TRANSFORMING STUDENT PERCEPTIONS: THE CASA GUATEMALA EXPERIENCE

by

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ABSTRACT

Teaching students to have a "global perspective" is one of the key aspects of global education. Curriculum used to develop such a perspective at the high school level rarely involves experiential cross-cultural programs which take students to the "Third World". One such program, the Casa Guatemala Project in British Columbia's Richmond School District, sends a small group of grade eleven and twelve students to Guatemala each year for two weeks to work at a children's orphanage. This study looks at how the experience transforms the students' perceptions of Guatemala, North America and themselves.

This investigation focuses on the substance and dynamics of changes in the students' perceptions using Mezirow's (1991) theory of the transformative dimensions of adult learning. The research follows six students as they go through the program from September of 1992 to April of 1993. Semi-structured and open-ended interviews, student journals, researcher observations and available documentation suggest that the students' perceptions and worldview are altered as a result of three key dynamics: a) conflict and dilemma, b) selective perception, and c) group dynamics and dialogue. When the students return to Canada they experience an intense period of alienation from their own community and society as they attempt to comprehend, assimilate and accommodate solutions to new understandings generated by the experience. The possible benefits of structured preparation and debriefing sessions are explored, as are implications for other experiential learning programs of a similar nature.
TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract ii

Table of Contents iv

Acknowledgements v

Chapter One: The Problem
   1.1 Introduction 1
   1.2 The Research Population and Program Student Selection Process 4
   1.3 The Problem 7
   1.4 Overview of the Research Methodology 9
      1.4.1 Semi-structured and Open-ended Interviews 9
      1.4.2 Student Journals 14
      1.4.3 Field Observations 15
      1.4.4 Documentation 15
      1.4.5 Summary of the Research Methodology 16
   1.5 The Role of the Researcher in the Study 17
   1.6 Towards a Theory of Experiential Learning in Young Adulthood 19
   1.7 Chapter Outlines 24

Chapter Two: Literature Review
   2.1 Introduction 27
   2.2 Sources of Literature 28
   2.3 Experiential Learning 29
   2.4 Citizenship Education 39
   2.5 Environmental Education 46
   2.6 Global Education 52
   2.7 Cross-Cultural Learning 58
   2.8 Discussion 63
   2.9 Conclusion 65

Chapter Three: History of the Casa Guatemala Project
   3.1 Introduction 67
   3.2 Origins and Early Years of Casa Guatemala (1979-1989) 68
   3.3 The Great Leap Forward: Launching the Trip to Guatemala (1989-1990) 79
   3.4 Expanding Horizons: A Period of Consolidation and Evaluation (1990-1992) 99
   3.5 Future Considerations for the Casa Guatemala Project 111

Chapter Four: The Students' Perceptions Prior to the Tour
   4.1 School Selection Process and Lead Up to the 1993 Tour 113
   4.2 The Students and their Perceptions Prior to Departure 116
      4.21 Linda Shaw: Social Status or Social Action 118
      4.22 Holly Range: Feminism and the Trumpet 123
4.23 Kaily Soila: On the Fast Track of Perceptual Change 127
4.24 Alice Gibson: An Adventure in Cross-Cultural Learning 133
4.25 Jane Lamb: Alienation and Social Action 138
4.26 Tim Long: Informing a Legal Career 143

4.3 Onward to Guatemala: Common Factors Affecting the Students' Perceptions 148

Chapter Five: The Journey Through Guatemala
5.1 Introduction: The First Steps Forward 154
5.2 Guatemala City: Just Another "North American" Town 156
5.3 Antigua: Learning About Life in Guatemala from the Tourist Beat 161
5.4 San Jose Chilli Juyu: The "Happy Poor" 166
5.5 Chichicastenango: The "Bargain Basement" of Guatemala 168
5.6 Tikal, Flores and the Camino Real: Temples, Poverty and Karaoke Bars 171
5.7 Round Two of Guatemala City: Deepening Reflections and Divisions 175
5.8 The Visit to a Baby Orphanage in Guatemala City 178
5.9 Casa Guatemala on the Rio Dulce: Gunboats, Mansions, Paint and Partnership 180
5.10 Livingston, Emilio and Casa Alianza: From Speeches to Glue Sniffers 192
5.11 Last Minute Reflections: The Students' Perceptions before the Journey Home 197
5.12 The Reception Back Home: Suntans, Gifts, Memories and Anger 203
5.13 Summary 215

Chapter Six: Conclusions
6.1 Change and the Students' Expectations 218
6.2 Critical Aspects of Transformation in the Students' Knowledge, Values and Perceptions 219
6.3 Conflict and Dilemma in Perceptual Change 222
6.4 Selective Perception 227
6.5 Group Dynamics and Dialogue 230
6.6 The Need For Preparation and Debriefing Sessions 232
6.7 Implications for Experiential Learning 237

Bibliography 240

Appendix A Semi-structured Interview Questions 247

Appendix B Letter of Permission 251
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This thesis is dedicated to the memory of my grandparents.

Jeff Stewart

March, 1994
Chapter One: The Problem

1.1 Introduction

The sixty kilometer road between the airport at Flores and the ruins of Tikal is, without doubt, one of the best maintained in Guatemala. The pavement cuts through the dense lowland jungle of the Peten and a myriad of small Campesino farmsteads and villages. Locals stare at our tour bus without much concern and, once we have passed, they quickly return to what previously occupied them. At either end of this well engineered highway the road reverts to the more common composition of dirt and gravel. This is poignantly obvious to us flying into the regional airport and even more on the fourteen hour bus ride from Guatemala City. At the northeastern corner of Lake Peten-Itza and half way along this first rate jungle path you can find the Westin Camino Real Tikal. It is a five star, international class hotel with rooms costing between $150 and $200 [U.S.] per night.

I was travelling with a group of twelve senior high school students and three teachers from Richmond, British Columbia, and an eighty-two-year-old physician from Australia. We arrived at the Camino Real that evening at about 5:00 pm. Most of us were drenched with sweat, tired, hungry and grumpy after a long day of touring the ruins of Tikal. On the way into the resort we had passed dozens of isolated peasant houses made of thatched palm roofs and dried cornstalk walls. In a patchy clearing near the hotel, several Maya children were playing soccer in their bare feet, using what appeared to be a worn out plastic ball. As the group reached the hotel many individuals experienced disbelief, anger and rising tension. The students wondered why they were staying in such affluent surroundings when all they had seen during the day were the homesteads of destitute peasants.

This was not the students' first glimpse of poverty in Guatemala. However, on this particular evening they confronted in full force the contradictions between extremes of
wealth and poverty on this planet. Perhaps more disturbingly they were realizing that they might be implicated in this global relationship. The group had come to this region of the "Third World" to learn about its culture and, most importantly, to support the work of a childrens' orphanage named Casa Guatemala. At home, in Richmond, the tour was viewed as a symbolic act of compassion, empathy and global civic duty. Yet, in the minds of these students this mission was being compromised by their stay in these lavish accommodations. The perceived distance between intent and action could not have been greater. The contradictions of the situation did not escape anyone on that bus. As the bus pulled up to the entrance of the hotel the students unloaded their luggage and the guide was promptly tipped. While checking in one student commented under her breath, "This is totally bogus. Like...what are we doing here?"

At this particular moment the students had been thrust headlong into a powerful ethical dilemma. The wealth that they possessed provided the opportunity to stay in opulent surroundings. The same could not be said of the parents and children they had just passed on the roadway into the Camino Real. The students firmly believed that they had come to Guatemala to demonstrate their solidarity with the people of "Third World". Their mission in this regard was concrete and clearly defined. They were in Guatemala to complete the work on an extension to the six room school house at the orphanage which had been made possible by the fundraising activities that they had participated in for the preceding four months. Despite all of this, however, they could not escape who and what they represented in the immediate context. They were the rich. They were the powerful.

Their reaction to this situation continued to change as the evening progressed. After quickly settling into their rooms, the students went down to the heated swimming pool, complete with a miniature waterfall. They were introduced to two families: one from the Vancouver area and another from Guatemala City. Both had come to the resort to get away
from the stress related to maintaining a very substantial standard of living. This day also
marked the eighteenth birthday for one of the students. So, it was agreed that the group
would dine together that evening to celebrate the occasion. After completing a very lavish
meal served by local waiters dressed in black and white, and trained in continental
presentation, the chef appeared to present the chocolate birthday cake. The events of that
night concluded with a visit to the karaoke bar and billiard tables in the lounge beneath the
restaurant. The “troops” had been entertained to a standard of expectation befitting this
style of accommodation. Had it not been for the fact that this resort was located in the middle
of the Peten jungle, nothing seemed radically out of place or different from that which one
would expect to find at the Bayshore Westin in downtown Vancouver.

Hours earlier the students had demonstrated outright repugnance towards the
implications of the arrangements for accommodation. The most intriguing aspect of these
events was the observation of the students’ willingness to move quickly past their earlier
expressions of guilt and disillusionment. Their ability to cope with this paradox was
striking, but not altogether unexpected. The switch in mood seemed to be a deeply ingrained
and even trained response to the situation. This did not mean that the implications of this
particular dilemma had reached a point of complete resolution for each of the students; their
comments in later interviews would reveal that this was not so. To be sure, they were
powerless to do anything to alter the situation, or at least believed they did not possess the
ability to change the course of events given that they were in a strange country and under the
guidance of other adults. For the moment they allowed themselves to look beyond the
immediate context. They rationalized an agreeable solution that fixed on the grander design of
the declared mission behind their journey. It was the end of the first week of touring. This
was meant to be a time for getting acquainted with the customs, the language and the culture
of the people of Guatemala. This kind of accommodation helped to cushion the images they
dealt with each day. It was something familiar and predictable. Over the past few days, the week of touring had been referred to by members of the group as a necessary transition period before they engaged in the more challenging tasks that awaited them. The following day they were to enter the second phase of the trip. They were off to work at the orphanage with children they had learned so much about over the last few months. With the potency of this earlier source of conflict now diffused the students shifted their thoughts towards the Rio Dulce.

The hotel incident was only one of many encounters which shaped the learning experience throughout the duration of the students' involvement in the Casa Guatemala Project.1 For each of them, the journey began in earnest during the application process five months prior to their departure. It would not be an exaggeration to claim that the experience with the program was pivotal in their early adult development. Yet, there is no way to clearly delineate when or where the ramifications of this journey will end or find expression throughout their lives. Quite often such changes take a long time to come to fruition or occur in such subtle ways that this cannot be accounted for in research. The students were brought to Guatemala for two weeks in the hope that the experience would assist them in bridging the mental and emotional gap between the "First" and "Third World". This study provides a narrative account of this journey from the perspective of six young adults who participated in the educational trip to Guatemala in March of 1993.

1.2 The Research Population and Program Student Selection Process

The research carried out in this study focuses on the experiences of students involved in the

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1 The Casa Guatemala Project should be distinguished from Casa Guatemala, an orphanage for abandoned, abused and neglected children located in Guatemala City and on the Rio Dulce. The secondary school program, based in Richmond, British Columbia, exists as a community-based fundraising and advocacy project supporting the operations of the orphanage but is not officially linked to the institution in Guatemala.
Casa Guatemala Project in 1992/1993. The program involves the administration, staff and students from three senior secondary schools in Richmond, British Columbia. These schools are: a) Richmond Senior Secondary, b) McNair Senior Secondary, and c) Steveston Senior Secondary. Overall leadership of the Casa Guatemala program has come primarily from Bob Carkner, the current principal at Richmond Senior Secondary. In recent years, significant input and organization has also come from the principal at Steveston Senior Secondary. The principal at McNair is only nominally involved and supportive as are the district's central administrative officers.

In the spring and fall of 1992, one teacher from each of the three secondary schools was selected to help coordinate the Guatemala trip. This involved a variety of tasks such as student selection, fundraising, educational and physical preparations, as well as media relations. They would also act as chaperons throughout the journey to Guatemala. Bruce Seney, a social studies teacher from Steveston Senior Secondary, was asked to head this triad of supervising teachers because of his long standing participation in the project and his extensive experience in leading student travel-education programs. Jenny Coyle and Rosa Laconte represented McNair and Richmond respectively. Neither of them had previous experience coordinating programs of this kind.

The student body of the three secondary schools is ethnically heterogeneous with a significant and growing percentage of students with Asian and East Indian origins. Historically, the largest segment of students in the district come from families of European descent. Most students attending these schools come from relatively affluent, middle to upper-class backgrounds. Twelve students from this population were selected for participation in the Casa Guatemala Project. The students ranged from sixteen to eighteen years-of-age. Ten of the students were female. Although preference has generally been given to individuals in grade twelve, the graduation year in the province of British
Columbia, five of the students selected for this year’s trip were enrolled in grade eleven. This decision was, in part, a reflection of the desire to have a returning contingent of participants within the schools for the following year.

The student selection process was initiated between September and early October of 1992, and was carried out by committees comprised of teachers and administrators. The twelve candidates had been selected and confirmed by early December of 1992. The intensity of competition within the application process varied greatly between schools. At Steveston, the process was the most intense and involved the submission of a personal resume, a written response to a one page questionnaire and a five-hundred word essay. These last two instruments were used to outline a history of each student's extra-curricular activities and explain their rationale for involvement in the program. The documents were reviewed by the selection committee and students were short listed for interviews which generally lasted twenty minutes. The final selections were announced after the interview process was completed. Relative lack of interest in the program at McNair and Richmond forced the selection committees to accept those applicants who were willing to meet the travel and accommodation expenses. They also had to demonstrate a history of good citizenship and an academic standing of second class honours.

While the initial intention was to choose four students from each school, six of the participants came from Steveston, four from McNair and two from Richmond. There are several reasons for this distribution. The travel-education program to Guatemala was originally conceived and initiated at Steveston in 1990 and as a result, this school has a history of being more intensively involved in the project. Second, Steveston was the only school to establish a waiting list as a result of the initial round of interviews. It was from this list that two additional Steveston students were chosen when openings became available because of withdrawals from McNair and Richmond in November of 1992. Both of the
cancellations were the result of monetary considerations. This was not an unreasonable excuse for dropping out as the students who did participate had to independently provide close to $2,500 [Cdn.] for travel, food and accommodation.

1.3 The Research Problem

The central focus of the research carried out in this study was to look at how the experience altered the subject's perceptions of themselves, their own society and a "Third World" country, namely Guatemala. This involved an analysis of both the learning dynamics that fostered perceptual transformation and the substantive qualities of the changes. The direct experience included their participation in a short term educational program that involved one week of travel in Guatemala and one week of work at the privately run orphanage which is sponsored, in part, by Richmond's secondary school project. To document the process of change in the students' perceptions it was first necessary to write a series of subquestions to guide the construction of a picture of the subjects' personal background, their motivation for involvement and the relevant aspects of the knowledge, values and worldview that they brought into the program. Hence, the initial interview was framed around questions that explored: a) students' explanation of their rationale for involvement and what they expected to gain from the experience, b) their career and future life goals and how these related to the program, what they knew about Guatemala and the history of the Casa Guatemala Project, c) how they viewed Canada and the political, social and environmental issues that surrounded their lives, and d) their view of the central purpose of the project. As the Casa Guatemala Project was only one of many travel and exchange opportunities available in the secondary schools participating in the project, it was anticipated that the students would be able to describe how they felt this program was different or similar to the others, and in relation to this, how they understood their interest in the program in relation to their peer
group. Finally, because the program is based in an advocacy perspective that involves local fundraising, education and promotional activities on behalf of the orphanage, the initial set of questions also looked at their perceptions of the program's impact on their immediate community and for those related to the project within Guatemala.

The second set of guiding subquestions was centered around the students' awareness of what they were learning throughout all phases of the experience. This set of probes was constructed on the presumption that the students could examine changes within their own knowledge, values and perceptions as the events of the program unfolded. Therefore, the students were asked, in various forms, to articulate what they felt they were learning from the experience before their departure, during the time in Guatemala and upon their return home. More specifically, this group of questions probed their changing knowledge of Guatemala, the nature of their political critique of the issues surrounding the "Third World" and how these issues related to their own lives in the "First World". This also involved explanations of how the immediate experiences had altered the way they looked at their own community. Finally, because the program was set in a social framework that involved dialogue with parents, teachers, friends and other community members, the students were continually asked to express their thoughts and observations of other peoples' reactions to their involvement and the various experiences that unraveled as the program progressed.

The last set of guiding subquestions was geared towards the re-immersion into the Canadian lifestyle and their home community. This inquiry also acted as a summative framework for the students. Questions structured during this phase looked at how the experience had affected their personal priorities, vocational outlooks and the possibility for future involvement in similar kinds of programs. The questions were gauged in this last section so that the students would explore their own priorities regarding the salient aspects of the entire learning experience. Finally, the three subsets of questions were refined and
written in a more formal sequence for use in semi-structured interviews throughout the different phases of the research which is outlined in greater depth in section 1.41 below. A list of all interview questions is provided in Appendix A.

1.4 Overview of the Research Methodology
The purpose of this research on Casa Guatemala is not to evaluate program effectiveness per se, but rather to investigate how the experience influences changes in the subjects' perceptions, values and knowledge. This suggested that the research methodology be centered around ways of identifying subtle, yet significant shifts in the students' thinking at various stages of participation in the program. To accomplish this task the research was carried out on a longitudinal basis from the beginning of the academic year (September of 1992), when the students were first selected, to a period one month after they had returned home (April of 1993). In this manner, different phases of their involvement were used to substantiate and analyze the transformation of the subjects' perceptions. To record this, a variety of qualitative data gathering techniques were employed including: a) semi-structured and open-ended interviews with student participants, school staff and a community member, b) student journals, c) field observations, and d) a review of all available documentation surrounding the history of the program.

1.41 Semi-structured and Open-ended Interview Sessions
The primary research strategy used in this study were the semi-structured interviews, scheduled on four different occasions with the students. The first round of interviews took place in late December of 1992 and early January of 1993. All semi-structured interviews were held in the school classrooms after instructional hours. Individual sessions were held at the students' respective schools and in privacy. Group sessions were structured so that students knew to take turns responding to
known about their selection for the program for only a few weeks. The primary goals for this interview included gaining an introduction to the students, developing personal rapport and establishing the researcher's presence as part of this year's team. This session was also particularly useful in mapping out a baseline of the subjects' prior knowledge and perceptions and in gathering the information necessary for the construction of a basic personal history for each party. The first interviews also initiated the process of identifying the six students that would eventually be tracked throughout the remainder of the experience.

Of the twelve student participants in the program one declined to participate in the research. A second student, Tony Eng, was deemed ineligible because he had participated in the program the previous year. His knowledge and experience within the program would generate a substantially different quality of data. Consequently, he participated in an open-ended interview after the completion of the program in April of 1993. The data from this session was useful in constructing a history of the Casa Guatemala Project in Chapter Three and in guiding the analysis of data provided by the other subjects in Chapters Four and Five.

Following the first round of interviews ten students remained as part of the research group. At this time it became necessary to consider how the students would be tracked for the rest of the study. All of the ten remaining students had reacted very favourably to the first round of interviews and it became apparent that cutting some of them from the study might jeopardize the positive and constructive relationship that was emerging up to this questions.

3 All students referred to in this study are identified by pseudonyms. Because all the subjects were legally minors at the time of the research, each of their parents or guardians has signed and submitted a permission slip to the researcher, declaring their permission to allow their student to participate in the study[see Appendix B]. The students also declared their permission on the same form.
11

point. Elimination of specific students from the research may also have had the impact of changing the students' interpersonal relationships, possibly inferring that an hierarchy existed within the group. Just prior to the second round of interviews it was decided that six of the students would continue to be questioned on an individual basis, and that the other four would take part in group interviews. This continued to be the basic interview structure for the remainder of the study. The students who participated in individual interviews were selected on the basis of the diversity of their backgrounds, stated reasons for participating in the program and the differences in their responses to interview questions. A secondary aim was to include representative students from each of the three schools.

The second round of interviews took place during late February and early March of 1993, the two weeks immediately prior to departure for Guatemala. It was anticipated that the students would demonstrate a heightened sense of awareness and more intense reflections surrounding the upcoming experience. At this point the students would also have had the opportunity to carry out some degree of independent learning about Guatemala, the orphanage and the project in general. Furthermore, the students would have engaged in discussions with friends, family, teachers and former participants that may have affected their ideas about participation. These interviews probed changes in the direction and substance of their earlier responses.

The third round of interviews occurred while the team was in Guatemala between March 8th and 22nd of 1993. The same structure of individual and group interviews was maintained at this time. Open-ended interviews were held during the third and fourth days of the trip in order to probe the students initial reactions to the experience. At this point the students were involved in the travel phase of the trip when most of the time was spent sight-seeing in and around Guatemala City and Antigua. The open-ended interviews were repeated between March 20th and the 22nd after the students had worked at the orphanage
for at least a day or two. The reason for documenting their reactions at two different times during the trip stemmed from the desire to capture their immediate and longer term reflections while in the host country. It was anticipated that the second week of the journey would be a period of greater emotional ease for the students as they would have had time to adjust to the conditions of travel in the host country, a situation that would permit greater clarity of thought about the larger implications of the experience. At this point they might also be contemplating their own reaction to re-immersion into Canadian society.

On the eighth day of the trip, two students told their sponsor teacher [Jenny Coyle] that they no longer wished to participate in the study. No adequate explanation was given for their decision to withdraw. No pressure was placed on the students to explain their decision to opt out of the research. As a result, the data gathered from their previous two interview sessions was not used in the study. However, it should be noted that their withdrawal eliminated what might have constituted a more critical perspective towards the program. Understanding why some students have a negative reaction to specific events, reject participation in a group process, or act out their frustrations through hostile gestures is as important as discovering more positive responses to educational programs of this kind.

The fourth and final set of semi-structured interviews were held between April 26th and May 6th, 1993. As a result of the two student withdrawals, only five of the original students continued to participate in the individual sessions with three remaining in the focus group interviews. At the time of this round of interviews, the students had returned to their

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4 The students that remained in the study acknowledged the decision to withdraw from the research by the two individuals. This change did not affect the remaining students' attitudes towards the research in any noticeable manner. In fact, the participants were not surprised to hear of the two individual's withdrawal. Follow-up conversations with the teachers and students confirmed that the researcher was not to blame for the decision, but was implicated in their rationale for withdrawal. Specific details of this situation cannot be disclosed for ethical reasons.
normal routines at school, home and work. It was assumed that the month long interval between this point and the end of the trip would allow the students sufficient time to reflect on their experiences in Guatemala and pull together some sense of an overall analysis of the immediate and longer term relevance of the program to their lives. During this last session, the students were asked to discuss their most important memories, what they had come to understand about Guatemalan and Canadian society from the journey, their constructive criticisms of the program, the nature of their interaction with the other participants, as well as the reaction of their peers, teachers and family members to the experience.

After several discussions with the research advisor, it was concluded that data from only six of the students should be analyzed to enhance the manageability of the study. This decision made it necessary to eliminate two of the remaining eight students. This was done after a review of their background information and a careful reading of their transcripts and journals. One of the criteria used to eliminate participants at this point was the clarity and depth of their responses within the interview sessions and journal entries. The second and equally important criterion was the emphasis placed on maintaining a diversity of personalities, a range of personal histories, and a variety of perspectives on the experience within the study.

A separate set of interviews was undertaken between September 1992 and May 1993 with four key individuals involved in either the historical development or the present implementation of the Casa Guatemala program. This included Bob Carkner, Jill Poulton, Bruce Seney and Ray Sawatsky.5 Jill Poulton was the community member responsible for the program's original development and inception in 1980. Bruce Seney had been involved with the Casa Guatemala Project on the periphery for several years at both Steveston Senior

5 These interviews were held independently between September of 1992 and April of 1993.
High and London Junior High and, as mentioned earlier, he was also chosen to lead the excursion this year. Ray Sawatsky was a student participant in the first travel program to Guatemala from Steveston in 1990. From the information provided through open-ended interview sessions with each of these individuals, it has been possible to construct a brief history of the project which is provided in Chapter Three. Second, their dialogue provided a diversity of detailed perspectives regarding the educational mandate that has guided the program's development. From this information I was able to construct deeper insights into the subjects' responses to questions in light of the historical perspectives on the program. Finally, these data were also used to confirm the validity and consistency of the researcher's analysis of the students' perceptions surrounding the experience in Guatemala and upon their return home to Richmond.

1.42 Student Journals

The second source of data on the students' perceptions was the students' journals. Each student was asked to make a few entries prior to their departure to Guatemala, one every day while on the trip and several more within the first couple of weeks after their return to Canada. Only six of the eight students involved in this study submitted their journals on the occasion of the last interview. Both of the students who did not provide a journal stated that they had experienced great difficulty in expressing the quantity and complexity of the thoughts they were having during the trip and in frustration mentioned that they had simply given up on the process. However, the six submitted journals contained a wide variety of rich discourse that chronicled their emotional and intellectual reactions to the various encounters, as well as outlining the specific factual information surrounding the places they had been and the activities that they had engaged in. Their journal reflections proved to be invaluable in supplementing the substance of the perceptions revealed in their interview
sessions and provided an important source for assessing the validity of the researcher's interpretations.

1.43 Field Observations
Field observations, recorded in a research log, comprised the third source of data collection in this study. These notes were based on a variety of sources and activities which included informal discussions with several school personnel, students and community members involved with the Casa Guatemala program, conversations with the thesis advisor, as well as an independent analysis of the events taking place throughout the duration of involvement with the project. Conversations contributed to an understanding of the school culture which surrounds the program and the contextual environment which shaped the students' perceptions. Attendance at several of the organizational meetings provided a means of understanding the nature of the students' preparation for the experience. The meetings were used by the supervisory staff for a variety of purposes, including medical and mental preparations, dissemination of scheduling information and learning materials on Guatemala, as well as guidelines for conduct and emergencies. More importantly, these meetings were the vehicle for developing a sense of collective consciousness surrounding the larger ethical and educational purposes behind the program. Observations of these meetings provided an important component of the analysis of group dynamics and the learning context which shaped the students' initial perceptions of the program.

1.44 Documentation
A review of various sources of documentation on the project was undertaken to further inform the study. This included an the examination of a video documentary produced for the program in 1990, the project's promotional booklet, as well as selected materials contained
These files contained a wide variety of correspondence with key personnel involved with Casa Guatemala, regional newspaper clippings and documents that surrounded various aspects of project administration. By reviewing these primary documents, the researcher was able to gain a richer perspective on the history and educational context of the program and develop clearer insights into the substance and references contained in the students' dialogue.

1.45 Summary of the Research Methodology

These four methods of data collection, then, constituted the heart of the research strategy in this study. The emphasis on this form of qualitative methodology is in keeping with suggestions emerging from two reviews of research on experiential learning and young adults (Hamilton, 1980; Conrad, 1991). What has emerged from this study is a wealth of contextualized information that focuses on students' perceptions of themselves, their engagement in activities in Guatemala and their evaluation of the learning process which grew out of the experience. This study claims no broad generalizability to other research populations or educational constituencies. The value in exploring the research problem in the context of this narrative case-study comes with the construction of the students' individual and shared accounts of the various events that took place throughout their participation in the Casa Guatemala Project. From an analysis of their dialogue it will be possible to explain how the substance of their perceptions has been transformed by the experience. Likewise, the specific dynamics responsible for these somewhat serendipitous, yet crucial changes in perception can be identified.

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6 The documents cited from Bob Carkner's administrative files were obtained by his permission and will henceforth be noted with the abbreviation (CF) for "Carkner Files". These included newspaper articles, letters of correspondence, project proposals, promotional pamphlets, newsletters and bulletins.
1.5 The Role of the Researcher in the Study

Assessing the effect of the researcher's role within the group begins with the identification of his perspective on the Casa Guatemala Project. In this regard it should be acknowledged that the researcher is an advocate of experiential cross-cultural programs, especially so when travel involves exposure of North American teachers and students to "Third World" contexts. There is a tendency amongst educators to select only those travel and exchange programs which involve wealthy industrialized states. Teachers and administrators send school groups to Japan or Europe instead of Panama or South Africa. One of the central reasons expressed for this preference is concern for the health and safety of students. What is often cloaked in this rationale is the educator's own lack of understanding and fear of people and places in the "Third World". The Casa Guatemala Project was selected as the case study for the research problem largely because it exemplifies the leadership and conviction necessary to break down the emotional and intellectual distance between communities in the North/South axis of global political economy. For the researcher, this study provided the opportunity to document the substance and quality of learning that took place during the students' experience with the Casa Guatemala Project. This was done, in part, with hopes that programs of this kind will continue to proliferate.

There was no forum planned within the 1993 program for the students to discuss their perceptions of the learning experience with their peers or teachers. Hence, the researcher assumed this role inadvertently through the use of periodic interview sessions and requests for journal entries. Both mediums of expression acted as a reflective format for the students to articulate their concerns and understanding of the events that surrounded the program. In fact, there was evidence in the students' conversations and journals, that even the researcher's presence stimulated reflective and analytical thinking. When the research was initiated in the fall of 1992 the students were fully briefed on the focus of the
investigation. There is no doubt that this understanding played a role in shaping the students' perceptions of the experience. Knowing that the researcher was looking for changes in their perceptions may have crystallized the notion that change was going to occur.

While working with the group the researcher did not assume the responsibility of one of the supervising teachers. The absence of a power orientation within the group permitted the development of a more open and discursive relationship between the researcher and students. One of the students described the researcher as being "like an older brother" on the tour. However, the researcher's involvement with the group did include a variety of leadership roles. This took the form of role modelling, organizing work details at the orphanage or providing advice and guidance to the students when requested. Despite the relaxed and interactive relationship that emerged with the researcher throughout the program, students remained aware of the fact that research was being carried out and that their conversations and activities were being monitored and recorded.

The effect of this relationship between the students and researcher must be understood when considering the nature of the data collected in this study. There is the possibility that the substance of the students' perceptions would have been expressed in a different manner had the researcher not been associated with the tour. Cognizant of this impact, every effort was made by the researcher to triangulate the findings of the study. The researcher balanced insights gleaned from the data against a review of various information sources: a) file documents, newspaper articles and video tapes collected from previous tours to Guatemala, b) interviews with former participants, teachers and community members associated with the program, c) presentation of chapter drafts to Bob Carkner, Bruce Seney and Ray Sawatsky. Throughout the study references are made to specific instances that further demonstrate the effect of the researcher's presence on the students' discourse.
1.6 Towards a Theory of Experiential Learning in Young Adulthood

Like most of their peers, the teenagers involved in the Casa Guatemala Project were exploring the deeper existential issues of meaning, vocation, social responsibility and human relationship for the first time in their lives. They were leaving the world of adolescence and negotiating the intricacies of their consciousness with a sense of wonder and amazement. Under such circumstances it is easy to see why the Casa Guatemala Project was so alluring. It held the promise of engaging these individuals in an experience which was unlike anything they or their peer group had ever encountered.

The students involved in the Casa Guatemala Project did not enter the program as blank slates, suddenly eager and aware of the need to construct perceptions of societies distinct from their own. They came to the program with backgrounds which informed their perspectives and knowledge of the issues, the people addressed by the actions of the project, as well as their reasons for becoming involved. Only a few of them had ever been afforded the opportunity to step outside the relatively affluent parameters of their daily lives in urban Canada to experience the reality of life in a "Third World" context. Herein lies the gist of this investigation. The students carried into the program their pre-existing perceptual orientations concerning the relationship of their community to Guatemala and Guatemalans. From their brief exposure to this country and their re-immersion into Canadian society, they developed values, understandings and a worldview that had been transformed by the experience.

Mezirow (1991) entitled this process of perspective alteration as, "the transformative theory of adult learning." While it is not practical to summarize the breadth of his arguments here, there are several key concepts that are particularly relevant to this study. At the centre of Mezirow's assumptions about adult learning is the role that language plays in the construction and negation of meaning. For Mezirow, all meaning is sustained
and constructed within the framework of established cultural-linguistic norms or "dialogic communities" (p.57). Hence, learning is primarily a social process of negotiating, testing or "naming" the terms of one's existence through communication with others. Mezirow labels this phenomenon, "consensual validation". It is from experience within our communities that we continually refine meaning perspectives or personal paradigms in order to interpret the events encountered in daily life. Mezirow describes these meaning perspectives as, "rule systems of habitual expectation" (p.42). He further categorizes meaning perspectives as epistemic, psychological or socio-linguistic in orientation. Meaning perspectives in turn provide the parameters under which meaning schemes develop:

Each meaning perspective contains a number of meaning schemes. A meaning scheme is the particular knowledge, beliefs, value judgments, and feelings that become articulated in an interpretation. Meaning schemes are the concrete manifestations of our habitual orientation and expectations (meaning perspectives) and translate these general expectations into specific ones that guide our actions. (p.44)

Because meaning perspectives are constituted on a grander cognitive scale than meaning schemes they are much harder to identify and even more difficult to alter. Meaning perspectives exist in a mental orientation which is seldom clearly articulated by the individual and this lack of articulation often leads to highly selective views of reality. Mezirow explains the longitudinal implications of maintaining such distortions using Ashley Montague's terminology of "psychosclerosis" or "hardening of the categories" (p.50). The direction and cycle of adult learning is geared towards identifying, clarifying and correcting distortions in perspectives.

Of critical importance to this study, is the notion that individuals often block or avoid their perceptions of circumstances that hold the potential of openly challenging our pre-existing meaning schemes or perspectives. This tendency is described as a perceptual
filtering system that has the effect of shaping the substance and patterns of one's observations of the world. Mezirow asserts that this is a fundamental component of character formation carried over from childhood where we learn to establish our "horizons of expectation" (p.51). As he describes:

In fencing out the world by focusing on a limited span of things, it seems inevitable that the learner must give disproportionate weight to some things that do not deserve it and artificially inflate the importance of the limited area that falls within his or her horizon of perception and action. (p.51)

What is not clear from this analysis of selective perception is how or under what circumstances individuals actually decide to reach out and intentionally transcend their established perceptual horizon. This appears to be a critical distinction which needs to be refined in Mezirow's proposal of transformative learning. Within the context of this study, however, it is sufficient to acknowledge the dynamic of perceptual filtering and selection. In reference to observations of the students' dialogue and actions, distortions could take the form of elaborate rationalizations, missed or inadequate observations of critical events, avoidance of involvement in problematic situations, excessive participation in task-oriented behaviour, intensified association with group members, as well as the maintenance of mannerisms more closely related to their home environment. Any instance or constellation of these behaviours could indicate attempts to maintain perceptual "blind spots" or to avoid increased anxiety from a given circumstance. This does not preclude the notion that such episodes might also be interpreted as manifestations of a slower pace of progression within the transformation process, but it does signify the attempt to obstruct the immediate implications of anxiety producing situations.

To initiate the sequence of events which ultimately leads to transformative thinking requires the intervention of divergent actions which produce a sense of conflict or dilemma within one's established meaning schemes. The more profound the ramifications of
an action, the more likely it is to challenge an entire meaning perspective. Once a conflict exists within the individual's frame of reference there is a compulsion to resolve it through critical and reflective action. Calling on the works of Dewey, Mezirow defines reflection as validity testing; the method by which individuals correct distortions in their thinking, involving changes in the predication of either the content, process or the premise(s) of understanding (pp.101-105). Reflective actions are the concrete manifestations of attempts to test the implications of newly formed meaning schemes or perspectives. Furthermore, it is important to point out that while content and process reflection can lead to the changes in meaning schemes, only premise reflection leads to perspective transformation. Critical reflection and reflective action then, constitute the central dynamics of transformative learning. They are an integral and intentional characteristic of adult learning which compel individuals to resolve contradictions within their meaning schemes and perspectives and progress towards more sophisticated conceptual frameworks (p.147). As Mezirow states:

Transformative learning involves an enhanced level of awareness of the context of one's beliefs and feelings, a critique of their assumptions and particularly premises, an assessment of alternative perspectives, a decision to negate an old perspective in favor of a new one or to make a synthesis of old and new, an ability to take action based upon the new perspective, and a desire to fit the new perspective into the broader context of one's life. Perspective transformation involves (a) an empowered sense of self, (b) more critical understanding of how one's social relationships and culture have shaped one's beliefs and feelings, and (c) more functional strategies and resources for taking action. Taking action is an integral dimension of transformative learning. (p.161)

In order to summarize the process of perspective transformation, Mezirow has identified ten distinct phases which constitute the sequence of reflective learning. Mezirow claims that the identification of these phases is supported through his own research and subsequent research carried out by Joyce Morgan (p.168). The phases are structured in the following manner:
1. A disorienting dilemma
2. Self-examination with feelings of guilt or shame
3. A critical assessment of epistemic, sociocultural, or psychological assumptions
4. Recognition that one's discontent and the process of transformation are shared and that others have negotiated a similar change
5. Exploration of options for new roles, relationships, and actions
6. Planning of a course of action
7. Acquisition of knowledge and skills for implementing one's plans
8. Provisional trying of new roles
9. Building of competence and self-confidence in new roles and relationships
10. A reintegration into one's life on the basis of conditions dictated by one's new perspective. (p.168)

While the transition between these phases is seldom neat and clearly distinguishable, the framework, nevertheless, provides a heuristic device that can be applied to the observation of an individual's reactions to circumstances which hold the possibility of being transformative in nature. Mezirow's theory of the transformative dimensions of adult learning is useful in studying the students' perceptions of their involvement in the Casa Guatemala Project. The brief, but sudden, immersion of the students into the life of the orphans and society in Guatemala is the type of event capable of stimulating the process of transformative thinking because it involves confronting a realm of circumstances which are completely foreign to their known experiences. Disorienting dilemmas can be identified by locating either specific instances, such as the events which unfolded during the Camino Real episode, or by looking at the experience of the entire program. In the latter case it is more appropriate to regard the program as an entire cycle of challenges leading to perceptual transformation.

The research carried out within this case study does not attempt to further validate Mezirow's theories or the model concerning the phases of transformative learning. Rather, it uses his proposals as a theoretical framework to help explore how and why the students' perceptions are altered over the course of their involvement in the Casa Guatemala Project. In basic terms, the model assists in the construction of an explanation of the learning that
takes place under circumstances which are relatively unstructured and ambiguous. Hence, the analysis of data will proceed with the implicit assumption that Mezirow's postulations regarding the dynamics of adult learning provide an appropriate framework for this study. This would be consistent with Chickering's (1976: p.64) view that adult modes of learning and social interaction are already in place by the middle teenage years. More specifically, the role that conflict, selective perception, and reflective action play in the alteration of pre-existing meaning perspectives and schemes is of particular relevance to the observation and analysis of the students' dialogue, as well as the interpretation of their reactions to the series of events which unfold throughout the journey. These central concepts will be referred to in some detail within the concluding chapter.

1.7 Chapter Outlines

The remainder of this study is comprised of five chapters. Chapter Two provides a review of the literature and research that has been instrumental in shaping and informing the problem and methodology used in this study. The review was constructed around sources from five different subject areas because of their particular relevance to an exploration of experiential learning programs that engage students in community-service or other advocacy orientations. These subject areas include experiential learning theory, citizenship education, environmental education, global education and cross-cultural learning. Each of these sources contributed findings that were worth consideration when refining the analytical orientation towards the Casa Guatemala Project and the students' perceptions in particular.

Chapter Three looks into the history and evolution of the Casa Guatemala Project. The narrative begins from the project's inception as a limited child sponsorship activity to the current program that involves substantial levels of fundraising for the orphanage,
student and teacher working visits to the institution in Guatemala and broader development education agenda within the wider community. This account was constructed on the basis of the personal accounts of five individuals that contribute various perspectives on the central events that have taken place over the last decade and a half. Through this glimpse at the history of the program it is possible to construct an account of the educational goals, school culture and institutional dynamics that have shaped the nature of the students' experience and perceptions. In short, the history provides the context for understanding how the subjects in this study perceive their individual and collective roles in supporting the advocacy perspective promoted by the Casa Guatemala Project and the expectations they place on the experience.

Chapter Four introduces the personal background, entry characteristics and initial perceptions of each of the subjects in the study. It begins with an overview of the selection process implemented in the fall of 1992 to recruit the 1993 student travel contingent from the three participating secondary schools. From this point the chapter explores the substance and differences in the students' preparation for the tour carried out at the various high schools. The central task of this chapter is then one of constructing a composite picture of the students' knowledge, values and perceptions in relation to the research questions outlined in Section 1.4. The descriptions were based on the students' responses to semi-structured interviews, application documents and entries in their journals. The resulting character portraits display the substance of the subjects understandings prior to their departure for Guatemala, revealing common trends and factors shaping their perspective on the Casa Guatemala Project.

Chapter Five represents the heart of this study. In essence, it presents the students' cognitive, perceptual and emotional journey through Guatemala and their response to the lessons of the experience when they returned home. The chapter documents the specific
events that were seen by the subjects as crucial to the alteration of their knowledge, values and perceptions about life in Guatemala and Canada. Of importance here are instances which stimulated the greatest sense of dilemma and conflict around their prior understanding of the relationship between the "First" and "Third World". It also outlines the changing nature of group dynamics and student discourse. From this glimpse into their changing worldview it is possible to identify the specific dimensions of perspective transformation that occurred for this sample of young adults.

The final chapter takes a look at the implications of the findings for the application of experiential cross-cultural learning theory in programs like the Casa Guatemala Project. Of particular importance are the constructs of conflict, selective perception, and group discourse as integral aspects of the learning experience. Using these constructs the analysis exposes the need for structured student preparation and debriefing exercises at different phases in cross-cultural experiential education programs. A brief summary of the changes that occurred in the students' knowledge, values and perceptions is provided with an emphasis given to the development of their sense of alienation from their own culture. The chapter also assesses the importance of the findings for the larger body of literature and research within experiential learning.
Chapter Two: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

The implementation of experiential programs in secondary educational institutions is a highly problematic and controversial task. Yet, advocates of such programs continue to press for incorporation within a broad range of subject areas, most frequently in physical, science and social studies education. Common to many of these diverse projects is an appreciation of the potential of experiential approaches to transform student learning. Students exposed to experiential learning face problems and the consequences of their actions in a manner fundamentally different from "traditional" classroom formats. Through direct participation in community service projects, cross cultural homestays, outdoor adventure programs, and internships, students enrich their understanding of themselves and others as part of the social matrix which contributes to the construction of power relations from local to global scales. In these situations students may develop a stronger sense of their own relationship to social structures, norms and institutions and take the first steps towards the development of a disposition of involvement coupled with an enriched critical awareness of issues (Wigginton, 1989).

Learning in the context of social and political action carries with it an approach to education with enormous potential and relevance to students. In order to develop a richer understanding of such programs, there is a need to investigate the impact of experiential curriculum on students' changing perceptions of themselves and the world which surrounds them. What are the contextual factors that enhance constructive student discourse and perceptual modification as a result of their participation in such programs? What is likely to be the substance and direction of perspective transformation taking place as a result of the students' participation in various kinds of experiential programs? What are the
implications of such findings on the future direction of school curriculum, structure and educational research?

Selecting a relevant body of literature to address the research problem in this study is not a straightforward task. This difficulty is due to the fact that the educational format of the Casa Guatemala Project is, in itself, multifaceted. It is possible to characterize the principles of the project as community-service, cross-cultural learning, global citizenship or experiential education. In truth, the learning experience structured by the Casa Guatemala program reflects important elements contained in all of these educational orientations.

2.2 Sources of Literature

The literature used to construct this review was identified between February of 1992 and January of 1994, using a wide variety of search methods. On-line and manual searches were carried out using the University of British Columbia library catalogues. Searches of ERIC on CD-ROM were utilized, combining a variety of descriptors that included: experiential education, global education, global approach, student action, community participation, community service, environmental action and community action. Articles were also obtained through references given by fellow students and several professors at the University. Finally, "snowballing" of article bibliographies provided several pertinent studies. Conrad's (1991) review of research was the most fruitful source for discovering a relevant body of literature. This meta-analysis of the research includes the findings of twenty-seven different studies on community-based, experiential programs within secondary schools and university undergraduate programs in the United States. While a few doctoral dissertations were presented in abstract form in reference journals and previously located articles, none of these were obtained for this review due to financial constraints.
Studies included in this review were selected on the basis of the specific insights that could be gleaned regarding the relationship between various instructional approaches and desired learning outcomes in experiential education. Of particular interest were studies that referred to the impact of experiential programs on the students' perceptions of events. That is to say, articles and research papers were identified which presented conclusions surrounding the a priori claims in the research so that these could be checked against the findings of the author's own analysis of the students self-reports. The attempt was also made to focus on those pieces of research carried out in the last twenty years. This was done to keep the debate current and relevant to recent trends in the writing on global education, as contained within the broader nexus of social studies curriculum. The vast majority of research and literature on experiential or "participatory" curriculum comes from five main sources. The relevant sources of literature for this study are categorized as: a) experiential learning, b) citizenship education, c) environmental education, d) global education, and e) cross-cultural learning.

2.3 Experiential Learning

The attempt to explain and clarify the unique nature of experiential learning has developed into a complex and ongoing debate. Earlier attempts to reconcile this issue focused on explaining the differences in reference to the structure of the learning sequence between "traditional" and experiential modes of instruction. Coleman (1976), Hamilton (1980) and Gager (1982) suggested that the instructional strategy used for concept and principle

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1 The phrase "participatory" is identified by Conrad (1991, p.540) as one of many such terms present in the literature on citizenship education relating to experiential learning. He also identifies that the terminology commonly used in the literature typically reflects the focal features of any given program. Hence, these are often described as volunteer service, community study, community projects, internships, and sociopolitical action.
development is fundamentally reversed in experiential education. This is based on the notion that typical classroom teaching begins with the transfer of ideas using a symbolic medium such as a lecture, textbook or video. In essence, students are asked to develop an understanding of concepts and principles in an atmosphere of complete abstraction with little relevance and application to their lived experience. These authors claim that in experiential education the sequence is altered so that learning begins with actions taken in "real" or concrete contexts. This allows individuals to apply the memory of their experience, through guided reflection, to construct more grounded understandings of the foundational principles and concepts which structure their awareness (Hutton, 1989: p.57).

Several critics argue that this account does not capture the fundamental dynamics of experiential learning. They have focused on the notion that all communication, regardless of context or sequence of presentation, is a symbolic gesture because it involves the use and exchange of language in a social context. It is social interaction which gives meaning to all experience (Mezirow, 1991; Wildemeersch, 1989; Habermas, 1987). Therefore, the actual staging of the learning sequence is of secondary importance as a distinguishing feature of experiential learning. What is central to this refined definition is the actual nature of the experience and the dialogue that ensues from it, that is to say, the kind of actions that one engages in and the specific qualities of reflections generated by such encounters. Mezirow (1991) describes these as content, process and premise reflections. Critical in this regard is the role played by conflict and dilemma as the underlying agent of schematic and perspective transformation (Mezirow, 1991: p.168; Kolb, 1984: pp.29-31).

Experiential learning is distinguished by the notion that individuals are intentionally placed in situations which jar their entrenched perceptions of reality and awareness. Kolb (1984) encapsulates this sentiment in the following comment:
I move through my daily round of tasks and meetings with a fair sense of what the issues are, of what other are saying and thinking, and what actions to take. Yet, I am occasionally upended by unforeseen circumstances, miscommunications, and dreadful miscalculations. It is in this interplay between expectation and experience that learning occurs. In Hegel's phrase, "Any experience that does not violate expectation is not worthy of the name experience." And yet somehow, the rents that these violations cause in the fabric of my experience are magically repaired, and I face the next day a bit changed but still the same person. (p.24)

Wildemeersch (1989: pp.63-64) describes this same learning dynamic as a rupture in one's "life-world". There is a parallel between what these various authors describe as the pivotal role played by conflict and dilemma in experiential learning, and the account in the previous chapter of the students' reaction to the events which unfolded at the Camino Real. When the instance of disjuncture occurs an individual is forced to reconsider or reconstitute the meaning of the events that have taken place. This process of coming to an understanding of the implications of events begins with independent reactions and reflection but is eventually negotiated and validated through communicative action or dialogue with others. This is what Mezirow (1991: pp.65-66) describes as "validity testing".

Experiential learning, within this postulation is seen primarily as a social act. Paulo Freire states this eloquently:

"Human existence cannot be silent, nor can it be nourished by false words, but only by true words, with which men transform the world. To exist, humanly, is to name the world, to change it. Once named, the world in its turn reappears to the namers as a problem and requires of them a new naming. Men are not built in silence, but in word, in work, in action-reflection.

But while to say the true word - which is work, which is praxis - is to transform the world, saying that word is not the privilege of some few men, but the right of every man. Consequently no one can say a true word alone - nor can he say it for another, in a prescriptive act which robs others of their words. (quoted in Kolb, 1984: p.30)

Hence, experiential learning is best viewed as a dialectical phenomenon where knowledge, beliefs and the larger perspectives shaping our interpretation of events are constantly being transformed through rational discourse. Furthermore, it becomes intentional when the
social, emotional and physical context are structured by educators to generate instances of perceptual disjuncture which demand reflective action.

Experiential education programs have been implemented for a variety of reasons and from a range of vastly different points of advocacy which affect the ideological emphasis placed on them. Weil and McGill (1989) have categorized these divergent rationales into four "villages" to explain the foundational basis of different programs. The first village focuses on the institutional accreditation of past work or life experience that demonstrates the achievement of specific learning outcomes, the second village looks at experiential learning as a pedagogical choice capable of changing the structure of education towards a "learner-centered" or "learner-controlled" environment, the third village is concerned with broader issues that involve social action and change, and the fourth village places the emphasis on personal growth and development through greater self-awareness and group effectiveness (p.3). This framework, which identifies the principal orientations towards experiential education, illuminates the various perspectives embedded in research on the topic. With this in mind, a number of studies are analyzed here that help to demonstrate the nature and implication of the findings on high school and undergraduate experiential programs.

A significant number of studies promote action based curriculum simply on the basis of a dedication to improving the quality of the learning and instruction. While affinity for this intent may stem from several of the "villages" identified above, research within the field often downplays subject affiliations in favour of investigating ways of improving the practice of experiential education for the sake of the learner. It is apparent from this revisitation to the roots of experiential practice that the authors realize the challenges and pitfalls awaiting reconciliation in the research. As a result, the emphasis of research is placed on the creation of a sound theoretical and methodological base that will enrich the
possibilities for successful implementation of experiential education in an institutional culture which has traditionally resisted the incursion of such programs.

Kolb (1984) provided one of the most comprehensive and, hence, one of the most quoted studies on experiential learning. Drawing on the earlier works of Dewey, Lewin and Piaget, he proposed an integrated model for experiential learning. In a fashion similar to Gager (1982), Kolb (1984: p.42) suggests that experiential learning involves a series of distinct phases beginning with a concrete experience which stimulates apprehension and structures one’s reflective observations. This is followed by a period of abstract conceptualization where the meaning and ramifications of events are reconstituted and extended in light of past experience. At this point the individual is capable of drawing together larger generalizations which are in turn transformed, acted upon and tested. This cycle of learning is continuous. For this reason Kolb is highly critical of research methodology which posits the experience as a series of distinctive and terminal outcomes (p.26). While Kolb has clearly articulated the structure and process of experiential learning, his main preoccupation within this framework is with individual subjectivity and learning styles, as well as person-environment transactions (Wildemeersch, 1989: p.65). There is very little consideration of the social and linguistic construction of knowledge and perception which are so essential to theorists such as Habermas and Mezirow.

Models of experiential education are comforting in one respect, but seldom relate to the complexity of implementation or practice. To understand the implications of experiential education we need to penetrate the depth and breadth of the possible impacts which these programs have on students and institutions. Conrad and Hedin (1982) undertook one the most extensive studies on these questions to date. Their study of thirty experiential learning programs included community service, career internships, community study, political action and adventure [outdoor] education. They report
discovering significant overall improvements in the students' social, psychological and intellectual development; categories they have maintained in more recent research as well.

Indicators of self esteem and moral reasoning consistently demonstrated the strongest positive correlation to students' psychological development. Their analysis of social development revealed positive improvements in the students' attitudes towards adults and others, response to community action and inclination towards future involvement and career exploration. Results from the application of the Social and Personal Responsibility Scale (SPRS) indicated changes in student perceptions of their competency, efficacy and duty, to act in ways that could positively effect the community. Of particular importance was the assertion that behavioural change precedes attitudinal change. In the area of intellectual development, problem solving inventories were utilized demonstrating progress in both complexity and empathy of thought. One of the more significant findings came with the identification that seventy-three percent of students reported they learned "more" (41%) and "much more" (32%) from their participation in experiential programs. The vagueness of such responses makes them difficult to interpret. However, the consistency of these statements testifies to the perceived relevance and preference to students of experiential programs over regular classroom instruction. If motivation and enjoyment, alone, were legitimate educational criteria for justifying program implementation then research in experiential education would need go no further. This study also gives credence to the notion that individuals experience these types of programs idiosyncratically, with greater relevance felt by those students who perceived that the situations were relevant and they were being appreciated for their work.

Serow (1991) shifts the emphasis from learning outcomes to initial motivation for participation. In a combined survey and interview study (N=42) which looked at the various explanations given for involvement by community service participants (CSP's),
Serow found that the subjects were motivated by a "norm of personal assistance" more than by broader social commitments. That is to say, the students in the research sample acted upon a code of personal ethics rather than for ideological reasons. Eighty percent of the CSP's mentioned that the sense of personal satisfaction derived from helping others was the prime reason behind their involvement in community service projects. The other most frequently reported factors included attraction to the work (36%), acquiring career skills (42%), meeting people (49%), duty to correct societal problems (54%) and involvement in clubs, activity or a class (56%). The predominance of this norm of personal assistance over broader sociopolitical goals was reinforced by comparing the value patterns of CSP's with a subsample of nonparticipants. CSP's placed less importance on family values and more on assistance to others than non-participants. Of the rated values, working for social justice/equality and peace/reconciliation remained the lowest ranked. It is not clear that Serow's categorizations of responses are, or need be mutually exclusive from one another as they refer to highly complex, and inter-related constructs. The importance of this study, however, centres on the proposal that students are motivated less by sophisticated political ideological principles and more by a general "spirit of helpfulness". Stated another way, it would suggest that students view such work, not from a refined or well articulated sense of efficacy or agency, but from a more limited moral perspective.

There is still another side to the understanding of student action programs which the batteries of quantitative measures for testing learning outcomes only touch on tangentially. Few applied studies in experiential education explore the demands that implementation brings to school culture and conversely, how the institutional norms and structures shape the experiential learning process for students and teachers. Tyler (1982), as well as Nathan and Kielsmeier (1991), have scratched the surface of potential answers to these questions. Indeed, Nathan and Kielsmeier have called experiential education, "The sleeping
giant of school reform”. They recommend that institutions drastically alter the way they view young people, in order to combat the deeply entrenched perceptions of alienation and inadequacy in relationships with the “adult” community. From the perspective of Nathan and Kielsmeier, dismantling the institutional structures of formal education is every bit as important as generating desired learning outcomes and behavioural goals. Their recipe for change is a fundamental one: to construct a pedagogy which values students as resourceful and productive individuals. The dominant perspective, which sees students as potential problems to be “fixed” with remedial programs, must be replaced by one which directly integrates them in the local community, thereby enhancing their feelings of responsibility and belonging. This requires that the local school site be given the mandate to develop programs which foster community integration and sociopolitical action. While the requisite change of philosophy is obvious in this paper, it is less clear how the schools are to implement these programs, given the resistance of school culture.

Conrad and Hedin (1991) provide a summary of the research and findings on experiential community service programs. They emphasize that the great majority of research has been geared towards the analysis of teaching methods capable of changing student behaviours and attitudes, followed closely by studies on the implications of experiential programs for institutional reform. They identify gaps in our understanding of the impact of experiential programs resulting from the choice of research methodology:

Sometimes the rigid reliance on paper-and-pencil tests can obscure the most obvious and meaningful data of all. In an inquiry into the impact of service on social responsibility, for example, the fact that participants are willingly and consistently acting in a socially responsible manner...is at least as relevant to the issue as how they score on a test of attitudes about being socially responsible. The spontaneous comments of participants in interviews and in journals are a rich source of qualitative data, revealing not only the general effect of a service experience but its particular and peculiar impact on each individual. (p. 748)

Second, Conrad and Hedin recognize the seeming inability of quantitative methodologies to get
at clear causal connections between this highly irregular and varied strategy and its impact on students, schools and communities. The quantitative methods they suggest would improve our understandings.

Rothchild (1982) analyzed the impact of an education structured in a context of sociopolitical action in her historical study of the Mississippi Freedom Schools which operated between 1962 and 1964. This study emphasizes the importance of training students in direct political action and the pursuit of social justice. Rothchild's argues that experiential programs increase the relevance and personal impact of education when the curriculum is applied to critical social issues that demand student involvement, action and reflection. As her description of the Hattiesburg Freedom School, volunteer training seminar indicates:

The issue was not, after all, small or "academic," for everyone knew it was a fact that people had lost their lives in Mississippi for movement work and that it was a possibility that people would continue to lose their lives "simply" trying to get into the southern political system. Seminars such as this, with heated debates on topics clearly relevant to real people's lives, helped the volunteers examine major issues in the movement and bring back to their students a new awareness of the facts of the black experience and the various interpretations that could be ascribed to these facts. Additionally, the volunteers often came to question their "ivory tower" academic beliefs of "value-free scholarship" and "objectivity," and to formulate alternative visions of what constituted "real" education for their students and themselves. (pp.408-409)

Thus experience in social activism was responsible for a qualitative leap in the volunteers' understanding of the issues faced by black Americans involved in the civil rights movement.

The Freedom Schools attempted to make fundamental changes in the social, economic and political condition of black Americans in Mississippi. This program involved the participation of a diverse cross-section of northern college students working with black teenagers from Mississippi high schools. The educational activities in the Freedom Schools included: a) basic literacy and political education of the students and their families, and b)
the mobilization of students to work as community activists campaigning for the registration of legally eligible black voters. Working with the basic premise that all education is political, Charlie Cobb and the Freedom School Volunteers focused their instructional activities on improving the dignity, self-concept and self-esteem of the students, as well as understanding their own history and roots of oppression. To do this the high school students were engaged in various unprecedented responsibilities, such as training as community literacy tutors for their peers, parents and other adults. The critical message emerging from this study is not the success or failure of this particular manifestation of the civil-rights movement, but the educational success of a pedagogy of action.

The overall direction of research into experiential education continues to take on highly divergent and controversial orientations. Authors like Wildemeersch (1989: pp.66-68) warn us about the present incursion of prescriptions which are overtly "individualist" and "instrumentalist" in nature, where the recipients of experiential programs are viewed as efficient consumers of an educational product. This is a critical point because this orientation denies the centrality of social communication and dialogue in experiential learning. It is precisely the dynamics of conversation, the ownership of language and the consensual construction of perception and understanding which play such a large role in the theory of transformative learning for writers such as Freire, Habermas and Mezirow. The remainder of this chapter focuses on literature and research which looks at the application of experiential methodology within specific subject areas. More often than not, authors within these curriculum areas are concerned with shaping the attitudinal and behavioural dispositions of the learner. Whether this equates to a pedagogy of indoctrination is not the issue that will be dealt with here.
2.4 Citizenship Education

Over the past several decades a variety of writers interested in enhancing democratic attitudes and behaviours amongst high school youth have developed a considerable body of research on the impact of community-service programs on student learning. These authors tend to see the role of citizenship education as one that enables schools to reproduce and repair democratic principles. The rise of extreme individualism and relativism are often cited as the key results of a society which has lost sight of "civic mindedness", creating legions of teenagers who are intensely alienated from mainstream institutions and the political process in general. Upwardly spiraling rates of violent crime, theft, gang membership, alcoholism and drug abuse are seen as indicators of the growing estrangement of youth from society. What is more striking, perhaps, is the fact that school culture itself, is often implicated in the promotion of deviant behaviour. The role of experiential curriculum, within the framework of civic education, becomes one of ameliorating the rise of hedonistic and antisocial behaviours that are now deeply embedded in the popular psyche of the teenage population, so as to replace them with values and actions more compatible with maintenance of a democratic society. This goal requires that youth are both trained to understand and value legal and democratic institutions. Community service has become the main vehicle to establish this envelope of personal relevance and this is constructed through direct engagement in the political process at the local level.

Parker (1989) and Clark (1990) see the mission of school-community participation as one that reconstructs the "social compact" and "civic virtue" amongst youth. They focus their criticism on the prevalence of poor social studies teaching methods and rigidly traditional school culture for the creation of the attitudinal and behavioral distance from democratic values. The prevalence of passive seatwork, focus on individual achievement, defensive teaching methods, avoidance of controversial issues and
departmentalization in high schools have all contributed to the failure of social studies to construct the necessary civic culture. Direct involvement and participation of the students in community projects represents one model for learning capable of rebuilding the students' confidence and attachment to democratic institutions. This in turn moves them towards a community of shared values and common goals, so as to combat the popular "crisis of civic life".

Just how this transfer towards civic virtue is manifest in their model of experiential education is left largely unexplained. The student is effectively plugged in and charges up on a strong dose of good will and concern for the community through participation in the local political process. The strongest evidence mustered in defense of this proposition is the example of one Hispanic-American named Pedro who, through his participation in a school sponsored, community-service program, has come to encompass and reflect all the fundamental traits of civic mindedness in his latest achievements. Pedro represents the ethnic youth offender made good, reaffirming the belief in the mythology of the "American dream". Yet, on one plane, these two authors have keyed in on a significant aspect of experiential curriculum. Participatory programs can create a stronger sense of relevance for the students which motivates them in a manner which traditional classroom instruction cannot. This is what Gager (1982) refers to as the presence of "intrinsic motivation" within the structure of experiential programs.

Massialas (1990) illuminates another justification for community service curriculum within the realm of citizenship education. Youth alienation, in his opinion, is due to the lack of emphasis on the development and assimilation of appropriate decision-making skills which has resulted in the rise of "anti-democratic" behaviour. He suggests that by using the school as a laboratory for broader society, secondary schools and social studies classrooms in particular can reverse the trend towards individualism by
operationalizing democratic principles and practices within all aspects of the formal institution. This is accomplished by training youth to value "fairness" through practice in the democratic process. Massialas also emphasizes the need to extend these activities directly into the arena of local government where the potential exists for apprenticeship in sociopolitical action. In this setting the students will be forced to grapple with the responsibilities of decision-making, enhancing their sense of political efficacy and developing a stronger sense of affiliation with the institutional process. To promote these objectives, schools must alter the norms and structures of "business as usual," and encapsulate democratic principles in daily operations and instruction.

While Massialas has identified that involvement in experiential programs holds the potential of developing one's sense of personal efficacy, his understanding of the causes of youth alienation is grounded in a perspective resembling that of victim blaming. Second, to suggest that the sudden infusion of conflict resolution and decision-making skills is the harbinger of a revolution in adolescent behaviour, stretches the parameters of possibility. However, the blatant and overpowering contradiction of preaching adherence to democratic principles within a school culture which is largely anti-democratic in nature is an important element in the critique of contemporary education. Community service programs are properly conceived, within this critique, as part of a broader movement for school reform. What is of value in this appraisal of community service curriculum is the notion that direct involvement in local politics provides the students with one manner of opportunity to dismantle the level of conceptual abstraction and skill achievement necessary to participate effectively in public life. It allows students to make sense of the power structures and institutional operations that affect their lives, while developing a sense of political efficacy and critical understanding of an otherwise highly complex bureaucratic environment.
The theme of building on the students' confidence and competence, so that they can participate effectively in civic life, has been refined by Newmann (1989). Central to Newmann's proposal is the need for student empowerment accompanied by systematic training in critical and reflective thinking. While retaining the rhetoric and slogan systems present in much of the citizenship literature, there is a deliberate attempt here to shift the emphasis of experiential curriculum towards task specific student achievement. In this case, the orientation is one of creating an environment focused on the exercise of "authentic discourse." By this, Newmann is referring to the process of developing the students' communication skills through dialogue emphasizing and giving value to the incorporation of their knowledge, beliefs and needs within institutional culture. The notion that experiential curriculum should build on and give merit to the status of the student's understanding, abilities, and sense of priorities, represents a significant departure from traditional transmission pedagogy which simply promotes the assimilation of externally predetermined knowledge, values and perceptions.

Analyzing the findings of their research on community service programs in high schools throughout the United States, Rutter and Newmann (1989) reported some very significant trends which shed light on the critical aspects of learning that emerges from the application of experiential modes of citizenship education with young adults. Their study reports that involvement in community service programs has had significant impact on students' personal development and little if any effect on their sense of civic responsibility. It appears that the pursuit and development of productive social relationships, which provides a sense of accomplishment through problem resolution, is the most strongly documented outcome. This tendency overshadows the acquisition of skills and knowledge, community awareness and involvement, career exploration and vocational experience. Second, this same sample of the students reported community service programs as the
context that promoted personal and social development opportunities more than any other.

The discovery that community service programs have little or no effect on the students' sense of social responsibility or ethical development is significant for it parallels the findings of Serow (1991). Rutter and Newmann attempt to account for this finding, suggesting that the emphasis on individual rather than public experience predisposes the students to perceive of their achievements in personal rather than broader ethical or societal terms. Their suggested response to the implications of these findings, however, is questionable. They reiterate the common declaration for the need to refocus curriculum so that civic virtue returns to the spotlight of intention through the selection of programs which embody critical social needs. In short, greater emphasis on the public good rather than personal and social development would create greater civic responsibility. While all this may be possible, Rutter and Newmann have failed to acknowledge possible rival interpretations rising from this data. One of the most damaging notions for citizenship education is the suggestion that high-minded civic virtues are of little relevance to high school students and, more importantly, that students' motives and aspirations for involvement are more closely tied to immediate concerns for personal, social and psychological development. Their response should not be the rehashed attempt to bury the desire for personal growth under another blanket of civic indoctrination. Instead, Rutter and Newmann would do better to recognize these trends as part of a dialectical learning process that may only posit the need for the consideration of civic virtue in later phases of adulthood. Investigating the relationship between the teenager's need for personal growth and the emergence of broader social values may be a more appropriate avenue of inquiry stemming from such findings.

One of the main thrusts in citizenship education over the past several decades has been the attempt to devise programs capable of dealing with youth alienation. This
phenomenon has largely been described in terms of antisocial behaviours. From an analytical perspective, alienation is most often perceived as a psychological or attitudinal disorder to be cured through short term programs that attempt to develop the students' affinity to their peers, adults, community and public institutions. This is precisely the perspective which framed a study on youth alienation by Calabrese and Schumer (1986). Their research focused specifically on several indicators of alienation within a sample of grade nine students involved in the development of a community project over a ten to twenty week period. The experimental group in this study demonstrated a significant decrease in levels of alienation and feelings of isolation compared to the control and limited treatment group as indicated on the Dean Alienation Scale. Also reported were reduced instances of discipline problems and improved attendance during and immediately following the treatment. Modest gains were reported on grade point averages. Despite the loss of traditional academic learning time, staff and community contacts interviewed after the study indicated improved relationships with the students. However, longitudinal observations indicated that these findings lasted only as long as the program was in existence. This rapid decline appears to be a trend indicated in most quantitative studies that are geared towards attitudinal and behavioural adjustment treatments.

Calabrese and Schumer's study is only one example of the prevailing attitude towards youth alienation in the citizenship literature. Manifestations of youth alienation are almost never conceived of as a product of healthy and critical minds reacting from experience and with provocation to a deranged society. Facets of youth alienation, if dealt with in a more constructive and progressive framework, can be viewed as a normal and even desirable response to the constant cycle of personal dilemmas that teenagers learn to cope with as they negotiate their entry into the highly complex political, economic, social, vocational and sexual relationships of adulthood.
Perhaps the most inclusive analysis of community service programs is provided by Conrad (1991). In his review of research, which encompasses twenty-seven quantitative studies over the last four decades, Conrad suggests that the evidence reflects strong and continuous support in relation to the positive impact of action-based programming on students' social, psychological and cognitive development. Contrary to Rutter and Newmann, Conrad focuses on a consistent body of research evidence describing a heightened sense of social responsibility growing out of community service programs amongst teenage students. On the down side, this study reports no appreciable support for increases in broad-based knowledge as reflected in scores on standardized tests, nor do any studies suggest lasting impact on the likelihood of later participation in civic affairs or on the students' sense of political efficacy. Some specifics of this study are worth summarizing because they highlight the breadth of research foci that have been explored recently within this paradigm.

In terms of social development, Conrad found that several studies demonstrated significant improvements in youth associations with adults, more favourable attitudes towards adults, more positive attitudes towards others, ability to work with others, increases in their sense of responsibility, as well as heightened ability to perform management and leadership skills. In the realm of psychological development the studies showed gains in self-esteem, moral and ego development, lower levels of youth alienation and feelings of isolation. Finally, in reference to academic learning and intellectual development, there appears to be positive support for improvements in thinking and perceptual processes in terms of open-mindedness, more complex patterns of analysis, ability to articulate ideas, weigh arguments, personal values reflection, autonomy in thinking and decision making. Enrichment of general factual knowledge from experiential programs seems to have produced the weakest results.

The trends present in the research findings on community service programs are
important to the analysis of student perceptions in the Casa Guatemala Project because they bring to light several critical themes that might be present in the subjects' emerging dialogue throughout different phases of their involvement. Of particular importance is the notion that the students may be initially motivated to participate, not from a complex ethical viewpoint, but from a more general perspective reflecting more immediate personal needs. Furthermore, these needs may reflect the desire to establish alternate social relationships or new insights on their present/future circumstances in life, neither of which are necessarily generated by a sophisticated worldview or humanitarian perspective. It would be advantageous to identify circumstances where these personal needs and the ethical principles are linked and explored within the framework of the experience. In which case, the subjects in this study may demonstrate a progression towards the internalization of a stronger ethical grounding for their actions as the events of the journey unfold.

2.5 Environmental Education

The rising acknowledgement of the need to train students to take action on environmental issues has brought forth a great deal of interest in the application of experiential curriculum within the secondary science curriculum. Indeed, very few disciplines have investigated variables supporting changes in behaviour and attitudes as thoroughly as the educators in the physical sciences. To date, the most impressive quasi-experimental research on experiential approaches comes from advocates of environmental education. In a manner strikingly similar to that found in citizenship education, the driving motivation behind the research in environmental studies focuses on the desire to establish lifelong behaviours and attitudes within each individual as the beacon of broader social transformation. Indeed, the literature on environmental education borrows much of its jargon and justification for experiential instruction from literature in citizenship
education. While advocates from both disciplines of study seek to enhance the individual's familiarity and appreciation of democratic institutions, environmental education places more emphasis on training students to take active roles in challenging the prevailing societal norms and structures that damage natural ecosystems and ultimately threaten our own well being. Understanding and utilizing democratic institutions is seen as the vehicle for reform and not as an end in itself.

What distinguishes this body of research is the fact that proponents of environmental education have more thoroughly investigated the direct relationship between various instructional treatments as independent variables of responsible environmental behaviour. Ramsey, Hungerford and Tomera (1982) explored the differences in environmental knowledge and behaviours between control, case-study investigation and sociopolitical action training groups within a sample of grade eight students. Focusing on six different operational categories they found that the groups receiving action training demonstrated a significantly greater ability to identify specific action skills, knowledge of issues, as well as exhibiting more frequent and overt examples of environmental behaviour than either the case-study investigation or control groups. It is also important to point out that overt environmental behaviour declined after instruction in all groups with relative means remaining the same.

An analysis of similar instructional relationships was carried out in an informal setting using a six day residential workshop for high school students. In this study Jordan, Hungerford and Tomera (1986) clearly demonstrated that awareness of issues by students precedes the progression towards application of remedial action measures. They also stipulate that basic awareness of issues does not necessarily lead to action. Instruction which develops the student's comprehension and application of action skills is first necessary to achieve changes in overt environmental behaviour. They also point out that
many students coming to the workshop were unaware of many of the action strategies open to
them in society. While camp situations traditionally focus on environmental awareness,
this study supports the idea that action training can be implemented with success and in
greater accordance with the aims of environmental awareness to achieve preservation and
conservation of ecosystems through citizen action.

Extending this comparative analysis of action and awareness methodologies, Ramsey,
Hungerford and Tomera (1987) evaluated the effects of two environmental workshops on
high school students. A six day residential program was used to observe changes in
knowledge of environmental issues and action strategies among six different instructional
groups. Categories of instruction for environmental action included ecomanagement,
persuasion, consumerism, organizational membership, political action and legal action.
Post-test scores revealed significantly greater knowledge of action strategies and issues
awareness in favour of the action instruction groups. A follow-up assessment of instances of
environmental action confirmed that participants in action instruction groups reported
taking a greater number of actions following the workshop. Once again they claim that issue
awareness instruction is insufficient as a means to promote knowledge of environmental
action strategies and in promoting overt behaviour modifications.

The strength of findings in earlier studies allowed Ramsey and Hungerford (1989) to
develop and refine an issue investigation and action training module (IIAT) for implemen-
tation and testing in middle schools. Their study assessed the ability of the IIAT teaching
module to improve the environmental behaviors of four intact treatment classes of grade
seven students compared to four control classes. They further investigated the impact of the
program on related environmental beliefs, values, individual and group locus of control,
sensitivity, knowledge of and skills in action strategies, as well as knowledge of ecological
concepts. Post-test analysis of variance revealed statistically significant gains in favour of
the treatment groups on all variables except for environmental sensitivity. It is suggested that knowledge and skills regarding environmental behaviour are more easily developed in the short term and that affective objectives (i.e., sensitivity) require longitudinal and cumulative improvement which are directly related to experiences in field trip or outdoor education programs.

Challenging the implications of the findings from the main body of research into environmental action instruction, Monroe and Kaplan (1988) suggest that issue awareness and problem solving strategies are more effectively taught in the classroom setting. From the results of a survey of fifty-one Michigan teachers, they report that action training can indeed contribute to the enhancement of problem solving skills and issue awareness, however, they are also quick to point out that participation in experiential projects may actually end up discouraging students from future involvement in environmental action. In support of their arguments they focus on several structural constraints within the culture and norms of secondary schools which diminish the probability that action-based curriculum can be implemented successfully. Their list of factors includes: resistance to leaving school property, brevity of instructional periods, limited preparation time, shortage of instructional support and curriculum guidelines, as well as limitations in the students' prerequisite knowledge and skills. That successful implementation requires highly dedicated and trained teachers is also borne out in the results of this survey. The gist of these findings may come as no surprise to those already experienced in action-based programming: Monroe and Kaplan reiterate many of the logistical pitfalls that coincide with experiential education and the structural hurdles that need to be considered in order to establish the conditions for successful and meaningful learning.

Hines, Hungerford and Tomera (1987) went beyond the analysis of instructional strategies best suited to establishing responsible environmental behaviour. They focused,
instead, on the identification of cognitive, demographic and psycho-social variables most influential in motivating students to take action. Their meta-analysis of environmental education research suggests that student action is a holistic response involving the interaction of several key variables that include: being cognizant of specific problems, having knowledge of action strategies, knowing which options are most appropriate to the dynamics of the issue, skill in the application of action strategies to a given problem and, ultimately, the desire to act on an issue. This last variable combines attributes such as an internal locus of control (i.e., an individual's sense of agency), attitudinal dispositions and the degree of personal responsibility. Finally, situational factors such as economic constraints, social pressures and the opportunity to choose from different actions have been identified as crucial components in strengthening the variables stated above. It is interesting to note that demographic variables such as age, income, education and gender demonstrated very weak correlations to responsible behaviour. As a result of their analysis of the research, the authors proposed a model for enhancing responsible environmental behaviour which combines the personality, cognitive and demographic factors that are found to be most responsible for shaping the learning process. They have stressed that personality characteristics (i.e., open-mindedness and empathy), while hard to address using this educational format and research methodology, are crucial to the success of action training projects. This study is invaluable because it goes beyond the identification of applicable educational rationales and instructional variables, to explore both the student and social characteristics affecting the learning process. In doing so, this meta-analysis establishes a framework for refining future quantitative and qualitative research into the specific intra-personal dynamics which support productive learning in experiential programs.

While the environmental education studies on community action programs have generated greater insights into important variables of instructional technique, student
characteristics and structural constraints, there are still significant gaps in the breadth of this research that need to be addressed. First, the focus of action behaviour research has almost always been placed on the individual acting in isolation of group or collective social dynamics. Student interaction, cooperation and interpersonal relationships must have a significant impact on the success of these projects and, yet, these dynamics have not received sufficient treatment in the studies carried out to date. This is all the more surprising knowing that the extension of organizational and communication skills are essential components in the success of political campaigns that address environmental issues. Individual legal, political, consumptive and persuasive acts are important, but only part of the collective momentum needed for a movement capable of social transformation. Second, the preoccupation with behavioural modification in environmental education is seen as a justification in itself, with almost no analysis of how students receive, digest or make sense of instructional objectives from their own perspectives. The input/output emphasis inherent in this approach to experiential instruction is still founded on learning outcomes determined for and not by the student. As a result, this pedagogical disposition perpetuates the potential for a serious disjuncture between the goals of educators and the needs and interests of students. Even with the most noble ethical objectives in mind they still risk failing to establish a learning environment that builds on a knowledge of student culture in young adulthood. Such a perspective on education perpetuates the present trend towards greater alienation from institutions and limits student motivation and initiative precisely because the substance and source of the crucial components is being determined for them.

The implications of the environmental action and behaviour research has relevance to the study of student perceptions in the Casa Guatemala program for several reasons. The findings suggest that when sociopolitical action training is added to the instructional agenda, teenagers respond with greater enthusiasm towards both the subject and method of
instruction. It is not surprising then, to find a range of related terminology commonly used to describe this phenomenon. The literature is replete with language such as empowerment, active engagement, relevance, apprenticeship and critical pedagogy. There should be no bright-eyed sense of revelation stemming from the fact that when students are taught about the skills and avenues of sociopolitical action in an engaging context, they respond by demonstrating more substantial understanding, awareness and enthusiasm towards the same. Likewise, if the students' exposure to sociopolitical action training is limited to a brief, one-time experience during their secondary education then they should not be expected to reflect long term attitudinal and behavioural changes, even though this might well be the outcome.

To add credibility to the claim that the use of experiential modes of instruction is a successful means of constructing the knowledge, values and skills necessary for active and informed citizenship, then educational research needs to shift the focus of its methodology towards studies that focus on an assessment of the substance of the students' dialogue surrounding their involvement in applied experiences. This study of the Casa Guatemala Project promises to illuminate the changing nature of such discourse as it chronicles the impact of the experience on students' perceptions.

2.6 Global Education

The issues dealt with under the rubric of citizenship and environmental education have largely been subsumed and transformed in various ways within the context of global education. Here, appropriate knowledge, values and behaviours contained in an informed worldview are defined in what is described as the "attainable global perspective" (Hanvey, 1982). Proponents of global education have suggested that a wide diversity of content and instructional methods be incorporated into elementary and secondary schools to promote the development of a more globally oriented worldview. This has led to confusion in the
conceptual framework of this paradigm. For instance, Hanvey's (1982) conception of global education includes perspective consciousness, global awareness, knowledge of global dynamics, cross-cultural awareness and awareness of human choices. Pike and Selby (1986) rework the original framework of global education offered by Hanvey, adopting similar veins of content, but alter the terminology to systems consciousness, perspective consciousness, health of planet awareness, involvement consciousness and preparedness, as well as process mindedness. To add yet another twist to the already vast array of categories proposed for global education, Kniep (1987) reduces the paradigm to a structure of basic content prescribed under four headings: a) systems [political, economic, ecological and technological], b) issues and problems [development, peace/security, environmental, and human rights], c) values and cultures [universal and diverse], and d) global history.

The incredible diversity of content that has been conjured up to define global education is more of a reflection of the larger attempt to satisfy the various interest groups that have a stake in establishing their turf within the emerging curriculum (Werner, 1990; Darling, 1988). The ensuing debate has derailed the attempt to establish global education as a credible discipline of study because of the need to appease the competing agendas of specific interest groups, all of whom seek to impose their own definition on the movement. As Popkowitz (1980) and Werner (1990) point out, global education exists as more of a "slogan system" of conflicting messages than a systematic, coherent and defensible approach to learning. Even with a shared sense of purpose and direction in hand, the state of research surrounding global education is woefully inadequate. Program evaluations have tended to reflect descriptive "show and tell," type orientations more than a serious analytical discourse that challenges advocates to substantiate the host of objectives and
The shift in emphasis from a national to a global perspective is centered around a fundamental reorientation of the individual's worldview. This requires not only that a new set of issues be placed in front of the learner, but also that he/she perceive them in qualitatively different ways. This is why Case (1993) offered the distinction between the substantive and perceptual dimensions of a global perspective. He suggests that the "lenses" we use to look at the world are equally, if not more important, than the ever shifting nature of problems or issues that confront us. As Case elaborates:

The perceptual dimension, which is the lens for the substantive dimension is made up of various intellectual values, dispositions and attitudes that distinguish a parochial perspective (i.e., making sense of the world from superficial, narrow, self-absorbed points of view) from a broad-minded perspective (i.e., making sense of the world from "enlightened" points of view)...The five interrelated elements which I offer as constituents of the perceptual dimension are: open-mindedness, anticipation of complexity, resistance to stereotyping, inclination to empathize, and non-chauvinism. These elements are neither additional pieces of information about the world nor what some might refer to as skills--they do not identify what students can do as much as what students are disposed to notice and to accept--and they are not the sort of traits that are acquired predominantly through repeated practice, especially if this is performed out of context. (p.320)

Case's point is an important one. If the present justification for global education is to stand then educators and researchers must realize that subject content, in itself, is insufficient as a basis to distinguish it from traditional disciplines of study. There must also be widespread acceptance of the notion that global education is concerned with shaping specific normative lenses for looking at other cultures and world issues. Furthermore, many programs in the long run fail to address this perceptual dimension successfully because they deal with it as a "treatment" or skill that can be transferred through repetitive applications, when really

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2 For examples of articles that exemplify this presentational approach to developing experiential global education programs see the following pieces listed in the bibliography: Alger, 1985; Rose, 1987; DeKock and Paul, 1989; and Ferguson, 1990.
such meaning perspectives are transformed through more radical dilemmas that require individuals to reconsider the very premises upon which their perceptions are formulated. As Mezirow (1991) points out, these instances of perceptual transformation can neither be artificially constructed for the learner, nor are they a predictable phenomenon.

There is also a common and critical distinction in the way advocates of global education approach experiential curriculum. There is a deliberate attempt to divert the emphasis placed on individual responsibility and allegiance to the nation state, towards a more universal commitment to issues of social, economic, environmental and political justice (Pike & Selby, 1986). Furthermore, there is an implicit understanding that global education is not simply about teaching students to understand world issues, but to train them to act on the beliefs that grow out of such an understanding. Darling (1988) elaborates on this notion of training for social activism in greater depth:

The belief that understanding must translate into action, has guided the development of global education since the early eighties. Social participation is now widely recognized as a central goal and is seen to be at the heart of the global perspective as well...Often the international point of view is emphasized over the national, and this in itself adds to tensions we saw emerging earlier this century...There is increasing demand for intelligent, enlightened action which will lead to a future that benefits the entire earth. Increasingly, emphasis is on universal concerns rather than regional ones, and even these are seen as inextricably bound to the welfare of all. (p.6)

National ideologies, as such, are replaced with perspectives that build on a recognition of the interdependence and interaction of all societies, cultures and regions of the world. This is extended into the demand that students be trained as active participants, both shaping and implementing solutions to problems within their immediate community (Alger, 1985).

The differences between the intent of experiential curriculum in global and citizenship education were also explored in an article by Schuyler and Schuyler (1989). Their critique of the goals of citizenship education are founded on the notion of interdependence; that there are massive contradictions arising from the intent to teach
students about the need for greater equality and political participation in a national framework, while ignoring the implicit connections to global systems and relationships. The purpose of action training in this framework is not to preserve democracy and the nation state for its own sake, but rather, to train young adults so that they are eventually capable of constructing an intensive critique of society at large and transforming this understanding into actions aimed at meaningful social change from the scale of the immediate community to the level of global systems. Within this notion of praxis is an understanding of youth alienation which is far more sophisticated and incredibly less patronizing than is the case in the literature emanating from the authors of citizenship education. There is a recognition of the corporate powers that daily undermine the relevance of the nation state, with all of its anachronistic ideology, and the need to engage the students' potential to take action in the face of these rapidly changing, crisis bound power relationships. In short, experiential education in this framework serves the purpose of promoting the students' critical awareness of issues, their sense of efficacy and agency and eventually their ability to take political action.

Experiential approaches to learning in global education, extend the teacher's ability to engage students in the direct exploration of these connections and develop their willingness to work towards social transformation (Chronkhite, 1991; Kniep, 1987). As so much of the content of global education centres on the status and dynamics of pressing world issues, there is a need to tie the learning of problems to the ability to find solutions and take action on a local scale (Pike & Selby, 1986). Enhancing the individual's sense of efficacy through active engagement in the pursuit of solutions to problems has the effect of reducing the potential for alienation and powerlessness in the face of oppressive macro-scale issues (Tooke, 1988). In his declaration of the need to move the global education curriculum beyond the present issue orientation, Werner (1990) states:
Unless learning and action are combined, an analysis of problems can become little more than "ambulance chasing," leading to cynicism and even despair rather than a deeper grasp of what the problems are, how they came to be, and what we individually and collectively can do about them. A sense of personal efficacy, so important to learning, is absent unless young people realize some avenue for agency. (p.5)

The goal of training students as activists for social transformation and justice has significant implications for classroom practice and school structure by the very nature of the instructional dynamics it conjures up. While Rose (1987) has focused on the possibilities for community integration and the development of decision making ability, others take the ends of a global orientation to student action much farther. Pike and Selby (1986) and Lewis (1990) have recognized that "empowering" students requires that traditional relationships in the classroom be dramatically altered. They believe that teachers must assume the role of facilitators, who engage students' needs and interests through the curriculum rather than determining the entire breadth of the package for them. By enacting this facilitative role, teachers thrust the responsibility for decision making, reactions and the consequences of actions into the hands of students, not only in an individual sense but in a cooperative manner as well. Active engagement in attempts to deal with community problems is the vehicle for promoting this goal. It is accomplished by motivating the students to immerse themselves directly in the social and political manifestations of the issues, creating more substantial and sophisticated perceptions of problems in the process (Pike & Selby, 1986: pp.49-52). Such a curriculum relies much more heavily on valuing the serendipity of experience over the acquisition of fixed chunks of textbook knowledge and is therefore a challenge to school norms and culture. For this reason alone it has been pointed out that implementation of experiential programs, regardless of the curricular framework, is often an agenda of school reform (Kniep, 1989; Nathan & Kielsmeier, 1991). This is one of the main reasons why ongoing experiential programs are
so rare in secondary education and research into it even more scarce.

Because the organizers of the Casa Guatemala Project have framed the learning experience within the broader conception of global education they must accept the ambiguities that such a framework holds. Even so, this placement is not without its merits. The educational component of the program is designed primarily to take students out of the comfortable surroundings of their affluent Canadian community for a short period of time and expose them to life in a radically different political, cultural, geographic, historic and economic context. Students' prior image of Guatemala is shaped by all the perceptual connotations encompassed in the popular discourse surrounding the "Third World". Through the students' experience in Guatemala these perceptions are challenged, renegotiated, re-applied and tested.

2.7 Cross-Cultural Learning

Cross-cultural awareness constitutes a significant part of the curriculum in global education, but the roots of research analysis on the subject are not historically tied to it. In fact, it would be more accurate to point out that global education has simply absorbed the topic of cross-cultural awareness within its framework as a result of its historical evolution. This relationship is evident even in the earliest works on global education, through the example of publications by authors such as Hanvey (1982). The basic assumption of cross-cultural education is that contact between individuals of different cultures leads to better understanding and appreciation of the "other".

Contemporary research into cross-cultural education has been promoted for various reasons and by a variety of different agencies. Study abroad and exchange programs at the university or college undergraduate levels, proliferated in the 1950's as campuses across North America attempted to construct a stronger international profile and generate a body of
graduates who were culturally literate in the norms and conventions of other societies and conversant in their languages (Kauffmann et al., 1992). The rationale underlying study abroad programs has been sound economic reasoning if nothing else, especially when one considers that the ability to communicate, conduct commerce and compete internationally is of critical importance to the interests of any nation. Maintaining the competitive advantage of society through the education of future economic and institutional elites appears to be a prime motive behind the implementation of many study abroad programs.

More strictly humanitarian reasons have also stimulated interest in the topic. The onslaught of both public and privately sponsored international development projects during the post Second World War era saw waves of volunteers working overseas in communities that were completely alien to them. Quite often this met with counterproductive, if not tragic, consequences as the values of volunteers and their programs clashed with those of the host communities. As a result, international development agencies became very interested in cross-cultural education as a fundamental strategy to ensure greater cultural sensitivity in the design and implementation of local projects and in the training of field staff. In a different, but related manner, international development agencies saw cross-cultural learning as part of their overall campaign for social and political change in society. The immediate offshoot of this was the emergence of "Development Education" beginning in the 1950's (Darling, 1988: p.2; Christie, 1983: p.9). Within the paradigm of development education, cross-cultural awareness is aimed at transforming the paternalistic and prejudiced perceptions held towards people of the "Third World" by individuals in the "First World". Empathy and solidarity are the principal constructs shaped within this conception of cross-cultural education. Cross-cultural awareness is developed at the high school level through a wide variety of educational programming, including international "pen-pal" or computer correspondence projects, child or community sponsorships, community linking,
student exchange programs, travel/study projects, and short term volunteer work experience in a foreign country. The latter is the rarest and the kind of experience provided by the Casa Guatemala Project.

A broad spectrum of research has examined cross-cultural programs. The findings of these studies focus on various aspects of the students' normative, social, psychological and intellectual development. Sikkema and Niyekawa (1987) investigated a cross-cultural learning program that brought American college students to Guam for an eight week period. From their analysis of journals and structured interviews they reported that the students went through four phases: a) disorganization, b) re-examination, c) reorganization, and d) the emergence of new perspectives (p.44). Their account of the learning process resembles the stages presented in Mezirow's (1991) theory of perspective transformation. Sikkema and Niyekawa (1987: p.55) describe the process leading to personal change as a blending of cognitive and affective learning. They note, in particular, that the core learning outcomes from the experience were a deeper understanding and appreciation of, as well as empathy towards cultural differences:

Negative responses to systems in the new culture that were quite different from their own gradually evolved into an attitude of appreciation and respect. This change was apparent in increased awareness of non-verbal communication; increased ability in subsequent communication with people of other cultures or subcultures as well as in their own; greater flexibility and increased tolerance for ambiguity shown in a more relaxed and confident approach to situations in daily living and to seemingly difficult problems; and an understanding of cultural relativity. (p.55)

By expressing such trends in the students' behaviour and discourse, Sikkema and Niyekawa claim that they were able to transform their mode of thinking from one characterized by mono-culturalism towards biculturalism (p.60). In doing so the students became acutely aware of their own culturally determined ways of thinking, valuing and behaving in the world; this is the essence of perspective consciousness but not necessarily transformation.
They quote one of the students: "...it is learning that there are different ways to perceive the world," (p.60). Indeed, discovering the nature of selectivity in one's own perceptions is part of the key to changing the assumptions and principles shaping patterns of thought. Mezirow (1991) identifies this as premise reflection and claims it is the driving force behind perspective transformation.

A great many of the findings from research carried out on study abroad programs have been summarized in the appendix sections of Kauffmann et al. (1992: pp.162-185). Most of the literature cited in this analysis of the research dealt with language or academic study abroad programs for college undergraduates in European nations and are, therefore, of limited relevance to this study. Nevertheless, some of the findings bear mentioning here. A conflicting body of evidence supports the notion that study abroad experience creates more favourable attitudes towards the host culture and more critical dispositions towards one's own society. A number of the research studies report, in fact, that students return home with largely negative attitudes towards the host country and a greater appreciation for their own culture (Kafka, 1968; Marion, 1974). Others report contrary findings suggesting instead, that students emerge from their experience with a more inclusive worldview. Pfnister (1972) performed in-depth interviews on 120 college students studying in "Third World" countries and reported that they demonstrated increased tolerance and understanding of other people and their views. Carsello and Grieser (1976) witnessed increased interest in travel, history, art, architecture and encountering new people. Marion (1980) executed a follow-up to the 1974 study and found that participants who travelled extensively during the interim between studies, had become less dogmatic, less conservative and demonstrated more favourable attitudes towards other cultures.

Many of the same studies suggest gains in interpersonal development, cognitive abilities and changes in student values. A program evaluation carried out by Pfnister
(1979) used an opinion survey and interviews with Goshen College alumni who had previously participated in a "Third World" study service trimester. The study reported that students were more tolerant of differences, decreased their concern about material possessions, strengthened critical thinking skills, experienced an increase in self-confidence, self-reliance skills and interpersonal skills. Carlson and Widman (1988) discovered stronger levels of cross-cultural interest, cultural cosmopolitanism and interest in foreign political concerns. This study also documented a mixture of more and less favourable attitudes towards the U.S. Koester (1985) and Carlson et al. (1990) demonstrated improvements in the students' knowledge of both the host country and the United States. Extending from this are the findings of several studies which point to intensified interest in academic pursuits and international events (James, 1976; Abrams, 1979; Koester, 1985).

Their analysis of this body of research on study abroad programs brought Kauffmann et al. (1992) to some interesting conclusions. They suggest that students are more likely to experience a stronger sense of personal growth than substantive gains in cross-cultural or global understanding (1992: p.75). The authors elaborate on the nature of this relationship:

During a first trip abroad, a student primarily matures, expands horizons, learns to be more independent and self-reliant, and acquires survival skills for coping with new environments. In subsequent intercultural experiences, the student can concentrate on building cultural and global understanding. (p.75-76)

Borrowing from themes presented earlier by Adler (1975), they describe the learning sequence as one which begins with an interest in foreign travel to discover another culture, which inevitably leads to the analysis of one's own society and ends up in a deeper and more thorough exploration of oneself.

Kauffmann et al. (1992) suggest that young adults primarily experience growth
towards greater personal autonomy of thought and values, a less confined sense of group belonging, more complex and relativistic notions of truth, a broader sense of vocational horizons, and a more expansive worldview shaped by greater empathy for others (1992: pp.127-142). This last aspect is described by the authors as a transformation into the stage of "empathetic ethnomorelativism" (p.140). While the research on the Casa Guatemala Project does not purport to validate this particular model of personal development, nevertheless, it does provide an interesting reference point to assess the transformation of the students' perspectives at different phases of the experience. Of particular interest will be the examination of changes in the students' discourse surrounding their perceptions of the dominant ideas and values common to their own peer groups, the Richmond community, and Canadian society at large compared with those encountered in Guatemala. From this point it will also be intriguing to gauge self-reports regarding the implications of the experience on their relationships with friends, parents, teachers and other community members, as well as their reconsideration of vocational options and lifestyle choices.

2.8 Discussion

There is growing recognition that implementation of experiential curriculum is both crucial to the enhancement of learning possibilities in secondary education and highly problematic in terms of program implementation. Many studies reflect the notion that student action training is ultimately directed at sociopolitical change. While explanations of the direction and dynamics of social and political transformation reflect a host of ideological perspectives, there is generally an implicit demand for youth to become involved in local, national and global issues. The literature on experiential education revolves around the development of an individual's sense of praxis surrounding three core themes: personal transformation, institutional reform and broad social change.
The recurrent theme of personal transformation tends to focus on the manifestations of youth alienation in post-industrial welfare states. It is widely acknowledged that contemporary society has isolated youth from the productive forces in society and in so doing has created an adolescent culture which complicates the transition into adulthood. Many students become "disfunctional" because they lack an environment which values and fosters their ability to develop the necessary attitudes, values, ethics, skills and responsibilities during the years of transition into adulthood. Justifications for experiential education, whether such activities involve peer tutoring, career apprenticeships, community study and service or political action, constantly refer to the potential of programs to reduce alienation. Yet students' are rarely taken into consideration in the planning phase of program development. Advocates of experiential approaches to citizenship, environmental, global and cross-cultural education need to reconsider how their pedagogy is cloaked in larger ideological imperatives. The research needs to look beyond test batteries which indicate trends in individual learning outcomes and focus on ways to document how the social and communicative aspects of experience contribute to transformation.

The goal of reforming learning outcomes also carries with it the need to alter the context in which education occurs. Institutional culture and norms work against such reforms. Implementation of experiential curriculum brings with it changes in time-tabling, new teacher/student relationships, acceptance of greater legal risks for school personnel, improved communications with and participation from the community, as well as a radical change in pedagogical approaches. Any one of these conditions sets in motion a wave of ramifications that many teachers and administrators will oppose for many reasons. It is one thing to develop noble claims for experiential learning with the support of the present body of research evidence but quite another to advance these projects successfully within the school context. Authors of the literature are quite right to identify experiential approaches
as a potent catalyst for school reform. The task of selling this understanding in a hostile climate is a matter altogether different.

The goal of social change is the least tangible and most contestable orientation for experiential curriculum. Research has failed to provide overwhelming evidence that involvement in experiential programs bears the fruit in lifelong behavioural and attitudinal dispositions towards sociopolitical action. What little evidence exists warns us that youth involvement in community service or political action campaigns is not motivated by sophisticated ideological imperatives and that forcing participation may even discourage future involvement in advocacy related activities. Several studies have indicated that young adults see their participation in community service programs more in terms of exploring chances for personal and social growth. This last motive might serve as a more acceptable instructional entry point for the proponents of experiential programs geared towards political and social transformation. While there is little question that action programs have the ability to engage the students' enthusiasm in critical social issues, such zeal may be short lived if experiential instruction fails to make the connection to more immediate personal ethics.

2.9 Conclusion

A wealth of literature and research has emerged on experiential education as a result of the enthusiasm of its supporters. However, a key component in our understanding remains unexplored. Student explanations surrounding the impact of programs on their knowledge, values and perceptions remains open to ongoing investigation. This is surprising given the presentation over the last two decades of a strong undercurrent of experiential learning theory which points towards the analysis of student discourse as the key to unravelling the dynamics of perspective transformation. If advocates continue to attest to the merit of action
programs to enhance the students' sense of political efficacy and agency then it is obligatory that they first establish an understanding of how learning is altering these perceptions from the viewpoint of the individuals involved.
Chapter Three: History of the Casa Guatemala Project

3.1 Introduction

The historical development of the Casa Guatemala Project coincided with a decade of popular revolution in Nicaragua and genocidal military atrocities in Guatemala. In coming to understand and respond to global events that deeply moved them, educators throughout North America and Europe designed curriculum and special school programs with an increasing orientation towards staff and student action (Darling, 1988). This chapter looks at the emerging scope, themes and implications of one such response in a Canadian educational context.

As an educational program, the Casa Guatemala Project was primarily concerned with a pedagogy rooted in the exploration of empathy and solidarity towards the people and popular struggles of the "Third World". The designers intentionally geared the program towards the integration of the "facts" of global poverty and political unrest with emotional or affective responses, for they assumed that the isolated presentation of the former constituted an incomplete, misleading and even dehumanizing form of education. Furthermore, they believed that thought and emotion were incomplete without the requisite application of social and political action. However, while constructing and guiding a constantly expanding platform for student learning and action over its first decade, the project encountered growing pains which, in hindsight, seemed somewhat predictable. Jill Poulton, Bob Carkner and the supporting teachers who developed the program have believed in and depended on broadly based community support to ensure the success of Casa Guatemala. In turn, this integration has forged unique and often conflicting relationships between the school and the surrounding community as the project began to explore new ground and non-traditional teaching methods. The Casa Guatemala Project, if nothing else,
would stand up as an intriguing case study of the institutional dynamics that are set in motion when educators attempt to change the established priorities, structures and norms of the contemporary high school.

This chapter, however, is not expressly concerned with such matters even though it does look at the key role played by the vision of the administrator who guided the project's development. These pages reveal the expanding scope, profile and impact of the project within the community. The history of the Casa Guatemala Project also provides a context for understanding the preconceptions of the participants in this study. The narrative was compiled through the accounts of five individuals. These figures include the high school principal who orchestrated the development of the program from its inception, a community member who initially instigated the connection between the Guatemalan orphanage and the Richmond schools, a teacher who has been involved on the periphery of the project since it began and who lead the most recent tour to Guatemala, as well as two students who participated in the educational tours to the orphanage on different occasions.

3.2 Origins and Early Years of Casa Guatemala: 1979-1989

I guess that I just never guessed that so many people would care about something like that. To me it was a small orphanage in a small country in the middle of nowhere and I cared, but I never thought that the caring would reach out into the community. I never thought that there would be students who would care enough to go down there and work; that people like yourself would go down and care to be

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1 The researcher recognizes the fact that these five individuals are advocates of the program which places limitations on the inferences which can be drawn from the history of the Casa Guatemala Project constructed here.

2 The accounts described here are based on interviews held between November of 1992 and May of 1993. All interviews were audio-taped and transcribed. In addition, several informal conversations and telephone calls with these people were conducted to refine the facts, information and perspectives presented in this study. This account of the history of the Casa Guatemala Project was reviewed and edited by Bob Carkner, Bruce Seney and Ray Sawatsky prior to publication. Several of the quotations have been altered as a result.
there and that people would drop off money at the school and not knowing, but trusting that a place like that existed and trusting us enough to know that the money would get there. I am amazed by it. So when you think that life can be negative and a lot of the world is in deep trouble, I don't know, that makes you feel good because it just keeps getting better and better. The children are really well cared for now which is wonderful. No one has given up on that place and those kids are the lucky ones. In Guatemala they are the lucky ones. (Poulton, Int)³

In the spring of 1979 Jill Poulton read an advertisement on a bulletin board in the staff lounge of Canadian Pacific Air in Vancouver. The request was directed to Spanish speaking candidates who would be willing to spend time volunteering at an orphanage named Casa Canada located in the heart of Guatemala City (Poulton, Int). The chance to work with the children and practice her Spanish appealed to Poulton, so she booked her holidays that summer and travelled to Guatemala. During her first encounter with the orphanage that summer, Poulton was introduced to two individuals who would alter the course of her life. The first was Naomi Bronstein, the Canadian born founder of Casa Canada who established the orphanage in the heart of Guatemala City in 1977 (Poulton, Int). The second individual was a recently acquired ward of the orphanage; an infant boy suffering from severe malnutrition and on the brink of death. Within a year Poulton had arranged the necessary papers and adopted Mike as her son.

Deeply moved by this first encounter with Casa Canada, Poulton returned to her own community and immediately established a sponsorship program for the children of the orphanage. Responses to her solicitation for private sponsorship of the Casa Canada orphans came quickly and a large network of friends helped to secure several important sources of funding. As Poulton recently recalled:

I decided because I knew so many people in the airline and there were so many kids down there, I decided to see if some people would like to sponsor

³ The following set of abbreviations will apply to the documentation of quotations and information in this chapter: Int = transcribed interview, IC = informal conversation.
a child. It was one hundred and twenty dollars a year. That is what it cost. That is what I charged them anyway. I had photos of all the kids and I knew who they were at that time. Not many of them were being moved or being adopted so they stayed there. I got them sponsored and some of them were sponsored three and four times. A good friend of mine, who was a teacher at London, said that she had a really great Principal at London Junior High here and that the school would be interested in sponsoring a child. So she said to come out and meet Bob and go from there. (Poulton, Int)

It is very likely that Bob Carkner would have discovered another project for the students of London Junior High to link up with if not for this chance connection with Jill Poulton. As it happened, the concept of sponsoring an orphan in Guatemala instantly appealed to Carkner's sense of vision regarding the extension of international development issues in the school. What really cemented the idea of a partnership between these two institutions was the fact that there would be a highly personal association for London students to the "Third World" through the assistance given to one child in Guatemala. In essence, supporting the orphans placed a real face and name to the otherwise clinical batch of statistics, issues and problems that typified the media's portrayal of the world's impoverished masses. Carkner believed that by following a child's progress his students would develop a sense of empathy and compassion for the orphans at Casa Canada and through this a deeper emotional appreciation of their situation and the issues which shaped their lives. While the slogans "global education" and "global perspective" were not commonplace in mainstream educational circles as yet, sponsoring a child in a "Third World" country seemed to strike the right chords in Carkner's vision of a dynamic education for the students at London Junior High. The underlying tenet of his educational philosophy revealed in this case was centered on the fusion of thought and action. In his mind, the sponsorship of the child was about instilling a sense of personal efficacy and solidarity in his students. With the connection between Poulton and Carkner now established, the two sat and discussed the background and needs of the orphanage in detail.
Within months of their first meeting, Carkner had mobilized the staff and students of London in a fundraising campaign for Casa Canada in the name of a fourteen-month-old orphan named Oswaldo (Carkner, Int). The school project was advertised to the parents and community through newsletters and assemblies. The response to this initial campaign was encouraging. Even though the fundraising goals set for the school's activities were intentionally modest, the success of the first events helped to establish a solid foundation for the continuation of the program at London. As Carkner recalled:

We raised about $300 to $400 and sent it down and Oswaldo’s picture was on the cover of the Casa Canada advert about sponsoring the orphanage. He was about fourteen months old and totally malnourished. I forget the weight difference but he was a complete horror show looking visually at him. We did it for three years. After three years he was adopted by an affluent family down there. It was a 'Cinderella story'. The students and kids in the school all felt that even though it wasn't much money, we had made a contribution to saving this youngster. Sort of a good feeling about the whole thing. So, from there we went on sponsoring. (Carkner, Int)

In one sense the strategy of sponsoring a child in a "developing" country was a simple replication of other contemporary agency-based initiatives taking place throughout Canada at that time. The Unitarian Committee, Unicef, Canadian Save the Children Fund had been using similar child sponsorship fundraising strategies which focused on the involvement of Canadian students for many years. What made the program at London distinctive, in one sense, was the attempt by several of the staff to foster a collective sense of responsibility amongst the student body towards the children of Casa Canada and Oswaldo in particular. Second, the fact that their sponsorship was being carried out as part of a broader community-based response under the coordination of Jill Poulton, made the "grassroots" connection even more tangible, supportive and important for the students in this situation (Carkner, Int). In other words, it was evident that their concern for the child was reflected by a wider cross-section of adults in the community.

In the first years of operation the sponsorship program did not overshadow other
fundraising drives at the school. The modest beginnings of Casa Canada allowed supportive staff members room to identify with the aims of the project without invading the traditional turf of other clubs or athletic programs. In this manner Carkner was able to quietly weave the philosophy of sponsoring Oswaldo into the fabric of the school's educational mission.

Bruce Seney, one of the teachers working with student council at London during that time, evaluated the early years of the project in this manner:

Initially, Casa Canada was a very detached thing. We did some fundraising for Oswaldo and Oswaldo was a name that everyone knew in the school but no one knew what he looked like. We got the semi-annual letter and the little photo but we didn't know who he was. (Seney, Int)

Even though the sponsorship of Oswaldo was not integrated within the school's mainstream curriculum at that time, Carkner was struck by the idea of resurrecting the traditional Remembrance Day Service to make it work as a promotional and educational venue so that it provided a powerful explanation for the school's involvement with Casa Canada. After consulting and sharing the idea with several of his teaching staff, the idea became a reality. The new assembly transformed the traditional emphasis on gratitude for the past deeds and sacrifice of long dead soldiers, into an multi-media event that demonstrated a graphic connection between Canada's military mobilization throughout this century and present day conflicts in developing nations (Carkner, Int). It was a theme that Carkner and the staff believed the students could appreciate and relate to. The relationship between the past and present was centered on the common need for social and political activism during times of crisis by several generations of Canadians. The modern foe to be vanquished in this scheme was poverty and injustice in the "Third World". The message also being that the students were making this connection through their sponsorship program.

Carkner explained it this way:

Remembrance Day in most schools was cancelled in the sixties and early seventies, but some teachers said we've got to try again; have another go at it.
We had some really creative people and so we thought well, okay, we are going to talk about the past, we're going to talk about the present and we are going to introduce an orphan. So all of a sudden the two came together and from then on every Remembrance Day was the connecting link between working for the orphanage and it was powerful. I then got BC TEL to do hookups and had them piped into the assembly and talked to Angie Galdamez who was the director of the orphanage, and so it became very high profile thing. But the connection was made between Remembrance Day, war and all those awful things that are happening out there and what can you and what can I, individually and collectively, do to make a better world. (Carkner, Int)

There was a feeling amongst the staff that the project was beginning to gather momentum and was becoming a more sophisticated vehicle to educate the student body. The assembly encapsulated the rationale for the school's involvement with Casa Canada and fostered a very personal emotional bond with the Guatemalan children. Characterizing the impact on the staff and students, Carkner stated:

For an hour and a quarter you had junior high school kids, grade eight to ten, sitting there. You could have heard a pin drop. We should have been handing out Kleenex at the end. It was pretty heavy stuff. We came out of there cheering because we realized that we had educationally struck something; we had created emotion and the emotion had some kind of effect on the kids and even though I would say it was not pleasant and they were sad, it was a positive thing from the point of view that we were able to make the connection for students. (Carkner, Int)

There was little doubt that the success of the new assembly was a source of great pride for the staff at London Junior High. The project had enjoyed some early success and had grown to involve a number of students and teachers who had become more personally committed to the orphanage.

In 1982 Bob Carkner was transferred as principal to Steveston Senior Secondary School in the same district. Support for the Casa Canada project at London quickly deteriorated as a result of his leaving. The new administration at London did not share the vision or enthusiasm for the project and several key staff moved to other schools (Seney, Int). Carkner quickly reconstructed the sponsorship campaign at his new school. The
program expanded rapidly at Steveston with the help of a few energetic and imaginative staff members who shared Carkner's zeal for the incorporation of issues of the "Third World" in the broader programming of the school. The Remembrance Day Ceremony was invoked, once again, as the primary means to promote support and understanding of the project within the school. At one point during this year Oswaldo was adopted by a family in Guatemala and Steveston began a new sponsorship of a mentally and physically disabled child named Juan Mario (Poulton, Int).

Ken Lorenz, one of the teachers who had been instrumental in creating the program at London, visited Guatemala and the orphanage on a photo-journalism tour in 1984 (Seney, Int). Lorenz did this despite the fact that news reports at home chronicled the horrendous nature of the atrocities being committed by military death squads throughout the country. He brought back a series of photographs, fresh news of the children at Casa Canada and a realization of a new set of possibilities for the school-based project. This was the first time that anyone from the school district had visited the orphanage outside of Jill Poulton. The connection between the community and the orphanage became more personal as a result. Lorenz's stories and pictures sparked an intensification of interest in the project within the school and community (Seney, Int). Guatemala evenings and special presentations were held throughout the area on several occasions as fundraising events for the project. Larger and larger sums of money were sent down to the orphanage each year as commitment and ownership of the program grew within the student body at Steveston. Sizeable donations from teachers, parents, businesses and community members began to appear on Carkner's desk at all times of the year. On many occasions the donations from community members were anonymous and reached quite sizeable sums (Carkner, Int). The scale of the project was starting to grow. By the mid-eighties the size of the annual donation to Casa Canada had grown to a respectable sum of three to four thousand dollars (Carkner, IC).
In 1985 the name of the orphanage was changed to Casa Guatemala. Angie Galdamez, a long time volunteer and coordinator at the site, became the new director of the orphanage when Naomi Bronstein returned to her home in Ottawa (Poulton, Int). At this time the civil war in Guatemala was extending into the streets of the capital city, and Naomi, who had guided the development of the orphanage from its inception, no longer felt that she and her family were safe (Poulton, Int). Galdamez believed the new name was a more appropriate reflection of the children who were served by the institution (CF). Related to this was the fact that private sources of funding were increasingly coming from a number of different international organizations including Denmark, France and the United States (Poulton, Int). The new name was less partisan and also signaled a changing of the guard at the orphanage. Galdamez's directorship also brought forth a new relationship with the school project in British Columbia. Carkner made a point of keeping in close contact with the new director during this period to obtain up to date reports on Juan Mario and the status of children at the orphanage. A solid friendship was established between the two administrators as communication between them became more frequent (Carkner, Int).

Sponsorship of Casa Guatemala, in the name of Juan Mario, continued for seven more years at Steveston High. By the late 1980's the idea of expanding the scope of the program began to emerge as a natural progression from the success which had been experienced up to that point. New ideas were needed to keep the project vigorous and to renew the level of involvement in Casa Guatemala fundraising efforts (Carkner, Int). Believing in the strength and educational value of the Remembrance Day Ceremony, Carkner and his fellow teachers managed to coordinate the production of a video of the school event as it occurred in November of 1988. Funding for the documentary was arranged in a joint venture between

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the school, three chapters of the local Veterans Associations and the Ministry of Education in British Columbia (Carkner, Int). Force Four Productions of Vancouver was approached to produce the video and accepted the contract. By this time the annual assembly had become a highly orchestrated event that involved the participation of decorated war veterans, local politicians, and several Guatemalan families who had moved to the area as refugees in recent years. To cement the concept of a global vision, within the structure of the ceremony, a conference call was coordinated between Bob Carkner in the school auditorium, Angie Galdamez at Casa Guatemala and two separate students from Steveston who were living and working in Japan and China during that year (Force Four Productions, 1989). Through the broadcast conversation with Carkner the school audience heard these various perspectives on the importance of what the school project was advocating.

Once completed, a copy of *A Memory and A Vision* was sent to every school district in the province of British Columbia and received air time on several local television stations (Carkner, Int). The success of their involvement with the orphanage was becoming widely known and Carkner and several of the staff were asked to do presentations for a number of community organizations and educational conferences in the region. Letters of appreciation for the video arrived at Steveston from all corners of the province. Articles on the assembly and the Casa Guatemala project appeared in local newspapers and the journal of the Pacific Command of the Canadian Legion. The article in *Legion*, entitled "A Global Approach To Remembrance" stated:

Steveston did more. It made remembrance contemporary. It encompassed yesterday's wars and today's strife in countries such as Guatemala in a 75 minute school service...The video depicts the ravages of war with glimpses of cultural exchange opportunities for Canadians. It makes no bones about the fact there are a score of countries today with repressive governments or rebel insurgents and that the death tolls are in the tens of thousands on
and beyond the Pacific Rim. 5

In this respect, not only was the sponsorship of Juan Mario working as an educational medium for the students at Steveston, but the program also became a stronger vehicle for both community integration in Carkner's school and networking with other educational constituencies (Carkner, Int). By this stage in the project's history Carkner could even count on the response of graduated alumni from Steveston and other regional schools to provide a steady stream of donations and support work for the cause (Carkner, Int). A number of elementary and junior high schools in the district also began their own child sponsorship and fundraising campaigns for Casa Guatemala in the fall of 1989 as a direct manifestation of the expanding profile and knowledge of the project in the Richmond community.

It was at this point that Carkner began to see Casa Guatemala as a model for the implementation of global education in other school districts throughout the province. This perception was based, in part, on the increasing profile and publicity that surrounded the project at that time. Global education, as a movement centered on issues of institutional and curriculum reform, was gaining momentum throughout many North American educational jurisdictions at that time (Darling, 1988), and Carkner was the central figure in what had become a very unique "home-grown" project in British Columbia. Carkner accepted this new mission as an educational leader in the name of global education because it strongly coincided with his philosophy of what a principal should be promoting and what schools should be engaged in:

I think in my role as a principal, I have the responsibility to work with teachers to realize the school's vision. The principal has got to be constantly looking to the vision, to be looking further, to be unfolding things and working with people about that.....I think every school should have a project, I mean at

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5 *Legion*, 65 (2), July/August 1990, p.31 (CF).
least one, but it should probably have at least three or four. That is the only way the school can move forward. Education is going to become better. More young people are going to be staying in school because it is relevant, because it is exciting, because we are working. I think when I started teaching there was the notion that schools couldn't be agents for social change. I think schools can be. I think education can be. (Carkner, Int)

By this time the pressure for changes to the project began to take place as a result of internal forces. Ownership of the Casa Guatemala project had extended to a core group of staff who shared the desire to improve and expand its mission. After a decade as a successful, but limited, fundraising effort for a distant orphanage, it was time to take the project and educational experience one step further. During a meeting held for staff involved with Casa Guatemala in the spring of 1989, Dave Gautier suggested one option that reflected the prevailing sentiment of several of the group members. The time had come to send a representative team of teachers and students from Steveston to Guatemala to visit and work at the orphanage. Carkner recalled the moment in this way:

They said to me that you should put your money where your mouth is. In fact you should, by example, go to Guatemala. They sort of jumped all over me. You are telling the kids they should do it. Why don't you do it? Made sense... It was as if somebody had lit a candle. We could have done it earlier. Nevertheless, it was the right time and they felt it and when they said it I felt it too. (Carkner, Int)

A number of factors conspired to make such an escalation in expectations possible. First and foremost was a relative decline of overt hostilities within Guatemala. Once again, tourism was opening up and reports coming back from community members who had recently visited Guatemala suggested that such a trip was feasible and relatively safe (Poulton, Int). Second, Angie Galdamez had grown to be good friends with Carkner through a decade's worth of phone calls and letters. She also depended on the yearly donations coming from Steveston High as part of the operating budget for the orphanage (Poulton, Int). In response to this sense of trust and friendship, Galdamez felt comfortable inviting Carkner and the students to visit
the orphanage so that they could directly witness the work they were supporting. Jill Poulton was, once again, shuttling between the Guatemalan orphanage and Canada, and acted as a messenger between Galdamez and Carkner. The offer to visit the children was becoming more and more explicit. Jill Poulton recalled the thrust of events in this manner:

I think he [Carkner] got tired of always just being on the phone and having this perception of what was going on in Guatemala. I think he really wanted to see it first hand and Angie, I think, talked him into it because she wanted to meet him because he had taken such a personal involvement in the place and sponsored a child himself and sent lots of money himself. I think that she kept saying, "Come down, come down," and the last time that I was down there, I went twice in 1988, she said, "Tell Bob and the students to come down. If they really want to help here the way to do it is to come." It took him another two years to go because he was really worried. (Poulton, Int)

It was as if Carkner was being compelled to organize a staff and student field-trip to Guatemala by nature of the very dynamics of the progressive expansion which he and the other teachers had instilled in the program over the years. With this new realm of possibilities, came the even greater challenge of selling the idea of travelling to Guatemala to the students, their parents, the staff and district administration. Carkner was about to enter one of the most turbulent years in his professional career. The sheer magnitude of the Casa Guatemala program was beginning to encounter a measure of resistance from several sectors of the broader educational community. Many individuals felt they had a stake in the future direction of the program at Steveston High, because the expanded format for the project had ramifications on other school activities and priorities. Others believed that Carkner did not truly realize the full weight of what he was proposing (Carkner, Int).

Taking students to a place like Guatemala gave skeptics a reason to limit the emerging parameters of this global education program.

3.3 The Great Leap Forward: Launching the Trip to Guatemala (1989-1990)

I guess I worry because we could just sit and never move ahead. The only
people who are really going to change the direction and make education a more influential force in making a better world are the people within it; the teachers and the administrators, when we work together in concert, to endeavour to change the lives of our kids, change the attitudes of our kids. (Carkner, Int)

Late in the spring of 1989, Carkner brought Ray Sawatsky, the newly elected president of student council, into his office and asked for his assistance in planning and promoting a working field-trip to the Casa Guatemala orphanage during the upcoming year (Sawatsky, Int). While their school had been sponsoring the orphanage financially for the past seven years, bringing students to visit their friends in Guatemala represented a radical departure from anything which had been conceived previously. There had been a constant stream of travel programs to Japan, France and Spain from the school, but this was completely different. This was Guatemala, a war torn and destitute "Third World" nation that consistently headlined in the Canadian media as the mecca of human rights abuses, death squads and political corruption in Central America. The proposed trip also represented a series of marching orders for Sawatsky that he never anticipated receiving when running for student council president that year:

He sat me down and said we have been working on this idea for quite some time of having students go down to Casa Guatemala. We were all very familiar with Casa Guatemala and his program through the fundraising that had gone on in the schools. Rather than be tourists and rather than be people that watch and observe, why not actually get involved in work there and take it one step farther? I was very excited I guess. It was a concept at that point and nothing more. It was kind of a dream, you know. The reality was probably a very small percentage that it was going to happen at that point. It was kind of an idea and it all happened so fast. Within six or seven months we were there. By the time we got back the next September for school, for grade twelve, we were working on everything. Everything we were doing was working towards the program and there really wasn't time to think about it or be apprehensive about it really until we were leaving to go. (Sawatsky, Int)

The decision to proceed with the trip to Guatemala was a novel and exciting twist to the established agenda for the staff and student body at Steveston. During the fall semester,
activities in support of the orphanage overwhelmed the school. The direct nature of what was being proposed for the staff and students rallied the school body and community behind the project as never before. The number of teachers interested in assisting with the Juan Mario Fund swelled to well over a dozen (Seney, Int). For the first time donations included material contributions to support the children. Very few specifics were laid out concerning the size and composition of the contingent that would travel to Guatemala and represent the school, but that did not seem to detract from the new wave of enthusiasm, activism and pride that hit the school that fall (Sawatsky, Int).

Unravelling the explanation for this intensified interest and participation in the project is not a straightforward task. Indeed, the novelty of sending students from Steveston was a major factor but this alone does not account for the widely expanded base of support within the school and community at large. The filming of the Remembrance Day Service that fall and the media's interest in the proposed travel program brought forth a great deal of publicity to the school and as a result it magnified the sense of mission and responsibility towards Casa Guatemala amongst the staff and students (Carkner, Int). Sawatsky recalled this period:

A lot of media groups out there thought this was great. The Fifth Estate thought this was the neatest thing which had happened in high schools in quite a while. Anyway, media, television, radio, newspapers embraced this program very quickly. So from that point of view they wanted to see it happen. This was new and novel in schools. When the schools and the school system was being badly criticized, this gave them a shining light. (Sawatsky, Int)

The recognition of Steveston's project was all the more important in the face of their long standing rivalry with Richmond Senior High. In this sense, competition and a superior sense of mission may have had more to do with the rising level of interest in the program than any other single factor (Sawatsky, Int). Regardless of the dynamics behind this heightened awareness and sense of mission, the school was clearly engaged in new frontiers:
When it was simply a couple of fundraisers throughout the year to raise a thousand or two thousand dollars it didn't involve the entire school. It involved a select group of students. You know most were student council and two or three administrators; Mr. Carkner and a couple of teachers. What happened when we elevated the trip to going to Guatemala we elevated what happened in the school drastically. That year student council did not do an event for anything other than Casa Guatemala. So a very high awareness of the program existed which wasn't there in past years. In my grade eleven year I don't remember the program being as public as it was when we were trying to promote it...All the students, whether they were going or not, got involved...Some high schools have sports teams that are the focus but our school that year seemed to be very clearly focused on the Casa Guatemala Project and there wasn't probably two days that went by were there wasn't something said, or some activity, or some news to do with the program and so all the students were very aware. So that was a big change from the year before. (Sawatsky, Int)

By October of 1989 the staff involved with the project had put together a formal proposal for the visit to Guatemala (CF). It suggested that a contingent of ten to twelve students and three or four staff visit and work at the orphanage. The brief also reflected the major selling point for the trip which had emerged by this time. Once again it was Jill Poulton who intervened to put the "bug" in both Carkner's and Galdamez's ears concerning what would be the central rationale for a trip to the orphanage (Carkner, Int). Over the past year a fully operational chinook salmon hatchery had been installed as a working biology classroom at Steveston under the direction of three teachers, Carkner and Joe Kambietz, a consultant from the Department of Fisheries and Oceans. The hatchery was purportedly the first of its kind in a North American high school setting. Building on the success of the hatchery, Carkner sought to utilize the expertise of Frank Price and several of the students, to enhance the productivity of the local tilapia fish farm which was already on site at the Rio Dulce orphanage in Guatemala (Poulton, Int; Carkner, Int). This suggestion lent greater legitimacy to the proposal for the travel/work plan because the stated rationale was now couched in terms which implied the framework of an applied field trip. This angle made the excursion more marketable to district administration, community
members and parents.

The announcement that a team of staff and students would travel to Casa Guatemala came, quite appropriately, during the November 11th assembly that year (Sawatsky, Int). The next phase of preparation for the organizing team was the selection of students who would represent the school on the excursion. At the initial information meeting nearly two hundred students were waiting eagerly to hear the proposed outline for the Guatemala trip to learn of the applications procedures (Sawatsky, Int). This turnout suggests that approximately one in every seven students at Steveston Senior High was at least interested in participating in the travel program to Guatemala. On its own, the figure demonstrates the popularity and strength of support for the project within the student body that year. The students were asked to submit a parental permission form, a brief statement indicating why they wanted to go and a personal resume which emphasized their extracurricular activities during the last several years. One hundred and thirty fully completed applications were submitted to the staff committee for evaluation in the following weeks (Sawatsky, Int). A crude triage was employed to thin the number of applicants down to a short list of thirty interview candidates. Students were eliminated in the first order on the basis of grades and past disciplinary problems (Seney, Int). The remainder of applications were pitched against one another on the basis of choosing the best possible representatives from the school. One of the major qualifiers for this lot of candidates was enrollment in the fish hatchery program as this was the assigned work project and prime objective of the trip (Sawatsky, Int). One of the last considerations was gender balance, but in the end the number of female applicants outnumbered the male applicants by a ratio of more than ten to one (Sawatsky, Int). Interestingly, this imbalance in the gender ratio of applicants continued for the next three years of the program. An explanation of this would stand out as an important piece of research in its own right. With all these factors in mind the short list
was negotiated, established and then posted by the selection committee. At this point an interview panel was formed and each candidate went through a fairly intense thirty minute grilling at the hands of a ten teacher panel (Seney, Int). Observing the available video footage of these interviews confirms the image of an interrogation like atmosphere during these sessions (Force Four Productions, 1991). Once the interviews had been completed the candidates were ranked individually by the committee and each student was voted on in turn. A list of twelve finalists was drawn up (Sawatsky, Int). Even with this stage in the process completed the committee could not announce the final travel roster. There was no confirmation coming from above as to the certainty of numbers permitted to go to Guatemala or even that the plan had the official sanction of district administration (Sawatsky, Int). A long period of uncertainty began to set in around the project.

Eliminating the students on the basis of grades and conduct was an expedient measure but one that had a lasting impact on the clientele that would support and participate in the program in the years to come. Sawatsky was more aware of the intention behind the selection criteria because of his leadership on student council and close connection to school administration. He recalled the original enthusiasm and participation of "mediocre" or "marginalized" students in this way:

When I went to the meeting you expected that class of student that was into school. This was so different than school and school functions. This was humanitarian, moral. However you want to look at it, that sparked the interest of some of these students. Maybe some of them were rebels and maybe when you are that age...I remember, even I was looking for something to identify with at that point in my life or whatever. This could have been it for them...It wasn't just smart people. It wasn't just people with good grades. It was a very wide range group of people ethnically who wanted to go. Even people who didn't speak English. They still wanted to go on this program. (Sawatsky, Int)

His perceptions of the implications of this conscious decision by the selection committee are even more revealing and are worth stating at length here:
J.S.: What kind of ramifications do you think that had on the program in later years?

Sawatsky: Once again you may not be getting a truly representative sample of students. You are getting the upper echelon or whatever...Perhaps one of those students are quite different in that their whole focus in life is to be very loving and caring and maybe the children missed that. The children in Casa Guatemala might have lost something by one of them not being included. The other thing I think about, you know, is often people that are conscious of world conditions and levels, they aren't always or even usually the upper echelon people or the academics of the world. It is not usually the academics or the well-to-do that really care, but often the people who are less well-to-do which aren't as academically sound which care more.

J.S.: Can you explain that?

Sawatsky: Maybe they identify better with the fact that everything hasn't come easy to them in life so maybe they identify easier with the Third World people a little better....Maybe the academic people get so caught up in what they are doing that they lose the personal interaction and the love and the care of the people around them and giving that back. They become self-consumed, self-determined an that kind of thing and they lose that. (Sawatsky, Int)

The purpose here is not to indict the selection process, but to expose the context and implications of these decisions for the program. To be sure, choices had to be made within a volatile political climate. The staff organizers needed to ensure that the selected candidates did not represent a potential liability to the safety of the group or the future of the program. Carkner was preoccupied diffusing the growing and increasingly vocal resistance to this new program from within his own school and the community at large. All the correct buttons had to be pushed, and selecting students with the "right stuff" was but one part of that process of steering the project in the best possible direction.

Pressure on Carkner was beginning to mount. Part of the resistance came from more silent sources within the school staff who saw the program interfering with other fundraising efforts and disrupting the normal cycle of events at Steveston (Seney, Int). Several representatives of international development agencies expressed their concern about the trip because they were skeptical of Carkner's depth of understanding of the
political turmoil in Guatemala and the potential risk for students' well being (Carkner, Int). Throughout the months leading up to the trip he would often arrive in his office and open letters with attached newspaper clippings that clearly pointed out the fact that Guatemala was far from being peaceful. Several community members and parents openly disagreed with the program philosophy and intent, favouring a more domestic focus for the school's projects and fundraising efforts (Carkner, Int). Carkner was being questioned repeatedly by education officials who challenged the wisdom behind this break with the mission of the school:

I had administrators in front of other administrators tell me that they felt that we don't have time to be fooling around in Guatemala; that we have got enough going on in our schools, solving problems of fighting, ethnic problems, etc. We haven't got time to be planning trips to Guatemala. We've got enough in going on in our own back yard; not that I am talking about charity but I'm talking about just the management of the schools...the kids not getting along, attendance problems, etc. How can you possibly fool around with Guatemala? So those forces were out there, too. (Carkner, Int)

With this critique of the new mandate, Carkner began to realize the full scale of the implications that were occurring as a result the changes of the project's goals. In response to his growing sense of apprehension surrounding the project, Carkner consulted a lawyer, who assured him that as long as standard procedures and precautions were enacted, then he had no basis upon which to worry in a legal sense (Carkner, Int). The objective of taking students to Guatemala was no longer simply a lesson surrounding the promotion of a "global perspective" within the school. The ensuing fundraising campaign and organizational responsibilities challenged the established order of priorities at the school and in the district.

Casa Guatemala was clearly becoming a project centered on institutional reform on a variety of fronts. The mission of the school was shifted towards a major concern with issues of the "Third World." The Casa Guatemala orphanage represented both the case study and the
call to action. This dynamic also implied that the teachers revisit the style and substance of their instructional pedagogy, even if only on a very superficial level. For some teachers, even the implication that some of their students would be temporarily removed from class to participate in the program was too much to handle (Seney, Int). Second, the school's relationship with the community was being altered on two fronts. Fundraising and promotional efforts brought the school in closer contact with parents, politicians, businesses and agencies in the district that supported the aims of the Steveston project (Carkner, Int; Sawatsky, Int). In some respects the cause of Juan Mario and the fish hatchery became a community-wide symbol of progress, pride and leadership. Both of these projects were, by now, receiving broad recognition as a pioneering program in secondary education (Carkner, Int). With the higher profile and more extensive community integration came increased public scrutiny of the school.

The program was still shrouded in uncertainty by the time of the first semester break at Steveston in mid-January of 1990. Carkner had booked and purchased an undisclosed number of airline tickets to Guatemala City for a date in March but the exact size and composition of the travel team was still not revealed (Sawatsky, Int). Confusing the matter even more was the sideline participation of the Force Four Film's production crew which had been hired, once again, to document the journey and experience of the Casa Guatemala team. Their return to the school was brought about through the diligent efforts of Chris Phillips, one of the teachers on the coordinating committee of the project at Steveston (Carkner, Int). Through several months of constant negotiations and applications, Phillips managed to swing funding for the film production through the British Columbia Teachers Federation, the W. R. Long Memorial Fund and the Canadian International Development Agency (Force Four Productions, 1991). By the time the interviews took place in January they had already put a production schedule in place and were busy taping the students and
events at the school. The presence of the Force Four crew at the school added to the perceived momentum of the project and heightened the prospects that a high school team would definitely be going to Guatemala.

During the onset of first semester examinations in mid-January of 1990, district administration suddenly announced that Carkner was to be transferred to Richmond Senior High School, effective immediately. In return Steveston was to receive their principal: Mr. Roy Akune. The news shocked the staff, students and parents of Steveston (Sawatsky, Int). Organized resistance emerged within hours of the announcement. Newspapers, television stations and the trustees were called by parents and community members almost immediately to spread the word of this decision in their hope that the district administration would rescind the order (Sawatsky, Int). Students organized a petition that was signed throughout the community. Telephone lines to the school and the district office were jammed as parents and local citizens sought clarification on the news and voiced their opposition to the transfer (Sawatsky, Int). After several days of badgering by the parents, students and community members the message was clear that this was an unpopular decision. The decision was reversed within a week of being issued (Sawatsky, Int). However, this abrupt reversal of intentions still took place with a slight twist: Bob Carkner was still to be transferred but this move would take place at the end of the academic year. In the interim he was granted permission to go ahead with the plan to travel to Guatemala in March.

By the time the dust had settled from this commotion, there were only seven weeks to prepare for the trip. The students were given word from Carkner that only six of them would be going, accompanied by two teachers and the three member film crew. The school contingent was half the size of the original estimate that had been rumoured in the previous months (Sawatsky, Int). Carkner would lead the trip with the assistance of Frank Price,
the biology teacher. Sawatsky was one of the six students to be selected. Four female students made the list as well as one other male student. With the release of the news that the trip was definitely going to take place, the group quickly prepared for the journey. None of the students had been to a tropical country before. Shots had to be taken, passports arranged and equipment organized (Sawatsky, Int). Introductory Spanish classes were arranged for the group. On top of all the individual responsibilities came the huge responsibility of dealing with the seventy-two boxes of goods that had been donated for the orphanage. The organization of donations was coordinated by the International Issues Club which had played a central role that year in promoting and fundraising for the Juan Mario fund. Carkner took care of the transportation of the donations by arranging free shipment of a container on the flight down to Guatemala (Seney, Int). Last minute fundraising events occurred and a special assembly was held to wish the group farewell. In total the school and community had raised close to six thousand dollars for the orphanage (Sawatsky, Int).

If the program had been mired to some degree in controversy and criticism over the intervening months, it was now transforming into a wave of support. To assist in the personal expenses of the trip, Steveston's Alumni Association donated five thousand dollars to assist with travel expenses for the group (Carkner, IC). Through all of this the mood amongst the student team became more intense as the March 17th departure date grew closer. Sawatsky recalled his sense of the personal implications that this journey posed with the notion that his "lifeworld" was about to be shattered by the experience. It is also interesting to note in his recollection of events, the paternalistic overtones in the students' collective perception regarding their upcoming role at the orphanage:

We were so involved with everything, the fundraising especially and the organization that finally when we had no more of that to do, we had nothing to occupy our time...The trip was organized and we were going. Then it really came down that we had time to think what we were doing and getting into. There was a great sense of seriousness there. We were going out into
the great beyond. There was a great sense that we didn't know what it was or what was going to happen. We were stepping out of our comfort zones. We were doing something so completely different that there has got to be a profound effect here somewhat. We thought that profound effect would be our influence on the people of Guatemala and the self-gratification that way. We thought it would be gratifying by being helpful and sharing our knowledge and that type of thing. When it came down to the day we were leaving it was just, let's do it. Let's stop thinking about it because it is driving us crazy. In some senses we were trying to talk ourselves out of it. It was a really an emotional roller-coaster ride inside our own heads because we didn't know what to expect. So we just kind of had all these different thoughts. I was kind of setting my life in order. (Sawatsky, Int)

The growing sense of trepidation was not limited to the students. Carkner frantically organized all the last minute details. With the day of departure finally at hand Carkner's level of apprehension was very noticeable (Force Four Productions, 1991). So much was at stake and he was entering an environment that he could no longer tightly control or anticipate.

The flight to Guatemala went smoothly, but for the team it represented a huge step into the great unknown and a time of intense reflection on the events that had taken place during the last six months. For the students the flight symbolized the physical and emotional distance between the "First" and "Third World". In reference to this, Sawatsky revisited the events leading up to their departure and assessed the situation with great clarity some three years after the fact. He spoke of the personal impact of this journey, as a process of breaking with what he identified as a series of "comfort zones":

The first comfort zone being a kind of distanced relationship with these people; the Casa Guatemala people. It is very comfortable for us people to sit up here in North America and send them money out of the goodness of our hearts and leave it at that. Sort of a spiritual feel good about yourself doing something for these poor degenerates type of attitude. It is a very comfortable way to be...You can maintain a distance from these people. You don't have to interact with them. You don't have to live with the people in South America. You don't have to know them...To elevate the program to this level that comfort zone can't apply. You have to get to know the people there intimately. You have got to trust them. They have got to trust you...The other comfort zone I talk about was personally, we get into modes in North America of certain life styles,
of certain ideals for ourselves that really had to be put aside to be involved in the program, because it wasn't going to benefit you materialistically to go to Guatemala. It was going to cost you money. It was going to cost you your time... You were going into an entirely foreign situation. I don't think that one of the six that went had ever been outside of North America. So in that sense we were leaving a very large comfort zone in North America, and go to the Third World with all the concepts of how the Third World is painted by the media here. True or not true you still have that in your head. (Sawatsky, Int)

Such apprehension about breaking the bonds of security within their home environment and culture came to a head during the flight to Guatemala City:

We didn't talk to each other much. We were all kind of living within ourselves for the moment, writing in our journals or just thinking. I was scared. There was no turning back at this point, but I was very scared. I was almost on the border line of regretting having done this. That is when I looked at the fringe. I am out of my comfort zone now. I have got one foot out and one foot in and I have got to pull the rest of my body out and let go of all the ties that held my life together for eighteen years. In a lot of senses I had to let go of them and just let myself go. I was struggling with that at LAX...We were all in a personal struggle at that point. (Sawatsky, Int)

With the overnight flight behind them the team arrived in Guatemala City airport to be greeted by the faces of children whose early vocation is that of professional beggar. For Sawatsky and the film crew the first hours of the trip were the most intense. The Force Four team, with Sawatksy carrying some of their film equipment, were immediately detained by customs officials who wished to capitalize on their situation (Sawatsky, Int). Separated from the rest of the group, the four individuals were brought into an interrogation room with young soldiers brandishing machine guns and a team of officers that demanded a five thousand dollar fee for permission to bring the film equipment into the country. For the next hour the leader of the film crew, who was conversant in Spanish, negotiated a way out of paying any sort of bribe. Instead, they departed under the condition that if any piece of the equipment went missing during their tour they would be arrested when they attempted to leave Guatemala (Sawatsky, Int). The team was forced to sign every piece of equipment onto their passports. Sawatsky had some very vivid recollections of
these crisis ridden moments:

You felt very threatened by these people. I immediately thought I am dead. All of my fears are coming true. I am going to die. I'm in this very tiny customs room. Well, we had about eighty thousand dollars worth of film equipment with us...The rest of the team was fearing for our lives while they waited for us outside. They had no idea what had happened to us. They were already out the door when we were detained. So there was some sweating and some heart beating...To bring up the first emotion you learn: it was the first time in my life that I had brushed, or in my own mind, I brushed death. (Sawatsky, Int)

The rest of the trip would prove to be more placid, but nonetheless intense and transformative as a learning experience.

The first few days of the trip were spent touring Guatemala City and Antigua with two guides, Guillermo and Francisco Mendoza, who were connected to the orphanage through Angie Galdamez. The group was firmly in "tourist mode" as Sawatsky defined it (Sawatsky, Int). While in Antigua the group was able to relieve the pressing urge to shop for an assortment of cultural trinkets from Maya street vendors who populated the stores and street markets of this old city. In Antigua the group finally met up with Juan Mario who had been transferred from Casa Guatemala to a foster home linked to a Catholic hospital in the city (Sawatsky, Int). Juan Mario greeted the group decked out in an assortment of Steveston paraphernalia which had been sent to him over the years of sponsorship. From here the group went to visit an orphanage sponsored by the Catholic Church. While it was not a highlight of the tour by any means, the visit provided a solid point of reflection and comparison to the orphanage they would work at on the Rio Dulce. As Sawatsky remembered:

Now this was a far cry from what you would picture an orphanage to be and we drew our contrast to Guatemala from this orphanage. It was very key for us to go to this. The Catholic Church had bought a hotel very cheaply during the years in which there was a lot of political unrest and tourism was down and this hotel sold out. It was quite the luxury hotel; glass conservatory buildings and that kind of thing which served as a school now. These boys, it was a boys orphanage, lived in a high bit of luxury for Guatemala, which is one of the greater ironies I faced in my lifetime, but one of the greatest contrasts we drew was that this orphanage had a steady supply of money
coming to it from the Church and we would later realize that Angie didn't have that major backer or name backer behind her. She lived day to day with donations from average people like us and the level of life in those two orphanages were compared by us quite a lot through our thoughts and discussions. (Sawatsky, Int)

Another event that Sawatsky recalled involved the backfire of a car engine while the group was travelling on the roads around Antigua. This experience demonstrated the lingering sense of danger that still existed in the minds of their Guatemalan hosts.

It sounded like a gunshot and Francisco and Guillermo, sitting in the front seat, panicked in a sort of sense. They were gibbering away in Spanish, quickly looking around and there was a very high level of tension with them that I felt and it probably was a gunshot. You could see in that, the underlying things that happen in Guatemala. There is immediately, when they hear something that sounds like a gunshot, they were scared and you kind of had a little understanding of the political situation that is not seen up front. There are rumours of death squads. I personally believe them to exist, but you don't encounter them right in your face in society there, but, judging from the reaction that Francisco and Guillermo had they are real and they are there. (Sawatsky, Int)

On the fifth day the crew set out for the site of the Rio Dulce orphanage on a bus organized through the travel agency in Guatemala. The six hour bus ride took the group eastward, completely to the other side of the country following the pathway of the Rio Matague which cuts through village after village and the lands of the United Fruit Company.

Shortly before the group reached their destination the bus broke down. What transpired from this usually frustrating circumstance was one of the most revealing learning experiences of the entire trip:

Here we are on a major highway with a broken down bus. A bunch of North Americans. What would happen in North America? Well, when I see somebody broken down on the side of a road I drive by. There wasn't a car that drove by in our direction that didn't stop and at least look out the window and see if they could help us. I am not exaggerating when I say that. Everybody wanted to see if they could help us in some way. Now, two transit buses of some sort stopped. The first one stopped for quite a while and there was a mechanic aboard and they waited for him for about twenty minutes to half an hour and you think about what happens to us when that happens...They just waited very patiently and when they realized that the mechanic on their bus wasn't going to have our bus fixed they just drove off and he stayed. I am quite
sure that he had a woman and a family to go to and, yet, he was very willing to help us. We immediately started discussing amongst ourselves the willing sacrifices that people make for perfect strangers. It was so foreign to us and it was something that we didn't understand...We talked about it that night as a group and it was incomprehensible to us because it is not behaviour that's not exhibited in our lives ever. (Sawatsky, Int)

Finally reaching the Catamaran Hotel that day, the crew was ready to go up river the following morning and start their work at the orphanage.

Running to the edge of the docks yelling, "Gringos" and "Hola," the children of the orphanage quickly whisked the Canadian students, teachers and film crew off to play games and see their home. For the next five days the team set about working on the various tasks they had prepared for. In some instances they were surprised to discover jobs that hadn't been anticipated. Frank Price and two of the students performed a series of water quality tests on the fish ponds and deduced that there were too many tadpoles in the hatchery. This was inhibiting the growth and multiplication of the tilapia due to reduced oxygen levels in the water (Force Four Productions, 1991). Their next job was to repair the situation by scooping out hundreds of thousands of the little beasts and training the children to do the same. Carkner, Sawatsky and the other students worked on several projects that week including moving a water pump, improving the plumbing and drainage of the septic system underneath one of the dormitories, as well as painting some of the buildings. Sawatsky recalled this week of work as the most intensive manual labour that he had ever performed in his life up to that point (Sawatsky, Int). At various periods throughout their visit the team took time to play and interact with the children. Some of the students instructed mathematics and music lessons in Spanish for the children.

Throughout the week the team grew to appreciate the centrality of the orphanage in the local Maya [Ketchi] community of Los Brisas. They also gained a clear appreciation for the extreme limitations of their ability to transform the living standards of their new
friends, especially in so short a time (Sawatsky, Int). This perception was aided by an emerging understanding of the school/community relationship within its social and political context. Not only were the village inhabitants' perceived as highly self-supportive, but the conditions of their shared struggle were also recognized. Far from being the helpless recipients of aid and "know-how" from the nations of the North, these people were seen as active participants in their fight for an education and a better way of life:

The biggest plus that we observed at the orphanage was the school. The school services not only the forty or so orphans that are there but about one hundred and twenty to one hundred and forty children from the surrounding communities. This orphanage becomes a focus of attention for the community around it. You find a lot of people, fathers and mothers, coming out to help at the orphanage in their spare time, building things and doing odd jobs. That provides free education for their children. They see the orphanage as kind of a central point for all the communities that are around...These children get an education which is provided for by Angie...Ten percent of the kids get an education in Guatemala. (Sawatsky, Int)

Comments like this also reflect a degree of growth in the substance of their knowledge regarding the culture and society that they were periodically immersed in. Their exposure to the orphanage also had a significant impact on the way they reflected on their own beliefs and the collective values of the society they came from. The transformation in his perceptions of the "Third World" were beginning to come full circle as Sawatsky later recalled:

We were actually working side by side with them. We weren't trying to be the big North American teachers. We were actually, whether we realized it or not, we were on the same level, doing the same jobs and performing the same menial tasks that they did every day. That really made it easy for them to accept us. I think that in those moments we suddenly realized that we don't have anything to give these people. Really and truly, we are probably, if anything, inferior to them in a lot of ways because of their work ethic and their ability to work for the good of the community and everybody pitches in and helps and materialism is totally irrelevant. There is not enough money to be earned for anyone to get ahead so they don't bother anyway. They all work to help each other. (Sawatsky, Int)

One of the most intense outcomes from the period at the orphanage was the emotional
bonding with the children. This development, in itself, provided an entire realm of lessons for the students. In one sense, their growing attachment to the children of the Rio Dulce orphanage began to symbolize their rejection of the clinical detachment with which their society and education portrayed the lives of people in "underdeveloped nations." Faith in their society's ideology of "aid" as a humanitarian gift for the poor masses of the "Third World" was being undermined and reformulated. Capturing the essence and dynamics of the transformation of his own perspectives, Sawatsky said this about the final departure from the orphanage:

There are very few moments in my life that I would say were as emotional as that time, which strikes me as very strange because we were only there for such a short time. The emotional bonds were very heavy, maybe because we had placed so many preconceptions on this trip. I don't know but there were a lot of tears which seems strange to say that, but there was and the boat ride home was very quiet...I don't think that anyone realized what had been happening to us. We had been indoctrinated here in a subconscious way...You know we didn't teach them anything. We didn't go and do anything for them other than we all became friends and through all of this, which is probably a far greater affect than us trying to teach them anything anyway. So there was a high level of emotion when we left, but there was a knowledge that we had established something. (Sawatsky, Int)

With the experiences of the five days at the Rio Dulce orphanage suddenly over, the group was thrust back into "tourist mode". One of the last days of the trip was spent visiting the town of Livingston which is located at the western terminus of the Rio Dulce on the Caribbean coast of Guatemala. In contrast to the Latino population of Guatemala City and the Maya peasants who occupy the vast majority of rural highland areas of the country, Livingston is a predominantly black community whose forbearers constituted the slave labour force of the regions plantations during colonial times. While this historical context may not have come to mind for the students, Livingston represented a stark contrast to the culture they had witnessed in other parts of Guatemala. For the students, the real value in this brief excursion came in the knowledge that Guatemalan society was composed of a far
more complex cultural base than they had previously anticipated:

Livingston is down on the Caribbean; on the Gulf. It is a counter culture community where instead of being Hispanic or Indian like the rest of Guatemala is, all these communities are a Caribbean negro type community like Jamaica. They play the reggae music and they speak the weird combination of whatever it is. French of whatever else they all speak. They were actually more hostile towards us than anyone else we ever encountered. I am not really sure why. (Sawatsky, Int)

The day after the events in Livingston, the group returned by bus to Guatemala City. By request, the last hours of their visit to Guatemala were spent in Antigua because of its relative charm and antiquity compared to the capital city. Returning to the hotel that night the group evaluated what they had experienced over the last two weeks and pondered the journey home:

None of us wanted to leave. We had really grown attached to this society, this country, this group of people that we had encountered and we didn't want to come home, which, judging from our emotions ten days earlier, you wouldn't have guessed that. You would have thought that we all wanted to come home but we didn't. Now became the time when we all tried to understand all the various things that we tried to understand; all the various emotional things we were struggling with. So, really we were beginning a whole new situation...lt was a really lousy feeling. (Sawatsky, Int)

Their arrival back in British Columbia brought forth a dose of "culture shock" and the beginning of a process of re-orientation to North American society. On the way home from the airport Sawatsky recalled visiting a massive supermarket and being overwhelmed by the incredible abundance of goods on the shelves. As he referred to it, "I stood there and looked at it for a while and it seemed so wrong," (Sawatsky, Int). Throughout the week after their return home the group was interviewed by throngs of reporters who announced the story of their visit in local newspapers and television programs. One local newspaper article headlined, "School of Life: Guatemala Visit Humbles Students," (CF) and chronicled a variety of conclusions they had already made regarding their experiences. One segment focused on three of the student's observations:
A talk with [names of the students], centers around exploded myths and media misconceptions about Guatemala. All three students are evidently in awe of the Guatemalan culture, stressing that we have much to learn from the people's sense of family and community. And the students seem almost embarrassed about the misconceptions they carried with them on the trip... "People in Guatemala are getting an unfair shake, because North Americans consider themselves to be so high and mighty that they can make these statements that are totally unfounded," said Sawatsky.6

To a greater or lesser extent, the experience in Guatemala had been a transformative one for each individual involved. Two years after the event Sawatsky would summarize the personal and collective impact of the journey. In this statement he identifies the substance and direction of change in his life perspective:

What happened there for the six of us was going to establish how we established a sense of ourselves. Now, as we have become older and established who we are it plays a key role in establishing who we are because there are intangibles that come up down there that don't come up in our society and you have to be affected by it. There is no way of getting around that. Intangibles such as the value systems they have and the value systems we have. You have to incorporate both philosophies into who you are. If you grow up in North America predominantly and never leave it and never see another value system, whatever you do is going to be based on those value systems. You are going to be somewhat materialistic. Your motivation for doing things is going to be different than the motivation for doing things that the Guatemalans have. Once you have seen that and experienced that you have to take that into your way of thinking and we all did. We all came back with somewhat different life goals I think, overall than when we went down. I really thought that I would follow in my big brothers footsteps; be a lawyer type and my motivation was that lawyers make a lot of money so I want to be a lawyer. In my young teenage mind that was my justification for doing that. I went to Guatemala and realized that having money is not the be all and end all of life, because all these people I met are very poor by my standards, yet, in a lot of ways they are more happy or as happy as everybody I know here. So what is going on here. Something is wrong as far as our thinking. You have to struggle with this as a person...I think you come to a different perspective on life. (Sawatsky, Int)

With the immediate success and lessons of the first trip behind them, the coordinating team of the Casa Guatemala Project began to plan for the return trip the

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6 See article "School of life: Guatemala visit humbles students" in Richmond Review, 7(17), April 8, 1990. p.1 and p.11.
following year. Although a follow-up trip had been suggested for the summer months, the idea was dropped due to concerns about the proximity of such an endeavour and the quality of a trip that would coincide with the height of the rainy season in Guatemala (CF). What was most valuable to the Casa Guatemala team at this point was the broader community support and knowledge of success that had grown up around the program over the past year. Carkner, the teachers and students of Steveston High had demonstrated, with great success, how important their direct and continued link to the orphanage was to the education of both communities. With the power of such an experience behind Carkner and his team, plans were already being made for expansion and improvement which would unfold during the next few months.

3.4 Expanding Horizons: A Period of Consolidation and Re-evaluation (1990-1992)

The fall semester of 1990 brought new challenges to the staff organizing teams. Bob Carkner was in a new school environment at Richmond Senior High School while his counterpart, Roy Akune, began his placement at Steveston. The transition was not an easy one for either party. Meanwhile, Carkner set out to build on the progress of the previous year. Throughout the summer and early fall period he was successful in lobbying for the maintenance of the travel/work experience as a central part of the overall project. Furthermore, he had managed to expand the scope of involvement in the program by bringing the other two senior high schools in the district "on board," as he often states (Carkner, Int). The expansion of the project into the other schools was relatively easy for his administrative counterparts to accept and implement. In essence, all three schools now agreed to send four students and one teacher to Guatemala with this year's travelling contingent. This expansion also meant that all three schools would, by necessity, be drawn
into promotional, educational and fundraising efforts surrounding the project. Once again, Carkner had succeeded in transforming the project and expanding its base of support. The new framework was also important to the administration and staff at the various schools because it provided a much needed venue for developing an environment of cooperation (Carkner, Int). This prospect was particularly appealing to the staff of Richmond High and Steveston because of the intense history of athletic competition that had been fostered between the two institutions over the years. McNair Senior High embraced the tri-school theme with a great amount of optimism, primarily as a result of the work of one of the teachers at the school, Jane Spearing, who was a long time supporter of the program’s direction and had been active on the periphery in years past.

The requirements of the administrative transition period during the fall of 1990 at Steveston placed the Casa Guatemala Project off the centre stage. Roy Akune needed time to settle into his new environment and forge a place for his own vision of the school. In the meantime, the teaching staff that had been so essential to the success of the project the previous year continued to work on fundraising and promotional activities in Carkner’s absence (Seney, Int). The new framework of the Remembrance Day Ceremony at Steveston was set in a series of breakfast meetings held by the organizing committee (Seney, IC). That year, the tele-conference with Angie Galdamez was replaced by a speech from a representative of one of the many refugee families from Guatemala living in the Richmond community. The new format of the service was a big success in the eyes of the teachers who had coordinated it, but the strong, personal link to the orphanage had faded somewhat (Seney, Int). With the initial excitement and novelty of the travel/education format of the program now past, fewer students came forth to volunteer their participation in Casa Guatemala Project in the fall of 1990. In fact, the number of candidates who applied for the Guatemala trip dropped to less than one quarter of the previous year’s level. Far from being
a project that defined the very heart and spirit of Steveston during the previous year, the Casa Guatemala Project reverted to a more balanced status within the broader extracurricular framework of the school.

During this same time period, Carkner was facing an even tougher set of marching orders at Richmond High. The transfer had shaken a large part of his spirit and enthusiasm as an administrator and educational leader (Seney, Int). To this was added the fact that the staff at Richmond High, with a few exceptions, did not associate with the history of the program. If the cause of Casa Guatemala was to be elevated to the great heights experienced at Steveston, then Carkner was going to have to build it from the ground up. Richmond High was a school whose pride lay in the success of its athletics programs, basketball especially. Global education and international issues were topics that only existed in the classrooms of a few select teachers in journalism and social studies (Carkner, Int). The school already had a full slate of extracurricular programming and this made finding space and support for the Casa Guatemala Project even more of a hurdle. With all of this, it was clear that it was going to take several years to introduce the program successfully at Richmond. Staff members needed to be actively recruited to help build a place for the program within the school's culture. Ken Lorenz, one of the main advocates for the program in the early days at London Junior High was already on staff at Richmond Senior High when the transfer of principals took place. The prospect of travelling to Guatemala was the best lure that Lorenz and Carkner had to draw in larger numbers of staff to the program. As had been the case in the past, Carkner engineered the implementation of the Remembrance Day Ceremony to work as his declaration of intent at Richmond High. That November the assembly went off without a hitch, and the response to this emotional appeal was promising. Several staff members, who witnessed the service, stepped forward and volunteered their support and active participation in promoting Casa Guatemala at the school (Carkner, Int). If the past
few months had represented a period of relative doubt concerning the future of the program in the expanded form, it was now abundantly clear to Carkner that those fears were largely unfounded. The way was now clear to strengthen the foundations of the project in the district's three senior high schools.

By the late fall, a fifteen member travel team had been selected for the return trip to Guatemala in March of 1991. Included in this were representative students and one teacher from each school. Fundraising events had been successful, but less effective during the first semester even though several junior high and elementary schools had been brought into the fold of the overall campaign. The prime factor in this trend was the strong decline of efforts at Steveston (Seney, Int). On January 17, 1991 the United Nations Forces launched the "Desert Storm" offensive on Iraq. District administration immediately placed a ban on any international travel programs for students (Carkner, Int). With great disappointment the tour to Guatemala was cancelled, but a team of teachers headed by Ken Lorenz decided to go ahead with an expanded staff contingent and visit the orphanage during the same period in March. Carkner decided to capitalize on the changed agenda by bringing along four teachers from Richmond High. Their participation in the venture could only assist in promoting support for the project at Richmond High. The focusing task adopted for the tour was the production of an information and promotional booklet which detailed the history of the orphanage, the tri-school project and pictures of the children who were the object of all the fundraising efforts (Carkner, Int). This booklet was then to be used to establish private or public sponsorships in the community and to clearly lay out the mission and intent of the project in years to come.

In the meantime, Force Four Productions was putting the finishing touches on the commissioned video. Working from over thirty hours of footage from the 1990 tour, the production team managed to reduce the screening time to twenty seven minutes. The video
entitled *Guatemala Journal* was ready for a premier viewing in early February of 1991. Carkner had great expectations in mind for the new production. For Carkner, the video represented the natural sequel to *A Memory and A Vision*. Once again, the goal was to distribute the tape in order to proliferate the concept of the Casa Guatemala Project to other high schools in British Columbia (Carkner, Int). Hopefully, the new production would also rekindle the intensity of media coverage of the project and in so doing, would spark renewed enthusiasm and pride in the expanded tri-school effort.

The debut of the film took place on a cold and dreary mid-February evening at a theatre facility in a local government office which housed a big screen television. A cross-section of the community attended this premiere including the local mayor, school board trustees, district administrators, refugee families, parents, teachers and students (Carkner, IC). In fact it was a congregation of all those community members who had participated in the success of the program to date. It was a moment of immense pride for Carkner and the student participants of the 1990 tour. In the same vein as the previous video, this production centered on the emotional impact and appeal of the experience. If the production of the video symbolized anything for those in attendance that evening, it was the fact that the Casa Guatemala was firmly established and, indeed, thriving as a result of the collective efforts of those in the audience.

Over the next six months the video was distributed to a variety of television stations and received extensive air time on both local and national networks. Youth Television, The Knowledge Network and Vision Television played the largest role in presenting the video to the public through repeated broadcasts of the tape (Carkner, Int; Sawatsky, IC). The response to this new production was overwhelming. Interested groups and individuals telephoned and wrote Carkner directly to receive further information on the project. Donation upon donation was submitted to the cause from individuals in the immediate
community who had, in the past, been totally unassociated with the project. Requests for conference presentations from global educational forums across Canada arrived on Carkner's desk (Carkner, Int). In the most profound sense the video had worked to expand the base of support for Casa Guatemala to new constituencies and had revitalized the mission of the project within local schools. This event also marked a clear turning point in the direction of encouragement from district administration.

The progress made with the release of the video was added to by the success of the teacher's tour of Guatemala and the orphanage in March of that year. The eight person contingent returned with a new round of tales and great enthusiasm for the project. While on site at the orphanage the group managed to gather all the necessary information for the promotional booklet. Each of the orphan's photos was taken and coupled with a short personal anecdote. In addition to their research the group delivered a cheque for slightly over six thousand dollars to Angie Galdamez for the children of the orphanage (CF). Even though students had not participated in the 1991 tour, the teachers' visit inevitably worked to secure the future of the project within the school district. A larger number of staff had witnessed the impact of the fundraising efforts first hand and added their own testimonies regarding the value of the tour when they returned home. The choir of experienced adult advocates had grown larger as a result. The booklet, which had been the focusing project for the teachers' group, would take another year to publish but would prove to be at least as effective in advancing the cause of the project as the professional video.

All the conditions for the continuation of Casa Guatemala were firmly in place in the three schools with the arrival of 1991-1992 academic year. At Steveston, Roy Akune had decided to revamp the staff selection committee process which was a sign of progress to all individuals involved at the school. Dave Gautier had worked closely with Akune during the last twelve months, where other teachers had faded into the background. With hindsight it
appears that Gautier's vigilance and enthusiasm may have served as a critical factor in establishing the principal's interest and involvement in Casa Guatemala (Seney, IC). The strongest indication of this change of heart was Akune's announcement that he was going to participate in the upcoming tour to Guatemala (Seney, Int). This gesture was even more appropriate because Steveston had ended up with six students on the tour roster as a result of student withdrawals. McNair High was still sending the allotted contingent of four students, but Richmond High only managed to secure two members for the team. For Richmond High this was a repeat scenario from the last year. While Carkner had done an effective job eliciting a sufficient degree of staff participation this was evidently not the case within the student body, at least not as far as involvement in the educational tour was concerned. Several factors may have accounted for this trend. Almost all of the students who withdrew from the program after the selection process was completed did so as a result of financial constraints. The price tag for participation on the trip was now reaching the two thousand dollar mark for the students and had to be raised privately. Whether or not people agreed with this stance, Carkner insisted that all fundraising be held in direct support of the orphanage and not for trip expenses. This was a position that Carkner had adopted for instructional and philosophical reasons:

Fundraising has got to be for the orphanage. The kids, as far as their expenses to go down there, they have to find on their own. That has been an interesting sort of side comment but the fact that in our schools there are a lot of people who are fundraising for themselves, to pay for a trip, to pay for football jackets or basketball jackets. I think as educators we should change that. I mean I've been guilty of that so I can say it without putting blame on anybody. I think that when people are doing fundraising and asking the community to dig into their pocket it should be for charitable things, some worthy cause. (Carkner, Int)

Regardless of this rationale, even keen students at Richmond High were having a tough time overcoming this financial barrier. In addition, Casa Guatemala had to compete with the established momentum of other dominant athletic programs at Richmond High (Carkner,
In this sense, not only were economic constraints affecting the degree of enthusiasm but the very essence of the political emphasis of the Casa Guatemala Project was at odds with the established mission of the school. Potentially interested students were being asked to walk the line between more self-serving aims and more humanitarian ones. In the short run, students were willing to become involved in fundraising events for the project but were not lining up to compete for the few spaces available on the tour. Changing the direction of this prevailing sentiment would require a major piece of salesmanship. In the meantime, however, Steveston had a continuing stream of students willing to suffer the uncertainty of a waiting list to get a position on the trip.

By early December of 1991 the third student and teacher team had been selected and the schools had already collectively raised the equivalent of last year’s donation for the orphanage. Three days before the Christmas break, Carkner received an emergency call from Angie Galdamez who informed him that the roof over the children’s dormitory had collapsed, the children were sleeping in tents and they needed three thousand dollars to complete the necessary repairs (Carkner, Int). If Carkner ever needed a test of support for the project, then this was it. Within days he was able to pull together the necessary funds, primarily as a result of an overwhelming response on behalf of the staff at the three schools. The fundraising that year continued to expand through a variety of other activities including a peanut sale put on by the business education department at Richmond High (Carkner, Int). The school cafeteria at Richmond High put on a Guatemalan dinner complete with entertainment and speakers for twenty dollars a head which generated a sizeable donation on its own. In the wake of all these events it was clear that the Casa Guatemala Project had inadvertently provided a means to integrate "development education" in such unusual subject areas as business studies and home economics.

The first tri-school student tour of Guatemala took place in March of 1992. The
itinerary of the program was altered slightly from the first year but covered much of the same ground. This time it included a two day visit to Flores and the ancient Maya ruins at Tikal which required a return flight to the northeastern province of Peten from Guatemala City. This excursion took place as part of the first week of the trip which was more clearly spent in "tourist mode," visiting Antigua and Chichicastenango, as well other sites (Eng, Int). During this first week the group also visited Casa Guatemala's house for newborns and infants in Guatemala City which added to their understanding of the total operation.

The last segment of the tour was spent painting the new school library at the Rio Dulce site which had been built by funds generated as part of this years project for the orphanage. No work took place in support of the tilapia fish farm which had provided such a strong justification and link for the first team in 1990. The deletion of the fish hatchery as the focusing project for the tour was necessary, primarily because it would center attention on the expertise of participants from Steveston High once again. From the lessons gained by the first group it was also clear that the fish farm was an inappropriate centerpiece in light of lack of expertise and commitment to the maintenance of the facilities at the Rio Dulce site. Carkner and crew had discovered through the previous trips that the school was the most valuable resource for the local community and would, henceforth, be the sole object of their attention. Even so, the new task of painting buildings did not provide the same sense of mission or depth of connection to the success of the orphanage as working with the tilapia fish farm had, according to Jill Poulton (Poulton, Int; Seney, Int). This may have been a positive thing from the perspective that it undermined the tendency to view the orphanage community as the fortunate recipients of enlightened beneficence and superior know-how from Richmond. However, others, such as Poulton and Seney, saw this as a significant loss in the intensity of the practical support provided for the orphanage by the program in the first year of the tour (Poulton, Int).
For the Canadian students, though, the experience in Guatemala continued to have a strong impact on the depth of their knowledge and nature of their perceptions of this country and its people. Tony Eng was one of two male students who travelled with the group and represented McNair High that year. He viewed the video Guatemala Journey prior to his departure and was, in some ways, anticipating the change of perspective that the film suggested would emerge from the course of involvement (Eng, Int). One of the more predictable things that came out of his exposure to Guatemala during those two weeks was the richness in the detail in which he described scenes from life in the country (Eng, Journal). Like Ray Sawatsky, Tony Eng made special note of the bonding process with the children of the orphanage and what this signified for his own sense of alienation from the lifestyle of the "First World" (Eng, Int). Upon his return home he wrote about these feelings:

The thing that amazed me was that these children still enjoyed their lives, even though they were orphans and had no family. They were forced to rely on each other for support and the volunteers who came to the orphanage. On that day we all became attached to the orphans emotionally and they became attached to us. I think that I took it upon myself to take care of Cynthia for the duration of my visit and I tried to do everything I could to make her happy. You know, in our lives, we don't get many chances to really become attached to a person, but in those few hours in which we knew each other a bond was developed between us that I will cherish for a long, long time. (Eng, Journal)

What Tony did not foresee was the manner in which the experience would alter his previous perceptions of his peers that even he admits were incredibly negative. He observed the realization of this changing critique as follows:

...the students that I went with they did really well. It is good to know, though, that there are people in the world who really care. They are not so self-obsessed or absorbed in their own personal realities. They are willing to take the time out and help somebody else just for the sake of helping. That is why we went down there and there weren't any ulterior motives. That was the only reason they went down there and that is good to know. It puts a positive spin on teenagers now...Teenagers these days do basically get a bad rap and a lot of people do think that teenagers are, indeed, scum. It is good to know that there are teen-
agers in the world who want to help and they do want to do something worthwhile because as long as there are people like that there is always hope for the future. (Eng, Int)

The comments throughout his interview and in his journal reveal a deep sense of personal transformation from the experiences in Guatemala, especially in regards to an improved attitude towards and relationship with his peers. While the nature of the impact on Eng has similarities to the accounts of other students, he also stresses specific aspects which are more personally relevant (Eng, Journal). Eng circulated these testimonies in a published form at his school several months later. This journal served to solidify the staff's sense of accomplishment in bringing home another successful educational tour of Guatemala.

Roy Akune returned from the tour with an extremely positive account of the experience. During his visit he was overwhelmed by the lack of medical care available to the orphanage community and on returning to British Columbia entertained the idea of arranging material and professional support for the Rio Dulce clinic (Carkner, Int). A second force affecting his response came from a far more personal context. While working at the Rio Dulce site he was introduced to a young Ketchi student that came from the local village of Los Brisas and attended the orphanage school. He was immediately taken by Guillermo's ability to speak English and his academic aptitude, especially in Akune's own teaching specialty of science. Through Guillermo, Akune was able to realize the value of what the three senior high schools were involved in at the orphanage, as well as a comparative understanding of the lack of educational opportunity available to the vast majority of Guatemalan children. Reflecting his sense of enthusiasm, Akune also came up with the idea of bringing Guillermo back to Steveston the following year to advance his secondary education (Seney, Int). While he may not have clearly understood the complexity and ramifications of the proposal he was considering, it was obvious that the bond with Guillermo deepened Akune's commitment to the project. When the group returned from
Guatemala that March, Akune added his voice of support to the program. Carkner, needless to say, was extremely pleased to have his fellow administrator "come on board" (Carkner, IC).

Over the past three years the program had undergone tremendous growth and alteration. Two of the three senior high school principals in the district were advocates of the project. The third principal, while not involved in the promotion of the program at his school, was at least nominally supportive. On the surface, district administration seemed more tolerant of Casa Guatemala and regularly attended promotional events (Carkner, Int; Seney, Int). Several junior secondary and elementary schools in the area were added to the growing list of program supporters, initiated fundraising campaigns and child sponsorship programs of their own. Several schools outside the district had expressed an interest in doing the same (Carkner, Int). One private school in the region made preliminary plans to travel to the orphanage the following spring. This active proliferation of this idea was exactly what Carkner had in mind:

I mean we're one school, one candle lit. If we could get others to become involved then we are really going to have an impact. Our long term goal is to have every school in the province doing something linked to global education. (Carkner, Int)

In the meantime, preparations continued for the tour and events of the 1992-1993 year. The goals for the program were elevated, once again, to include a record breaking ten thousand dollar fundraising campaign that would be directed at building an addition to the school at the orphanage (CF). At the same time the publication of Casa Guatemala: Developing A Global Perspective was completed and a thousand copies of the promotional booklet were distributed to sponsor groups, schools and individuals throughout the community. This booklet documented the record of accomplishments and the impact that the Richmond community project was having on the children of the orphanage. The project was entering its fourteenth year and had succeeded in ways that Carkner, Poulton and others
would never have believed possible.

3.5 Future Considerations For The Casa Guatemala Project

In retrospect, the history of the Casa Guatemala Project underscores the crucial role of administrative leadership to ensure the successful implementation and development of experiential projects of this type. This does not mean that teachers and staff members in the various schools did not play an essential role in the establishment and growth of the project. However, without leadership capable of paving the way for their collective efforts this project would have either plateaued at a stage of more modest goals or folded during the early years of its evolution. The Casa Guatemala program was built on a series of successful transitions that have allowed the project to expand and incorporate several highly contentious changes in direction. It began as a relatively simple and easily manageable child sponsorship program in one junior high school in 1979. Over the next decade the scope of the program grew incrementally to the point were the organizers felt comfortable enough to attempt the quantum step forward which was embodied by the first visit to the Guatemalan orphanage in the spring of 1990. The necessity of administrative leadership throughout the history of Casa Guatemala also brings into focus the future prospects of the project in the absence of a leader with Carkner's vision and persistence. The rapid deterioration of the program at London Junior High in the aftermath of his transfer to Steveston in 1982 is a case in point. If Casa Guatemala is going to maintain the ground it now holds in this school district it is going to have to do so with the assistance of administrators who share Carkner's fundamental humanitarian commitment and comprehension of the educational value of the program.

7 Bob Carkner was in his final year as a principal within the Richmond School District when this chapter was written. However, he maintains the status of consultant with the district for the 1994-1995 academic year.
There is also a question in regard to the student clientele that supports and participates in the various events held in the name of Casa Guatemala. Involvement in the promotional and fundraising activities is far from unanimous or equally consistent within the collectivity of students in the schools. Steveston, because of its long history and identification with the project, overshadows the level of participation in the other two schools. Since the program expanded to Richmond High in 1990 it has continually faced problems fielding its quota of applicants for the tour to Guatemala. To this should be added the fact that the student clientele in the district is also rapidly changing in terms of their ethnicity and class background. This demographic transition may affect the program more than any other single factor. One of the teachers interviewed at Steveston hesitantly suggested that the rising proportion of immigrant students coming from Hong Kong and Taiwan hold very conservative values about "Third World" or development issues. Addressing the level of participation of these students in the program he noted the following trend:

They're less interested. That is a fact. At meetings they don't attend. They are not the ones who come to the meetings. They are not the ones who come to the slide presentations. They are not the ones who come to guest speakers. You know, it is an optional thing. People show up but they don't come. Now maybe it is a language issue. Maybe we are not presenting it in a way that is conducive to their participation. I am not sure but that has changed. I think it is something that I am concerned about. (Seney, Int)

Casa Guatemala exists in these schools as one of many extracurricular options open to the students. It openly competes for their participation with other highly successful athletic, academic and specialty club programs. Even though the teachers active in Casa Guatemala may be fully cognizant of the value and necessity of continued dedication to the project, they continually struggle to maintain the level of student and community interest in a period of economic restraint.

The past and future strength of the program rests on the broad base of support which
has been established in the community throughout the many years of Casa Guatemala's development. Parents, businesses and various community organizations have been integrated at various levels and times into the planning of events that have been held in support of the project. As a result, the coordinators have experienced less of a struggle promoting sponsorship events in recent years as an increasing number of individuals in the community have come to personally identify with the success of Casa Guatemala. In this respect, Carkner and his team have done a very good job of marketing the aspirations of the project through the use of the media and the dissemination of promotional booklets. Moreover, Casa Guatemala has been able to demonstrate directly how a "grassroots" development and educational project can be effective in establishing a constructive dialogue between communities of the "First" and "Third World" in a manner conducive to the goals of global education and the broader sense of universal social justice.

The impact of the Casa Guatemala Project on the quality of life provided for the children of the orphanage has been frequently articulated in public presentations by its organizers (Carkner, Int; Seney, Int; Poulton, Int). The somewhat more difficult task that remains is substantiating and explaining the educational merit of the project. If the testimony presented by project alumni like Sawatsky and Eng are any indication, there are grounds for believing that the experience of travelling to Guatemala and working at the orphanage, even though it is only for a brief time, holds the potential for intensive transformation of individual and collective perspectives. Whether the focus of such transformation involves content, process or premise reflection is a matter which can only be verified through more precise, longitudinal research.
Chapter Four: The Students' Perceptions
Prior to the Tour

4.1 School Selection Process and Lead Up to the 1993 Tour

The selection process got off to a late start in the fall of 1992 at Richmond Senior High and followed the same pattern as in previous years. Approximately seventeen students showed up for the initial information meeting in mid-October, but only five of these attended the second meeting with their parents one week later; all were female candidates and all were in grade eleven or twelve.1 The students were asked to fill out resume sheets and write a brief essay, expressing their reasons for wanting to participate in the Casa Guatemala tour. The students were also told that selection carried with it the responsibility of involvement in fundraising activities held for the orphanage throughout the year. Several days later it was apparent that interviews were not necessary at this school as only four students had submitted applications and almost immediately, one of these students dropped out for financial reasons. Several days after this, Carkner was told by another of the remaining three students that she too, was reasonably certain that she would be forced to do the same. In the end Richmond was only able to field two participants for the trip. This was somewhat disappointing for Carkner because it indicated that while he had gained staff involvement and community financial support, the strong message of global citizenship, manifest in fundraising events, school promotions and the annual Remembrance Day Service, was still not getting through to the general student body — as indicated by the lack of line up of students eager to enroll in the excursion to Guatemala.

Although the selection process at Richmond had failed to generate sufficient interest,

1 All information contained in this chapter has been gathered through the researcher's observations of and participation in events, or through conversations with individuals directly connected to the program.
the same events at Steveston produced a much more encouraging level of student interest. Steveston had already established a confirmed roster of four student participants and a waiting list of four more from an initial body of close to twenty-five individuals. This had occurred while the other schools scrambled to fill their openings. In fact, the waiting list at Steveston was compiled in anticipation of problems in meeting the quotas at McNair and Richmond. The same shuffle to fill the twelve student positions had gone on the previous year and was no surprise to Carkner or the other staff organizers. McNair Senior High was sending two male and two female students all of whom were in grade twelve. With some degree of surprise, Tony Eng was repeating the trip as one of the four representatives from this school. His desire to return was a timely one for the selection committee at McNair as one of their selected candidates had declined for financial reasons. Regardless, no subsidies were available to individuals who could not overcome the financial barrier. It appeared that the sizeable price tag for the tour was a major hurdle and a central component of the selection criteria at both Richmond and McNair. After a few weeks of discussion, it was decided that Steveston would receive the two remaining openings from Richmond High’s contingent. By the third week of November the final list of participants had been assembled for the 1993 tour and the first meeting of the entire group was announced.

The meeting took place on November 30th at McNair Senior High. All twelve students [ten female and two male] and the three supervising teachers were in attendance along with Carkner and other district staff who were involved in the project's overall coordination. The agenda focused on administrative details surrounding payment and inoculation schedules, the proposed itinerary of the trip, as well as a review of fundraising events held to that point. A sale of Guatemalan handicrafts at a local mall earlier that month had netted close to $1,500 [Cdn.] and provided the first forum for the students from all three schools to meet one another. This amount represented a significant chunk of the established goal of $9,000
As it turned out this was the only meeting of the group that would explore aspects of the political and historical context of Guatemala prior to the trip. Carkner briefly discussed the record of human rights abuses in the country and suggested that the students read the most recent Amnesty International Report on Guatemala which outlined the "terrible conditions" which most people were forced to live under in the country. Somewhat more time was spent outlining his expectations for the students. His explanation included six broad goals: a) modelling and sharing the experience with other students and schools, b) observing conditions in Guatemala and the daily realities of "Third World" poverty, c) developing an enriched perspective on the above with the aim of becoming "Wise Global Citizens", d) seeing the impact of the Casa Guatemala Project with their own eyes, e) seeing how the local community valued the operation of the school, and f) developing a sense of mission towards "improving the conditions of the world." These stated goals boiled down to three key elements of personal growth for the students: [within the realm of international development issues] enrichment of their knowledge, changes in their values, and intensification of their disposition towards community advocacy and action. Students were introduced to the research project and the focus on their perceptions of the experience. The meeting was adjourned with the knowledge that the group would assemble on two more occasions before they departed for Guatemala in March. These meetings were held to take care of remaining administrative details, discuss packing requirements and participate in basic conversational Spanish lessons. There was, decidedly, little opportunity for students to get better acquainted and forge a sense of collective engagement in the tasks that lay ahead of them. If the students were be involved in any further preparations then it was going to be at the request of individual schools or sponsor teachers.
4.2 The Students and Their Perceptions Prior to the Departure

In the months leading up to the tour, only the staff at Steveston provided supplemental educational sessions for their student participants beyond the fundraising campaign events. This was not surprising given that Bruce Seney had been asked by Bob Carkner and Roy Akune to lead the tour this year as the Steveston supervising teacher. His extensive experience in student travel was the primary factor in this decision as no administrative representatives actively sought involvement in this year’s tour and the two other sponsoring teachers from Richmond and McNair had no experience in this kind of student travel. Seney was very aware of the need to prepare the six student participants from his school. As a result, these six students received several additional history lessons and Spanish classes in the weeks prior to departure. Many of the students were also encouraged by Seney to become active members in the International Issues Club at Steveston. One of the main tasks this year for the Club was to organize the annual Thirty Hour Famine for World Vision and to coordinate Guatemala Week in February which had become somewhat of an institution since the school originated the tour to Guatemala in 1989. Furthermore, Mary Coll, one of the student teachers who was working on her practicum in the social studies department under Seney’s supervision, had just returned from a year-and-a-half stint as a volunteer at the Rio Dulce site of the Casa Guatemala orphanage and the Casa Alianza refuge in Guatemala City. Coll provided a rich source of background knowledge and, as a result of her direct experience, she acted as an important role model for many of the students at Steveston. Her conversations with the students had a substantial effect on the development of both their preconceptions and reflections regarding the upcoming adventure. This became obvious in the students' later interview sessions. Just weeks before the tour took place Seney described the contingent of Steveston students in this manner:

They are neat kids...a few of them especially are just perfect candidates for this.
They are already there in mind and spirit but they have not been there in experience. So I am anxious to see how this will affect them. I think some of them will be even more committed to things like the international peace movement, human rights and a number of things. The kids that are going from Steveston are already there. I am willing to bet that this experience in Guatemala will embellish that more. They will have an even stronger feeling about it. (Seney, Int)

From the interviews that took place throughout the two weeks prior to the departure date, it was evident that the students from Steveston had, indeed, developed a much richer perception and understanding of the challenges and prospects. In contrast, the students at Richmond and McNair had experienced only brief encounters and discussions with former participants or had managed to watch the Guatemala Journey video from the 1990 tour. Regardless of their background preparations and encounters, all of the students shared the perception that they were involved in a formative experience. While some of them reflected on this in terms of career goals, others focused on changes in their values and perceptions of life. Very few of the students could explain the exact dynamics of how or why these profound changes would take place as a result of two weeks in Guatemala, nor could they clearly or convincingly articulate the value of these expected transformations. Nonetheless, the expectation of "change" was clearly and consistently articulated by the students in the weeks leading up to the trip.

What follows is a brief introduction to each of the students selected for the study sample. The individual portraits have been constructed from information provided by a review their transcripts, journals, program applications and the researcher's observations of the first two interview sessions. What emerges from these data sources is a picture of a

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2 After the first round of independent interview sessions, the subjects were slotted into the second round groupings which consisted of a section of individual interviews [six students] and one group interview [four students]. Of the transcripts finally used in this study, Alice Gibson, Jane Lamb, Tim Long and Holly Range participated in individual sessions. Kaily Soila and Linda Shaw were two of four subjects that remained in the group interview sessions.
group of individuals who correctly and uniformly understand their relative condition of affluence, who are capable students, possess different degrees of critical awareness and vary in their commitment to social change. The latter two orientations were reflected most clearly in their perceptions of crucial issues and in the way they viewed their own society. Through this glimpse into the students' perspectives on their "lifeworld" it was possible to establish the common and distinctive ways that this group of individuals approached their upcoming involvement in the Casa Guatemala Project.

4.21 Linda Shaw: Social Status or Social Justice

Linda is an honour roll student in grade eleven at Steveston Senior High School. In her last report card she obtained a 3.5 grade point average and has repeatedly received academic awards since the seventh grade. Her favourite subject is, without doubt, English as she likes creative writing and poetry, but sciences also top her list as she admits becoming a marine biologist is one of many potential career goals. To this end Linda would like to attend university, in the United States if possible. Linda's abilities, however, are not limited to academic pursuits. She was a nationally ranked gymnast up until grade nine when she decided to quit due to the strain on her personal life. Linda travelled extensively with national and provincial teams throughout her competitive career to most major cities in Canada and she has also attended international meets in the United States, Bulgaria, Germany and Taiwan. As a result, Linda understands that she is more travelled than the vast majority of her peers. From these experiences she has developed a somewhat more sophisticated "lens" to construct an informed world view. Her interest in travel has also been stimulated by her parents, both of whom worked as volunteers with the Peace Corps for two years during the 1960's.

Linda is a very confident, happy and mildly extroverted person. She is popular with
her peers and has a number of close friends whom she socializes with on a regular basis. Like many teenagers she is relatively uncertain about many of the details regarding her long term career goals and choices. What is interesting, though, is her struggle with wanting to make a solid income and her desire to do something that contributes to the well-being of society:

J.S.: Do you have any sort of broader future goals, things that you see yourself doing in the next twenty years?

Linda: Hopefully, I'm making, I mean money is a big part of what I want when I grow up. I want to be able to have it so I don't have to worry about it like my parents, like everybody. It seems like they have to worry about having money. I want to find a job where I'm set to be able to do things that I want to do, but I guess I also want to do something that makes me happy. Social work may not give me a lot of money but I think it will be pretty beneficial. So I might do that, maybe live in the States [she holds dual citizenship], I don't know. I don't want to get married. I never think about getting married, so I don't know if I'd get married or not. (Shaw, Int#1)³

Beyond this relative uncertainty about her future aspirations, Linda exuded a sense of contentment with the state of affairs in her society. The problems that did exist were largely external to her own community and country. In terms of domestic problems she was most concerned about environmental issues and the high ratio of marital breakups. On a more critical bent, she was able to draw upon the connection between the nature of poverty in the "Third World" and that which exists in her own society. This was most clearly demonstrated to her through the living conditions of First Nations people in Canada. Linda questioned how this scenario could exist in a country of such pervasive wealth:

Generally, I think, Canada is a great place. Some of their, I mean I still think that the Indians or the Natives, sorry, deserve so much more than what they're getting. They're getting the short end of the deal, I think. Other than that, I

³ For the purposes of documentation, the following interview abbreviations will apply: Int#1 = first interview session prior to the trip (December, 1992 to January, 1993), Int#2 = second interview session prior to the trip (February, 1993), Int#3 = open-ended interview sessions while in Guatemala (March, 1993), Int#4 = interview four after returning to Richmond (April, 1993).
mean there's poverty still here, it's just it's not looked at, you know. It's
looked at different from other countries than it is before they look at the stuff
here. I think that should be realized, because before I read about it, I never
even thought that people were starving in Canada, you just don't see it. I don't
see people starving in Canada. It seems like such a prosperous country. And
there's the other thing, there's so much food and there's so much money to go
around. (Shaw, Int#1)

Her comments reveal an ability to comprehend more abstract contradictions in global
political economy and reflect a universal conception of human rights. Linda consistently
expresses concern and empathy towards individuals and groups that she feels are being
marginalized. Also, she appears to clearly recognize her own abilities and good fortune in
life. Her involvement in a variety of volunteer activities within the school and community
have significantly molded her perceptions of efficacy. When in grades seven and eight, she
volunteered to work with children in a summer daycare program at the local community
centre where, at one time she was given the responsibility of working directly with a child
with Down's Syndrome. During her junior high school years she peer tutored for students
requiring personal help or academic assistance. For the past two years she helped organized
World Vision's *Thirty Hour Famine* with the International Issues Club at Steveston. When
asked to explain why she was drawn to events like these and the Casa Guatemala Project she
replied with tones that underscored her sense of empathy:

I have been to a lot of places around the world but I have never been to a
Third World country where I want to see that kind of world and I want to,
maybe, change the way I am. Not change the way I am, but change my views
and stuff. I've talked to people who have gone there before and they sounded
a lot different than they were before I talked to them, like before they had
gone. And the World Famine, I mean we learned about all these children who
suffered and malnourished and undernourished. I don't know I just want to
really help them in a way and see, I don't know, just put myself in their
shoes, I guess. (Shaw, Int#1)

While Linda perceived that she had the ability to "help" impoverished children it was also
couched in a way that placed her own learning and development at the centre of this advocacy
perspective. Expanding on how the trip would be "helpful", Linda emphasized the
expectation of personal growth from the experience. This internal focus, however, was
balanced by her perception that the importance of their work with the orphanage lay in its
emotional solidarity with the children at the orphanage:

*Linda:* ...I just feel I have to do something. I don't know, I think it will be
really helpful to go there. I hope it will be helpful.

*J.S.:* Be helpful in what sense?

*Linda:* Well, so they know that people are actually out there wanting to help
them, that the Guatemalans know that people actually want to be there for them
and help them and know that they're not being left alone. Also, it will help
because I don't want to be so materialistic and sometimes I think that I am and I
know I am. So hopefully I'd be able to go there and maybe shed some light on
different things.

*J.S.:* Shed some light. You mentioned that before, 'shed some light'. What
do you mean by 'shed some light'?

*Linda:* Just open my eyes up and make me understand. Make me understand that
Richmond isn't the only place; that it's not the only place and the money we have
is not what everybody else has and that people live so much differently and I
don't even realize it. You know, we go day to day and I wanting for a pair of $85
pants from my parents and their wanting for pants period. You know, I need
shoes and I want $100 shoes. It's just different. I just want to realize it for
myself. (Shaw, Int#1)

Linda first heard of the Casa Guatemala project from her sister who had
unsuccessfully applied to the program at Steveston in 1991. Linda also talked at length
about the tour with one student who had been on the trip the previous year and emphasized
how much the tour had "changed" this person's life. The resulting conversation clearly
demonstrated the depth of Linda's expectations for her own experience in the months prior to
the trip. When asked to provide specifics concerning her direct observations of the changes
she had witnessed in this friend, Linda had several tangible ideas in mind:

*Linda:* She's more down to earth now. She sees things differently than we do
like she's not as materialistic. You can tell just by the way she dresses. She
looks more environmentally, I don't know, she is nicer now, too. She's more
understanding.

J.S.: Any other sort of specific things that you can pinpoint that are different that she's changed or anything she's said that really strikes you as something that would represent change?

Linda: Just the way she's so, she's quieter too. I've noticed she was quiet. She's like more at peace it seems. I don't know, it is hard to explain...She is just more at peace with herself or something.

J.S.: Did she ever discuss with you the reason for those changes?

Linda: She said it really hits home what you see in Guatemala, the kids and the way they have to live compared to the way we live and what we see is so huge and, you know, disasters in our lives are just trivial to what they have to live through every day. (Shaw, Int#1)

If Linda had preconceived notions of the impact of the trip she was engaging in, this was not matched by growth in her knowledge of the country she was going to. She classified it as a "Third World" country, believed it was in South America, felt that it had a very corrupt government, poor educational standards and that the culture was extraordinary, but could not elaborate on any specifics regarding the above. Linda admitted that her perceptions of Guatemala were fed mostly by media images and broadly applied knowledge which she had gained in school that was not very accurate or inclusive. The strength in Linda's perceptions of Guatemala were found in her ability to identify with the people's living conditions and struggle which was based on these generalized notions of life in "underdeveloped" countries.

Her perceptions were also tempered by a realistic understanding that their work at the orphanage was not going to result in any drastic improvements in the children's predicament. On the contrary, she was cognizant that the value of the experience was in more personal terms. Many of these perceptions are present in a quote from Linda's original application to the Casa Guatemala program:

I want to feel these children's sufferings and share in their happy moments. I want to realize how lucky we all are and how selfish we must be. I want to help the children, be there for them. I want to experience the act of giving,
wanting and expecting nothing in return. A smile from an orphan would brighten my day... I'd love to hold a little baby and feel we're helping just a little. I want to live in an un-selfish world, a life where materials are only there to enjoy and share. (Shaw, Project Application Form)

Before leaving for Guatemala, Linda consistently reiterated her dilemma with the desire to establish a secure standard of living and the pursuit of social justice issues. The experience with the Casa Guatemala Project would hopefully clarify these conflicting images of her goals in life.

4.22 Holly Range: Feminism and The Trumpet

Holly is fifteen years of age and in grade eleven at Richmond Senior High. Last year, she was on the honour roll in junior high school but her average this year was a high "B". Her passion in life is playing the trumpet, at which she excels. She plays in at least six different ensembles, orchestras and jazz groups throughout the region and has played for the British Columbia Honour Band on several occasions. Her talents have earned her several musical scholarships. Although she plays with the school band at Richmond High, she is critical of the quality of instruction and would rather go to school and live in the heart of a big city with a more vibrant theatre and musical scene. Ultimately she would like to play for a city orchestra in the United States or Europe because she believes the performance level of these bands is much higher than contemporary organizations in Canada -- first chair in the London Symphony would be an acceptable occupational fate in Holly's eyes. To that end she would like to attend university, preferably at McGill in Montreal because she believes they have one of the best music programs in the country. McGill, in itself, is only tolerable because it is relatively affordable.

Holly comes from a solid middle-class family. Her mother is an educator and her father is a supervisor for a large company. She is a relatively quiet person and very
observant. While she is not likely to reply with extensive answers when questioned, she speaks her mind clearly and directly. It was quite apparent that she possessed a well-rounded knowledge of contemporary problems. Her critique of the Richmond community was only slightly less harsh than was her comment on the rest of Canada. She listed several pertinent issues to demonstrate this perspective. Feminist issues were often subtly raised during the interview sessions and informal discussions with the researcher. If there was any place in the world she did not want to travel to, it was the region around Iran and Iraq because their views on women were repugnant.

Of all the students interviewed, Holly had the most radical critique of the political status-quo. Social change, in her perception, would only occur if people took overt actions and confronted power structures directly. In our first interview she exalted Greenpeace as a group that represented the kinds of things that needed to be done to confront major contemporary issues. When asked to clarify why she felt this way in the second interview, she responded with some very revealing comments:

_Holly_: Well, the only way that they get through to people is by doing such drastic things, like the way that the ships that either they transport oil or they're hunting whales or whatever they do. But, they [Greenpeace] go out and they do such extreme measures, like trying to block the ships...then they get the coverage. People start to be aware of what they are doing and that's the only real thing I've ever seen get through to the people and get to the government, that hey, there's something happening that people don't agree with.

_J.S._: Why do you think that's the case?

_Holly_: Because people just don't want to hear it sometimes, I don't think. They just want to live in their own little world and think that everything's going all right. They don't want to face the facts.

_J.S._: Okay, and the facts are what?

_Holly_: The world's going down the tubes. Like there's so many problems that it's almost impossible to deal with, for a few people to deal with. It has to be everyone that'll come together, which will never happen. (Range, Int#2)
Remarks like the above were not uncommon when talking to Holly. Such opinions reflect a critical disposition towards the world around her. However, Holly is not depressed or overly serious. While somewhat secretive about the details of her life, she is generally open to discussions, friendly and has a sly grin on her face most of the time.

Holly sees herself as a giving person who works well with other people in the sense of being a "team player". When not playing her trumpet, she is involved in the school's Outdoor Club and is occasionally involved as a volunteer in the community. She first learned of the Casa Guatemala program while reading her older brother's yearbook from Steveston Senior High. She was already interested in applying before she heard the public announcement at Richmond High in the fall of 1992. Holly's explanation of her desire to become involved in the program was complex. In one sense she felt that it was a chance to test the waters for potential work and career choices in years to come. Like many others, Holly saw her role as "helping" the children at the orphanage and did not hold inflated expectations about the groups work in Guatemala. On a more realistic scale, she believed it was a good opportunity to see what life was really like "down there". Like Linda, she anticipated being the central beneficiary of the experience:

J.S.: How do you see it helping you?

Holly: Well, it will show me how lucky I am to be living here and just cause I have heard it will change you a lot when you come back. I think it will change me.

J.S.: How do you think?

Holly: That is what I am going to find out.

J.S.: Do you have any ideas now of how it might change you?

Holly: It is going to put me into a different perspective of what it is like to live in a country that is poor, I guess, in a lot of areas; where kids are shot in the street, where things are totally different. It is just a totally different world after that. (Range, Int#1)
Holly also believed that their work with the Casa Guatemala program was symbolic of solidarity between the "First World" and the "Third World". Among other things, Holly saw the school-based project providing "hope" for the people of Guatemala:

J.S.: What does this program do for the people of Guatemala?

_Holly_: It brings them the money or the gifts or the clothes they need bad and it shows that there are people out in the world that will come and help them; who are willing to forget everything they left behind and come to work for them. And that there is hope for their society to get better if they feel that's what they need. Something like that.

J.S.: What do you mean by "hope"?

_Holly_: Hope, well it gives them something to look forward to. Like we're from a country where...they consider this extreme wealth, I think, and it gives them hope that maybe someday they'll be able to have the same sort of luxuries we have.

J.S.: How does it do that?

_Holly_: Well, we bring them materials like the books and things like that, where they can get educated themselves and start to get some education down there so the youth can slowly build up their society to one where they have the same educational foundations we have and people are lawyers, doctors, all those people that could really make the society into a better place. (Range, Int#2)

Embedded in this perception of "hope" is the notion that pursuing the material wealth of the "First World" was the ultimate goal of development in "Third World" societies, that the proliferation of better educational standards was an integral component in its realization. She also understood that "development" was a long term process. An intensive understanding of power relationships and historical knowledge did not inform her perspectives. She, nonetheless, attached a clear sense of political efficacy to her efforts with the school project, believing it contributed to the process of change, if only in a symbolic and limited manner. As an extension of this sense of efficacy, Holly also attached significance to the project in terms of how it might possibly have implications on the future well-being of her own community:
It's the type of project where it's dealing with people of our own age, it's dealing with problems that could eventually come and affect us, and at some point in our lives we should try and do something to help. (Range, Int#2)

Within this statement is a clear perception that there are potential ramifications for inaction in the "First World" in regards to the problems of underdevelopment in "Third World".

Another revealing aspect of Holly's feelings about the upcoming tour was a concern about her own ignorance of the appropriate modes of cultural behaviour and social interaction in Guatemala. Beyond wishing that she had better knowledge of Spanish and the history of the country, she worried that her lack of understanding of their culture might cause her to offend Guatemalans; a situation which she wanted to avoid. In this sense she was very conscious of the need to demonstrate respect for the host culture. This sensitivity was prompted partly by an understandable fear of the country to which she was going, given its recent political history. One of the few bits of knowledge she felt she possessed about Guatemala was that soldiers shot homeless children in the streets of the capital city. She admitted learning this from some of her teachers. This particular piece of information was based on an article which outlined the background to these allegations and was being circulated in interested circles around the school. Holly was the only individual to express concerns about cross-cultural sensitivity prior to the journey.

4.23 Kaily Soila: On the Fast Track of Perceptual Change

Kaily Soila typifies the kind of student who is actively involved in the life of her school and community. She has been an honour roll student since grade eight. Kaily was very disappointed about the fact that she once received a "B". In 1992 she was working as the

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4 See "Police are suspect in cases of violent deaths - Guatemala: Children are the victims" Latinamerican Press, 13 September, 1990.
president of the International Issues Club, managed the senior boys basketball team, and sat on the yearbook committee, the "grad" committee and was active as a member in the Counter Attack Club which aims to eliminate teenage drinking and driving. She had a meeting to attend every day outside of class time. Somehow she managed to work part-time as an office assistant at a local medical clinic in order to pay for the trip to Guatemala. In past summers she thoroughly enjoyed her volunteer work at a municipal daycare centre where she ran programs for the children. Kaily is a "bubbly", highly energetic and very busy person. This energy and involvement sometimes hides the fact that at the time of her involvement in the Casa Guatemala Project, her mother was very ill. In fact she had applied and been accepted for the project during the previous year, but was forced to cancel because possible exposure to tropical diseases in Guatemala might have put her mother at great risk when she returned home.

Geography and history are Kaily's favourite subjects. She was very interested in last year's social studies class because it focused, in part, on "Third World" countries and other cultures around the world. She attended Japanese classes throughout the first semester of the 1992-93 school year. Her interest in learning about other societies was stimulated, in part, by extensive travel experience. Of these journeys, the grade eight trip [1988] to the Soviet Union stands out in her memory. She describes this visit analytically:

That was fun. We just basically toured around and went to museums and talked to other students. It was really neat because we saw it before the "Wall" came down....They seemed like there was a difference between the younger kids and the older kids in the USSR. The younger kids were just so eager to meet us and talk to us and give us things and us give them things, but the older people were more cautious or...you know they didn't want us to talk with them or anything like that. Like one group gave us, it was like a brownie type group that we have, and they gave us all their scarves and the teachers made them come back and take them away from us. They didn't want them to give them to us. You know, we would be wearing shorts and they would kind of scald on us. They were so used to the communist part of their country. They didn't like the openness of the other countries coming in. (Soila, Int#1)
With this considerable interest in travel and working with children, Kaily would like eventually like to be an elementary teacher and, in the future, a mission teacher in a "developing" country. Her religious convictions are implicitly concealed in these career objectives.

Kaily’s first interview began with very positive overtones in her feelings towards the Richmond community. In her mind, Richmond and Canada were ideal places to live in. There was a perception that most people in Richmond were caring and supportive. These characteristics distinguished her home from larger cities that typically suffer from high rates of crime and violence:

"I think the community is very strong. I mean except for a little gangs and a little school fight or something like that we don't have a high murder rate or anything like that. It seems that families are really strong and everything like that. The schools have a lot of incentive to them; they have great groups you know. There is lots of groups outside school for kids and things like that. I really think that it is a great area. It seems like there is a really strong community here. People actually want to get together and help. I think the high schools are really great. I mean from Vancouver to Richmond, I like Richmond so much better. It seems that people are just so close community wise. (Soila, Int#1)"

This positive expression reflects her view that the world is in fairly decent shape except for selected aspects like the environment. She believes that people are fundamentally peace loving and generous -- a faith which may have come from her experiences working as a volunteer in the community and in response to her observations of the Casa Guatemala program:

"I think on the rate of giving the world is really great, you know. It seems that, except for the fighting and everything like that, but for the basic aim of the people, they want peace in the world and they are willing to help other countries and everything like that. We are going more and more towards a democratic state, you know. Everyone has freedom to speak and everything like that. So on the human side I think it is better, but on the environmental side and still on the fighting side, you know there are still a few people who are still fighting in the world and things like that. Like the political wise and then the environment wise the environment is not very great right now. The world is not
very great on that side. So on half side of the humans wanting to try and give and help other countries it is really good. (Soila, Int#1)

To Kaily, these problems were seen as a series of fronts that can be challenged independently. There was great faith in the civic-mindedness of the community which, from her perspective, will in the end overcome problems. She envisages a steady march towards greater democracy and freedom in the world. There was no sense of interconnection or overarching power relations that actively structure and give rise to problems such as "fighting" and the "environment". These were all problems that could be tackled in isolation from one another with the right amount of caring, volunteerism and diligence.

Kaily, if any of the students, demonstrated a substantial shift in the nature of her analysis and perceptions of the program in the months prior to going to Guatemala. She began explaining her desire to travel to Guatemala in much the same manner as her peers: the experience would change her perspectives, enrich her understanding of the "Third World" and, in the mean time, she would be able to "help out" with their problems:

One thing that baited me was listening to other people talk about it. Like it just makes me so excited and I really want to go down there and help other people like what she said and I think, also, how she said it changes our lives and everything like that. This is what I also want to do when I am older. I want to help out like this and it has motivated me to go down there. (Soila, Int#2)

Even more revealing of the group's perceived role in Guatemala, were the aspirations underlying her desire to offer humanitarian assistance. In the early months of involvement with Casa Guatemala, Kaily believed that the group's role was merely an extension of a broader community response to the needs of the "Third World". She viewed social and economic development as primarily a matter of transferring the superior "know-how" of the prosperous and capable "North" to the impoverished masses of the "South". Furthermore, she thought that the most important and, as yet, untapped resource for stimulating "development" lay in the mobilization of collective awareness and resources in
the community:

I think as a community we can help Third World countries, or maybe we can have a drop off shoe thing or a drop off medical supplies thing. You know, maybe there will be certain people go over who are qualified and give the supplies to people and teach them how to use those supplies so we don’t always have to keep going over there and help them. They will actually learn how to do it themselves instead of just saying, well here is some money and here is some food, but we are not going to teach you how to do it. I think that they need to learn, you know, how we have schools where we learn how to do things. So from generation to generation people always know how to do things, but, whereas, not many people are qualified to do certain jobs. I think they need more education over there. (Soila, Int#1)

By the time of the second interview, four weeks later, Kaily’s view of the group’s influence on the people of Guatemala had a more specific political flavour. In discussions with Mary Coll, the student teacher at her school who had recently lived and worked in the Casa Guatemala orphanage, Kaily was developing a more critical and informed perspective on the possible ramifications of their presence in the country:

J.S.: What does this program do for people in Guatemala?

Kaily: I think that they see a more international awareness and they see the Western countries actually wanting to help. I think that they may also see an intrusion on their culture also, but I think from what I have heard, people are nice down there. Like, they are glad that we are down there because supposedly the government won’t harm us down there and they will back off more if there is more international support down there. So I think that the people down there are actually glad that there is international support. (Soila, Int#2)

Through these comments it was evident that Kaily was, for the first time, beginning to consider possible negative ramifications from the presence of international volunteers and tourists in Guatemala. The belief that the presence of foreigners provided a kind of unspoken safety zone for Guatemalan peasants was a substantial change in the level of sophistication in Kaily’s intellectual understanding. In addition, concepts like cultural erosion and modification were now squarely within her grasp.

In the weeks immediately prior to departure for Guatemala there was a marked
change in her perceptions of the nature of their school-based program. Kaily was becoming skeptical regarding the extent of help the group would really provide to the orphanage given the proposed agenda of the tour. She gradually began to critique the manner in which the group would be travelling which she believed contradicted the purpose and intent of the school program. All of this made her feel uneasy about the assumptions underlying the proposed itinerary:

When you think that we are staying in top quality hotels and like half our trip we are taking Spanish lessons and then we are going shopping and things like that, only six days of our trip is up at the orphanage. When you think about what we have been saying at our school; that has been our whole focus is Casa Guatemala, the orphanage...We are going down there and we are not actually just helping the orphanage. We are actually doing the 'touristy' things too. I think it is neat for the first time to go down there to do some interesting things to get the feel of it, but if I go down there a second time I am just going to spend it at the orphanage. (Solla, Int#2)

Kaily's expressed knowledge of the culture and issues surrounding Guatemalan society was typical of the Steveston group who had been involved with the International Issues Club and had several weeks to discuss the trip with the student teacher. From her own research and discussions with Mary Coll, she had gained an awareness of problems such as glue sniffing and street children, government corruption and repression, absolute extremes of wealth and poverty, the historical context of Latino domination of the Maya civilization and the burning of the codexes, and the continuing problem of refugees from the civil war. With this growing awareness Kaily was more convinced than ever of the need for the program. At the same time she was also expressing a growing sense of frustration and intolerance of people who did not understand the value of their work:

Like even some adults when they talk to me they are like, "Oh wouldn't you want to put that towards your university education or something like that?" I think it is worth it. Like, this is what I want to do. I have put a lot of work into this project and I want to see what we are actually doing when we are down there. Some people just don't understand it. Like, I think you have to have that in your head that you actually want to do this. Some people just can't understand
why you would want to put your money to that, you know, when you could go to Australia or something like that, but that is what we want to do. (Soila, Int#2)

For Kaily, at least, this kind of verbal resistance began to symbolize the disjuncture she felt between her values and the more traditional ones that surrounded her in the community. As she had grown to identify with the program she was also learning, as others surely were, how Casa Guatemala challenged more popular ways of understanding and interacting with "developing" nations. Her growing attachment to the cause of supporting the children at the orphanage was possible because of an open-mindedness that she perceived others did not share.

4.24 Alice Gibson: An Adventure in Cross-Cultural Learning

Alice Gibson is a grade eleven student who intentionally performs just slightly better than the norm. This is not because she has average abilities, rather she limits the amount of effort she pours into academic pursuits. In some regards Alice has the observational and analytical abilities of a trained anthropologist. She is a very sensitive and modest individual given her considerable abilities. She demonstrates a willingness to comprehend other points of view. Likewise, empathy and an external frame of reference are cornerstones of her personality.

Beyond the desire to attend university when she graduates from high school, Alice did not state entrenched or highly specific career goals. She expressed interest in tourism because of her love of languages. Alice declared that she will be taking Japanese and was already fluent in Spanish as she has spent every summer in memory with her mother's relatives in Mexico. She has a wealth of experiences to share regarding her visits to Cuernavaca, including her recollection of the 1985 earthquake that devastated the capital city. Alice is perceptive about the kinds of changes taking place in this country. She
describes it this way:

Mexico is starting to grow a lot more. Like, just the place where I went...it's becoming more American kind of in a way that you go to the store and you can buy your Levi's instead of your Mexican jeans or whatever. But a lot more has been imported. Like you can go down there and buy a T.V. dinner at the store whereas, normally you'd go to the market and buy your fresh vegetables and your meat from the butcher and it's just, I don't know, it's just growing more into a city because before it was more like a little town. (Gibson, Int#1)

Alice has developed critical comparisons between the social norms of her peers at Steveston Senior High and those in Mexico:

I think people in Mexico aren't as judgmental in a way. Because when you come here, if you're wearing like a really outrageous outfit to school, people will look at you like, oh, my God; in Mexico, they'll probably just feel like oh, well, like it's not so much a competition to be the same. It's more like everyone is who you are kind of thing, or you are who you are. (Gibson, Int#1)

Alice's background has had an obvious impact on her rationale for involvement in the Casa Guatemala program. Like her peers she explained this in reference to the desire to "help", but the difference in her elaboration of this theme came in the context of her life experiences. This distinction was obvious from the moment she applied to the program. As indicated in the following passage from her application form:

Last summer I spent two months in Mexico with some of my relatives. The city I stayed in is named Cuernavaca. It is a fairly well developed city but there is still a bit of poverty. When I walked down the streets I saw ladies with their young babies selling baskets or candies to make money to buy some dinner. Whenever I saw this I felt very sad. I also felt very selfish and very guilty because I've never been able to do anything about it, but now we can do something about it. It might not solve all the world problems but it will certainly help the orphans of Casa Guatemala. (Gibson, Project Application Form)

Unlike her peers in the program, this written rationale was not a response to extensive conversations with previous participants or from viewing the Casa Guatemala video, but from lived experience and direct observations of poverty in Mexico.

From the onset of her involvement, Alice was able to place very limited and more
realistic expectations on the potential impact of the Casa Guatemala program and their upcoming visit. When asked how she felt their work was helping the children at the orphanage, she responded:

I don't really know if we are. Like we are going to help them but probably in the way that's something new for them. It will be a whole new experience and we're building the two new rooms and the library. That will probably help and I think just the experience for them. (Gibson, Int#1)

She elaborated on this perception in more detail when later asked to explain the reasons why she thought the program had been created:

Alice: I think it's probably so that we can learn something and so that the people at the orphanage can learn something, like it goes both ways. But I think we'll learn a lot more about how fortunate we are to have things and they'll learn a lot more about what, like how our culture is different and things. So I think probably so that we can all learn something out of it.

J.S.: Are there other things you might learn out of this?

Alice: Probably, yeah, I'll probably, I'll learn more about the country itself and about, like how it is because sometimes it's the way it's in the papers and all that. It's different from when you're really there. (Gibson, Int#1)

Even though Alice shared the belief that their participation in the program was based on the desire to "help", she couched this in a markedly different language. The experience, in her mind, was more of a cross-cultural exchange than an extension of material aid or activism for "Third World" development. In this sense the journey was more beneficial to the group as learning experience for all parties involved. Secondly, she understood the value of this journey as a means to overcome the inadequacies of the media's portrayal of Guatemala, so that in response to her observations she could develop her own independent perspective on the culture and politics of this nation.

Like Kaily, Alice shared in the growth of her understanding about Guatemala from discussions with Mary Coll and through her involvement in "Guatemala Week" which she helped to organize at the school. Even though she had not set foot in Guatemala, Alice
provided very rich descriptions of many aspects of this society. Her description of the abduction and training of Maya boys into military service is representative of her changing knowledge and preconceptions of the country:

A lot of people are just being neglected because they don't have a lot of money so they can't really...they can't buy land and they can't do a lot about it, just because the army has so much control and they've brain-washed so many young boys into being part of the army that they'll never really have to worry about the army running out of people, just because...Miss Call said that when she was in Guatemala they'd...when she was taking buses, she said that the army would just get on the buses and take 13-year-old boys and take them off to boot-camp and just brainwash them for six months and a lot of them wouldn't come out alive. A lot of them would just commit suicide because they couldn't handle it, and she said they'd come out killing machines, like they'd just come out and kill people because they're street kids or just because they were...they had land and the government wanted it or the military wanted it or just things like that. (Gibson, Int#2)

Alice also participated in an international development conference for high school students at the University of British Columbia where she attended a seminar put on by Ray Sawatsky and Tony Eng, two of the programs past participants. On this occasion she viewed the video Guatemala Journey for the first time. The presentation had an immediate impact on her commitment to the project as she witnessed, for the first time, the children and the setting of the orphanage. When asked to explain how this further affected her she began to cry. Her explanation of this growth in attachment to the program was taking on more personal strands of reasoning as her knowledge of the social and political context of the orphanage grew:

I think I'm more aware now about what's going on in Guatemala, so I want to help. Like, especially the kids, because they're just...I think they're just victims of a lot of...like almost everything that happens, like the government and things; they can't really help it. So I think just going helps the kids. (Gibson, Int#2)

Alice also talked with several of last years participants on the Casa Guatemala trip and reported similar themes in regards to their explanations of the impact of the journey.
There was an expectation that the experience would change her perspective on life, create a different set of priorities, provide her with a greater appreciation for the benefits of living in this society, as well as gaining a much more extensive knowledge of the different people and culture in Guatemala (Gibson, Int#2). Another interesting perception was the feeling that she was working with a group of like-minded individuals who had now become her close friends. This was even more important to her because it mutually reinforced their individual reasons for involvement or, as she expressed it, "because it feels like we all have a lot of support, like we all, we're all doing this pretty much for the same reasons, we all have a lot in common," (Gibson, Int#2). Finally, the simple fact that the program created its own unique culture and structure for the expression of these values amongst her peers was important to Alice:

Alice: I think it's given me a lot of responsibility, because I like to be involved with the schools and things, but I've never really been involved in a project like this where we actually plan things out and do things and go out and talk to people and things like that. But I think that it's probably made me, I don't know if it's stronger, but I feel I'm, I've matured a bit, like I look a things differently now sometimes.

J.S.: How do you look at things differently, do you think?

Alice: Well, I try not to criticize so many people any more. Like when I see something, I don't think, 'Oh, that should be that way,' or, 'Oh, I don't like that.' I kind of think, 'Oh that's how it is. I guess I should deal with it,' kind of; like, make it better, don't make it worse, kind of. (Gibson, Int#2)

Not only was Casa Guatemala providing Alice with friendships that reinforced the commonality of her values with her peers, but it also gave her a constructive way of acting on these beliefs in an institutional setting while developing organizational skills which better enabled her to carry out such actions.
4.25 Jane Lamb: Alienation and Social Action

Jane Lamb is a grade eleven student who achieves grades in the "B" range. She openly admits that she could get straight "A's" if she applied herself, but feels she has other priorities. What became most apparent throughout the interviews was that Jane feels totally at odds with main-stream society. She demonstrates her alienation, both mentally and physically, as a challenge to others' perceptions of "normal". When you first meet her you are taken by the silver ring she wears through her nose, a symbol of her desire to express her individuality in an unconventional manner.

Jane comes from a deeply religious household. Her parents are very involved with the Anglican Church, and this institution has been an integral part of Jane's life to date. Over the past few summers Jane has been on staff at a Bible camp where she led children's programs, cooked and performed maintenance tasks. Jane recalls these experiences with great enthusiasm because of the sense of community and accomplishment that she developed. However, these memories also serve as a critical yardstick with which she measures her life back in the city:

Jane: ... when you get home it's just like holy, like you feel so much more mature and so much more responsible. I remember when I got off the bus from coming home I stepped aside in the Greyhound Bus station and it was just like, 'Oh my God!" I felt like an alien, I just felt like you just changed so much it's so incredible.

J.S.: You felt like an alien?

Jane: Yeah, because like you're in a city and you felt like, I don't belong here. I don't want to be here. Like everyone who gets back from the camp they kind of withdraw a bit because, it's just so true because you just don't want to be here...like, you can have a negative attitude towards here and this kind of society because you've experienced so much good in the summer.

J.S.: How do you explain the differences?

Jane: The differences? Everyone here is a lot more, it's just everyone here is just so caught up in themselves and what's going on...it's just so much
more impersonal here, so impersonal compared to a community, it's just so impersonal like incredible. (Lamb, Int#1)

In recent years she has grown to challenge the doctrines of Christianity because they are at odds with many aspects of her personal beliefs. A year after assisting in the organization of an interfaith conference with the youth wing of the Anglican Diocese, Jane declared that she had become a member of the Ba'hai community. In her eyes this faith was more in tune with the necessities and realities of the contemporary world, particularly in light of Ba'hai views on the equality of women and the acceptability of other forms of faith. Jane describes the Ba'hai Faith as the "religion for today" (Lamb, Int#1).

More convincingly than any of the other students, Jane sees herself working as a community social worker or organizer in the future and this includes the desire to work in just such a capacity in the "Third World". In her own community she envisages a vocation as an activist teacher or peer counsellor, particularly for teenage women:

You know how people come to high schools and they're, like not lecturers, but they give talks on certain things, people who would do that...And I see doing something like that on self-esteem because people nowadays, especially like girls, girl's self-esteem are so low. Like even me for weight and stuff...And I was thinking that if I could just go from school to school and like just teach kind of self-esteem courses, just say you are okay, you know, you are good, you're worth it and you're a good person and you are beautiful. You know, just that kind of thing because everyone needs so much. (Lamb, Int#1)

Jane is acutely aware of the larger commercial and political forces which shape the culture and values of her society. Not willing to succumb to these forces, she is adamant about avoiding a middle-class lifestyle. She would rather travel and hold a diversity of jobs than have a family and live all her life in the same community (Lamb, Int#1).

Beneath a happy, yet sarcastic demeanor is an individual who expresses critical concern about society and a deep commitment to working for social change. Looking beyond the immediate pleasures and perceived accomplishments of her own culture, she feels a great potential to improve the quality of life for people:
Well, considering Canada is supposed to be...according to United Nations, Canada is the best country to live in, but people in Canada are still, like Canada sucks. Like Canada still has its problems, you know. So considering that, Canada is supposed to be the best place, but then considering the Quebec issue and like Native people and just everything and our political leaders like Vander Zalm and stuff, you still aren't near perfect, you know. Even the best isn't really that great. (Lamb, Int#1)

Indeed, Jane is impatient and frustrated with what she perceives as the lack of understanding and commitment to change in official institutional circles. Politicians and the "rich", in her view, are almost beyond hope in this regard. Jane places greater faith and emphasis on smaller scale, "grassroots" initiatives that realize substantial achievements for individual groups of people. In her view the proliferation of projects similar to Casa Guatemala represents an appropriate extension of this train of thought (Lamb, Int#1).

Jane, like others, did not inflate the significance of their journey for the children of the orphanage or the people of Guatemala. The brunt of the benefit was going to the teachers and students on the trip who gained new insights into the culture and lifestyle of Guatemalan people:

I think it benefits us more than it does them, though. Because, I mean, us going there for two weeks doesn't really do much for them except for giving them a bit of fun for two weeks I guess. But for us, it gives us like all the culture and stuff and we open our eyes so much more, I guess, when we're there. So it's good for the students who go and the teachers who go and stuff. (Lamb, Int#2)

In this sense the trip was most important as a tool for gaining a new perspective on life in her own society:

J.S.: You say 'open your eyes'. Can you explain that?

Jane: Like realize that it's not just Canada...not everywhere is just like Richmond. You know, it's just...everyone...there's different cultures and there's different levels of wealth and stuff and I'm totally wealthy, you know. (Lamb, Int#2)

For Jane, the real gains of this program would come in the reinforcement of values she
already possessed, as well the manner in which the experience would lend support to her sense of advocacy on world issues (Lamb, Int#2). She even expressed disappointment that more of her peers could not participate in the program because of the impact it might have on their values and in turn, the ramifications this might have on the momentum for change:

Like right now if I came up from Guatemala and said to people, 'Hey, let's raise some more money for Casa Guatemala,' most people would say, 'Oh, well no. Like, I already did before you went,' you know. But if everyone went back, everyone would want to give more money, you know. Like there would be so much more done, if everyone was involved, so much more could be done. (Lamb, Int#2)

In quite a different light, Jane was able to project herself into the perspective of a Guatemalan who might witness these travellers from the North. Far from their presence being beneficial to these people in the manner in which they generated valuable tourist dollars for the local economy, she perceived a far more negative implication:

Like, compared to us they have nothing; they don't. So when we go there and they look at us and we have all our clothes...which is so much to them...and when they see us they probably feel like, 'God, like I have no hope. Like look at them, like they come here for two weeks and they leave.'...Like, if I was them, I'd be thinking, 'God, like what's the point of my life, because...look at them, they're so rich but they're so far away.' (Lamb, Int#2)

She is conscious of her own relative standard of living and a strong current of empathy for those she is about to impose upon as a tourist. One even senses subtle shades of guilt from her portrayal of the interaction between the two groups of people.

The lead-up to departure was even more unsettling to Jane: she reported developing a great deal of frustration with her classmates who failed to comprehend and appreciate the nature of the group's visit to Guatemala. In both her journal and second interview she discussed the issue in depth:

Jane:...So many people I know, like just people I'm not even close with, they're always...,'Oh can you bring me this back?...And that's all I seem to her really, is, 'You're going down to Guatemala? Cool. Can you bring me this'? And I just...it totally pisses me off...
J.S.: What kind of things are they asking for?

Jane: Like clothes...because you can buy cheap things there in Chichicastenango... I'm not going to buy you gifts...it just seems that people just think of, 'Cool, can you get us something?...' they don't think, 'Oh wow, you're going to see a totally different culture and wow, that's something amazing'...it just seems so much for them, like some big fun trip...It just annoys me so much. (Lamb, Int#2)

This indictment of her peers further indicated the strong degree of alienation she already felt towards mainstream society, particularly the emphasis on materialism and individualism.

Jane admitted to knowing very little about Guatemala prior to the trip. Like others, she discussed gaining an appreciation for the work of the Casa Guatemala orphanage and some degree of insight into the social and political situation in Guatemala from the student teacher at Steveston. At one point she elaborated at some length on the plight of street kids in Guatemala, but did not venture into other aspects of her understanding or perceptions of this country (Lamb, Int#2). Jane made continual reference to the idea of returning to do volunteer work, before she had even experienced the journey. She admitted being heavily influenced by her aunt and uncle whom she regarded as role models:

I've just always wanted, all my life just wanted to get out of Canada...I've just wanted to go to a third world country and...just not for two weeks, not just for a holiday. Just I wanted to go there and be there for a year. Like my aunt and uncle lived in Guyana for three years...they've like totally made things progress there. (Lamb, Int#2)

For Jane this trip represented a "turning point" in her life, something that would allow her to make informed decisions about her career choices and possible options in the future (Lamb, Int#2). The trip was a natural extension of her desire for a career that reflected her political efficacy.
4.26 Tim Long: Informing A Legal Career

Tim is an academically gifted individual in his senior year at McNair Secondary School. During his junior high school years he attended the Incentive School in Richmond, which offered a program of enriched curriculum and studies. While he enjoyed the learning atmosphere at this school, he switched to a mainstream high school because of the lack of extracurricular activities offered at Incentive. Consequently, in grade eleven, he enrolled at McNair. History and politics are his favourite subjects, although he feels very competent in all areas of study. However, he refuses to take biology because he conscientiously objects to the prospect of dissecting animals of any sort. Tim openly admits that he holds to a very rigid set of personal principles. Last year he was recognized the top scholar at McNair and hopes to repeat this performance. Involvement in intercollegiate athletics programs is not a goal to which Tim readily aspires. As he states, "I'm not a big fan of competition." Instead, Tim prefers to participate in recreational level sports and activities. This last year he managed the junior girls volleyball team. Beyond this, he is very involved in the school, sitting as a member of the environment, newspaper and yearbook clubs, as well as student council where he acts as treasurer (Long, Int#1).

As an extension of his penchant for politics, Tim sees himself as a successful community activist. He sits on a number of municipal boards and committees as a youth consultant and organizer. Recently he was appointed to the Richmond Youth Community Advisory Council. He is also dedicated to working with his Ismaili community's education board. Although Tim explains this desire for intensive political activity in several ways, the core of this motivation appears to come from a strong personal sense of efficacy which has only been realized in recent years:

I worked hard in school. That was it and then I joined one group one year...It expanded my horizons. First of all, I realized I liked being busy, like I just cannot sit idle. It's something I've always been like that and I feel that you
know, so many youths say, 'Oh well, you can't make a difference,' but here I am and I know I'm going through programs and I know that I am making a difference and I have the opportunity to do so. And somebody just has to take the initiative to go into it and I think realize that, you know, you can do something about it. You can make a difference about it and you just have to take that initiative to do it. So I don't think it is just a matter of involvement. I guess it made me more mature in the process. (Long, Int#1)

Tim describes the roots of this disposition in reference to his stable family upbringing, the values instilled by his religious community and wealthy socio-economic standing. His parents run a successful wholesale business (Long, Int#2). Yet financial success is not the yardstick by which Tim wishes to measure his own achievements. Rather, he pictures himself working as an advocate of "civil liberties". He feels he can realize more tangible and personally rewarding results from involvement in community and international development issues (Long, Int#1; Int#2).

Self-actualization and self-confidence are Tim's strongest personality characteristics. He has an impressive degree of political and historical knowledge for someone his age, and has a striking ability to articulate his own status and relationship with society. Tim wants to attend an elite university, preferably Berkeley or Stanford in the United States, or McGill in Canada. Eventually he would like to graduate with a law degree and work as a diplomat for the United Nations (Long, Int#1). Through all of these aspirations, Tim holds to conservative notions of social change and his place within it:

Society as a whole has been good to me, I think, in the sense that I don't come across many roadblocks. I feel society has its own rules, and sometimes if you don't go against those rules...if you go against those rule you are condemned and I've been very lucky, because I don't think I've gone against those rules yet...So I think in that sense, society's been good to me, because I've sort of been in that, you know, I have good grades...and I don't get into the violence and I am articulate and...I've followed the rules. But, society is also a collective of values and I'm just fortunate that my values fit into that spectrum. (Long, Int#2)

As a result of attendance at conferences and forums, Tim has met numerous politicians and
bureaucrats who have served as role models for him. He feels comfortable with this circle of people and they have influenced his perception of a possible vocation:

I know one man who is in Stanford and he just got his Rhodes scholarship. He's going to Oxford and he's done some programs for the United Nations. So I guess if you see other people doing it you feel like hey, there's something there for you. I know a woman who is the chairman for the Refugee Board of Canada. Here she is making a huge difference and she's just like everyone else. You think there's a chance that I could make a difference too. (Long, Int#1)

While these role models have, no doubt, informed his career goals, several other strong influences shaped the nature of his life aspirations and his reasons for pursuing involvement in the Casa Guatemala program.

Tim recalls travelling to Tanzania and Kenya as a younger boy, to visit his parent's former home. Several memories of this experience stand out for him: the degree of police corruption, the beggars on the streets, problems with currency exchange, the difference in procedures for travelling on planes, and his parents' description of the comparative decline of the streets and facilities in the country as a result of the termination of colonial rule (Long, Int#1). Even with these recollections Tim felt that he had not gained fully from the experience, because his family was staying at fancy hotels and "decadent" surroundings:

I was there twice and I saw first hand the problems that they faced and it's really sad and at the same time I had my own family members who are so wealthy and staying at the Hilton in Nairobi which was just ridiculous. You know, that disturbed me when I was young. At first, you know, no big deal, I was having such a great time, all these servants and everything. But you know, even after I came back I thought more about what happened and what I'd seen and it just disturbed me. I think I was sensitive to that. Maybe because it was part of my heritage itself. My own community, the Ismaili community, has a lot of work in development; we have sponsorships and foundations...So it is just something in me. (Long, Int#1)

There is an underlying ethic of religious duty and benevolence colouring much of Tim's philosophy. His Ismaili community places a strong emphasis on charity and acts of compassion. The practical extension of this comes through his experience in conferences
organized by the Aga Khan Foundation which sponsors community development projects throughout the world. On an immediate and personal level Tim drew parallels between his sense of spirituality and his efforts with the Casa Guatemala program:

I do a lot of reading, like on philosophy and mystical religion and I search for sort of...not purpose, but something beyond physical existence. Like I do that often, and my religion does that a lot, and sometimes, like I look at my work in an orphanage or whatever as a form of prayer, because I believe it is. (Long, Int#2)

However noble and lofty this explanation seems, it must be weighed against more selfish and earthly tangents in Tim's personality. During the second interview he admitted attempting to impress a young woman while on a date through an intentional and timely reference to his upcoming work at the orphanage in Guatemala:

And she was very impressed that I was willing to go to Guatemala and work in an orphanage and to do some Third World development work and stuff. So I guess it made me seem caring and whatever and stuff...I'm not too proud of that, let's put it that way. Anyway, she wasn't my type, so I wasn't interested after a while so it didn't matter. (Long, Int#2)

The idea of travelling in Guatemala and working at the orphanage was initially stimulated by his former principal at the Incentive School who had gone to this country and reportedly changed his career path to medicine as a result. Tim saw the trip as a chance to experience the same degree of "revelation" and learn about a part of the world that was poorly understood and largely ignored. In many ways the trip served to reaffirm his values before he went to university and embarked on a career. More importantly, he perceived that the people of Guatemala represented, "an area that also needs my help," and that the school program was a vehicle for, "giving back," to them (Long, Int#1). Clearly, there was sense that he had something to give to these people either now or in the future. These perceptions of the "Third World" were later attributed to his learning in the grade eleven social studies course. Here, students were exposed to the terminology and ideology of global education which informed their understanding of the world in terms of concepts like the "global
village", "interconnection" and "interdependence". Tim used these terms readily in his discussions. All individuals had a moral responsibility to address issues of social and political injustices throughout the world according to Tim (Long, Int#1). Referring to this, Tim stated:

I just feel that the opportunity to do something outside of Canada, to do some good outside of Canada instead of within...Guatemala is an example where...there's a lot of injustices, and you hear about them and they frighten me a lot. And I can't help but think to myself that there is some way you can make a difference, even though chances are you cannot, but I feel that there is some sort of way, and even if it's just that one individual, you know...I just think that Canada would be better and the world would be better if these countries could maybe have some sort of sustainable development. (Long, Int#2)

The Casa Guatemala program was an appropriate manifestation of this global vision for Tim. He described the whole experience as a personal process of "giving a face" to international problems through the example of the bond he would establish with the children at the orphanage (Long, Int#2). The tour would provide him with the opportunity to test whether or not he was able to "make a difference" in boundaries beyond his own community, and hopefully to discover a deeper sense of personal relevance from the experience to further shape his beliefs and aspirations (Long, Int#2).

Significantly, Tim's explanation of the importance of the Casa Guatemala Project and the group's visit, did not emphasize deep concern for the people of Guatemala or the orphanage. Seemingly, this experience had greater personal significance for him in terms of assisting his career aspirations (Long, Int#2). He was very aware of the fact that he would be called upon to give speeches and slide presentations when he returned so that the message of the Casa Guatemala program could be spread in the community and to his peers (Long, Int#2). These motives would also be congruent with his perception of social change as a process of individual leadership that took place within existing institutional boundaries. Tim was very agreeable with the legal and bureaucratic framework in society and felt his
allegiance to it would be rewarded with rank and privilege (Long, Int#2).

Perhaps his inability to express a more detailed vision of the impact of the Guatemala visit was due to his lack of prior knowledge of the country and orphanage. Unlike the students from Steveston he did not have access to organized orientation activities. Outside of the two meetings of the entire group, Tim's only sources of information on Guatemala and the excursion came from an encyclopedia, articles on Rigoberta Menchu that had been recently published, and the video Guatemala Journey which he viewed at an earlier date. Despite all of this, however, Tim fully appreciated the unique value of this trip as an educational experience which underscored the very reason it had been established in the first place:

I look at Guatemala as another form of education...and some sort of way of learning about something that you can't be taught in the textbooks in school or in a book. And I meditate sometimes, so it would be nice to meditate there with what I've seen and stuff. (Long, Int#2)

4.3 Onward to Guatemala: Common Factors Affecting the Students' Perceptions

The students who came to the Casa Guatemala program did so with a diversity of backgrounds and interests. Each of them had a distinctive way of explaining their own motivation and purpose for becoming involved in the project. Their individual rationales for involvement encompassed varying degrees of both internal and external points of reference. All of the students emphasized the personal benefits which would accrue as a result of their experience, particularly the broadening of their perspectives and vocational decisions later in life. Four of the students acknowledged a qualified sense of identification with action for social change and social justice. While the term "help" was pervasively employed, strong notions of paternalism or cultural superiority were absent from their dialogue. The students described the reasons for the program in terms of a less tangible sense of solidarity with the orphanage and a shared cross-cultural learning experience more than anything
else. The students' most distinct range of perceptions were their attitude towards Canadian society. Jane, Holly, and Alice held more intensely critical attitudes towards the norms and values present in their community. Canadian society was not perceived to be problematic in any definitive sense in the eyes of Linda, Kaily or Tim. Indeed, it was a place that people came to for solutions for or refuge from turmoil that was largely conceived to be external to their community and nation.

Beyond the unique qualities of their individual explanations are a host of shared perceptions. Every student in the study sample mentioned at one point or another in the first two interview sessions, that they expected their work in Guatemala was going to "change" them in various ways. Their numerous references to a personal transformation included such things as their career and vocational goals, future involvement in "development" activities and organizations, personal values and priorities, lifestyle patterns, future travel plans, perspectives of their own society, the nature of their perceptions (eg., open-mindedness), their level of maturity, the depth of understanding of Guatemalan society, as well as a more informed sense of media literacy concerning coverage of the lives of people in the "Third World".

The breadth of items contained in these preconceptions of "change" can be explained, in part, by their unanimous exposure to the video Guatemala Journey in the months leading up to the tour. Many students reported being deeply affected by this documentary of the first trip to the orphanage in 1990 because of the style of presentation and the narrative content which centres on a continual series of student and teacher monologues which reflect on the personal relevance and impact of the trip on their lives. Alice Gibson was moved to tears when discussing the occasion of her first observation of the video and perceived that she would have a very tough time leaving the children after a week of being with them (Gibson, Int#2). The strong emotional undercurrent in the video was an intentional feature of its
production. Carkner and his associates, beginning with the planning and conceptual stage of the film, fully intended it to serve as a powerful promotional and recruitment medium for the project (Carkner, Int). However, in delivering this message, the video also suggests that participation in the trip carries with it both the expectation and anticipation that changes will occur in the students' perceptions, knowledge and values.

The students' contemplation of these various modes of "change" was also fostered by discussions with previous participants in the program. Some individuals reported listening to the testimonies of past participants at slide presentations in previous years, at initial information meetings and more often than not through direct conversations. Many of the students had older brothers or sisters in the three schools who were friends with the project's alumni and, as a result, had discussed their experiences at length in a variety of social circumstances. Once again, the example of Linda Shaw's dialogue concerning her discussions with "Jodi" is an explicit demonstration of how such interaction with former participants has shaped their preconceptions of the personal impact of the trip:

**J.S.: What did Jodi have to say about it?**

*Linda:* She loved it and she is going back again after she graduates by herself to volunteer. She loved it so much. She said it would change you. She said it changed her, the way she looks at things. She just came back totally different, which is true because I remember her from before and she is just so much different from what she was. (Shaw, Int#1)

Similar recollections can be cited from the interviews of every other student in this study. Clearly the expectation of "change" was well entrenched before they even set foot in Guatemala.

For the candidates at Steveston, this perception was also intensified by conversations with the student teacher whose background of work in Guatemala was outlined earlier in the chapter. Mary Coll brought a wealth of insights to these students and was instrumental in shaping the substance of their prior knowledge of Guatemala. However, in the same fashion
as past participants, she stimulated the perception that this event was bound to affect them in a profound manner. For Kaily Soila, conversations with Mary and other alumni of the tour provided a powerful reinforcement of her initial decision to apply for the program:

*J.S.:* If you look back now over the last few months, what has motivated you to become part of the program?

*Kaily:* One thing that baited me was listening to other people talk about it. Like it just makes me so excited and I really want to go down there and help other people. Like what she [Mary] said; it changes our lives and everything like that. This is what I want to do when I am older. I want to help out like this and it has motivated me to go down there. (Soila, Int#2)

The consistency of these expectations across the group is important because it had broad implications on how they would observe and react to situations while in Guatemala. In terms of this study, the prevalence of these preconceptions of anticipated impact makes it harder to discern whether or not documented changes in their perceptions are purely a response to events in Guatemala or whether their observations are largely reinforcements of previously held notions which they gained from other individuals. Also, one must consider the possibility of strong individual and peer oriented pressures for the students to report experiencing the same kind and intensity of effects as those who have previously gone on the tour. This made it all the more important to observe instances in their later interviews and conversations, where the students openly resisted or were critical of these preconceived notions of change.

The established profile of the Casa Guatemala program within the three schools as a humanitarian venue was another factor which played a role in shaping the students' perceptions of what they were engaging in. Not only were the subjects able to draw clear distinctions between their program and other student travel exchanges in the schools, but they were also quite frank in differentiating the characteristics of students who applied to various types of trips including their own. While the students understood that the tour
agenda in Guatemala included a substantial amount of sight-seeing they felt that the trip was fundamentally different from other trips in its purpose and orientation. In the words of Holly:

There's actually a point to it. The other trips seem to go to France or somewhere. Well what's the point? You're going there to sight-see, you're not really doing anything...or to Japan. There just seems to be more value to this trip, on the whole, for your life. You'll get something out of it, you'll get something in return, unlike other trips. (Range, Int#2)

For Holly, the feeling that they were going to help with the orphanage was the one feature which distinguished this tour from others. In this sense there was a underlying current of political efficacy around the trip which appealed to her and the others. Tim also shared this perspective, however, he also felt that there was a more definitive difference which set this journey apart from most others:

J.S.: How does the Casa Guatemala program and the trip compare to other school trips abroad?

Tim: The fact that it's to the 'Third World'. Most of the trips that I hear about go to France and Japan, which is really wonderful, because you're learning about different culture and stuff, just like here, but there's not that 'Third World' aspect...I guess more of a culture shock than anything, and also there's the fact that you are doing, you are actually creating a classroom for these students...and you are doing hands-on work for these children. (Long, Int#2)

The idea that the Casa Guatemala tour was breaking the mould of student travel by venturing to a less affluent region of the world seems basic in one sense, but this underscores the notion held by the students that the program was special and that they, by virtue of their involvement, were a distinctive group of students. While most held to the belief that the participation in the tour would ultimately be beneficial to all of their peers, they nonetheless commonly perceived that those who were best suited to the program represented a more inquisitive, open-minded, empathetic, appreciative, other regarding and less materialistic cross-section of students:
J.S.: What kind of students are suited for this program?

_Kally_: Not just think of themselves and actually think about other people.

J.S.: Anything else you think about in terms of who is suited?

_Kally_: Just have a good heart and up spirit, because don't go down there and go like, 'This is so awful.' But, go down there with an open mind and actually look open-minded and everything and think how lucky we are and just be open-minded and enjoy the things you are seeing. (Solla, Int#1)

There was also the implication that suitable participants had a greater tendency towards lifelong advocacy and activism in reference to issues of social justice:

J.S.: What kind of students are suited to this program?

_Jane_: A student who totally cares, like someone who just totally cares about going, who isn't just going to see Guatemala and to go shopping and stuff, someone who wants to go and see the children and someone who wants to help. Someone who like in their later life, after graduation, after university, wants to do something, not be a lawyer. I'm not saying lawyers suck or anything, I'm just saying...someone...just to have a career where you might go to Casa Guatemala and work there for a while...somebody who really cares and wants to make a change and wants to know more. (Lamb, Int#2)

The substance of these statements is very revealing in the way it provides a glimpse of how the participants perceived themselves and their immediate peer group. While the students never expressed the concept of "suitability" along purely ideological lines, they were clearly able to define a series of personal values and dispositions that set themselves apart from others who did not wish to participate in the project. This adds weight to the notion that students who become involved in the Casa Guatemala Project see it as an alternative program which pays special attention to their desire to explore and expand on these underlying values and beliefs, which are otherwise not given expression in the course of their high school education.
Chapter Five: The Journey Through Guatemala

5.1 Introduction: The First Steps Forward

The group met for the last time five days prior to departure for Guatemala at the house of Jenny Coyle, the teacher representative from McNair. Bob Carkner and Roy Akune attended, as did several members of the community who had made donations for the orphanage. At this time it was announced that the network of schools and private donors from the area had managed to raise close to eleven thousand dollars [U.S.] which far exceeded the amount of contributions to the orphanage in previous years. Carkner and Akune were visibly pleased as they congratulated the group for the manner in which they had supported the program and the example they were setting for their peers and community.

This farewell party marked the first occasion that all students, teachers and the researcher had been brought together in a social setting. The level of excitement amongst all seventeen members of the travelling team was quite high. The discussions amongst the students wandered to everything from the horrible taste of chloroquine tablets, their sore arms and buttocks from the shots they had received, to the vast array of settings they were going to encounter on the two week trip. Through all of this, the orphanage weighed heavily on their minds if only for the fact that they were asked to pack one of their two suitcases with the donated clothes and books. To this atmosphere was added the video Guatemala Journey which played in the background as they went about packing their bags. There was a common feeling amongst the students that new sets of friendships were being forged. This was based on a shared perception of their common humanitarian values, exemplified by the desire to "help" the orphans of Casa Guatemala and experience a "Third World" country for the first time. Days prior to this gathering Alice Gibson mentioned in her journal:

I'm really glad that I've really gotten to know people, because it's important to
get to know other people, other than your usual friends. I've really gotten to know Kaily Soila and Elizabeth Arch and we are all close now.¹ I think that our entire group is to get to know each other really well and we are going to share an experience that we will never forget. (Gibson, Journal)

The group met at Vancouver International Airport at 5:30 am. on March the 8th, 1993 in preparation for the flight to Guatemala City via Chicago and Miami. Forty-seven very large bags were checked in at the United Airlines desk to the amazement of the ground-crew. The students were no sooner at the airport than they were already explaining the special purpose of their trip to other passengers who inquired into the reason for this mountain of baggage. Parents and children shared their last few minutes together as they said their good-byes and then the group departed through U.S. Customs.

While the students encountered Guatemala in their own way, and no doubt drew their own lessons from the experience, there remains a common progression in the nature of their responses to the events.² The first week in the country was spent visiting different tourist sites in the area around Guatemala City, Antigua and Tikal. During the first days of the tour the students' discourse focused on specific cultural insights that informed their growing knowledge and perceptions of life in Guatemala. From such observations they were able to draw larger generalizations concerning the social, economic and political context within the nation. Second, from the onset of their odyssey the students drew comparisons with their own society and background. As the days passed and the tour entered the second week at the orphanage on the Rio Dulce, the substance and emphasis of this comparative discourse became more intense and critical in nature. By this time, three consistent themes were apparent in students' observations: a) greater appreciation of the benefits of living in Canada

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¹ Pseudonyms have been used for all twelve student participants on the trip.

² These observations were based on a review of transcripts, journals and researcher's notes.
with a specific emphasis on health and education, b) intensified alienation from, and a rejection of, North American values and lifestyles, praise and affection towards Guatemalan culture, reflections on career and future implications on their own lives and value systems, and c) an intensified sense of advocacy related to "Third World" issues. These themes were amplified four weeks after their return to Richmond. By this time, the students also began to express a more directed sense of alienation towards their peers, teachers and immediate community and in some instances, a critical dimension to their perceptions of the media's portrayal of life in Guatemala and the "Third World" in general.

5.2 Guatemala City: Just Another "North American" Town

It just felt that every time we were driving back from Antigua or a little town or village I felt like I was going home. It was so depressing. I don't know why. Just because I sort of saw Guatemala City as just like any other place here; like going into the Canadian airport. I just felt like we were all going home. It was so depressing every time we were going back to Guatemala City. (Shaw, Int#4)

The group arrived in Guatemala City at seven o'clock in the evening and were immediately confronted by immigration officers backed by teenage soldiers who stood quietly in offices off to the side of the processing booths. For many students this was their first glance at these cold and imposing characters wearing camouflage uniforms, black boots and semi-automatic machine guns. During the next two weeks this rather threatening image would fade into a relatively normal and less obtrusive part of the everyday scenery throughout Guatemala. Nevertheless, it was a potent symbol of authority for the students and a stark contrast to the norms in the society from which they had come. Once the team cleared immigration they gathered their luggage and loaded a separate bus which was ready to whisk them away to their hotel in the heart of the city. It was at this point that the group members were introduced to Emilio, the group's tour guide who, through his stories and interpretation, would become one of the most influential sources of knowledge concerning the realities of daily life in
Guatemala. Going to the vehicle the group was besieged by a throng of child beggars and vendors who pleaded for money or masked the same intent by offering wilted flowers and colourfully braided pencils for sale. The incident had immediate impact on the students' perceptions of life in Guatemala and set the tone of their reflections for the rest of their stay:

Once we loaded our luggage we rolled outside and got our first glimpse of GUATEMALA! Kids and mothers lined up asking for money and food. It was quite shocking. I didn't know what to do. We bought flowers from a lady who had a tiny baby and we gave the kids granola bars, candy and Canadian pins. A little boy walked up to me and asked me for my Canadian pin. I was quite emotionally moved. I took it off and pinned it on his collar of his obvious worn out clothes... It was so sad. Here we are with all the money in the world and then there are these poverty stricken children in front of us. When we were walking on the bus, we looked to our left and there was about a four year old boy walking all by himself on a dark street. I don't understand; how can our world come to this? What have people done to deserve this kind of life? (Soila, Journal)

The most interesting aspect of this exchange was the total lack of apprehension with which some of the students embraced the opportunity to engage in conversations with these total strangers. Their eagerness to establish rapport and communication with other children and adults would continue to be a typical response to situations throughout the tour.

Minutes later the bus departed from the airport for the short ride to the Hotel Villa Espanol, the home base for the group while in Guatemala. While on route to the hotel the bus passed through the modern streets of "zone ten" in the city, lined with international franchise outlets which included everything from Benetton's to McDonald's. These stores served as a rather bizarre point of reference to several of the students who seemed quite excited and, yet, amazed to discover something familiar in this strange new place. No sooner had the hotel rooms been assigned and baggage unloaded than several groups of the students headed up the street to get dinner at one of these icons of North American civilization. Later that evening the teachers, Dr. Bracken and several of the students were introduced to
Guillermo Mendoza and Angie Galdamez who had come to the hotel to meet the members of this year’s contingent and thank them for their contribution to the orphanage. At that point Kaily Soila, Elizabeth Arch and Nancy Lee came rushing into the hotel lobby, laughing and panting to announce that they had just climbed a monument in a traffic circle down the street, to the noise of honking horns and jeers from the cars passing below (Soila, Journal). Angie Galdamez and Guillermo Mendoza looked on at the two in astonishment as they heard the story. Angie then told them that she had done the same thing as a teenager, when she was new to Guatemala City several decades earlier. Furthermore, she pointed out that she had been arrested and thrown in jail for this offence with a few of her friends. The monument was, in fact, dedicated to General Miguel Garcia Granados, the first president of the independent Republic of Guatemala [1871-1873]. Angie also explained that such monuments were held in high esteem as a national symbol of pride, especially so at the cadet training facility for military officers located just across the street. The students were mortified by this revelation as they pondered the potential ramifications of their actions; only later to comment on how different this was from their own society. Nancy Lee was quick to point out that she and her friends had climbed statues in Stanley Park in Vancouver in the past and it was never considered, in their view, to be an act of disrespect. The next morning Guillermo Mendoza joked with the students that he had received several phone calls from the police and military regarding the incident who demanded that students' names be forwarded to local headquarters immediately. Needless to say, this was the last time anyone in the group dared to engage in similar actions during the remainder of the trip. The group had not been in Guatemala four hours when the first lessons of the tour were already taking shape.

The events of this first evening were also acting as a means through which the students became better acquainted with one another. While there are several instances where students refer to this early period in the trip as one of fostering new friendships
(Gibson, Journal; Long, Int#3), others began to see their peers in a more critical light.

Jane Lamb discussed an incident that occurred on that first night while walking home with the group that had gone forth to McDonald's. The event left her wondering about the frame of reference and motivations of one her peers:

*Jane:* I think that some of the people in the group are just totally ignorant too.

*J.S.:* What do you mean by ignorant?

*Jane:* Someone in the group, they said to me, we were walking in Guatemala City last night, and he is like, 'Oh, I can't wait until it is daytime and we can see everyone walking around and doing things,' and he is like, 'Oh it will be really nice and stuff.' I was just...he totally expected it to be nice and totally beautiful. He was so surprised with the street kids at the airport and I was like, 'It's going to be ten times worse in the daytime in Guatemala City. You are just going to see just as many street kids if not more.' He just did not think of it and he is like, 'Oh, I know.' He didn't or else he just wouldn't have said things. He didn't; he was just like, 'Oh let's go to the Chanel store so I can get a Polo shirt for my dad, because it will be cheap here.' I guess some people are here for different reasons. (Lamb, Int#3)

This incident was so intriguing for Jane that she also made mention of it in her diary (Lamb, Journal). While some may have been exploring new friendships, others simultaneously witnessed the rapid emergence of divisions within the group, based on what many perceived to be ulterior and suspect motives of the other individuals (Soila, Int#3). Such differences would become more apparent and intense as the days progressed.

The following morning the group toured through the crowded and busy streets of Guatemala City in a private bus, accompanied by Emilio Juarez who provided a running commentary on the sights they passed. The first stop was the city's central plaza that was located in front of the Presidential Palace. Emilio Juarez discussed the pattern and history of settlement in the city, focusing on the numerous earthquakes which had repeatedly flattened various churches and government buildings during the past five centuries. The journey out of the city included a tour of the different "zones" which comprised, not only
separate administrative districts of the municipality, but also the different classes of
neighbourhoods, of which "zone ten" represented the most affluent sector with its five star
hotels, shopping facilities, night clubs and dining establishments. On the way out of the city,
en route to Antigua, Emillio pointed out the middle and lower-class zones where one could
buy or build a home for less than a few hundred dollars U.S. The students listened in
amazement as he explained that if he wished to have a shower or obtain a day's supply of
water for the household, he had to wake at five in the morning as this was the only time when
the water mains were in operation. Not long after this the group passed over a bridge
between two banks of a deep ravine, the slopes of which were crowded by tin and cardboard
shacks. Not wanting the students to miss this situation, Emillo elaborated on the fact that
these "barrios" were expanding rapidly in the area surrounding the greater metropolitan
region. Beyond the click of a few cameras the group sat silent on the bus in disbelief of what
they were seeing (Soila, Int#3).

Their brief encounter with Guatemala City over, students later remarked on the
living conditions and characteristics of the urban lifestyle which they had witnessed. Holly
Range was struck by the lack of electricity and services in most of the districts (Range,
Int#3). Tim Long commented on how Guatemala City was, "just another North American
town; I mean the bathroom toilets are made by the same people as our toilets at home and
there is McDonald's and Pizza Hut," (Long, Int#3). Kaily Soila provided a lucid series of
observations in her description of the scenery:

*Kaily:* I also noticed how Americanized all their clothes were. Like they must be
sent down here...Like one boy had a Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtle and one girl had
a Levis shirt with 'Button Your Fly'. That just came out. You really notice the
advertising and everything that they have. Like in all the advertising is white
people. You know, girls with blond hair, guys with brown hair or whatever.
That was different because down here they are brown...You wonder why they don't
have their own people on the billboards.

*J.S.:* Why do you think?
Kally: Well because it attracts them more. I was talking to the lady from the language centre. She said that guys here just totally admire the girls with light skin and green or blue eyes...When they see this they think it is amazing. It is like they look up to white people...which is kind of sad that it is true because that is were they get a lot of their money from and things like that. (Soila, Int#3)

The clarity of insight in this observation was not atypical of other students' responses to the environment they encountered. While the learning experience was not formally structured it was still serving to provide a very intense format of reflection.

5.3 Antigua: Learning About Life In Guatemala From the Tourist Beat

All I can say right now is it's amazing. It is nothing like I thought it would be. I feel kind of bad because here we are so rich to the Guatemalans. I feel really touristy right now, but I know we are learning a lot from the villages and the kids. (Soila, Journal)

Once the bus had cleared the outskirts of Guatemala City the group sat back and enjoyed the ride to Antigua, passing by a number of smaller villages and communities along the way. The group observed women and children carrying huge loads of wood or other supplies on their backs as they climbed up steep paths or the shoulders of the winding roads:

I thought when you saw the ladies with their kids carrying water, because they had no water in their village and they had to walk, he said [Emilio], like over four kilometers a day just to get water. Like for us, all we have to do is walk a few steps to our tap. I mean this is their daily life having to do this. (Soila, Int#3)

The next stop was on the grounds of a massive multinational coffee plantation at the base of two volcanoes located just outside of Antigua. Emilio took the group up a service road to see the plants and then provided a brief lecture on the growing, harvesting and processing of the beans. Several of the students were stunned to hear of the working conditions and wage levels of labourers who picked the crop (Range, Journal). Jane Lamb described what she discovered this way:
Workers who work there pick normally 100 lbs. of beans per day and get paid 12 Quetzales per day. That is not equivalent to even $2.50 U.S. Pathetic!!

(Lamb, Journal)

Even though phrases like "sexual division of labour" and "fair wage" did not enter into their vocabulary, it was clear that these images had provided the substance for the development of such conceptual frameworks in the future.

In Alotenango the students first glimpsed peasant life in small rural villages. Maya women were dressed in brilliant hand woven blouses, sitting on street corners while selling vegetables and fruit. Others were busy hand washing the family clothes at the public sinks just off the main square. The men sat together in the shade with their cowboy hats making inquisitive glances towards the bus as we arrived. At the same moment several dozen children were led in single file to the playground for recess. Nearby a heavily armed military patrol passed through the back streets of the village behind the school. The locals paid no obvious attention to the troops. Members of the group began taking pictures and immediately joined the soccer game taking place in a dusty courtyard. Kaily Soila was caught up in the activities, but later referred to the situation with a critical and analytical perspective:

Sometimes I felt really out of place. Especially when all the boys were playing soccer and all the ladies were doing the washing. I wasn't quite sure. I wasn't comfortable taking a picture. I felt bad we were invading their privacy or something. It just seemed like their whole village was on show to show how poor they were. I felt really bad like we were invading their privacy, like we shouldn't be there. (Soila, Int#3)

To this she also added an interesting comparison:

I think I wasn't expecting that people would be just staring at you like you are out of place. I thought it would be like in Canada when tourists are there but you can't really tell. But here you just stick out. Everyone, when we are on the bus, everyone just stares at you. I guess it is just because you are different. (Soila, Int#3)

Jane Lamb referred to a similar reaction, but depicted the impression of feeling like a,
"Japanese tourist," back in Canada (Lamb, Int#3). For many of the students the characterization of being a tourist was not something they were at all comfortable with and, as was the case with other perceptions, this was a feeling that would grow to aggravate them more in the days to follow. For several students the break for lunch that day exemplified the paradox of being a wealthy tourist for several of the students (Soila, Journal; Range, Journal; Gibson, Journal). Lunch was eaten in a very lavishly appointed hotel dinning room with a clientele of wealthy Guatemalans, Europeans and North Americans. Prices and the contents of the menu reflected the tastes and expectations of such customers. Students referred to the "snotty" rich people and described the experience as disturbing because of the customers' attitudes and treatment of the waiting staff.

On the road back to Antigua the group stopped in briefly at several locations, including "Carolina's" for a look at authentic Maya handicrafts. Two young women knelt before hand looms as they worked on wall hangings which adorned the walls of the shop. As the group poured through the shop and made another round of purchases, Rosa Laconte, the Spanish teacher from Richmond High, got dressed up in typical Maya garb and posed for a picture. The group was told by Juarez that one could only barter up to fifteen to twenty percent of the stated price of the goods at this outlet as compared to other places were the goods were less authentic or factory produced. In that case, one could easily bargain twice that percentage. The group had learned the bartering rules in order to shop for "Gringo tourist goods". Juarez also explained the nature and background of the styles of traditional dress in the country. The workers at the looms noted that one blouse worn by the women could take up to two months to weave and that patterns in their dress denoted which area or village they came from.

Departing from "Carolina's", the group travelled through dirt roads lined with fences and peasant houses made from dried cornstalks which Juarez explained was the most
abundant and cheapest building material for these people. He also made note of the fact that any one of these huts could be home to a very large extended family. On the outskirts of Antigua the group stopped briefly at the village of Santiago. In the village square, in front of an imposing and very old white cathedral, the students stepped out to take a look around. Within minutes they were surrounded by children from the local school which had just been dismissed for the day. Jane and Alice were conversant in Spanish and decided to talk to the children. They asked the children to sign their names in a book they had with them entitled "New Friends". They suddenly disappeared into a crowd of children who pushed and shouted while waiting impatiently to write their signatures in the book. In Jane's case this incident was a more positive example of interaction with the locals than the one she had encountered earlier in the day in Guatemala City when a student mocked her attempt to engage in a conversation (Lamb, Journal). For the Richmond students, experiences like this one exemplified what they commonly perceived as the friendly and open nature of Guatemalan people. Greeting perfect strangers on the street was not a form of casual behaviour they were accustomed to. Nonetheless they thoroughly appreciated this cultural norm. Within the first few days several of the students acknowledged that the general approachability of people was shattering some of their preconceived fears of coming to Guatemala (Shaw, Int#3). In fact, it was with absolute relief that some the students realized that the Guatemalans were not all about to steal from them:

I expected it to be scarier than it is. It is not scary at all. When we walk down the streets all together I don't feel threatened at all. The people are so friendly to us and everybody that I walk by they say, 'Hola,' and we say, 'Hola.' I don't feel they are going to take my purse. (Shaw, Int#3)

The prior expectation by some of the students that they would be treated with distance and hostility by Guatemalans seemed incongruent with these students' willingness to engage in games and conversations in villages like Alotenango and Santiago. It is perhaps a deeper
indication of their assimilation of the media's portrayal of tourist culture in foreign
countries, through such medium as American Express commercials. Any remaining
apprehension about interaction with locals seemed to dissolve as the week passed.

Late that afternoon, after visiting a local jade factory, the group checked into the
Posada del Don Rodrigo; purported to be the oldest hotel in Central America. In excitement
and a little bit of astonishment at the facilities, several members of the group ventured to
the various rooms occupied by the group to make comparisons. The hotel was an impressive
museum in its own right with rooms distinctively appointed with colonial period antique
furniture, a central courtyard complete with a pair of domesticated parrots and a separate
garden filled with tropical plants visible from a restaurant where Maya waitresses were
dressed in their traditional clothes. Although the group appreciated these rather posh
surroundings, many of the students questioned the implications of this opulence. For
example, Alice Gibson acknowledged that she, "didn't think that we should stay in big
expensive hotels because it would be kind of like the opposite of what we are here to do,"
(Gibson, Int#3). Others, such as Jane Lamb, expressed similar concerns but appreciated
the fact that the group was staying in nice hotels if only for the reason that it might end up
being better for all of them in terms of their health (Lamb, Int#3). Beyond the fact that
Antigua was one of the most popular and picturesque cities in Guatemala, the central reason
for coming to this location was to participate in a day-and-a-half of intensive Spanish
lessons. The students felt far more comfortable in Antigua than they had in Guatemala City
because of its smaller size, rustic charm and relative docility. Here, the students were able
to mingle both with locals and other visitors, quench their pressing desire to buy souvenirs
and attend the festivities marking the four-hundred-and-fiftieth anniversary of the city,
which by sheer chance, occurred on the second night of the group's stay there. Students
described this last event as the "Coca-Cola" celebration because of that corporation's more
than obvious sponsorship of the event that featured, "rich girls performing a dance which was so awful, it was like a bad, bad, bad imitation of Michael Jackson's Thriller," (Gibson, Journal). In the end, however, Antigua did not provide many vivid and impressive recollections, nor was it a place which instilled the desire to document a long list of memories in their journals.

**5.4 San Jose Chillijuyu: The "Happy Poor"**

I just remember, so clearly, walking into that school room and all the little girls were there and they were sitting like this, like up so straight, and they were just so proud to be in school and just so happy. They were so proud and it was just so cool to see some kids eager to learn and happy to be in school. You could tell they just all tried their hardest because they knew it was a sacrifice for their parents to get them there. They were the raddest kids. That was the best experience. Just think about the kids who jack off at school and don't care at all and school's not a big deal for them here [Canada]. But then you think, 'I wish you could all go and see that and just see some kids who would just cut their arm off to come to a school like this,' you know? Like that was the best. (Lamb, Int#4)

Day four of the tour brought the group to a small peasant village called San Jose Chillijuyu in the gentle rolling hillsides along the highway to Chichicastenango. Chillijuyu is a farming community which had been occupied by Maya peasants for centuries according to Emilio, who was himself of native ancestry and from this region of Guatemala. It was here that the students got their first detailed look at the living conditions of the majority of people in this part of the world. The focus of the stop at Chillijuyu was to visit the six room school house which was just being completed. Emilio led the group into the kindergarten class and began telling the students about the circumstances under which this facility operated. Neglected by the national government, this school was maintained through funds supplied largely by the parents of the village who collectively had made the choice to provide the materials for a better standard of education than most other peasant children received in the country. The
Richmond students listened attentively to hear that teachers were paid six hundred Quetzales per month [$120 U.S.] and received no institutional training whatsoever. The children of the class sang two songs for the group, one in their local dialect and the other in Spanish. The songs had an instant emotional impact on the teenagers, some of whom smiled with a tearful eye. What follows is a selection of their comments regarding this occasion:

Their life seems so sad to us, yet they seem so happy. They were so excited to see us, every class welcoming us in. In Canada it is always such a disturbance for them to be interrupted in the middle of a class, but for them it was so exciting. I love these people. I wish all people could be like them. (Soila, Journal)

We walked into the school and all of the little girls were sitting up so straight and proper and smiling. So willing to learn and so happy. They were all so gorgeous. They sang some songs for us. I had to hold back my tears so hard so they didn't think I was sad. I am unable to explain their beauty. (Lamb, Journal)

For Tim the chance to talk with the children and look around the school, instilled a perception of these native children as the "happy poor" of Guatemala. These thoughts brought forth a less emotional, but nevertheless astute observation of a major contradiction in the nature of the prevailing dialogue between "First" and "Third World" communities:

Tim: I look at these kids and they might be poor and stuff, but they are happy and they are so grateful and stuff. Especially today more than ever, when we went to the school, the native school, it just boggled my mind that they looked so happy and stuff even though they don't have that much. And here we are really, never really satisfied with what we have and stuff. I often wonder who it is that needs help. Do they or do we? Things like that sort of work both ways in that we help them, but in the same way we are helping each other. Before I was thinking that we were going down to do some good and help them and stuff, but really, I have really realized the two way street that it was.

J.S.: What do you mean exactly?

Tim: I think I look at them and I start to learn to be a little more satisfied with what I have. (Long, Int#3)

This perception of the dirt poor, struggling and "happy" Guatemalan peasant was an observation repeatedly expressed in various forms and at different times, by all six students.
in the study (Range, Int#3; Gibson, Int#4). In fact, the image of these people as welcoming and warm-hearted souls who, in the face of such adversity, managed a complete and fulfilling life, added depth and perspective to Tim's appreciation of his own standard of living. As Linda Shaw pointed out:

> When we were at the Indian escuela, it seemed to me, when we got there, that they were so happy with what they had. They were so happy to be in school. If we were put in the situation they were put in, the school was, what do you call it, it was rudimentary compared to our schools. I think I am sure if we were put in that situation now we wouldn't be able to hand it. (Shaw, Int#3)

During the time that Emilio provided his explanation of the school, he had asked that the male teachers and Dr. Bracken stand separately to the back of the room. His narrative then focused on hope for the future of Guatemala as personified in the lives of "these little boys". For Holly Range and several other female members of the group, his rather exclusionary monologue, coupled with the separation of the adult male members of the team, was a powerful reflection of the dominant social order in Guatemalan life (Shaw, Int#3).

Linda Shaw interpreted the event in this manner:

> One thing I noticed was it is a very male dominated society, which is one thing that I didn't really notice until we went to the escuela...they separated us and put Mr. Seney and you and Dr. Bracken in the back alone and the way they talked about how, 'You see these faces, you see these faces in the class, these will be the boys of tomorrow in Guatemala.' That was a total shock. I thought I misunderstood him until someone said, 'Wow, this is total domineering,' like male domineering. (Shaw, Int#3)

The chauvinism displayed in this one instance was part of a broader recognition of male dominance and "machismo" in Guatemalan society (Range, Journal; Range, Int#3).

**5.5 Chichicastenango: The "Bargain Basement" of Guatemala**

When I was there I just didn't feel happy. I didn't feel that that was the real Guatemala. I thought it was just a big trap to get lots of money. And I guess the people there expect that now because it's successful because so many tourists go there, but I don't think that that's what Guatemala is all about;
personally. (Gibson, Int#4)

As the bus negotiated the snake-like road up to Chichicastenango, Juarez pointed out the broken and charred wreckage of a textile factory that was bombed several years ago by revolutionary forces operating in this area of the Quiche. Before the group was unleashed for the day in this tourist mecca he warned the students that they should be back at the secured parking lot, ready to leave no later than 3:30 pm., as one of the last tour buses out on market day in the previous week had been robbed by local bandits. With pockets loaded in Guatemalan currency, members of the group made their way into the crowded streets and markets of this hilltop town for a harried day of bargaining. During the day Tim earned a reputation as a ruthless bargain-master and jokingly dubbed himself “Poverty Maker” (Long, Int#4). At one point throughout the day he made the interesting observation that many of the stalls were occupied solely by children who carried out the daily commerce. Furthermore, he emphasized that one had to really step back and take note of this situation because it was too easy to fail to make the distinction that these were not adults operating behind the tables. After haggling over prices with street vendors for several hours, the group finally reassembled at the bus. By this time it was already choked with bags stuffed with merchandise. With great excitement, the students began to display their bargains and souvenirs for family members and friends back home.

Although some of the students reported being caught up in shopping in Chichicastenango, it was not a situation on which they would look back with much affection. Tim recalled the events of the day in this manner:

Chichicastenango. Well I still feel guilty for what I did when I started asking

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3 The students and teachers broke up into several smaller groups for the day. The researcher spent a great deal of time during the day with Tim and teacher Rosa Laconte. This account is based on one of many conversations which took place in the market throughout the day with these individuals.
for obscene prices and actually getting some...The main thing I take from it is me bargaining and almost cheating; not cheating, but taking things for very, very small prices. I still feel guilty for that. I wish I hadn't been so ruthless I guess, but I guess you learn from it...It was not that I was being cheap, it was the challenge of it...We were on a vacation. I needed something really tangible to take a challenge. (Long, Int#3)

Others reported being absolutely repulsed at what had transpired there (Shaw, Int#4). For Jane Lamb, the setting and experience was very symbolic of the relative financial power and attitudes of individuals visiting there from her own culture:

We are so damn rich and we are so lucky. Like we are so rich. Even I feel like I am totally snotty because I won't pay four bucks for a pair of shorts. You know, like I want to go a dollar less. Like, 'Gee Jane you are really spending your money like a rich person aren't you.' Like I am just sick to think that I won't pay five bucks for a pair of shorts when like to me my parents would pay forty for a pair of shorts for me, but here I will pay five...The point isn't that they are ripping me off because they aren't because I can afford it. (Lamb, Int#3)

On a somewhat different note, three of the students bore witness to the way in which tourism in Chichicastenango had changed the way local vendors interacted with foreign visitors. This was a stark contrast to what they had just witnessed from local people in other places such as San Jose Chillijuyu:

It seemed to me that people were different in 'Chichi' compared to the people we met in Antigua. I guess because they were used to having to totally bargain with foreigners because that is their life and that is how they make their money from foreigners. (Soila, Int#3)

I really don't think that they liked us much. I think they resent when you bring them down to such a low price and then you pull out a wad of money, which you don't mean to do, but you pull out a wad of money and you try and pull the bills away that you are supposed to give them and sometimes they shake their head and you feel stupid because you try and get down to the lowest price you can which is like three dollars in American dollars which is nothing for us. (Shaw, Int#3)

The people seemed like all they wanted was our money and they all seemed to watch us and watch our cameras and watch us counting our money and it made me feel really uncomfortable. I also felt that because I could speak Spanish they didn't give me good deals on things. (Gibson, Journal)

If the visit to Chichicastenango had managed to accomplish anything it was the manner in
which it curbed the students appetite to engage in further shopping expeditions while on the tour. In fact, the excursion only seemed to intensify the students' resentment of being thrust so deeply into this tourist centered mode of interaction with the people of Guatemala, when they had originally believed they were going to assist the children of an isolated orphanage.

5.6 Tikal, Flores and the Camino Real: Temples, Poverty and Karaoke Bars

Then we went to our hotel which was the most luxurious hotel I have ever stayed in. It was called the Tikal Camino Real and it is owned by Westin Bayshore. But, it was so inappropriate for Guatemala because it is some resort for rich 'gringos' and meanwhile down the street are some people who probably make less in one day from farming than some people who work in the restaurants do from their tips...But we were going to volunteer at an orphanage and it felt wrong to go and stay in this fancy resort. (Gibson, Journal)

The flight to Flores from Guatemala City was a brief fifty minutes. Upon arrival, the group was met by a guide named Pedro, who would act as host and interpreter for the day at the ruins of Tikal. Pedro was a young man who had little formal education, yet he possessed a broad depth of knowledge of the region that was very impressive. Early in the tour he disclosed that as a teenager he was pressed into service with the Guatemalan military for three years of mandatory service. His comments regarding this period in his life and nature of the government in Guatemala captured the group's attention, adding another perspective to their understanding of the region. Tikal was awe-inspiring from an historical perspective. As the group meandered through the well groomed paths cut between dense tropical jungle, they stopped to see howler and spider monkeys, climbed several temples and sporadically listened to Pedro's commentary of the ruins. For many individuals it was hard to imagine that a city which ultimately reached a population estimated at over 150,000 Maya people, once existed there. Several of the students noted that they recognized one of the temples as it had appeared in a Nike running shoe commercial. However, the more important link
between the past and present represented by this site was drawn by others:

It was just amazing to see these structures and the dedication that these people of the past had and it seemed unfair because the school we went to before was made up of the descendants of this great civilization and now they lived in so much destruction and poverty in those areas. It just seemed so ironic. (Long, Int#4)

It was a hot and muggy day. By the time the group had finished a late lunch at the base of Temple IV, many felt they had experienced enough of trekking through the ruins. The group split up for a few hours while Pedro completed his tour with several of the students and teachers. The others were taken by bus and waited back at the entrance pavilion. By four in the afternoon the group was headed down the road to the Tikal Camino Real. On route we passed by hundreds of peasant farmsteads that lined the roadside. Many of the students pondered what it must be like to live in such a remote place. Rumors spread through the bus that the hotel the group was staying at that evening was an extremely posh, five star operation. Tim had learned this from a Fodor's guide book that one of the passengers shared with him while on the plane that morning (Long, Int#4). Bruce Seney was puzzled at this destination because it wasn't the facility booked on the official itinerary. Before even arriving he expressed concern that this hotel was going to be little too opulent for his tastes and that several students had already stated that they were not at all happy with this turn of events because it seemed to represent such a blatant contradiction to their intended purpose for being in Guatemala.4

As the bus pulled into the Camino Real the mood of disbelief amongst the students was intense. Porters helped check baggage while several individuals ventured forth for an initial

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4 The group had been booked originally at a moderate hotel in Flores. Because of recent flooding on lake Peten Itza this facility was unavailable. The group was booked into the Camino Real while the group was in Guatemala and the change of plans had not been relayed to Bruce Seney, the trip supervisor. Bruce mentioned the displeasure of the students to the change of bookings as they were stated to him on the bus, to the researcher while the group was staying on location.
reconnaissance of the facilities. Several conversations centred on a sense of confusion and disappointment with what had transpired. If there was one consolation to the situation, it was the fact that the hotel had a swimming pool. Soon after checking in it was filled by members of the group who, by that time, were beginning to shed their earlier feelings at what had come to pass. Linda Shaw elaborated on the rapid shifts in her emotions at this point:

We drove past all the huts, we were just realizing how amazing the huts were. I kept on saying how I wanted to go stay in the hut and not the five star hotel. So we drove past, we drove to the hotel and I just said, 'This is stupid. I can't believe we are staying here. This is so ridiculous. It makes me feel so guilty.' I heard it from everybody. In my ears I kept hearing, 'guilty, guilty, guilty.' We walked in and got our card, we saw the pool and we ran to our rooms and got in our bathing suits and ran into the pool with fountains flowing out of the water. I think I got over the guilt pretty quickly because we were in this pool in like five minutes. That is how I saw it. Our guilt was pretty shallow. (Shaw, Int#4)

Regardless of how nice it might have been to have a pool that evening, others in the group looked back at the situation and expressed a lasting sense of disillusionment with the whole affair (Long, Int#3).

Even though the facilities in Antigua were comparable to those of the Camino Real, the student's sense of hostility towards the event lingered on long after the tour was finished. Holly Range revisited her interpretation of the events of that night in these comments:

It makes you feel so guilty. You are not on that trip to go to some nice hotel with a swimming pool and Karaoke. That is not the point of the trip. It is a nice gesture but not the point...Most people felt that it was a little too ritzy for the purpose of our trip and their parents thought so too. Like, they heard that we were staying in four or five star hotels and they just disagreed with that too. (Range, Int#4)

Jane Lamb's tone was a little more strident in her condemnation of the situation and its apparent significance:

It was disgusting. It was nice but it should have been in Palm Springs. Like I just don't think it really fit in Guatemala...It totally showed me the rich and the
poor. It showed me like a rich Guatemalan family who are going to stay there for the weekend. It just totally showed me that there is just tons and tons of dirt poor and there's a couple of just rich; like rich compared to us...But I thought it didn't have much of a place in Guatemala...like what a waste of money...I felt bad because when the bus driver would drop us off I'd be like, 'Yeah, we're so nice to you and stuff and then we're going to stay in our nice big hotel.' There's like down the street there are just totally poor people living in villages and then down the street a bit there's like a huge hotel and I'm staying there after I've seen all this poverty and after I've seen what people do, and then I get to stay in a pool with mineral water. (Lamb, Int#4)

Alice Gibson's observation was focused more on what the presence of the Camino Real implied about the political economy of the region:

I think that there's a lot of like industrialization, you know, like a big American company going down and trying take it all away from them, just because of the sake of money, you know, making money. So I think that the Westin Bayshore [hotel in Vancouver] or whatever, they don't have a lot of respect for the people, just because they probably weren't even asked if that hotel could be there or if, you know, the land was being used for something else. They just probably went in there and built this big hotel just to make lots of bucks. (Gibson, Int#4)

The students' disapproval of the events that evening at the Camino Real was, in part, fostered by the growing sense of disenchantment with spending their first week in Guatemala as tourists. The entire trip was based on the notion that it was special and distinct from other travel programs in their schools by virtue of the fact that they were going to do humanitarian work at Casa Guatemala. The opulent surroundings of the Camino Real gave them pause to question the legitimacy of this claim. It also demonstrated in no uncertain terms that they were members of a privileged group in a privileged society. This also signified that they were part of this parade of wealth at the hotel by virtue of their ability and willingness to stay there. This was not an easy pill to swallow. It was a powerful demonstration of both Guatemalan and global class structure and their privileged place within it. Later in the evening the group sat down to a lavish birthday dinner for one of the group members, and ended the meal with a cake specially made by the chef who had been flown in to open the facilities some months earlier. From that time on the Camino Real
served as a point of reference for everything that would transpire on their trip.

5.7 Round Two of Guatemala City: Deepening Reflections and Divisions

Today we woke up at 9:30 and we watched Fashion T.V. and CNN on USA channel. It was weird because we were in Guatemala. (Gibson, Journal)

The following afternoon, after checking out of the Camino Real, the group headed for the small city of Flores while waiting for the flight back to Guatemala City. While driving into the island town over a gravel causeway it became very apparent why we had not stayed at the hotel scheduled on the itinerary; the first floor of the establishment was under several feet of water from the flooding of Lake Peten-Itza which threatened to, or had already, destroyed many of the houses and businesses along its shores. The lake was not connected to a natural drainage basin and the pumping system, installed by American engineers several decades earlier to control water levels, had fallen into disrepair leaving the local population to the mercy of the elements.

Immediately after arriving in Flores the group was met by a number of male teenagers who greeted the female students who were wearing shorts with comments like, "Hello. How are you? Nice legs!" (Gibson, Journal). The incident was innocent but it conveyed the message of how these Guatemalans viewed the tourists who frequented the area. Ironically, just days before this event, some of the students had voiced their hostility to the trip preparation sessions which stressed the need for appropriate dress and deportment:

One thing that comes to mind, it is not really to do with the people or anything like that, it is with what they prepared us to come here for, they prepared us that it was going to be so bad. We can't wear shorts or you have to always have bug repellent on or be prepared that you are going to be so sick and everything. It seems so tame. It is nothing like that at all. It is like they hyped us up and it wasn't like that at all. Maybe it will be later but it hasn't been like that so far. (Soila, Int#4)

As the students grew more accustomed to the surroundings and how they operated within it as
tourists, they also began to reflect less on the obvious and immediate aspects of cultural
differences which made Guatemala distinct, and more on what these elements symbolized
about their own lives and society. By the end of the first week of travel they had already
started to construct and draw upon a variety of interpretations that emerged from their
experiences on the tour. Their thoughts began to focus more clearly on the personal
significance of what they were learning from the initial days of the tour. That night, back at
the Villa Espanol in Guatemala City, Linda made this comment:

I am starting to see myself now as a different person. I am starting to wonder
if it is me now or me before who I really am. Because, before I used to try and
make everything a joke and now it doesn't seem like I have to now. I look at
things more seriously. (Shaw, Int#3)

Kaily Soila reiterated this point in her own way:

I find that when you are here you tend to contemplate things more. You try to
analyze things and understand things and every time you see a poor person lying
on the side of a road I just kind of think about what they are doing? What were
they doing before? Why are they there? What have they been through in life?
But, it seems I didn't really care about that before. When you look at poor people
in Canada, say you are looking downtown and some guy comes up and asks for
money, it is like, 'Go away!' (Soila, Int#3)

Even though the students resisted and were often critical of their role as tourists, they
nevertheless acknowledged the impact that these experiences were having on their changing
self-perceptions.

In addition to the role played by the physical setting and their observations of these
numerous encounters, the students also began to notice the role of their peers in shaping
their perceptions of the experience. By now the traveling and tourist routine was taking
their toll on group dynamics. As the first week drew to a close, sub-groups were beginning
to form in response to the intensity of interaction in this setting. In some cases strong
undercurrents of tension ran between specific individuals (Range, Journal). This
ultimately led to a situation where one of the teachers had to change rooming assignments to
head off open hostilities. In another instance, two students formed their own clique and began segregating themselves from the rest of the group (Long, Int#3). Others understood that these two individuals were good friends but interpreted this move as a sign that they felt they were "more mature" than the others (Range, Int#4), and that they "just seemed like they were there for themselves" (Lamb, Int#4).

That evening Tim and these two students headed out to sample Guatemala City's infamous night-life in "Zona Viva" as he recalled it (Long, Int#4). The apparent contradiction between this act and what he had stated concerning the previous night's events and the environment at the Camino Real was puzzling. When questioned about this, he replied:

We wanted to enjoy ourselves and everyone else stayed in. We were like, we are in Guatemala and it was, 'How could you stay in?' type of thing... 'Let's go out and see what there is.' We did want to enjoy ourselves to an extent. We said, 'Well it is night time so let's go see what the night-life is like for ourselves.'...I'm in another culture and I am staying in a room eating Pizza Hut. It just boggles my mind. I can't do it. (Long, Int#4).

There was a sense of disbelief and criticism reflected in this comment regarding the choice of the other students' activities at the Villa Espanol that evening. This commentary serves to highlight the differing interpretations and reactions to events amongst individual students and the effect this was having on the patterns of social interaction within the peer group while in Guatemala.

The inconsistencies between certain individuals' dialogue and their actions were increasingly noticed by others in the group. By the time they began working at the orphanage a few days later, this perception helped to solidify a growing sense of division amongst group members based on what some individuals interpreted as inferior motivations for their peers participation in the program (Lamb, Int#4). In reference to this, Alice Gibson summarized her observations of group dynamics through these comments:
Like in our group, there was the talkers and the doers kind of. Like a lot of people would say, 'Okay, this is what we are going to do today, do, do, do, do,' and then, when it got down to it, there were people who actually did it and people who kind of just talked about it. (Gibson, Int#3)

For several of the subjects in this study, such perceptions of their peers became an important factor in how they evaluated their own role within the group and experience with the program. This emerging analysis of their peers' motivations and values would also extend into the substance of the critique the students would construct regarding their friends, teachers and community when they returned home a week later.

5.8 The Visit to a Baby Orphanage in Guatemala City

I felt really happy at times because I thought that at least these babies had a home and people who really loved them and wanted to be with them. I think that when I saw everybody else crying, that made me sad too. But then I thought if they get adopted then they are very fortunate and have something to look forward to. (Gibson, Journal)

On the morning of day seven the students visited the infant wing of the Casa Guatemala orphanage in the downtown core of the capital city. The group entered the site to discover over thirty babies and toddlers lying in cribs. For the first few minutes there was relative silence as individuals wandered separately through the facilities and observed the children and volunteers engaged in the normal course of events at the home. As the students began to pick up the children and play with them, a stream of tears started to flow which lasted until the group departed and passed well down the road out of Guatemala City. That night in her journal Jane Lamb discussed how she had been strongly touched by the whole experience and one infant in particular:

Then Mr. Seney said that we had to go. So I put Rosa del Carmen back in her crib. I didn't want to leave her so I sat on the floor and rubbed her back. She was so beautiful. I could only think of her life now and her future. She was so beautiful and innocent, yet has nothing and nobody. All she needs, all the orphans need is to have someone hold them and love them...I sat there and cried
for Rosa del Carmen; for her life, her love. I do not have the faith right now to honestly, rightfully pray for her. I feel so much for her...I cried until we had to leave. (Lamb, Journal)

While at the orphanage several of the students took turns changing the infant's dirty diapers while others took pictures or played with the children. During this time Emilio provided some background information regarding the history of the orphanage and the background of the infants at the facility. While the conditions at the orphanage were less than adequate by North American standards, the students generally appreciated that this operation was a blessing for those children fortunate enough to be brought through the doors. Kaily remarked:

I think everyone was touched by this orphanage. First of all because they are babies and second of all because in our society we have never seen children being neglected like this. However, they have good treatment compared to their society. (Soila, Journal)

Similar to the events at the school house in San Jose Chillijuyu, the visit to the infants orphanage played a large role in constructing a strong emotional attachment to the children of this part of the world. This made their perceptions of life in Guatemala much more personal and grounded in their direct experiences with the people they encountered. For Holly Range and others on the tour events such as this one provided the most intense and meaningful learning experiences (Range, Journal). Indeed, witnessing the conditions under which these children lived brought home the full force of the impact on the students' reflections on their own lives and society back in Canada.

For Tim, the situation at the baby orphanage was revealing in many ways, but through his own admission he was surprised at his reaction to the cries of the children who lay with soiled diapers in the cribs beneath him:

When we first saw the kids I had almost made myself scared of them in some ways, in that they said you will get lice and you will get this and that. I feel really embarrassed that I was hesitant. Also it come from the fact that I come from a family where it is very proper...It was such a big step, like I love kids
and I teach them and stuff and I have never been hesitant. This is the first time I have ever hesitated and it really bothered me so much. For the entire night I was bothered with why did I hesitate?...The night before going to the orphanage we had a little party time or whatever and we went to the club which was fine and stuff, but the next day we went to the orphanage and that was interesting because I felt really guilty that I had spent all that money and had enjoyed myself...I was just feeling guilty for having such a wonderful time in that same, probably only a five minute drive from that same place were the kids were living just by themselves. (Long, Int#3)

In this one instance Tim was being forced to confront how his distaste for the childrens' hygiene restrained him from immediately demonstrating what he also perceived to be much needed care and affection. At the same time, his observation of their living conditions also served to bring into focus the broader ethical implications that grew out of his choice of activities the previous evening.

5.9 Casa Guatemala on the Rio Dulce: Gunboats, Mansions, Paint and Partnership

About the kids, you just have to remind yourself that the kids are three and four years old and they are put into situations that adults can't deal with...It makes you sort of realize that your life is not that bad compared to these ones and hopefully it will turn you around a little bit for the better. It is an experience that you will never get again; I don't think. (Range,3:3-4)

I think it made me really mad. At some of the hotels we stayed at there were totally touristy people. They would be asking us why we are here and we would say we are just helping the orphanage...It just seemed that they didn't believe that we were really going to help an orphanage or really make a difference. For me it did make a difference because I know that I am always going to want to go back to Casa Guatemala and help there...I want to see how it progresses and how it gets better. It just makes me so mad that there are so many tourists here who are just soaking in their money and they are not taking a chance to go around and look at this place. (Soila, Int#3)

After travelling the full day along Highway #9 through the valley of the Rio Matagua, the group arrived at the Hotel Marimonte for the evening stop-over before moving on to the orphanage the following morning. The Marimonte was just one of many hotels that were located on the banks of the Rio Dulce, several miles from the Caribbean Sea. The region was
referred to as the "Riviera" of Guatemala and this image was confirmed not only by the number of foreign yachts that plied the waters out front of the hotel, but also by the mansions which lined the shores of the river and served as summer homes or retreats for the nation's wealthy elite. Kevin, the owner of the Catamaran Hotel, elaborated on the political setting of the Rio Dulce when he described it as being, "just like the pioneer days of the 'Wild West' in America."Apparently, most of the new homes in the region were built on land confiscated from the local Ketchi community without any form of compensation or recognition of their historical tenure over the territory. The native's compliance with this state of affairs was ensured by the strong military presence in the region which took the form of navy gunboats and heavily armed helicopters that patrolled the river. Despite this invasion of home building and marina construction the region still managed to support an incredible tropical ecosystem and served as the home to the somewhat less obtrusive 83 acre site of the Casa Guatemala orphanage for children and teenagers.

Day eight of the tour began with the group's assembly at the docks of the Marimonte. Because of the amount of luggage the group travelled in two waves to the orphanage, first stopping at the Catamaran Hotel to drop off their personal belongings. This somewhat less ostentatious facility served as the group's home for the next six days. As the first boat-load of students and teachers travelled down river towards the orphanage there was great excitement in anticipation of the first rendezvous with the children. It was a scene played out with tales of great jubilation in the program's video Guatemala Journey and in the recollections of past participants which had been shared with many of the students prior to this year's excursion. They were not to be disappointed.

5 Kevin, the owner of the Catamaran Hotel, had lived on the Rio Dulce for several decades. He was a retired Wing Commander in the U.S. Air Force and reportedly engaged in active duty in Vietnam during the 1960's. While we stayed at the Catamaran he supplied a great deal of information to the students and researcher about the region through various informal conversations.
As the boat pulled up to the dock a group of toddlers and young children ran to the boat, greeting the group with great excitement, leaping into the students arms. Once the first contingent had arrived the children were called back into classes by their teachers, who worked in a newly constructed five room preschool which had been painted recently in bold primary colours. Several of the foreign volunteers stood in the playground adjacent to the preschool and stared in a cold manner at the members of the group who had just arrived. It was a sudden indication that our presence was neither special nor particularly welcomed from their perspective. A few of the students, Kaily and Nancy in particular, took note of this rather intimidating reception and commented on the matter as they looked around the immediate vicinity. From that point onward it was apparent that there would be no pomp and ceremony surrounding the group's arrival and that it was expected that things would operate in a "business as usual" environment while the students were on site.

When the second wave of teachers and students arrived one hour later, we were greeted by Joseph, the assistant director of the orphanage and second in command to the "Senorita" [Angie Galdamez], as he was accustomed to calling her. The group was then taken on a tour of the grounds which were comprised of an impressive set of facilities -- especially by Guatemalan standards. Far from looking like a tropical variation of an apparition from Oliver Twist, the site contained two tilapia fish ponds, a clean and well populated piggery, a banana and fruit plantation complete with a nursery, a chicken pen and egg hatchery, a fully operational hydroponic greenhouse that had been donated by the Swedish government, a renovated teacher's quarters, a somewhat dilapidated medical and dental clinic, a large and well equipped kitchen/cafeteria that sat across from the childrens' and volunteers' dormitory and the new six room schoolhouse that the tri-school project in Richmond had built from this year's donations. The layout and setting of the orphanage was much different than anyone had previously imagined. Jane Lamb later referred to it looking
more like a "summer camp" (Lamb, Journal), while others reported being surprised at the presence of "modern technology" on site (Soila, Journal).

Once the introduction to the grounds had been completed, it was decided between Joseph and Bruce Seney that the students and teachers should have the chance to stay overnight and eat lunch at the orphanage during their stay. This was the first time that such an invitation had been extended to any of the Richmond groups. In previous years the teams stayed at the Catamaran and brought prepared food to the orphanage each morning from the hotel. Although the "Senorita" vehemently opposed the idea during a radio conversation that morning, Joseph insisted that the plans go ahead. The appropriate arrangements were made and the first group of four students was slated to stay over the following evening. In support of this effort, Joseph passed around photocopies of the rules and regulations for volunteers and insisted that the students become thoroughly familiar with the contents. He stressed that the orphanage was not run in a democratic fashion and that they should not expect special treatment.

Later that morning the students and teachers met to discuss the tasks at hand and the assignment of jobs. For the next five days the group broke up into smaller details. Some sorting out the huge volume of clothes, books and other donations, while others laboured around the school house embarking on the rather gargantuan task of applying three coats of cheap latex and enamel paint. Several times each day the students took breaks and played with the children. Many of students were already claiming to have "bonded" with one or more of the orphans (Gibson, Journal; Soila, Journal; Range, Journal; Long,4). This was a pattern of interaction with the children that seemed consistent with the reports of previous participants in the program and in the available documentation surrounding past tours.

After the second day of work it became clear that certain students had a greater propensity to engage in hard physical labour. Several others took longer and longer breaks
away from the painting or sorting tasks as the days passed or creatively invented new assignments such as painting colourful murals on the panels of the school before the main jobs had been completed. The difference between the "talkers and doers" (Gibson, Int#3), was becoming more apparent to members of the group and this interpretation of events was confirmed by the researcher in conversations with the teachers who became increasingly irritated at the trend by the week's end. Tim, to his credit, was very open about the fact that he had never painted before but made several attempts to become involved in the work as it progressed. Holly and several others were surprised to find out that he had not brought any work clothes with him to Guatemala (Range, Journal).

The chance to stay overnight and work with the toddlers was an opportunity that many, but not all individuals seized upon. In this sense, there was a direct relationship between those students who demonstrated their willingness to work hard at fulfilling the group's duties at the orphanage and those who stayed overnight. For those who welcomed the experience, it was an intense and eye-opening endeavour. These individuals reported that they were astounded by the amount of work the volunteers had to perform in the course of a day:

You'll never get ANY idea how much work goes into the orphanage and how much work the volunteers do...I really admire them. Mary Coll was there for NINE months. So by the end of the day I had harsh sunstroke and I couldn't even hardly stand. I was so tired. I have never felt so drained in my life. Man I felt awful. (Lamb, Journal)

For Kaily Soila, involvement in one of the overnight contingents was a highly informative experience:

At 4:00 pm. our group left and behind stayed Alice, Holly, Nancy and I to get the real experience of a volunteer. It was HORRID! First you take them to dinner, where they throw their food around, cry and always ask for "AGUA". Then the real task comes; you must undress them all, bath them all, dress them, put on their diapers and powder, brush their teeth and finally try to get them to sleep. Believe me, it is not as easy as it sounds. We finally got them to sleep, but
throughout the night they kept waking up...In all I only got 1/2 hour sleep and
ended up waking up at 4:40 am. I think it is a really good idea to let the students
sleep overnight, because then they understand what it is truly like to be a
volunteer. One has to be mature. (Soila, Journal)

Just the day prior to this event Kaily was adamant about her desire to return to work at the
orphanage in the very near future (Soila, Journal). With the realization of the hardships
involved in volunteering came a new understanding of the level of personal sacrifice and
dedication that would be necessary to engage in this line of work over a prolonged period of
time. Romantic notions of wanting to "help out" were no longer a sufficient basis upon which
to launch a proposed career as a mission teacher or overseas volunteer, nor were her
previous experiences with child daycare in Richmond necessarily applicable or similar to
this setting (Soila, Int#3).

Members of the overnight contingents believed that they had gained valuable insight
into the workings of the orphanage and the life of volunteers. In addition, they felt that the
members in their own group who chose not to share in this opportunity had missed the
chance to get the whole picture of what transpired at the orphanage on a daily basis (Soila,
Int#3; Gibson, Int#3). At the same time they were quite ready to admit that their plans for
future involvement as volunteers had been altered somewhat in response to the lessons
learned during that one night of work:

I noticed that all of us, we all said before we came to the orphanage that we
were all so enthusiastic. We were going, 'Yeah, we are going to stay there.
After this we are going to stay there for three months, four months,' whatever.
We were all sounding so gungho about the whole thing, you know. Only the
people that didn’t stay...who I think totally lost out on an excellent experience,
but...the people who did stay, I think we realized that we weren’t mature
enough. Everyone who came out of that...the orphanage, we all decided that we
weren’t mature enough to go back there right now. I couldn’t have handled two
days there. I think two days in a row would have totally burned me out...I
think I’d go crazy. (Shaw, Int#3)

Added to this learning was recognition of the severe lack of physical comforts and
emotional support for volunteers at the orphanage. At one point in the week Joseph openly acknowledged that in the past six months the operation had seen seventy-two volunteers come and go, most of whom had left because they realized they could not tolerate the hardships and selfless existence demanded by the work. He further elaborated that most of the temporary volunteers who came to the orphanage were young university students from Europe and North America who brought their own highly romanticized perceptions about working in the "Third World". In fact, after conversations with the volunteers the students learned that several of the present crew were clearing out during the upcoming weekend and, furthermore, that the remaining four workers were hoping that the Richmond students would stay on to assist them because this exodus would leave them extremely short staffed. There was no positive response to this plea from anyone within the group. In the months prior to the trip many of the students had proudly disclosed their intention to pursue work as volunteers overseas. Now, many of them were beginning to reassess their dedication to this ambition as the reality of the conditions of volunteer work became clearer. Tim expressed his own concern about what the work at the orphanage implied for his future plans which echoed the statements by members of the overnight contingents:

Unfortunately I did not get the opportunity to stay overnight. Not now. I don't think I am mature enough to do something like that right now. Mature, but I just don't think I am ready to go for that six month period, but I really look forward to that time after my first degree to go and really want to do that wherever. I have met a lot of people who have done that and it has changed them for the better as far as I am concerned. (Long, Int#3)

The continuity of this theme of "maturing" in their dialogue seemed to indicate that the students' shared conversations were collectively shaping their emerging perceptions of the experience. For some of the students it would take several weeks back home for their individual verdicts on future involvement as volunteers to be clearly articulated. In any event, the reality of the situation for volunteers at the orphanage blunted the more
exuberant edge of such ambitions for several students; while others remained steadfast in their conviction to pursue this goal despite what they had seen (Lamb, Journal; Gibson, Journal).

After several days of observing conditions at the orphanage, many of the students began to express an appreciation for the quality of life that was provided for the children (Long, Int#3; Shaw, Int#3). In turn, these perceptions were used to draw out larger generalizations about the relative implications of this situation, not only for other children in Guatemala (Range, Int#4), but also for the lives of their contemporaries in North America (Soila, Journal). Jane Lamb's comments exemplified a popular sentiment in this regard:

I am so impressed with the orphanage too. In a way I think these kids have a better life than half of America does. I mean they don't but they are so free. The kids are so free and that is good. They are so independent, but just because of their lifestyle, they are totally cooperative. All the orphanage is their family, you know. It is good in some ways like that they are so healthy in terms of like protein and stuff. Like I have been thinking that the way they are fed and stuff they are fed so well. They are probably healthier than any kid in America I'd say. Like I think so. They don't eat junk food and stuff except for when we come. They are so tough and they are so strong and I am so impressed with the discipline and stuff...Like I didn't think it would be like this at all. (Lamb, Int#3)

This perception was most often balanced by an appreciation that the orphans lacked the consistency of role models and parents in their lives and also did without many material comforts that the students took for granted (Soila, Int#3). Still, their interpretation that these children were "fortunate" despite such shortcomings was all the more proof that the orphanage was safe and happy home.

To their reflections on the relative quality of life at the orphanage was added the constant supply of stories provided by Joseph and other volunteers concerning the personal background of these children. The childrens' case histories included everything from glue
sniffers who had been plucked off the streets of Guatemala City, to a little boy who was taken from his parents when it was discovered that he had been burned repeatedly with hot wax and boiling water. Several of the children were removed from their parents because of sexual and physical abuse. Others were simply brought to the docks of the orphanage and abandoned by their parents. After a while it was apparent that every one of the seventy or so orphans had his or her own personal history and all of their stories helped to construct images of what other childrens' lives could be like outside of Casa Guatemala. It was not surprising when the students began to see the children before them as the "lucky ones" in this part of the world (Soila, Int#3).

The location of the orphanage on the Rio Dulce also provided a reference point through which they developed various comparisons about class structure and wealth in Guatemalan society. This setting included the presence of a large number of tourists who sailed their yachts in the waters around the region. Linda and Kaily appropriately identified Joseph and his wife as part of this larger scene of affluence. Despite the fact that he was acting as the head volunteer on site, these students detected some very revealing aspects surrounding their interaction with the children and in their daily routine at the orphanage which demonstrated the distance which Joseph and his wife placed between themselves and the children:

I mean it was good that he was working there because he was helping them, but I feel he was doing it because he felt guilty. You could tell because when he walked through the orphanage he just walked through and if the kid was lucky he patted his head or something. He sort of talked to them like they had no lives ahead of them. He talked like they had no hope. The other thing was just that he lives on a yacht on the river and then he comes back to the orphanage and tries to get back into that frame of mind at the orphanage while he can go back to the yacht and do whatever. That was kind of odd. (Shaw, Int#3)

Even his wife, she didn't even know the kids names. I don't know, it seemed like she didn't even know anything about the orphanage. When we were there it seemed that she talked to the kitchen staff that day, but that was the first time
she had talked to them...I remember I was like, 'How long have these people been here,' and it was a long time and I am like, 'Oh, she is just like asking about this today?' (Soila, Int#3)

Linda's and Kaily's observations of these two individuals and their apparent detachment from the situation was but one representation of the nature of interaction between the wealthy and impoverished individuals in this region. Located directly across the bay from the orphanage was the current President's residence on the Rio Dulce. The proximity of this and other stately cottages on the river was constantly being juxtaposed with the living conditions at the orphanage. Such extreme wealth also contrasted sharply with the Ketchi communities that lined the banks of the river. This setting brought forth numerous interpretations and reflections from the students as they shuttled between the Catamaran Hotel and orphanage each day. Tying together his experience with the Camino Real and the Rio Dulce, Tim made this observation:

An example of the same thing was the orphanage on the one side of the river and the President's house being on the other. It was such a dichotomy. Like here you have this orphanage of hundreds of kids, many of them who have been abandoned and many of them who have been abandoned because the government has shot their families or killed their families, and across the river you see this splendor of wealth and this huge home were the President lives. It was the same thing with the Camino Real. It bothered me. It bothered me to realize that there was such an unequal distribution of resources and of wealth in that country and that is one of the reasons why they are suffering in that country so much. (Long, Int#3)

At the Catamaran Hotel one evening, Jane Lamb recalled her own feelings about this situation through the occasion where she was introduced to a wealthy Guatemalan family at the Marimonte Hotel who were building their own summer home on the river:

Jane: It is rich. The Rio Dulce is a totally rich river. And then I think, 'Why is the orphanage there? Why is the President's little summer cottage over here?' ...Like the people who were staying in the hotel before this one, they were building their weekend house on this river but down the river there is an orphanage. Like even in this area there is total extreme differences, and people know the orphanage is there too. I would talk to people about it and they would say, 'Oh yeah that. That is so nice of you,' but then they would be building their
nice house on the river.

**J.S.** What does that tell you?

**Jane:** That people who are rich here just want to get richer and they don't really care. They are just totally blind and ignorant towards the poor here. Because, if you live in a country and it is your country you can't not see it.

**J.S.** Do you think they see it?

**Jane:** They see it but it doesn't hit them I don't think. Because, if you're from a rich family and you have only had that and you have been taught not to see it and you have been taught to say, 'Oh it is not our problem,' it is not going to be your problem. (Lamb, Int#3)

For many of the students the Rio Dulce represented a microcosm of the larger picture of life and politics in Guatemalan society which they had witnessed over the last two weeks. They had a growing sense of disdain for the rich who seemed to flaunt their power and wealth in the face of the abject poverty which surrounded them (Gibson, Int#4). At the same time it made them more acutely aware of how the tourist industry played into the social matrix which supported and structured this reality (Long, Int#3; Gibson, Int#4). This led to more questions about their own role in this tourist setting and whether their program could ever be distinguished from this open display of wealth (Soila, Int#3).

For several of the students, the question of their role at the orphanage came up in the form of conversations with the volunteers on site. In one instance a volunteer did not hesitate to suggest that their money would have been better spent if they had simply stayed in Richmond and contributed the money for the tour directly to Casa Guatemala (Gibson, Int#3). This point of view was countered with the rationale that the trip was a unique educational experience with lessons that they could not have received through any other means. While this volunteer expressed outright denigration of the group's contribution many of the students were raising their own questions about their role in Guatemala.

At this point the students were surprised to learn of the limited scope of their
program's financial impact on the orphanage and, furthermore, that their presence on site was generally perceived as more of a nuisance than a benefit from the point of view of the workers. Linda and Kaily had these things to say about their discovery of this perception from the point of view of the volunteers:

In some parts you didn't feel welcome. For some it was like a hassle having us there. They kind of made me mad because we put so much into this orphanage and to have you feel like you weren't welcome, or that you weren't doing a good job or something. It made you feel bad. We have always been taught that we have done so much for this orphanage and they thank us for the money we give them. You just thought that you felt really unwelcome. (Soila, Int#3)

We found out the way they said that Canada was not really that big of a benefactor compared to Sweden and I thought that we were always such a big contributor and were really looked upon as being a great help, but basically... I don't think we have given them as much money as other countries so they don't see us as important. (Shaw, Int#3)

For Jane Lamb this realization was tempered with feelings of empathy for the volunteers who had to put up with the group's intrusion into their routine (Lamb, Int#3). In most cases, however, discovering that there were limitations to their welcome at the orphanage was unsettling. This dilemma was further compounded by the recognition that the donations from the school program in Canada were of only fractional importance to the overall budget of the operation. The students had just struggled with the implications of travelling as tourists for a week only to find out that their role had not changed that significantly in the eyes of volunteers at the orphanage. Despite several days of hard work on the facilities, many individuals began to re-evaluate their presence as fundamentally self-serving in the sense that they were gaining greater personal benefit from their participation in activities at the site. Instead of perceiving this visit as an expression of "help", it was now abundantly clear to several subjects that the purpose of their tour was more appropriately couched in terms of a cross-cultural exchange between the orphanage and the students from Richmond (Gibson, Int#4). Some even questioned the ethics of coming in and developing relationships
and bonds with the children, only to depart several days later leaving them standing on docks waving good-bye (Soila, Journal; Shaw Int#3; Soila, Int#3).

By the time the students left Casa Guatemala on day thirteen, their perspectives regarding the purpose of the Richmond program and their role within it had been irrevocably altered. There was a strong realization that the children who lived at the site had a much more substantial quality of life than they had first envisaged and that this was made possible, in part, by the donations their project sent to maintain the organization. Second, despite the lack of personal possessions and consistency in parental care, these children grew up within a sound extended family atmosphere founded in the orphan's communal support of one another and through the assistance of the hired workers from the surrounding villages. While volunteers were necessary in this regard, they were not always a blessing to the children. That many of these orphans emerged as independent and well adjusted individuals despite this rather spartan environment was astounding to many of the students and gave them pause to consider the conditions of their own upbringing and values. For the Richmond students it was obvious that their school project had contributed significantly to the construction of facilities on the site and in this way supported ongoing improvements in the children's education. Equally important was the realization that their role in visiting the orphanage was more correctly perceived as a chance to "witness", rather than "help" or change the orphans' lives in any significant manner. This course of individual reflection and evaluation, however, was still far from complete as several important experiences lay ahead of them.

5.10 Livingston, Emilio and Casa Alianza: From Speeches to Glue Sniffers

I think that we have always heard things about it when we are here. We always heard about them, but we didn't see anything like that until our second day before leaving. It was so amazing. It was depressing seeing them right there; I
mean glue sniffing right there. I mean a bag wouldn't last. I mean like ten minutes and they would throw it away and then they would take the other kid's bag and start sniffing again. It was just that they were always sniffing it. You were just wondering what it was doing to them. I was scared but I felt so confused. I don't know what to think. (Soila, Int#4)

The last two days of the tour in Guatemala were spent winding down and travelling back to Guatemala City. On the morning of the thirteenth day the group stopped briefly at the orphanage to drop off papers and pick up three of the volunteers while travelling down river to visit the Caribbean town of Livingston. The stop at Casa Guatemala was a final chance to say good-bye to the children and workers on site. Several of the students had tears in their eyes and sat very quietly as we pulled away from the dock for the last time. Jane Lamb stated in her journal that evening:

I didn't cry until now, when I left the orphanage. It's just now that I think about their future and how greedy I am and how I live, well almost a fantasy. I love it here. It is so real...So real. Man I am so greedy and selfish. The children at the orphanage are so welcoming and loving, and even if they forget us in a month they are happy to know us. (Lamb, Journal)

This day of travelling on the Rio Dulce served as a time for relaxation and sun-tanning. What seemed most important at the time was the seating arrangements in the front of the boat in order to maximize one's exposure time in the sun while on route to and from Livingston. This side trip also served as a time for silent contemplation, judging by the relatively somber attitudes of the students and teachers. During the final days of the trip there was a significant element of tension within the group. As Holly observed:

It's our last full day here and boy are things getting touchy. I wish that everyone else could go home and I could go to the orphanage...God is everyone bitchy. I guess it is because we all want to go home because there is nothing else to look forward to. (Range, Journal)

The time spent in Livingston was a worthwhile detour by the accounts of most of the students (Lamb, Journal). The unique culture of this Caribbean region was a surprising addition to the prevalent Maya and Latino centred areas they had witnessed throughout most of the trip.
However, after several hours of walking the beaches and streets of the town the group was anxious to return to the Catamaran in preparation for the journey back to Guatemala City and the flight home.

The following morning the bus was loaded and the group departed on the long drive to the capital city. The only scheduled event for the day was a visit to Casa Alianza in the heart of downtown Guatemala City. It was approximately one hour outside of the city that Emilio decided to give a lengthy talk to the students. At this point most of them were sleeping or in a very groggy state as a result of the long journey in very cramped conditions. Regardless of their condition, most individuals came to life and listened attentively as he started to describe his innermost feelings about the significance of what the group had done in Guatemala. Even though Emilio had ventured into discussions surrounding the politics and social realities of life in his country on previous occasions, there was a strong current of sincerity running through his voice which caught the students' attention. He described his own struggle in life to inform the students of the hardships of growing up in this part of the world. At the heart of his speech was a very emotional account of his own personal struggle to raise and educate a family through seemingly insurmountable barriers. He then expressed his gratitude for what the students had done for the children at the orphanage, accenting the fact that without their assistance there was very little hope for the children's future as his government did not care at all about their plight. Furthermore, he stressed that they should return to their home and gently accept the lessons from this journey, always to remember to take full advantage of the benefits of living in Canada while continuing their efforts to assist others who were less fortunate. The students' unanimous response to his speech was the strongest indication of the influence he had on summing up the spirit of their work. His comments acted as a kind of ethical cushion that allowed them to swallow the more powerful contradictions which they had come to acknowledge through their
journey up to this point. Kaily provided the most in depth remark about the implications of his words and the students' state of mind at this point:

For some reason he put the whole point of our trip into one speech. I thought things that I haven't even realized before. Like I never thought about our wealth before. I realize we have it better off than them but it is like he pointed out, that he is not mad at us for our wealth. He just wants us to make sure we use it to our advantage. Like down there if they had that much wealth, I mean they would use it to their benefit for education and everything so they would become better. It seems that if you think of some kids up here they just, 'I don't want to go to school,' or, 'I don't want to do this,' you know... It seemed he liked what we were doing. Like some people down there were like, 'Oh why are you wasting your money down here? You could have just sent it down.' He didn't feel that way... He liked that we were seeing what it is actually like. He hoped that we would come back down and use our wealth to our advantage to help and help other people. He made us feel that we didn't have to feel bad that we have money. (Soila, Int#3)

Indeed, feelings of guilt for their relative wealth and affluence were commonly expressed by the students at various points on the tour (Lamb, Journal; Shaw, Int#3; Soila, Int#3; Long, Int#3). Prior to his speech, there was no consensus on how to wrestle with the implications of their own relative wealth while travelling through a poor nation. In the short term at least, Emilio provided them with a way to resolve this dilemma through his plea for vigilance and determination in the pursuit of social justice.

Later that afternoon the bus negotiated the final twists and turns of the road into Guatemala City. After passing through the crowded streets, thick with diesel smoke and colourful buses, the group pulled up in front of Casa Alianza. This house operated as a refuge for street children and youths, almost all of whom were addicted glue sniffers. The students from Steveston had heard of this facility from Mary Coll, but were nonetheless shocked when they observed three youths sitting on the street curb directly across from the building, voraciously inhaling vapours from plastic bags lined with industrial strength glue. These kids took notice of the vehicle and the seventeen pairs of eyes fixed in their direction. Within moments they came up to the bus, started to leer at the women passengers and
climbed up onto the roof rack. A sense of panic shot through the bus as many individuals sat, shocked in disbelief at what they were experiencing. Windows were locked tight and several students winced at the sight of the youths licking the glass outside the vehicle. After several minutes of discomfort and anxiety the driver pulled away from the front door of the institution. Within half an hour the group returned to tour the operation as Emilio had by now received the necessary permit to enter the building.

While the tour of Casa Alianza was somewhat of a disappointment to several students (Range, Journal; Soila, Journal), the events that took place outside the refuge were highly disturbing for most individuals and left a lasting impression of the violent realities of street-life. Jane Lamb felt it was the most significant event of the trip (Lamb, Int#4). She recalled the moment in this fashion:

If you're near the orphanage [Rio Dulce] you don't really see too many bad things...When I was at Casa Alianza and we saw the street kids and stuff just sniffing glue, that's reality, you know. That was so real and that was the thing that hit us, that hit me at least. That's where you see the real down side of the country and just what goes on there...It's one of those things that you see on TV and you hear about it, but you're never going to really see it, you know? (Lamb, Int#4)

For Linda Shaw, the incident outside of Casa Alianza sparked anger and outrage at her reaction and inability to do anything about the situation:

*Linda:* It made me really angry. It made me angry because I was scared. I felt scared of those kids when I first saw them and it made me angry because they were about the same age or a little bit younger than us and to be scared of a little kid. That made me so angry; not at them, but just at the people who support their habits. I have already started a letter and I know it is not going to do anything, but I am starting a letter to Elmer's, the people who are selling the glue and I am going to try and get people to sign it and just tell them that. I mean they are not going to do anything about a kid writing a letter to the factory saying, 'Stop giving the glue!', but as long as they know. At least I can get them the letter and they can see it. It just pissed me off.

*J.S.*: In what sense?

*Linda:* Just the fact that those kids were able to get glue. The fact that the
people are actually selling that glue knowing that it is going to destroy kids. The fact that I was scared of those kids because they were taking something that we never did and that we have never seen and I was scared of a twelve year old. That made me really angry to be scared of such a harmless kid when it is not their fault. It just really pissed me off...I just want to stop it and you can't. (Shaw, Int#4)

The incident outside of Casa Alianza confirmed several things for the students. First, it further demonstrated the comparative safety and well-being of the children living at the Rio Dulce orphanage, many of whom were fortunate enough to be removed from these same streets in Guatemala City. Second, it revealed just how sheltered their own existence and lifestyle was from this kind of every day brutality. After all, these were the very youths that they had learned were shot by government troops rather than have them loitering on the streets and acting as a nuisance to the tourists (Lamb, Journal).

5.11 Last Minute Reflections: The Students' Perceptions Before the Journey Home

Jane: Like everyone who lives like we do should have the chance to see a Third World country. They should come here.

J.S.: For what reason Jane?

Jane: Just because when you see it with your own eyes, like when you walk down the street and see somebody begging, like seriously someone who can't walk, and begging, it is just going to hit you more than if you read it in a book, because it is not real in a book. It is real when you see it and then you know you have to help. It is real, like the poverty and everything...Like in our one planet you can see such extreme differences. You cross a border and it is suddenly poor, you know. Like you cross an imaginary line and it is so different. (Lamb, Int#3)

The third round of interviews were completed during that last evening of the tour at the Villa 6

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6 This information was provided for the students by Mary Coll who worked at Casa Alianza during the previous year in Guatemala City. It was also reportedly confirmed by newspaper articles which made the same accusations concerning police brutality and the shooting of street kids. See, "Police are suspect in cases of violent deaths" Latinamerica Press, September 13, 1990.
Espanol in Guatemala City. During these sessions the subjects' comments focused on a host of formative observations they had compiled over the past two weeks in Guatemala. Their dialogue centered around several key themes which emphasized the value of the tour as an educational experience and also transcended the immediate circumstances they had encountered. Important among these themes were remarks they made concerning their anticipated reception back home, how they would react to re-immersion into their own communities, as well as reflections on the dominant values and ethics of Canadian society which stood in contrast to those witnessed in Guatemala.

In the days and hours prior to their return home to Richmond it became evident that many students were reflecting intensely on how this experience was affecting their personal values and beliefs. Their expressed views ranged from skepticism and doubt to complete affirmation of the process of "change". Several other students seemed to reverse their opinions from one day to another on the question of the impact of the trip on their lives. Holly Range was one of the more reticent students to admit that the journey had affected her perceptions in any major way. In fact, before her involvement with the children at the orphanage she had expressed unequivocal rejection about the trip's influence on her views. Such transformation had been strongly anticipated in the weeks prior to the tour by every subject in the study. On the day of her arrival at the orphanage Holly reported in her journal:

I don't see how this trip is supposed to be so emotional, because I am not a changed person so far; maybe a little more pissed off, a little more sick, but not some weird emotional freak whose view of life is changed to an extreme.

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7 This account is based on informal observations of the students' conversations while on site and at the orphanage and at the Catamaran Hotel. While the researcher did not directly invite or suggest this topic of discussion, it appeared that his presence may have inadvertently triggered their conversations on this theme. There was suggestion in several of the subjects' journals that the researcher's presence on the tour was cause for moments of more intense reflection (Lamb, Journal).
Enough of this analyzing garbage. (Range, Journal)

After being with the children for a few more days her analysis concerning this process of change began to take on a more constructive tone:

One kid, Jose, put my whole life into perspective. He sniffed glue in the streets of Guatemala City. Now he goes into trances then starts crying. It feels as if why try? I complain about homework when it is such an honour to be able to learn whatever we can. I guess in a way I've changed my perspective in life. (Range, Journal)

By her third interview Holly started to clarify the possible ramifications of the experience on her perspective in life. The most critical component of this was the realization of the relative hardship of Guatemalan life in comparison to her own:

J.S.: How has this trip affected your own feelings?

Holly: Well it just sort of put things into perspective. Like you have people down here, like these kids and they don't complain about much when you think of it. We complain about waiting in line or about the stupidest things and you think about these kids and you feel stupid. It sort of puts it into perspective ...Like their lives are so unbelievably hard and yet they still go through it happy and here I am complaining about school or homework and education is a privilege, not something that you just have to do. It is an honour to have an education. I don't know how lucky I am. All the things I have are really just luxuries compared to what these people have. (Range, Int#3)

For Tim, the success of the work done at the orphanage renewed his faith and commitment to his Ismaili community, as well his hope for the future of humanity (Long, Int#3). He also felt that the experience would make him "a lot more laid back," implying that it had altered his need to be in full control of the events shaping his life (Long, Int#3).

In a fashion similar to Holly Range, the experience added a more personal perspective regarding the relativity of his problems back home.

That is what this trip has done, it has put my life in perspective more...I don't have many problems. I am very fortunate but there were a few things that I was worried about like that 'B' in geography or something ridiculous like that. Like I said ridiculous and before it wasn't. This trip has put things into perspective of how fortunate I am again. (Long, Int#3)
Others within the group tried to anticipate changes in their perspectives through projected concerns over the possible nature of their interaction with peers, family and other individuals in the Richmond community. Linda had this to say about her sense of angst regarding such a reaction when she returned home:

The one thing I want to know is when I get back there, am I going to be resentful to other people who didn't experience what we experienced? I don't know if I am going to look at things and to laugh inside and go, 'Humpff, if they only knew the way they are and how stupid they look.' Everyone said last year who went, they said, 'Oh you are going to come back different.' But seriously I think I have changed. (Shaw, Int#3)

In addition to the above, Linda and Kaily were very concerned about the way they would deal with individuals who questioned the purpose of the Casa Guatemala program. For Linda, there was little doubt in her mind that she was going to resent any hint of ambivalence demonstrated by people towards the issues of the "Third World":

It just makes me so angry that people are so ignorant to places like this that they wonder why we went. Like that is just such an ignorant question, 'Why are you spending money to go to Guatemala to help kids in an orphanage?' You know that is such a stupid question to ask. It just makes me mad to think that people aren't even going to bother to experience it and that they are always going to live like that. That is why there is not so much money at the orphanage. That is why we have so much and other places don't, just because we keep our money to ourselves and don't bother thinking about other things; other people in other countries who need more. (Shaw, Int#3)

Kaily was equally concerned about defending the rationale of the program against those who would challenge it. In addition to this she expressed her growing feelings of solidarity towards the people of Guatemala:

You can't explain what we have learned. I think I'll defend Guatemala. Like I love it so much, I think I'll defend it. I don't understand why 'they' wouldn't want to come down here, because you learn so much. Like our society is nothing like this. Here everyone is so nice. Everyone says hello and everything. Just because of their government it doesn't change the people. They are so nice despite their government. I think that is why they work twice as hard; to show people that they can do it. (Soila, Int#3)

Comments such as these underscore the effect of witnessing the living conditions and struggle
of the Guatemalan peasants in illuminating the differences between the dominant values of this culture and their own.

Kaily and Alice made repeated references to their amazement with the seemingly unconditional generosity, friendliness and caring of Guatemalan people towards one another and total strangers (Soila, Int#3; Gibson, Int#3). More important, was the students' growing identification with the plight of the peasant population of this country. The students perceived that the strong sense of community support and rugged determination was the Maya's most distinctive cultural characteristic in reference to their own. This is what they had witnessed first hand in Antigua, San Jose Chilijuyu, Tikal and the Casa Guatemala orphanage. Such perceived differences between the two cultures inevitably led to comparisons:

I think that our society is a lot more materialistic than it is here because over there [Canada], for example, a kid gets a toy and they'll say, 'Oh well where is the other one?' It is kind of like people there always want more and more. But here, if a kid was to get a toy, he would love it. It would be his only one. They don't expect a lot here, but in Canada everybody kind of wants more. Here people seem to be satisfied with what they have a bit more. (Gibson, Int#3)

As the trip drew to a close, the students' comparisons of the two societies began to resound with tones of outright rejection and resentment towards their own culture. It was a curious mix of sentiments because the students paralleled these expressions of alienation with equally vociferous declarations about the benefits of living in Canadian society. Nevertheless, they grew strongly disenchanted with the dominant North American social norms of competition, individualism and materialism. Tim Long had this to say about living in Richmond:

It is hard not to look at it and feel a little bitter, in that it is so prosperous and it seems so unfair. Here you have these just amazing people and they are just so happy and they have so little. In Richmond, suburbia, seems like this place where everyone is striving to get ahead. Do you know what I mean? You want to say look, look around the world and not just Richmond to see who has the
bigger car, look around the world and see what needs to be done and what can be
done and be grateful. I don't think that people are very grateful. Society as a
whole, I feel bitter in that way a bit. (Long, Int#3)

Jane Lamb was more vocal than others in reference to her growing disdain for North
American culture. Her conversation is used extensively here to demonstrate the broader
realm of criticisms that the students expressed at this late stage in the journey. In the first
instance, Jane drew upon a critical analysis of the use of technology as an extension of her
own society's power and corrupting influence over places such as Guatemala. In one of her
last journal entries while at the Catamaran, she noted:

   Guatemala is making me hate technology more than I did before. Now I feel that
   I have a reason to. It seems that the places that have technology, use it wrong so
   they influence the countries that don't have it, to use what they have wrong too.
   (Lamb, Journal)

To this macro-level of analysis she added implications for her personal lifestyle and choices:

   I have a family. I have a good family. My parents paid for me to come here.
   Not all of it but most of it... I have so much. I have my own room. Like families
   here live in a hut and I have my own bedroom. My bedroom is the size of their
   house and I just got my, my parents just gave me a huge closet... So now I have
   more room in my bedroom but my room is really the size of people's houses
   here and like my room is too small for me. Like, do I need that...No! (Lamb,
   Int#3)

Later in her journal Jane conveyed a sense of remorse and rejection at having to return to
Canada:

   I want to go home so I can be settled down but I don't want to leave Guatemala. I
   really don't want to go home to all of the hustle and bustle. It seems now that
   North American society is so pointless and way too uptight. I don't really think
   that I'll realize how I've changed until I get back into our North American
   system.8 (Lamb, Journal)

8 Lamb commented in her journal that she had to cut short interview three because talking with the
researcher was making her emotionally distraught. This was a clear example of the role that
student/researcher dialogue played for these individuals. These discussions were often a much
needed venting mechanism for the students to clarify their thoughts about recent events. However,
in some instances the anxiety created through these discussions pushed the students to their
emotional limits.
Finally, she elaborated on what she meant by "system" in the interview held that same evening:

We are so scheduled; our lives, we are robots. Our lives are so like you go to school until grade twelve, you go to university, you travel, you view a bit of the world, see a bit of this country, go back home, get a bit of money, go back home, work, work, work, work, work, have a little social life and work and work and make money, make more money. That is totally what it is. (Lamb, Int#3)

While the other individuals were not as vehement in their renunciation of North American values and lifestyles as Jane, they all expressed disenchantment with the prospect of returning home to face familiar routines and pressures. The tenor of these declarations made it important to observe manifestations of the students' growing sense of anxiety and alienation during the weeks immediately following their return to Richmond.

5.12 The Reception Back Home: Suntans, Gifts, Memories and Anger

I go crazy sometimes thinking about what they could do with some of these things...They could do so much with so little down there, where we do so little with so much. (Range, Int#4)

With the intensity of the last two weeks of travel suddenly over, the students came back to their community invigorated by the memories and stories from the circumstances they had experienced. Photographs were developed, gifts were given out to family and friends and, as in years past, reporters came to the school to interview the members of the group in order to cover their odyssey in the local newspapers.9 This initial wave of jubilation and enthusiasm, however, was short lived. No sooner had the subjects returned to their jobs, friends and schools than they reported deepened withdrawal and alienation from their respective communities. Their journals entries, completed during the first two week period, were replete with descriptions of growing antipathy towards teachers, friends and

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9 See, "Orphans made visitors take second look at Third World," *The Vancouver Sun*, Section B6, Tuesday, April 6, 1993.
other acquaintances who did not share their sense of "enlightenment". This trend continued to find expression in the final interview sessions held one month after their return. Each of the subjects experienced this period of disenchantment in their own way; some with moods characterized by deep depression and others with a sense of anger and outrage. Despite all of this the students remained resolute that their journey through Guatemala had transformed their understanding of both nations, as well as their values, priorities and goals.

Linda spent her first week at home. She could neither face the prospect of going back to the regular school routine, nor was she willing to reestablish relationships with her old peer group. By the time of the last interview she began to draw conclusions regarding the prevalent value of selfishness that she felt underscored the basis of most of her friendships (Shaw, Int#4). Through this account, she also criticized the absence of any form of altruism in her peer group which she conversely believed characterized the spirit of the group’s work in Guatemala:

*Linda:* Now that I think about it, all my friends were all thrown together, but not because of the beliefs we have, but because we have fun together. With the friends I made in Guatemala, like I made four or five close friends, it seems that if we got back together we would be close again. We were there because we actually felt the same way and we were there for the same reason. My friends here, we go out and stuff, but we go out because we have fun together. It is totally different kind of friendship. I value the friendships I made in Guatemala a whole bunch more than I do the friends I have had for three or four years.

*J.S.*: Why is that the case?

*Linda:* I mean we got close so quick. We were just thrown together and we just got so close so quick and we experienced so many different experiences together. Here it is just the same routine every weekend. It is the same routine every day. The same problems with everybody. Once again it is just the selfish thing. They are selfish friendships too, you know. Like I talk to people on the phone and I will want to talk about something else and all you hear is me, me, me, me, l, l, l. I can’t handle it anymore when people talk about themselves constantly. It is crazy how people talk about themselves. (Shaw, Int#4)

Linda was also disappointed about the manner in which she had behaved in Chichicastenango.
The "shopping spree" that took place there, now symbolized all that was in error with her previous consumer driven and materialistic values. She had this to say about the longer range impact of that day:

I felt guilty about going there. I am guilty about the stuff I have now that I bought. It is all over my house and I feel so guilty. I haven't given it to anybody. I haven't done anything with it. I just put it in my closet. I just feel sick about what we did there. (Shaw, Int#4)

In addition, Linda believed that the first week of touring could be reduced to a series of "little side shows," put in motion in order to teach the students just how poor people in places such as San Jose Chillijuyu really were (Shaw, Int#4). There was a slight tone of resentment for having been guided through these situations, as it made her feel that the lives of these people had been reduced to roles in a "play" for wealthy tourists.

In the end, Linda hoped that people in her own society would begin to understand the Casa Guatemala project as an example of the much needed "connection" between Canada and other parts of the "Third World" (Shaw, Int#4). To this were added strong expressions of empathy for the poor and impoverished members of her own community which she believed grew out the lessons learned on the journey through Guatemala:

In this society it is shameful not to have money. If people don't have money, people joke. My friends joke about people not having money, like, 'Oh nice shoes,' or, 'Look at what he is wearing man.' I don't know; everything is so different now...I mean, I never respected people who were poor. It was like, 'Why don't they have money like us?' Now I see them as just unfortunate. It is like they have had a lot of bad breaks. (Shaw, Int#4)

In response to her new perspective on poverty, Linda also expressed a decreased interest in the pursuit of personal wealth. She hoped that her career might allow her to be comfortable financially, but as she stated in her final comment:

Now I think I am going to actually have a life other than making money. I am going to go to school and I am going to go to Guatemala and work there. I am going to make enough money before I go so that I can actually be comfortable there so I don't have to worry about the airfare home. I am going to go there so
I can give them money because that is what they really need. It is great that they have volunteers but what they really need is the money. (Shaw, Int#4)

Kaily's re-entry into life in Richmond was less dramatic than Linda's. Nevertheless, Kaily was discouraged by the return to the "hussle and bussle" of North American life. On her first day back she noted this sentiment in her journal:

I am starting to miss Guatemala and the kids. I know now that I want to go back for sure. I miss the relaxed, friendly life. I am now part of a stressful, competitive life that I don't want to be part of. (Soila, Journal)

Her distaste for the situation was compounded by several incidents with teachers and fellow students who openly challenged her perspective on the lessons and value of the trip. To the comments of the previous day in her journal she added:

Today I went back to school. All people could say was, 'Oh, you're so dark!' that kind of made me mad because, that was not the point of the trip. I even got a comment today saying, 'Why did you want to go to Guatemala anyway?' People just don't understand the beauty of the country until they go there. Even one of my teachers just kept talking about the Guatemalan government and how it totally rules the people. He could not understand Guatemala from my point of view. I told him the people and the landscape were beautiful, but he responded that the people and landscapes are beautiful all around the world. I told him that these people are amazing since they are so happy with nothing. He didn't agree with that comment. Oh well, I guess people really have to go to Guatemala to experience what I have. I felt lonely today -- like people didn't understand me. (Soila, Journal)

Kaily later admitted knowing or learning little about the politics of Guatemala from the events surrounding the tour (Soila, Int#4). For Kaily, it was enough that she had directly encountered life in several communities in this country, and that her brief time had allowed her to observe that these people had a different set of priorities from those in her own society. Perceiving Guatemalan peasants as members of the "happy poor" was a questionable generalization, but nonetheless, typical recollection of these people by the students. That their peers, teachers and the popular media focused solely on aspects of oppression in this society was something that several of the students had to struggle with after they returned.
These students believed that they had witnessed a cohesive, vibrant and community-minded people who struggled on a daily basis with the conditions of their poverty in a positive and constructive fashion.

Kaily also experienced growing alienation from her immediate peer group (Soila, Int#4). They did not share her enthusiasm for the Casa Guatemala Project, and their values were now strangely at odds with her own:

When I came back everyone just seemed so different. Like everyone was talking about, 'Oh, do you want to go to the mall today?...Oh, let's go buy that.' I was just, 'Okay!', you know. It was just so confusing when I came back. It was really weird when I came back. Everything was confusing. I didn't understand anything. People just seemed so different and didn't seem like my friends anymore. They seemed like different people to me...All that people could say when they read the newspaper was, 'Oh, we saw your picture in the newspaper.' They never had anything to say about the trip. (Soila, Int#4)

Kaily later pointed to the dominant social pressure for individuals to "make money" as the key to her confusion regarding her friends. This, she felt, was the product of their upbringing which stressed materialism and wealth (Soila, Int#4).

Holly Range's remarks echoed her frustrations upon returning home. Unlike Linda, Holly did not feel the need to create new friendships based on her changed values and perceptions. In fact, she made explicit her preference to return to Guatemala without other members of the group:

I still think of the orphanage and miss it very much. It is harder than I thought it would be. I really hate it here and can't wait until I can go back. Tomorrow would not be too soon. It's not the group I miss at all. I'm actually glad that I'm not around them anymore. I miss the orphanage, the country, the lifestyle, but most of all the people. If I had the money I'd be on the plane the day after exams. As I write this with my T.V. on and lights on with simple things we take for granted, there are people everywhere, not just in Guatemala, who have nothing. So, now I'm preaching about this unjust world, but what am I doing about it? I guess that is for me to decide. Without this trip I would never of thought about things like that, let alone possibly doing something about it. So I guess this trip has really changed my life. It took a little time to reflect and think for me to figure this out. Hopefully others have taken advantage of this opportunity to experience what so few experience, but everyone should...Eventually things
will be back to normal. It is too bad it has to. So basically, life really sucks now, but I've still been able to learn a lot. (Range, Journal)

Holly's reception back at Richmond Senior High did not ease matters. One of her teachers remarked that she had no suntan, which made her angry at what she perceived to be a shallow and callous remark:

One thing that pissed me off at school when I returned was a comment by my teacher who said, 'My God you didn't get a tan? What a waste of time.' First of all I did get a tan, it's just that I look almost normal now, and second of all that was not the point of this trip. I would have yelled at him and expressed my opinions but my marks are getting low enough as it is due to my absence. (Range, Journal)

This entry signifies the seriousness and intensity of her identification with what she had done in Guatemala. At the same time it portrays the context of her disillusionment with the values of middle class North American society. Holly's experience in Guatemala fuelled a more profound critical awareness of her community. She compared her perceptions of the values of people living in Canada and in Guatemala:

_Holly:_ Well I say they [Guatemalans] are a more loving country or they love their country. They love where they live and their reason for staying there, I think, is just their love of that country. In Canada I am sure there are people who love the country, but they are just here because there is money, there is jobs, there is a relatively good economy and they are just money crazy and power crazy, I say, here or in the States...We take everything for granted here. Well, people down there just take what they can get and they appreciate it. We just take everything for granted. The type of society we live in where people are not at all as friendly and you just learn that this is what money can do to you sometimes. Like the power we have here pulls people away from one another I think.

_J.S._: What are some of the ways that comes about? Why are we like that?

_Holly:_ We want all the luxuries. We want to have everything. We want to be on the top. I can do this. I have this. I am better than you. They want to feel better. They want to feel superior. (Range, Int#4)

Such generalizations attest to the manner in which Holly's hostility towards materialism in Canadian society were referenced to her reflections on the tour of Guatemala.
Holly concluded that the program made her more aware of the value of the education system in her own country which she vowed to take greater advantage of in the future (Range, Int#4). She also felt that the experience had shaped a new way of seeing her life and future goals:

Well I will be back there in the next few years; I can promise that. Just how it has changed me...it is going to affect me for the rest of my life I think for that way. Always living day by day and just being happy with what I have and not expecting too much and going for it just to get everything. I just want to have what I need and if I have more, fine. It is not something I am after. (Range, Int#4)

As one of her last comments she re-affirmed the personal importance of the journey:

Well if I had a choice I would do it all over again regardless of who went. Even if it was my enemies I would still go. (Range, Int#4)

Alice Gibson's reaction to being home was similar to the other students. Her comments expanded on the theme of alienation from her community. On her first day back at work she encountered a customer who was offensive because of the woman's selfish attitude. The owners of the shop next door paid only scant attention to her summary of her trip before quickly interrupting so that they might get back to work (Gibson, Journal). Like others, Alice had trouble adjusting to the stress, tension, materialism and competitive emphasis (Gibson, Int#4). In her perception this was a complete contrast to the social norms and attitudes of Guatemalans, which she typified as "more accepting", "happier" and "appreciative". She explained the dynamics of the problem in Canadian society in this fashion:

Our society's put onto us or has given us an idea that you aren't good enough no matter what you do; you can always improve, you can always have more, you can always make more money or whatever. Like you can always have more than you have, but it's never said you should be happy with what you have. (Gibson, Int#4)

She summarized the terms of her alienation with this emotional and powerful entry in her
I'm glad being home with my family but I feel that I left a part of my heart at the Casa Guatemala orphanage on the Rio Dulce. It feels so awkward to be home. I don't like it at all. I feel like there is so much pressure to be the best or be the most successful, that people here don't really enjoy life. It's really stressful and there is so much tension, but it's probably my feelings of loneliness and missing my new friends that causes me to feel so very uncomfortable here. I know that I have to accept it here because this is where my life is. I mean, my family, my house, my job and my school are all here in Canada, but I feel like my heart is still in Guatemala. I find it hard to talk to my friends and family about my feelings about the orphanage. It's hard because I miss the kids tonnes already. Whenever I talk about how much I love it, my throat gets a lump and my eyes fill up with big fat tears. Right now I don't want to be here. I hate it here. People seem so uptight, unfriendly, impersonal and especially selfish. I shouldn't be so critical, because people are usually a certain way because of their environment and the way they were brought up. In one of Michael Jackson's songs it says, 'We must stop existing and start living.' I wish this were true. People seem to only be here and not take any risks or try new things. People seem really closed-minded, and sometimes I wish that everyone would open their minds and live a little more. (Gibson, Journal)

Even though Alice struggled with this dissonance, she was convinced that it was a necessary part of the learning experience. To deal with her frustrations and alienation, Alice talked with Mary Coll who described a similar period of emotional turbulence when she returned from Guatemala the previous summer (Gibson, Journal). While Alice had visited and lived in Mexico and witnessed scenes similar to those in Guatemala, she was resolute that the Casa Guatemala tour had instilled new perspectives in her life. This was particularly true in reference to her intensified appreciation of the quality of life for people in Canada (Gibson, Int#4). She was convinced that others would benefit equally from the chance to encounter programs similar to the Casa Guatemala Project (Gibson, Int#4).

On a different note, Alice described gaining a greater appreciation for teamwork through the group's efforts at the orphanage. Alice's rationale for this stemmed from the insights she gained about her peers during the week of work on the Rio Dulce and the overnight visit particularly:
You really see what people's strengths and what people's weaknesses are and who really helps in the end and who really does their part in the end, you know. Like you really see, 'Okay, well I think this person's going to do it or pull through for us,' and if they don't you really learn, 'Oh, okay, well I guess they didn't,'... then you really learn about who deals with things certain ways. (Gibson, Int#4)

Although she felt she was now more fully cognizant of the hardships faced by volunteers in places such as Casa Guatemala, there was no doubt in her mind that she was going to seek out a longer term experience in the near future (Gibson, Int#4).

Jane went to great lengths to express her feelings of warmth and attachment towards the Guatemalan culture. Her comparisons dealt with the superficiality that typified human interaction in North American society and, conversely, the honesty and simplicity with which people lived in Guatemala:

It just seemed so much more 'real life' than here. It just seemed so much more the way the majority of the world lives...it's not like here...kind of a fake happy...It's just more relaxed and more, just the way I kind of feel life should be. Not the poverty, but just the way people are, just the attitude kind of and I just totally loved it there...Just not so worried about the money thing. (Lamb, Int#4)

These expressions of warmth towards Guatemalan people were not surprising coming from Jane. In part, they reflect highly romantic notions of life in Guatemala. She had already declared her distaste for the North American urban lifestyle prior to the journey. The Casa Guatemala experience justified her alienation by further verifying the relative degree of artifice and greed in her own society:

It seems that people here don't really see the important things. They don't really see that the most important thing is to be happy, you know, and to appreciate what you have. It is not important what kind of car you have. It's important that you're happy and that you have friends, people who love you and stuff...it's just so materialistic here. (Lamb, Int#4)

Jane's sense of moral separation from her immediate environment also extended into relationships with her peers. Upon her return she perceived that few individuals seemed to
deeply care about what she or the group had experienced or, even if they did show a modicum of interest, it usually focused on the wrong issues (Lamb, Int#4). The day she returned to school she had this to say about her emotional state:

I am not able to get Guatemala out of my mind. I can't help but think of how I should take advantage of it and how damn lucky I am. I got my pictures back today and Alice and I went to the Bread Garden and looked at them. I couldn't stop smiling. It felt so good just to remember it so well, but yet so sad. The people at school I tell are...well there are so many reactions. Some of them I can tell really don't care. Some are happy for me, others jealous. (Lamb, Int#4)

Like Alice, she was comforted by Mary Coll who eased her sense of anxiety over the emotional distance she was experiencing from her peers (Lamb, Journal). In the last few entries of her journal she discussed the loneliness that stemmed from the inability to share her sense of wonder and excitement with anyone else other than members of the group (Lamb, Journal).

Jane did not feel that the Casa Guatemala program had "changed" her in any radical manner. Beyond statements such as, "we're just one hundred times richer than I thought we were," her overall impression was that the journey largely reinforced the values and ethics she already possessed (Lamb, Int#4). Most important, in her opinion, was the way the trip would help her make decisions about her own lifestyle and career in the future (Lamb, Int#4). In the more immediate time frame, however, she admitted hating school and having to prove her intelligence to others (Lamb, Int#4). As the weeks passed this feeling compounded as her attendance at school became less frequent and her grades fell dramatically. It appeared that the experience of returning from Guatemala was having a greater toll on Jane than even she had anticipated.

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10 Knowledge of this trend was acquired through a conversation with Bruce Seney at the end of the school year. Seney was a teacher at Jane's highschool and provided regular updates on the status of several of the subjects in the study.
Tim came the closest of all the subjects to specifically expressing an elevated sense of efficacy in the immediate aftermath of his experiences with Casa Guatemala (Long, Int#4). He was confident that his efforts, combined with the work of the group, had a real impact on the lives of the children at the orphanage:

That gives me the shivers whenever I think that I had the opportunity and the power to make that kind of difference; being part of something that is improving this world I guess. There are so few things these days and it seems so pure in its intentions and it seemed to make a huge difference and it gives me the shivers to think of this orphanage that has been built to help all these kids and to give them a sense of direction and to give them a place to stay and to feed them. Just the entire feeling of this place emulated this feeling that it is trying to do. It emulated this love that it had and this bonding that all the kids had and just the atmosphere. There was something very special about it. (Long, Int#4)

Tim extended this perception of purpose to the work he did for the program at home. In this respect he felt that the most important role he could have was to proliferate the message and lessons of the program within his own peer group and community. When asked to describe the contributions that the school program made to the orphanage he stated:

Sharing the experience with your friends and letting other people know how bad it is. Letting them know that this country is having a lot of problems and that there are glue sniffers out there. I tell these stories to my friends and to the people I come across out there. I show them some pictures. I show them the wonderful side, like the kids and the culture and the richness of it. I think that is the most important thing; telling them and letting them know that there is this country that exists out there that is suffering so much and that there are things that we can do. There is something that any individual can do to make a difference. (Long, Int#4)

His ability to frame the experience as part of a personal expression of efficacy seemed to stem from his prior involvement in community issues and projects. In this regard his perceptions of the mission of the Casa Guatemala program and his place within it, fit into the larger image of his career interests. This view was consistent with the one expressed a month earlier while in Guatemala, when he reiterated his intention to pursue a career in

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11 During the fourth interview session Tim informed the researcher that he had just returned from attending a youth conference in Ottawa [mock parliament].
international law (Long, Int#3). For Tim, the most important change that occurred in his perspective as a result of the tour through Guatemala came in the context of a heightened interest in his religious community and local political issues.

Another interesting aspect of Tim's final interview was the absence of any sense of estrangement with his peers and school environment. While the other students reported an intense phase of disaffection with their peer groups, Tim made no mention of such feelings. What was consistent, on the other hand, were his perspectives on what the experience told him about his own community and standard of living. Tim was equally critical in this regard:

J.S.: Have you entertained any thoughts and reflections about your own community, lifestyle and society since we returned?

Tim: Yeah it has been hard...We waste so much. We are so lucky but there is so much opulence here. So much opulence it just seems so unnecessary at times...Realizing on the one hand that we are very fortunate to live in a country that does not have as corrupt a government as Guatemala; has social services and health care and so on. On the other hand realizing that there is still a lot of waste and opulence and wealth in this country that is just wasted and that we could do so much better in countries like Guatemala...

J.S.: What do you mean by waste? What do we waste?

Tim: We waste our energy. We waste our time. We waste our money. We waste it all on material things. We waste it on the drive for gain; no one thinks to reason why. Everyone seems to think that all you have to do is work hard to get money. We waste so much time and things and don't realize that here are other ways of channeling that. I just think that everyone is in this pursuit of all these things and not really having any sense of ethics in saying that, 'Hey, there are other people around you. There are a lot of people a lot worse off and how about helping them for a change and not being so selfish at times.' I remember thinking that a lot. You become a lot more cynical when you come back about our society in general. (Long, Int#4)

In a fashion similar to other members of the group, Tim had to balance feelings of appreciation and gratitude for the benefits of living in Canadian society with seemingly contradictory emotions of bitterness and disenchantment for what appeared to be a flagrant
display of wealth. The real loss in all of this was the opportunity to put such resources to better use.

In response to his work at the orphanage, Tim stated that he had established a sense of solidarity with the people of Guatemala and the children in particular (Long, Int#4). He specifically admired what he perceived as the presence of a strong community spirit and the people's cooperative efforts to struggle for a better way of life (Long, Int#4). This made it harder when he heard about news reports that outlined the Guatemalan government's renewed campaign to fight guerilla insurgence in the northern regions of the country. As he stated:

When you read it, it still affects you so much because you know what they are destroying. You know the people who are being hurt almost. You feel some sort of connections and you realize that and it really hurts. (Long, Int#4)

Tim's criticisms also ventured into the media's portrayal of people and communities in impoverished countries like Guatemala. Holly Range had expressed similar concerns in her interview but did so as a passing comment (Range, Int#4). Tim was disturbed by the misleading slant provided in the images and perspectives in broadcasts about this part of the world:

There are a lot of negative things about these countries, but there are a lot of positive things too. What about this contentedness that everybody seems to be talking about and that these people seem to emulate? What about that, because we all have something to learn from that. Perhaps the media needs to focus on that. It is the everyday course of the media which is always negative. But of course it comes back to us; what we want to read and what we want to see is what they portray. (Long, Int#4)

The media's distorted and misleading accounts of places like Guatemala explained for Tim the need to point out that individuals from his society should have experiences such as Casa Guatemala in order to gain a personal dimension to their understanding and knowledge of the "Third World" (Long, Int#4).
5.13 Summary

The consistency in the students' criticism of their own society was significant. Many of them understood beforehand, that their involvement in the tour was likely to bring about new perspectives regarding their lives in Richmond. However, at this point there was little to suggest that intense feelings of alienation from their peers and community would be one of the strongest effects they would report as a result of their participation. In the weeks after their return the students' struggled to make sense of the immense differences in the standards of living between these two nations and, more importantly, what this implied for the dominant values of people who lived in both of these locations. The students, without exception had rejected the overwhelming emphasis on materialism, competition and individualism in North American society and did so because they believed that such values were antagonistic towards attempts to build genuine communication within and between individuals and their respective communities. These same social values and norms were also blamed for the lack of compassion, interest and action in efforts to bridge the gap between the quality of life in "First" and "Third World" nations.

In Guatemala, the students witnessed several communities struggling to survive with a standard of living far below their own. From what the students could discern, these people responded to their condition of poverty with a spirit of cooperation and mutual support that was decidedly absent in Canadian society. Such perceptions, however, existed in a highly romanticized notions of the "other". That many of the students found the experience unsettling seems to be an understatement. Regardless, there was no formal mechanism for debriefing when they returned home even though conflict and alienation compelled them to construct a response to the lessons drawn from the experience. In the end, however, their perceptions of Guatemalan society enabled the students to construct very substantial comparisons with Canadian society, as well as their own values and ethics. Furthermore,
these contrasting images had immediate effects on a number of their perceptions, most of which centred on a heightened sense of critical awareness. Peer relationships were cast into doubt. The students began to reconsider their career goals and their sense of priorities in life. There was an intensification in their alienation from North American culture. They demonstrated a growing disdain for flagrant displays of wealth. Paralleling this, however, were expressions of deeper appreciation for the benefits of living in Canada, specifically in reference to education and health care. The most revealing aspect in all of this was the fact that such intense reflections could grow out of a two week experience in Guatemala.
Chapter Six: Conclusions

6.1 Change and the Students' Expectations

In Chapter Three, Ray Sawatsky's narrative was used to portray the experience of a young adult going to Guatemala for the first time with the Casa Guatemala Project. He described the perception of leaving one's established "comfort zones". He was, of course, using his own terminology to describe the transformation of his "horizons of expectation," the perceptual framework that shaped his interpretation of events. The "comfort zones" which had been shattered, included the normative, communicative, and emotional distance that his affluent society placed between himself and communities in the "Third World." Bridging this gap was made possible through his direct confrontation with Guatemalan society and the orphanage. As a result he rediscovered many of the unarticulated assumptions that formed the cornerstones of his own interpretive schemes and perspectives. Through his experiences, Sawatsky was forced to negotiate a series of intense personal conflicts that addressed his priorities in life, his understanding of both cultures and his worldview. Mezirow (1991) described this holistic intellectual transformation as the engagement of content, process and premise reflection.

Sawatsky's testimony underscores the notion that for some individuals, brief but intense encounters with substantially different cultures hold the potential of radically altering fundamental perspectives in life. Yet, by his own account, he was predisposed to the experience of perspective transformation. What brought him to the threshold of change was largely the assimilation of the underlying philosophy of the Casa Guatemala Project. His acceptance of this vision was reinforced through the convictions and actions of his peers, teachers, administrators, parents and community members who supported the goals of the project. This collectivity of individuals constituted his "dialogic community" and was
largely responsible for shaping changes in his perceptions. Such transformation was, therefore, predominantly a social rather than purely an individual phenomenon.

The young adults who initiated their experience with the Casa Guatemala Project in the fall of 1992, inherited expectations that had been transferred by many of the program's alumni, school staff and community sponsors. Among other expectations, the participants' believed that they would be "changed" by the experience of traveling in Guatemala, working at the orphanage and bonding with the children. Some of the students discussed this perception as if it had become the accepted, idealized and somewhat romanticized norm. Indeed, the anticipation of "change" was a critical reference point in their expectations for the journey and one of the cornerstones of their initial justification for becoming involved with the project. Before leaving for Guatemala in March 1993, the six students expressed their belief that this project was special amongst the various foreign travel and exchange programs provided by their schools. They understood that they constituted an nontypical cross-section of their high school peers. When asked to describe their distinctive qualities it was expressed in terms of a shared sense of political efficacy and connection to the spirit of humanitarianism engendered in the project. Furthermore, they assumed that they were less self-centred than the vast number of their teenage peers, which was demonstrated through their willingness to act for the benefit of the orphans.

6.2 Critical Aspects of Transformation in the Students' Knowledge, Values and Perceptions

An ideology or reified frame is insulated against unwelcome perceptions and points of view that it deems irrelevant. We can deal with the anxiety generated by the homeless who sleep in our urban streets or starving Third World peasants by simply not focusing on them, by entering what George Simmel called an "urban trance." (Mezirow, 1991: p.135)

The six students who participated in this study demonstrated their predisposition
towards critical awareness from the outset of their involvement.\textsuperscript{1} They had consciously decided to challenge the parameters of their knowledge, values and perceptions by traveling to the "Third World" in order to separate themselves from the "urban trance." In doing so they transformed not only their vision of this region of the world, but also the perceptions of their own community and, ultimately of themselves as actors within this social environment.

Their experience allowed them to construct a wealth of contextualized knowledge about Guatemala. The tour put a sharper, more powerful face to Guatemala. Their discussions revealed a host of insights into the geography, history and culture of this country. Through their travels and work at the orphanage, the students' directly observed both the urban and rural living conditions that typified the existence of wealthy and impoverished Guatemalans. From this new information they were able to piece together a host of generalizations concerning the contemporary social, economic and political make-up of this nation. While these generalizations did not always reflect a sophisticated ideological perspective, their comments nevertheless demonstrated a growing sense of uneasiness with the blatant contradictions that stemmed from witnessing coexisting extremes of affluence and poverty in this context. Indeed, there were signs that they were able to interpret possible connections between working conditions, wage levels, military patrols, advertising and consumerism, and the influence of multinational corporations in Guatemala. However, their thoughts on these matters seemed largely underdeveloped and of secondary importance.

More important was their emerging realization of their own place within this spectrum of wealth and the ramifications this perception had for their understanding of the program, their own community and their lives in North America. The various events and

\textsuperscript{1} The term "critical awareness" in this context refers to the normative (ideological) analysis of society.
conversations at the hotels, villages and orphanages crystallized the perception that this tour was more about their own education than a clear act of humanitarianism. In this sense they were the greatest beneficiaries from the experience even though their efforts supported improvements in the childrens' daily lives at the orphanage. From their work at Casa Guatemala and through their observation of other communities they drew an appreciation of the different value systems that existed in Guatemala and how these contrasted with the prevalent norms in their society. Their reflections of the experience in Guatemala led to an intense period of conflict and alienation upon their return to Richmond. While they unanimously expressed a deepened sense of appreciation for the quality of health and education in their own community, they were equally vociferous in their condemnation of the overpowering influence of materialism, competition and individualism which seemed to permeate their culture, a condition many of the students now perceived as ultimately destructive. The dominant values that existed in their society were seen as the roots of local and global problems, not the solution.

Grappling with this new perception of their society and the resultant alienation from their peers, teachers and community members symbolized that their worldview had become more complex and demonstrated an intensification in their critical awareness of their society. Several students perceived an overarching paternalism by agencies and members within their society towards communities in the "Third World." For some of the students, the empathy initially shown for the children of the orphanage grew to include greater concern for the "homeless" and disadvantaged in their immediate community (see Kaily Soila's comment in Chapter Five, p.176). Similarly, they demonstrated an intensified interest in social activism. This disposition had implications for their vocational prospects, as well as for their expressed priorities and goals in life. Many of the students responded by seeking out a new circle of friends that further embellished a shared interest in social issues
and activism. This was contrasted, in their perception, with the more self-serving and superficial friendships that typified many of their previous relationships in some cases.

At the time of the final interviews in April 1993, the students' perceptions still existed in a state of disequilibrium which required further resolution. The re-immersion into the Richmond community had proved to be highly troublesome for several individuals in particular. This state of affairs, however, was not as problematic in itself because it was in keeping with the dialectical nature of transformative learning. To resolve the conflicts that existed in their normative framework and perceptions, the students tested out their new assumptions in the context of actions taken within their own community in the weeks following their return. What follows here is an explanation of three central dynamics that gave rise to changes in the students' understandings and an account of the substantive and perceptual dimensions of transformation. These include: a) conflict and dilemma, b) selective perception, and c) group dynamics and discourse.

6.3 Conflict and Dilemma in Perceptual Change

As the events of the journey unfolded and in the aftermath of re-entry into Canadian society, the students' expectations were either reinforced or transformed. Their encounter with perceptual change was fostered by the numerous conflicts and dilemmas that emerged from specific events. Conflicts developed within the students' perceptual framework for several reasons. First of all, the experience provided each student with new information, concepts and values, what Mezirow (1991: p.44) calls meaning schemes. These were assimilated largely through students' observations of Guatemalan culture and society. New meaning schemes generated critical reflection because they were either at odds with their preconceptions, or revealed themselves in far more complex forms than had been anticipated. When the difference between their old and new perspectives was most
pronounced the students experienced apprehension and anxiety as they attempted to resolve the dissonance. As Mezirow (1991) notes, reflective assessment is the mechanism through which individuals attempt to re-establish equilibrium in their belief systems. Of particular importance to this complex of disorientation were the different value systems that students' witnessed in Guatemala. The most influential value system in this regard was that of the Maya peasant communities. In many instances these were diametrically opposed to the dominant norms in their own society. Many of the students observed both the symbolic and concrete manifestations of conflict between the different value systems they had witnessed. These included actions taken by themselves and other members of the group, those of wealthy tourists and Guatemalans, and those of the Maya communities they encountered. These new perceptions made it necessary for them to re-evaluate their own activities, priorities, assumptions and intentions within the project, as well as within the broader context of their lives in Canada. In doing so, the experience in Guatemala both altered and expanded their worldview.

Several circumstances were particularly significant in generating the sense of conflict or dilemma. The first of these was the style of the group's accommodation in Guatemala. By the end of the tour, many of the students acutely perceived a blatant contradiction between the philosophy that guided the program's activities and their own traveling conditions in affluent hotels, private buses and exclusive dining establishments. The power of this contradiction was exacerbated by the abject poverty and adverse living conditions that surrounded the group at all times during the journey. This inequity was magnified upon their return to the relative luxury of their own community. More than any

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2 The value systems most commonly identified by the students for affluent Guatemalans or North Americans included materialism, competition and individualism. Conversely, the value systems they associated with the Maya communities included communal sharing of wealth, community mindedness, cooperation, spiritual and physical interdependence, and friendliness.
other aspect of the tour, this new understanding unequivocally revealed to the students their
place on the spectrum of poverty and wealth on the planet. In fact, dealing with the
implications of different standards of living in the "First" and "Third World" became the
central orientation in the students' discourse throughout much of the journey and
particularly when they returned home.

The students also began to draw connections between their own behaviour and their
interactions with Guatemalans. Events like the shopping spree in Chichicastenango created
associations between their actions with those of other wealthy patrons that frequented this
region of Guatemala. This perception added to their larger sense of disillusionment. A host
of revelations at the orphanage added to their confusion. These disclosures included the
discovery that their presence at Casa Guatemala was perceived by volunteers and staff
members as a distraction more than a benefit, that their overall contribution to the welfare
of the children was of limited significance, that volunteer work was far more demanding than
they initially had realized, that the international volunteers themselves represented a
potential liability to the operation and the psychological development of the children, and
finally that the entire experience was largely for their own education. These insights caused
many of the students to reassess their preconceptions of the journey, which fed their
growing alienation from North American society.

One of the more powerful emotional conflicts, of those outlined above, was bonding
with the children at the orphanage. Interestingly, their relationships with the orphans
became problematic only when they were about to leave the Rio Dulce. It was at this point
that the students perceived possible negative consequences from the intensity of their
growing emotional attachment to the children, a feeling they believed the orphans shared.
The brevity of their stay implied that such attachment was harmful to the emotional
stability of the children. After their departure, many students commented that "bonding"
served selfish motivations and that it was "unfair" to the children. They now understood that orphans had to persevere through countless short term relationships with foreign volunteers, all of whom ended up leaving the orphanage after a brief placement at the institution. This aspect of the critical transformation of their perceptions was revealing because it changed the way many of them viewed work as a foreign volunteer. Prior to the journey volunteering was perceived as an unproblematic humanitarian gesture. In fact, this was the core of their efficacy perspective and defined the spirit of the program. As the tour drew to an end they began to observe that volunteering was a far more complex relationship. Not only was the work far more demanding, but their ultimate responsibility to the children and the community was now understood in more profound terms. In the end, the students had to wrestle with these insights as it related to their self-image and career goals. The students also reconsidered what these lessons implied about the nature of relationships between "First" and "Third World" communities. In particular, several students began to question the nature of "aid" and foreign assistance and the ideological perspectives that grew out of these relationships.

The students' dissonance in relation to their own culture made it necessary to reconcile their new beliefs and perceptions within the context of their immediate lives when they returned home. This accommodation took the form of intensified interest in three areas: a) pursuing life goals and vocational prospects that were more clearly associated with movements for social justice, b) solidifying new friendships with peers that shared their new perceptual orientations, and c) more intense criticism of the structures, norms and individuals that embodied the values they now disdained. In most cases this intense disenchantment went beyond the depth and range of transformation contemplated prior to their departure for Guatemala.

The students did not immediately comprehend or utilize all of the information in
their new meaning schemes. Indeed, weeks after they returned the students still had great
difficulty understanding the personal significance and ramifications of all they had
experienced. This suggests a "lag time" between the actual experience of events and the full
assimilation of meaning schemes into coherent perceptions. It would also suggest that while
some aspects of their experience played a very active role in shaping new perceptions in the
immediate context, other information and values were left unexplored and unarticulated.
These "dormant" understandings needed to be unravelled and validated through dialogue with
others so that they could construct a more holistic comprehension of the personal
significance of their experiences.

The implications of "blind spots" in the students' comprehension of the experience
can be interpreted in two distinct ways. First, when viewed as a deficit, shortfalls in their
understanding become a potential catalyst of intensified perceptual conflict at a later date
because the students' understanding of the experience is left in a suspended, inadequately
articulated state. This situation ultimately requires clarification through reflection at a
later period in time when recurring conflicts force the disparities in the individual's
understanding to the fore. The fact that many of the students internalized and identified with
so much of Emilio's speech on the second last day of the journey, demonstrated their desire to
reconstruct a sense of perceptual equilibrium. This dynamic was powerfully demonstrated,
again, when the students returned home and struggled to make sense of their alienation and
disdain for the values of North American society. Second, regardless of the degree of
sophistication in the students' insights, the journey to Guatemala helped form new
understandings and perspectives which can be used to fuel reflection and reflective-action in
other experiences. How these transformed perceptions are played out in the students' lives
is highly dependent on the priorities and personal preferences given to them by each
individual (Mezirow, 1991: pp.120-121), but it also reflects the degree of guidance and
structured reflection that is provided during the educational experience.

6.4 Selective Perception

Mezirow (1991: p.49) describes the role of pre-existing meaning schemes and perspectives as the, "lions at the gates of awareness," to use Goleman's terminology. As Mezirow describes, frameworks of interpretation "set us up" and focus our perceptions. Meaning schemes, "provide the basis for reducing complex inferential tasks to simple judgments" (p.50). The notion that individuals subconsciously regulate or filter their perceptual field holds particular relevance to the analysis of the students' discourse about the Casa Guatemala Project. The students' selective focus on certain issues and events indicates that preconceptions shaped their interpretation of the experience. Furthermore, this construct is useful because it explains why students often expressed different perceptions of shared events.

The students entered the program with a widely shared expectation that personal "change" would occur as a result of their experience. However, they did not approach the program with identical preconceptions of the nature of this transformation. Their differences reflected the way they understood the role of the project within their personal lives. Variations also resulted from interaction with previous participants and school staff before the tour (Chapter Four). As the journey unfolded the students frequently expressed different interpretations of commonly shared experiences. The incident which took place at the kindergarten classroom in the Maya village of San Jose Chillijuyu exemplifies this phenomenon. For Linda and Holly, Emilio's separation of the men during his speech demonstrated the chauvinism and male dominance in Guatemalan society. For Tim this same incident illuminated the internal fortitude, determination and persistent "happiness" of the Maya peasants. Tim never mentioned, and perhaps was not aware of, the gender implications
of this event.

The students' interpretation of the significance of their day at Chichicastenango is another example of selective perception. Jane and Linda's reflections on this occasion focused on the larger personal implications of their relative wealth. This was graphically demonstrated when some students flashed wads of Quetzales (Guatemalan currency) in front of street vendors in the market while bartering for the lowest possible price. They found this behaviour to be morally repulsive. Linda felt embarrassed by her actions and, in the end, stuffed her acquisitions from this buying spree in her closet at home and did not give them out. These two individuals inferred from their observations that the tourist bus culture in this town, which brought in a constant parade of rich foreigners like themselves, had warped the locals' reception and reaction to visitors and changed the traditional native market culture in Chichicastenango. While Alice shared many of Linda and Jane's sentiments she expressed the rather distinct perception that because of her fluency in Spanish she received poorer deals on things from the vendors. This brings attention to the role of ethnicity in shaping individual interpretations of experience. On the other hand, Tim molded his reflections of this event around feelings of "guilt," but only in so far as he was a very competitive bargain driver and may have gotten away with more than he should have by "cheating" the children who bartered with him. Indeed, Tim saw the event as a challenging game while on "vacation" in Guatemala.

The students focus on the juxtaposition of wealth and poverty on the Rio Dulce is another example of selective perception, but in this case it was a shared understanding. Consider for a moment how a group of bird watchers, military officers, geologists or bankers would approach a trip to Guatemala. Because the students' perceived their journey as an advocacy campaign for the orphanage, they were preoccupied with maintaining the integrity of this mission in their thoughts, deeds and interactions with other individuals.
This perception influenced the way they reacted to other tourists, interpreted their own actions, and assessed the symbolic and concrete gestures of wealth in Guatemala. That the students often stereotyped Maya peasants as the "happy poor" demonstrates the romanticized nature of their perception of these people. This belief was left largely unchallenged and "unpacked" throughout the tour, primarily because regular debriefing sessions were not built into the format of the program. These sessions would have permitted the teachers to address the ideological underpinnings of such a perspective. When they returned, their preoccupation with manifestations of affluence intensified their rejection of North American society.

The students' "premise distortion," as Mezirow (1991: p.121) describes the phenomenon, was partly a response to the researcher's role with the group. Interviews with the students provided the only organized format for them to explore issues that had been raised throughout their experience. Several students reported that they felt more inclined to reflect more intensely on the political and social nature of their actions in the researcher's presence. This relationship reinforces the notion that students would benefit from the presence of structured interview sessions which would allow them to synthesize the implications of their actions and observations. However, the role of researcher prevented a more holistic exploration of issues because of the need to avoid suggestive or leading questions in the interviews. Less restricted discourse would have opened opportunities to share and facilitate changes in the students' perceptions. By reinforcing an awareness and use of perceptual lenses and ideological analysis through debriefing sessions the students would have been able to deal with their new meaning schemes in a manner that validated their feelings of alienation within a more constructive framework.

The students in this program focused on contradictions of wealth and poverty because they were oriented by the turn of events to do so. This was the premise upon which their
involvement was predicated and was handed down to them by previous participants, teachers and community members. Likewise, they were cognizant of the experience of "changing" throughout the journey and were constantly looking for and expressing symptoms of this within their own perspectives. Therefore, while selective perception created distinct understandings of specific events for each individual, it was also a phenomenon that existed and was shared in various forms within the group of subjects as a whole. This suggests that group dynamics and dialogue played an integral role in the construction of meaning from the experience.

6.5 Group Dynamics and Dialogue in the Construction of Meaning

Prior to the journey through Guatemala, the students and teachers had not spent a significant amount of time together. This lack of familiarity shaped the group dynamics which evolved over the two weeks in Guatemala. Within the first week of the program noticeable rifts, conflicts and clusters of affiliation formed which shaped both the students' perceptions of other members in the group and the way conversation occurred throughout the journey. These affiliations were of critical significance to the learning that took place throughout the journey because the conditions present in these relationships constituted the more limited community within which conversation took place. As such, the various constellations of discussion sculpted both individual and collective explorations of meaning and the emphasis placed on the significance of various events. Mezirow (1991: pp.54-63) discusses the importance of dialogue in the construction of meaning and the development of consensus. He suggests that "consensual validation" is the primary mechanism through which individuals test out assumptions and alter their meaning schemes and perspectives. Mezirow's premise

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3 The students from Steveston were involved in several fundraising activities as a group and collectively worked on "Guatemala Week" at their school. In addition, they also participated in special trip preparation sessions that included language, history and geography instruction.
that meaning is both socially constructed and continually renegotiated is of particular relevance to this study in understanding how group dynamics shaped the students' reflective dialogue.

One of the strongest demonstrations of the impact of group dialogue on the construction of meaning emerged in the second week at the orphanage. In response to the work being done at the orphanage and during the overnight stays, one particular set of students categorized other individuals within the group as either "talkers" or "doers". This perception spread through this group, and was even reinforced and validated by the observations and comments of the teachers and the researcher. The ramifications of this perception were important. The "doers" label reinforced for these individuals that they possessed the "correct" motivations, attitudes and values and that the "others" were simply "there for themselves," participating in the tour for the purpose of a vacation and little else. Accounts of specific individuals' motivations by several of the "doers" fluctuated over time. In the end, one of the "talkers" acknowledged the notion of "missing out," because the opportunity to stay overnight at the orphanage was passed up, signifying that the "doer's" belief that the overnight visit was a special event had circulated within the group.

Emilio's speech on the road into Guatemala City is another example regarding the power of group dialogue in the construction of meaning from experience. His discussion demonstrates the influence of conversation in the development of shared comprehension and consensus. In the short term, Emilio's insights provided a means to resolve the contradictions that emerged throughout the duration of the tour. The students continued to reflect upon his thoughts during the days and weeks that followed this event. Several individuals either directly quoted or reiterated much of Emilio's appraisal when they discussed their role in Guatemala during the last interview sessions. Emilio's speech served to reaffirm their sense of purpose and efficacy. His perspective was all the more legitimate
in their perception because he was Maya. However, the strength of this consensus deteriorated quite rapidly when the group returned home. The students soon realized that their opinions were considered a minority perspective within their own community of teachers and peers. This phenomenon serves only to reinforce the need for structured mechanisms of reflective-action in the aftermath of such an experience.

Many other instances of group dialogue can be cited to demonstrate the dynamics with which perceptions were collectively woven through the content, shared metaphors and patterns of the students' speech. Seen together, they show the means through which the students' came to common understandings and perceptions of the experiences in Guatemala. When the subjects returned home, the strong sense of affiliation which emerged from their encounters and continued discourse was a critical factor in the process of their re-adjustment to life in the Richmond community. Several individuals made special note of their perception that only people who shared their experiences could begin to appreciate what they were going through during this difficult time. It was precisely this "dialogic community" that helped forge their shared sense of meaning during the experience in Guatemala, and its absence which became so problematic when they returned to Richmond.

6.6 The Need For Preparation and Debriefing Sessions

The absence of systematic preparation and debriefing sessions meant that the program did not accomplish its full potential as an educational experience for the students and their community. Several instances outlined in the earlier sections of this chapter attest to the fact that the students would have benefited from participation in formal discussions capable of validating their ideas, correcting misconceptions and enhancing the articulation of partially formed ideas. Indeed, the benefits of structured, systematic preparation and debriefing sessions are repeatedly discussed in the literature on experiential education.
(Kauffmann et al., 1992; Hutton, 1989; Sikkema & Niyekawa, 1987; Gager, 1982; Hamilton, 1980). The rationale for debriefing is directly related to individual's need for assistance in making sense of their new perspectives through dialogue with others who have shared the same, or a similar, experience. Such dialogue triggers and enhances the construction of new insights. In fact, Mezirow (1991) suggests that dialogue is the only mechanism through which meaning is developed and shared. This underscores the primary role of reflective assessment. Without organized debriefing individuals are forced to deal with unresolved meaning schemes independently or to seek their own "dialogic community". This was the situation in which many of the students in the Casa Guatemala Project found themselves upon their return to Richmond. The lack of formal debriefing also explains why so many of the students felt isolated and anxious at this point in their experience. For this reason the students turned to other members of the group for friendship and consultation.

The profound impact that conflicts, selective perception and group dialogue had on the students' understanding of the experience brings to light the inherent educational value of cross-cultural experiential programs like Casa Guatemala, but it also suggests a key role for educators. Through their direct exposure to the various situations in Guatemala, the students were able to transcend the limitations of their prior worldview. However, the alienation that the students experienced upon their return to Richmond also accentuates the need for greater consideration of preparation and debriefing sessions. Their anticipation of "change" needs to be clarified and accentuated by an understanding of the substantive and perceptual dimensions which frame a more global worldview. Case's (1993) suggestion, in this regard, is worthy of consideration. Open-mindedness, anticipation of complexity, resistance to stereotyping, inclination to empathize and nonchauvinism are normative dispositions that students need to develop so that they are capable of interpreting the significance of events in a cross-cultural experience. Furthermore, debriefings need to
accentuate the reapplication of these "lenses" so that the students avoid rationalization and distortion of the meaning of their experiences. The students' ability to more fully comprehend their experience within a global perspective requires that the students be exposed to ideological constructs that would be useful in analyzing the significance and meaning of particular events. Without nurturing an informed ideological understanding, students are left to interpret their experience using meaning schemes and perspectives that often lead to unsuitable or distorted perceptions. Educators need to identify such distortions so that implicit and unarticulated beliefs are exposed and reconstructed. Debriefing should also take into consideration the students' need for reflective-action, the utilization of new perceptions in order to validate their changed assumptions about the world. This can be done through applied actions within their own community so that alienation can itself be transformed into a positive and constructive discourse with their peers, teachers, parents and employers. By recognizing the validity of the students' dissonance, it can be used to extend the parameters of their critical discourse in the community at large and magnify the educational value of their experience to a greater number of people.

Educational preparation and debriefing sessions could be established for the group during three phases of the program: a) a self-assessment weekend prior to the journey, b) daily debriefing sessions during the tour, and c) a re-orientation retreat after the students return to their own community. The self-assessment weekend should be held immediately

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4 This refers to Case's (1993; pp.319-320) elaboration on the substantive dimension of a global perspective. This includes: a) universal and cultural values and practices, b) global interconnections, c) present worldwide concerns and conditions, and d) origins and past patterns of worldwide affairs. For other elaborations on the substantive dimensions of global education see Hanvey (1982) and Kniep (1986).

5 An example of this validation and extension of the learning experience is found in the follow-up to the 1993 Casa Guatemala Project. Bruce Seney confirmed in the spring of 1994 that three of the students continued to promote the program through slide shows and presentations at other schools and community forums.
after the students are selected for the program and would serve three major purposes.\footnote{The self-assessment weekend could, similarly, be used for student selection purposes. Each school could send candidates to the weekend with the understanding that the best possible team of students would be selected on the basis of a pre-established ranking system. A ranked waiting list could, likewise, be established for the tour should vacancies come open.} First, this weekend should be used to teach students the principals of reflective thought so that these can be utilized from the very onset of their involvement. Self-assessment sessions would include the students' self-evaluation of their motivations for becoming involved in the project, the use of journals to help articulate reflective ideas, as well as setting personal objectives for the tour. These personal objectives could also be expanded on in reference to the students' longer term goals in life. Second, personal objectives should be linked to the creation of group goals which includes the establishment of a collective sense of purpose for the project. Here, the students should be involved in as many facets of the decision-making process as possible so that their ownership of the program is fostered and an activist orientation is given concrete modes of expression. This might include creating proposals for fundraising goals and activities, school and community education programs, and a publicity or media campaign for the duration of the project. The weekend of activities would also serve to establish the rules and norms of group discourse for the remainder of the program. Third, preparation sessions might include a variety of educational activities which emphasize both the substantive and perceptual issues that will enhance their understanding of the experience. Of particular importance would be training in cross-cultural differences in norms of behaviour and social interaction. The students could also be involved in sessions which look at topical information such as current political issues surrounding the host country, cultural and economic geography of the regions they are visiting, and comparative demographic information. Background information sessions might involve presentations and discussions with individuals who have recently immigrated from
the host country.

While on tour the group should engage in daily debriefing sessions to clarify and extend the learning taking place from the experience. It is at this point that teachers can play a pivotal role by exploring the students' immediate interpretations of the events they have witnessed, addressing their concerns or misconceptions as they arise, and providing different focuses for group discussions. During these sessions alternative explanations of events can be drawn out by utilizing tools such as Case's (1993) perceptual lenses, revisiting previous observations to compare and contrast with new situations, and drawing out connections from specific instances to broader issues and generalizations. Establishing a routine of daily debriefing sessions can help to sharpen the students' critical awareness of the issues brought to mind by exposure to different and often deeply disturbing cultural contexts. At the very least, debriefing sessions provide a format for articulating, validating and refining the students' understanding of their experiences.

A re-orientation retreat should take place within two months of the students' return to their community. Bringing the group back together at this point serves several purposes. In the first instance the students should be given the opportunity to challenge or defend the validity of the learning that has taken place throughout the experience in focused discussion sessions. Teachers should act in a facilitative manner by centering the students' discourse around important themes from talks during the tour. Past participants from the program might also serve as appropriate leaders for these sessions, acting to reinforce the students' reflections. Second, the students should be given the opportunity to discuss and identify frustrations that they might be experiencing as a result of re-immersion into their home environment. The intent here should not be to downplay or dismiss their sense of alienation, but instead to legitimate such feelings through sessions which draw out connections to other groups or issues that directly relate to their conflicts. It is at this point that the students
should be exposed to a variety of print and multi-media resources that will assist them in extending their knowledge and establishing stronger generalizations from the experience. Third, the group should explore strategies that will allow them to apply their experience and desire for activism within the community. In the end, the re-orientation sessions should bring the students' experience with the program to a state of closure so that they are able to envisage the integration of their new perspectives and understandings into future goals and vocations.

6.7 Implications For Experiential Learning

Attempts to validate and explore the claims about student learning in experiential programs have historically been based on quantitative tests (Conrad, 1991). Seldom has research methodology taken into consideration the students' own perceptions of how they negotiate their experience within these programs. By focusing on the dialogue of the six students in this study it was possible to construct a picture of the events and changes, grounded in an analysis of their perspectives. The analysis revealed that they perceived their involvement as a transformative experience, not only in terms of their knowledge of Guatemala, but their perceptions of their own society and lives as well.

The complexity of the students' learning experience also suggests that experiential education cannot and should not be defined as a process, series or sequence of rigidly defined stages that individuals must pass through in order to arrive at the desired learning outcomes. From this study, it would appear that cross-cultural experiential learning is a response to the three crucial dynamics that are set in motion for each individual by the events of a given program. These dynamics include conflict and dilemma in dealing with prior understandings, selective perception of events and shared dialogue in the construction of meaning. However, it should be stressed that many crucial learning events cannot be
anticipated. Hence, the specific qualities of these dynamics in various learning situations are of great significance in determining what is experienced in a given program. Future research could confirm, clarify and extend our understanding of these dynamics as they exist within different programs and amongst a wider variety of research populations. Continued research and program development in experiential learning would be better informed if educators developed and incorporated a knowledge of these dynamics within preparation and debriefing sessions.

The findings of this study went beyond the information generated by batteries of pencil and paper tests to identify the interpersonal and communicative dynamics that drive learning in this kind of program. To date, the application of quantitative methodology in experiential education has largely been used to provide a "snapshot" of specific learning outcomes determined for the students. Treatments are structured to maximize and control these learning outcomes and often observe manifestations of specific isolated variables. In so doing, the students' learning is not understood as a holistic interactive phenomenon. When the focus of research methodology is on the students perceptions and negotiation of the experience, the findings illuminate not only a wealth of information about the substantive and perceptual dimensions of learning, but also the social dynamics that shape it.

The findings of this study also bring into question the value of using quasi-experimental methods to reveal the distinctive qualities of experiential learning. Using traditional classroom instruction as a control setting to compare knowledge acquisition or normative changes in community or international experience is contrasting two different social and interactive means of coming to understand the world. Classroom instruction cannot be expected to reproduce the real contexts needed to transform meaning schemes and perspectives in the fashion demonstrated by this study of the students' experience with the Casa Guatemala Project. This in not to suggest that classroom instruction is incapable of
creating some degree of perspective transformation. However, the power of direct experience within a cross-cultural program like Casa Guatemala cannot be entirely simulated in the classroom, nor should it be expected to.

It would appear from the findings of this study that the students' ability to construct a more sophisticated worldview was based, in the first order, on their exposure to contexts that allowed them to internalize information that contrasted and conflicted with their previous understandings. It was only through their attempts to rectify these personal dilemmas and shortfalls in their previous understanding that the students were able to come to know their universe in a more complex manner. A great bulk of the literature in citizenship education in particular, deals with student alienation as if individuals suffered from a deficit of comprehension and appreciation for democratic principles. When viewed from the dynamics of Mezirow's (1991) theory of transformative learning and from the findings made in this study, alienation, conflict and dilemma are integral parts of the learning process, for it is through the resolution of personal crisis that individuals come to a deeper understanding and new perspectives regarding the issues which surround their lives. Indeed, it is one of the more influential ways that they can explore their personal connection to these issues. If parents, educators and governments in North America are truly interested in methods to substantially transform students' global perspectives, then pursuing the continued development and implementation of experiential programs like the Casa Guatemala Project is an appropriate focus of energy and resources.
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APPENDIX A

SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

INTERVIEW SESSION ONE; (December, 1992 - January, 1993)

A. Demographic Questions:
1. First of all, I would like to ask you a few questions about your background:
   - Have you always lived in Richmond?
   - Where else have you lived?
   - Do you like living in Richmond? Why or why not?
2. What grade are you in?
   - What are your favourite subjects/least favourite subjects?
   - What are your overall grades like?
3. Have you ever received any awards or special recognition for academic/athletic
   achievements or other things you have been involved in?
4. What kind of activities have you been involved in at your high school? (probe)
5. Are you involved in any clubs or programs outside of the school? What?
6. What do your parents do?

B. Career Interests:
7. What would you like to do after you finish high school?
8. What are your career or future goals? What other things do you see yourself
doing throughout your life?

C. Past Travel Experience:
9. Have you traveled to many places in B.C.? Canada? Elsewhere?
   - What things do you remember most about these places?

D. Casa Guatemala Context:
10. Where did you hear about the Casa Guatemala Project?
11. Why did you choose to get involved?
12. Can you describe in detail the process which lead to your decision to apply for
    the project?
13. What have people said about your decision to apply for the project?
14. How are you financing your involvement in the program?
15. Why do you think this project has been created?
16. Can you tell me what you know about the history of the program?
17. How is your school involved in the Casa Guatemala Project?
18. Have you discussed the project with any of the past participants?
   - What did they say?
19. Have you ever been involved in activities or programs that are similar to the
    Casa Guatemala Project?
   - Could you make any comparisons about the projects?
20. What personal qualities do you see yourself bringing to this years group of
    participants?
21. Could you tell me what you know about Guatemala?

E. World Issues:
22. If you could rate the state of the world from one to five, with one being terrible and five being excellent, what grade would you give it? Why?
23. Are there specific world issues you feel need more attention? What do you feel should be done about these issues? What do you feel is being done about these issues? Who is responsible for dealing with these issues?
24. How would you rate Canada on a scale of one to five? Why? (repeat subquestions in question #23)
25. How would you rate Richmond or Vancouver on a scale of one to five? Why? (repeat subquestions in question #23)

INTERVIEW SESSION #2: (February, 1993)

A. Casa Guatemala Program and Anticipated Outcomes:
1. What are you thinking about the Casa Guatemala program these days?
2. Are there other things you think you should know about before the trip?
3. If you look back know, what motivated your decision to get involved in the program?
4. What kind of things do you anticipate seeing and doing on the trip?
5. What do you think the purpose of this program is?
6. What kind of students are suited for involvement in this program?
7. What kind of students are not suited for involvement?
8. Is it a program that everyone should be involved in...why or why not?
9. How do you see yourself fitting into this continuum of "suited" and "not suited" which you have just described for me?
10. How does the Casa Guatemala compare to other school trips abroad?

B. Changing Perceptions and Knowledge of Guatemala:
11. Have you learned anything more about Guatemala since we last met? How? What? When? Where? Who?
12. Do you think others in the program or in your school have learned anything more about Guatemala?
13. What does this program do for the people in Guatemala?
14. Could you explain your answer in detail?
15. Can you tell me what you know about the orphanages you will be visiting?

C. Reflections on Journals:
16. Have you been keeping a journal on your experiences with Casa Guatemala?
17. Describe some of the thoughts, concerns or highlights you have expressed in your journal?
18. Could you read one of your entries for me?

D. Self Concept and Political Efficacy:
19. If you were asked to write an autobiography of yourself; what kind of personal characteristics would stand out for the reader of the book?
20. What would be some of the thoughts and feelings you would express about the society you live in?
21. If the publisher asked you to write a chapter on your experiences with the Casa Guatemala program; how would you fit it into the overall story of your life?
22. In the biography which someone will write about you 50 years from now, what will come out as major themes by age 25? By age 50?
23. Describe any connections you see between your involvement in the Casa Guatemala program and your life outside the program for me.
24. Can you see yourself participating in projects similar to Casa Guatemala in the future? What? When? Why?

E. Mental Maps of Past and Future Travel:
25. Explain your map to me.
26. Describe your reasons for selecting these countries as the ones you would like to visit.
27. Describe your reasons for selecting these countries as the ones you would not like to visit.
28. What does this map tell me about you?

INTERVIEW SESSION #4: (April, 1993)

A. Perceptions of the Orphanage and Guatemala:
1. Now that you have had some time back from the trip, what are some of your clearest memories of what you experienced in Guatemala?
2. What thoughts do you have about:
   a) Antigua and Chichicastenago
   b) San Jose Chillijuyu
   c) Tikal and the Camino Real
   d) Guatemala City
   e) Livingston and the Rio Dulce
   f) the orphanage
   h) others?

B. Analysis of the Program:
3. How would you describe the role of the Casa Guatemala Program for Richmond students in light of your experiences?
4. What is the role of the program at the orphanage/in Guatemala?
5. What suggestions do you have for next year's program?

C. Group Dynamics:
6. What are your thoughts and reflections concerning this year's group of participants in the program?
7. How would you assess the roles that different people played on the trip and at the
orphanage? What about the teachers/myself?

D. Richmond and Canada:
8. Have you entertained any thoughts and reflections about your own community and lifestyle since we returned? Could you explain some of these?
9. What comparisons would you make about Guatemalan and Canadian society?

E. Future Goals/Political Efficacy/Self Concept:
10. Many people have commented that this program has "changed" them. Is this true for you? In what ways?
11. How will your experiences with this program shape your life in the next few years?
12. What did this experience teach you about yourself?
13. What are the biggest lessons that you will take from this trip?

F. Journals:
14. Are there any highlights from your journal that are particularly important to you in terms of expressing the impact this trip has had on you? Could you share this with me?
15. Are there other passages that you think reveal important points of reflection or details about the trip?
September 15, 1992

To: Students considering participating in "Student Perceptions and the Casa Guatemala Project" and their parents/guardians

This letter requests your permission for______________________________ to participate in this research project. The purpose of the project is to investigate what students learn about 1) themselves, and 2) the process of social change through their participation in the Casa Guatemala Project. Six students will be chosen to discuss their involvement with and reflections on the program in interviews staged a four different intervals from September 1992 to April 1993. The discussions will be audio-taped, and the tapes will be transcribed for research purposes. Notes on informal discussions, reviews of students journals and general observations of the participants will be made through the duration of the research as well. Strict confidentiality will be maintained in regards to these discussions, journals and observations: tapes, transcripts and notes will contain no names.

Participation in this project/research is entirely voluntary. A student or parent may refuse or withdraw consent at any time, including after the interviews and observations have begun. As well, students will be guaranteed the opportunity to withhold portions of their journal or the journal in its entirety from the researcher. No materials will be used from students who withdraw permission. There will be no consequences in terms of class standings for participating or withdrawing from the research project at any time. No monetary compensations will follow involvement in this research. The maximum amount of time involved in the interviews will be six hours. The research will be carried out by Mr. Jeff Stewart, a candidate for the degree of Masters of Arts in Education, and the data used towards his thesis. If you have any questions about the research, he is available at 822-6647. You may also contact Dr. Peter Seixas (U.B.C. Faculty Advisor) at 822-5277.

Sincerely,

Jeff T. Stewart