Teacher Perspectives on Community Engagement in an International School Context

by

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Abstract

This qualitative case study explores teacher perspectives on community engagement efforts at the International School of Dakar (ISD) in Dakar, Senegal. It examines how teachers define meaningful and reciprocal community engagement, as well as barriers to engagement and proposed solutions. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with six teachers, two from each of the elementary, middle and high school departments at the International School of Dakar. During the interviews, participants discussed their experiences with community engagement at ISD, defined meaningful and reciprocal community engagement, identified challenges, as well as posed ideas for improvements. The interview findings were triangulated with analysis of IBO and school policy documents, as well as a researcher reflective journal. Findings were analysed within a postcolonial theoretical framework.

The research revealed that teachers defined meaningful and reciprocal community engagement as engagement that is long-lasting, mutually beneficial, and that results in student learning. Teachers largely defined community engagement as synonymous with community service. The service model they described is consistent with a traditional service-learning model. Teachers perceived the school's community engagement efforts as largely lacking, identifying personal, professional and socio-economic barriers to engagement. They proposed solutions that involved educating teachers, fostering long-term partnerships and soliciting the expertise of the Senegalese staff members at the school. The case study also revealed that teachers were largely unsure or unaware of existing programs and resources available, as well as their own responsibilities with regards to community engagement. This case study advocates for a critical service-learning model at the International School of Dakar.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Rationale of the Study

My interest in the topic of community engagement in an international school context is the result of my six years of teaching experience in international schools in Egypt and Senegal. In both countries, international schools serve a very specific socio-economically privileged population, often children of diplomats, international organizations, and local political and economic elite. Especially in the Global South (defined later in this chapter), these international schools stand in contrast to the public system of education in terms of curriculum, class sizes, resources, teaching staff, reputation and access to technology. I have enjoyed my teaching positions and students, but over time I have realized that my classroom existed in what felt like a different world. I began to see how from my perspective at least, this different world did not seem to intersect with the world outside the school walls. I began to think about my own role in separating these two worlds of the international school and local community.

As international schools continue to proliferate, so has the body of critical literature. I was inspired by research undertaken by Tanu (2016) on the ways in which socio-economic privilege turns the international school environment into an imagined community, which "relegates the host country to the background of a temporary life overseas" (p. 429). I am living this "temporary life" in Senegal, and I wondered how expatriate teachers conceptualize their place here. I often think about my role in perpetuating inequality, and I wondered if other teachers feel the same way.

I notice that our school employs a discourse of international mindedness and stresses the importance of community, but our students have limited interactions with students in local schools, with the exception of occasional sports games and service-learning projects. I recognize

that this status quo is problematic. In the context of this case study, I define reciprocal community engagement as a model in which international school community engages with the Senegalese community as equals and partners, and not the patron-beneficiary relationship that typically characterises student volunteerism. I define meaningful community engagement as a model that allows for more sustained relationships between school and community, responds to community needs as voiced by the community, and asks all participants to reflect critically on the structures of power that exist and their place within them (Larsen, 2015; Stanlick and Sell, 2016).

I understand how, to a certain extent, as a teacher I might take an active role in facilitating these more meaningful and reciprocal interactions, yet I cannot say that I do. Teachers are mandated to coach, facilitate activities, often organize and lead service-learning projects. They also have the ability to invite others to the school for educational purposes, yet the bubble of the international school community seems to persist. Do other international school teachers see this as problematic as well? This is becoming an area of conversation at our school, and our Service-Learning Coordinator recently conducted a survey on middle and high school teacher opinions on the high school's service-learning program. This case study examines how teachers conceptualize community engagement, and the barriers they identify.

Theoretical Framework

This study is grounded in a postcolonial theoretical framework. In the particular context of international schools in the Global South, postcolonial perspectives locate the research questions of this study within a broader context, and establish the significance of the findings in relation to global structures of power. Postcolonial analysis exposes and examines inherited power relations, and their continuing effects on modern global culture and politics (Ashcroft,

Griffiths and Tiffin, 2007). Postcolonial perspectives focus on issues of globalization, hybrid cultures, and transnationalisation, all of which are immediately relevant in an international school context (Mercadal, 2014). More specifically within an African context, Wa Thiong'o (1986) argued that the imperialist tradition in Africa is today maintained by both an international and African neo-colonial bourgeoisie, and is in part enforced by "a corpus of state intellectuals, the academic and journalistic laureates of the neo-colonial establishment" (p. 2). A significant analysis of international education through post-colonial perspectives exists, and will be explored in more depth in the literature review.

This theoretical framework informed my reflective journal entries, my analysis of the data gleaned from interviews with teachers at the International School of Dakar and my analysis of relevant curriculum and policy documents.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was twofold: to explore how international school teachers in Dakar, Senegal conceptualize the interactions between the international school community and the wider Senegalese community, and to identify barriers to meaningful and reciprocal engagement. Because this study focused on the practical experiences of teachers as gatekeepers, the hope is that these same international school teachers, school boards and administrators can begin to address barriers, and to consider building programs that might burst the international school bubble. This study focused primarily on the opinions and experiences of international school teachers, supported by relevant International Baccalaureate Organization (IBO) and school policy documents related to service-learning and community engagement.

Research Questions

This research study explored the attitudes of teachers at an international school toward community engagement, specifically with regards to how international school students interact with the local Senegalese community. It sought to answer the following research questions:

1. How do international school teachers in Dakar, Senegal conceptualize the engagement between the international school community and the broader host nation community?

2. How do teachers define meaningful and reciprocal engagement between the international school community and the host nation community?

3. What barriers do international school teachers in Dakar, Senegal see to meaningful and reciprocal engagement between the international school community and host nation community?

4. What solutions do teachers propose to establish such meaningful engagement?

Definition of Terms

The following terms are operationally defined in the context of case study in order for the reader to fully understand the nature of the case study and the review of the literature.

Community Engagement*:* For the purpose of this case study, community engagement is defined as all activities in which international school students, staff and teachers interact with non-international school members of the host nation community. This can include field trips, guests to campus, athletic events, service-learning opportunities, as well as other types of interactions.

Creativity, Activity, Service (CAS) Program: CAS is a core component of the IB Diploma Program for students in grades eleven and twelve. It consists of three elements: creativity, activity and service. CAS defines service as: "collaborative and reciprocal engagement with the community in response to an authentic need" (International Baccalaureate

Organization, 2015b, p. 20). Students must complete the CAS program as a graduation requirement.

Expatriate Teacher: A teacher who is hired by international schools and is not native to the host country in which the international school is located.

Global South: Robertson and Komljenovic (2016) reviewed the different definitions of the Global South, and summarized the definitions as, principally, the large number of territorially-located countries in Africa, Central and South America, and Asia, who face major economic and other development challenges. It is defined as a relational concept based on level of development. Robertson and Komljenovic (2016) listed 160 states included in the Global South, however, they argue that "we might see a Global North in the geographic Global South; for example, the gated communities and exclusive education aimed at local and international political and economic elites in countries such as Nigeria, South Africa or Brazil" (p. 595). It is common to find international schools within these gated communities.

International Baccalaureate Organization (IBO) or International Baccalaureate (IB): The International Baccalaureate Organization program is a prominent curriculum in the international school system built around a discourse that incorporates academic rigour, student identity and international mindedness. As described by the IBO, the "aim [is] to do more than other curricula by developing inquiring, knowledgeable and caring young people who are motivated to succeed. [They] strive to develop students who will build a better world through intercultural understanding and respect" (International Baccalaureate Organization, "Why is the IB different?" para. 1). There are currently ninety-eight IBO schools on the continent of Africa in twenty-nine countries. These schools are almost universally private institutions; the only two

state-sponsored IB World schools in Africa are in Egypt (International Baccalaureate

Organization, 2018).

International School: The term "international school" encompasses a huge diversity of

institutions and practices. As Pearce (2013) identified, it is difficult to create a general definition

of international schools, but "Whether teaching in English in a non-English speaking

environment, not following the local system, or founded as either a market alternative to local

schools or from global idealism, they are always anomalous" (p. 2). Hayden and Thompson

(2013) identified three categories of international school. Type "A" schools cater to expatriate

families for whom the local education system is not considered suitable. Type "B" are

international schools that were established on an ideological basis, often to promote global peace

and understanding. Type "C" schools cater principally to host country nationals who are

members of the social and economic elite and seek a Western education unavailable in the

national education system.

Host Nation: The country in which the international school is located.

Primary Years Program (PYP): The IBO's curriculum for elementary age students (to

grade five).

Service as Action (SA): The community service component of the Middle Years

Program of the International Baccalaureate.

Service-Learning: As described by Lillo (2016), service-learning is a form of pedagogy

in which students become involved directly in communities and then critically reflect on the link

between their experience in the community and their academic course content**.**

Design and Methods

I conducted a qualitative case study in order to explore my research questions. As described by Baxter and Jack (2008), case studies enable the researcher to answer "how" and "why" type questions, while taking into consideration how a phenomenon is influenced by the context within which it is situated (p. 556). I selected a case study methodology for this study in order to answer the questions about *how* international school teachers conceptualize community engagement. I also sought to explore the contextual factors that contribute to the phenomenon of community engagement in international schools, specifically as they relate to barriers to creating meaningful engagement with the broader Senegalese community. I conducted semi-structured interviews with six teachers across the elementary, middle and secondary school faculties. I examined relevant school and curriculum policy documents along with survey data collected by the International School of Dakar. Finally, I wrote a reflective journal during the data collection process to capture my insights, to uncover meaning and to identify connections between data sources and the literature (Blake, 2005).

Significance of the Study

Previous research on the topic of community engagement in international schools has examined the problematic nature of community service-learning programs at international schools (Vaccaro, 2011; Martin and Griffiths, 2013; Stoecker and Tryon, 2009; Wasner, 2016). Lillo (2016) studied how teachers evaluated current community engagement efforts at three international schools in Africa. This study is significant because it bridges the gap between these bodies of research by asking teachers how they conceptualize community engagement efforts, and specifically how they define meaningful and reciprocal engagement. This study focused on teachers' perspectives, recognizing that teachers have an important role as gatekeepers in the school community, responsible for supporting and supervising student projects, organizing field

trips outside the school gates, and running after school programming. Therefore, this study posits that how teachers conceptualize meaningful and reciprocal engagement will have an impact on the type of programming they deliver and the extent to which their programming challenges the socio-economic hierarchy and colonial legacy.

Limitations

1. Four of the six teachers interviewed identified as fluent French speakers. Senegal's official language is French, so their interactions with the Senegalese community are likely different than the English-only speaking teachers.

2. No Senegalese or locally-hired teachers volunteered to participate in this case study. ISD employs Senegalese teaching staff and locally-hired teachers who have been employees at ISD for longer than the majority of the expatriate teaching staff. Their perspectives on community engagement likely differ from those of the expatriate teaching staff.

3. The researcher sent the email soliciting volunteers for the case study during the school's summer vacation. As a result, few teachers responded and the researcher did not have a large pool from which to choose a diverse sample of participants.

4. The findings of this study are limited to the experiences of the participants and may not necessarily be applicable to other expatriate teachers in IBO schools in the Global South.

Summary

This case study sought to examine teacher perspectives on community engagement in an international school context. It employed a postcolonial theoretical framework in order to situate the study in a broader international context. The case study, based at the International School of Dakar, explored the way international school teachers conceptualize their engagement with the host community, and identified barriers to meaningful and reciprocal engagement.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

The literature review forms the basis of my methodology and research questions. Literature was chosen to establish the context for the study, as well as to examine the central phenomenon of the study—namely international schools in the Global South, and their engagement with their host nation communities. The literature review was not restricted to international schools in West Africa, where my study is based, as there is limited literature on this subject. Where possible, literature is based on research conducted in international schools in the Global South.

The literature review is divided into seven key themes, some of which are divided into sub-themes. These seven themes relate directly to the research questions outlined previously. The themes establish the context of the study, and include:

1. Who are International School teachers?

2. Who are International School students?

3. International Schools in the Global South

4. International Schools as "cultural bubbles"

5. Postcolonial perspectives on international schools

6. Community service-learning

7. Barriers to engagement between international school students and host nation students

Who are International School Teachers?

In addition to fulfilling their regular teaching duties, teachers are often the individuals who run curricular and extracurricular programs for students. They serve as coaches, leaders and

guides, and often supervise and coordinate service-learning projects with students. It is therefore important to examine who these teachers are, and the nature of their employment.

As Gaskell (2016) found in his global survey of international schools, there were approximately 402,000 international school teachers worldwide in 2016. This number is expected to double to about 780,000 by 2026, just as international schools are expected to continue to proliferate. The demographics of international teachers were outlined by Bunnell (2017) who defined teachers as "middling actors" (p.194). He identified eighty-five percent of expatriate teachers as Caucasian. In terms of the length of their employment, sixteen per cent were employed for one year, forty-five per cent for two to five years, and twenty per cent for more than ten years. He continued to outline how forty-eight per cent had "single" marital-status; and seventy-two percent were under the age of forty, with almost one-third in their twenties. Bunnell (2017) concluded that international school teachers were relatively young and therefore largely inexperienced, and tended to stay at a particular school for a limited period of time.

Bunnell (2017) outlined that international school teachers are not often native to the host country. Hayden (2006) identified that there is often a discursive desire for international schools to employ a more culturally diverse teaching staff, but that this is not always realized due to parent desire for native English speakers. However, Hayden and Thompson (2007) argued that it is no longer possible to generalize about teaching populations consisting largely of "overseas-hire," or expatriate, teachers as this no longer applies to all schools. They further explained that there is a growing number of teachers in host nations who develop expertise in international programs such as the IB. That said, although host nation and expatriate teachers may have equal levels of experience in a particular program, parents may pressure school boards to hire foreign

native English speakers due to the perceived prestige of children being educated by expatriate teachers (Hayden and Thompson, 2007).

Burke (2017) similarly identified expatriate teachers as "a means by which global insights are brought into the local environment" which can "cast a deficit lens on the student's country of origin that is constantly being compared with opportunities and potentials available elsewhere" (p. 220). Hayden (2006) also noted that host country national teachers are often on contracts different than expatriate teachers with fewer benefits, and therefore they may appear to be less valued than their expatriate colleagues.

Researchers have made only a few attempts to classify international school teachers. Although Hayden (2006) identified that it is difficult to generalize, he referenced research by Hardman (2001) that categorized overseas teachers applying for posts in international schools as follows: childless career professionals; mavericks ("free and independent spirits"); career professionals with families; senior career professionals; senior mavericks; and senior "Penelopes" ("faithful to the country they had adopted") (Hardman, 2001, p. 131-132). Bailey's (2015) study of expatriate teachers in Malaysia challenged these classifications, and found that a teacher's professional identity is more complex than these categories, and is constantly evolving. According to Bailey (2015), a teacher's identity changes in relation to "their view on the skills required for teaching; to their current, past and expected future roles and the pressures they experience within them; to their relationships with their colleagues; and to their view of their current institution, and its systems for curriculum and assessment" (p. 5).

However, in their study of Canadian teachers in the Global South, Tarc and Mishra Tarc (2015) defined international educators as an "outward-oriented group of professionals from middle-class backgrounds who see themselves as citizens of the world" (p. 41). They identified

the complex and challenging social relations these teachers occupy as "in-betweens" (p. 41).

Tarc and Mishra Tarc (2015) surveyed international school teachers who identified sentiments of

discomfort between the elite users (families) of international education and the local host country

workers at the school, writing that "They often find themselves literally 'in the middle' of an

array of historical and political forces and unfamiliar social formations" (p. 44-45). They

identified that many teachers felt unprepared for the complex social and class dynamics they

confront "when forced to negotiate competing interests and demands of local service workers,

guards, drivers, children and parents from elite families of many different nationalities and

educational systems, elite school administrators and school board members" (p. 45). Tarc and

Mishra Tarc (2015) found that this place as a middling actor led to teachers' greater

understanding of the dynamics of race, gender and social class within the host nation.

In her critical study of the "cultural bubble" of international schools, Ledger (2016)

identified that international teachers have been accused of perpetuating the isolation of

international schools, and that international school teachers also exhibit the phenomenon of

"expat-mindedness" (p. 29). In her qualitative ethnographic study of twelve international school

teachers, Roskell (2013) explored how this might have come to be: international school teachers

experienced culture shock and felt distanced from the local community. She noted that it was not

necessary to learn the local language in their daily lives, as host nation staff and many locals

spoke some English. In order to protect themselves from the stress of culture shock, teachers

formed strong, exclusive relationships with others of their same culture or nationality. She found

that these teachers were strongly critical of the host nation while tending to idealize aspects of

their home country.

In contrast, Burke (2017) looked at the role of expatriate teachers in relation to processes of colonisation, and argued that the expatriate teacher can be characterized as an "agentic and powerful force for change, facilitating forms of education that acknowledge past and present effects of colonisation in a more fulsome treatment of the teacher's role as an educator" and not just an "impotent instrument of the system" (p. 214). Burke (2017) emphasized that teacher understanding that "various endeavours have shaped and continue to shape the contemporary educational context is fundamentally important if the expatriate teacher is to resist present and future oppressions" (p. 217).

Who are International School Students?

If international school teachers are "middling actors" with the ability to connect students to the wider host nation community, it is important to understand the demographics of the student population (Bunnell, 2017, p.194). Hayden and Thompson (2013) identified that there is indeed some variation within the student populations of international schools, but overwhelmingly the students are children of the economic and political elite, both local and foreign. Bunnell (2014) and Brown and Lauder (2011) asserted that they are "the preserve of the wealthiest strata on the globe" (Brown and Lauder, 2011, p. 43). This economic privilege sets them apart from the majority of students in the host nation.

The type of student largely depends on the type of international school. According to Hayden and Thompson (2013), there are three types of international schools. As described in Chapter 1, Type "A" international schools consist largely of students who are children of globally mobile expatriate families for whom the local education system is not considered appropriate. Hayden and Thompson (2013) add that these students experience constant mobility and thus often have a difficult time building and maintaining attachments with the host

community. Useem and Downie (1976) were the first to identify and define the category of Third Culture Kids (TCKs), a category of children who, among other traits, live abroad with their parents, are exposed to a wide diversity of cultural and educational influences, are internationally oriented, and experience feelings different from their peers when they return to their home country.

Langford (2012) explored the nature of TCKs, and how international schools expose students to the multiple cultures of their peers. Her survey of research identified distinguishing traits of these TCKs including "approach to relationships," "linguistic ability," "flexibility," "cultural awareness," "tolerance" and their "worldview" and identified that they are open-minded, more open to community, often from highly-motivated families, and more adept at interpersonal relations (p. 37). Lijadi and van Schalkwyk's (2018) qualitative study of former students of international schools identified some of the challenges faced by this population, namely differences in academic calendar, curriculum, and language of instruction. Most importantly, they experience "a lack of rootedness" in the local culture, feelings of displacement, rejection, and unease during the first few months in a new international school (p. 50).

However, Type A international schools populated by TCKs are now in the minority. As Brummit and Keeling (2013) highlighted, eighty percent of the clientele of international schools are now local/national children, not expatriate students. These students attend what are defined by Hayden and Thompson (2013) as type "C" schools, which are usually for-profit and populated by the wealthiest host nationals. Emenike and Plowright (2017) explored the identity of the students indigenous to the host nation that attend international schools, and coined the term "Third Culture Indigenous Kids" (TCIKs). They form a third culture as they navigate between the different cultural expectations of their schools and their indigenous communities.

This study focused on students attending international schools in Nigeria. The students underwent what the authors called a process of "Western acculturation," but remained conflicted and identified feelings of ''not belonging" and "contrived belonging" (p. 11). The authors found that most students appeared to view their indigenous cultures as inferior to Western cultures, and to feel that their Western cultural dispositions gave them a superior social status relative to the local culture. In their study of the experiences of TCKs, Lijadi and van Schalkwyk (2018) summarized that this rise in local students attending international schools is likely attributed to wealth building in the host countries.

It is important to note that this case study focuses on a Type A international school, which has only a small population of local Senegalese national students. This is not necessarily the case in other countries in the Global South.

International Schools in the Global South

Hayden and Thompson (2007) presented evidence that an international education is becoming more popular in the developing world. However, this is not necessarily the case in Africa. Bunnell (2016) identified a dearth of international schools located in Africa. Those that do exist stand in stark contrast to the local education systems and are often Type A schools populated with TCKs, like those studied by Lillo (2016) in Kenya, Ethiopia and South Africa.

Gardner-McTaggart (2016) identified a unique dynamic present within International Schools in the Global South. Schools are seen to be able to confer social, cultural and economic capital. Schools that deliver the IB program in Africa often have high tuition costs, therefore provide private schooling predominantly for the elite. Gardner-McTaggart (2016) identified the implications, primarily that, "For the elite, this means a shift from national-based cultural capital towards an international conception of cultural capital" (p. 23). However, he argued that the IBO

does not explicitly seek to replicate oppressive ontologies or epistemologies, and that there is no discernable "hidden agenda" (p. 24). He argued that the IBO is simply highly developed product with high market value in the Global South.

Similarly, in the introduction to the special issue of *Oxford Review of Education* on the topic of non-state actors in education in the Global South, Srivastava and Walford (2016) identified a dual system in the Global South as a result of private sector education. In essence, those who can afford to opt out of government schooling do so, and a variety of non-state actors in the private education sector operate with different motives. As Srivastava and Walford (2016) wrote, "Such a situation raises many questions linked to equity, social mobility, and social justice" (p. 491). This dual system contributes to the separation of the international school from the host nation community.

International Schools as Cultural Bubbles

Despite the broad definition of international schools, Hayden and Thompson (2013) wrote that arguably, one main characteristic found in all schools that describe themselves as international schools is that they offer a curriculum that is not of the "host country" (Chapter 1, section 3, para.1). They are always anomalous in this sense, and considered "outsiders to their neighbourhood" (Introduction, para. 3). Ledger (2016) further described how international schools in general have a unique sense of place because they are often removed from the national and local setting. He outlined four principal factors in forming a cultural bubble: Schools, teachers, curriculum and place. A growing body of literature tackles the isolation of the international school, and it can also be categorised by Ledger's (2016) themes.

School

The economic and cultural differential of those living within these expatriate enclaves and the local host community can be extreme. Cambridge and Thompson (2004) defined the 'enclave' construct: the situation where families isolate their children's' educational environment from exposure to local culture. Allen (2002) highlighted the cultural distance between the school and the surrounding environment, and argued that, in many cases, schools do not discourage this separateness, and are aware that it is a valid marketing tool to endorse their product in market situations. International schools still form a minority compared with the number of national schools in a region. Dunne and Edwards (2010) highlighted how international schools do not necessarily foster or encourage relationships between their students and other students within the host nation. They noted the lack of opportunities to interact with local students through academic or extracurricular activities. Allen (2002) found that it is more likely for international schools to form associations with other international schools rather than host nation schools.

Tarc and Mishra Tarc (2015) presented a more complex picture. At close view, they argued, the international school is not an "elite homogeneous bubble with impermeable borders keeping the host community at bay. It is a transnational space of gendered, racialized inter-class relations" (p. 48). They argued that the local population indeed is employed by the school and participates within the community. According to Ledger (2016), there is considerable variety in ways that international schools do engage with the host community. The connections with the community could be classified as: cultural events; disciplined-based; project-based; or integrated into the fabric of the institution. More common, however, is the connection between international schools.

Teachers

Ledger (2016) outlined that many teachers had little or any genuine or sustained contact with the outside community, and that this was likely due to language and cultural barriers resulting in the superficiality of how some school communities interact with their host community. As Lillo (2016) found in her study of community engagement in IBO schools in Africa, schools are more likely to share resources with other international schools due to common concerns and demographics. She quoted one teacher who said "(International) schools have commonalities and are facing the same problems. Our colleagues aren't in local schools, our colleagues are in like schools… and the nearest like schools are a country away" (p. 45).

Curriculum

Ledger (2016) outlined that international school curricula typically encourage international mindedness, global perspectives and English language, which is often in contrast to the local system of education. Many curricula, such as the curriculum published by the IBO, do indeed mandate cultural connections with the local context. Lewis (2005), former director of the International School of Luxembourg, argued that the structure of the IB program in fact offers a narrow perspective to students age 14 to 16. He argued that too often they have a minimal exposure to present circumstances through the curriculum, except through extracurricular programs such as the Model United Nations.

There is a growing body of research on the IBO, and in particular how its philosophy manifests in practice in international schools. Tate (2013) indicated that it is actually difficult to measure the extent to which the IBO curriculum succeeds in promoting international understanding, intercultural awareness and global engagement as the only evidence is anecdotal. As Roberts (2013) wrote in his chapter entitled "International Education and Global Engagement: Education for a Better World?":

Schools are not embracing the IB because they are internationalist, but because, in some

cases, they wish to become internationalist [...] but many schools now adopting IB are

more concerned with the general qualities of the curriculum and its international

acceptability rather than its concern with international understanding or a better world.

(para 9)

Place

There is limited research on the physical environment of the international school.

However, Tanu (2016) examined the way in which the school maintains its distance from the

local community through its physical architecture. She studied an international school in

Indonesia, and noted that the security (police car, gates) were symbolic markers of the class and

cultural distance of the school from its local environment. Tanu (2016), like Robertson and

Komljenovic (2016), noted that schools are often located in affluent neighborhoods and gated

communities. She also identified the contrast between the "green oasis-like campus that belies

the bustle and smog that characterize Jakarta" (p. 436).

Postcolonial Perspective on International Education

International schools and the cultural bubbles they perpetuate are subject to broad critical

examination, particularly as they relate to social and cultural hierarchy, inequality, construction

of other, and other postcolonial themes.

Writing about the ideology of international education, Tate (2013) listed potential

negative consequences of international education. He included: "detaching some students from

local allegiances and traditions," "preoccupation with global citizenship at the expense of the

even more pressing demands of local and national citizenship," and its "support in practice for

the growing dominance of the English language and its associated cultures" (p. 257). Tate (2013)

identified that the evidence to support these claims within an international school context is, at this time, largely partial and anecdotal. However, it is important to note that scholars like Canagarajah (1999), Kubota (2002) and Wa Thiong'o (1986) have written extensively on the topic of English language education and its colonial role in detaching students from local allegiances and traditions. This is primarily the case in Type "C" international schools.

Indeed, Emenike and Plowright (2017) employed an interpretive strategy to study indigenous Nigerian students studying at an international school in Nigeria, with the premise that international schools are part of a neocolonial system. In essence, they argued that the type of education offered at international schools, specifically in Nigeria, is Western-centric, which emphasizes class inequalities and reproduces a transnational capitalist class. They added that this Western-centric approach to education can almost be considered a new form of colonialism, in that the local elite uses it in order to achieve advantage. Indeed, in their study the Nigerian students identified themselves as caught between both cultures and even having developed neo-colonial attitudes towards their own indigenous culture. Like Tate (2013), Emenike and Plowright (2017) found that local students who attend international schools experience a dislocation from their local knowledge, and this can include a loss of the indigenous language and culture. They cited Fanon (1968), comparing international schools to the internalized neo-colonialism in which "a colonised person rejects their indigenous culture for its perceived inferiority and then claims an affinity with Western culture in order to achieve global citizenship" (Emenike and Plowright, 2017, p. 7) Wa Thiong'o (1986) also described the "cultural bomb" of a Western education, which has the effect to "annihilate a people's belief in their names, in their languages, in their environment, in their heritage of struggle, in their unity, in their capacities and ultimately in themselves" (p. 3).

In her case study on an international school in Indonesia, underpinned by postcolonial theory, Tanu (2016) described a social and cultural hierarchy with the international school community in a higher position than the majority of host country nationals. She outlined how this hierarchy is created by a discursive construction of distance between the school's community and the host society, and that it is reinforced by the economic structure.

Tate (2013) also argued that service-learning programs that are embedded within international schools are problematic from a postcolonial perspective. Service-learning will be discussed in more depth in a forthcoming section, but from a postcolonial perspective, Tikly (2004) and Martin and Griffiths (2013) identified the "othering" that occurs with these types of programs, and how both international school students and the host nation become locked into a particular way of relating. Students are likely to view locals as poverty-stricken, especially when compared with their Western lifestyles. As Tikly (2004) further outlined when writing about education and the new imperialism, these interactions often result in Western students questioning their consumer habits, feeling grateful for what they have and desiring to make a difference. Tikly (2004) identified this as problematic because it perpetuates imbalanced Global North-South relations.

Along these lines, Andreotti (2011) studied an English school partnered with a school in Ghana and identified that the relationships established contributed to the reproduction of Western ethnocentrism and hegemony:

> Central to what teachers and pupils in the school in England were learning from the
> partners in Ghana was an affirmation of their position of privilege through the reification
> of a classification of privilege/underprivileged based on an ahistorical single standard of
> political and economic development. This affirmation worked both as a confirmation of

moral supremacy and a call for immediate action, rather than a critical examination of the

construction of standards of economic and political development (p. 140-141).

Dunne and Edwards (2010) outlined that international schools strengthen connections with

Western ideals due to their isolation, and that this comes at the expense of local interests. Indeed,

their survey of literature affirmed their argument that elite education simply reproduces social

privilege. This social privilege is often reinforced through community service-learning programs.

Community Service-Learning Programs

Many international schools in the Global South, including the International School of

Dakar, have mandated community service-learning programs. These types of projects make up

the bulk of the interactions between students, teachers, and the host nation community. There are

two types of service-learning defined in the literature: a traditional model and a critical model.

The research suggests that the IBO promotes a critical model in theory, but it transforms into a

traditional model in practice. Because of a gap in the literature on service-learning in

international schools, I have also chosen to review research on community service programs and

travel-study programs, in which young people from the Global North volunteer in the Global

South for a limited time period. This cultural context is similar the cultural dynamic of

international schools.

The IBO requires that students participate in service-learning activities. This is key to

their "learner profile," which states "The aim of all IB programmes is to develop internationally

minded people who, recognizing their common humanity and shared guardianship of the planet,

help to create a better and more peaceful world" (International Baccalaureate Organization,

2015, p.2). As a result, students participate in regular service projects and reflect formally on

their experiences. The IBO defines service as "collaborative and reciprocal engagement with the

community in response to an authentic need," adding that "Service within CAS [benefits all involved: students learn as they identify and address authentic community needs, and the community benefits through reciprocal collaboration. Service fosters development of abilities, attitudes and values in accordance with the IB mission statement and the IB learner profile. As such, CAS service experiences are unpaid" (International Baccalaureate Organization, 2015b, p.20).

In general, research on the community service-learning projects of international schools in the Global South is limited. Lillo's (2016) study of service-learning programs in three international schools in Africa showed the clear link between service-learning and volunteerism and the IB experience, and identified how this ideal is difficult to implement in practice. However, researching Kenya, Ethiopia and South Africa, Lillo (2016) found that "Despite such lofty intents, community engagement efforts are often far less central than the institutions claim and the rhetoric is extremely difficult for teachers or student leaders to put into practice" (p. 4).

Vaccaro (2011) and Martin and Griffiths (2013) further identified how such community service-learning programs are often problematic in that they tend to perpetuate stereotypes and reinforce issues of privilege. Martin and Griffiths (2013) also suggested that they recreate "colonial, hierarchical ways of thinking, putting societies in the south in a deficit position, positioning them as 'backward' and in need of 'catching up' with the West" (p. 942).

Although they described service-learning in an American context, Stoecker and Tryon (2009) also identified that the traditional model of service-learning "exploits poor communities as free sources of student education" (p. 3). Wasner (2016) outlined critical service-learning within a more international context, specifically as it relates to the IBO. Wasner (2016) and Clark and Nugent (2011) argued that the traditional model not only reinforces hierarchy and

privilege, but can even lead to feelings of alienation and intolerance among participants. Carney

(2014) and Mitchell (2008) outlined that service-learning programs impart the message to

students that "this is the way things are," and issues that could promote lasting change are not

tackled (Carney, 2014, p. 82). Stanlick and Sell (2016) also identified that service-learning leads

to a hero mentality, relegating host community members to the position of sidekick or recipient.

Similarly, Wasner (2016) argued that short-term service-learning activities contribute to a

superficial impression of a culture, "which can lead to generalisations and essentialist attitudes

about an entire nation and its people" (p. 246).

Carney (2014) defined a critical service-learning program as one that encourages students

to explore things such as "class structure, organizational hierarchies and power, environmental

degradation, access and ability, race, and gender, [and in the process] these concepts take on new

meaning and can be understood in some very profound new ways" (p. 82). Larsen (2015) also

emphasized the importance of projects that are respectful and collaborative, and based on

relationships that are mutual—rather than a relationship in which one group feels they have

something to teach or give the other.

To counter the criticism of traditional service-learning models, Tiessen, Lough and

Grantham (2018) identified that most of the research on this topic focuses on the nature of the

experience of the volunteers, and noted a gap in their understanding of the needs and desires of

host communities. In their book on Southern perspectives on international volunteering, they

remarked that an "overwhelming desire and optimism exists among host organization staff and

community members to create strong, lasting partnerships with volunteer sending organizations

in the Global North" (p. 134). The authors did recognize similar challenges, namely unbalanced

power relationships and a lack of reciprocity, but also recognized the benefits, which "commonly

include opportunities for organizational capacity building, skills transfer, cross-cultural exchange, increased international exposure, and the advancement of national or community development objectives" (p. 134).

Similarly, Lillo (2016) presented a summary of the research, and outlined benefits for international school students that include a positive correlation between service-learning and long-term community involvement, increased engagement in academics, a heightened sense of self-esteem, a refined sense of self gained through a values reflection process openness to diversity and reduced negative stereotypes, and higher levels of human rights awareness.

Barriers to Engagement Between the International School Community and the Host Nation Community

Despite the benefits outlined in the previous section, and fact that international schools often promote global citizenship and community engagement, an inherent contradiction results from the isolation of the schools from the community. Lillo (2016) explored this topic in relation to service-learning projects, but in general there is a lack of research on what prevents students from building relationships with students of the host nationality. Teachers at two of the three schools she surveyed recognized that time constraints, scheduling and competing school initiatives were barriers to their own more sustained interactions with community through service-learning projects.

Lillo (2016) also found that the economic disparity between students and the local community makes genuine engagement challenging. Hayden and Thompson (2013) identified that international school students are often more globally mobile and therefore have a difficult time making attachments or getting involved in the communities. Allen (2002) suggested that

students perhaps do not feel the need to connect with the local community, as they were able to feel close to individuals in other areas of the world as a result of technology.

Summary of the Literature

Overall, six key themes in the literature were evident on the topic of community engagement between international schools and host communities. These include: international school students; international school teachers; the context of international schools in the Global South including their isolation; post-colonial perspectives on international schooling; community service-learning; and finally, the barriers that prevent community engagement. This review highlights the nature of interactions between international school students and host nation communities, and examines the problematic and imbalanced nature of these relationships, as well as the role of teachers in facilitating these experiences. Gaps do exist in the literature, including how teachers themselves conceptualize the interactions between the international school and the host nation, and whether they find the relationship problematic. Another unanswered question examines the barriers that teachers perceive which prevent them from building partnerships with the community and facilitating interactions between students. There is also limited literature on the host nation staff of international schools, and the professional dynamic between expatriate and host nation staff.

Chapter 3: Research Design and Methodology

Design

The design of this case study is qualitative and emergent. Although there is some ambiguity around the definition of a case study, in essence it is "An in-depth description and analysis of a bounded system" (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 39). A case study differs from other methodologies because it is more of a research type than a research methodology. It is defined by the unit of analysis—and this unit of analysis is the bounded system. As Merriam and Tisdell (2016) wrote, this bounded system is "a single-entity, a unit around which there are boundaries" (p.38). For my particular case study, the bounded system is The International School of Dakar in Dakar, Senegal.

A case study methodology is often used in social sciences, especially in "practice-oriented fields" like education (Starman, 2013, p. 29). It is important to note that case studies are not used to develop theory and cannot be generalized to the wider population. Rather, they help us answer "how" and "why" questions. According to Yin (2009), case studies are also useful when the researcher seeks to explore the contextual conditions that may be relevant to the phenomenon under study, and when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are unclear. Indeed, I sought to understand *how* teachers conceptualize community engagement, and to explore the *context* in which this community engagement occurs.

The Setting

This case study was conducted at the International School of Dakar in Dakar, Senegal. ISD employs eighty teaching staff members, serving a population of more than seven hundred students from sixty-five different countries (International School of Dakar, 2019a). The International School of Dakar is in many ways a typical Type "A" international school, as

defined by Hayden and Thompson (2007). It follows the IB curriculum, operates on a not-for-profit model, and has a diverse student population. This case study is therefore a representative or typical case study, which, according to Starman (2013), can help uncover "deeper layers that previous theory has missed" (p. 35). It is also a descriptive case study, as outlined by Yin (2009), which describes an intervention or phenomenon and the real-life context in which it occurs. The International School of Dakar is currently undergoing a transformation in its service-learning and community engagement program, and this is an area of conversation in meetings and in the staff room. Specifically, this case study explored how teachers conceptualize their role within this changing context.

The Participants

Participants were teachers at the International School of Dakar. This case study utilised typical purposeful sampling, defined as a sample that "reflects the average person, situation, or instance of the phenomenon of interest" (Merriam and Tisdell, 2016, p. 97). Teachers from the elementary, middle and secondary schools were invited to participate. For the purpose of focusing the case study, I restricted the interviews to six teachers, two from each section of the school. I invited volunteers to participate, and where possible, selected from the volunteers to create a diverse sample. Participants selected were a mix of males and females who have been teaching at ISD for varying lengths of time. All participants were expatriate teachers. Participants were proficient in English.

Methodology

Role of the Researcher

I was the primary instrument of data collection and analysis. I conducted all six interviews, transcribed and coded the interview data and conducted the analysis. I am an

employee of the International School of Dakar, and therefore a colleague to all research

participants. As a colleague of the participants, there was the possibility for perceived or

potential conflicts of interest for the research study. Participants were able to withdraw from the

study at any time.

Semi-Structured Interviews

I conducted semi-structured interviews. The questions were based on the research

questions, with varying question prompts used depending on the direction of the interview (see

appendix D). I selected this structure of interview in order to access participant perspectives on

the important elements of my research questions, while providing the flexibility for both the

researcher and participants to explore new ideas on the topic. I sent my research questions to

participants in advance of the interview so that they had time to consider their responses.

Document Analysis

In addition to the teacher interviews, relevant IBO curriculum documents were analysed

for this case study. These included: *The Primary Years Program (PYP): The learning community*

(International Baccalaureate Organization, 2018b); *The Primary Years Program (PYP): The*

learner (International Baccalaureate Organization, 2018c); *The Middle Years Program (MYP):*

From principles to practice (International Baccalaureate Organization, 2014); *Diploma Program*

(DP): Creativity, activity, service guide (International Baccalaureate Organization, 2015b). I also

analysed the *International School of Dakar CAS Handbook, 2018-2019* (International School of

Dakar, 2018) and the *CAS and SA Faculty Survey, 2019* (International School of Dakar, 2019b).

All documents were uploaded to Atlas T.I. Content was assigned codes based on the themes that

emerged during the analysis process.

Research Process

Entry

Potential participants were selected via a typical purposeful sample (Merriam and Tisdell, 2016). They were contacted via their International School of Dakar email, and were provided with the cover letter and consent form (appendices A, B and C). These participants were able to accept or decline participation in the study, or could seek more information.

The research study was authorized by the Director of the School, and his permission was attached to the letter of consent. Teachers were informed that participation or non-participation in the study would have no impact on employment at the school. Potential risks to participants were minimal. Participants' identities were kept anonymous, and therefore their professional reputation was not at risk.

Informed Consent

Potential participants were informed of the purpose of the study as well as the research questions. They signed the informed consent form and could withdraw from the study at any time.

Data Collection

Data was collected by way of semi-structured interviews arranged at a time convenient to the participants. Interviews took approximately 20-55 minutes. They were conducted over Skype. Participants were provided with the research questions prior to the interview so that they could reflect on the topic in general. Interviews were audio recorded and subsequently transcribed. Participants were offered the opportunity to review the transcripts to ensure that their voices were accurately captured. Interview transcripts were uploaded to Atlas T.I for analysis.

Data Triangulation

Interview data was triangulated with relevant IBO and school policy documents (listed in the "Document Analysis" section). Because the research questions for this case study centered on teacher perspectives, my findings and discussion emphasized the data from the semi-structured interviews. The IBO and ISD documents were used to compare teacher perspectives on community engagement to the relevant IBO and school policies and curricula.

I also triangulated data through a reflective journaling practice. Reflective journaling is valuable in the academic setting because, as Blake (2005) outlined in his literature review, it requires the researcher "not only to make connections, but to declare them in concrete form" (p.1). Other benefits of reflective journaling during the data collection process include discovering meaning, understanding the perspectives of others, and making connections between experiences and theory (Blake, 2005). As I am a teacher at the International School of Dakar, reflective journaling also allowed me to critically examine my own role in, and preconceptions about, the activities that participants describe, as well as how they are embedded in a complex system (Cooper, 1991).

I wrote reflective journal entries prior to interviewing each participant. I wrote subsequent entries after each interview, reflecting on the ideas and connections that emerged in the interview. The reflections were semi-structured and informal, centered around a selection of questions adapted from Bourner (2003):

- What happened that most surprised you?

- What patterns can you recognize?

- What emerged that contradicted your prior beliefs?

- What emerged that confirmed your prior beliefs?

- How do you feel about the interview now compared with how you felt about it at the time?

- How else could you view the ideas that emerged?

- Was there anything about the experience that was familiar to you?

- What might you do differently as a result of your experience and your reflection on it?

These reflections assisted in my analysis of the data collected in the semi-structured interviews.

Data Analysis

Interview data was analysed inductively and comparatively. Analysis began simultaneously with data collection in order to determine preliminary themes, which were used as codes in Atlas T.I. When all interview transcripts were uploaded to Atlas T.I., they were reviewed and assigned codes. There were a total of forty codes created, loosely grouped based on the research questions. These codes allowed for a comparative analysis of the themes that emerged from the data.

Summary

The case study utilized in-depth interviews with six participant teachers from The International School of Dakar. Interview data was triangulated with a researcher's reflective journal, school policy and IBO curriculum documents on the topic of community engagement, as well as survey data gathered by The International School of Dakar (see Chapter 5: Discussion). Data was coded and subsequently analysed using Atlas T.I. These sources of data served to address the case study's research questions outlined in Chapter 1.

Chapter 4: Findings

This chapter describes the major themes that emerged from the interviews with six teachers from the International School of Dakar. Two teachers were interviewed from each of the elementary, middle and high school faculties. Some identifying information was modified or omitted to protect the confidentiality of participants and those mentioned in the interviews. Teachers were assigned gender-neutral pseudonyms and the pronoun "they." The high school teachers interviewed were Morgan and Taylor, the middle school teachers were Alex and Jamie and the elementary school teachers were Lou and Eli. The findings also reference survey results from the *CAS and SA Faculty Survey 2019*, as well as IBO and International School of Dakar policy handbooks and online publications.

The findings are divided into sections based on the study's research questions, and further subsections based on the themes that emerged. The first research question (How do international school teachers in Dakar, Senegal conceptualize the engagement between the international school community and the broader host nation community?) was subsumed in four themes: the international school bubble, engagement as service, superficial interactions, and engagement with Senegalese staff members. The second research question (How do teachers define meaningful and reciprocal engagement between the international school community and the host nation community?) was subsumed in two themes: definitions of "meaningful engagement" and definitions of "reciprocal engagement." The third research question (What barriers do international school teachers in Dakar, Senegal see to meaningful and reciprocal engagement between the international school community and host nation community?) was subsumed in four themes: socio-economic, language, school priorities and knowledge of Senegal. The fourth research question (What solutions do teachers propose to establish such meaningful

engagement?) was subsumed in three themes: expertise of Senegalese staff, community

partnerships and educating teachers. The final section of this chapter outlines themes that

emerged from the interviews that do not directly respond to the study's research questions. These

themes include: awareness of existing programs, community service liaison and teacher roles and

responsibilities.

Research Question 1: How do international school teachers in Dakar, Senegal

conceptualize the engagement between the international school community and the broader

host nation community?

School Bubble

A common theme that emerged from the interviews is that the teachers generally

conceptualized the international school community as distinctly separate from the wider

Senegalese community. This idea emerged in the interviews both implicitly and explicitly. It is

important to note that the interview question "What do you think of the engagement between the

international school community and the wider Senegalese community? What comes to mind?"

frames the two communities as separate entities, and this likely shaped how teachers discussed

the engagement. However, only one of the six teachers, Morgan, resisted this dichotomy. When

discussing the ISD community, they said "It's kind of a big soup bowl you know? It's a big soup

pot with a lot of...all sorts of complexities there." Regarding the "Senegalese community," they

said,

> I think that finding a Senegalese community is tricky because you have Senegalese that
>
> work at the U.S. Embassy [...] they work at the embassy but they have their own
>
> Senegalese community. I think it's a gray area. How do you necessarily define Senegalese
>
> community?

 In general, teachers did not differentiate between the English-speaking expatriate community and the school community.

Explicitly, three teachers—one from each of the high school, middle school and elementary school departments—discussed the isolation of the international school community in relation to the wider Senegalese community. When asked what they think of the engagement between the ISD community and Senegalese community, Alex immediately responded with "Isolation. Isolation and an isolated community within a broader community" and later in the interview also referred to ISD as "shockingly isolated," emphasizing the negative connotation. This "community" is not limited to the school, but is defined by the teacher as including the overlapping expatriate community—or "expat world." Despite the soup bowl analogy, Morgan described the expatriate community using the word "bubble." Referring to the American families in particular, they said: "They live in their little American bubble, have their kids in the international school, which for them is the American international school [...] they have their little American community and they don't really branch out too much." Morgan also described the physical isolation of the school in saying "we go through this eight foot high perimeter fence, security perimeter," suggesting a level of distrust of the Senegalese community. Similarly, Eli described how students and families also tend to spend time with other expatriates: "Their parents are friends, their kids are friends and maybe if they know someone from work, [...] I think it tends to be other expats." The depiction of the school community and wider English-speaking expatriate community as an isolated bubble suggests that, overall, teachers do not see much engagement between the communities.

When asked why teachers feel like this "bubble" exists and persists, teachers provided a variety of responses. Morgan and Eli attributed their isolation on a personal level to the nature of

their jobs as teachers. Morgan said, "We're in the gates of the place all day, it's really hard to [engage]." Eli and Alex also attributed this to how the school sets up new staff orientation and activities. The school organizes tourist trips and special events for expatriate teaching staff. Eli added that: "You already kind of have a built-in friend group which makes it easy not to branch out, unless you are really trying. I feel like you [...] have to make a real conscious effort." Eli also connected the "bubble" to the language barrier.

Morgan identified that the tendency of expatriate job postings to be temporary also contributes to the creation of the bubble. Teachers and families are often only in the country for a short period of time: "they're there for two or three years and they bounce around from country to country. So I get the fact that they're not necessarily deeply investing." Morgan also stated that teachers and families often do not have any other family networks or communities in Senegal, "so the school has to do all this other stuff to make up for what they don't have in their own community."

Community Engagement as Service Activities

Despite the fact that neither service-learning nor community service were mentioned explicitly in the interview questions, when asked "What do you think of the engagement between the international school community and the wider Senegalese community? What comes to mind?" and "If I were to ask you to define meaningful and reciprocal engagement between the International School community and the Senegalese community, how would you define it?" the majority of teacher responses framed community engagement as service. For example, when high school teacher Morgan was asked if they could think of examples of programs that allow ISD staff and students to engage with the Senegalese community, the examples they listed were a volunteer project, fundraising project and the Week Without Walls service component. Three

teachers, Morgan, Alex and Taylor mentioned examples of non-service programs, namely

robotics, a play production and athletics, but these examples were not as prominent in the teacher

interviews. Alex indicated that these non-service programs are less prominent at the school, and

that this is problematic:

> They sort of reinforce that Senegal is an impoverished country that needs help. So these
>
> service activities sort of fall under that rubric. But learning about learning Senegalese
>
> language, learning Wolof, learning about Senegal's history, learning about like the
>
> government or the arts or things like that—we don't. At school we really don't have
>
> access to learn about a broader range of what makes up the country, the culture.

Engagement as Superficial

From the interviews it appears that ISD teachers thought the existing programs that

involved ISD teachers and students interacting with the Senegalese community were superficial

or insubstantial. Taylor put it succinctly: "I think the engagement is sometimes quite superficial

because I think it's still kind of like, let's gather a bunch of stuff and donate in one fell swoop as

opposed to kind of an ongoing interaction." Morgan characterized engagement as "a meager

attempt."

All four middle and high school teachers discussed the annual Week Without Walls trip

when asked about community engagement. Week Without Walls is a week-long overnight trip to

different locations in Senegal. All students from grades 6 to 11 participate in this trip, along with

most middle and high school faculty members. Middle school teacher Alex described the trip as

a "Tourism/learning/small component of service element." Morgan alluded to the superficiality

of the interactions that students and staff have with the local community over the course of these

trips:

ISD has a week without walls program that puts kids out of the community, but what? You stay in a hotel and it's half spring break community building. You're staying in a hotel at a beach that costs a hundred bucks a night so you go and have this token little hangout with Talibé kids and play games with them, you know? That's not integrating with the community, that's a show and tell.

Elementary grades four and five facilitate one overnight trip outside of Dakar, and Lou also identified that it's lacking because it is not sustained. They say, "it's just a really quick thing." As mentioned by Taylor, all six teachers identified that the problem with the service activities, whether school-based or during Week Without Walls, is that they are often not sustained. Jamie said, "You're going to help something in a village or you might be doing some physical manual labour, or you might be bringing some supplies, you might be able to organize something, get something going, and it's for a couple of hours and it's usually a one-off."

Middle school and high school students are responsible for participating in and ultimately planning service projects as one of the requirements of their IB education (International Baccalaureate Organization, 2014). The middle school and high school teachers interviewed were similarly skeptical of the service projects that result from students' participation in the mandatory Service as Action (SA) and CAS (Creativity Activity Service) programs. Morgan said, "They're always—it's just like such an easy thing. Like OK, let's have our rich parents go buy some brownie mix, we make the brownies, we sell them, we get a hundred thousand and we bring it to an orphanage." Middle school teacher Jamie expressed the same sentiment: "I find it pretty fake and pretty hollow and pretty superficial. Yeah, anybody can go over and raise some money for the orphanage and give them some supplies, but you're not really creating much of a

tie, you know?" Taylor hinted towards the problematic nature of these interactions, describing

them as: "fundraising and donating, which still has a kind of noblesse oblige aspect to it."

Engagement with Senegalese Staff Members

An interesting complexity emerged from the interviews with teachers. Despite the

conceptualization of ISD as a bubble, four of the six teachers interviewed discussed the diversity

that exists within the school community, in particular with regards to the Senegalese staff

members. Based on the interviews, it seems that the Senegalese staff members are seen as

straddling both the school and Senegalese communities, but are primarily considered to be

different from the teaching staff and students. None of the interview questions named Senegalese

staff members directly, but teachers did mention interactions with them in their interviews when

asked about community engagement, suggesting that they are considered separate from the

foreign-hired staff. Teachers recognized that the interactions between staff/students and local

staff are somewhat problematic.

Alex and Jamie discussed the school drive to collect food items to be donated to

Senegalese cleaning and maintenance staff for Korité, a Senegalese holiday: "We periodically

have donations for our local staff, but our staff hopefully is receiving good wages and [...] it's

confusing to me—like why are we giving charity [...]?" Jamie indicated that this charity model of

engagement with Senegalese staff members is potentially a barrier to meaningful relationships:

"They will ask you for some money for their kids at school or they'll ask you what are you going

to give them when you leave [...] there's always that little issue." Indeed, Morgan identified that

the local staff and Senegalese workers on campus are almost invisible to the students and

expatriate staff. Talking about locally-hired construction workers, they said, "behind the wall,

invisible, is three guys making honestly two thousand CFA a day [...] it's a two-faced system. Those are the untouchables. You know, there's no interaction, there's a gate between them."

With the exception of the annual school event called Family Day, Lou identified that the majority of school events, holiday parties and social events are planned exclusively for the foreign-hired teaching and administrative staff. Lou found this problematic: "I think there isn't enough of a connection between our [expatriate] staff and our Senegalese staff sometimes." A few teachers mentioned Family Day as a good example of engagement. Family day is an event when the families of all ISD staff, foreign hired and Senegalese, are invited to campus to play games and share a traditional meal. Referring to Senegalese staff members, Jamie said, "they come here on the weekend with their families and you get to meet them and it's a little bit better." Lou also spoke positively of Family Day: "I think our family day is something that's […] really powerful."

Research Question 2: How do teachers define meaningful and reciprocal engagement between international school students and host nation school students?

Definitions of "Meaningful" Engagement

Definitions of meaningful and reciprocal community engagement contained many overlapping elements. All of the middle school and high school teachers interviewed defined "meaningful" engagement within a service context. Responses differed slightly for elementary school teachers, who defined it more in the context of classroom curriculum.

Teachers were explicitly asked their definitions of meaningful engagement. High school and middle school teachers' definitions of meaningful largely contained two elements, the relationships and time commitment. Alex described meaningful engagement as having "[...] the

capacity to change both sides' perspectives," and "something ongoing, and something that would be co-constructed." Taylor also explained that the partnership is what makes it meaningful:

> What actually matters, and I think what's the important thing is, which makes it meaningful is, […] that the different parties form a relationship with each other and especially a relationship, I think, that sees each other as individuals [...] I think meaningful reciprocal community engagement is very much about building relationships—the relationships with peers is about coming to see each other as individuals or as unique communities.

For Taylor, building relationships was more important than the quality or impact of the service activity itself:

> I think the value of service lies in appreciating kind of the co-dependent and symbiotic relationship of people. This idea that if you step out of your bubble and you actually engage with other people and you reach out to help that you psychologically, morally gain in return [...] it's very much about the relationship, rather than the project or action itself.

Morgan had a different definition of meaningful engagement linked with commitment, and specifically commitment to service and improving conditions for Senegalese. "Long-term commitment to make things better [...] "Sustainable and it's making a long-term difference."

High school and middle school teachers discussed how they did not consider the model of fundraising and giving donations to Senegalese organizations meaningful. Alex explained that engagement should not consist of "ISD telling a local school 'we're going to give you this stuff'" Taylor linked engagement in the form of donations to a broader colonial context, saying that

"I feel uncomfortable with donating stuff because I see that as reinforcing more of a hierarchical relationship where one more privileged group is kind of condescending to give stuff to a less privileged group."

Elementary school teachers did not frame meaningful engagement within a service context, but instead linked it with student learning and classroom curriculum. Lou said, "It's more meaningful when it's connected to what we're doing in class, the units of inquiry [...] because it then provides this kind of shared experience that we can draw upon throughout the unit." Discussing an overnight trip they took with students to learn more about Senegal, they said,

> We returned to it over and over, and it really did help to build the students'
> understanding, not only of the unit of inquiry but of how what we were learning really
> connected to the country in which they live. And so that's why it was really meaningful.

Eli also defined meaningful engagement as "somehow connected to our unit and also that they have some background knowledge" and "[to] connect in an authentic way."

Definitions of "Reciprocal" Engagement

The interview questions separated the concepts of "meaningful" and "reciprocal," but it was clear that when teachers were explicitly asked how they define "reciprocal" community engagement they had difficulty isolating the concept of reciprocal. Instead, they often began their definition of "reciprocal" but ended up merging the definition with that of "meaningful," indicating that these two ideas overlap significantly. Nevertheless, some common ideas of "reciprocal" community engagement emerged. Alex linked reciprocal to "co-creating and co-benefitting." Morgan said something similar indicating that there should be mutual benefit—both ISD and Senegalese kids should "get something out of it." In reference to the second grade

games project, Eli defined reciprocal more in terms of an equal partnership: "It wasn't just second grade going and teaching like "look at what we know" and teaching them, but having them also come and do the same thing. I think that was a great way to have a reciprocal interaction," she added that it's "not just a one-way street." Lou referred to an overnight trip that saw both communities benefiting. The ISD students learned about the community, then donated benches: "You know, we provided them with some things that would help them in the future because they were helping us. So that was kind of like the reciprocal part."

Taylor and Lou added the concept of relationship to the definition. Taylor referred to the robotics program as an example, stating that both groups should be working together on a project. They said: "I think meaningful reciprocal community engagement is very much about building relationships—the relationships with peers is coming to see each other as individuals or as unique communities." Lou defined it as "inviting people into our community [...] creating that like shared experience"

Research Question 3: What barriers do international school teachers in Dakar, Senegal see to meaningful and reciprocal engagement between the international school community and the host nation community?

The six teachers interviewed identified a variety of barriers that they perceive as impeding engagement between the international school community and the wider Senegalese community. The barriers they identified exist on the individual, professional and societal levels and often overlapped, indicating that there are many interlocking reasons why they find the engagement lacking. These barriers identified by teachers include the language barrier, socio-economic gap, the lack of knowledge of Senegal and perceived school priorities.

Language Barrier

In addition to an array of local languages, the most prominent of which is Wolof, many Senegalese people in Dakar speak some French, as it is the official language of Senegal. The ISD community is primarily English-speaking, the main language of instruction is English and the majority of teachers on staff speak English as their first language. Therefore, it is not surprising that language ability was named as a barrier to meaningful and reciprocal community engagement. However, teachers identified that it is not the sole barrier and that it is possible to overcome. It is important to note that four of the six teachers interviewed identified as fluent French speakers.

Five of the six teachers interviewed identified personal language ability as a significant barrier to engagement on a personal level, and generalized that language is a reason why the community is not able to engage with the wider Senegalese community. Alex identified clearly that "Language is another huge obstacle. I think for people who speak French, that's a big advantage. But a shocking amount of our staff don't speak French." This indicates that engagement should be easier for those who do speak the language. However, both Lou and Jamie identified that it is perhaps more complex than simply inability to communicate. Lou said, "As an [expatriate] living here, I don't feel like I can make those connections on my own, even though I speak French [...] There is a language barrier between much of our staff and the overseas hires, but I think there are ways to bridge that." Eli listed language as an obstacle but suggested that it could be overcome: "I think the language barrier is the biggest thing [...] but I think also it's just the ease of having other English-speaking people. I think sometimes it makes me not try as hard."

Socio-Economic Barriers

Interestingly, teachers did not specifically identify cultural differences as a barrier to engagement. Instead, two teachers described differences in socio-economic status as a key reason why the international school community is separate from the broader Senegalese community.

Jamie stressed that his position as a foreigner with socio-economic means is the principal reason why "genuine" engagement is not easy for them on a personal level. They said,

> I don't find there is a lot of genuine engagement on a real level where you can do things personally and get to know them that well. I think this is because of the barriers of the culture coming from the religion you have, especially the so-called socioeconomics you have because you're a foreigner with money. And so there's always that - right away off what can you give me? What can you do for me?

When asked if the socio-economic barrier to engagement is greater than the language barrier, Jamie responded: "For me, yes, way more—because for me it's not language [...] I wouldn't call it a problem, I see it as a reality. It's the reality of the differences in socioeconomics."

Morgan emphasized that the bubble of the international school does not consist of only students from foreign countries, and there is indeed a Senegalese student population:

> Like look at some of the Senegalese kids that live here [...] because the rich kids that can afford to go to ISD, those families are so above the great masses [...] and the economic and underdevelopment disparity between somebody who can afford to go to Casino and buy, you know, frozen yogurt and packaged French potato chips, and somebody that lives half an hour south of Podor in a grass hut, that's so wide. Those two worlds are so wide that I think, in a place like Senegal, it's harder to do.

Using the example of Senegalese students at ISD, Morgan argued that it is not necessarily culture that is a barrier, but rather income and socio-economic status. Indeed, Morgan generalized, "So

the more underdeveloped the country is, the harder it's going to be to have anything other than a kind of show and tell contrived scenario for how they integrate."

School Priorities

Four of the six teachers interviewed identified administrative priorities as an obstacle to meaningful and reciprocal community engagement. Essentially, they stated that they believe that the school prioritizes other activities over pursuing meaningful and reciprocal community engagement, resulting in limited time and resources allocated to such programming. The remaining two teachers indicated that community engagement is becoming more of a priority, but it is not fully realized and is in a transitional phase.

Alex said, "I feel like our school mission is not even about intercultural understanding." They discussed perception of the administrative priorities, providing an example of a colleague who tried to invite a Senegalese guest speaker to the school:

> [They feel] like admin is not interested, and [they feel] like [they've] gotten a negative response [...] [they] said [...] it won't get funded [...] and I did sort of wonder this morning as I was thinking about this meeting. I was like, really? We spent tens of thousands of dollars bringing in an American to come and tell stories about Africa, but we don't have five thousand dollars to bring in an internationally-renowned Senegalese photographer to talk to our students?

Alex stressed that "There's a lot going on at the school. And it's not really prioritized, and so with it not being prioritized there's not gonna be time." Morgan outlined what they perceived to be the school's priority: "It seems like ISD is there to provide both the education and the entertainment for the child" In general, "When a kid goes to ISD, the goal is not to integrate with Senegal" and "ISD's goal has nothing to do with Senegal." Rather, the priority is to provide a

familiar community and environment for students who come from other countries. Morgan perceived this as normal for international schools, concluding that ISD is not an outlier in this regard.

Three teachers indicated that service learning is slowly becoming more of a priority. Taylor said, "There's definitely a push to make the service-learning more substantive and to make it more about ongoing relationships and about [...] organically developing projects as opposed to a kind of one-off community service outing." However, Taylor emphasized that, "I think we're still a school where other extracurriculars are prioritized more, sports especially." Jamie seemed to think that the school might be moving towards more of a service-learning priority, but they were not sure to what extent and if it is formalized. They said, "My understanding is that the school wants to go more that way…" Taylor also indicated that priorities seem to shift at ISD, creating a lack of consistency in programming. Taylor said,

> The school has developed a relationship with a particular local school in the Saloum
>
> Delta region and they're starting to kind of form a relationship. But again, that's probably
>
> going to change next year because they're going to have to be going elsewhere.

Similarly, Elementary teacher Eli said perhaps the priority is there, but it is not followed through: "I do think since it's such a transitional period that's like we want to do all these things, but there's not always guidance or the resources."

Teacher Knowledge

All six teachers interviewed identified that the lack of teacher knowledge of Senegal is a major obstacle to meaningful and reciprocal community engagement. They discussed the lack of knowledge of community organizations and resources, as well as of the complex challenges that service programs are designed to address.

Teachers referred to the fact that, as newcomers to the school and to Senegal, they did not know what opportunities were available for engagement or how to pursue them. Morgan said, "I think you do have to have a lot of initiative on your own. And I know that one of the obstacles or barriers [...] might be just not being fully informed." Eli said: "I think that teachers don't always know the questions to ask about, I don't know everything that's available to us." Alex said the same thing: "A huge obstacle is really lack of knowledge. Knowing kind of what is out there" Interestingly, Alex noted that the school does have Senegalese teaching staff, but their perspectives are not sought out: "We're not utilizing them at all. I get the impression that [Senegalese teacher] is not solicited at all […]." This is discussed in more depth in the "Solutions" section.

In addition to a lack of knowledge of the resources available in the community, Morgan identified that students and teachers do not have the knowledge to understand the complex needs of the communities that service programs are meant to serve, and that this lack of knowledge impedes their ability to create meaningful service programs. Referring to teachers, "the amount of effort and expertise it takes is way outside of what they got here to do." Morgan added, "Those are not problems that our high school kids are going to solve. I mean they're not problems that USAID knows how to solve because they're big money projects." Jamie said something similar, identifying the barrier of not "having full knowledge of what the situation is and so what needs to be done for that situation." Taylor said that this works both ways, and that community partners also do not always understand the purpose of the service projects ISD implements: "I've seen multiple cases with service-learning where, when you go out to local community, they don't know what's needed or what we're actually striving for so they aren't

able to maybe always meet us halfway." As a result of these gaps in knowledge, these teachers

argued that the service tended to be superficial.

Research Question 4: What solutions do teachers propose to establish such meaningful

engagement?

Teachers were asked "What ideas do you have to support or facilitate meaningful and

reciprocal community engagement?" Both in response to that specific question and indirectly

throughout the interviews, the six ISD teachers interviewed provided a variety of possible

solutions to the perceived obstacles they identified. Three major themes emerged: soliciting

expertise from Senegalese staff members, establishing longer-lasting community partnerships

and educating teachers.

Local Staff Expertise

Three teachers, Jamie, Alex and Morgan identified a valuable resource that the school

already has: the cultural knowledge and expertise of the Senegalese staff of the school, the

teachers and teaching assistants, guards, administrative and maintenance staff. They identified

that these are individuals who can potentially bridge the gap between the ISD community and the

local community. Jamie in particular discussed this idea at length: "We have enough expertise on

staff, it's to get [teachers and administrators] to ask." When asked: "Do you feel like the school

has the resources to provide that knowledge to teachers who might want to start a program?"

Jamie responded, "I think we do with the local staff." Specific to the Week Without Walls trip,

Jamie said that there would be value in consulting and including Senegalese staff both in the

planning and in the trip itself:

> We established local staff going on Week Without Walls trip, great. Can we make the
>
> next step, which is to get them to maybe, maybe that's where the Week Without Walls

trips is going to go, maybe the trips are going to go to where some staff members are from and there's a need in their area?

Alex also indicated that hiring more Senegalese teaching staff could be a potential solution, and that the Senegalese staff already have the knowledge that the school might need. They said, "We should hire more Senegalese staff for teaching positions so that it's not just the cleaning staff who are Senegalese. Also we should use the knowledge of local hires."

Eli identified the value of including Senegalese staff members in classroom activities. They described how a Senegalese staff member contributed to a class project that involved donating food items to the cleaning and maintenance staff for Ramadan. They shared their knowledge of Senegal, which made the project more meaningful for students. They said,

And in our unit we were talking about Ramadan, so they already had a background knowledge of Ramadan and then [Senegalese staff member] talked to them [...] I feel like they really kind of had a five-year-old understanding of what we were doing and why we were doing it.

Eli described how having the background knowledge of Senegalese culture provided by a Senegalese staff member, and meeting the Senegalese staff member who would receive the donated items, resulted in an improved interaction between the students and the Senegalese staff members. Eli said, "When they see the staff that we gave bags to, they run up to them, they hug them, so now they do have more interaction than they would normally."

Long-Term Community Partnerships

Four teachers suggested that deliberately building more permanent relationships with community organizations, in particular with local schools, would increase meaningful and reciprocal community engagement.

One of the questions on the *ISD CAS and SA Faculty Survey (2019)* was, "Do you have

any suggestions on how to make the reflective process more meaningful for our students?" One

teacher responded: "Establishing more permanent links with local organizations [...] having

established service projects would help in the long-term." Taylor discussed the same idea,

stressing that it would help the quality of the service that ISD students and staff would be able to

provide in the community. They said, "developing more established relationship with the few

institutions is going to be important because then over time you can develop, I think, a better

mutual understanding of what each party is trying to get out of the relationship"

Three teachers, Alex, Lou and Eli, all proposed creating partnerships with local schools

in Dakar. Lou suggested,

> If we were to create some kind of partnership with a school, like we could have a sister
>
> school somewhere in Dakar, maybe we do events with them like every couple of months
>
> or something, just so we can have a long term partnership with someone so that it then
>
> becomes a meaningful connection that endures.

Alex suggested the same idea—creating a partnership with a local school, as opposed to the

current model of engagement, which they said consists of programs that last "two days a year or

one-offs." Eli also mentioned inviting other schools and students to the ISD campus, saying that

"I think it would be really interesting if they can do more things with schools." Many teachers

were critical of the "one-off" model of engagement, so this was seen as a solution to promote

more sustained and meaningful relationships.

Educate Teachers

Considering that two of the main obstacles identified by teachers were lack of

knowledge and language ability, three of the teachers interviewed suggested that educating

teachers and providing access to information on community resources would have the potential

to support meaningful and reciprocal community engagement. Alex suggested that a deeper

understanding of Senegal as a country and culture would be beneficial, and therefore suggested

that the school should "educate teachers about Senegal beyond consumer and entertainment

options" during new-staff orientation. They continued, "the school should also offer Wolof for

staff who are interested in taking that." Acknowledging that not all teachers may be interested in

learning more about Senegal, Alex said, "[...] the school can set a tone. They can make it easier

for the people who definitely want to learn more about Senegal, and for the people that are

maybe on the fence, they can facilitate opportunities for those people." Eli also suggested that

opportunities to learn French and Wolof would help: "they could offer local language classes on

campus, maybe more frequently or for different levels for the staff."

Both elementary school teachers suggested that it would be useful to set up a resource

bank for teachers so that they could access information on different opportunities for

engagement. Lou said, "having some kind of directory of who's in our community in any given

year." Eli said the same thing:

> If there is something at the beginning of the year telling us like these are some options, if
>
> [the Community Service Liaison] has somewhere where we can go to look up different
>
> options, I think that would be more beneficial than only being able to talk to [them] when
>
> you can meet with [them].

Emergent Themes

Three themes emerged out of the interviews that do not directly respond to the study's

research questions. They include teacher awareness of existing community engagement

programs, teacher awareness of the community service liaison, and teacher roles and responsibilities.

Awareness of Existing Programs

One theme that emerged from the interviews was that teachers were largely unaware of key existing community engagement programs at the school, or they were unaware of the nature of such programs. When asked "Can you think of any examples that you have seen in your time at the school?" Jamie responded, "I'm sure there are some—I don't know of any personally." Alex was unsure of the nature of some of the programs:

It seems like the Kirikou was a joint production. It seems like sometimes we play sports with students from local schools [...] But as far as regular events that are really embedded in the daily life of our school we're kind of shockingly isolated from my perspective.

Indeed, students from ISD and a local school did work together to put on a performance of the play *Kirikou et Karaba*, ISD hosted a robotics tournament that invited several public schools to attend, and ISD hosted a student forum (called "Forum of Students") with three other schools and Senegalese academics to discuss global issues. ISD sports teams also regularly play against local schools. Only one teacher mentioned *Kirikou et Karaba* and two teachers mentioned the robotics program in passing, indicating that they are either unaware of these programs or they did not come to mind at the time of the interview.

Teachers expressed uncertainty when discussing examples and seemed to appear skeptical. For example, Morgan was aware of a student volunteer program teaching English in a local fishing neighbourhood, but was unaware of the details and felt skeptical about the program: "I mean who knows what it actually was? But what it sounded like was kind of interesting, like

actually having students go down. Were they just doing it to check off a box for their little TOK [Theory of Knowledge course] or their CAS thingy? Probably."

Awareness of Cultural Advisor/Service Learning Liaison

Along the same lines as the previous theme, it became evident throughout the interviews that teachers in the middle and high school faculties were not fully aware of the role of the Cultural Advisor/Service Learning Liaison, or the individual did not come to their minds during the interview. ISD employs a community liaison—a Senegalese staff member who is meant to help coordinate activities with the wider community. This individual's full title is Cultural Advisor and Community Outreach, Service-Learning Liaison (Middle and High School) and Service Learning Coordinator (Elementary School) (hereafter shortened to "liaison"), indicating the broad scope of their role. Indeed, the IB recommends that, for CAS projects, there be a liaison officer "who has a good relationship with the community where the service project is based" (International Baccalaureate Organization, 2015b, p. 25). The liaison's role is also outlined in the ISD CAS handbook for students: "The CAS and service learning liaison is in charge of assisting you in order for you to find the right connections for your experiences and projects. He or she can provide logistical assistance if needed" (International School of Dakar, 2018, p. 8). The liaison's name is listed in the handbook.

Middle school and high school teachers were generally unaware of the role and responsibilities of the community liaison. Alex said, "I know [the liaison] was responsible for awhile, but then it seemed like he was no longer responsible." Jamie did not refer to the liaison when asked what resources are available to teachers, but later in the interview alluded to their role: It's not fully established—how much in it is documented? And is [their] job to make this happen, as the person doing all that? I don't know."

In the high school, there are two positions meant to facilitate the student CAS program: the Service-Learning Coordinator and the aforementioned liaison. Indeed, there was some confusion about the differing roles of the coordinator and liaison, even though it is outlined in the student handbook. High school teacher Taylor did not mention the liaison as a resource, and instead referred to Service-Learning Coordinator, who manages the students' CAS portfolios and ensures they know the CAS expectations, but does not provide assistance with programs.

The elementary school teachers interviewed had a better understanding of the liaison's role. Lou clearly described the role of the liaison: to "reach out in the community, to help us make connections [...] [they have] the language." When asked about resources available to teachers, the liaison came up first: "[they're] a big one [resource] [...] because [they're] Senegalese but [they] also [speak] English and French, and you know, I think that it's the kind of bridge you need to make those connections with the local community." However, Lou also indicated that perhaps it is not as effective as intended because of the nature of the role: "our service-learning coordinator is really working hard to do that. I mean but [they're] working hard to do that from elementary school to high school and it's a lot on [their] plate." Eli also listed the liaison as a resource when asked about the obstacles to community engagement.

Awareness of Teacher Roles and Responsibilities

Throughout the interviews, it became clear that ISD teachers were somewhat confused about their roles and responsibilities with regards to community engagement. Some teachers questioned whether it is their responsibility to take initiative.

The IB has very specific guidelines for the role of teachers with regards to the CAS program at the high school level. For CAS, the teacher's role is to supervise and guide student initiatives, not to plan them. This is the school policy as well. The teacher's role is outlined in the

ISD CAS handbook: "Your CAS advisor is responsible for helping their advisees with CAS activities and monitoring their advisees' progress with CAS" (International School of Dakar, 2018, p. 8). There is no written policy outlining roles and responsibilities of teachers at the middle and elementary school levels.

As a result, some teachers were not sure of their role in the process and they indicated that they have received mixed messages from administration. As Alex said,

> It seems like how exactly the service is supposed to happen is unclear [...] then I heard a week or two ago—no, the classroom teachers are supposed to be implementing it like that's the ultimate goal [...] So I do feel like the overall message is that we want to do something, but that we don't have a coherent, clear vision.

Eli had a similar experience: "I feel like I don't really know what [the liaison] is supposed to do and how much [they are] supposed to do versus how much we are supposed to do."

Jamie suggested that teacher commitment to community engagement makes for a meaningful experience—and that programs are successful when a teacher takes ownership, "if you have a teacher that's always going in every week and committing time." Taylor said something similar,

> I think they're definitely still owned by teachers. I think the school's working on a shift from that but I think for example one reason that the English teaching program is flailing a little bit is because it's teacher run and the teacher who was in charge of it is now leaving and there wasn't enough student buy-in, [it] wasn't developed enough for it to continue, at least not easily.

Both teachers recognized that the responsibility should primarily be given to students, but teachers end up doing the work. Eli said, "There's a lot of, if you don't figure it out on your own,

it might just not happen. And with everything else you have on your plate, it's hard to then go

'hey what are we going to do for this?'"

Acknowledging mixed messages about teacher responsibilities, Taylor argued that

teachers should have a role—one similar to the one outlined by the IB, and that teachers' effort is

required for programs to be successful, even the student-initiated ones. They said,

> I think there's a bit of a false narrative [...] because I think the administration is afraid of
>
> giving teachers more stuff to do and [that] the teachers protesting that the stress levels,
>
> they are like 'oh you just need to sign off as a supervisor, there's no work involved.' And
>
> actually I disagree with that. I think if it's going to be good, there is work involved.

Taylor and Morgan both mentioned that it is unrealistic to expect teenagers to organize quality

programming themselves. Taylor said,

> Kids are kids, right? [...] we're still talking about adolescents, teenagers, younger than
>
> that obviously in elementary school, and so they need somebody to teach them how to
>
> organize stuff. Maybe we're not actually developing the ideas and running the projects,
>
> but we need to teach them how to organize logistics, how to communicate promptly with
>
> each other, how to maybe consider questions of the ethical implications [...]

Summary of the Findings

This chapter presented the findings from the interviews with six expatriate teachers

employed at the International School of Dakar. Overall, teachers defined meaningful and

reciprocal community engagement as engagement that is long-lasting, mutually beneficial, and

that results in student learning. Teachers largely defined community engagement as synonymous

with community service. Teachers perceived the school's community engagement efforts as

lacking, identifying personal, professional and socio-economic barriers to engagement. They

proposed solutions that involved educating teachers, fostering long-term partnerships and

soliciting the expertise of the Senegalese staff members at the school. The interviews revealed

that teachers were largely unsure or unaware of existing programs, resources available as well as

their own responsibilities with regards to community engagement. Chapter 5 will discuss these

findings within the context of the literature reviewed in Chapter 2 and the researcher's reflective

journal.

Chapter 5: Discussion

In this final chapter, I review the themes that emerged in the interviews in response to the study's four research questions. In discussing each research question, I make connections between themes and the second chapter Literature Review. As a teacher at ISD and a colleague of the participants, I also locate myself in relation to the research questions. I do this by triangulating the findings with observations from the reflective journal I wrote before and after each interview. I finish this chapter with a discussion of conclusions, implications and recommendations.

Research Question 1: How do international school teachers in Dakar, Senegal conceptualize the engagement between the international school community and the broader host nation community?

On one level, the ISD teachers interviewed for this study conceptualized the international school community as separate from the Senegalese community. They identified that the school community, which they link with the expatriate community, is largely isolated within Dakar. This bubble construct is evident in the literature, and in particular is explored by Ledger (2016). However, despite using words like "isolation" and "bubble," to describe the ISD community, teachers also alluded to the complexity that exists within, suggesting that it is not a simple us/them dichotomy, and that perhaps the separation is discursive. Alex, Jamie, Morgan, Eli and Lou all discussed the Senegalese staff members and the "local hires" of the school in response to questions about community engagement, suggesting that they are both within and outside of the community. Morgan said that the bubble is more of a "soup bowl," referring to the fact that there are Senegalese staff members at the school and in embassy workplaces. These individuals are considered to be part of both communities to a certain degree. I reflected on this idea after my

interview with Morgan, as they explicitly questioned the dichotomy. I realized that I, too, have tended to frame the school community as a completely separate entity when discussing community engagement with students, ignoring the Senegalese staff members and students at the school.

This reflects the discussion by Tarc and Mishra Tarc (2015), who argued that the international school is not an "elite homogeneous bubble with impermeable borders keeping the host community at bay. It is a transnational space of gendered, racialized inter-class relations" (p. 48). Tarc and Mishra Tarc (2015) observed that the local population employed by the school participates within the community. The teachers interviewed recognized this fact, but largely framed the nature of the interactions between expatriate staff and students and local staff as concerning. Morgan suggested that the Senegalese workers on campus are largely "invisible," Alex found it disconcerting that staff and students were asked to provide charity donations to Senegalese staff members, and Eli noted that these employees are rarely invited to staff social gatherings, with the exception of Family Day. These observations reflected what Tanu (2016) described as a social and cultural hierarchy with the international school community in which the expatriate staff are in a higher position than the majority of host country nationals. This hierarchy seemed evident to and uncomfortable for teachers at ISD. Tanu (2016) outlined how this hierarchy is created by a discursive construction of distance between the school's community and the host society. After my interview with Morgan, I reflected that this seems to be the case at ISD; teachers, myself included, alluded to a cultural bubble but also recognized the diversity that exists within it. "Bubble" might not be the right metaphor for the school community. MacKenzie (2009) lamented that very little has been written about the non-teaching staff of international schools, and indeed they remain largely invisible in the literature. As I thought about the

interviews with Jamie, Alex and Morgan, as well as my own interactions with Senegalese staff, I thought that perhaps the relationships between expatriates and local staff within the locus of an international school in the Global South might reflect larger Global North/South dynamics.

Interestingly, teachers largely conceptualized community engagement as synonymous with community service. No definition or explanation of "community engagement" was mentioned in the interview questions, yet the majority of examples of community engagement programs provided by teachers were service-based, from fundraisers to orphanage visits to teaching English in a local neighbourhood. Non service-based programs, like robotics and athletics were mentioned in passing, but the majority of the discussion centered on community service. This is especially the case within the middle and high school departments.

To equate community engagement with community service in the Global South is problematic from a postcolonial perspective. Indeed, Tate (2013) argued that the service-learning programs that are embedded within international schools can result in students viewing the lives of locals as solely poverty-stricken, especially when compared with their Western lifestyles. Tikly (2004), Martin and Griffiths (2013) and Abbot (2006) all identified the "othering" that occurs with traditional service-learning programs, and how it can result in both international school students and the host nation becoming locked into a particular way of relating. It is not surprising that teachers defined community engagement in this way, as there is a clear emphasis on service inherent in the Services as Action (SA) and Creativity, Activity, Service (CAS) programs. Vaccaro (2011) and Martin and Griffiths (2013) further identified how such community service-learning programs tend to perpetuate stereotypes and reinforce issues of privilege, suggesting that they recreate "colonial, hierarchical ways of thinking, putting societies in the south in a deficit position, positioning them as 'backward' and in need of 'catching up'

with the West" (p. 942). Taylor and Alex both alluded to this pattern of relating. Taylor said that

"I feel uncomfortable sometimes with the donating stuff because I see that as reinforcing more of

a hierarchical relationship where one more privileged group is kind of condescending to give

stuff to a less privileged group." Taylor's comment about "condescending" to donate items to

Senegalese organizations made me consider that these service interactions are likely informing

the way ISD students view the Senegalese community in which they are embedded. The

literature on traditional versus critical service-learning examines this dynamic, and indeed the

service-learning programs described by the teachers interviewed all fall within the "traditional"

model of community service. This will be discussed in more depth in the subsequent section.

In general, the teachers interviewed found the community engagement efforts at ISD to

be lacking. They described service efforts superficial and not impactful for many of the reasons

outlined by Lillo (2016) in her study of service-learning in international schools in Kenya, South

Africa and Ethiopia. Echoing Lillo's (2016) findings, Morgan, Taylor and Jamie all mentioned

that fundraising was superficial, and Taylor, Morgan and Eli identified "one-off" volunteer

sessions as ineffective.

Research Question 2: How do teachers define meaningful and reciprocal engagement

between international school students and host nation school students?

In the interviews, teachers were explicitly asked to define meaningful and reciprocal

community engagement. Despite the fact that some of the interview prompts divided these two

concepts, the teachers' definitions of "meaningful" and "reciprocal" largely linked and

overlapped. Teachers stressed the importance of longer-lasting relationships with community

partners in their definitions. Their descriptions and examples aligned with the IBO's definition of

service as "collaborative and reciprocal engagement with the community in response to an

authentic need," and that "Service within CAS benefits all involved: students learn as they identify and address authentic community needs, and the community benefits through reciprocal collaboration. Service fosters development of abilities, attitudes and values in accordance with the IB mission statement and the IB learner profile." (International Baccalaureate Organization, 2015b, p.20).

I noticed that some teachers, Morgan in particular, somewhat glossed over their definition of meaningful and reciprocal engagement. It seemed easier to discuss examples of programs that they did not consider to be meaningful or reciprocal. Indeed, five of the six teacher emphasized that one-off community service activities were not meaningful, largely suggesting that they were superficial and with minimal impact on either party. This is also reflected in the *Creativity, Activity, Service Guide*: "Single incidents of engagement with individuals in a service context can lack depth and meaning. When possible, interactions involving people in a service context best occur with a regularity that builds and sustains relationships for the mutual benefit of all" (International Baccalaureate Organization, 2015b, p. 22). Wasner (2016) extended this further, arguing that short-term service-learning activities contribute to a superficial impression of a culture, "which can lead to generalisations and essentialist attitudes about an entire nation and its people" (p. 246).

After my interview with Lou, I noted that teachers seemed to struggle with isolating the concept of "reciprocal," and that they tended to emphasize the idea of partnership in their definition of meaningful engagement. This made me think that the mutuality of community engagement might be the most important element to ISD teachers. Larsen (2015) similarly emphasized the importance of projects that are respectful and collaborative, and based on relationships that are mutual—rather than a relationship in which one group feels they have

something to teach or give the other. Alex echoed this sentiment, explaining that engagement

should not consist of "ISD telling a local school 'we're going to give you this stuff'."

      As Lillo (2019) identified, there is still lack of clarity surrounding the definition of

service-learning and what it means to teachers, and this can lead to varied outcomes. She wrote,

"While varied understandings or outcomes are not necessarily problematic, in some instances

service learning is conflated with traditional volunteerism, which lacks the same intentionality

around learning. It occasionally lacks criticality" (p.5). Indeed, the definitions and examples of

meaningful and reciprocal engagement provided by the ISD teachers interviewed lacked a

critical element, and therefore aligned with the traditional model of service-learning. Although

teachers like Taylor and Eli discussed the importance of reciprocity, equal partnership and

relationships, there was no mention of a critical examination of "class structure, organizational

hierarchies and power, environmental degradation, access and ability, race, and gender," which

characterize a critical model (Carney, 2014, p. 82). This did not surprise me; the self-reflection

required for this model can be uncomfortable for students and teachers, as well as for the school

as an institution. It is something that I myself have struggled with during my time in Senegal as I

consider the socio-economic disparity that the international school likely has a role in

perpetuating. I can see how I directly benefit professionally and financially from this system. As

Wasner (2016) explained, "Entering such an arena of critical thinking within a framework of

global citizenship in schools can be a dangerous path to tread, if this means that the very power

hierarchies within which one finds oneself are to be uncovered" (p. 240).

      The importance of student learning through community engagement came up in

definitions of meaningful and reciprocal engagement, in particular with the elementary school

teachers. Eli brought this up in reference to the second grade games project, which they also

defined as reciprocal because it was "not just a one-way street." Lou referred to an overnight trip that saw both communities benefiting; the ISD students learned about the community, then donated benches. The IBO emphasizes that service-learning helps students in their development, specifically of "abilities, attitudes and values in accordance with the IB mission statement and the IB learner profile" (International Baccalaureate Organization, 2015b, p.20). It is important to note that Stoecker and Tryon (2009) identified that the traditional model of service-learning risks "[exploiting] poor communities as free sources of student education" (p. 3). This is worth considering when the IBO mandates community engagement as part of elementary curriculum, and middle and high school students are required to participate in the SA and CAS programs.

Although middle and high school teachers did not refer to curricular outcomes in their definitions of meaningful and reciprocal engagement, high school teachers in particular discussed CAS at length, and CAS has very clear learning outcomes linked with the service component. Morgan agreed with the teachers who responded to the faculty survey, suggesting that the "ticking the boxes" of learning outcomes is the motivation for the community engagement, and that this was not meaningful. It was interesting that of the middle and high school teachers, only Taylor mentioned student learning in their definition of meaningful and reciprocal engagement. The general impression was that the students are participating in these activities because they are mandatory, suggesting that teachers do not perceive the students as learning from much from the interactions. Jamie mentioned this as well, and it encouraged me to reflect on my own experience. Ultimately I do not feel that I, as a teacher, have learned much from participating in the one-off volunteer experiences, so how can I expect this of my students?

Research Question 3: What barriers do international school teachers in Dakar, Senegal see to meaningful and reciprocal engagement between the international school community and the host nation community?

The personal, socio-economic, and professional barriers to community engagement identified by ISD teachers were largely reflected in the literature. However, the discussion of language and cultural barriers to community engagement in the literature that did not emerge in the interviews. Specifically, Ledger (2016) attributed the lack of community engagement by international school teachers partially to language and cultural barriers and highlighted their role in perpetuating the expatriate "bubble." Roskell (2013) explored how international school teachers experienced culture shock and felt distanced from the local community. She noted that lack of ability in the local language and culture shock resulted in teachers forming strong, exclusive relationships with others of their same culture or nationality. Interestingly, cultural barriers were not emphasized by ISD teachers, and culture shock was not mentioned in the interviews at all. Only Jamie explicitly listed cultural difference an obstacle to community engagement in passing, but they did not elaborate. This surprised me at first, but as I reflected on my own experience, it occurred to me that many expatriate teachers have taken multiple overseas job postings. They therefore might feel accustomed to living in a different cultural context to their home country. Three teachers did indeed identify language ability as a barrier, but interestingly they spoke of it as a barrier for other ISD teachers and not themselves. English-speaking teacher Eli identified it as a barrier for themself, but indicated that it was one they could, and desired to, overcome. Initially I was surprised that language difference was somewhat downplayed by teachers. My interview with Jamie prompted some self-reflection; though I do not speak the predominant language Wolof, I am a French speaker. However, I cannot say that I

have had an easier time facilitating community engagement than my English-only speaking

colleagues. Indeed, one of the more robust service projects at ISD was initiated by one such

colleague.

The teachers suggested that a significant barrier to community engagement, more

complex than language and cultural differences, is tied to socio-economic forces. When asked if

the socio-economic barrier to engagement is greater than the language barrier, Jamie responded:

"For me, yes, way more—because for me it's not language [...] I wouldn't call it a problem, I see

it as a reality. It's the reality of the differences in socioeconomics." Jamie's sentiment is reflected

in the literature as well. In her study of International Schools in Kenya, Ethiopia and South

Africa, Lillo (2016) found that the economic disparity between students and the local community

makes genuine engagement challenging. Tarc and Mishra Tarc (2015) found that teachers

identified an impermeable line between the North American teaching staff and the local workers

at an international school, concluding that "The lines drawn between [them], an agonizing

dimension of their struggle for friendship, are a direct effect of larger socio-historical relations"

(p. 47). Tanu (2016) also described how the social and cultural hierarchy with the international

school community is reinforced by economic structure. ISD teachers Morgan, Alex and Jamie

identified this hierarchy as an obstacle to meaningful and reciprocal engagement, and Morgan

also said, "So the more underdeveloped the country is, the harder it's going to be to have

anything other than a show and tell contrived scenario for how they integrate." Morgan and

Jamie in particular located the problem in a broader postcolonial context, linking it to socio-

economic forces, but in so doing, they seemed to suggest that it is not in their power to change or

challenge this status quo. As Jamie said, this difference is a "reality." If teachers like Morgan and

Jamie see this as a "reality," I reflected, an individual expatriate teacher might feel that there is

nothing they can do to change it. I wondered to what extent a critical service-learning approach

that asks students and teachers to identify their role in the hierarchy could address these power

dynamics and challenge the idea that nothing can be done.

Teachers also cited professional barriers to meaningful and reciprocal community

engagement. They identified that community engagement is not one of the school's priorities.

Alex said, "I feel like our school mission is not even about intercultural understanding." Morgan

outlined, "When a kid goes to ISD, the goal is not to integrate with Senegal." Rather, according

to Morgan, the school's priority is to provide a familiar community and environment for students

who come from other countries. Morgan perceived this as normal for international schools, and

indeed his opinion is reflected in the literature. Cambridge and Thompson (2004) and Allen

(2002) described how creation of expatriate enclaves are somewhat intentional. Allen (2002)

argued that, in many cases, schools do not discourage the separation between the international

school and the host community, as the difference is its marketing tool. Because community

engagement is not prioritized, Alex and Taylor felt that time and resources were not devoted to

these initiatives, and both identified this as an obstacle. Lillo (2016) similarly found that teachers

at two of the three schools she studied listed competing school initiatives as one of the barriers to

more sustained interactions with community through service-learning projects.

Taylor, Eli and Lou noted that they have perceived a recent shift in school priorities,

suggesting that they hope that community engagement programs will strengthen. I agreed with

their observation; over the past school year I have found myself sitting in more staff meetings

and student assemblies on the topic of community service. As Taylor said, perhaps the school's

priority is there, but it seems to be in its "nascent stage."

Finally, all six teachers identified their own lack of knowledge as a barrier to meaningful and reciprocal community engagement. They recognized that they do not have the ability or expertise required to create meaningful and reciprocal community engagement opportunities. They discussed the lack of knowledge of community organizations and resources, as well as of the complex issues that service programs are designed to address. Referring to teachers, Morgan said, "The amount of effort and expertise it takes is way outside of what they got here to do." Alex also commented that teachers might not be interested in learning about Senegal. This prompted me to reflect on my first year teaching at ISD, and the amount of time and energy I devoted to adjusting to the new work environment and curriculum. Weekends were spent grading and planning, with little time to explore Senegal. Community engagement took a backseat to the everyday business of teaching. A lack of understanding the host country, Lillo (2016) found, can result in defaulting to the fundraising or charity efforts that ISD teachers largely found superficial. Indeed, Eli said, "I think that teachers don't always know the questions to ask about, I don't know everything that's available to us." Lillo (2016) also suggested that the transient nature of the lifestyle of students and teachers in many international schools result in gaps in facilitators' knowledge of school culture and protocols.

Research Question 4: What solutions do teachers propose to establish such meaningful engagement?

When teachers were asked if they have any suggestions to facilitate meaningful and reciprocal community engagement, three main ideas ideas emerged: soliciting the expertise of Senegalese staff members, intentionally educating teachers about the community, and building long-term relationships with community partners.

The first solution related to the Senegalese staff members of the school. ISD teachers

Lou, Alex and Morgan recognized that Senegalese staff members receive different treatment

from the expatriate staff, and identified that this is concerning. Indeed, Hayden (2006) noted that

host-country national teachers are often on different contracts than expatriate teachers with fewer

benefits, and therefore they may appear to be less valued than their expatriate colleagues.

However, ISD teachers said that Senegalese staff members have the potential to bridge the gap

between the expatriate population of the school and the broader Senegalese community,

therefore supporting meaningful and reciprocal community engagement. When asked: "Do you

feel like the school has the resources to provide that knowledge to teachers who might want to

start a program?" Jamie responded, "I think we do with the local staff." Jamie was the first

teacher to suggest this idea in the interviews. It had not occurred to me previously, perhaps

because it was not prominent in the literature on community engagement in international schools.

In general, there is not much literature on the local staff of international schools and the complex

personal and professional dynamics between them and the expatriate staff. Mackenzie (2009)

recognized this gap in the literature, and emphasized their important role in the school

community:

> What gives all of these non-teaching members of the school community a unique and
>
> important position in its organisational culture is that they will more than likely be
>
> citizens of the host country and also be relatively long-term employees of the school.
>
> Expatriate teachers (and administrators!) may come and go and may hog the limelight
>
> while they are present but it is more likely to be the locally-hired non-teaching staff who
>
> provide institutional continuity and give the school what might be called a centre of
>
> gravity (p.60).

Institutional continuity is valuable for long-lasting community engagement. Jamie suggested that Senegalese staff members could be consulted when planning the middle and high school Week Without Walls trips. Alex suggested that they are an untapped resource for finding community partners. As Senegalese staff members are likely to remain as employees for longer than the three to five-year average of teachers, Jamie and Alex's proposed solution could lead to longer-term partnerships and offer the stability that is often lacking in international schools. Mackenzie (2009) outlined how local staff members also bring the host culture and language into the school, and indeed Eli described a class project enriched by the participation of a Senegalese staff member. After my interview with Eli, I reflected that engaging with Senegalese staff members in class, and seeking their expertise when outside of the school gates, could foster relationships that are not within the donor/recipient framework.

The teachers interviewed also suggested that the school should provide more opportunities to learn about Senegal and help teachers find resources available in the community. A more in-depth knowledge of the host country would help build more thoughtful programming. Indeed, as Lillo (2019) recognized in her study, "Most of the facilitators interviewed had only been in the local context for several years, so lacked deep understanding of customs, values, etc. [...] These sorts of local knowledge gaps made it more difficult to cultivate meaningful and respectful projects" (p. 15). Alex suggested that a deeper understanding of Senegal as a country and culture would be beneficial, and therefore suggested that the school should "Educate teachers about Senegal beyond consumer and entertainment options" during new staff orientation. New staff induction at international schools tends to focus more on organizational culture and school systems rather than integration within the host community (Stirzaker, 2004), and this is indeed reflected in Zilber's (2009) "Orientation strategies for new staff: by and for

school leaders," which primarily lists methods to orient teachers within the work environment and not the host culture. Lou suggested a resource bank of community partners available to teachers, indicating that this might bridge the knowledge gap described by Lillo (2019) and create more sustainable projects.

The final suggestion proposed by teachers was to build more long-lasting partnerships with the local community. Taylor and Lou stressed that long-term partnerships would help the quality of the service that ISD students and staff would be able to provide to the community. Taylor said, "Developing more established relationship with the few institutions is going to be important because then over time you can develop I think a better mutual understanding of what each party is trying to get out of the relationship." This sentiment is echoed by Tiessen, Lough and Grantham (2018) who interviewed community partners of a volunteer program and found that the community members favoured "strong, lasting partnerships" with organizations in the Global North because of the benefits of "organizational capacity building, skills transfer, cross-cultural exchange, increased international exposure, and the advancement of national or community development objectives" (p. 134). Indeed, Wasner (2016) criticized the one-off volunteer experiences that ISD teachers described, saying that when "one is very much 'looking-in' on another way of life so foreign to one's own, one is contributing to a superficial and potentially damaging impression of a culture, which can lead to generalisations and essentialist attitudes about an entire nation and its people" (p. 246). Longer-lasting partnerships have the potential to foster the relationships that Taylor found most valuable: "the value of service lies in appreciating kind of the co-dependent and symbiotic relationship of people." After my interview with Taylor, I reflected that I have not seen very much thoughtful and nuanced reflection about

symbiotic relationships from students in their CAS written reflections. I wondered to what extent this is a result of the short-term service projects they engage in.

Emergent Themes

Three themes emerged from the findings that did not directly respond to the study's research questions. However, they are relevant to the function of community engagement at ISD. The emergent themes relate to teacher awareness of programs, resources and their roles and responsibilities. The findings suggest that improved communication can impact both teacher perception of community engagement and their involvement in it, working toward more meaningful and reciprocal programming.

I was surprised that teachers were largely unaware of some of the existing community engagement programs and opportunities, especially those that were not service-based, like athletics, robotics, the Forum of Students and the *Kirikou et Karaba* play co-production. I reflected that perhaps this was because teachers did not necessarily view the programs as community engagement, as they are not within the service framework. It could also point to a gap in internal communications. Despite the fact that ISD publishes a weekly "Jaguar Journal" in which many of these programs are highlighted, they did not come to mind during the interviews. Lillo (2019) found this to be the case in her study of the service-learning programs at international schools in Kenya, Ethiopia and South Africa. Teachers reported being too busy to read the newsletters that featured the community service programs, and "With few opportunities to informally discuss projects in which their students were engaged, many teachers were unaware of service-learning efforts on campus. They thus missed opportunities to become involved or support students' engagement" (p. 16).

Teachers were similarly unclear of the role of the Cultural Advisor and Community Outreach, Service-Learning Liaison (middle and high school) and Service-Learning Coordinator (elementary school). This employee's job description, encompassed in their three titles, is to facilitate community engagement activities for the whole school. Similar local leaders were present at the other African international schools studied by Lillo (2019), and "these individuals understood things about the community's history, customs, values, and norms," and were therefore able to help facilitate more meaningful programming (p. 15). Lillo (2019) suggested that such a liaison has the potential to be of value beyond simply coordinating community engagement activities. With their insider knowledge of the community, the leaders described by Lillo (2019) also were able to help the expatriate students and teachers "reflect more deeply on their privilege, roles, and approaches," therefore facilitating a more critical service-learning program (p. 15). At ISD, the liaison is Senegalese, multilingual and has been with the school for several years. That middle school and high school teachers did not identify the ISD Liaison as a resource for facilitating community engagement suggests another potential gap in communication. Mackenzie (2009) described host nation non-teaching staff as "the school's institutional memory," who therefore have the potential of fostering long-term community engagement (p. 58). The liaison's office is in the secondary wing of the school, so before I interviewed Lou and Eli, I wondered to what extent the elementary department utilized the liaison as a resource. I was surprised that both teachers seemed more aware of the liaison's role and responsibilities than the middle and high school teachers. I wondered if this was due to internal communication, or perhaps it can be attributed to the nature of the elementary teaching, which requires that teachers take more ownership over planning activities for their individual

class of students. Elementary teacher Lou perceived that the liaison works very hard, that there's "a lot on [their] plate," and suggested that this might impact their availability to teachers.

Finally, elementary, middle and high school teachers also expressed some confusion regarding their own role and responsibility in relation to facilitating community engagement opportunities for students. They questioned the extent to which they are meant to take initiative for developing programs and meeting the school's requirements for community engagement. As mentioned previously, they might lack the institutional knowledge of their role, and expectations placed upon teachers might vary depending on the administrators in charge. As Alex said, "It seems like how exactly the service is supposed to happen is unclear [...] then I heard a week or two ago—no, the classroom teachers are supposed to be implementing it like that's the ultimate goal [...]." After the interview with Alex, I wondered to what extent programming is stalled because teachers are not familiar with expectations and procedures.

Burke (2017) emphasized the role of expatriate teachers in relation to processes of colonisation, and argued that the expatriate teacher can be characterized as an "agentic and powerful force for change, facilitating forms of education that acknowledge past and present effects of colonisation in a more fulsome treatment of the teacher's role as an educator" (p. 214). Considering that the teachers interviewed were not sure of their own responsibility with regards to community engagement, this opportunity was most likely lost. Developing meaningful programming that challenges the status quo and helps "resist present and future oppressions" is no small demand on teachers who already are balancing the everyday requirements of the profession (Burke, 2017, p. 217). Morgan alluded to this, recognizing that implementing service programs that thoughtfully address complex community needs is challenging and not necessarily what teachers intend to do when they accept a new teaching job: "The amount of effort and

expertise it takes is way outside of what they got here to do." Taylor reflected that teachers

should take more responsibility, but are perhaps receiving mixed messages: "I think the

administration is afraid of giving teachers more stuff to do and the teachers protesting that the

stress levels, they are like 'oh you just need to sign off as a supervisor, there's no work

involved,' and actually I disagree with that. I think if it's going to be good, there is work

involved." While I agreed with Morgan that teachers do not come to Senegal with the unique

goal of developing thoughtful community engagement programs, after my interview with Taylor

I was reminded that, like so many aspects of the teaching profession, quality programming

requires thought, hard work and reflection. A meaningful, reciprocal and critical engagement

program would certainly be no exception.

Conclusions

This study interviewed six teachers at the International School of Dakar, two from each

of the elementary, middle and high school departments. The study sought to answer four research

questions: How do international school teachers in Dakar, Senegal conceptualize the engagement

between the international school community and the broader host nation community? How do

teachers define meaningful and reciprocal engagement between international school students and

host nation school students? What barriers do international school teachers in Dakar, Senegal see

to meaningful and reciprocal engagement between the international school community and the

host nation community? and What solutions do teachers propose to establish such meaningful

engagement?

The findings of this study indicated that teachers at the International School of Dakar

perceived the school's community engagement efforts as largely lacking, identifying personal,

professional and socio-economic barriers to engagement. These teachers' experiences are

significantly reflected in the literature on service-learning at international schools. The study also found that teachers defined meaningful and reciprocal community engagement as engagement that is long-lasting, mutually beneficial, thoughtful and that results in student learning. Importantly, they emphasized service in their explanations of community engagement, largely downplaying activities like athletics and theatre. Although this focus on service aligns with the IBO curriculum for SA and CAS, short-term projects and fundraising efforts are largely viewed as ineffective and are identified as problematic from a postcolonial perspective.

The emergent themes related to teacher awareness of engagement programs, school resources and teacher responsibilities. In general, the teachers interviewed were uncertain of the presence and nature of existing community engagement programs at ISD. Middle and high school teachers in particular did not recognize the Cultural Advisor/Service-Learning Liaison as a resource. Overall, teachers were not sure to what extent they were responsible for developing community engagement programs.

This case study found that ISD teachers' definitions of meaningful and reciprocal community engagement largely aligned with a traditional service-learning model. The literature clearly indicates how this model is problematic from a postcolonial perspective. This is especially important considering the student population of the International School of Dakar. Many are the children of the elite: foreign embassy and multinational company employees, as well as wealthy Senegalese families. Their perceptions of the local Senegalese community and their own role in the socio-economic hierarchy, reinforced in their formative years at ISD, can have longer-term consequences depending on their career paths.

I undertook this case study as a result of my own experience as an international school teacher in the Global South. Both in Egypt and in Senegal, I found it uncomfortable that the

international school community seemed to exist within a bubble in the host country, only engaging with the host culture on a superficial level. As a teacher, I understood that, to a certain extent, it was within my power to facilitate more meaningful and reciprocal community engagement activities. I wondered whether other teachers felt the same way. The ISD teachers I interviewed indeed expressed a similar sentiment, reinforcing the importance of meaningful and reciprocal community engagement. Examining the findings within a postcolonial theoretical framework helped me locate our discomfort within a larger socio-economic context and pointed me towards a critical service-learning model. The ideas that emerged from the semi-structured interviews revealed some of the many moving parts that must come together to build meaningful and reciprocal community engagement at international schools, and in so doing provided a practical way forward for the International School of Dakar.

Implications

This study posited that teachers' perceptions of what is meaningful and reciprocal community engagement will impact on the type of programming they deliver, and the extent to which their programming challenges the socio-economic hierarchy and colonial legacy. However, the study found that teachers' definitions of meaningful and reciprocal engagement largely did not align with the programming they support or their perceptions of the programming delivered at ISD. They attributed this to a variety of factors, from lack of teacher knowledge of Senegal, to socio-economic differences, to awareness of their roles and responsibilities. Their voices on this topic have implications for the International School of Dakar, as they clearly identify where they ask for further support and propose actionable solutions for the consideration of the administration of the International School of Dakar.

Although this case study focused on the International School of Dakar, the findings echoed a study by Lillo (2016) in South Africa, Ethiopia and Kenya. ISD teachers identified similar personal, professional and societal barriers to community engagement. This suggests that the findings of this case study are significant for other schools in Africa and in the Global South.

Recommendations for Future Research

ISD teachers defined community engagement as synonymous with community service, and indeed there is a small critical body of research on service-learning in international schools. There is a gap in the literature on non-service-based community engagement activities at international schools. Specifically, it would be valuable to research the prominence of these activities, how expatriate students and teachers view these activities, as well as how they are perceived by the host country students and community members.

There is very little written about the local staff of international schools and the professional dynamics that exist between them and the more transient expatriate staff. This dynamic is particularly interesting in international schools in the Global South, where a socio-economic hierarchy may be created (or reinforced) within the gates of the international school. As indicated by ISD teachers, these individuals can have an important role in bridging the gap between the expatriate community and the host nation community. This is an area for further research.

Other Recommendations

Local Staff Engagement

It would also be worthwhile for schools to recognize and examine the professional dynamics within the "soup bowl" of their international school community, in particular the dynamics between expatriate students and teachers and host nation employees. Specifically, ISD

teachers recommended that the school provide greater opportunities for interaction between local

staff and expatriate staff, and that local staff be included in the planning and execution of

community engagement programs.

Supporting Staff Learning

Teachers identified that they lack knowledge of community engagement opportunities as

well as of the culture and needs of Senegalese community that they are embedded in. It would be

beneficial for ISD to provide more extensive and ongoing training in these areas, both during

new-staff orientation and on an on-going basis throughout the school year.

Community Engagement and Critical Service-Learning

When read alongside the literature, the findings of this study suggest that ISD should

continue to support and celebrate activities that allow ISD students and the Senegalese

community to engage on equal footing.

As international schools continue to proliferate in the Global South, schools should

examine the relational dynamics of community engagement and the way the host nation is

framed through service-learning activities. Specifically, ISD should consider adopting a more

robust critical service model. Although the IBO definition of service is largely consistent with a

critical model, ISD teachers identified that this is not how service manifests in practice. Teachers

would likely benefit from professional development on a critical service-learning model. They

should be provided with concrete examples of what this model looks like in practice so that they

may guide the students in their service activities.

Communication

ISD teachers had trouble identifying existing community engagement programs. They

were not aware of the exact role of the Cultural Advisor/Community Service Liaison, and they

were unsure of their own responsibilities with regards to community engagement. Should ISD

choose to prioritize community engagement, greater emphasis on communicating and celebrating

the aforementioned programs, resources and responsibilities will benefit teachers.

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Appendix A: Recruitment Email

Hello,

I'm writing today to ask if you would be willing to participate in a case study I am conducting to complete my MEd thesis. I am looking for two participants from each of the elementary, middle school and secondary faculties.

You can find attached a letter outlining my research questions and the details of the case study.

I am requesting to interview you. It will be an unstructured interview (more like a conversation) on the topic of my research as detailed in the attached letter. It shouldn't last longer than 30-45 minutes. The interview will be in English. It will all be confidential and anonymous, and your participation will have no affect on your employment with ISD.

Please let me know if you're available for an interview. This is completely voluntary, and I know we are all very busy people, so it's no problem at all if you don't have the time. If you agree, we can arrange the time either before or after school or even on a weekend. We can even conduct the interview over Skype.

If you have any questions about the interview or about my research, please feel free to ask.

Thanks!

Ann Salter Jarrett

Appendix B: Information Letter

Dear potential participant,

The purpose of this letter is to provide information about the research for my thesis for my MEd in Social Justice Education. I am a Masters of Education candidate completing my thesis requirements under the supervision of Dr. Frances Helyar.

The title of my research project is "Teacher Perspectives on Community Engagement in an International School Context." The purpose of the study is to investigate how international school teachers in Dakar, Senegal conceptualize the interactions between the international school community and the wider Senegalese community, and to identify barriers to meaningful and reciprocal engagement. My research questions are:

1. How do international school teachers in Dakar, Senegal conceptualize the engagement between the international school community and the broader host nation community?
2. How do teachers define meaningful and reciprocal engagement between the international school community and the host nation community?
3. What barriers do international school teachers in Dakar, Senegal see to meaningful and reciprocal engagement between the international school community and the host nation school community?
4. What solutions do teachers propose to establish such meaningful engagement?

I hope to interview six teachers from the International School of Dakar, two from the elementary school, two from the middle school and two from the high school. As such, I would like to interview you for data gathering purposes. The interview will take approximately 30-45 minutes to complete and will be audio recorded and transcribed. You will have the opportunity to review the transcript before it is analysed.

There is no forseeable harm associated with participating in my research, nor are there direct benefits. Participation in this study will have no effect, either positive or negative, on your employment at the International School of Dakar. As I, the researcher, am a fellow employee at the International school of Dakar, there is potential for real, perceived or potential conflicts of interest. Should any emerge, you may withdraw from the study. Data collection will occur in June 2019, will be securely stored by me while completing the research, and will then be submitted to my supervisor, Dr. Frances Helyar, who will securely store the data on an external hard drive for 5 years before being destroyed, as per Lakehead University's policy. Only my supervisor and I will have access to the raw data. Your anonymity and confidentiality as a participant in the research will be guaranteed, as far as possible, through the use of pseudonyms in the data analysis and reporting processes.

Your participation in this research project is entirely voluntary. As a research participant, your rights include: the right to not participate; to withdraw at any time during the data collection

phase without prejudice to pre-existing entitlements, and to continuing and meaningful opportunities for deciding whether or not to continue to participate; to refuse to answer any questions in the interview process; to opt out without penalty and to have any collected data withdrawn from the data base and not included in the study (until completion of the data collection phase of the study; if you choose to opt out any data pertaining to your participation will be destroyed); the right to privacy, anonymity and confidentiality; and to safeguards for security of data.

I have completed the Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans Tutorial Course on Research Ethics and provided a certificate as evidence of completion to my thesis supervisor. If at any time, you have any questions or concerns regarding the project, please feel free to contact me by email, asalter@lakeheadu.ca, or by telephone, +221.766002858, or you may contact my supervisor, Dr. Frances Helyar by email at fhelyar@lakeheadu.ca or by telephone, +1.705.330.4006 ext. 2623.

Should any personal concerns emerge either during or after the interview process, you may contact our school mental health counsellor, Mary Giuliani (maryg@faculty.isd.sn) to make a free and confidential appointment. You may also contact Kelly Trimble (trimbletherapy@gmail.com), who provides mental health counseling off-campus and is not affiliated with the International School of Dakar.

This study has been approved by the Lakehead University Research Ethics Board. If you have any questions related to the ethics of the research and would like to speak to someone outside of the research team please contact Sue Wright at the Research Ethics Board at +1.807.343.8283 or research@lakeheadu.ca.

Your support as a participant will be a valued component of my proposed MEd thesis. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Ann Salter Jarrett

Appendix C: Consent Form

Lakehead University - Participant Consent Form

Study title: Teacher Perspectives on Community Engagement in an International School Context.

I, _____, (participant name) have read and understood the above information, including the potential risks and benefits of the study. I hereby consent to my participation in the research.

I understand:

- The potential risks and benefits of the study;
- My participation is voluntary and I may withdraw from the research at any point during the data collection period;
- I may choose not to answer any questions;
- All information gathered will be treated confidentially;
- All data will be securely stored by the student researcher while completing the assignment, and will then be submitted to the supervisor, Dr. Frances Helyar, who will securely store the data on an external harddrive for 5 years in a locked cabinet before being destroyed, as per Lakehead University's policy;
- I will not be identifiable in any written documents, publications or presentations resulting from this research;
- A digital copy of the MEd thesis will be made available to me upon my response to an emailed invitation once the MEd degree is granted

I also understand that the results of this research will be used only in the following:

- Publication and presentation of thesis as part of MEd requirements
- Presentation of results to Administrative team at the International School of Dakar
- Potential publication of subsequent articles based on research

_____   _____   _____

(Print Name)   (Signature)   (Date)

Interviews will be audio recorded and transcribed. You will have the opportunity to review transcribed interviews. Please check one:

___ Yes, I consent to be audio recorded for the purpose of this research study.
___ No, I do not consent to be audio recorded for the purpose of this research study.

Please check one:

____ Yes, I am interested in receiving a copy of the MEd thesis via email.
____ No, I am not interesting in receiving a copy of the MEd thesis via email.

Please sign and return this form to me. A copy of this consent form will be provided to my supervisor. For further information concerning the completion of this form, please contact:

Ann Salter Jarrett, MEd Candidate - Faculty of Education, Lakehead University
+221.766002858 / Email: asalter@lakeheadu.ca

And/or the supervisor:
Frances Helyar, PhD
Associate Professor and Chair, Education Programs, Faculty of Education, Lakehead University Orillia
Office: 705-330-4008 ext. 2623 / Email: fhelyar@lakeheadu.ca

Appendix D: Interview Guide

Interview questions are based on the case study's research questions. The interview will be semi-structured. Depending on how the participant responds to the interview question, any of the prompts (in italics) may be asked, or other follow-up questions that emerge based on the response. Participants will be asked all of the final questions.

Research question 1: How do international school teachers in Dakar, Senegal conceptualize the engagement between the international school community and the broader host nation community?

Interview question 1: What do you think of the engagement between the international school community and the wider Senegalese community? What comes to mind?

Possible Prompts:

- *How would you describe the ways that ISD staff and students interact or engage with the wider Senegalese community?*

- *What activities do students and teachers participate in that allow them to connect with the wider Senegalese community?*

- *Do you find that staff and students are able to learn about Senegal from these connections?*

- *Do you find that the Senegalese community has the opportunity to learn about the international community through these connections?*

- *To what extent is it important for these connections to be established/maintained?*

- *What would you change or improve about these connections, if anything, and why?*

- *Do you see these interactions as beneficial to the Senegalese community. Why or why not?*

- *Do you see these interactions as beneficial to the ISD community? Why or why not?*

Interview Question 2: What do you know about ISD's policies regarding community engagement and service learning?

Possible Prompts:

- *Have you read any policy or curriculum documents related to community engagement and service learning?*

- *To what extent do you feel like current ISD programs adhere to the school's policy and curriculum documents?*

Research Question 2: How do teachers define meaningful and reciprocal engagement between international school students and host nation school students?

Interview Question 3: If I were to ask you to define meaningful and reciprocal engagement between the International School community and the Senegalese community, how would you define it?

Possible Prompts:

- *How would you define "meaningful"? Do you think the engagement between the international school students and Senegalese students is meaningful?*

- *Can you think of any examples that you have seen in your time at the school?*

- *How would you define "reciprocal"? Do you think the engagement between the international school students and Senegalese students is reciprocal?*

- *Can you think of any examples that you have seen in your time at the school?*

Research Question 3: What barriers do international school teachers in Dakar, Senegal see to meaningful and reciprocal engagement between the international school community and the host nation community?

Interview question 4: What processes either facilitate or are obstacles to meaningful and reciprocal engagement between the international school community and the Senegalese community?

Possible Prompts:

- *What is the process to establish a project or program that connects ISD staff and students with the Senegalese community?*

- *Are there systems in place at the school that help facilitate these types of programs? How well do they work?*

- *Do you perceive any obstacles that make it more challenging for teachers and students to engage with the Senegalese community? If so, what are they?*

- *Could you give me some examples of these barriers/supports?*

Research Question 4: What solutions do teachers propose to establish such meaningful engagement?

Interview Question 4: What ideas do you have to support or facilitate meaningful and reciprocal community engagement?

Possible Prompt:

- *Considering any obstacles you may have identified, what systems or supports would you like to see in established so that the engagement might be more meaningful?*

Final Questions/Thoughts:

Is there anything else on this topic that you would like to add?

If there are any other ideas or examples that come to your mind, can you please email them to me (asalter@lakeheadu.ca) within the next 7 days?

I would also like to remind you of your access to our school mental health counsellor, Mary Giuliani (maryg@faculty.isd.sn). You may contact her to make a free and confidential appointment at anytime.

You may also contact Kelly Trimble (trimbletherapy@gmail.com), who provides mental health counseling off-campus and is not affiliated with the International School of Dakar. There is likely a cost associated with accessing this off-campus service.