiting the needy and participating in their activities, and contributing towards buying items to help the needy.
Respondents G (Female): Finance J (Female) Law	I want to work for an NGO, because I want to do something that has social impact on others, such as those NGOs that work with people in conflict areas, where I can focus on women and children. This is something I have already thought about.
Respondent I (Female) IT	I realize I am blessed and grateful to have what I have right now, I compassionate and empathize so much, which drives me to try to find solutions to help my community.
Respondent B (Female) Actuarial Science	It just makes me want to help people more; it is fulfilling to help people around you in whatever small way.
Respondent E (Male) B.Com	I have given back to society by giving accommodation to a first year X University student whom I didn't actually know before.

***Responses to RQ 3: Meanings participants attach to community service.*** To

gather information on participants' responses to research question 3, on their change in attitude towards being philanthropic, participant were asked to describe the meaning and the sense community service made in their lives. Sample responses are shown in Table 7.

Table 7

**Sample Participants Responses of Meanings Attached CSP**

Respondent / Program	Participants Responses
Respondent B Actuarial Science	It is important to help the society realize its goals, to use your talents to grow people around you. So as you pursue your career also remember the society around you, and to help in any way you can.
Respondent G Business Finance	...you receive so much in terms of perspectives of life, making new friends, meeting new people who have made it in life but they come back to give, they inspire you to look into yourself and decide this is what I want to do and help another person .
Respondent D B.Com	I had 100% change in perception of community service and what it entails.
Respondent F B.Com	Getting into community service is personal choice and is tough making a life sacrifice.
Respondent M Hospitality and Tourism	CBA is not just a voluntary act, it is not just a place you want to go because the School requires you to, it is a place where you have to be involved meet people from different backgrounds.

Table 7: (Continued)

*Sample Responses of Meanings Participants Attach to Community Service*

Respondent / Program	Participants Responses
Respondent H (Female) BBS Finance	I think CBA is something necessary in a person's everyday life. If it was voluntary I don't think the experience would have reached many people, assuming that people were moved in the degree that I was moved, so it wouldn't have been effective because few people would go for it. The fact that it is mandatory makes it work, because it makes people evaluate who they are.
Respondent G Business Finance	Community service is something that cannot be ignored, although it has been ignored, but it is very important, because you get there to help, but you are the one who is helped; you receive so much in terms of perspectives of life, making new friends, meeting new people who have made it in life but they come back to give, they inspire you to look into yourself and decide this is what I want to do and help another person.
Respondent J (Female) Law Student	Community service is a good thing, it gives you a good perspective to life, and makes you see how you could help someone else, it tends to shape you as a person, and it molds you as a person.
Respondent K (Male) B.Com	Community service is there to ensure that the community is well taken care of in terms of development, in terms of growth of the community, because in a community we have different types of people, different problems and different types of situations, which need people to chip in and contribute. It creates a balance because there is something, which everyone can do towards giving back to the community....
Respondent G Business Finance	One of the negative sides of charity which I did not like is that some owners of these homes, make the children (girls) go to events and sing sad songs to evoke sympathy of people to raise money, such as "I am an orphan, my parents left me, I need money", although the owner was not doing it out of malice....
Respondent I (Female) IT	I also realized that people tend to focus on the negative side such that they do not appreciate what is done for them, they demand more and greed comes in, and this frustrates the idea of community service being equality and sharing.

**Step 2 - Generating initial codes (level 1 codes and level 2 codes). In**

developing the initial codes, I recorded, or identified passages of the transcribed texts that were linked by a common idea, or theme that allowed me to arrange, or index, the text into groups, thus establishing a framework of thematic ideas around it (Gibbs, 2007); which is disassembling data (Yin, 2011). While coding, it was necessary to view the text

in an analytical manner, rather than using a descriptive focus approach. This process involved reading transcribed data in order to ensure identification of relevant ideas in the text. Some of the Level 1 codes and Level 2 codes stuck closely to original texts (in-vivo coding, Yin, 2011). As recommended by Charmaz (2003), some of the questions that I considered while undertaking thematic coding, and which guided the way forward were: (a) What is going on? (b) What is the respondent saying? (c) What do these statements take for granted? (d) How do the structure and context serve to support, maintain, impede or change these statements?

After listening to the recorded audio files, reading the transcripts and making notations, I made wrote down the data categories as they emerged. I thought through the emerging categories; reflecting over them to consider the explicit and implicit meanings, and jotted down the data categories as they emerged. A total of 70 initial codes emerged from the transcribed participants' responses (Appendix F). The codes were aligned with Kolb and Kolb's conceptual framework, that addressed the objectives of the CSP with regard to, when and where it was taken; factors influencing the decisions to choose CSP sites; students' experiences and meanings they attached to the CSP; linking CSP activities with the academic programs; and the influence of the CSP on students' attitudes towards the needy and their own philanthropy, to affect positive social change. Appendix F is a representation of the initial codes generated during thematic analysis and their alignment to the Kolb and Kolb's conceptual framework. Alignment of initial codes with Kolb and Kolb's conceptual framework indicated that some of the initial codes cut across more

than one of the four-fold Kolb & Kolb's experiential learning framework, concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization, and active experimentation. A code could express students' concrete experience in the field, as well as, a reflection on the observation.

**Step 3 - Searching for themes.** During the search for initial patterns or themes (level 3 codes or category codes), I wrote down the broader meanings of the data in form of statements. I followed this with attaching participants' statements and grouping repeated statements together in clusters (using different colors for each participant) until all the categories were exhausted, after which I discarded redundant information (McLeod & Shanahan, 1993); this was reassembling of data (Yin, 2011). During this stage the following questions guided me in the development of meaningful patterns from the transcripts: Did the emerging patterns make sense? Were the patterns leading to an important plane? How did the patterns relate to the concepts of my study? Did the patterns become more complicated or expansive when additional items were reviewed from my database? (Yin, 2011). In the process, my judgment as the researcher remained paramount in deciding and retaining what I considered significant from the participants' experiences based on my understanding of students' perceptions of community service. This is consistent with Kothari (2010) and Yin (2011), who reported that data reduction is the process of looking deeply into the data and sharpening, sorting, focusing, discarding and organizing data so as to enable drawing and verifying conclusion. The process led me to develop 35 basic initial sub-themes out of the 70 initial codes as outlined in Table 8. I

used the basic codes to define the final themes in later stages of theme development

(Attride-Stirling, 2001).

Table 8

Basic Initial Sub-Themes

S/N	Concrete Experience	Reflective Observation	Abstract Conceptualization	Active Experimentation
1	Students' responsibilities in making a good choice (3)	Character building	Character building (4)	Character building
2	University-student collaboration/site selection (3)	University-student collaboration/supervision		
3	Activities carried out at the sites	Instilling the institutional values and norms/humanitarian activities (2)		
4	Positive student's view towards CBA (2)	Appreciating the need for the project	Positive attitudes from the students towards community service (3)	Positive change in attitude of students (4)
5	Negative student's view towards CBA	Lack of internal support from the university (supervision)		
6	Discipline and hard work	Patience (2)	Patience (2)	
7		Humility	Humility (3)	Humility (3)
8	Family support	Empathy	Empathy	
9	Lack of internal support from the university (supervision)	Networking with others	Networking with others (3)	Networks (3)
10	Lack of internal support from the university (on the CBA goals/objectives)		Discipline and hard work	
11	Linking CBA to the academic programs (2)	Linking CBA to the academic programs	Linking CBA to the academic programs(4)	
12		Acquisition of new skills (intrapersonal/interpersonal skills/report writing/organization)(3)		Being positive in acquiring new life skills(6)

Table 8 (Continued):

*Basic Initial Sub-Themes*

S/N	Concrete Experience	Reflective Observation	Abstract Conceptualization	Active Experimentation	
13		Giving back to the society (2)	Giving back to the society (3)	Giving back to the society (8)	
14	Frustrations (from field staff) (4)	Frustrations with the community service (2)			
15			Perception change concerning the society (5)	Humanitarian activities	
16			Passion for change (a self-realization/self-awareness) (3)	Passion for change (a self-realization/self-awareness) (2)	
17			Developing leadership skills	Teamwork(2)	
18			Generosity/sharing	Generosity/sharing(2)	Generosity(2)
19				Simplicity and sacrifice. This results in sympathy	Simplicity and sacrifice. This results in sympathy(2)
20	Understanding people	Understanding people from different cultures and backgrounds (7)		Understanding people from different cultures and backgrounds (4)	
21			Self-growth and development	Self-growth and development	
22	Challenges Associated with community Service/site selection	Challenges Associated with community Service/Done for financial gain			

The basic initial sub-themes were extracted from the textual data. They were considered as backings, because they were statements of beliefs anchored around central notions and they contributed toward the formation of the final sub-themes and the super ordinate themes (Attride-Stirling, 2001). In as much as the codes are the basic properties of the data, offering very little information on the texts that were analyzed, they gave the immediate meaning of the data. This was the reason why the analysis was taken further into final sub-themes.



**Step 4 - Reviewing themes.** Further reduction was conducted on the basic sub-themes to come up final-sub-themes, because the basic sub-themes were too many. Basic sub-themes representing close ideas were merged to form the final 16 sub-themes as summarized in Table 9.

Table 9

## Final Sub-Themes

<b>Concrete Experience</b>	<b>Reflective Observation</b>	<b>Abstract Conceptualization</b>	<b>Active Experimentation</b>
Site Selection process and activities	Students' Growth and Development	Students' Growth and Development	Students' Growth and Development
University-student collaboration during site selection and supervision	University-student collaboration during site selection and supervision	Attitude change Concerning the Society	Attitude change Concerning the Society
Students' Initial Views Towards CBA	Giving back to the society	Giving back to the society	Giving back to the society
Family support During Site Selection	CBA and Academic Programs Linkages	CBA and Academic Programs Linkages	
Students' Character Development	Life Skills Acquisition		
Frustrations during CBA program	Networking	Networking	
CBA and Academic Programs Linkages	Learning and Understandings other People's culture		Understanding people from different cultures and backgrounds
	Frustrations during CBA program		

The final sub-themes were considered mid-order themes (Attride-Stirling 2001) because, they classified the basic sub-themes into clusters of similar meanings or concerns. They were clusters of denotations that summarized the key assumptions of a group of basic initial themes in a way that was more concerned with the originating data.

These final sub-themes were the foundations that saw through the development and explanation of the final themes on the CSP. It can, therefore, be said that the final sub-themes brought together all the main ideas suggested by the basic themes, in this perspective, and cut across the main assumptions underlying the basic broader theme in the texts as a whole.

**Step 5 - Defining and naming the final themes.** After identifying and displaying the basic sub-themes and final sub-themes, I followed that with data reduction. This was done in order to help other parties to quickly identify and make sense of the bulky data. Consequently, the final sub-themes were organized in line with the four-fold Kolb and Kolb's conceptual framework. The final sub-themes were further reduced so that the themes that had close relations were merged to come up with four final themes that addressed Kolb and Kolb's (2008) four-fold conceptual framework on experiential learning, which comprises concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization, and experimentation. In addition, I renamed some of these themes to reflect the research topic, and therefore, ensured alignment to the three research questions of the study. The four final themes that emerged were as follows:

1. Support for effective CSP/CBA implementation and challenges;
2. Students' personal growth and development;
3. Giving back to society / Gratitude; and
4. Students' self-awareness and attitude change towards the needy

Each theme was addressed by more than one concept of Kolb and Kolb's (2008) four-fold conceptual framework on learning experience. For example, student personal growth and development was a concrete experience, a reflective observation, an abstract conceptualization, and an active experimentation. Table 10 gives a representation of the final four themes, and their alignment to the conceptual framework.

Table 10

Final Themes Aligned to the Conceptual Framework

Concrete Experience	Reflective Observation	Abstract Conceptualization	Active Experimentation
Support for effective CSP/CBA implementation and challenges	Students' personal growth and development	Students' growth and development	Students' growth and development
Students' personal growth and development	Support for effective CSP/CBA and challenges	Giving back to the society/Gratitude	Giving back to the society/Gratitude
	Giving back to the society/Gratitude	Students' self-awareness and attitude change towards the needy	Students' self-awareness and attitude change towards the needy
	Students' self-awareness, attitude change towards the needy		

**Step 6 –Producing the report / conclusion.** The sixth step involved giving meanings that emerged from the thematic analysis, to provide an overview of participants' expressions in the data. Qualitative researchers contend that detached and true objectivity is impossible to achieve and that the essence of any phenomenon is not fully understood, although truth can be constructed. As far as this study was concerned, qualitative research permitted me to give rich exposure on the shared meanings and

subjective experiences that I constructed. It involved giving description of the various perceptions and attitudes of students in engaging in CSP from the contextual view and frame of reference of the individual interviews. It is on these themes on the CSP that interpretations of participants' perceptions were given, based on each theme to clarify the Kolb and Kolb's conceptual framework of experiential learning, which comprises concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization, and experimentation.

### **Evidence of Quality**

Accuracy and credibility of qualitative research findings is ensured through validation of findings (Creswell, 2012). In this study, accuracy and credibility was ensured through use of comparing information from the different participants by addressing the congruency of the findings to reality, as recommended by Merriam (2009). I obtained feedback from participants by sending them their responses through e-mail to rule out the possibility of misinterpreting the meaning of what they said and their perspectives on CSP, consistent with recommendations by earlier researchers (Creswell, Merriam, 2009; Yin, 2014). The draft dissertation was given to a peer reviewer, an educationist, for purposes of confirmation of data interpretation and for checking possible divergent viewpoint of perception, as a part of good practice (Stake, 2010). The reviewer has a PhD in Curriculum Studies and has published books, book chapters and over 20 articles in refereed journals. There were no divergent views observed.

Dependability was ensured through maximum variation of participants to represent gender, academic program, and the type of CSP activity, which allowed greater range of application by readers or consumers, consistent with Merriam (2009). Further, dependability was addressed by use of study protocols, documenting all research procedures of the interview sessions and keeping record of the case study database, especially data collection procedures since there are no existing routine procedures for qualitative case studies, consistent with Yin (2014).

Additionally, purposeful identification of typical participants was used (Merriam, 2009), those who continued to participate in community service activities after first-year. Other strategies I used included, observing reflexivity through critical self-reflection, and explaining personal biases, disposition, and assumptions regarding the CSP at the university, that may have emerged during the research (Merriam, 2009); and using audit trail by keeping a research journal detailing the processes of conducting the research to help the reader understand the research context (Merriam, 2009). I checked for discrepancies from participants' responses, but there were no discrepancies found. However, I suggested areas for further research. The findings were presented using the following procedure: presentation of findings in themes, interpretation, and giving explanation of the data analysis; and providing systematic summary and interpretation of outcomes in relation to the problem and research questions; and description of project outcomes. In the next section, I give detailed analysis of the final themes in relation to the conceptual framework and how they answered the research questions.

## Results

During the coding process, four major themes emerged, namely: support for effective CSP implementation and challenges; students' personal growth and development; giving back to society/gratitude; and students' self-awareness and attitude change towards the needy. The themes were aligned to the research questions and used to define the results of the study.

### **Theme 1: Support for Effective Community Service Program**

**Theme defined.** This theme emerged from analysis of participants' responses and codes generated in line with concrete experience (CE) and reflective observation (RO) of the Kolb and Kolb's (2008) four-fold conceptual framework of experiential learning. From participants' responses, internal support for the success of the CSP was provided by the university as follows: (a) a list of possible community service sites where students could do their CSP (CBA); (b) an introductory letter to the CSP site indicating the purpose of the community service, and that the service was voluntary and students should not be paid; and (c) organized students' supervision (follow-up) by academic staff from the relevant schools. However, some students identified the CSP sites of their choice so long as they met the requirements of the university, consistent with the university guidelines for CBA (Appendix E). The sites at which the participants did their CSP, included, homes for the elderly, children's homes, kindergartens for needy children, primary schools for needy children, church, teaching high school students in impoverished areas, rescue center for girls, community library, and hospitals. The

activities were focused on doing manual work for the needy people in society. All the respondents reported that making the community service mandatory was critical to their success, otherwise most students would not do it. Undertaking community service during the first-year was important, because it shaped students' lives; at first they felt forced to do it, but after going through the activity they came to appreciate its significance (Table 4). For example, respondent H reflected that,

At the beginning instead of it being something driven by care for the human person, it ended up being like a requirement, do or die. Later after settling at the site, I understood the reasoning behind it, which I could not see at the beginning.

All the 13 respondents reported that the process of identifying the sites for CSP at needy places was helpful for self-awareness and personal growth; this was consistent with the university's objective of the required CSP, developing an attitude of helping the needy and solving their problems (Appendix E). Participants further stated that, it required discipline to do physical or manual work, and to work hard, which is important for personal growth and instilled positive social values in students. As an example, respondent A reflected,

I think CBA is something necessary in a person's everyday life. If it was not mandatory I don't think the experience would have reached many people, assuming that people were moved in the degree that I was moved, so it wouldn't have been effective because few people would go for it. The fact that it is mandatory makes it work, because it makes people evaluate who they are.

Apart from providing necessary support in identifying the CSP sites, the university academic staff supervised students by visiting them at the site at least once to ensure that students had done the required 200 hours' work, and had acquired personal experiences. All participants, except one, reported having been visited by academic staff during their CBA attachment, and discussed their daily activities. However, some participants reported that the supervisor rarely asked about personal experience because they were more concerned with students meeting the 200 hours requirement and ethical values.

In addition to internal support from the university, participants received external support from the staff at the community service sites. At the site, students were assigned supervisors to ensure that they did appropriate activities for the minimum required 200 hours of service. Site supervisors shared information about students' performance with supervisors from the university. Participants also received external support from relatives and friends in identifying suitable sites for the CBA. For example, one participant was assisted by a Reverend to identify a children's home run by a church, while two others were supported by their families to work at hospitals. Respondent I explained that, it was hard finding a place to volunteer at, so my parents had to get involved, because the time was too short. For example, application is made in November and attachment starts in January the following year. Respondent K said, "My dad helped me get the attachment at hospital because he was supplying water to the institution."



In terms of the objectives of the required CSP, responses from several participants indicated that they were familiar with the general objective of the CSP, which was, to create in students an awareness for the needs of others and to develop more compassionate human beings who are able to respond to those needs and to instill the sense of giving back to the society, and finding solutions to societal problems (Appendix E). Participants were aware of the difference between the CSP (CBA) and the mandatory industrial attachment, the latter being program-based, to be completed in third-year.

Although a number of participants reported that participating in the community service was not a challenge, a few of them were frustrated during the first week of the assignment, in trying to settle down and understanding the value of the program. However, by the end of the 200 hours of community service, participants came to understand the importance of helping others; one participant put in more hours than the required 200 hours. As indicated in Table 4, some participants had challenges with identifying appropriate CSP site, and reported that it was hard finding a place to volunteer, so family and friends had to get involved, because the time was too short. Participants found that close interaction with people at the CSP site was important in understanding people's problems, yet this did not seem to have been emphasized to students before embarking on the community service assignment. A participant wanted to do the assignment at a children's home, or at a hospital, but did not get any of those so opted to work in a community library. Other participants found community service challenging because it involved a lot of manual and laborious work, although this was

motivating at the same time because it helped develop in students' virtues such as humility and empathy. A particular challenge of interest with the identification process was going into community service without prior background knowledge about the service. Respondent A reflected,

So you go searching for the site as if you are looking for a job. There is also a time period so if you don't find attachment during that period you would probably not graduate, so the stakes are high. So, at the beginning instead of it being something driven by care for other people, it ended up being like a requirement, do or die. Later after settling at the site, I understood the reasoning behind it, which I could not see at the beginning.

Some of these challenges could have hindered participants from having full experiences of the community services.

From this theme, it can be concluded that participating in the CSP activities provided opportunities for students do physical work for the needy giving them first-hand concrete experience of what being needy is all about. Students personal efforts in the process of identifying appropriate sites, and doing manual work is consistent with the definition of community service as given by Seider et al. (2012), who defined community service as, a type of experiential learning which enables students to engage in specific community activities with clear learning goals, and which integrate reflection and critical analysis.

From analysis of participants' responses, and discussions, the required community service undertaken by students during the first-year of study seemed effective in helping students have positive personal concrete experiences, and made them aware of the society around them. Although there were challenges that frustrated students at the beginning, the personal touch they put into identifying a site appropriate for their need helped them to develop skills for personal discovery than if the site was chosen for them by the university.

This theme answered research questions 1 and 2 of the study: what are students' perceptions on their involvement in identifying CSP activities; students' description of their experiences with the CSP respectively. The concrete experience gained from undertaking community service activities in theme 1 were the basis for observations and reflections for students' personal growth and development, which is the essence of the discussion under theme 2.

### **Theme 2: Students' Personal Growth and Development**

**Theme defined.** This theme emerged from the analysis of participants' responses and codes generated in line with all the stages of Kolb and Kolb's (2008) four-fold conceptual framework of experiential learning: concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization, and active experimentation. Participants reported various learning experiences according to the type of CSP activity they were engaged in, which was consistent with findings of earlier researchers. Participants reported having developed new ways of thinking about the needy and what it means for communities to

have challenges; they came to terms with the reality of the society around them, how people live, and realized that not everyone is privileged and that some people struggle to get basic needs of life such as food. This was consistent with the findings of Prohaska (2013). Participants reported having had increased awareness of the realities of their communities, and wanted to find solutions to those problems. Similar results have been reported by earlier researchers (Aftandilian & Dart, 2013; Lattanzi, et al., 2011: Prohaska, 2013). Respondent I was touched by a particular needy situation at community level and reflected,

There was an old man staying alone, his house was infested with bedbugs, so he kept scratching himself with a piece of stone, and that just broke me, because no one should be exposed to that kind of condition. Sometimes I would offer my pocket money to just help some desperate situation.

Other experiences reported by participants, that are consistent with findings from earlier researchers, were: community service was a humbling experience, which made participants appreciate how people pull together in the community in team work spirit, not that they had much, but because their neighbor needed it, and they shared the little they had; participants appreciated that the poor have less but they are often generous (Plumber et al., 2011). Participant further learned to be patient, especially those working in homes for abandoned children and homes for the elderly, as they learned not to judge people before interacting with them to know them better, because people can be different from whom they appear to be; they learned to trust others, appreciate and respect

peoples' cultures; and learned the importance of making friends and networking, which improved their interpersonal skills and ability to relate with people from different backgrounds (Johnson, 2013; Simon & Cleary, 2006). Furthermore, participants learned the value of simplicity of life, sacrifice to others and appreciated the peace that giving back to the community brings (Carson & Damangue, (2010).

Additionally, the required community service: (a) instilled the value of hard work and pushed students beyond their known limits, it evoked in students compassion and empathy towards the needy and their situations (Aftandilian & Dart, 2013); (b) facilitated the development of organizational and leadership skills; (c) instilled tolerance of others (Lattanzi et al., 2011; Plumber et al., 2011); and increased spiritual awakening in some participants, they learned not to take things for granted. Respondent E reflected that considering he was not from an economically well-off background, he did not have any problem doing manual work, but the experience reminded him of his background, and the importance of being humble. Participants were reminded that life is not just about one self but about what one does to help other people, and what one does to give back to society. At the CSP sites everybody did manual and physical work irrespective of their social and economic backgrounds, this humbled all participants who worked in such situations. Response from Respondent E is an example of how participants were touched by the community service, "it changed my mindset, I was going astray, it actually brought me back to my senses, and I realized that this was the way people are supposed to do things."

Furthermore, the required CSP gave participants opportunities to learn about other people. For example, Respondent B said that, children will love you if you feed them, and they will freely interact, open up to you, and freely share their thoughts. These experiences created in participants 'good feelings of self-worth', and a sense of worthy contribution towards social good (Carson & Domangue, 2010). Participants came to realize that while some people working with the needy were there for financial gain, most people working with the needy do so not because of financial gain, but because of the love they have for the needy. Participant noted that those who worked at the homes for the needy children for financial gain did not last long. Respondent D reflected, "I learnt that when you are doing work, you have to do it with passion then you will achieve your goal, it will make an impact on the children."

With regard to linking community service with academic work, the X University did not expressly state this as one of the main objectives of the required CSP, although it is implied. This was because linking academic work to service was achieved through the mandatory industrial attachment, which each student must take during the third-year of study. It was, therefore, not surprising that a number of participants did not see the linkage between their academic work and the community service activity. Although some students did not think the program helped them with their course work, during the interview it emerged that the service helped them to understand some units of the academic programs (Franz, Childers, & Sandelin, 2012). For example, for students in business information technology, community service helped them understand a unit on

development that focused on interacting and relating to people from other cultures. Some participants, however, easily linked the CSP to their academic courses. For example, students in bachelor of commerce reflected that the service helped them to appreciate a course on corporate social responsibility as they observed how chief executive officers (CEOs) contributed to the children's home. Participants related community service activities to the unit on social entrepreneurship which deals with handling social problems in society, as well as appreciating the practical aspect of common good. Similarly, hospitality and tourism student appreciated the connection between the CSP and the practical aspects of the academic program, because hospitality and tourism course part of being hospitable to people, being a servant to people and being a helper in society. The participant indicated that he used skills learned in theory in the classroom and applied them at the children's home by making children's beds and preparing their meals.

From the second theme, it can be concluded that community service had improved students' understanding of their academic programs. Participating in the required CSP facilitated development of social, spiritual, and academic skills, experiences which are important for the holistic development of the student. The CSP helped students as follows: (a) they developed new ways of thinking; (b) made them come to terms with reality of the society around them; and (c) made them humble, created in them a sense of compassion and empathy, patience, trust, and sensitivity to other peoples' cultures and backgrounds, and they learned the value of simplicity of life

and sacrifice to others. Community service enhanced students understanding of the linkage between academia and community service.

When students reflected on all the learning experiences, the experiences were assimilated and distilled as students began to think about what giving back to society really means. The theme answered research question 2, on how students describe their experiences with the CSP, from which students began to think of what community service means.

### **Theme 3: Giving Back to Society/Gratitude**

**Theme defined.** This theme emerged from analysis of participants' responses and codes that reflected three stages of Kolb and Kolb's (2008) four-fold conceptual framework of experiential learning, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization, and active experimentation. Participants saw the positive aspect and importance of community service as giving back to the society. Participants' perceptions on the concepts about community service were that, it is about giving back to community, knowing the society and the people who are less privileged, helping solve their problems, and it is a learning experience. Participants perceived that community service is: (a) a tool that helps students to appreciate their lives, what they have and how fortunate they are to have what they have; (b) a way of helping the society to realize its goals through using talents and skills freely availed to them to grow as a community, pushing people beyond where they are, and showing them the possibilities of life, giving a feeling of fulfilment; and (c) giving is not only in monetary terms, but also giving in terms of time,



knowledge, and talent. Similar reflections have been reported by other researchers (Carson & Domangue, 2010; Lardner, 2014). Other meaning participants attached to CSP were that was it is a reflective and effective program, that made students consider others apart from themselves and their immediate surroundings, to think of the greater community and its social issues, and to realize that society is built by people giving, and not by people taking. Furthermore, students learned that community service is a personal choice; it is tough because it is about sacrifice. Yet, it makes sense because it can change people's lives and make the world a better place to live in; it is necessary in a person's everyday life; and it is a vital aspect in any society that all should endeavor to cultivate. These meanings were consistent with the findings of Kajner et al. (2013). According to participants, community service should be everyone's social responsibility and business, so that people can become aware of everything that goes in the society, and realize that that whatever one does to help others has a positive impact; it has the possibility of creating the peace that is needed in society because it gives people a sense of belonging. These positive meanings of community service helped in preparing students for good citizenship as persons who are sensitive to others' needs and welfare, consistent with findings of Colby et al. (2003) and Prentice (2011).

Community service can ensure that the community is well taken care of in terms of development and growth, because in a community, there are different types of people, different types of problems, and different types of situations, that need contribution from people with diverse skills and expertise. Consequently, community service has the

capacity to create a balance in society, because there is something which everyone can do towards giving back to the community. When people work as a team it becomes easier and better, which is consistent with the findings of Plumber et al. (2011). This is one positive social changes that community service has on society. The positive impact of community service with regard to self-growth, self-awareness and the meanings participants attached to the required CSP at X University was reflected by Respondent M as follows,

It is not just a place you want to go because the university requires you to, it is a place where you have to be involved and meet people from different backgrounds; it is a class of its own; it is an experience of its own; it is a different world brought to you by different characters of life; it is a place where you get to nature your skills, inter-personal and intra-personal ski, which helps you to grow and learn every day; each and every day brings in a different experience; and if you take the chance to learn from those experiences, you become a better person than you were when you walked in there.

Doing community service, however, is not always positively viewed by all students. One of the participants reflected that her younger sister, enrolled at the same university, and who did her community service at the place where the respondent did hers, yet her sister did not seem to have had a change in attitude; she did not like the experience, and to her CSP did not make sense. Since I did not interview the sister, because she was not part of the study, I was not able to draw any conclusion from this

observation. However, it cannot be discounted as evidenced by the challenges faced by participants during the initial stages of CSP, and the recommendations which are included at the end of this section for improvement of the program. A participant reported that some beneficiaries of community service tend to focus on the negative side such that they do not appreciate what is done for them, but regard it as a right, which defeats the idea of community service being a tool that brings equity and sharing in the society. This is consistent with reports from earlier researchers that students receive life experiences of both responsibilities and frustrations (Ladner, 2014; Leisey et al., 2012; Seider, 2012; Vergee, 2010).

The abstract conceptualizations of the meanings that participants attached to community service with respect to giving back to society provided new implications for self-reflection, and change in attitude towards helping the needy in society. The CSP forced students to reflect on what they saw, heard, and felt, and they become aware of their own attitudes, identities and sensibilities, consisted with findings by other researchers (Golberg & Coufal, 2009). Students began to think of taking actions to help the needy in society. The analysis of this theme focused on how students described the influence of the CSP on their attitudes towards being philanthropic and giving back to society, answering research question 3 of this study. According to Kolb and Kolb (2008), these meanings on community service and change in attitude serve to guide new experiences where participants actually seek and participate in community work as part of their daily lives. This was the focus of analysis of the next theme.

#### **Theme 4: Students' Self-Awareness and Change in Attitude**

**Theme defined.** The theme emerged from analysis of participants' responses and codes related to reflective observation, abstract conceptualization and active experimentation of Kolb and Kolb's (2008) four-fold conceptual framework of experiential learning. In terms of self-awareness, participants reported having become aware of various social issues in community, and realized that it is important to understand people's problems without judging them in order to improve them, and that a person needs the community in order to succeed. An example of such self-awareness was described by Respondent F,

In my social life there is one major person and a few people around it, come to my academic life there is one major person and a few people around it, and in my spiritual life there is one major person and a few people around, so if you ask me to name one person who made me who I am today, that would be an impossible question, because it is the society which has made me into what I am.

Similarly, CSP at X University is a building of experience, because it is done in first-year when students had not understood why they should do community service when their friends and contemporaries from other universities were on holidays. However, a number of participants reflected that as they went through the experience and got to help someone who was appreciative of the help, they felt fulfilled and began to have a spirit that was willing to offer services without expecting anything in return; this was similar to the findings by Carson and Domangue (2010) and by Leisey et al. (2012). As a result,

because community service is not skill-oriented, students came to appreciate the X University's mission of producing holistic persons, who are better human beings and better persons; students understood why the university moves them out their comfort zones for them to appreciate that there are things that matter outside academic work. This sensitized students towards civic education, consisted with the findings by Payne (2000). Respondent I reflected, "I realized I am blessed and grateful to have what I have right now. I am now compassionate and empathetic so much which drives me to try to give help to my community."

For others, the CSP was an addition to what they were already exposed to in theory. For example, a law students reported that, they were already sensitized to the problems in society and would have picked up signs of negligence at the community service sites if it were to occur. The reflective concepts reported by participants were indications that students' self-awareness of their surroundings was stimulated and they became sensitive to other peoples' problems, consistent with reports by earlier researchers (Lattanzi et al., 2013; Prohaska, 2013).

In terms of change of attitude, participants reported that their attitudes had changed after participating in the CSP, and continued to be engaged in activities for helping the needy. Participants realized that they can change somebody's life by just being there for them and by doing simple things, such as cleaning the rooms and cooking for the needy. Similar findings were reported by Smit and Tremethic (2013, and by Ladner (2014). The experience stirred up philanthropic spirit in students, who became

more willing to give. They realized that they got something in return when they helped, because weeks into the program participants came to understand that they were not just changing someone's life, but someone was also changing their lives too, which is similar to reports by Smit and Tremethic (2013). Respondent M reflected, "I found that working with children was such a humbling experience, but a good experience, because you want to make someone's life more comfortable." Respondent G also reflected,

Sometimes people just need to talk to someone, to connect and interact with others. Interacting with the underprivileged girls made me to be more approachable and to realize that we are all human. I became a people person and understood that everyone has something to give.

The reflection was a significant aspect of the CSP, which is consistent with findings from other research studies, for example, by Carson and Domangue (2010). It seems that giving people something makes one feel good, because of being appreciated as being a good person for giving without expecting anything in return. Similarly, participants experienced change in terms of comprehension, in perspective, change in attitude towards developing a philanthropic spirit; and change in personal growth, by realizing that helping or improving someone's situation can have a positive impact on the community. An example of such personal growth and change in attitude was reflected by respondent B, who stated, "It just makes me want to help people more; it is fulfilling to help people around you in whatever small way."

A participant had a change in attitude and reflected that before he was not able to see beyond his family and school, he did not know the depth of challenges parents who cannot feed their children face, the CSP enabled him to find out how to help, to give love to other people who are always there to receive it, which is similar to the findings of Prohaska (2013). As a result of engaging in the CSP, some participants realized that there are children who need to be loved. They reported that, they would continue contributing towards the course of the needy as a part of community service, as a part of giving back to society. An example of the degree to which the community service program changed attitudes is through the reflection of respondent E, who explained:

I have given back to society by giving accommodation to a first year student at X University whom I did not actually know before. He had come to the Nairobi City for trials for the “Kenya Under 21 Hockey Team”, but coming from up country he had nowhere to stay before getting a place of his own. I assisted him to train with X University team and apply for sports scholarship, which he did and succeeded. He finally became the best player in the Hockey Premier League in Kenya. Later he became the Captain of X University Hockey Team. In a way the university mentored me through community service, I also mentored someone else not just to improve on his hockey ability, but I also facilitated his academic dreams. I also mentored and hosted 8 other students from my former high school during their life at the X University, by giving them initial accommodation and making sure

they were stable to stay on their own. I encouraged my mentees to do the same for others, which they have done, even for students from other schools.

The CSP changed students' attitudes by invoking the spirit of doing good and the sense of philanthropy, that can be scaled up to help specific individuals in society, as well as the society in general, because these students are likely to continue with the spirit of philanthropy into their career lives.

The X University offers voluntary community-based outreach program (COP), undertaken by students, alumni, and staff and carried out on Saturdays. The activities include, tree planting in primary and secondary schools in the neighboring impoverished areas, visiting children's homes, and visiting inmate in prisons. Participants reported that about 20% of students volunteer for the COP. One of the reasons given for the low participation rate by students was limitation of time, because when students reach third-year they must take an industrial attachment and students find that they are very busy, and creating time for the COP becomes challenging. This is consistent with reports by other researchers that, service-learning puts pressure on the already packed curriculum (Dukhan et al, 2008; Selingo et al., 2006). Secondly, students make an annual monetary contribution to the COP, and they feel that the contribution is a satisfactory way of helping the needy while they are still students. It was also pointed out that students can, and do participate in COP after graduation as alumni, and that the number of alumni participation in COP had increased steadily reaching about 70 at one Saturday event



during 2015/2016 academic year. Participation of 20% of students in COP (out of 4000) was a notable step towards developing philanthropic graduates who give back to society.

The responses from participants were indications that the CSP at X University stirred up students' self-awareness and changed their attitudes to be sensitive to other people's problems and find solutions to those problems; this instilled a sense of philanthropy in students. The analysis of theme 4 answered research question 3 of the study. According to Kolb and Kolb (2008), as a part of active experimentation, and because of change in attitude, participants sought and participated in various types of community work as a part of their daily lives. However, there is a possibility that the self-awareness and philanthropic spirit may not last beyond students' lives at the university. There is need for further research to follow students into their career lives to establish whether students maintain the spirit of philanthropy and giving back to society into their career lives.

### **Summary**

The data generated from participants' responses indicated that the required students' CSP at X University has positive impact on students. Students came to terms with the reality of society around them and became aware of the challenges of the community; they had concrete experiences of what it means to be needy. As students reflected on their experiences they realized that community service instilled positive social, spiritual, and academic values in them. The values included: humility, patience, respect for other peoples' background and cultures; it improved their intrapersonal and

interpersonal relationships, empathy for those in need; and it improved understanding of their academic programs. Consequently, students developed a sense of philanthropy and planned to, and continued to be involved in supporting the needy in society as a part of community service and giving back to society. Although students may not have initially appreciated the required CSP, as they proceeded with the program, they came to conceptually realize the meaning it made in their lives, and recognized their own self-worth and fulfilment. In the process, students discovered their philanthropic inclinations, acted on their changed attitudes and found ways of helping the needy as a part of their daily lives. If X University graduates continue with this philanthropic attitude into their career lives, and if X University's experience is adopted by other universities, there is the possibility that in a few years, the Kenyan society can be changed to view community service as a responsibility of everyone and consequently help create a better and more balanced society.

### **Limitations**

A limitation of this study was that it was a qualitative case study, using one-on-one interviews for data collection for a specific community service program, at a specific university. It focused on 4<sup>th</sup>-year students who had undertaken the service during their first-year of study, and who had reported positive impact of the community service. The findings of the study are, therefore, limited to X University, which is a high selective university attracting mostly students from the upper economic spectrum. There is a possibility that the impact of the required CSP is evident for the privileged students. The

less privileged students at other universities in Kenya, with similar CSPs, may not have the experiences reported in this study. Although data was collected from 4<sup>th</sup>-year students who had had time to reflect on their perceptions of the required CSP, there is no guarantee that the change in attitude to be philanthropic will be sustained through their career lives (Goldberg & Coufal, 2009).

### **Conclusion**

The qualitative case study addressed the research question regarding students' perceptions on how the required community service had influenced their attitudes towards being philanthropic and with the possibility of affecting positive social change. Findings from the data collected from 13 4<sup>th</sup>-year students were presented, using thematic approach, synthesized descriptions of information, and direct quotations from participants. Initial basic sub-themes and final sub-themes were drawn up as informed and driven by Kolb and Kolb's (2008) four-fold conceptual framework. Final themes emerged from participants' interview responses, which were aligned to the conceptual framework. The findings from the study indicated that students' perceptions of the required CSP at X University influenced and changed their sensitivity to the people with needs. Students helped the needy, and found a sense of philanthropy with a possibility of affecting positive social change. The study strengthened understanding of the CSP at X University. There are recommendations that were formulated based on the findings from the evaluation study of the Project, in the form of an evaluation report for the X

University. In Section 3, I discuss the project in terms of the goals and rationale, review of literature, and discussion regarding implementation and implication for social change.

### Section 3: The Project

#### **Introduction**

The X University and its staff had never conducted an evaluation study of the required CSP from students' perspective since it was instituted in 2004. Investigation of the program is important in order to have a deeper understanding of effectiveness of the program in meeting its stated objectives (Spaulding, 2008). Fourth-year students of X University who had spent at least 200 hours in a required CSP during their first-year of study participated in the study and shared their perceptions of the program in order to get a deeper understanding of the CSP, which is technically referred to by the university as community-based attachment (CBA). I focused on understanding students' perceptions of their involvement in identifying sites for the CBA program, students' descriptions of their own experience with the program, and students' descriptions of the influence of the program on their attitudes towards being concerned for the needy and helping them find solutions to those needs. The project I created for this study was an evaluation report arising from the case study on the CBA program. The goal of the evaluation report focuses and addresses students' experiences and the recommendations arising from the study for improvement of the effectiveness of the required CSP, and areas for further research, which the university can consider. The findings of the study were used to formulate recommendations for improvement of students' personal experiences with the required community service.

This section includes a description of the project, its goals and rationale. It also includes the review of literature for investigation of the program, the project study, and a discussion of the implementation process of the study project. The section ends with a discussion of social change at the X university level, the level of this university's sector in Kenya, and the Kenyan society in general.

### **Summary of Results from the Evaluation Study**

The goal of the evaluation study was to investigate the required community service by focusing on the perception of 4<sup>th</sup>-year students who had participated in the program during their first-year, and who had time to reflect on their experiences in order to understand how the program has influenced their own philanthropy and affect positive social change. Students' perception was identified by using data collected through one-to-one interviews from 13 4<sup>th</sup>-year students. The participants came from: (a) the school of commerce; (b) the school of law; (c) the institute of mathematics and applied sciences; (d) the school of information technology; and (e) the school of hospitality and tourism. Overall, I found that the CBA program influenced and changed students' attitudes to be sensitive to people with needs and they tried to find solutions to those needs, and it also instilled a sense of philanthropy in students with a possibility of affecting positive social change. Specifically, the required community service had the following positive impacts on students: (a) students appreciated the significance of the required community service through real-life experiences of responsibilities and frustration of identifying community sites, as well as rewards, benefits, and fulfilment that service brings; (b) students

developed self-awareness that community service is good for personal growth, instilling personal values of humility; empathy; trust; and social, spiritual, and academic skills; (c) students became more aware of the challenges and needs of society and had change of attitude towards being sensitive to the needs of others and realized that community service is everyone's social responsibility; and (d) they continued to take part in community service activities. However, in spite of the positive outcomes of the required community services at X University, there were some recommendations that emerged from the interview of participants that if addressed would make the required community service more effective. The following recommendations are based on the weaknesses identified through participants' responses to the research questions and interview questions.

### **Recommendations for CSP/CBA Effectiveness**

One area of concern was the effectiveness of the program with respect to the process of identification of the community service sites. Although students were happy with the identification process of the sites for community service, especially the support from the university through providing the list of possible sites, the first week of the community service was frustrating to a number of students. However, by the end of the program, students tended to appreciate the significance of the required community service. Additionally, students felt that the X University should assess the CBA sites chosen by students that were outside the provided list to ensure that the sites meet the criteria of neediness. Furthermore, students felt that there were some children's homes in

Nairobi City, that were so modernized that students engaged in these sites were unlikely to appreciate and understand the real challenges of the needy. Yet, there were other children's homes that were desperate for assistance and where students' help would have more impact.

Another area of concern was the way students were introduced to the program. Although students received real-life experience of responsibilities and frustrations of identifying appropriate community service site, the way first-year students were introduced to the program needed to be assessed for improvement to ensure that students had more knowledge of the significance of community service in society before they proceed on their community service attachment. They should be given some background information on community service to help them appreciate the moral values behind it, thereby improving their attitudes towards it, so that students do not have to wonder why they are being forced to give back to society. Students who have participated in the CSP should be given a chance to share their experiences with first-year students in a formal setting or forum, possibly during orientation, to ensure that these students understand the importance of community service before they engage in the CSP. This may help in improving students' attitudes towards the program, especially at the initial stages. The strategies are in line with the principles of good practice in service learning, which encourages participants to have adequate background information before they start the engagement to maximize their experiences (NSEE, 2009, 2013).



Interaction during community service activities was also an issue that came up during interview sessions. Although interaction is one part of the objectives of the CSP, its importance should be emphasized by ensuring that there is a time slot during the community service activity where students can have formal interaction with the various people they meet at the sites in order to share experiences. This can enable students to have a deeper understanding of different types of people they work with, their real-life situations, and their beliefs and cultures.

A number of students stated that there was no linkage between the CSP and the academic programs they were pursuing; yet, some students could relate the community service activities with some units in their academic programs. Although this is not one of the main objectives of the required community service because students have a mandatory course-based industrial attachment undertaken in the third-year, it will be beneficial for students to start linking university education with community activities irrespective of the program they are pursuing. This is an area that the university can re-examine to improve the effectiveness and impact of the required community service.

The required community service should be extended to diploma courses offered by the university so that it has a wider impact on the student population as well as the communities that are being served. Community service should also be encouraged right from primary schools, secondary schools, and universities for it to have a wider national impact and be effective in creating in Kenyans a culture of helping others and finding solutions to their problems. Community service should, therefore, be recommended for

university students as a part of holistic development of the student and a tool for affecting positive social change in society. There are also recommendations that I have proposed concerning further research.

### **Recommendations for Further Research**

As a part of their postgraduate study or in collaboration with other universities or government departments, X University should undertake the following research topics to further improve an understanding of community service: (a) investigate whether the philanthropic spirit is sustained through the career life of students by extending the study to graduates in the industry, (b) assess students' impression on community service before and after participation in community service to determine the degree of impact, and (c) differentiate community service from outreach or extension programs to determine if they have similar impacts as that of the required community service programs.

### **Rationale**

The X University's objective was to foster in students a culture and habit of concern for the needy through participating in a required CSP, the community based attachment (CBA). The X University had reported that the required community service had a positive impact on students in terms of the significance of time shared with the needy, the joy it brings, and the essence of investing time with the needy. However, students' perception on how the program influenced their attitude to foster a culture and habit of concern for others had not been conducted in order to have a deeper understanding of the program's effectiveness and whether this concern for the needy

persists beyond the first year of study (Golberg & Coufal, 2009). I conducted a qualitative case study that included one-to-one interview with 4<sup>th</sup>-year students to have a deeper understanding of the required community service and to assess whether it influences students' attitude to be philanthropic and contribute towards addressing community problems and to affect positive social change.

Several researchers have reported the social benefits of community service. Examples of such benefits include students developing good citizenship and community-building skills, becoming aware of other people's struggles and having increased awareness of social realities of their communities and finding solutions to those problems (Aftandilian & Dart, 2013; Prohaska, 2013). There is a need to study the effectiveness of CSPs and their long-term impact on students' attitudes beyond the service (Carson & Domangue, 2010); Leisey et al., 2012; Pike et al. 2011). I found that students' perceptions of the required CSP at X University influenced and changed their sensitivity to the people's needs. Consequently, they tried to help those in need and found a sense of philanthropy with a possibility of producing positive social change. It affirms to X University that the CBA is making a change in students' lives. I used evaluation report because it allows for the dissemination of the findings of the study which will be useful to stakeholders of the program, who include: (a) students as primary beneficiaries; (b) the university management and administrative staff, who ensure that the objective of the CBA in meeting the vision of the university; and (c) program coordinators and members of faculty who implement the program and who can make changes to it. Additionally,

other universities in Kenya can learn from X University's experience and improve their own CSPs.

Evaluating CSPs is important because the resultant evaluation reports are used to improve academic outcomes, and to develop self-awareness, social awareness and good citizenship in students (Prentice & Robinson, 2010; Rubio, et al., 2016). The evaluation report will benefit both students and staff because it makes available useful information for strengthening the CBA, encourages discussion among stakeholders, empowers faculty and other stakeholders, stimulates development of shared goals among stakeholders, and facilitates continuous improvement of the program. The data analysis in Section 2 had four themes that emerged from the study: support for effective CSP, students' personal growth and development, giving back to society/gratitude and students' self-awareness and change in attitude towards the needy.

### **Review of the Literature**

I focused on evaluating a required CSP at a private university in Kenya, the X University. In this review of the literature, I focused on the importance of having a deeper understanding of the required community service at a private university from students' perspectives, in terms of influencing their attitudes to be philanthropic. To complete this review of literature, I used the Walden University Library and Google Scholar, and databases such as EBSCO, ERIC, Education Research Complete, and SAGE. The search terms used included program evaluation, community service, service learning, community engagement, experiential learning, higher education, colleges, universities,

design and benefits of program evaluation, and, students' perceptions. I focused on peer-reviewed sources and studies on institutional policy literature. The most relevant literature to the research results was reviewed for this section. I divided this review on the chosen genre of program evaluation into, definition of program evaluation, purposes of evaluation, types of evaluation, evaluation process, benefits of evaluation, and recommendation for effective evaluation.

### **Program Evaluation**

Higher education institutions are promoting students' participation in community outreach programs through a variety of initiatives. Therefore, they should use evaluation to demonstrate the effectiveness of their programs in achieving the intended goals (Perry, 2010). The phenomenon of student service in communities has become more widespread. A field of scholarship has emerged that encourages the service because of its positive effects on students, and several peer-reviewed journals now focus on the topic, and many universities have offices for service learning (Erickson, 2010). Evaluating CSPs is, therefore, important in many higher education institutions because the programs are used to improve academic outcomes; and to develop self-awareness, social awareness, and good citizenship in students (Prentice & Robinson, 2010; Rubio et al., 2016). Additionally, students evaluating their service learning courses are more likely to report that the courses promote interpersonal, community and academic engagement, academic challenge, and continued study at the university (Gallini & Moely, 2003). Regardless of the type of question used, the evaluation must be aligned to the theory of action. There

should be a statement designed to connect program goals and objectives to the intended outcomes of the program. There should be a statement of underlying assumptions about the needs being addressed, which are often based on prior program evaluation findings or other evidence that something has not worked or is not working well (Mohajeri-Nelson & Negley, 2016). Before the decision to evaluate the program is taken, it is important to know exactly what and whom the evaluation is being done for, and to be certain that the benefits of the program will outweigh the costs, and there should be clarity of purpose (Whitham, Whietsage, Cone, & Permal, 1983). I found that the required CSP at X University influenced students' attitude to be philanthropic. Therefore, this evaluation will be important for the university to confirm that the required community service is making positive change in students' lives and inculcating in students a culture of service to others.

In educational setting, a program can be defined as an initiative, with a set of goals and objectives aimed at solving or improving an educational system (Worthen, 1990). Program evaluation is the process of determining the value of something (Scriven, 1991; Worthen, 1990). Lodico, et al. (2010) defines program evaluation, as the process of determining the significance or worth of something through careful appraisal and making recommendations for improvement and success. Educational programs can take place outside the institution, are varied in nature and, therefore, their evaluations also vary in nature (Lodico et al., 2010). Evaluation consists of activities undertaken to judge the worth or utility of a program in improving some specified aspect of an educational

system (Worthen, 1990). Institutions can, therefore, use evaluation process as a tool for gathering information to assess the effectiveness and impact of their activities, or programs and for improvement (Mattessich, 2003). It is the view of evaluation as a systematic gathering of information in order to make judgments about the value of a program, that reflects its origin as a strategy for ensuring accountability of innovative programs as an objective way for funders, decision makers, and consumers to know that their money is well spent and their trust well placed (Whitham et al., 1983). Program evaluation is easy when used for assessing a program implemented at one site (as was the case of the required CSP at X University), however, it can be challenging when used to assess multi-site programs, such as a federal policy that spans across several states or provinces (Posavac, 2016). Furthermore, novel evaluators have a better understanding of program evaluation with smaller projects (Posavac, 2016). Higher education institutions regularly evaluate their programs, to ensure that the programs meet the intended objectives and standards as set by quality assurance agencies (Perry, 2010). In Kenya, universities are required by the accrediting agency, the Commission for University Education, to conduct evaluation of the institution every 5 years, and evaluation of academic programs after every cycle, for quality enhancement (Republic of Kenya, 2014). The process of evaluating an institution (institutional audit) can be considered as an equivalent way for an institution of higher education to conduct total quality management (TQM) (Sallis, 2014). The required CSP at X University had not been evaluated from the students' perspective since its initiation in 2004. Therefore,

undertaking evaluation of community service at X University provides information that enables the evaluator to better understand the program (Posavac, 2016).

**Purpose of program evaluation.** Program evaluation provides feedback to the people who are responsible for making changes to the program, for purposes of decision making, thereby enhancing quality of the service (Posavac, 2016). With regard to service learning or community service, program evaluation is done for assessing the program's impact on students' learning outcomes and on those who receive the service (Mattessich 2003). Some of the purposes of program evaluation are, to: (a) decide on program implementation; (b) decide on program continuation, expansion, or certification; (c) decide on what changes to make to the program for improvement (Posavac, 2016); (d) gather evidence to support continuation of the program; and (e) gather evidence for discontinuation of the program (Worthen, 1990). The most common purpose for program evaluation is to gather information to support its effectiveness (Astin, 2012). Evaluating a community service program is critical for institutions, because it is usually linked to the mission and vision of the university in order to develop in students a sense of citizenship, greater social responsibility, and to support students in meeting academic goals (Mitchell et al., 2012). An example of why it is important to evaluate CSPs is reported by Lardner (2014) in which the evaluation of learning community program in 66 college campuses, assessed student engagement and student support as part of the best practices for evaluating the program was considered a priority. Furthermore, program evaluation can be undertaken to permit the institution or organization to: (a) continue to offer the



program if it is effective in meeting its objectives; (b) make changes to the program that will make it more beneficial to participants; and (c) discontinue the program if it fails to meet the objectives for which it was established (Posavac, 2016). Posavac explained that if the program is good, the evaluation is used to identify its strengths and aspects that need improvement, and to determine the program's limitations.

**Types of program evaluation.** There are two types of program evaluation depending on the nature of the information, and when the feedback is provided to the institution or organization (Lodico et al., 2010). Summative evaluation is used for measuring outcomes at the end of the project, in order to determine how the outcomes relate to the overall judgment of the program and its success, and whether the goals and objectives have been met. Examples of summative evaluation include, state assessment, or qualitative data gathered from interviews which elicit participants' responses that summarize their perception of outcomes or experiences (Lodico et al., 2010). Summative evaluation can determine whether a program should be continued, expanded, or discontinued. It can also be used to decide whether a program should be funded, and it is done as a part of accountability at the end of the project cycle (Giancola, 2014; Posavac, 2016; Worthen, 1990). Formative evaluation is done for development, where feedback received is used for improvement of the outcomes of the program, or for increasing efficiency; the feedback is reported back to the client as the program is ongoing (Lodico et al., 2010; Posavac, 2016). Some formative evaluations are undertaken to gain a deeper understanding of the program (Chelimsky, 1997). It is also used as a methodology to

learn the depth and extent of the need for the service provided, whether the service is adequately exhaustive in addressing the stated needs, and if the level at which the service is offered helps the needy at a realistic cost without undesirable side effects (Posavac, 2016). In order to maintain quality of the program, when it has been assessed to be effective from its summative evaluation, it is necessary to continue providing feedback through periodic monitoring (Posavac, 2016). Therefore, undertaking regular program evaluation is important for higher education institutions, to monitor effectiveness of their programs (Shipman, 2005). The required community service at X University had not been evaluated from students' perspectives since it was initiated in 2004, therefore, this evaluation study will be important to the university to appreciate students' perspective of the required community service.

**Process of program evaluation.** Through program evaluation, participants can clarify their values which help them to sharpen their understanding of the essence of education (Kellagham et al., 2003). Findings from program evaluation is useful for a variety of stakeholders, public schools, school boards, district leaders and staff (Hanover Research, 2015). Program evaluation process, includes establishing the goals of the program and each of its components, and identifying important questions that stakeholders will ask about the outcomes of the program. It includes the following steps: (a) defining the program by identifying the short-term, medium-term objectives and its long-term goals, and stating the strategies and activities of the evaluation; (b) planning evaluation, which entails gathering information about the design of the program,

identifying both broad and specific evaluation purpose or questions, identifying potential types of measures and sources of data to address the questions, and developing a plan for how and when data will be collected and by whom; (c) implementing the evaluation, which consists of determining data analysis methods, collecting and managing data; (d) interpreting results of evaluation during which evaluation results are examined, and evaluation report prepared; (e) providing feedback to stakeholders, and refining the program through sharing the findings for improvement; and (f) continuing the process of evaluation periodically (Fairman & Johnson, 2016; Nazanin et al., 2016).

Program evaluation is a concept known to faculty members in higher education institutions, because teaching and research employ similar theoretical frameworks and approaches (Shipman, 2005). Unlike research, which seeks to develop knowledge on a particular issue, the objective of program evaluation is to facilitate stakeholders to make decisions to strengthen the program, improve effectiveness of the institution, and improve academic experience (Lodico et al., 2010). Evaluation, therefore, results in a judgment and recommendations on a program or service, whereas, research results into a conclusion about a topic (Fitzpatrick, Sanders & Worthen, 2004).

**Benefits of program evaluation.** In its guide for evaluation of undergraduate academic programs, the State University of New York (2012) reported that, effective evaluation of academic programs directly benefits both faculty and students because, it: (a) makes available useful information for strengthening programs; (b) encourages discussion among stakeholders; (c) empowers faculty, as well as, other institutional

stakeholders; (d) stimulates development of shared goals among the stakeholders; (e) fosters collegiality; (f) facilitates continuous improvement of the institution and its programs, thereby allowing them to remain responsive and relevant in a changing environment; and (g) enables institutions and programs to meet the expectations and requirements of external stakeholders. Additionally, evaluation process facilitates documentation necessary for accreditation of institution or program in order to demonstrate program or institutional effectiveness (Upcraft et al., 2005).

**Challenges of program evaluation.** When evaluation is undertaken by an external evaluator, there are challenges of trust with stakeholders involved in the program because they may view the evaluator as a threat to their work, and they may feel that the evaluator does not have an in-depth understanding of the context of the program should the findings come out negative. With regard to internal evaluators, the challenge may arise from previous and current relationships with stakeholders who may interfere with the evaluation, through intimidation by trying to influence the findings (Lodico et al., 2010). Additionally, it is unnecessary to evaluate a program under the following circumstances: (a) when data gathered will not be used, because it provides information that no one was asking for, or information that does not contribute to the attainment of program goals; (b) when common knowledge can easily provide the information required; (d) when it is too soon in the project cycle before results can be reasonably be expected; and (e) when there is no access to professional competence or material resources needed to ensure that evaluation results will have merit (Whitham et al., 1983).

**Recommendations for effective program evaluation.** To reap the full benefits of any program evaluation, it should involve feedback mechanism from students, because they are the primary stakeholders of program's service (Smith, MacGregor, Mathew & Gabelnick, 2004). Evaluation of academic programs should involve both faculty and other stakeholders (Maki, 2004); involvement of faculty in the process is important, because they are the ones who develop the programs and implement the recommendations arising from evaluation (Middle State Commission on Higher Education, 2006). Additionally, for program evaluation to be effective it must be imbedded in institutional policies and procedures (López, 2006). Consequently, evaluation should be conducted on a regular basis and be integrated into daily operations of the institution (Witham et al., 1983). Evaluation is likely to be positive and results are likely to be useful when evaluation is built from the start of an ongoing activity (Hollander, 2004). The success of an evaluation is judged by the data collection method, and whether the information was used by the people responsible for making changes to that program. A good evaluation report which is kept in institutional shelves and not used is of no value. This happens when the evaluator is not involved in the day-to-day delivery of the service, or activities that are being evaluated, and so the scope of evaluation can be restricted by the institution itself (Lodico et al, 2010). It is, therefore, important that any evaluation is accompanied by an evaluation report to the institution for improvement of the program (Nazanin & Negley, 2016). Some of the best practices for effective evaluation of programs are that: (a) there should be a clear system of keeping and

evaluating outcomes and processes with an inbuilt feedback mechanism; (b) there should be monitoring and continuous improvement of the program; (c) students should be given opportunity to express their opinions (NSEE, 2009, 2013); and (d) there should be assessment of the program so that its administrative and instructional components remain aligned with institutional mission (Huerta & Hansen, 2013). A good strategic plan can be used for positive change and growth, and embedding evaluation within the plan itself provide information for continuous improvement, therefore, a strategic plan with an embedded evaluation provides the ingredients for success (Giancola, 2014).

There is no standard format for presenting results of evaluation reports. However, Hannover (2015) suggested that an evaluation report should have: (a) an executive summary; (b) an introduction or program history; (c) a statement of the evaluation's goals, purpose, and essential research questions; (d) methodology overview; (e) results analysis; and (f) findings and recommendations. It is the responsibility of the program evaluator to decide whether the evaluation is intended for program improvement and inform program owners, or for assessment of program's value, and that the report is delivered to those who initiated the evaluation. However, it is not the responsibility of the evaluator to disseminate the results of evaluation (Lodico et al., 2010). It is expected that the program administrators will review the results prior to dissemination, but program evaluation results are not regarded as published documents (Lodico et al., 2010: Spaulding, 2008).

This second review of literature for this project study focused on evaluation reports in higher education institutions, with special attention to community service and service learning programs. Evaluation of programs is an important responsibility of administrators and should involve feedback mechanism from students because they are the primary stakeholders of programs. The investigation of the program (evaluation study) allowed me to make some recommendations that should improve effectiveness of the required CSP at X University based on research results of the study.

The recommendations for improving effectiveness of the required CSP addressed each theme of the research study, namely: support for effectiveness of the CSP and challenges, students' personal growth and development, giving back to society / gratitude, and students' self-awareness and change in attitude towards the needy, as demonstrated by the literature reviewed (Appendix A).

### **Project Description**

The CSP, or community-based attachment (CBA) program, at X University is taken by students during the long holidays at the end of the first-year of study. It is designed to ensure application of student's skills, gifts, and resources to enhance the quality of life of people in need. Students volunteer in activities that focus on providing services off-campus to the needy in different sectors of the community. A minimum of 200 hours must be completed at one service site.

Specifically, the CBA helps students to apply their skills and knowledge to societal problems to enable them to, build capacity for learning and leadership; develop

personally, professionally and academically; and understand themselves, their community and their role in the community. The community-based attachment was created to fulfill a part of the university's mission, to provide service to the society. It is the spirit of helping others which is the basis for making the CBA a requirement for graduation, to encourage students to serve others in their daily lives. The program aims to create an awareness of the needs of others, and to develop more compassionate students who are able to respond to the plight of the needy; and to acquaint themselves with career and professional-skill, volunteering possibilities in the nonprofit sector.

Students are encouraged to discuss with their advisors, early in their university experience, options for fulfilling the community service requirement. During the service, students are expected to: (a) collect a letter of introduction from the faculty; (b) update the details of their internship in the online system within the first week; (c) familiarize themselves with the CBA list of sites where students have previously completed their attachments (this is not exhaustive, and students go to organization not on the list by request from school coordinators); and (d) download guidelines for report writing, and present the community service attachment report to the coordinator within two weeks of the second-year course work. Late submission of the attachment report results in a maximum score of 20 out of 50.

This project was grounded in the evaluation study of 4<sup>th</sup>-year students' perception of the required CSP undertaken during first-year of study at a private university in Kenya. The evaluation study was intended to have a deeper understanding of the CSP and its



effectiveness in influencing students' attitudes to be philanthropic, and affect positive social change. However, the program had not been evaluated before from the students' perspectives. The strengths and weaknesses of the program from students' perspectives were identified using data collected from 4<sup>th</sup>-year students through one-to-one interviews. The information gathered in the study was used to structure the project. The evaluation report can be used by program coordinators at schools level, and the X University management to improve effectiveness of the program in achieving the university's mission of fostering in students a culture and habit of helping those in need, so that students can have more sustained change in their attitude towards being philanthropic.

I chose formative evaluation method, because it allowed me to gather data through one-on-one interviews that was reflective of the perceptions and experiences of 4<sup>th</sup>-year students who had participated in the CSP (referred to by the university as CBA) during their first-year of study. Formative evaluation was considered appropriate, because the feedback was for improvement of the outcomes of the program, or for increasing efficiency, and because the feedback was to be reported back to X University as the program was ongoing (Lodico et al., 2010; Posavac, 2016). Furthermore, collecting formative data through interviews was useful in helping me to have a deeper understanding of the required community service program, and understand how it had influenced student' attitude to be philanthropic towards people with need, and in identifying areas requiring improvement, in order to make the program more effective.

The evaluation report was prepared for submission to X University for improvement of the program. The evaluation report had an executive summary, description of the required community based attachment (CBA), evaluation of the CBA, findings in the evaluation study, and recommendations (Appendix A), were consistent with good practice of preparing evaluation reports (Hanover, 2015). The findings of the evaluation study indicated that the CBA is effective in: (a) making students aware of the needs of the society around them; (b) facilitating development of social, spiritual and academic skills which are important for holistic development of the student; (c) helping students to appreciate the importance of giving back to society; and (d) initiating students' self-awareness and changing their attitudes to be philanthropic towards the needy in society. In addition, the evaluation report contains recommendations which have been suggested to the university to address improvement of effectiveness of the CSP. The major recommendations were as follows: (a) in terms of support for effective community service, the X University should provide students with background information on community service, and encourage 4<sup>th</sup>-year students who have undertaken community service to share their experiences with first-year students before they proceed on the community service assignment; (b) in terms of enhancing students personal growth, students should be encouraged to link community service with academic work, and emphasize the element of formal interaction with other people during the community service activity; (c) in terms of giving back to society, the X University should extend the study to graduate students in industry to assess if the philanthropic spirit is maintained

through career life of students; and (d) in terms of students' self-awareness and change of attitude towards the needy, in order to expand the impact of the program, the X University can consider expanding the required community service to its diploma students, and consider sharing its experiences with other universities in Kenya. I will present the evaluation report to the X University, including an implementation plan for improvement of the program.

### **Implementation Plan**

My responsibility towards the implementation of the project was to share two copies of the project with the university management for improvement of the required CSP. However, the implementation of the findings and recommendations that have been proposed in this report are beyond the scope of this study because, as the researcher, I was not a member of the faculty of X University, and I was not authorized to implement any changes on behalf of the University. The objective of the evaluation study was to have an in-depth understanding of how the required community service influenced students' attitudes toward being philanthropic and contribute to addressing community problems. The agreement between I and the X University was to submit two copies of the dissertation to the university (See Appendix C). However, the proposed recommendations as contained in the evaluation report (Appendix A) are easy to implement. They are: (a) emphasizing students' interaction with people working at the CSP sites during the community service activity; (b) ensuring students have adequate information on community service before proceeding to the practical aspect of the

program; (c) ensuring that students undertake community based attachment in needy places where their contributions are likely to make a significant impact to the community and appreciate the importance of giving back to society; and (d) the 4<sup>th</sup>-year students who had participated in the CSP should be provided with a chance to share their experiences with first-year students in a formal forum to enhance students' experiences and to improve students' attitude towards the program. The remaining sections outline the needed resources and support for the program, barriers and potential solutions to the barriers, an implementation timeline, and the role and responsibilities of students and others for proper implementation of the project.

### **Needed Resources and Existing Support**

It is in the interest of X University, and that of the community service coordinators to study the findings from the study, as contained in the evaluation report, and decide what parts of the recommendations they can adopt, in order to ensure that the CSP is effective. The existing support for the program is provided by the university management, through assistance with identification of possible community sites, and providing students with introductory letters to the community sites, while the school coordinators invested their time in supervision of students, which have been instrumental in ensuring the success of the program. The recommendations, which mainly touch on implementation process, and which have been proposed in this evaluation report, can be implemented by X University without incurring any additional cost to the CSP. Providing a formal forum for 4<sup>th</sup>-year students to share their experiences with first-year students

will require collaborative efforts between management, faculty members, and students. The resources needed to disseminate the evaluation report to staff and faculty include, materials for photocopying, time to attend a meeting to discuss the evaluation report if the university wishes me to present the report to them; and support from faculty to attend the meeting.

### **Potential Barriers**

The barrier to disseminating the content of the evaluation report include, time needed for the organization of various meetings to discuss the evaluation report with stakeholders, the type of appropriate meeting and venue, involvement of all critical participants, and my personal presentation of the report to the university. Organizing for such a meeting can be challenging, because academic calendars are busy. The evaluation report should be presented to the management, administrative staff, program coordinators, all members of faculty, and students, so it can be difficult to find time suitable for all.

It was my intention that other universities learn from X University's experience, therefore, it would be important if other universities have access to the evaluation report. However, the potential barriers that might hinder other universities in Kenya learning from X University's experience is the competitive nature of university education. The required community service is one of the unique features of X University, which gives it a competitive edge; therefore, the university may not be so willing to freely share its experience with other universities. However, there is a possibility of disseminating the

findings to other universities through the National Commission of for Science, Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI), the custodian of research studies in Kenya, which requires that a copy of the research study undertaken in Kenya be deposited with them; they may decide to disseminate the information to other universities at their cost as part of a scheduled conference at which I would present the report, but, the permission of the university would be required. The X University is a relatively small, highly selective private university, with student population of about 6,000. The implementation and coordination of such a program can be a barrier in other larger universities, it is more feasible in such a small university as X University as compared to public universities where student population may be as high as 80,000 (Republic of Kenya, 2016). However, if coordination of the CSPs in large public universities was decentralized to school or faculty level, as X University has done, then it may be successful. The Commission for University Education, the quality assurance body, in consultation with NACOSTI, and the government, can find ways of implementing community service as a tool for instilling in students the culture of volunteering services to community as a part of philanthropy and good citizenship, and affect positive social change. The government can introduce regulations that encourage mandatory community service at all levels of education, from primary school, through to secondary and to university, to ensure that community service has a wider impact on society. This is one of the reasons why the culture of philanthropy thrives in the USA (Titlebaum et al., 2014).

**Proposal for Timetable**

Implementation of the evaluation report will begin when I submit the evaluation report to X University in July 2018, through the deputy vice chancellor, research and innovation, who authorized the study. I will be available to respond to any questions that the university may raise. Once the Walden University has officially approved my doctoral study, I will request for time to present the evaluation report to the university, at their annual opening day meeting, before the new academic year starts in September 2018. The request will be made through the deputy vice chancellor, research and innovation. I have proposed that the participants include, deputy vice chancellor, academic and student affairs; deputy vice chancellor, research and innovation; deputy vice chancellor, planning and development; the university secretary; director, university relations and communication; executive director, finance; deans, directors of schools; and coordinators of the CSP. I will advise that the report be disseminated to participants at least 2 weeks before the meeting to allow for informed discussion. The implementation of recommendations for improvement of the CSP, which do not have heavy financial implication, should be ready for first-year students taking their community service in January 2019, when the academic year 2018/2019 begins. It would be important to start with recommendations that can be easily implemented with minimal financial implications, for example, providing first-year students with background information on community service during orientation. It is up to the university to adopt the proposed implementation timetable, or amend it in line with its activities.

### **Roles and Responsibilities of Students and Others**

My primary role in the evaluation of the required CSP was to gain a deeper understanding of the program from the perspectives of 4<sup>th</sup>-year students on how it influences students' attitude to be philanthropic and affect positive social change. My responsibility in implementing the results of the evaluation of the project study would be to make the report available to the university, to share with the program coordinators, and with first-year students. I would be responsible for answering questions about the findings and recommendations. The X University and program coordinators will be responsible for sharing their experiences with other external stakeholders. However, the program coordinators at the schools' level will be responsible for implementing the recommendations, but with the support from the University administration.

### **Project Evaluation Plan**

The project was a formative evaluation. I used formative evaluation, because it allowed me to gather data through one-to-one interviews that was reflective of perceptions and experience of 4<sup>th</sup>-year students who had participated in the community service program during their first-year of study. Formative evaluation provides feedback to the client as the program is ongoing (Lodico, et al., 2010; Posavac, 2016). Collecting formative data was useful for identifying areas of effectiveness and improvement of the CSP, which was used to create the evaluation report. A number of researchers have defined program evaluation as the process of determining the significance or worth of



something through appraisal and study, and making recommendations (Lodico et al., 2010; Scriven, 199; Worthen, 1009).

The effectiveness of the required CSP can be determined by the feedback from primary stakeholders, the 4<sup>th</sup>-year students, who would have had time to reflect on how the program had influenced their attitude to be philanthropic and helping people in need. According to Austin (2012) the most common purpose for program evaluation is to gather information to support its effectiveness. Perry (2012) stated that educational institutions use evaluation to demonstrate effectiveness of their program in achieving the intended goals. Additionally, students evaluating their service learning courses are more likely to report that the courses promote interpersonal, community, and academic engagement than students evaluating other courses (Gallini & Moely, 2003). Any evaluation report should be presented to the institution for improvement of the program as a part of good practice; therefore, I will present the evaluation report to the X University as feedback for improvement of effectiveness of the CSP (Nazanin & Negley, 2016). The feedback from evaluation is important to individuals who are connected to the CSP, who include, the university management, administrative staff, members of faculty, and program coordinators; they would be able to determine whether the recommendations provided in the evaluation report are feasible and reasonable (Posavac, 2016). If these stakeholders are satisfied with the recommendations provided in the evaluation report, they can create a plan to implement the recommendations. In addition, after reviewing and studying the evaluation report and recommendations contained

therein, the stakeholders may also add other recommendations of their own, or raise questions as they deem appropriate (Worthen, 1990). As the program evaluator, I will be available to answer any questions, and to clarify any findings or recommendations in the evaluation report that may be raised by stakeholders.

It is possible that studying the evaluation report, the stakeholders may make additional decisions, that some aspects of the required community service need more extensive evaluation process; and that a different type of evaluation be conducted. The university, especially the program coordinators, who are directly connected to the CSP, would be able to determine whether their community service is effective in achieving the university's objective of fostering a culture and habit of concern for the needy in society and helping them find solutions to those needs, being philanthropic. If the university addresses the recommendation, effectiveness of the program will be further improved, and students will realize the full impact of the program.

### **Project Implications**

#### **Local Community**

The findings of my study will strengthen the resolve of X University to continue with the program, and will incrementally have positive social change in the society (Aftandalian & Dart, 2013; Lattanzi et al., 2013). As the chair of the technical working group on the Initiative for Harmonization of Higher Education Quality Assurance and Accreditation (HAQAA), the project provided me with a unique understanding of the perspectives and needs of students participating in CSPs. I have learned how students are

affected by the challenges of the needy in society and their desire to contribute to finding solutions to community challenges, thereby developing positive citizenship traits. Students feel fulfilled when they help others, and as they interact with the needy in society they also get something in return, and consequently, they are more likely to continue with volunteering in community service. I have supported the inclusion of required community service as a part of the proposed standards and guidelines for higher education in Africa. As a member of the board of governors at a university institutions in Kenya, I will support community engagement by university students. Evaluation of the required community service provided me with an insight as to why community service is my responsibility, and consequently, I have purposed to take a more active role in community programs.

### **Far-Reaching**

While this evaluation report was specific to the X University, I trust that it will also be of value to the higher education sector. In terms of X University, the findings of the study should encourage them to continue with the required community service and improve on its effectiveness by adopting the recommendations in the evaluation report. I trust that the X University will support further studies to assess whether students' philanthropic attitude is sustained through students' career lives. The X University could use the results to enter into collaboration with other organizations for an extensive study on the program to assess if the philanthropic spirit is sustained through students' careers.

Additionally, other universities may learn from X University's experience and introduce similar required CSPs, for greater positive social change in Kenyan society.

Other higher education stakeholders and policy makers such as the Commission for University Education, NACOSTI, and the Ministry of Education, after reading the results of the study may appreciate that the required community service at X University is changing students' lives, and making positive social change and is meeting the objective of university education and the aspiration of the Government of Kenya. This may lead to expanding the required CSP to other levels of education, from primary level to university level, for greater positive social change.

The number of qualitative studies on required community service by students are limited, especially those that focus on students' perspectives, experiences and change of attitude. The practical evaluation of the program may serve as a model for community service program in other universities, to initiate programs with the objective of creating a sense of philanthropy in students. The benefit of conducting formative evaluation is having a deeper understanding of the program from students' perspectives, who are the primary stakeholders of the program. The results support the X University objective of producing holistic graduates, who are sensitive to addressing societal challenges.

### **Conclusion**

The discussion of this section focused on describing the resultant evaluation report from a qualitative case study, on students' perceptions of the required CSP at a highly selective private university in Kenya. The evaluation project included goals and

rationale. The review of literature included research that informed the project evaluation report. The implementation plan described the role of the university management, administrative staff, faculty members, and program coordinators in making the program more effective. The implication for social change from my perspective, addressed how I might apply the lessons learned from the project in my current and future work, and also from the perspective of X University and higher education policy makers. In Section 4, I provide further analysis of the project in terms of its strengths and limitations in addressing the problem, recommendations for future research, and my reflection on what was learned in my journey as a scholar, a practitioner, and a program developer.

## Section 4: Reflections and Conclusions

### **Introduction**

This section includes with my personal critical reflection of my experiences during my journey with the doctoral study as an adult learner, a concept that has been documented by Dewey (1938) and Knowles, Holton, and Swanson (2012). The doctoral study has helped me to critically reflect on the concept of adult learning and experiential learning and appreciate that people view issues from different perspectives. I have become patient, tolerant and more reflective as a practitioner and scholar. In this section, I discuss the project strengths and limitation, my reflection on the entire program of study, the development of the evaluation report, lessons learned and personal growth as a scholar, practitioner, and as project developer.

### **Project Strengths**

Because the main goal of the project was to understand how the required community service influenced students' attitudes towards being philanthropic and helping people in need; the participants supported the objective of the program. The evaluation report had several strengths. The project addressed the need for investigating effectiveness of the required CSP from students' perspective. Scholars have reported the positive impact of community service on students' personal lives (Plumber, 2011; Stewart & Alrutz, 2012), and the importance of linking effective community service with scholarly activities and academic goals (Hanover Research, 2012). The study led to a program evaluation report, which gave the results of the study and some

recommendations for strengthening the required CSP. Since the program was initiated in 2004, the X University had not assessed the effectiveness of the program from students' perspectives, apart from the quarterly reports that program coordinators submit to the administration. Not much study had been done to understand the long-term consequences of community service (Pike et al., 2011). The evaluation was a tool for the required CSP by first-year students, which can be used in support of accreditation and quality audit activities of X University by the quality assurance agency, the Commission for University Education. Documenting strengths and challenges of a CSP is also a way of establishing university best practices (Suskie, 2009).

During data collection through interviews and data analysis, students who are the primary stakeholders of university education, were given a voice to express their experiences with the required community service and their contributions to the needy in society, which they reported had a positive impact on their social, academic, and spiritual lives and developing them into holistic persons. They also expressed their views on how to make the program more effective. This evaluation report illuminated the positive impact of community service in changing students' attitude to be philanthropic and help the needy in society; many student continued to volunteer after their course ended, consistent with earlier research (Hatcher & Studer, 2015; Taylor & Raykov, 2014). The evaluation report allowed 4<sup>th</sup>-year students of X University to give feedback to the university, concerning the effectiveness of their required CSP in meeting its objective. Lastly, although the evaluation report focused on 4<sup>th</sup>-year students at X University, the

report gives other universities a chance to examine their CSPs to assess whether their programs meet the objectives for which they were established.

### **Recommendations for Remediation of Limitations**

Even though the project had several strengths, some limitations were noted. The limitations were related to adoption of the evaluation report by the university, sampling criteria, sampling size and time. The evaluation report must be adopted by the X University to be useful and serve the purpose for which it is meant. Because I am not an employee of X University, I may not be aware of its organizational practices, procedures and protocols that might hinder implementation of the recommendations. Although I confirmed the findings from previous research that community service influences students' attitudes to be philanthropic towards those in need, there were some limitations related to data collection. Data were gathered from a small sample size of 13 participants at X University in order to have a deeper understanding of the program; however, this limited the scope of students' experiences. Additionally, the purposive selection criteria used limited the sample to those who had positive experiences, which limited the diversity of responses and experiences.

If the doctoral program duration and resources were not a limiting factor, I could have used a qualitative survey method and expanded the sampling strategy by using stratified sampling strategy to include students with negative perceptions of their community service. This would have enabled me to have a larger sample size to capture more responses, but then I would not have collected rich contextual data to enable deeper



understanding of the required community service (Creswell, 2012). The findings of the study are, therefore, specific to X University in Kenya. If time was not a factor, a longitudinal evaluation of the required CSP could have been conducted for two cohorts when students are in third year and when they reached fourth year. This type of evaluation would have enabled comparison of recent experiences and long-term experiences. I could also have extended the study to graduates of X University in the industry to assess if the spirit of philanthropy is sustained through career life; but, this would have required a longer period beyond the program structure.

Using interviews as data collection method is a known limitation in qualitative research (Creswell, 2012; Merriam, 2009). There is a possibility that the information may have been filtered through my own views as the researcher; that participants may have provided information they thought I wanted to hear, and the responses may not have been articulate, perceptive or clear. These concerns were addressed by use of an interview protocol with open-ended research and interview questions, which also allowed use of probing questions to clarify participants' responses. Additionally, I could have had an assistant researcher to help with the interviews to ensure interpretations were from another perspective and compared the results. However, the analysis part of the doctoral study document was reviewed by Walden educationists to assess the validity of my interpretations.

A possible limitation to the study could have been my previous supervisory role as an employee of the Commission for University Education, which may have made

students hesitant to speak candidly about the program in case I still had connections with the agency. However, I made my retirement from the commission known to the participants during briefing session and before interview sessions began, and I feel that participants were genuine and truthful in their description of their experiences with the community service judging from similarities in their responses.

### **Scholarship**

The requirement by Walden University for doctoral students to be immersed in their study and reflect on their experiences has increased my understanding and appreciation of experiential learning, affirming the work of education philosophers such as Dewey, Kolb, and other scholars who stated that acquisition of knowledge is the result of reflection, and that experience is also an essential element of education (Dewey, 1944). As I interviewed participants and received their responses, I came to understand the role of conceptual framework of experiential learning, particularly the interconnectedness of Kolb and Kolb's (2008) four-fold conceptual framework that involves concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization, and active experimentation. I appreciated how participants had experiences in helping the needy at the different community service sites, how they reflected on their experiences from first year to fourth year of study, and how they made decisions to continue with community service in their lives. I found this touching and would like to undertake more studies in this area.

My professional and scholarly work was based on Walden's vision of affecting positive social change and maintaining ethical standards. As I worked towards completing the project, reflecting on my experiences and writing the final chapters, I came to realize that patience, diligence, critical thinking and analysis, and having an open mind to issues are the hallmarks of a successful scholarly research process. Towards the end of the data collection process, one of the participants wanted to know why I chose to study the required community service using one-to-one interviews, and not through a survey method. As I explained to him my reasons, reflected on the responses I gave him, I realized that I need to be active and contribute more to the needy in society. Consequently, I have purposed to identify some needy situation where I can make material contribution or identify a needy individual and assist in improving the life of the individual in one way or the other. The study on community service changed my attitude to be more philanthropic just as it did to the students.

As a result of undertaking the research study through Walden University, my focus in project development changed as I became more sensitized to the significance of periodically evaluating community service in affecting positive social change; that it is the business of everyone to volunteer to help those in need. As the chair of the task group on harmonization of African standards and guidelines for higher education, I have supported inclusion in the standards periodic evaluation of programs as part of good practice in quality assurance. I hope to have this practice adopted at the university where I am a member of the governing board.

### **Project Development and Evaluation**

Before my doctoral journey and conducting the research study, I had experience with university's activities from the perspective of quality audit. From that experience, I wanted to have a deeper understanding of the required community service at X University, because it had a focused objective, to change students' attitudes to help people in need. Additionally, because the X University had stated that the required CSP had positive impact on students, I wanted to have a deeper understanding of the program from students' perspectives. If students' perspectives were consistent with the University's opinion, it would enable me to make recommendations to other universities to learn from X University's experience. I came to appreciate the role of qualitative case study, as well as, its limitations; the challenge of conducting interviews in an institution where one is not an employee. I came to understand the complexity of planning process; the importance of collaboration with various members of the university to access students. I had to cooperate with the administrative office, research office, the heads of school/institutes, coordinators of the program at school level, and the students. The entry into the site, the X University, was not that easy because of the unwritten culture and protocols of universities, which I came to appreciate. It took me a little longer than I had planned to recruit students. I realized that coordination of the required CSP had been decentralized to school level, which meant I had to hold discussions with each heads of the five schools, for ease of students' recruitment for the study, emphasizing the importance of having an open mind to planning. Having access to students who had

volunteered to avail themselves for the interview sessions was a challenge, because 4<sup>th</sup>-year students were on their last semester and some were completing their final examinations. However, the officer in charge of research coordination assisted me, and I engaged the services of a third-year student as an administrative research assistant, to organize for interview sessions, which speeded up the process.

Additionally, I had planned that I would hold interview sessions in a secure place for purposes of observing participants' privacy. When I started organizing for the interviews, I realized I had made an assumption that a room would be easily available; but, I realized that I was not in control of this issue. However, the university had private rooms where members of faculty mentor students, and the administrative assistant arranged for use of one mentoring room as so long as there was no conflict with students' mentoring sessions. Since it was nearly the end of the academic year, the mentoring sessions were few and I had the use of one room for all the interview sessions, ensuring that participants were subjected to a similar interview environment. If I were to plan for another research study, I would make sure of availability of such facility well in advance, especially during the project planning stage. I have, therefore, learned that it is important to take care of all the details of the project and assess their feasibility well in advance.

As a program developer, I wanted to ensure diversity of student participants in terms of gender, academic programs pursued, and the activities of the CSP. Ensuring diversity was difficult, because participation was voluntary, so it took me time to have at least one participant to represent each school. There were more females than males (3:1)

who volunteered to participate in the study, which did not reflect the gender proportion in student population at X University (roughly 1:1). Additionally, as a project developer, I had to identify codes and relevant themes from data analysis, aligning initial codes to the conceptual framework so as to come up with meaningful themes, which ensured that the findings were meaningful to the reader. Therefore, I read the transcribed data several times, developed codes, and aligned the themes to the conceptual framework. I finally came up with four appropriate themes that directed the results for the doctoral study. I found the theme development process interesting. It was for me, the most challenging aspect of the doctoral study, but in the process I came to appreciate qualitative research study.

### **Leadership and Change**

Higher education institutions have been called upon to prepare its graduates to be civically engaged community members, and community service is a common strategy that educators have adopted to stimulate civic engagement in students (Prentice, 2011). Leaders in higher education have established their presence in the communities as institutions that provide holistic education and work to uplift the lives of humankind (Zivkovic, 2013). It is expected that the university leadership will understand that institutional change efforts on community service must not be mere rhetoric, but it must be reflected in the way the university collaborates with the community (Doberneck et al., 2011). The university leadership will appreciate that effectiveness of the required CSP is evidenced on its impact on students' attitudes to be philanthropic from students'

perspectives to affect positive social change. For a CSP to be successful, the leadership must ensure that it is reflected in the mission and strategic plans of the institution (Jacoby, 2003); students must be encouraged to reflect on their activities in terms of personal development, content learning, and a sense of civic responsibility, addressing community needs through service (Stewart & Alrutz, 2012).

My sense of responsibility as a leader in quality assurance in higher education was enhanced as a result of this doctoral process; it has been useful to me as the chair to the technical working group of HAQAA, which was developing harmonized standards and guidelines for quality assurance in higher education in Africa. Additionally, as a member of the board of governors of a university in Kenya, I will influence policy direction that promote community service by students. I will take a leadership role in community service by passing the same information to friends who I know will respond positively, leveraging on the trust they have in me. However, before I do that I will identify the main problems of the chosen communities, undertake critical analysis of the situations, and make a decision on what type of contribution would be most effective and sustainable. The opportunities to help the needy are available in Kenya, and I will rally support for such homes. As a freelance consultant in quality assurance in higher education, and having been a head of department at the quality assurance agency, I will continue to offer my leadership skills in the area of quality assurance in higher education in helping universities to strengthen their quality culture.

### **Analysis of Self as Scholar**

I had over four years of my doctoral study to critically think about my personal development as a scholar. Pursuing a doctoral study was something I had put off for some time, because I could not imagine how I could move from research in the field of veterinary medicine to undertaking scholarly research in the field of education. At some point, I really wondered if I could do it, especially when I was challenged with the science of conceptual frameworks and theories of experiential learning, but the more I read, the more I realized I was already practicing some of these concepts and theories in auditing universities for quality assurance. Walden University gave me the opportunity to undertake adult learning through e-learning, where I could use my personal attributes and skills I had gathered through years of service at the quality assurance agency as coordinator of accreditation and quality audit activities. At Walden University, I was encouraged by the faculty to always draw from my work experiences and to challenge and analyze issues from different perspectives.

One area where I had marked improvement was my ability to produce scholarly work, through interrogating research studies, and critically analyzing them before use. This enhanced my intellectual capability, writing skills, and applied research skills that I am already using in my consultancy work, and in providing policy direction on research as a member of the board of governors of a university. The practice of completing many assignments and reading the works of other scholars contributed to my academic growth



with support from professors at Walden University, various academic committees, and webinars provided by Walden University writing center, and the Walden library.

I enhanced my skills and appreciation of e-learning as a delivery mode. I was central to the development of the standards and guidelines for open, distance and e-learning (ODEL) for the Commission for University Education; this is one of the reasons why I chose e-learning mode of delivery for my doctor of education study. The delivery mode has helped me appreciate and fully understand the standards and guideline of ODeL. I believe that students learn better through this delivery mode (if it is professionally implemented) because of the self-discipline, time management, good planning, and looking for information and challenging them. Consequently, I encouraged a former colleague at the commission, who also registered in the EdD program at Walden University. In the field of consultancy, the use of technology is important because it saves time and cost of travelling. The information communication technology skills and leadership skills I have gained in the process of my journey through the program has been useful to me in my current work as the chair of the technical working group, working online with members from diverse regions of Africa and Europe.

#### **Analysis of Self as Practitioner**

The motivating factor for me to pursue the doctor of education in higher education leadership was to understand the significance of the third arm of university education, community service at X University, because it had a specific objective of fostering a culture and habit of concern for those with need. As a practitioner in quality

assurance in higher education, and a member of the board of governors of a university, assessment of CSP at X University informed my professional work that community service by students is important for students' holistic development and growth (Stewart & Alrutz, 2012); it is a tool that can be used to affect positive social change in the community. The findings drawn from the participant's responses indicated that, it is fulfilling to volunteer to provide service to those in need; that community service is the business of everybody in order to have a just society. Consequently, I was challenged to play an active role in community service. The findings from the study, therefore, helped me to appreciate that for community service to be successful in a university environment, it should be encouraged at early levels of education system.

Additionally, the doctoral studies improved my understanding and appreciation of open and distance e-learning (ODEL), and the standards and guidelines for its quality assurance. I have taken this understanding into the development of the harmonized standards and guidelines for higher education in Africa.

### **Analysis of Self as Project Developer**

The doctoral study project gave me an opportunity to develop a research idea from conception to actualization. In order to complete my doctoral study, I had used the following skills: planning, interview, analysis, synthesis, writing, research, organizational, and time management skills. The development process for achieving each milestone of the study required my total commitment and time management, and sticking to the plans and deadlines for achievement of various tasks and milestones. Designing the

project was challenging at the beginning because, the structure and direction of the research that was dependent on my personal efforts. This required diligence and patience on my part. For example, it was important that I was realistic in my planning and allowed flexibility in terms of achieving the milestones, particularly in arranging for the one-to-one interviews with participants. I learned to be flexible and reassessed and changed semester plans and doctoral study plans. I was patient and understanding, and accommodated students' schedules, making last minute changes without running into frenzy mode. It was, fulfilling to me as I successfully achieved each milestone in the approval of the prospectus, proposal, and the final doctoral study.

### **The Project's Potential Impact on Social Change**

There was potential that the findings of the project would have positive social change at community level. From the interview responses, I gathered that the required CSP had several positive learning experiences for students and the communities. For students, the positive impact included developing a sense of humility, trust, patience, and appreciation of people from different backgrounds and cultures (Johnson, 2013). The CSP it influenced students' attitudes to be concerned for the needy in the society, and many students continued to volunteer in helping the needy as part of their contribution to society, thereby developing a sense of philanthropy (Martinez & Wolverton, 2009); many students were engaged in community service as a part of giving back to society. This evaluation study confirmed to X University that the required CSP was meeting the stated goals for which it was established, to develop in students a sense of philanthropy and to

produce holistic graduates. The communities to which X University students provide service benefitted, will continue to benefit as students continue to undertake the required community service. There is the possibility that X University graduates will continue with philanthropic works into their career lives and affect positive social change. In the evaluation report, I have made recommendations on how the X University can further improve the effectiveness of the program , which if adopted will benefit students, the university and partnering communities.

When X University graduates go to the field, and they have the philanthropic attitude, and they continue with the spirit of community service, it is probable that they will affect positive social change. Additionally, if other universities learn from X University's experience, they will improve effectiveness of their CSPs. The Kenya government might commission further studies on community service that could in the future end up in a requirement for required community service across all universities, to ensure that university graduates are sensitive to community needs and develop the spirit of philanthropy (Prohaska, 2013; Tumuti et al., 2013). The Kenya Government may develop policies and introduce community service at early stages of education to ensure that Kenyans develop a culture and spirit of community service as is in the U.S., where it is done from primary school level to university level (Spring et al., 2008). If community service is practiced in all educational institutions then it is possible that the impact will be greater and positive social change will be far reaching.

### **Implications, Applications, and Direction for Future Research**

The evaluation study and the project added an additional research on the benefits of community service from students' perspectives, how it influences their attitude to be philanthropic, and how it fosters a culture and habit of concern for the needy in the society. It has confirmed to X University that the program is likely to have positive social change. The recommendations in the evaluation report can be used as additional source of background information for first-year students at X University before they proceed with their required CSP assignment. It will be valuable information to the program coordinators for the improvement of the implementation of the program as suggested by student participants.

Students had a positive opinion about the required CSP at X University; they offered suggestions on areas which can be improved to make the program more effective. One of the limitations of the study was the small sample taken from one university out of 68 university institutions in Kenya. Similar investigations should be undertaken on community service in other universities. However, there is the possibility that the results of such studies may not be similar to those of X University because CSP may not be implemented in the same manner.

The long term impact of community service learning had not been fully investigated, so there was need for further research to understand whether the philanthropic spirit was sustained through career life of students; this can be done by extending the investigation to alumni in the industry (Carson & Domangue, 2010).

Further research should be done to assess students' perceptions on community service before and after participation in the community service to determine the degree of impact (Byers & Gray, 2012). Similarly, survey research should be done to differentiate community service programs from outreach or extension programs to determine if they have similar impacts as the required CSP at X University (O'Meara et al., 2011).

### **Conclusion**

In Section 4, I reflected on various aspects of the project, as well as my personal development as a scholar, researcher, and program developer. I indicated the potential impact of the study on positive social change, its implication and future research areas. The results indicated that the required CSP is an effective strategy for fostering in students a culture and habit of concern and philanthropy towards the needy. Students who participated in CSP in their first-year of study were likely to continue with community service activities in their communities. Students had various learning experiences, they: (a) developed self-awareness and came to terms with the realities of communities around them; they learned to be humble and patient; (b) learned to respect other peoples' backgrounds and cultures; (c) developed organizational and leadership skills; and (d) linked academics to service. The CSP influenced students' attitude to be philanthropic towards the needy in society. To improve the effectiveness of the program, X University should stress the significance of interaction and ensure there was a slot for interacting with other workers at the CBA sites during community service. First-year students should be provided with background information on community service, and 4<sup>th</sup>-year students

who have undertaken the required CSP should be given opportunity to share their experiences with new first-year students at a formal forum before students proceed on community service. This can ensure that first-year students have a positive approach to community service, which will likely enhance and sustain the culture of philanthropy in students. There was need for further research to assess the long-term impact of community service on students own philanthropy. Evaluation is a good practice for ensuring that community service programs meet the intended objectives for which they are established. Community service by students is an integral part of giving back to society that helps to develop in students a culture of philanthropy; it is a tool for affecting positive social change.

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Appendix A: The Project

**Evaluation Report for  
X University on  
The Required Community Service / Community Based Attachment**

**Prepared by: Rispa A. Odongo**

**September 2017**

## **Executive Summary**

The use of community service to promote learning and civic responsibility in higher education has been recognized and widely documented since the 1980's. However, X University had not assessed effectiveness of the required community service program from students' perspectives since it was initiated in 2004. The purpose of the evaluation report was to present the findings and recommendations of a doctoral evaluation study on the required community service program (CSP), referred as community-based attachment (CBA) by X University. The evaluation analyzed perceptions of 4<sup>th</sup>-year students who had undertaken the required community based attachment during their first-year of study as the basis upon which analysis was done. Three guiding research questions directed the data collection towards understanding the impact of the required community service program on fostering in students a culture and habit of helping people in need and influencing students' attitudes to be philanthropic. The data for evaluation was collected using interviews with 4<sup>th</sup>-year students. The qualitative data from students' responses was synthesized into four main themes using Kolb and Kolb's (2008) four-fold conceptual framework on experiential learning that identified students' perceptions on the program. The evaluation study addressed the following questions: What are students' perceptions on their involvement in identifying CSP activities? How do students describe their experiences with the CSP? How do students describe the influence of the CSP on their attitude towards being philanthropic? The results indicated that the program was effective in:



1. Making students aware of the needs of society around them;
2. Facilitating development of social, spiritual and academic skills which are important for holistic development of students;
3. Helping students to appreciate the importance of giving back to society; and
4. Initiating students' self-awareness and changes their attitudes to be philanthropic towards the needy in society.

The findings of this evaluation report are to be used to provide feedback to the university, especially program coordinators, for improvement of effectiveness of the program.

### **Description of Community-based Attachment Program**

The required CSP at X University is taken by students during the long holidays at the end of the first-year of study. It is designed to ensure application of student's skills, gifts, and resources to enhance the quality of life of people in need. Students volunteer in activities that focus on providing services off-campus to the needy in different sectors of the community. A minimum of 200 hours must be completed at one service site.

Specifically, the CSP was meant to help students to apply their skills and knowledge to societal problems, enable them to: build capacity for learning and leadership; develop personally, professionally and academically; and understand themselves, their community and their role in the community. The required CSP was also created to fulfill part of the university's mission, to provide service to the society. The spirit of helping others was the reason the community service was made a requirement for graduation, to encourage students to serve others in their daily lives. Consequently, the

program aims to create an awareness of the needs of others and to develop more compassionate students who are able to respond to the plight of the needy; and to acquaint themselves with career and professional-skill-volunteering possibilities in the non-profit sector.

Students are encouraged to discuss with their advisors, early in their university experience, options for fulfilling the community service requirement. During the service students are expected to: (a) collect a Letter of Introduction from the Faculty; (b) update the details of their internship in the online system within the first week; (c) familiarize themselves with the CBA List of sites where students have previously completed their attachments (this is not exhaustive, and students go to organization not on the list by request from school coordinators); and (d) download guidelines for report writing and present the community service attachment report to the coordinator within two weeks of the second-year course work. Late submission of the attachment report results in a maximum score of 20 out of 50.

### **The Program Evaluation**

Since 2004 when the program was initiated, the university had not undertaken a qualitative study of the program from students' perspectives. I used formative evaluation through one-to-one interviews of students who had undertaken community engagement during their first-year of study. The purpose of the evaluation study was to determine the effectiveness of the required CSP from students' perspective in influencing their attitudes towards being philanthropic towards the needy in society and thereby affect positive

social change. I received approval from the university and consulted with school/program coordinators before interviewing students. I used formative evaluation, because it allowed me to gather data through interviews that were reflective of the perceptions and experiences of students, in order to provide feedback to those responsible for making changes in the program. The 4<sup>th</sup>-year students who had undertaken their CSP by end of first-year, and who had positive experiences, were invited to provide their perceptions on the program. I used an interview protocol to collect data from 4<sup>th</sup>-year students at X University who had completing their community service by end of first-year of study. Data collection from 4<sup>th</sup>-year students was on the premise that they would have had time to reflect on their experiences, thereby enabling me to determine whether the experiences were sustained through university life.

Purposeful sampling procedure allowed me to select participants who would be able to provide information that would offer a deeper level of understanding of the required CSP at X University. Fourth year students were invited via e-mail to volunteer to participate in the evaluation study. Only students who had had positive experience with the program were interviewed. A briefing session was held to inform the participants of the following: (a) the purpose of the research; (b) participation was voluntary and they could opt out at any point; (c) data collection would be through audio recorded one-to-one interview with the researcher; (d) the research benefits and the possible minor discomfort that might be associated with the study; (e) there would be no compensation for participating in the interviews; (f) and participants' confidentiality and privacy would

be respected. Each participant signed a consent form to confirm voluntary participation. The same information was contained in the e-mail requesting students to volunteer to participate in the research study.

The data generated for the evaluation study were from responses to interviews of 13 4<sup>th</sup>-year students, comprising five males and eight females, drawn from the five schools, commerce, law, information technology, financial economics, and hospitality and tourism. The students did their community based attachments in children's homes, kindergarten for needy children, and church cum Sunday schools, homes for the elderly, hospitals, and teaching in primary schools in slum areas.

I used a semi-structured interview protocol, which contained pre-determined interview questions that addressed the three research questions. However, the interview questions were flexible and allowed use of probing questions to clarify participants' responses. Data analysis was carried out using thematic analysis driven by Kolb and Kolb's (2008) four-fold conceptual framework on experiential learning. The findings and recommendations proposed in this evaluation report were based on the four themes that were identified in the study as outlined here: (a) support for effective community service program; (b) students' personal growth and development; (c) giving back to society; and (d) students' self-awareness and change in attitude towards the needy. I took necessary steps to ensure accuracy and credibility of the data and findings, and no discrepancies were found from interview responses by participants.

### **Findings of Evaluation Study**

The findings from the evaluation study were based on students' perception on the required community service. The findings indicated that the required community service at X University had positive impact on students by influencing their attitude towards being philanthropic towards the needy in society. The findings of the evaluation study were guided by the four themes as follows:

1. *Support for effective community service program and challenges*

With respect to support for effective CSP, students reported that making the CBA mandatory was effective in ensuring that students engaged in the community service, otherwise most students would not do it. Doing the CSP during first-year of study was important in shaping students' character. At first students felt forced to do it, but after going through the activity, they came to appreciate its significance. They realized that the process of identifying the sites for community service at needy places was helpful in creating self-awareness, and for students' personal growth. Students further indicated that, it required discipline to do physical, or manual work, this was good in instilling positive social values in them. Supervision by the university and by the staff at the CSP sites were critical in ensuring students were exposed to appropriate experiences.

These findings were consistent with the university's mission and objective of the required CSP which is developing in students, positive attitudes towards the needy and solving their problems. The findings were also consistent with the definition of community service by Seider et al. (2012). However, a few students were frustrated

during the first week of the attachment in trying to engage and understand the value of the program, but this became clearer as the service progressed. The overall strength of the program can be attributed to the support provided by both the university and the community site.

## 2. *Students' personal growth and development*

In terms of personal growth and development, students reported that participation in the required community service facilitated development of their social, spiritual, and academic skills, such as leadership and organizational skills, experiences which are important for the holistic development of the student. While they developed leadership skills, students came to terms with the reality of the society around them, how people live, and realized that not everyone is privileged; some people struggle to get the basic needs of life such as food. Students learned that community service is a humbling experience; and learned to be patient and not to judge people before interacting with them, consistent with the work of earlier researchers (Aflandilian & Dart, 2013; Lattanzi et al., 2011; Prohaska, 2013). Students learned to trust, appreciate and respect other peoples' cultures and backgrounds, also reported by Johnson (2013). The experience instilled in students the value of hard work and evoked the feelings of compassion and empathy towards the needy and their situations. In particular, the community service helped students develop new ways of thinking; it made them come to terms with reality of the community around them; made them humble, created in them a sense of compassion and empathy, patience and sensitivity to other peoples' cultures, as reported

by other researchers (Aftandilian & Dart, 2013; Johnson, 2013; Lattanzi et al., 2011; Prohaska, 2013). Lastly, it enhanced students understanding of the linkage between academia and community service, consistent with Franz, Childers, and Sandelin (2012).

In the process of giving service, students realized that not everyone working in community service sites was philanthropic. When community service was done for financial gain, it caused some frustration among the students, as reported by other researchers (Lardner, 2014; Leisey, 2012).

### 3. *Giving back to society/Gratitude.*

In terms of giving back to society, the community service helped students know what goes on in the society, while it helps society realize its goals through using available talent. Students realized that community service is a personal choice; but it is tough because it is about sacrifice; however, it makes sense in that it can change peoples' lives and make the world a better place. Students realized that community service is something necessary in a person's everyday life; it is a vital aspect in society that should be cultivated in all individuals. Community service should be everyone's social responsibility and business so that all become aware of everything that goes on in society. Students realized that community service helped them appreciate that, whatever one does to help others has a positive impact on community, thereby creating peace in society and gives people a sense of belonging. Students also realized that community service is not only giving in monetary and material terms, but it is also giving in terms of time and knowledge and talent; it is creating a difference in someone else's life, which gives a

feeling of fulfillment. The positive meanings students made of community service helped in preparing them for good citizenship as persons sensitive to others needs and welfare, which was consistent with the findings of Colby, et al. (2003). Community service can, therefore, ensure that the community is well taken care of in terms of development and in terms of growth.

4. *Students' self-awareness and change in attitude towards the needy*

In terms of self-awareness, students reported having become aware of various social issues, and realized that it was important to understand people without judging them; that a person needs the community to succeed. As students helped people, they felt fulfilled and appreciated, and they developed a spirit that was willing to give without expecting anything in return (Carson & Domangue, 2010). In the process students came to appreciate the university's mission of producing holistic persons, and making them better human beings and better persons.

In terms of change in attitude, after participating in the required community service, students continued to be engaged in helping the needy in various activities. Specifically, some students realized that one can change somebody's life by doing small acts, such as, just being there for them and talking to them, cleaning their rooms and cooking for them, therefore, some students continued providing services to the community sites. Furthermore, students realized that in helping others, they got something in return and became more willing to give, and that was when the spirit of philanthropy was stimulated. Students reported having experienced change in personal



growth; in comprehension, in perspective, and change in attitude towards developing a philanthropic spirit. Students continued to provide help to those in need in their own capacities. The CSP, therefore, helped students to develop positive meanings to community service, which prepared them for good citizenship as persons who are sensitive to the needs of others and their welfare. During the service, some students realized that some beneficiaries tended to view community service as a right and so they did not appreciate the assistance provided to them, which frustrates the idea of community service being a tool that encourages sharing and brings equity in society. This was consistent with the findings from other previous studies (Lardner, 2014; Leisey, et al., 2012; Seider, 2012; Vergee, 2010).

### **Recommendations**

There were other recommendations from the study which are related to the four themes, and which I have proposed for consideration by X University for improvement of the CBA. However, I have suggested some recommendations which are not necessarily related to the themes that emerged from the research study, and that may not be specific to the case of X University, but they can enhance the impact of community service programs in Kenyan. These recommendations focus on the program options, expanding the program to other courses, pre- and post-events of CSP/CBA, and academic linkage.

**CSP/CBA option.** Students reported that there were some children's homes in Nairobi city, where students undertake their CSP, which were modernized and were unlikely to provide students with real challenges of the needy, yet there were other

children's homes which were desperate for assistance and so students' help would have more impact on such homes. Additionally, two students seemed to have had difficulties in finding appropriate community sites for engagement. The university should carefully assess the CSP sites chosen by students, which are outside the provided list, to ensure that the sites meet the criteria of neediness to enable all students to have the full experience of what it means to be needy.

**Pre- and post- events of community engagement.** Before students proceed for community engagement they should be given some background information on community service to help appreciate the value of community service, this can improve their attitudes towards the required community service, especially at the initial stages, so that students do not have to wonder why they were being forced to give back to society, imagining if there was something behind it. This was consistent with one of the principles of good practice in service learning that, participants should enter the experience with sufficient foundation to support a successful experience (NSEE, 2009: 2013). To support the idea, the university can facilitate 4<sup>th</sup>-year students who have completed the community service to share their experiences with first-year students in an open forum, possibly during orientation, to ensure that first-year students understand the importance of community service before they start the engagement. Although interaction is part of the program objective at X University, its importance should be emphasized by ensuring there is a time slot during the community service engagement when students can have formal interactions with the people working at the CSP site, for purposes of sharing

experiences. This will enable students to have deeper understanding of people and their real lives and situations and cultures.

**Expand programming of community service.** To reap the full benefits of community service nationally, and to encourage giving back to society as a social responsibility, I am proposing that, through collaboration among government departments, industry, and financial institutions, strategies be found that promote community service at all levels of education in order to inculcate the spirit of philanthropy in students for wider social impact. The X University is encouraged to share its experiences on the required CSP with other universities in Kenya, who may implement similar CSPs for grater positive social change.

**Linkage between community service and academic courses.** While some students could easily link the CSP to academic program they were pursuing, a number of student participants could not, because this was not the main objective of the CSP, since students had an industrial attachment taken in third-year of study. It is suggested that X University should encourage students to always try to connect community service to academic programs, to encourage them to be interrogative and analytical.

**Further research.** Literature review showed that further research was needed in addressing the long-term career effects of service learning (Carson & Domangue, 2010; Pike at al., 2011). I am, therefore, suggesting that the X University could use the findings from the evaluation study to enter into collaboration with other organizations for an extensive study to assess if the philanthropic spirit is sustained through career life of

students, by extending the study to its graduates in the industry. Additionally, the university can undertake a study to investigate students' impression on community service before and after participating in the CBA to determine the degree of impact.

### **Conclusion**

As part of expanding students experience and philanthropic spirit, other universities in Kenya can learn from X University's experience and improve the impact of their community service programs. Higher education stakeholders and policy makers, such as the Ministry of Education, Commission for University Education, the National Commission on Science Technology and Innovation, after reading the results of the study, may appreciate that the required community service at X University is changing students' lives, and is making positive social change, and is meeting the objectives of university education and aspirations of the of the government. This may lead to finding strategies that encourage community service at all levels of education in Kenya.

## Appendix B: Interview Protocol

Flexible Interview Guide for Students

Time of Interview:

Date of Interview: October 2016

Place of Interview: X University

Researcher / Interviewer: RispaAchieng' Odongo

Interviewee / Participant: A

### **RQ 1: What are students' perceptions on their involvement in identifying CSP activities?**

#### Issue 1: CSP Context Issue

- 1.1 Explain to me why you were involved in this community service program, and when you got involved?
- 1.2 *What was your experience with identification of the activity of the CSP? Explain the role of each person involved in the process. How did you feel about the process?*
- 1.3 What would you describe as a typical day at the community service site?
- 1.4 Describe to me what you considered your best learning experience at the site.

### **RQ 2: How do students describe their experience with the CSP?**

#### Issue 2: Students' Learning Experience with the CSP

- 2.1 *How would you describe your experiences with the CSP activity?*
- 2.2 Can you tell me a story that you remember from the CSP that you still think about today?"
- 2.3. What did you learn by being involved in this experience? What did you learn about yourself and about other people? How did you learn it?
- 2.4 How did your participation in the CSP affect your understanding of the course material of your academic program you are pursuing at the university?

- 2.5. Tell me about a time during your community service experience when you thought, “this is what university education is about”.

**RQ 3: How do students describe the influence of the CSP on their attitude towards being philanthropic and affecting positive change?**

Issue 3: Students’ Self-awareness

- 3.1 *What is your perception of how the CSP has influenced your attitude towards being philanthropic and affecting positive social change in the community?*
- 3.2 Tell me about the most significant aspect(s) of your CSP experience.
- 3.3 Tell me about a time during your service-learning experience when you were confused or frustrated.
- 3.4 How have you changed because of your involvement in this CSP experience?

Issue 4: Overall Students’ Meanings

- 4.1 *Following up on what you said about your experiences with the CSP and personal growth, how do you understand community service in your life? What sense does it make to you?*
- 4.2 Given what you have explained during this interview, where do you see yourself in the society in future?
- 4.3 Is there anything else you would like to share to help me understand your perspective of the CSP?

## Appendix C: Approval From X University



30 January, 2017

Rispa Achieng' Odongo,  
Doctoral Student,  
EdD - Higher Education Leadership,  
ID A00446637,  
Walden University,  
USA.

Email: [risiachieng@yahoo.com](mailto:risiachieng@yahoo.com)

Dear Risper,


**RE: AUTHORIZATION TO COLLECT DATA AT [REDACTED] UNIVERSITY**

The Research Office at [REDACTED] University has granted you the authorization to collect data from students within the University. The authorization is effective from February 1<sup>st</sup>, 2017 to April 28<sup>th</sup>, 2017. The data collection is for your PhD Research study entitled "*Students Perception of a Required Community Service Programme*".

Please note that this is an administrative authorization and does not constitute an ethical approval of your research.

Please sign the declaration form binding you to the ethical use of the data you will access from [REDACTED] University (meant strictly for the purposes of your study).

Yours sincerely

  
Rafael Da Silva  
**Deputy Vice Chancellor - Research & Innovation**

**APPENDIX 1: CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION DECLARATION**

I, \_\_\_\_\_, solemnly declare that I will NOT willingly divulge confidential information/data collected from \_\_\_\_\_ University without due consent from \_\_\_\_\_ University. I will strictly utilize the information for the purposes of my academic research.

Sign: \_\_\_\_\_

ID/ Passport No.: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: 30<sup>th</sup> January 2017

**APPENDIX 2: INFORMATION SHARING DECLARATION**

I, \_\_\_\_\_, solemnly declare that I will share the Research Results of the study by depositing a copy of the final research report at the \_\_\_\_\_ University Research Office.

Sign: \_\_\_\_\_

ID/ Passport No.: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: 30<sup>th</sup> January 2017



## Appendix D: Student Recruitment Script

March 2017

Dear X University Fourth Year Student:

My name is Rispa Odongo and I am a doctorate student at the Richard W. Riley College of Education and Leadership, Walden University, USA. This letter is to request for your participation in an educational research study. The purpose of the study is to have a deeper understanding of how fourth year students at X University perceive the effectiveness of the required community service program on their lives. I believe that the study may help X University to improve effectiveness of its community service program; and other universities in Kenya may also benefit by improving effectiveness of their own communities service programs using X University's experiences.

The major aim of the study is to provide an account of your own experience with community service program in your own words, and its impact on your own attitude towards helping people with need. If you are interested in participating in the study you will be required to participate in a one-to-one interview lasting not longer than one and a half hours. An additional follow-up interview session in person, lasting about 30 minutes, may be required to clarify comments made during the first interview session. Both interviews will be audio recorded. Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary and you can withdraw at any point, yet very much appreciated.

I am looking forward to discussing with you and sharing your experience as part of this research study. I will observe strict confidentiality so that you may freely discuss your

experiences. Any personal identifiable information collected during the interviews will be kept strictly confidential and stored in password protected computer file. Only aggregated data will be used in the study report. Participating in this study would not pose risk to your safety or wellbeing, except there may be minor discomforts such as fatigue or stress. If you agree to participate, please email me your contact information, and you may contact me if you have any questions on XXXXXXXX.

There are no direct monetary benefits to you for participating in this study.

Respectfully,

Rispa A. Odongo

## Appendix E: Guidelines for CBA

 University  
 Community Based Attachment

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Last Modified: November, 2016

### 1.1 What is Community Based Attachment?<sup>1</sup>

Community Based Attachment is the application of one's skills, gifts, and resources to enhance the quality of life of people in need. Students engage at the end of their 1st Year undergraduate course in volunteer activities that focus on providing services off-campus needed by different sectors of the community. 200 hours minimum must be completed at one service site.

### 1.2 Why Community Service?

Enhance faculty capacity for research and teaching; help students apply their skills and knowledge to societal problems; help students build capacity for learning and leadership; help students develop personally, professionally and academically; help students understand themselves, their community and their role.

### 1.3 Why is it a Graduation Requirement?

University is a leading not-for-profit private university operating in Kenya, which aims at serving the Kenyan society to the best of its ability. Part of its mission is to provide service to Society. It is in this spirit that the Community Service requirement was created and each student is required to serve others. Students are encouraged to discuss with their advisors, early in their university experience, the options for fulfilling the Community Service requirement.

### 1.4 Aim of CBA

1. To create an awareness of the needs of others and to develop more compassionate human beings who are able to respond to these needs.
2. To acquaint students with career and professional-skill-volunteering possibilities in the nonprofit sector.

### 1.5 Overview of CBA

At the end of their 1st year of undergraduate study, students participate and complete a minimum requirement of 200 hours at one service site. They must:

1. Collect an Introduction Letter from the Faculty Help desk.
2. Update the details of their internship in the online system within the first week.
3. The [CBA List](#) highlights where students have completed their attachments previously, but it is not exhaustive. If you have an organization not on the list, kindly consult with your Faculty attachment coordinator before you begin your attachment.

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<sup>1</sup> Retrieved from: (Muthoni, 2016)

4. Download the Report Guidelines and present the Attachment Report to the faculty attachment coordinator 2 weeks into your 2nd year course work.
5. All reports submitted after the deadline will get a maximum score of 20 out of 50. This is based on a percentage issued by the faculty/schools for all late projects with a maximum score of 40%.

### 1.6 CBA Course Code

<b>Faculty/School</b>	<b>Bachelors' Degree</b>	<b>Code</b>
<b>Commerce</b>	Commerce	CBA 1200
	Leadership and Management	CBA 1200
<b>Finance &amp; Applied Economics</b>	BBS Actuarial Science	CBA 1200
	BBS Finance	
	BBS Financial Economics	
<b>Information Technology</b>	Business Information Technology	CBA 1200
	Informatics	CBA 1200
	Telecommunication	CBA 1200
<b>Tourism &amp; Hospitality</b>	Tourism Management	CBA 1200
	Hospitality Management	

### 1.7 CBA Guidelines

The CBA experience provides students the opportunity to:

1. Interact with people from various cultures and life situations and address societal issues that challenge the community.
2. Engage with non-profit organizations.

The CBA experience is: separate from service required by internship or another course; directly beneficial to the community; and, it is done for and under the auspices of a nonprofit organization accredited by the University.

The CBA experience does not involve: compensation; counting hours spent sleeping, traveling or training; direct political campaigning; participating in events such as fundraisers where the student does not interact directly with the non-profit organization. Working for any private individual or family not directly associated with a nonprofit agency is not eligible.

## 1.8 CBA Outcomes

1. Acquire skills in learning from experience (to observe, ask questions, synthesize, problem solve)
2. Recognize and address the needs of the community.
3. Add a positive value to your university experience.
4. Develop personally.
5. Build meaningful relationships with individuals in the community.
6. Believe that you have the ability to make a difference.
7. Develop an understanding and compassion for people from various cultures and life situations.
8. Experience the satisfaction of doing something worthwhile for a community.
9. Learn to use your skills, talents, and knowledge to benefit others.
10. Better understand an organization's structure, goals and importance to the community.

## 1.9 CBA Rights and Responsibilities

### 1.9.1 Students

<b>Rights</b>	<b>Responsibilities</b>
Expect clear and appropriate assignments	Set up a service experience in a timely manner
Experience fulfilling work	Be persistent in your communication
Receive orientation and training	Be honest about goals, skills, limitations and motivations
Expect informed involvement with agency	Fulfill your commitment
Encounter safe and healthy working conditions	Maintain confidentiality
Have access to individuals to go to for help	Cooperate with staff
	Be flexible and open-minded
	Stay informed
	Ask for help when needed
	Understand your role

### 1.9.2 Community Service Partners

<b>Rights</b>	<b>Responsibilities</b>
Expect support for your site and its personnel	Provide fulfilling and challenging tasks
Expect students to be responsible, flexible, cooperative, and to fulfill their commitment.	Require students to attend orientation and training
	Provide safe and healthy working conditions
	Offer adequate supervision and help when needed
	Complete paperwork (service log and evaluation)
	Inform Faculty attachment coordinator of concerns or issues
	Expose students to issues related to your site
	Reflect with students on what they are learning from their service experience.

### 1.10 CBA Information and Forms

#### 1.10.1 Online Attachment System

The student logs into the system using their AMS credentials. After you login, enter the attachment details: location, contact and activity details. Confirm that you enter the correct email of your host supervisor because that is the email that will be used to send your assessment form to him/her.

After you enter the attachment details, the [REDACTED] Attachment coordinator will view the activities you filled in and either approve or reject them. If they are approved, you will be assigned supervisor from [REDACTED] to come visit you at your attachment place. If they are rejected, you will be notified immediately. You can visit site from here.

#### 1.10.2 Report Guidelines

Student comments are solicited at the end of the Attachment regarding the service and service site. The Guidelines will contain the Service Log or Daily Diary of a record of hours served (200 hours minimum) and specific activities each visit. Form is typically kept on-site. If a site requires a separate sign-in, the student should ask who will fill out the Service Log.

You can download the report guidelines here.

## Appendix F: Initial Codes Matrix

Initial Codes	Concrete Experience	Reflective Observation	Abstract Conceptualization	Active Experimentation
Students' responsibilities in making a good choice	X	X		
Positive university-student collaboration	X	X		
Positive student's view towards CBA	X	X		
Negative student's view on the possibility of pretending	X	X		
Positive student's view towards CBA	X	X		
Students' responsibilities in making a good choice	X	X		
Character building		X	X	
Discipline and hard work	X		X	
Instilling the institutional values and norms		X		X
Defining the CBA objectives and intentions: giving back to the society				X
Urge to give back to the society as a result of previous personal experience		X	X	
External support from family members in getting the sites, relatives and friends	X	X		



Internal support from the university in choosing the sites	X	X		
Recommended sites for the CBA.	X	X		
		X		
Activities carried out at the sites				
Supervision strategy and expectations from the students	X	X	X	
Lack of internal support from the university (supervision)	X	X		
Perception change concerning the society			X	X
Positive attitudes from the students (acquisition of new skills)		X	X	X
Change of attitude		X	X	X
Confusion and lack of awareness on the program's intentions	X		X	
Virtue of patience		X	X	
Positive attitude in learning about other people			X	X
Kindness and responsibility			X	X
Positive attitude towards learning about the challenges faced by the communities		X	X	X
Developing strong relationships and networks			X	X
Infighting from the fellow staff members at the sites	X	X		
Humility		X	X	X
Positive attitude to embrace new skills			X	X
Embracing the need to share		X	X	
Being positive in acquiring new life skills			X	X

The need to give back to society and self-correction		X		X
Adapting to new environments to overcome the challenges		X	X	X
Helping the needy				X
Developing new traits			X	
Failing to create a link to the academic programs	X		X	
Linking CBA to the academic programs	X		X	
Passion for change (a self-realization)		X	X	
Appreciating need for patience and understanding		X	X	
Report writing (a new skill acquired)		X	X	X
Organization skill (a new skill acquired)		X	X	X
Humility, teamwork and developing stronger relationships			X	X
Generosity and kindness			X	X
Humility, teamwork and developing stronger relationships			X	X
Creating self-awareness		X	X	X
Appreciating the fact that everyone do not have equal opportunities		X	X	X
Exploitation of the weak in the society by the rich	X	X		
Failing to acquire relevant skills			X	X
Understanding the behaviors of the children		X		X
Developing self-awareness and abilities			X	X

Passion to help those in need			X	X
Appreciating the need for the project			X	X
Avoiding pre-judgment		X	X	
Listening and paying attention to others		X	X	
Simplicity and sacrifice. This results in sympathy			X	X
Change of perspective and self-awareness		X		X
Cooking (a new skill acquired)	X			X
Developing existing skills and knowledge about the society			X	X
Self-growth and development		X	X	X
Learning more about the communities and the value of human life		X	X	X
Making moral decisions			X	x
Learning more about the society, and the humanitarian activities		X	x	X
Positive results from the CBA program		X	X	X
Students giving back to the society			X	X
Impact of the CBA: students being empathetic			X	X
Being overworked	X	X		
Frustrations from the supervisors	X	X		