Voices of the "served": community resident perspectives on international service-learning in Peru.

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VOICES OF THE “SERVED”: COMMUNITY RESIDENT PERSPECTIVES ON INTERNATIONAL SERVICE-LEARNING IN PERU

By
Adam C. Stieglitz
B.A., University of Miami (Florida), 2004
M.P.A., Middlebury Institute of International Studies at Monterey, 2011

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University of Louisville
Louisville, Kentucky

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A Dissertation Approved on

June 23, 2022

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my grandma, Honey. Thank you for being my biggest fan. Love, your número uno.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

As I reflect on the past five years, I realize the commonly referenced “dissertation journey” is, indeed, quite an accurate characterization. I have been fortunate to experience many extraordinary journeys over the course of my life. At the end of the day, it is the people along the way that make it possible…and worth it.

I cannot offer enough thanks and gratitude to Dr. Mary Brydon-Miller, the chair of my committee, mentor, advocate, and perhaps more than all, dear friend. Mary, ever since we met in Monterrey, you have continuously stuck your neck out for me. You believed in my research, but more so, you believed in me. I could not have done this without you. Thank you.

And to the rest of my committee, I am grateful for all your support. Dr. Jason Immekus - you and I worked together closely since I was your wide-eyed, first year, graduate assistant. Thank you for showing me the ropes of higher ed, but also being a friend at the times when I needed one the most. Dr. Meghan Pifer - thank you for pushing me to realize my potential from the start. You always believed my research could make an actual contribution to the field, and I will forever be grateful that you held me to the highest standard. Dr. Netta Avinari - it has been such a pleasure collaborating with you over the years. I appreciate you joining my committee and always making yourself available to guide me in the right direction. When I got stuck (which was often), I could always depend on you to get me back on track, so thank you.

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To my mom (Rob) and my dad (Al) - without your love and support this would have been impossible. Thank you for always unconditionally having my back. I love you both, always. And to my sister Randi (Svenny) - you are my best friend and favorite person. I love you more.

Finally, to my family at the Andean Alliance for Sustainable Development. Thank you for continuously supporting me as I strive to make our organization a first-class leader in the field. It has been quite a ride thus far; somehow, it feels like the best is still yet to come.
ABSTRACT

VOICES OF THE “SERVED”: AN ACTION RESEARCH INVESTIGATION OF COMMUNITY RESIDENT PERSPECTIVES IN INTERNATIONAL SERVICE-LEARNING

Adam C. Stieglitz
June 23, 2022

The purpose of this study is to capture and share community resident perspectives on international service-learning (ISL). Community resident voice is largely underrepresented in ISL scholarship and practice. Conversely, research on student outcomes is ubiquitous, which generally makes student benefit a predominant consideration in ISL program design. Consequently, scholars have criticized ISL programs for being inherently extractive and even an embodiment of modern-day colonialism. This study aims to address this critique by offering a robust representation of community residents’ perspectives for how to responsibly design ISL programs.

This study used action research methodology to capture community resident voices who participate in ISL. Specifically, I used Cousins and Chouinard’s (2012) participatory evaluation method to evaluate ISLP Perú, an ISL partnership between the Andean Alliance for Sustainable Development, the Speed School of Engineering at the University of Louisville, and Sacllo, an Andean community in Perú’s Sacred Valley. The research questions guiding the study were 1) how do Sacllo residents perceive and experience international service learning, and 2) according to Sacllo residents, what are
ISLP Perú’s greatest strengths and weaknesses? In alignment with the participatory evaluation framework’s emergent nature, program stakeholders played a key role in contributing to and framing the line of inquiry. In the end, data collection involved a mix of semi-structured interviews, focus groups, and a series of participatory activities to systematize the ISLP Perú experience.

This study’s primary deliverable is the International Service-Learning Framework for Faculty (ISLFF), a guide developed out of this research to help faculty navigate the process of partnering with community residents in ISL. Specifically, the ISLFF includes a series of actionable processes, prompts, and questions to help create communication channels, identify local challenges, co-create program deliverables, assess and access resources, and incorporate interculture exchange into ISL program planning. Indeed, various scholars have contributed frameworks, guides, curricula, and checklists to help guide faculty through the multi-layered web of service-learning and campus-community partnerships, however the ISLFF is the first framework to fully represent the community’s perspective. Primary implications for future research involve emphasizing the natural confluence of action research methodology in ISL, as well as reconsidering the value of a transactional approach to ISL. The impact this study can have on the field includes increasing levels of mutual benefit in ISL programs, creating fair and just campus-community partnerships, and offering an innovative approach towards engaged scholarship in the international realm.
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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Service-learning (SL) is a pedagogy that combines academic learning with meaningful community service (Bringle & Hatcher, 1995; Sigmon, 1994). It is a type of campus-community partnership that embodies Ernest Boyer’s (1996) idea of engaged scholarship, which suggests higher education institutions have a responsibility to serve as a resource to their surrounding society. Service-learning is the primary mechanism universities use to implement their service-driven mission (Driscoll, 2008). According to a Campus Compact survey, 52% of university respondents have a formal designation for community-based learning courses, averaging 83 such courses per institution (Campus Compact, 2016).

This study focuses on international service-learning (ISL), a crossbreed of SL, study abroad, and international education (Bringle & Hatcher, 2011). International service-learning can be defined as:

A structured academic experience in another country in which students (a) participate in an organized service activity that addresses identified community needs; (b) learn from direct interaction and cross-cultural dialogue with others; and (c) reflect on the experience in such a way as to gain further understanding of course content, a deeper understanding of global and intercultural issues, a broader appreciation of the host country and the discipline, and an enhanced sense of their own responsibilities as citizens, locally and globally (Bringle & Hatcher, 2011, p.19).
Mutual benefit between campus and community partners is an indicator of success for ISL programs (Bringle & Hatcher, 1996; Cruz & Giles, 2000; Enos & Morton, 2003; Holland, 2001). Scholars commonly measure campus benefit through student learning outcomes. Students who participate in service-learning benefit from improved grades, increased civic engagement, problem-solving skills, and greater appreciation for diversity (Berson & Younkin, 1998; Gray et al., 2000; Levesque-Bristol, et al., 2010). In the international context, some studies suggest that students reap profound changes in their worldview, self-concept, and overall understanding of social problems (e.g., Kiely, 2004, 2005a). While research about student learning outcomes in service-learning is ubiquitous, identifying and measuring community benefit presents a controversial issue.

The claim that successful ISL equates to mutual benefit between campus and community partners becomes stifled upon closer consideration of what constitutes community and how community benefit is measured. The term community in ISL research can be ambiguous, which has the potential to misguide a researcher’s line of inquiry. Clayton et al. (2010) suggested researchers distinguish between community residents and community organizations, however responses to scholarly calls for research on community voice concentrate on the latter (Blouin & Perry, 2009; Ferrari, 2000; Sandy & Holland, 2006; Tryon & Stoecker, 2008; Worrall, 2007). Consequently, findings from prior studies primarily promote the successes and challenges local organizations experience when hosting service learners and omit community residents’ voices from the discussion. Though host organizations’ perspectives offer a sound contribution to the discourse on ISL impact, it is imperative to also represent community resident voice.

**Purpose of Study**
A lack of knowledge about community resident perspectives in ISL research results in student-centric program design. This is problematic because ISL programs designed without the input of community residents are susceptible to unfavorable consequences. VerBeek (2002) contended poor attempts of ISL “can disempower local communities, do not build local capacity, and are neither equitable, nor sustainable” (p. 59). In a similar vein, hosting service learners can come at an economic cost for communities, for example wasted time, energy, and other resources (Blouin & Perry, 2009; Crabtree, 2013; Wood, et al., 2011). This gives credence to critical scholars who argue ISL is representative of post-colonial behavior (Hammersely, 2012; Henry & Breyfogle, 2006; Reynolds, 2019; Sharpe & Dear, 2013), as well as Freirian philosophy, which illuminates oppressive structures within education systems and criticizes educational institutions for exerting power for their own advancement at the expense of vulnerable populations and societies (Freire, 1972). Despite minimal representation of community resident voice amongst the ISL community, universities continue to promote and implement ISL programs, as evidenced by the ubiquity of ISL programs across the US and global north.

The scarcity of community resident perspectives in ISL scholarship makes it nearly impossible to measure mutual benefit, and consequently ISL program success. Perhaps more importantly, the absence of community resident perspectives in ISL program design leaves community partners vulnerable to extractive behaviors of powerful higher education institutions. A better understanding of community resident perspectives will contribute to more responsible and meaningful ISL program design and
implementation. Therefore, the purpose of this investigation is to gain a better understanding of community resident perspectives in ISL.

Chapter 1 of this dissertation begins with the origin of the study, along with an introduction to three central figures in this investigation: 1) the Andean Alliance for Sustainable Development (AASD), a Peruvian non-profit organization I co-founded in 2010; 2) ISLP Perú, an international service-learning program I started at the University of Louisville; and 3) Sacllo, an indigenous farming community in the Peruvian Andes. Next, I present the research questions guiding this study and introduce action research as the research methodology. I justify why action research is appropriate for this study and introduce my researcher positionality and the questions guiding my reflexive process. Finally, Chapter 1 concludes with an articulation of my objectives and intended contribution to action research theory and practice.

**Origin of this Study**

The origin of this study stems from my time facilitating ISL programs in Perú as Director of the Andean Alliance for Sustainable Development, a Peruvian non-profit organization I co-founded in 2010. In Perú, the AASD is primarily known as an agriculture organization because of our flagship community greenhouse program. Since 2010, the AASD has partnered with over a dozen high-altitude indigenous communities to build greenhouses and help address challenges related to farmer health and economic opportunity. In the United States (and, also in Perú), the AASD is known as an educational organization because of the AASD experiential education program. Each year, the AASD hosts dozens of students from various US-based universities and facilitates integrated, experiential learning programs designed around research and data
collection, service-related programming, cultural immersion, or semester-long projects or internships.

The AASD’s goal is to create mutual benefit for all actors involved in AASD programs. The AASD operates through an approach centered around trust-based relationships and participatory methodology is critical to achieving mutual benefit. In practice, this involves spending time in local communities, co-defining problems, and collectively determining courses of action to address those problems. During my tenure as AASD Director of Experiential Education (2011-2018), part of my responsibility was to design and facilitate international service-learning programs to benefit student participants and community partners. Ideally, students benefit from cultural immersion, applying course-based skills in the field, and personal and professional transformation. Community residents should benefit from advancements in community projects, data to support understanding of local challenges, and/or economic growth.

Eventually I began to inquire whether the programs I was facilitating were mutually beneficial. On one hand, it was clear AASD student participants were benefiting. For example, post-program surveys from a 3-week long program in January 2017 showed students benefit from a better understanding of their personal and professional goals, increased intercultural competency, and a newfound understanding of international development. Yet, a lack of tangible, measurable program outputs, as well as disenchanted community resident participants suggested local communities were not benefiting as much as students, if at all. It became clear the AASD’s practice did not align with the AASD’s community-first philosophy, thus I took the lead on addressing this challenge.
I turned to literature in search of guidance for how to increase community benefit, but valuable information was scarce. I was taken aback by how research about improving the student experience outweighed research on achieving community benefit. Indeed, certain scholars acknowledged the importance of generating data on community perspectives, however these were more commonly via calls for future research rather than existent empirical studies. It became clear the challenge I faced was not unique. I determined it was in the best interest for the AASD, local community partners of the AASD, the field of ISL, and myself to pursue ways to improve ISL program design through doctoral research.

**International Service-learning Program – Perú**

In 2017, I enrolled in the Educational Leadership, Evaluation, and Organization Development program in the College of Education and Human Development at the University of Louisville (UofL). One of my primary goals was to create an AASD experiential education program on the UofL campus; hence, upon my arrival, I began networking and setting up meetings to promote the AASD and gauge interest for international education programs. After meeting with various representatives on campus such as faculty in the Spanish department and the director of the international center, I was eventually introduced to Caleb Brooks, director of the International Service-learning Program at UofL. Caleb mentioned the timing of our meeting was serendipitous because he was currently creating an ISL program with the Speed School of Engineering at the University of Louisville (the Speed School). That same day, Caleb introduced me to Mary Andrade, a senior advisor at Speed and an advocate for international education.
During our meeting, Mary spoke about Speed’s nascent global engineering track, which was created for students to build skills they would not attain in a traditional classroom, such as intercultural competency, critical thinking, and applied problem-solving. I spoke about the AASD’s experiential education program and the value the AASD places on creating mutual benefit for student and community participants. It quickly became clear a partnership between the AASD and Speed made sense. Mary scheduled a follow up meeting with Dr. Thomas Rockaway, a full-time professor in the civil engineering department, who, despite his initial skepticism, committed to being faculty lead of an ISL program. Soon after, the International Service-learning Program - Perú (ISLP Perú) was created as a formal collaboration between the Speed School of Engineering and the AASD. The purpose of ISLP Perú is twofold and best described through the lens of student and community outcomes.

For students, ISLP Perú is a credit-bearing ISL program that includes a course- and field-based component. Student participants spend two months on the University of Louisville campus learning a mix of theoretical and practical skills. First, students learn about Perú’s history and culture, international service-learning, and intercultural competency. Then, students are briefed on a real-life community challenge in Perú and learn specific engineering skills to help address that challenge. Finally, students travel to Perú for two weeks where they apply their newfound skills and theories in the field. In sum, ISLP Perú provides students the opportunity to apply engineering concepts in the field, gain domain-general thinking skills such as critical thinking, leadership, and problem solving, and immerse themselves in a culture different from their own.
The second purpose of ISLP Perú is to support Andean communities by contributing engineering skills and expertise to help address complex development challenges. Specifically, ISLP Perú supports the Andean farming community of Sacllo to identify and address issues related to their community irrigation system. Sacllo’s outdated irrigation system is losing water and therefore creating social and economic strife amongst community members. To date, community leaders in Sacllo have been unsuccessful in petitioning the local government to aid in reconstructing the canal system. Hence, another purpose of ISLP Perú is to help Sacllo capture, document, and communicate the extent to which their communal irrigation system is damaged (See Chapter 3 of this proposal for a more detailed account of the situation in Sacllo, ISLP Perú, and program deliverables).

To date there have been two iterations of ISLP Perú. Formal and informal evaluations indicate student goals have been achieved. For example, when asked to describe how ISLP Perú impacted how participants viewed their role as an engineer, one student responded:

ISLP has changed how I see my role as an engineer. I realize that I have more of a social responsibility than I thought I did as an engineer, and that no matter what job I take I can always look to work towards the good of all people.

In another example, when asked to reflect upon global citizenship, one student responded:

Being a global citizen is treating the whole world as your small community. While we were in Perú, I realized how much more community oriented Perú was than the United States. To me, being a global citizen is important and means to
me that I should (and do) care about how people are doing in my community and should try to help if I can.

These testimonials offer a small glimpse of how students who participate in ISLP Perú benefit from personal and professional growth.

However, the extent to which Sacllo benefits from participating in ISLP Perú is unclear. Informal conversations with community members suggest community benefit have been minimal. For instance, most community members have never seen a deliverable or output from the program. Further, there have not been any improvements made to the canal system or any meaningful use of the data and information provided to the community. ISLP Perú is designed to be mutually beneficial, yet it appears only students benefit. The unequal distribution of benefit in ISLP Perú is problematic, yet also presents an opportunity to better understand and improve the program.

Research Questions

The unequal distribution of benefit between student and community participants in ISLP Perú exemplifies the stance of critical scholars who posit ISL is a modern-day form of colonialism, where students and higher education institutions benefit at the expense of community time, energy, and resources (Blouin & Perry, 2009; Crabtree, 2013; Wood, et al., 2011). The wider community of ISL scholars have acknowledged those claims, and, in response, called for more research to better understand community partners’ perspectives (Bringle et al., 2009; Clayton et al., 2010; Crabtree, 2008; Cruz & Giles, 2000; Giles & Eiler, 1998; Sandy & Holland, 2006; Stoecker, 2016). However, to date those calls for research have gone mostly unanswered. Perhaps the lackluster response can be attributed to challenges associated with gaining access to community
resident perspectives, such as the inability to effectively identify residents, access resources to connect with the network, and establish a project’s reach (James & Logan, 2016). Certainly, these challenges can be compounded in the international realm where differences in language, technology, culture, and time zones can all create barriers to meaningful dialogue and data collection.

As a budding practitioner-scholar, I am in a unique position to rise above these barriers and respond to the call for more research on community resident voices in ISL. The purpose of this research is to gain a better understanding of community resident perspectives in ISL. The research questions guiding this study are:

RQ1. How do Sacllo residents perceive and experience international service-learning?

RQ2. According to Sacllo residents, what are ISLP Perú’s greatest strengths and weaknesses?

I used action research methodology to answer these questions. Specifically, I partnered with community residents from Sacllo and conducted a participatory evaluation (Cousins & Chouinard, 2012) of ISLP Perú. Participatory evaluation is an action research method that involves key stakeholders in the design and implementation of a program evaluation (Cousins & Chouinard, 2012). In Chapter 2 of this dissertation, I present a review of the literature to support the claim that there is a need for more community resident voice in academic literature on ISL. In Chapter 3, I offer a detailed account of action research methodology and how I used participatory evaluation to capture community resident voice in this study.

Community residents had a lot to say about ISLP Peru and ISL in general. Perhaps one of the largest takeaways of this study was that Sacllo residents saw value in
participating in ISLP Peru. One major reason Sacllo residents saw value in participating
in ISLP Peru is because Sacllo is facing a serious challenge with respect to their
community irrigation system, and they feel that trained university representatives can
contribute to the community’s understanding of the problem, as well as possibly
identifying a solution to their challenge. Indeed, with respect to the larger dialogue on
ISL, this community identified stance pushes back on the notion that community
transformation should necessarily be the milestone community outcome of ISL (Clayton
et al., 2009; Enos & Morton, 2003), and instead more consideration should be given to
the value of a transactional approach to ISL. Certainly, a hybrid approach that prioritizes
community transformation alongside tangible community outcomes seems the most ideal.

In Chapter 4, I present the findings from the participatory evaluation. Sacllo
residents suggest several process-oriented considerations for ways university
representatives can responsibly approach working with a community partner in ISL. The
findings from this study include identifying and addressing a meaningful community
challenge, incorporating intercultural exchange, university representatives doing what
they say they are going to do, considering and being transparent about the program
budget, and communicating at all levels of program implementation. Finally, in Chapter
5, I discuss the implications this study has on both research and practice, which primarily
includes the International Service Learning Framework for Faculty, a guide developed
out of this research to help faculty navigate the process of partnering with community
residents in ISL. Specifically, the ISLFF includes a series of actionable processes,
prompts, and questions to help create communication channels, identify local challenges,
co-create program deliverables, assess and access resources, and incorporate interculture exchange into ISL program planning.

**Why Action Research?**

Action research pushes back on the positivist worldview of traditional academic inquiry. Rather than adhering strictly to the convention that research must be objective and value-free, action research encompasses a constructivist worldview that acknowledges the complexity of phenomenon. It embraces the notion that knowledge is socially constructed, thus allowing for knowledge to emerge, and be captured through a participatory and democratic process. This process represents a commitment to action and social change, one of action research’s core tenets (Brydon-Miller, et al., 2003).

The field of ISL is ripe for an action research investigation. ISL research have come up short in representing community residents’ voices and advancing processes that result in community benefit. An action research investigation in the field of ISL will allow unheard voices from the campus-community partnership to finally be represented within the scholarly discussion. Additionally, it will illuminate new perspectives for how to frame, view, design and implement ISL programs. Finally, in this study, action research’s collaborative approach allows me to leverage my role as a practitioner-scholar to access quality and meaningful data with the intention of improving an actual ISL program – ISLP Perú – in the field.

**Researcher Positionality**

insiders to contribute to their personal and professional development, especially regarding solving an identified problem. Additionally, it was helpful to consider where I exist on the insider-outsider researcher positionality continuum, which aims to help action researchers clarify their stance in the setting that is being studied (Herr & Anderson, 2005). According to Herr and Anderson (2005), “the degree to which researchers position themselves as insiders or outsiders will determine how they frame epistemological, methodological and ethical issues” (p. 30). Indeed, action research is an ideal methodology for this study given my role as an ISL practitioner, budding scholar, and community member in Sacllo.

Action researchers can occupy multiple positions (Herr & Anderson, 2005). One position I take throughout this research is outsider-within. Nearly a decade of intimate, field-based experience in Perú, relationship building with community partners, and living in a local community that hosts ISL groups offers me a unique perspective from within that context. This position enables me to contextualize differing perspectives of the various stakeholders and knowledge brokers involved in this study. This is important because deep-rooted power dynamics affect the campus-community partnership (Camacho, 2004; Freire, 1972; Hammersely, 2013) and being able to identify, acknowledge, distinguish, and address contradictions between a dominant group’s ideologies and actions is critical to this study.

While the relationships and trust I have built with local community members leaves me confident I can capture a local’s perspective for this study, still, I am and always will be an outsider. Regardless of how embedded I am in the community, as a White man with a middle- to upper-class upbringing, I will never be able to relate to the
realities and challenges of an indigenous Andean community the same way a community resident does. In fact, I would be remiss to not consider whether my role in this study coincides with the argument that international service-learning embodies a modern-day form of colonialism (Camacho, 2004; Hammersely, 2013; Reynolds, 2016). One might argue my role as an outsider in this study is embodying that critique, rather than alleviating it.

In addition to being an outsider-within, I also carry an insider positionality to this study. An insider is a researcher doing research on their own practice or practice setting (Herr & Anderson, 2005). As a co-founder of ISLP Perú and the AASD, I am highly invested in the success of both entities. A main characterization of action research is its emphasis on improving a situation. Therefore, as an insider in this study, I have two main intentions: 1) to increase ISLP Perú’s impact and level of mutual benefit and, 2) help grow the AASD’s experiential education program to become a renowned leader in the field of international education.

**Reflexivity**

Reflexivity is the way an author describes their own position vis-à-vis research participants and the issues being examined (Stoecker & Brydon-Miller, 2013). Action researchers use reflexive processes to contextualize claims, create transparency, and to anchor ownership of expression (Bradbury-Huang, 2010). Starr and Mitchell (in press) broke down Danielewicz’s (2001) articulation of reflexivity as:

An act of self-conscious consideration that can lead people to a deepened understanding of themselves and others, not in the abstract, but in relation to specific social environments… [and] foster a more profound awareness… of how
social contexts influence who people are and how they behave… It involves a person’s active analysis of past situations, events, and products, with the inherent goals of critique and revision for the explicit purpose of achieving an understanding that can lead to change in thought or behavior.

As such, my own reflexive process begins with the following questions and initial responses.

*Why am I doing this research?*

I believe the campus-community partnership can play a key role in addressing pressing societal issues. However, after spending ten years in the field facilitating ISL programs and three years of scouring ISL scholarship, it is clear the campus-community partnership is not meeting its potential. Specifically, community partners do not benefit as much as student participants. To me, this inadequacy can be attributed to a shallow understanding of what ISL community partners need and how (if) their needs can be realized through the campus-community partnership.

I am doing this research because I believe I am the best person to capture and share community resident perspectives in ISL. Indeed, community resident perspectives are difficult to obtain (James & Logan, 2016), especially in the international realm. My position as a practitioner-scholar and outsider-within offers a unique opportunity to rise above those challenges. In sum, there are two major reasons I am doing this research: 1) I believe the campus-community partnership has potential to address pressing societal issues, yet its capability is not being maximized, and 2) I believe I am positioned to contribute unique perspectives to the scholarly dialogue on how to improve ISL program design.
Why am I best positioned to do this type of research?

Apart from few (See Camacho, 2004; Kiely, 2004; Kiely, 2005a; Porter & Monard, 2001; Reynolds, 2016; Sharpe & Dear, 2013), most research on international service-learning is conducted by scholars removed from the reality of field-based ISL programming. My experience implementing ISL programs, along with the relationships I have built bridging community and campus partners, offers a unique opportunity to represent the perspectives of campus and community partners. This aligns with scholars who suggest ISL research would benefit from more participatory methodology (Crabtree, 2008; Cruz & Giles, 2000). Community resident perspectives are largely omitted from the scholarly discussion on ISL, especially as it relates to measuring success and effective program design strategies. I am best positioned for this type of research because I have unique access to capture community resident perspectives and represent them amongst the community of ISL scholars and practitioners.

What biases do I have and how does that translate into what I am or am not seeing?

I am biased because I want to believe the campus-community partnership can help address complex societal challenges. To me, higher education institutions’ resources, intellectual capital, and structured research initiatives should be used to create informed, innovative approaches to problem solving in their surrounding society. Yet, in the context of ISL, critical scholars challenge this stance and purport campus representatives extract time, energy, and other resources from developing communities in exchange for student learning and meeting their service-oriented mission (Hammersely, 2013; Ver Beek, 2002). While I agree with this stance, I also believe it is a circumstance of poor program design and planning. It is important in this research to consider ISL programs may merely
be a mechanism to meet higher education institutions’ agendas and deliver unique opportunities for student learning.

I am also biased because of the various roles I assume in this project. For example, as a founder of the AASD I am passionate about ISLP Perú and want to see it as a success. Similarly, I have invested time and energy to create ISLP Perú, thus I am invested in the success of student participants. Finally, I am biased because of my lived experiences in Sacllo and, to some extent, cater to the needs and human rights of Sacllo residents. It is important to recognize the biases these roles create, acknowledge the various stances they represent within this research, and remain as objective as possible when gathering and analyzing data.

In what ways does my outsider-within positionality not only enable me in this research, but also confine me?

My status as an outsider-within came because of countless hours integrating with community members in Sacllo. Informal, unstructured, and unplanned activities such as working together in the corn fields, celebrating together at community events and festivities, or sharing a casual beer or chicha (traditional Incan beer derived from corn) have been the cornerstones for building mutual trust. Of note, I am also one of only two outsiders who live in Sacllo. Having an accepted role in the community will allow me to harness the relationships with my neighbors and capture meaningful community perspectives. I argue it would be challenging for a complete outsider to attain legitimate community resident perspectives without some degree of placement within the community.
On the other hand, it is possible this investigation could reinforce my status as an outsider. I am concerned the formal structured processes of this research – such as recording interviews and even seeking consent – may illuminate my outsider status and raise doubts or concerns about my motivations. To address this concern, I intend to be aware when each of these two constructs – outsider or within – are at the forefront of my role in this research and explicitly acknowledge them with myself and the community members who will participate in this study.

*In what areas of this study do I have influence? In what areas do I not have influence? In what areas should I not have influence?*

My sphere of influence in this study circles back to my various roles and positionalities. The primary areas of this study I can influence include, but are not limited to, how the study is communicated to all actors and participants, the overall methodology and approach to collecting data (although my influence in this realm will be shared by community resident participants due to the inherently collaborative nature of a participatory evaluation), and how findings are disseminated. In addition, I can influence how results are incorporated into future iterations of ISLP Perú program design and how the research findings should be communicated to the larger community of ISL scholars and practitioners.

In addition, my role as founder of the AASD represents another sphere of influence. Ultimately, I have a primary role in bringing students and resources to Sacllo to participate in ISLP Peru. On one hand, this level of influence is a strength of this study because I am passionate about the program’s success and thus can influence the program’s sustainability. Conversely, my role as the primary influencer in ISLP Peru
means the program largely depends on my ability and willingness to ensure the needs of other program stakeholders are met, such as Sacllo residents and the Speed School representatives. If at any point I decide to move on from ISLP Peru, surely the program would also come to an end.

Given that, I cannot let my positionality as an insider or outsider-within dictate this study’s analysis or findings. The primary purpose of this study is to improve ISL program design based on community resident perspectives. I am not a community resident; therefore, I cannot contribute to the stance of community residents. Yet, given my involvement in ISLP Perú, my own stance and perspective in this study is important, especially regarding improving program design. While I acknowledge my positionality has an influence on this study’s analysis and findings, I cannot allow it to dictate the outcomes.

**Articulation of Objectives**

In action research, the investigation’s objectives not only reflect the researcher’s goals, but also the specific communities’ or organizations’ concerns the research is designed to address and the local outcomes they have identified related to these issues (Stoecker & Brydon-Miller, 2013). The first objective of this study relates to my intended contribution to ISL scholarship. One reason knowledge of community resident voices is widely omitted from ISL literature and program design is because it is challenging to access (James & Logan, 2016). As a researcher and practitioner who lives in a community that hosts ISL programs, I have unique access to community resident perspectives on ISL. Thus, one objective of this study is to capture the community
resident perspectives on ISL and share it with the scholarly community in a meaningful way.

The second objective of this study relates to my responsibilities as director of the Andean Alliance for Sustainable Development. This research is in the best interest of the AASD because it will improve how the AASD bridges communities with universities and increase levels of mutual benefit. There are two specific ways I hope to accomplish this. One is to improve ISLP Perú by incorporating community resident voices into the design, facilitation, and evaluation process. The second is to capture the processes that lead to success and systematize them throughout all AASD ISL programs.

The third objective of this study relates to my personal and professional growth. I was primarily a field practitioner prior to enrolling in a doctoral program. I dedicated my life to growing the AASD and exposing students from the United States to international experiences I hoped would change their lives. However, as a practitioner in the middle of the Andes mountains, I barely had the credibility, access, or resources to share my lessons learned in the field. Thus, the third objective of this study is to succeed in rigorous structured investigation and gain the credentials to validate my voice and share my research findings with the network of international education scholars and practitioners.

**Contribution to Action Research Theory and Practice**

This study will contribute to action research theory and practice by continuing to shape and enforce scholar-practitionership in higher education. A scholar-practitioner is a scholar dedicated to generating new knowledge that is useful to practitioners (Wasserman & Kram, 2009). According to Huang (2018), there is a barrier to scholar-practitionership
in higher education and the “domains of practice and scholarship are in need of mutual regeneration” (p. 125). Travers et al. (2013) suggest power dynamics in the higher education system contribute to this barrier:

The power of academics is enshrined in systems set up to support research, such as positions on grants, administration of funds, the complexities of research ethics boards, and the need to publish in academic journals. All of these require or promote academic leadership of projects and establish academics as experts in areas that are not typically their own lived experience. Thus, even if a project defines its power structure differently, on paper and in processes, academics must often be the formal project leaders. (p. 411)

This is especially prevalent and problematic in the field of ISL and campus-community partnership research. I argue it is irresponsible to research and publish on campus-community partnerships without equal representation of each partner’s perspective. This seems to be the norm in international service-learning, where the vast amount of research and publications are led by scholars without ISL field experience. As part of this research, I intend to push the evolution of scholar-practitionership in higher education by framing the role of practitioner-scholar. To me, practitioner-scholarship would represent an accepted role within the academy where practitioners can generate new knowledge that is useful to scholars.

**Chapter Summary**

Early in this chapter, I presented the following problem: community resident perspectives are widely underrepresented in international service-learning literature and program design. I discussed how I recognized this challenge facilitating ISL programs as
a practitioner, which ultimately led me to pursue doctoral research. In 2017, while studying at the University of Louisville, I co-founded ISLP Perú – an ISL collaboration between the AASD, the Speed School of Engineering at the University of Louisville, and the Andean community of Sacllo. For this research, I conduct a participatory evaluation of ISLP Perú to collect data on community resident perspectives. In this chapter I offered context to the nature of this study and my approach for answering the research questions. I introduced action research and discussed why it is an appropriate methodology for this study. I also presented my researcher positionality, the questions guiding my reflexive process, research objectives, and intended contribution to action research theory and practice.

In the next chapter of this proposal, I review scholarly literature about international service-learning. I discuss in more detail what service-learning is and how it is situated in higher education. Then, I offer a critical perspective of international service-learning to help make the case for why a better understanding of community resident perspectives is important in ISL research and program design. Finally, I review empirical studies on student and community outcomes to portray what the scholarly community knows about ISL outcomes and what areas remain underexplored.
CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

International service-learning offers students an experiential learning opportunity in another country while addressing community needs through a service project (Crabtree, 2008; Kiely & Kiely, 2006). Successful ISL programs are mutually beneficial, which implies students and communities both stand to gain from their participation. However, community resident voice is largely underrepresented in research and practice, thus making it challenging to design programs effectively. The lack of community resident voice in academic research not only exposes a gap in scholarly literature, but also a shortcoming in ISL program planning and design.

This literature review has three main sections. The first section introduces international service-learning and how it is situated in higher education. The second section offers a critical perspective of international service-learning and shows how power differentials between campus and community partners can impact program outcomes. The final section reviews empirical data on student and community outcomes in international service-learning, which exposes a need for more research representative of community resident voice in scholarly literature.

How International Service-learning is Situated in Higher Education

The purpose of this section is to show how international service-learning is situated in higher education. The first part defines SL, shows how it fits in the experiential learning theoretical framework. This includes how a SL course is structured and how it deviates from traditional class-based pedagogy. The second part of the section
introduces international service-learning, its history and background, and the characteristics that differentiate it from domestic service-learning. The section concludes by discussing international service-learning as a manifestation of the campus-community partnership. This includes defining the campus-community partnership, determining quality in a campus-community partnership, and presenting the Students, Organizations in the community, Faculty, Administration, and Community residents (SOFAR) structural model (Bringle et al., 2009) which portrays ten potential dyadic relationships within the campus-community partnership.

**Service-learning**

Service-learning is a mechanism that universities use to implement service-driven aspects of their missions (Bringle & Hatcher, 2000). There are myriad definitions for service-learning because its interpretation varies across educators, universities, program goals, and pedagogies (Furco, 1996; Giles, 2016; Kendall, 1990; Mitchell, 2008). Bringle and Hatcher (1995) provided the following widely accepted definition:

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

SL’s roots trace back to John Dewey, who described experience as a primary source of learning, in that a connection between education and personal experience enhances learning (Giles & Eyler, 1994). SL is grounded in experiential learning theory, which represents a process of learning where knowledge is created through the transformation
of experience (Kolb, 1984). Kolb (1984) deconstructed the experiential learning process into four distinct segments - abstract conceptualization, active experimentation, concrete experiences, and reflective observation (See Figure 2.1).

**Figure 2.1**

*The Experiential Learning Cycle*

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Note. The Experiential Learning Cycle. From *Experiential Learning as the Science of Learning and Development*, by D. Kolb, 1984

It is helpful to describe each characteristic of experiential learning in the service-learning context. Concrete experience involves a student’s field-based experience that connects with course-based learning (Bringle & Hatcher, 1995). Reflection represents the “intentional consideration of experience in light of particular learning objectives” (Hatcher & Bringle, 1997, p. 153) and is necessary for binding experience with theory (Felten et al., 2006). Reflection leads to abstract conceptualization where students make sense of their observations and link them to other sources of knowledge (Eyler, 2002). In this process it is standard for students to keep track of key takeaways through structured
activities such as journaling or facilitated discussions with peers, faculty, community partners, or group leaders (Molee et al., 2010; Taylor, 2008). Active experimentation concludes the learning cycle where theories or questions that arise through the process can be tested and further experimented upon in the same, iterative cycle (Eyler, 2002).

The nature of a service-learning course can be described as a rich learning environment, i.e., “a shared space where various stakeholders can share meaningful experiences that go beyond a standard, unilateral flow of information that is normally associated with standard pedagogy in higher education” (Preece & Manicom, 2015). Integration of experiential and academic learning where students are offered the opportunity to learn both in the classroom and in the wider world is implicit in this approach (Howard, 2001; Lester, 2015; Levesque-Bristol et al., 2010; Strage, 2000). Experiential learning is conducive to service-learning because it leads to civic participation, creates a space where students can share field experiences, which leads to mutual learning, and induces a deeper understanding of course material (Darby et al., 2016; Levesque-Bristol et al., 2010). Service-learning becomes a learning environment where students discover knowledge rather than simply be told information (Howard, 2001; Preece & Manicom, 2015). This is important because the integrative and reflective structure of a service-learning course can result in a deeper, more meaningful, and more relevant understanding of course-based concepts (Hullender et al., 2015) that a traditional experience that does not include experiential learning.

**International Service-learning**

International service-learning is a type of SL and experiential education where campus representatives partner with a community or communities in a different country.
It has become increasingly popular on college campuses and more recently a focus of scholarly investigation (Bringle & Hatcher, 2011). Kiely and Kiely (2006) defined ISL as:

A course-based form of experiential education wherein students, faculty, staff and institutions: (a) collaborate with diverse community stakeholders on an organized service activity to address real social problems and issues in the community; (b) integrate classroom theory with active learning in the world; (c) gain knowledge and skills related to the course content and advance civic, personal, and social development; and (d) immerse themselves in another culture, experience daily reality in the host culture, and engage in dual exchange of ideas with people from other countries. (p. 17)

Jonas and Steinberg (2011) drew a distinction between ISL courses and programs. ISL courses are individual courses where content is disseminated at least partially in another country and some or all the service is conducted in another country. International service-learning programs are completed in another country and integrate several courses, of which a service component exists for at least one course. ISL programs can take a variety of forms, including single courses that take place entirely in host-country (often 6-8 weeks in length), sandwich programs involving a shorter time in a foreign country within an on-campus academic course before and/or after the ISL experience, international practicum or internship experiences or co-curricular programs such as alternative breaks (Jones & Steinberg, 2011; Niehaus, 2012). Faculty or staff-led co-curricular service trips, academic courses with international immersion that include service experiences, study
abroad programs with service components, and international programs with formal
service-learning curricula are also considered ISL (Crabtree, 2008).

Crabtree (2008) places ISL within the context of international development to
help explain its history and origin within higher education. International development
became popular during post-World War II reconstruction efforts when countries across
the globe were categorized as First-World (developed), Second-World (Soviet bloc), and
Third-World (under-developed) nations. In the 1960s and 1970s, third world nations
began to stagnate economically and socially, which sparked a global movement driven by
First-World countries to help countries develop. At the same time, universities began to
view the promotion of international understanding and world peace as part of their
missions (Crabtree, 2008). International service-learning emerged along with educational
movements such as the importance of experiential education, engaged scholarship, and
national growth in volunteerism and activism (Kenny & Gallagher, 2002).

The successes and failures of international development initiatives during the
modernization era offers insight toward what constitutes responsible and effective ISL.
Shortcomings of international development initiatives have been attributed to exogenous
development (Vázquez-Barquero. 2002). Exogenous development represents a
westernized view, which emphasizes developing a country using imported technology,
capital, and human resources (Vázquez-Barquero, 2002). Consider for example the case
study Takata and Inouu (2017) published on how ethnic groups in East Kalimantan,
Indonesia responded to an intervention from an international NGO. In this example, the
Bahau, an ethnic group from the east Kalimantan region of Indonesia maintained a
traditional practice of food giving and sharing to maintain a balanced source of protein.
However, this traditional practice was disturbed when an outside organization funded by a logging company intervened and promoted the creation of farmer groups to grow rubber. As an outcome, exogenous development divided the Bahau group, and ultimately disturbed the overall health and well-being of the community.

Endogenous development refutes this approach and implies modernity – including the goals and values of development – should generate from within (Ray, 1999). For example, consider how a series of local initiatives in Urnäsch, Switzerland helped a small community address challenges related to low economic opportunity and employment (Mühlinghaus & Wälty, 2001). As the economic situation in Urnäsch became increasingly precarious, local businesses and community members created a program called Urnäsch-Moving Ahead Together to help identify the root causes of the challenge and determine potential solutions. As part of this program, a team of counselors and university students spent a week interviewing and organizing group discussions with community members about their ideas and vision for their community. The program culminated in a presentation of findings and a series of activities to create initiatives that address the challenge. This endogenous approach to development ultimately led to the creation of a culture club, a village café, and groups for the creation of tourism and economic development. Parallels can be drawn between endogenous development and responsible ISL program design and implementation, particularly through an emphasis on collaboration.

Kiely and Kiely (2006) included “collaborate with diverse community stakeholders on an organized service activity to address real social problems and issues in the community” (p. 17) as part of ISL’s definition. Sandy and Holland’s (2006) study
helped characterize what collaboration looks like in the context of a campus-community partnership. They conducted focus groups with 99 community partners and determined the most important characteristics of the campus-community partnership are 1) communication among partners, 2) understanding partner perspectives, 3) personal connections, 4) co-planning, training, and orientation, and 5) accountability and leadership. Although collaboration between campus and community partners is emphasized as an important characteristic of ISL, scholars recognize community resident voice is underacknowledged in ISL literature (Berinyuy et al., 2014; Blouin & Perry, 2009; Crabtree, 2008, 2013; Cruz & Giles, 2000; Reynolds, 2016; Spear & Chapman, 2020; Wood et al., 2011). The complex nature of ISL as a formal representation of the campus-community partnership and the power dynamics within this relationship help explain the lack of community resident perspectives in literature and program design.

**International Service-learning as Campus-Community Partnership**

The campus-community partnership is widely accepted as the primary unit of analysis in SL research (Bringle et al., 2009; Bringle & Hatcher, 2002; Enos & Morton, 2003; Vernon & Ward, 1999). The campus-community partnership is a series of interpersonal relationships between (a) campus administrators, faculty, staff, and students and (b) community leaders, agency personnel, and members of communities (Bringle & Hatcher, 2002). Meaningful campus-community partnerships are grounded in trust, respect, and governance structures that allow democratic decision-making, process improvement, and resource sharing (Worrall, 2007). Effective partnerships meet short- and long-term goals, value community partners’ expertise and contributions, and maintain frequent and candid communication (Sandy & Holland, 2006; Worrall, 2007).
Enos and Morton (2003) offered the following framework to articulate how quality of a SL partnership improves when 1) duration and 2) depth and complexity increase:

**Figure 2.2**

*Framework for Development of Campus-Community Partnerships*

![Diagram](image.png)


On one end of the spectrum, low-quality partnerships are considered transactional and characterized as short-term, task-oriented, lacking a larger purpose, and offering benefit to one or both parties, but no growth (Enos & Morton, 2003). For example, consider a case study when engineering faculty and students from a Midwestern university in the United States installed a solar powered water pump at an orphanage in Guatemala (Borg & Zitomer, 2008). Faculty and community representatives never had a clear communication channel, nor came to a mutual agreement on program goals. The water pump eventually failed and nobody in the community had the skills to fix it or access to engineers from the university. While the university accomplished their objective of broadening the social, cultural, and international experience of engineering students, that experience came in exchange for community members’ time and a useless water
pump. Notably, in 2009, Clayton et al. added exploitive as a low-quality partnership characteristic to recognize one-sided partnerships that fall short of transactional and intentionally or unintentionally take advantage of or harm one or both parties (Clayton et al., 2009).

On the other end of the spectrum, high-quality partnerships are considered transformational and characterized by a deep commitment, mutual exchange of tasks, and the emergence of relationships, identities and shared values (Enos & Morton, 2003). The Global Solidarity Partnership between a university in the Southeastern United States and a community in Haiti exemplifies a high quality, transformational campus-community partnership (Vinciguerra, 2014). The university proposed a partnership that involved a long-term relationship and the need for an attitude of listening and accompaniment rather than project creation. Together they formed a steering committee and decided any collaboration between the university and the community would have to abide by three criteria: 1) Empowering/civil society building, 2) Long-term development, and 3) Relationships of mutuality. Ultimately, the Global Solidarity Partnership led to a multi-year program and the successful implementation of a fair-trade coffee project, a fair-trade artisan project, and a solar energy initiative.

Bringle et. al (2009), distinguished between campus-community relationships and campus-community partnerships. A relationship is a general and broad term to refer to all types of interactions between persons; a partnership is a relationship in which the interactions possess closeness, equity, and integrity (Bringle et al, 2009). Bringle et al. (2009), warn of using the campus-community partnership as the sole unit of analysis in SL research because it falls short of specifying what constitutes “campus” and
“community” given the specific time, place, and context. The SOFAR structural model (Figure 2.3) differentiates “campus” into administrators, faculty, and students, and “community” into community residents and organizations (Bringle et al., 2009). This breakdown acknowledges the homogeneity and heterogeneity of each group.

**Figure 2.3**

*SOFar Structural Model*


While each actor in the campus-community partnership may share certain perspectives, agendas, cultures, resources, power, and goals, the nature of the interactions amongst each other could vary substantially. Similarly, each actor might hold different perspectives related to the challenges or needs being identified and addressed through service-learning. Figure 2.3 shows ten distinct dyadic relationships within the campus-
community partnership. Additionally, the model points out the various dyadic relationships that can exist amongst each group, i.e., within students, faculty, administrators, community organizations, and community residents. This perspective takes the seemingly binary “campus” and “community” partnership and transforms it into a vast series of multidimensional relationships, perhaps creating conflict for researchers or practitioners interested in achieving and/or measuring mutual benefit as a program outcome.

A major purpose of this section is to show the complex nature of ISL. Program duration, communication and planning channels, program depth and complexity, and the closeness, equity, and integrity of the program all affect program quality. In addition, there is a wide spectrum of stakeholders, including students, faculty, administrators, community organizations, and community residents, all with unique needs and perspectives. All these considerations give rise to a critical perspective that illuminates the effect power differentials between campus and community representatives can have on ISL programs. The following section explores service-learning through a critical lens and shows how these various layers of complexity can affect the extent to which mutual benefit and reciprocity are achieved.

**International Service-learning through a Critical Lens**

Contrary to scholars who suggest mutual benefit and reciprocity are cornerstones of ISL (Hartman et al., 2014; Porter & Monard, 2001), critics argue there are inherent barriers to achieving mutual benefit due to power differentials between campus and community partners (Donaldson & Daughtery, 2011; Hammersely, 2013; Sharpe & Dear, 2013). Further, some argue students and campus representatives benefit from that power,
sometimes at the expense of community hosts. This section presents the stance of scholars who are critical of the ISL model. It begins with an overview of the early scholarly discussion related to prioritizing “service” or “learning” in SL program design. This gives rise to the concept of reciprocity as a goal of SL and why it is a contentious concept within the scholarly community. That segues into a discussion on critical theory and how post-colonialism and hegemony are used to expose unethical behavior in ISL. The purpose of this section is to expose the server vs served dichotomy in ISL and begin to show the importance of incorporating community resident perspectives into ISL program design and literature.

**The Service versus Learning Dichotomy**

Early scholars of SL debated the extent to which learning and/or service should be prioritized in SL program design. In 1979, Sigmon identified “reciprocal learning” as a goal of SL, implying both service-providers and service-receivers should learn through their participation (Sigmon, 1979). Kendall (1990) suggested “learning” as the sole outcome of SL was not sufficient and highlighted the importance of community impact. Kendall (1990) defined SL as “a pedagogy that combines academic learning with meaningful community service.” Sigmon (1994) offered the following typology (Table 2.1) to show how prioritizing “service” and/or “learning” can affect service-learning program outcomes:

**Table 2.1**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>service-LEARNING</td>
<td>Service outcomes secondary; learning goals primary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SERVICE-learning</td>
<td>Service outcomes primary; learning goals secondary</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
service-learning  |  Service and learning goals completely separate
SERVICE-LEARNING  |  Service and learning goals of equal weight and each enhances the other for all participants


This typology implies prioritizing learning in SL can diminish the community partner’s experience and lead to underwhelming outcomes in the community. Likewise, an emphasis on *service* can create a situation where student learning is not maximized. Prioritizing *service* and *learning* equally can enhance program outcomes for both students and community partners. The discussion around service and learning became a platform for scholars to investigate best and worst practices in program design, curricular and pedagogical development, stakeholder roles and responsibilities, and program outcome design and attainment. Ultimately, achieving reciprocity was recognized as a predominant goal of SL (Blouin & Perry, 2009; Enos & Morton, 2003; Henry & Breyfogle, 2006; Porter & Monard, 2001).

Reciprocity is “a personalized form of exchange in which there is an expectation of return that takes place between people who have a social bond, which is strengthened by the exchange” (Maiter et al., 2008, p. 307). Despite reciprocity being a cornerstone of SL, in many cases SL practitioners do not know if, how, and when reciprocity is achieved due to its subjective and context specific nature (Bringle & Hatcher, 2009; Sandy & Holland, 2006). Moreover, while many scholars insist reciprocity adds value and meaningfulness to a partnership, some contend it masks latent power imbalances between partners (Donaldson & Daughtery, 2011; Hammersely, 2013; Sharpe & Dear, 2013).
Reciprocity is commonly referenced as an exchange between “server and served” or “service provider and service recipient” (Camacho, 2004; Keith, 2005; Reynolds, 2016; Sharpe & Dear, 2013). However, this contradicts the notion that campus and community representatives are equal partners and suggests power differentials must be considered when analyzing success and equity in service-learning.

**The Server versus Served Dichotomy**

In 1968, Ivan Illich gave a speech titled “To Hell with Good Intentions” to a group of student-volunteers at the Inter-American Conference of Student Projects in Mexico. Illich (1968) warned of dangers of paternalism associated with any voluntary act of service, especially in the international context. He ended his speech by saying, “I am here to entreat you to use your status, your money, and your education to travel to Latin America. Come to look. Come to climb our mountains and enjoy our flowers. Come to study. But do not come to help.” Fifty years later, Illich’s (1968) message remains central to the modern-day critique of SL.

Power differentials in the campus-community partnership help explain why students intending “to help” can create complex challenges in international service-learning. The late Brazilian educator and philosopher Paulo Freire (1972) took a stance that systematic socialization of education systems is driven by motivations to gain control of an oppressed class. In ISL, campus representatives purport to provide service to those in need, yet there is little evidence showing community residents benefit from their participation in ISL programs. Nonetheless, ISL programs continue to embody a “service provider” versus “service receiver” dichotomy that supports notions of charity based on a moral responsibility to help (Reynolds, 2016). However, this false binary perpetuates
latent power differentials between campus and community partners, especially given many community partners from the global south still suffer from a legacy of colonialism. Not acknowledging the historical, political, geographical, and ideological contexts of community partners can impede on a campus’ attempt to meaningfully collaborate, participate, and interact with a host community (Hammersely, 2013; Kahn, 2011).

Consequently, research investigating ISL outcomes suggest unequal distribution of benefit between campus representatives and host communities. In fact, despite campus partners’ well intentions, host communities can be worse off after participating in SL. SL is susceptible to reinforcing stereotypes of the poor (Hollis, 2004), perpetuating distorted understandings of complex social problems (Prins & Webster, 2010), diverting funds and other resources away from community members (Sherraden et al., 2008), and deepening the cycle of dependence on outsiders (Donaldson & Daughtery, 2011). Donaldson and Daughtery (2011) attribute the unequal distribution of benefit to a deficit-based approach, where campuses disregard assets and rather focus on deficiencies such as poor hygiene, below-standard living conditions, and low-language capability (e.g., not being able to speak English) (Donaldson & Daughtery, 2011; Mathie & Cunningham, 2003). In turn, this behavior sends a message to communities that “you need our help,” creating an environment of dependency and disempowerment rather than positive social change.

Sharpe and Dear (2013) referred to points of discomfort when they reflected on their experience as ISL program faculty leaders. As part of a senior level, full-credit course titled “International Field Experiences in Recreation and Leisure”, Sharpe and Dear (2013) led their students to Cuba to add an experiential perspective to their course and provide an opportunity for their students to develop leadership and instructional
competencies in a cross-cultural setting. With help from their partner institutions in Cuba they arranged a day of service to work on a school garden project. However, the following excerpt exemplifies their discomfort upon arrival to the school:

Our excitement to ‘serve’ quickly diminished when we came to realize that the school did not know we were coming and, further, there was no garden at the school. After some conversation between our Eco-Institute leader and a school official, we were given the go-ahead to dig up the grass so as to make a garden plot. The organization supplied us with two shovels, a pickaxe, and two buckets to use to complete our work. We did the best we could, but by the end of our day we had made little progress; it looked like we had done more damage than good. Our presence had also disrupted the school day completely, as students poured out of their classrooms to watch us work. We returned to our bus feeling extremely uncomfortable at the damage we had done and confused about the situation in which we had found ourselves. Most striking to us was the question posed to us as we left by our Eco-Institute leader: “So, was that what you wanted? To get your hands dirty?” (p. 52)

This is an example of an ISL program that while designed with good intentions, resulted in a unique learning experience for students at the cost of an international community partner. At the least, the university student group was exposed to a culture different than their own and experienced what education is like in rural Cuba. Further, seniors majoring in recreation and leisure were able to apply their experience to their studies by learning about the intricacies of rural tourism and distinguishing the difference between “commodified and de-commodified tourism” (p. 51). On the other hand, all these
experiences and learning lessons for the ISL group came at the cost of middle school students’ education and schooling as outcomes for them included missed class time and a dug up school yard.

The ubiquity of irresponsible international service-learning practices has led to the creation of new, formalized characterizations of service-learning designed around global ethical engagement. Hartman and Kiely (2014) presented Global Service-learning (GSL) as a model that shifts away from the unrealistic impact-based outcomes found in ISL and moves towards a SL model built around power, privilege, and community voice. The GSL model stands apart from ISL because it is (a) committed to student intercultural competence development, (b) focused on structural analysis tied to consideration of power, privilege, and hegemonic assumptions, (c) placed within a global marketization of volunteerism, (d) typically immersive, and (e) engaged in the critical global civic and moral imagination (Hartman & Kiely, 2014). Similarly, Hartman et al. (2014) make a connection between ISL and the growing field of international volunteer tourism, which is an industry worth $173 billion US dollars annually. As such, Hartman et al. (2014) suggested Fair Trade Learning, a “global educational partnership exchange that prioritizes reciprocity in relationships through cooperative, cross-cultural participation in learning, service, and civil society efforts” (p.110).

The purpose of this section was to illuminate inequities and power differentials in the campus-community partnership. Power differentials can lead to an unequal distribution of benefit between campus and community representatives, which commonly implies campus representatives gain more from their participation than community hosts. Critics of ISL point to critical theories such as post-colonialism to explain why this is the
case. The following section offers more insight towards these inequities by analyzing research findings through the lens of program outcomes. Specifically, it highlights student and community outcomes in the domestic and international context, with the purpose of exposing a greater need for community resident perspectives in ISL research, literature, and program design.

**Domestic and International Service-learning Outcomes**

Most of the research about service-learning relates to identifying program outcomes and measuring programmatic success. Thus, scholars commonly focus on student learning and community impact. The purpose of this section is to show what the scholarly community has learned about SL program outcomes, but more importantly, expose where more knowledge is needed to contribute to the knowledge base for how to improve SL program design. This section provides an overview of literature broken down by student and community outcomes in the domestic and international context. It includes a mix of early and recent key findings from quantitative and qualitative studies implemented by faculty who are involved in SL programs. The section concludes with a summary of key takeaways and a logical next step in SL research.

**Student Outcomes**

Data from early studies of SL show evidence of positive impact on students’ cognitive development. Students who enroll in SL courses are more likely to apply principles from the course to new situations, in addition to achieving higher final grades compared to a more traditional course format (Markus et al., 1993; Miller, 1994). Similarly, when compared across disciplines, students who participate in a service experience show higher final course grades than students who are not engaged in service
(Berson & Younkin, 1998). Astin and Sax (1998) conducted a longitudinal study and surveyed 3,450 students across 42 higher education institutions to help determine how students are affected by the service experience. Regression analysis controlling for student characteristics at the time of college entry found evidence students who participate in service experiences saw significant increases in college GPA, increase in field or disciplinary knowledge, amount of contact with faculty, and preparation for graduate or professional school.

Service-learning also has a positive effect on students’ understanding of social issues. Specifically, service learners have a greater awareness about the complexity of social problems and variability involved in dealing with them (Batchelder & Root, 1994). An understanding about social issues tends to be coupled with a newfound role and active presence in service learners’ own communities. For example, service learners show a greater commitment to participate in community programs (Astin, 1998), engage with and promote civic responsibilities within their community, aspire for leadership roles (Astin, 1998; Myers-Lipton, 1998), and endorse the importance of having an impact on the political system (Giles & Eyler, 1994). In the long run, service learners have the propensity to find a career that provides the opportunity to help others or be useful to society (Markus, 1993).

The SL experience also influences students’ personal growth and insight. Service learners experience an increase in moral development (Batchelder & Root, 1994, Boss, 1994; Gorman, 1994), as well as a higher degree of identity exploration by making connections with the self, community members, and other volunteers (Rhodes, 1997). Similar outcomes include a greater awareness of personal strengths and weaknesses,
newfound career aspirations, and improved self-esteem (Batchelder & Root, 1994; Boss, 1994; Markus et al., 1993; Levesque et al., 2010; Levesque, Sell, and Zimmerman, 2006; Sanders, Van Oss, & McGeary, 2016). Motivation is also linked to the SL experience. Levesque et al. (2010) conducted a survey-based experimental study across 31 different disciplines and 99 separate classes to assess the links between motivational processes and learning outcomes. Findings revealed high degrees of autonomy in the learning environment was significantly and positively associated with self-determined forms of motivation.

**Student Outcomes in International Service-Learning**

Kiely (2005b) offers Mezirow’s (1991) theory of transformational learning to explain student outcomes more commonly experienced in ISL. According to transformational learning theory (Mezirow, 1991), students experience a shift in perspective (Mezirow, 1978) as they construe, validate, and reformulate the meaning of their experience. Thus, in ISL, exposure to a new culture, country, and context is a catalyst of transformation. Under these circumstances, students experience profound changes in their worldview, self-concept, and overall understanding of social problems (Crabtree, 2008; Kiely, 2004, 2005a; Larsen, 2017). Kiely (2005) identified six specific elements of the ISL cross cultural experience that leads to transformational learning for students:

1. *Contextual border crossing*, which refers to student understanding of the individual, structural, programmatic, and historical aspects of the context they carry with them across borders.
2. *Dissonance*, which refers to the various radical or intense forms of dissonance students experience upon arrival to another country, such as historical, environmental, physical, economic, political, cultural, spiritual, social, communicative, and technological.

3. *Personalizing*, which refers to a student’s exposure to a way of life so much different from their own that it triggers “visceral emotional reactions” that cause a student to recognize, question, or challenge their own strengths and weaknesses.

4. *Processing*, which refers to students’ critical reflection and discourse related to the social, economic, and cultural disparities students are exposed to.

5. *Connecting*, which involves listening, understanding, empathizing, and struggling with locals as allies.

6. *Emerging Global Consciousness*, which can be viewed as an outcome of the five aforementioned elements and characterized as “an emerging critical awareness of complex relations of power and of how identity, position, and the ability to act autonomously are socially and culturally structured.” (p. 278)

The cross-cultural contact students experience in ISL programs leads to learning, cultural awareness, and personal growth (Kiely, 2004; Niehaus & Crain, 2013), which Crabtree (2008) notes is a necessary consideration to optimize student learning and ISL program design. This learning can be conceptualized as intercultural competence, defined as, “the ability to communicate effectively and appropriately in intercultural situations based on one’s intercultural knowledge, skills, and attitudes” (Deardorff, 2006, p. 247). Other characteristics of intercultural competency include the ability to shift one’s frame of reference appropriately, the ability to achieve one’s goals to some degree, and
behaving appropriately and effectively in intercultural situations (Deardorff, 2006). Notably, Avineri (2019) points out it might be problematic to view intercultural competency solely as an individual skill or trait. Avineri (2019) introduced the nested interculturality model, which “foregrounds an ecological, dynamic, relational, and negotiated view of interculturality” (p. 40) and suggests that “assessing individuals’ intercultural competence must simultaneously integrate a recognition of context as well as the histories, experiences, and identities of individuals in interaction with others” (p. 40).

Although research on student outcomes specific to ISL are relatively exiguous, the evidence shows ISL creates unique student outcomes above and beyond domestic SL (Niehaus & Crain, 2013). In one of the most robust studies about student outcomes in ISL, Kiely (2004) conducted a longitudinal case study to investigate how 22 students encountered transformational learning during and after an ISL experience in Nicaragua. The mixed-methods study that included observation, document analysis, semi-structured interviews, pre- and post-trip questionnaires, and photographs, found all students experienced emerging global consciousness. Kiely offers three specific categories to help describe emerging global consciousness: (1) envisioning, (2) transforming forms, and (3) chameleon complex. Envisioning refers to the initial shift in perspectives in which most students express the “intention to act” on their perspective transformation by actively working for social justice upon return to the United States. Transforming forms refers to how students experience a dynamic shift in their political, moral, intellectual, cultural, personal, and spiritual self- or worldview.
The third category of emerging global consciousness – the chameleon complex – refers to long-term challenges and struggles students experience in attempting to change their lifestyle and engage in social action. Kiely (2004) points out transformation as a form of learning is commonly assumed to be uniformly positive, and student outcomes or behaviors that result from questioning the status quo are often neglected. However uncomfortable feelings can arise for students as they grapple with new knowledge associated with socioeconomic power (Larsen, 2017). Upon return to the United States, students struggle to conform to or resist their traditional norms after exposure to different cultural norms. Further, they are unable to act on a newly found global allegiance due to little support from family and friends or a predetermined perceived obligation to conform to the norms of what comes with being a citizen of the global north.

**Community Outcomes**

While scholars have responded to a myriad of calls for research to learn more about community outcomes in SL, most of the scholarship is seemingly representative of community organization perspectives. For example, Blouin and Perry (2009) conducted interviews with representatives from 20 different community-based organizations that have worked with service learners to understand when and how service-learning courses benefit the community. Findings showed host organizations value the extra labor and resources of service learners because it increases the number of people the organization serves. A similar study collected quantitative and qualitative data from nonprofit and private agency supervisors \( N = 30 \) and found service learners provide useful service, work related skills and are an overall benefit to their agency (Ferrari, 2000). Surprisingly, the most consistent finding related to the effect service learners have on community has
nothing to do with community impact. Organizations commonly view hosting service learners as a further commitment to social change by contributing to student learning, career decision making, civic perspectives, and overall understanding of social issues in the community (Darby, 2006; Jakubowski, 2018; James & Logan, 2016; Sandy & Holland, 2006; Tryon & Stoecker, 2008; Worrall, 2007).

Community organizations also acknowledge challenges associated with hosting service learners. Worrall (2007) conducted interviews with 40 representatives from community-based organizations and found hosting service learners necessitates a commitment that outweighs the work service learners provide. Other challenges tend to be tied to poor communication between host organizations and university faculty. The absence of a strong communication channel manifests in hosts not having a sound understanding of their responsibility or student placements misaligned with course or organizational objectives (Blouin & Perry, 2009; Sandy & Holland, 2006; Tryon & Stoecker, 2008). Further, short term SL programs make it difficult to justify the time it takes to train a service learner, as well as leading to less commitment from students (Tryon & Stoecker, 2008).

While community organization perspectives seemingly dominate SL literature intended to represent community voice, a handful of smaller studies capture the voice of those directly affected by the service. James and Logan (2016) measured community impact of a single graduate level SL course in education where service learners worked with middle schoolers and their families to offer media and technology trainings, assist in a gardening program, and provide literacy support for students in need. Semi-structured interviews revealed SL led to 1) the establishment of role models for middle schoolers, 2)
increased reading skills, and 3) shifting perspectives of university (both positive and negative). Thus, in this case the evidence shows SL had a mostly positive impact on community residents.

A similar exploratory study analyzed the impact of a tutoring program on elementary school children. Schmidt and Robby’s (2002) research questions asked if service recipients believe they benefit from service being provided and if it made an actual difference to the community. They compared elementary students tutored by university students ($N = 260$) with a comparison group ($N = 256$). Whereas results showed service in the form of tutoring prompts positive academic change for elementary students, more compelling was the connection made between student academic gains and demographic similarities between students and tutors. Schmidt and Robby (2002) suggest this finding illuminates an opportunity for further research in the field.

**Community Outcomes in International Service-Learning**

Evidence shows ISL has a positive impact on host communities. In a qualitative study exploring community impact, Wood et al. (2011) conducted focus groups with ISL program leaders from universities ($N = 26$) who had led or accompanied a total of 63 short-term ISL or other study abroad programs over the course of five years. The data show communities benefit from students spending money in the community, as well as providing gifts, service projects, and tangible resources otherwise inaccessible to community members. Community benefit in the form of economic or material contributions was also documented in Searle and Larsen’s (2016) study, where they interviewed community members who participated in an ISL program designed to train teachers in Tanzania. Results showed community residents benefit from contributions of
materials such as books and sporting equipment, as well as scholarships established for the local students. In addition to economic benefit, the evidence shows community residents appreciate intangible outcomes, such as cross-cultural bonding and emerging friendships (Searle & Larsen, 2016; Wood et al., 2011).

However, not all community impact from ISL is positive. For instance, ISL programs can reinforce the silent message communities are poor or in need of external assistance (Crabtree, 2008; Sharpe & Dear, 2013). Differences in social and cultural norms can also impede successful program implementation, such as students not speaking the local language or being unaware of delicate socioeconomic issues (Searle & Larsen, 2016). Further, inconsiderate student behavior such as excessive drinking or being “loud and annoying” can have a negative impact on the overall experience for community residents (Wood et al., 2011, p. 8). Notably, Davis et al. (2019) facilitated focus groups with representatives (N = 19) of nonprofit organizations to explore how community partners define and implement service-learning and found community partners’ understanding and conceptualization of service-learning are not universally consistent with what is disseminated throughout the academic literature and service-learning organizations.

Chapter Summary

There are distinct takeaways from a review of the SL literature. Clearly the scholarly emphasis on student outcomes far outweighs attention on community outcomes. And although literature on student outcomes is robust, research on student outcomes in the international context is sparse. Further, in addition to being limited in scope, SL literature on “community” is hardly representative of those who are intended to benefit
from service but tends to focus instead on organizations who host service learners. This shortcoming is heightened in the international realm.

In their article titled “Where’s the Community in Service-Learning Research?,” Cruz and Giles (2000) warned of the perils associated with conducting research on community voice. They identified political, practical, and intellectual reasoning as to why community research is challenging. Political challenges reference the scholarly prioritization of academic outcomes to address concerns related to academic rigor. Intellectual challenges include defining community and controlling for variables that can confound a study. Practical limitations include a lack of resources and access to subjects of study. After nearly two decades, the question Cruz and Giles’ (2000) posed in the title of their publication is still worthy of inquiry.

A major intention of this research study is to represent community resident voice in ISL. Specifically, I explored community resident expectations of one ISL program – ISLP Perú – and the factors that contribute to or impede upon the realization of those expectations. With respect to Cruz and Giles’ preoccupation, this research proposal’s participatory design paired with my practitioner – scholar positionality creates an environment conducive to rising above those challenges. The following chapter of this dissertation outlines the research design in more detail. It begins with a justification for using action research as a methodology, followed by a data collection plan using participatory evaluation as a research method. The chapter culminates with a brief description of how data were captured, as well as a summary of the implications of this study.
CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

This chapter begins with my epistemological and ontological assumptions as a qualitative researcher, followed by an overview of action research and why action research is an appropriate methodology for this study. Next, I present the participatory evaluation’s contextual factors and enabling conditions, which segues into how action research methodology applied to this investigation. Following this is a discussion of the research design, where I introduce a two-phased approach to data collection. In the first phase I collected data using semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions. The second phase of the research design involved systematizing the ISLP Perú experience with the purpose of utilizing initial findings to reconstruct and plan future iterations of ISLP Perú. The chapter concludes with procedures and protocol for translation, transcription, and data analysis.

Philosophical Assumptions

It is appropriate to address my ontological and epistemological stances prior to introducing my research design and methodology. Ontology refers to the nature of reality and its characteristics (Creswell, 2007). Morgan and Smircich (1980) introduced a typology for researchers to identify their core ontological stance based on a subjectivist-objectivist continuum. On one end of the spectrum, subjectivist approaches to social science view reality as a projection of human imagination; on the other end, objectivist approaches identify reality as a concrete structure. Cunliffe (2011) contested the dualistic nature of Morgan and Smircich’s (1980) original typology and revised the spectrum to
account for newfound complexities in choices about qualitative research due to the emergence of “developments in metatheoretical perspectives, organization theory, research methods, and ways of theorizing” (p. 647). The outcome was a continuum that included three problematics – intersubjectivism, subjectivism, and objectivism.

To contrast Morgan and Smircich’s subject-object distinction, Cunliffe (2011) depicted the three problematics as clouds on a continuum to portray the cloudy overlap amongst their interpretations. Cunliffe (2011) also included intersubjectivism to help demystify ontology as a dualistic construct. Intersubjectivity refers to “a commonly experienced and understood world of shared meaning, interpretation, and culture” (p. 657). While subjectivism and intersubjectivism both interpret the world from within, intersubjectivism acknowledges that sharing the world with others influences one’s interpretation of reality. As it relates to the core ontological assumptions of research methodology, intersubjectivist and subjectivist approaches both view research as a craft, whereas objectivist approaches are seen as more scientific.

I lean more towards an intersubjectivist position as a researcher due to its interpretation of the relative nature of reality. Whereas a subjectivist stance views reality as “imagined, symbolic, and interpretive,” intersubjectivism acknowledges social reality as “relative to interactions between people in moments of time and space,” while still existing as a product of the human mind (Cunliffe, 2011, p. 654). This position connects with my epistemological stance, which is social constructionism.

Epistemology refers to what counts as knowledge based on the different ways of knowing the world (Feldman, 2014). Social constructionism challenges the notion that knowledge exists within the parameters of a single, ultimate, and objective truth.
Sometimes mistaken as being interchangeable with social constructivism, the subtle distinction has to do with where knowledge dwells. In social constructivist philosophy, one’s understanding of the world exists within their own mind as an outcome of the way they view or experience reality (Creswell, 2007). While that perspective exists as a layer of social constructionist philosophy, social constructionism takes the constructivist argument one step further. Social constructionism addresses the following question: if knowledge is created within one’s own mind as a circumstance of their social reality, then what distinguishes a person’s knowledge from their neighbor who shares a similar reality? Herein lies the differentiation between social constructivism and social constructionism.

Social constructionism recognizes that knowledge is influenced by one’s own social context yet manifests as a construct within the human relationships found in a particular social sphere (Berger & Luckmann, 1967; Gergen, 2009). While acknowledging the contentious nature of social constructionism, Gergen (2009) helps us understand the “drama” of this emerging philosophy by noting “what we take to be the world importantly depends on how we approach it, and how we approach it depends on the social relationships of which we are part” (p. 2). Social scientists acknowledge social constructionism as an emergent school of thought in qualitative research, particularly action research. In fact, Gergen and Gergen (2008) pointed out “the growth of action-oriented research is simultaneous with the emergence of social constructionist view of knowledge” (p.159). Perhaps this corollary can be explained when one considers action researchers’ universal critique of positivist conceptions along with the general consensus among action researchers that knowledge creation is a “practical affair” carried out
through “participative and democratic processes” (Reason, 2006). Given the human element and community focus of this research, it is the interrelationship between people in communities within a local context that will determine what constitutes knowledge.

**Methodological Framework: Action Research**

Action research blends theory and action with the purpose of “addressing important organizational, community, and social issues together with those who experience them” (Coghlan & Brydon-Miller, 2014, p. xxv). More formally, action research is defined as:

A participatory, democratic process concerned with developing practical knowing in the pursuit of worthwhile human purposes, grounded in a participatory worldview which we believe is emerging at this historical moment. It seeks to bring together action and reflection, theory and practice, in participation with others, in the pursuit of practical solutions to issues of pressing concern to people, and more generally the flourishing of individual persons and their communities.

(Reason & Bradbury, 2001, p. 1)

Action research encompasses the notion that knowledge is socially constructed, thus allowing for it to emerge, and be captured through a participatory process (Brydon-Miller, Greenwood, & Maguire, 2003; Coghlan, 2019; Herr & Anderson, 2003). Importantly, the investigation’s objectives reflect not only the researcher’s goals, but also the specific communities’ or organizations’ concerns the research is designed to address (Stoecker & Brydon-Miller, 2013).

Any mix of quantitative or qualitative methods can be used in action research. What typically constitutes action research is the extent to which it is participatory. In this
context, participation refers to “the process by which those people who will use or be impacted by the research are involved in its design and conduct” (Stoecker & Brydon-Miller, 2013). Action research sheds the researcher/subject of research dichotomy and takes the stance that community participation and ownership of the research process lead to higher degrees of impact. Action research is iterative and reflects a cyclical process of constructing, planning, acting, and evaluating, all within a given context (Coghlan, 2019). It is through this process that knowledge is created.

**Appropriateness of Action Research for this Study**

There are two primary reasons action research was appropriate for this study. First, action research identifies a problem and attempts to improve the situation. As pointed out in the literature review, a primary problem I identify in this research relates to the underrepresentation of community resident voice in ISL. The absence of community voice creates a gap in scholarly literature and influences the way ISL programs are designed and implemented. More traditional dissertation researchers might aspire to contribute solely to the scholarly discussion on this topic; however, the purpose of this dissertation research is to improve an actual ISL program in the field, as well as fill a gap in the academic literature. Therefore, action research was an appropriate methodology for this study because it created new knowledge while simultaneously working towards improving a situation.

The second reason action research was appropriate relates to my researcher positionality. As director of the Andean Alliance for Sustainable Development (AASD) and lead facilitator of ISLP Perú, certain scholars might argue my proximity to the investigation will impede the study’s validity. However, various advocates of action
research push back on that argument (Bradbury & Reason, 2001; Brydon-Miller, Greenwood, & Maguire, 2003; Coghlan, 2019; Herr & Anderson, 2005). According to Coghlan (2019), an insider doing research on their own organization has access and understanding to the complexity of the organization’s identity in such a way that an outsider would not. He goes on to argue an outsider attempting to investigate and address complex organizational issues might get stuck in the “swampy lowlands where issues are messy, confusing and incapable of a technical solution” (p. 4). Moreover, those tend to be the most important issues to address. Given this argument, action research was the appropriate methodology for this study because of my insider status and the access to information that status provides.

Nonetheless, one may still have concerns about the potential for a biased perspective as an insider doing research on my own organization. Bias exists inherently in qualitative research and there is no prescriptive set of procedures to eliminate bias in descriptive or interpretive studies (Norris, 1997). Norris (1997) suggests putting the onus on researchers through a consideration of self as a researcher and self in relation to the topic of research to minimize bias and keep research honest and fair. As such, my motivation for doing research on my own organization was not to promote its success; rather, my motivation was to improve the organization’s programmatic processes. Therefore, it was in my best interest to find the weaknesses of the program and figure out how to make informed improvements.

**Action Research as an Emergent Developmental Form**

A core characteristic of action research is its emergent developmental form (Reason, 2006). In action research, capturing the process of inquiry is as important as
specific outcomes. In practice that implies “the questions may change, the relationships may change, the purposes may change, and what is important may change” (Reason, 2006, p. 197). The emergent form of action research has implications on the design of an investigation, especially when compared to the step-by-step, replicable framework typically expected in a more traditional research proposal. Indeed, Reason (2006) suggests a flexible research design is good practice in action research:

Good action research does not arrive fully fledged in a clear research design separate from the stream of life but evolves over time as communities of inquiry develop within communities of practice. This means that the inquiry process begins at the initial moment of inception - however tacit and inchoate that may be - and continues well after any formal research is complete; and it means that in the early days of an action research endeavor, choices about quality may be quite different from those in a more established process (p. 189).

Dick (2002) wrote specifically about doctoral students using action research and asserts it is not just the researcher’s interpretation or understanding that emerges from the situation, but also the methodology itself. Action research is a cyclical process through which the researcher alternates action with critical reflection (Dick, 2002), making it impossible to design the research in full detail before starting the intervention. In this research I proposed a plan for gathering data using participatory methodology, however I also anticipated (and hoped) new methods and questions would arise throughout the process. My philosophy is that it would be a disservice to my research and my research partners if I did not recognize and adjust my approach in conjunction with the emergence of information. Further, I would be forced to take a closer look at the extent to which my
research is actually participatory if information to challenge my original design did not emerge organically during the investigative process.

**Research Method: Participatory Evaluation**

Program evaluation is a systematic inquiry leading to an appraisal that allows for judgment of the merit, worth, and significance of an intervention (Scriven, 1999). Program evaluation is essential for organizations in fields such as education and international development because it actuates informed decision making about important programmatic issues. (Materia et al., 2016). However, a critique of program evaluation is that results are not often utilized (Smits & Champagne, 2008). Participatory evaluation (PE) is a specific evaluation method where trained evaluators work in conjunction with non-evaluator program stakeholders to produce evaluative knowledge (Brisolura, 1998; Cousins & Chouinard, 2012; Cousins & Whitmore, 1998). Program stakeholders are people with some vested interest in the program (Mark & Shotland, 1985). Evidence shows that non-evaluator stakeholder involvement in the evaluation process can lead to higher degrees of utilization of results, quality and timeliness of evaluative knowledge, shifts in organizational or programmatic processes, and/or participant empowerment (Brandon, 1999; Cousins & Chouinard, 2012; Greene, 1998; Papineau & Kiely, 1996).

In the 1970s, participatory evaluation originated alongside other participatory approaches to social inquiry. At the time, concerned researchers began to recognize the disconnect between traditional researcher-led investigative approaches and the voice of those affected by the issue at hand. Likewise, certain program evaluators argued that the process of evaluation had become overly scientific and driven by managers and decision makers, rather than those who had an actual stake in the program (House, 1993).
Consequently, evaluators emphasized participatory techniques intended to galvanize more aligned and relevant approaches to evaluation design. This involved incorporating a unique level of context into the evaluation process, such as historical, political, cultural, economic, and geographic considerations (Cousins & Chouinard, 2012). Participatory evaluation has since become commonly accepted practice in the field of program evaluation (Cousins & Chouinard, 2012).

The primary differentiation between PE and more traditional forms of evaluation is the extent to which non-evaluator stakeholders are involved in the evaluation. In more conventional modes of program evaluation, the role of evaluator and program stakeholders are separate. In PE, non-evaluator program stakeholders are involved in the process of design, implementation, data collection, data analysis, and/or distribution of results. While the involvement of non-evaluator stakeholders in participatory evaluation processes can lead to improved program performance, it can also be a catalyst for community member empowerment, including a newfound perception of self-efficacy, a greater propensity to achieve personal and collective goals, and increased community participation in concerted action (Cousins & Chouinard, 2012; Papineau & Kiely, 1996).

To help explicate how non-evaluator stakeholder participation creates unique value to the evaluation process, consider when Greene (1998) compared two case study participatory evaluations. The first case study was a program evaluation of a youth employment program, which brought key staff members into the PE and focused on “gaining a better understanding of especially private sector employers’ on youth employment and of the congruence between employer and youth job related needs and expectations” (p. 92-93). The second case study was a day-care information and referral
program evaluation, which brought staff and stakeholders such as program developers, program funders, child-care providers, parents, agency administrators, and board members into the evaluation process that focused on “understanding better the parameters of parents’ child care needs and the role of the Information and Referral program in addressing [those] needs satisfactorily, particularly within the context of high quality family-provider care for young children” (p. 97). Findings from this comparative case study showed a link between a participatory evaluation process and meaningful, substantive uses of the evaluation results. Specifically, data from this study showed stakeholder participation in evaluation is one route to increased utilization of evaluation findings, which were exemplified in this study as:

(a) significant new program developments, policy implementation, and/or planning activities (major instrumental use) and (b) smaller procedural changes in program operations and activities (minor instrumental use), both of which appeared to be grounded in (c) a broader and deeper program understanding, representing important confirmation of existing intuitions (conceptual use), (d) citation of results in reports and proposals to external audiences (persuasive use), and (e) enhanced prestige and visibility for the program within the larger community (symbolic use) (p. 100).

Indeed, in this case, non-stakeholder evaluator involvement helped shape policy, program, and planning activities as an outcome of the participatory evaluation process.

In another example of how non-evaluator stakeholders contribute to the evaluation process, Papineau and Kiely (1996) conducted a study on participatory evaluation methodology used within a grassroots community economic development
organization. Papineau and Kiely (1996) were interested in “exploring how participatory evaluation methodology 1) promoted the empowerment of stakeholders who became involved in designing and implementing the evaluation, and 2) fostered the utilization of findings in program planning” (p. 79). The organization central to the PE’s goal was to “develop new responses to the economic needs of their clientele” (p. 83). A guiding principle of the evaluation was to include as many stakeholders as possible; hence, there was a total of 35 non-evaluator stakeholder participants, comprised of program staff, volunteers, students, and service users. Findings from the study reported participants experienced increased self-efficacy within the organization, the acquisition of new skills and information, and instrumental and conceptual uses of evaluation results.

There are two streams of PE: transformative participatory evaluation (T-PE) and practical participatory evaluation (P-PE) (Cousins & Whitmore, 1998). In T-PE, the underlying objective is that program stakeholders gain a greater sense of ownership and empowerment of a particular program or setting. It is grounded in an emancipatory logic and political rationale, such that it challenges the status quo of who defines and controls the production, use, and ownership of knowledge in a particular program. Although intended outcomes of T-PE fall within the realm of empowering underrepresented program stakeholders, the potential of achieving pragmatic and practical outcomes is likely (Cousins & Chouinard, 2012).

Practical participatory evaluation is an approach to evaluation supportive of programmatic or organizational decision making and problem solving through systematic inquiry (Cousins & Whitmore, 1998). The core premise of P-PE is that stakeholder participation enhances utilization of evaluation results (Cousins & Whitmore, 1998;
Smits & Champagne, 2008). Despite that, P-PE outcomes are not exclusively practical and pragmatic; evidence shows transformative outcomes for stakeholders as well, such as developing and applying learned concepts associated with systematic inquiry, the creation of evaluation organization structures, the appointment of promotion of individuals into organizational structures, and invigorating professional development experiences (Cousins & Chouinard, 2012). This research was more representative of P-PE because of the emphasis on practicality and pragmatism.

**Justifying Participatory Evaluation as a Research Method in this Study**

I invoked Cousins and Chouinard’s (2012) three justifications of collaborative inquiry to defend my decision for using PE as a research method. The first justification is *political*, which implies the PE process is rooted in social justice and democracy. Thus, one reason PE was justified for this research is because it aligns with my intent to continue illuminating the otherwise silent voice in program decision making amongst community residents who participate in ISL. The second justification is *philosophical*, which implies a primary goal is the production of knowledge. Participatory evaluation was an appropriate research method for my dissertation because it is conducive to extracting meaningful insights representative of community resident voice to contribute to a larger scholarly discussion. The final justification is *pragmatic* and ties back to a major purpose of this study. Participatory evaluation leads to instrumental consequences and enhances the usefulness of the knowledge it creates. This aligned with my intention to improve a particular program’s design using participatory evaluation methods.

**Framing Participatory Evaluation**
I used Cousins’ (1998, 2012) 3-part conceptual framework of PE (Figure 3.1) to frame this inquiry.

**Figure 3.1**

*Conceptual Framework for a Participatory Evaluation*


The first component called for identifying contextual factors and enabling conditions of the PE, such as community context, program and institutional influences, and the evaluator’s background and role. The second component establishes the participatory processes of the PE, such as locus of control, stakeholder diversity, and depth of participation. The third and final component pertains to PE in terms of proximal and
distal consequences. Notably, the PE conceptual framework was not intended as a prescriptive roadmap for PE implementation, but rather an anticipatory tool to help organize thinking in a comprehensive fashion (Cousins & Chouinard, 2012). In the following section I show how Cousins’ (1998, 2012) conceptual framework was exemplified in this current research.

Participatory Evaluation Framework Component 1: Contextual Factors and Enabling Conditions. The first component of the PE conceptual framework involves establishing contextual factors and enabling conditions so an evaluator can determine the conditions of the inquiry. I begin this section with a description of Sacllo, the Andean community in Perú where the PE takes place. Then, I provide a synopsis of ISLP Perú, the program being evaluated. Finally, I offer an overview of how the Andean Alliance for Sustainable Development is supporting this research, along with an account of my own qualifications to lead the PE as evaluator.

Community Context: Sacllo. Sacllo is an agrarian community comprised of 53 families nestled in a small valley alongside the Urubamba River (see Figure 3.2). It is technically a comunidad campesina (rural community), a federally recognized municipal classification for autonomous indigenous communities that acknowledges traditional land rights, governing processes, and other community characteristics. Farming is the main economic driver in Sacllo, hence day-to-day life revolves around growing corn that farmers sell on the domestic and/or international market. The standard of living in Sacllo is relatively basic, however Sacllo is located across the river from Calca (Figure 3.3) where community residents can easily walk or drive across a bridge to access an open-air
market, schools, banks, restaurants, and clinics. Calca is also a major transportation hub for travel throughout the region.

Sacllo shares a similar historical narrative as most communities of Incan decent around the Cusco region. In the 1500s Spanish settlers arrived preaching salvation through western religious belief, only to ultimately raid sacred dwellings, seize Incan gold, and settle on their land. Today, community residents in Sacllo continue to suffer from modern day forms of colonialism. Sacllo is currently in a political battle with the regional municipality and a private enterprise who are forcibly building a gondola style chairlift for tourists to visit the hidden ruins of Huchuyqosqo located in the mountain above Sacllo. Municipal representatives argue the gondola is in Sacllo’s best interest; the community alleges corporate greed, and is fearful the project will disturb farming practice, degrade the environment, and create hostility and unnecessary competition amongst neighbors in the name of tourism. I raise this issue because of the relationship between international service-learning and post-colonialism. I anticipated the historical and modern existence of colonial behavior will be prevalent within the context of this inquiry.

**Figure 3.2**

*View of Sacllo and the Urubamba River from Above Calca*
Note. Google Earth, n.d. Image retrieved November 17, 2019

Figure 3.3

Birdseye view of Sacillo, Calca and Huchuyqosqo in the Sacred Valley of the Incas
Program Influence: ISLP Perú. In 2010, my colleague Aaron Ebner and I founded The Andean Alliance for Sustainable Development (AASD), a community-based organization in Calca, Perú. The AASD’s mission is to harness collective intelligence to support community-led development in the highlands of Perú. In Perú, the AASD is known as an agriculture organization. The AASD supports high altitude indigenous farming communities by helping them identify and address community challenges. Over the past ten years, the AASD has supported school and family greenhouse projects, organic farming capacity building workshops, farmer access-to-market programs, the overall representation of campesinos (rural farmers) in the public and social sphere, and many other community-led initiatives.
Outside of Perú, the AASD is predominantly known as an education organization. The AASD has partnered with various universities in the United States to collaborate on experiential education and ISL programs designed to add value to AASD community programs and student participants. The AASD has implemented a wide spectrum of experiential education programs in accordance with the constantly shifting needs of the AASD and/or AASD community partners. Students who study with the AASD might participate in community-based research, greenhouse project construction, fundraising, web design, geographic information system mapping, program evaluation, translation and interpretation, documentary filmmaking and more. The AASD is considered a social enterprise since community projects are primarily funded through university partnerships.

In 2017, I formed a partnership between the Speed School of Engineering at the University of Louisville, the Andean Alliance for Sustainable Development, and the community of Sacllo. Together we designed ISLP Perú, an ISL program designed to help community residents in Sacllo identify and communicate challenges related to their damaged community irrigation system. Due to natural causes such as rock fall, erosion, and uprooting, Sacllo’s irrigation system is losing significant amounts of water. Water scarcity has forced the community to adjust water distribution and management accordingly, which in turn has led to conflict amongst farmers in the community. Sacllo has petitioned the local municipality to repair the irrigation system, however, to date no action has been taken.

ISLP Perú is implemented in three phases. At the beginning of the program undergraduate and graduate engineering students participate in a ten-week long course on the University of Louisville campus. During the first month, I facilitate an orientation that
includes interactive activities and presentations about international service-learning, the history and local context of Sacllo, and reflection on their roles and responsibilities in the program. During the second month, engineering faculty train students on technical skills they apply in the field, such as measuring water flow, geographic information system (GIS) mapping technology, and flying drones. Finally, the program culminates with a two-week long experience in Perú.

In Perú students split their time between project related activities and cultural immersion. Students dedicate a total of 6-8 days on project related activities, such as collecting GIS data in Sacllo. Prior to collecting data, students present the initial plan to community leadership and then co-design a final plan for collecting data. In 2018 and 2019, students split into two groups and were led by a community member to collect data in the community. Typically, one group collects data on the canal system’s major damage points, such as the type of damage, the damage point’s location on the canal system, and the damage point’s level of severity. The second group measures water flow at various points along the canal system to determine the quantity of water being lost. Each night the team convenes at the AASD office to upload data and reflect on the day’s events over dinner.

The AASD coordinates various cultural activities for students to participate in outside of a typical workday. This includes exploring lesser-known Inca ruins, hiking to hidden waterfalls, visiting artisan markets, and traveling to the famous Machu Picchu ruins. Students also spend a day visiting communities where the AASD implements agriculture projects and volunteering their time to help with AASD community projects. Students can take advantage of their down time, when they walk around Calca, visit the
vibrant outdoor markets, or take short adventures on any of the various foot trails surrounding Calca. Inevitably, one of the best experiences for students tends to be living together with a local family, where they share breakfast and spend time around the garden.

To date, two iterations of ISLP Perú have been completed. The first iteration was completed in 2018, and the second iteration was completed in 2019. The 2018 program was essentially a pilot. Despite months of communication and coordination leading up to the program, face-to-face time between campus- and community-representatives proved to be the catalyst for building a collective vision of ISLP Perú’s possibilities. Together, community residents and campus representatives toured the irrigation system, examined major damage points, and discussed possible solutions. It was collectively decided a map of Sacllo’s irrigation system would be an appropriate deliverable for the first year. Within months of completing the program, a detailed map was produced and presented to the community (Figure 3.4).

Figure 3.4

2018 ISLP Perú Deliverable
Note. Map of Sacclio’s irrigation system using ArcGIS technology and created by UL students and staff.

In 2019, the second iteration of ISLP Perú was more robust due to the newfound collective understanding between campus representatives and community residents. An ISLP Perú steering committee was created in Sacclio, which included the community president, the president of the water irrigation committee, and other community leaders involved with the program. After reflecting on the program’s first year, the steering committee conveyed the importance of a more accurate portrayal of water loss. Additionally, they expressed the need for a more innovative way to communicate the challenge they face. In response, administration from the Speed School of Engineering allocated substantial resources to support ISLP Perú.

In anticipation of ISLP Perú 2019, faculty purchased state-of-the-art drone technology, advanced GPS tracking units, and modern devices to measure water flow. In
August 2019, seven students and three faculty members made the second ISLP Perú pillage to Perú. Students spent various days measuring water loss at various sites along the canal, flying drones to capture accurate and detailed images of the canal system and its demographics, and documenting every damage point and other points of interest along the canal. In the end, deliverables from ISLP Perú’s second year included two digital story maps that highlight the various damage points along the irrigation system (Figure 3.5), as well as data on water loss (Figure 3.6).

**Figure 3.5**

*Example of 2019 ISLP Perú Deliverable 1*

*Note.* Example of an imagery centered digital story map taken from ArcGIS online showing a damage point along the Sacllo canal system and descriptive information.
Note. Example of a data centered digital story map that can be filtered based on the type of data users are most interested in. This example shows a part of the canal losing 43% of its water.

Program Influence: Covid-19. What transpired after ISLP Perú 2019 was unexpected. Of note, creating digital maps using ArcGIS technology is a time-intensive task. Program deliverables were not ready to present to the community until early 2020, just as Covid-19 was becoming a global pandemic. In March 2020, I flew to Perú to present the deliverables to the community. There were various intended purposes of the presentation: 1) update the community on the program’s findings and get their feedback, 2) involve the community in next logical steps with respect to ISLP Perú 2020, and 3) create a launching point for my dissertation research and data collection. Unfortunately, I
had to cancel the presentation due to Perú’s strict response to Covid-19, which included a national quarantine.

Eventually, I presented the maps to the community President, Vice-President, and the person in charge of the irrigation committee. I happily accepted this concession given the challenges associated with getting groups together due to Covid-19 social distancing restrictions. The deliverables were well received; however, discussing plans for using the maps or the next iteration of ISLP Perú did not seem reasonable given the overall uncertainty in the face of a pandemic.

Covid-19 decelerated the advancement of ISLP Perú and this research, but fortunately neither came to a halt. Although the University of Louisville had to cancel ISLP Perú 2020, 2021, and 2022 for Covid-19 related reasons, faculty and administration are excited to reignite the program post-pandemic. Regarding this research, Covid-19 delayed the PE by approximately one year. Originally, I intended to use the results from this PE to inform the design of ISLP Perú 2020. Now, I have implemented this PE and have a sufficient representation of community resident perspectives to inform the design of ISLP Perú 2023.

**Institutional Influence: Andean Alliance for Sustainable Development.** The value of participatory evaluation can be maximized when supported by an organization offering full commitment to the process, as well as resource allocation (Cousins & Chouinard, 2012). Accordingly, the AASD was supportive of this research because of the opportunity to utilize PE findings to improve future programs. The AASD considers itself innovative in the field of international experiential education, however it receives minimal exposure. This research was an opportunity for the AASD to advocate as a
leader in the field of ISL via journal publications and conference presentations. This type of outreach will also enable the AASD to build new university partnerships and scale up AASD programming.

The AASD supported this research in various tangible ways. First, the AASD committed staff to communicate and coordinate with community residents during planning stages, aid in secondary note taking during data collection, and help with other on-site logistics. In addition, the AASD provided technological support and office space. Technological support included projectors for presentations in the community, as well as funding to support the ArcGIS web account that houses all digital mapping. Jim Valenza, the AASD GIS specialist, uploaded and managed all GIS related data. The AASD also contributed financial capital to support this research, such as travel and local transportation costs for coordinating and conducting the evaluation. Finally, the AASD has committed to dedicating resources to support the dissemination of research findings, such as conference funding or professional association membership fees.

**Background and Role of Evaluator.** Earlier I made the case that action research was an appropriate methodology for this investigation, yet I omitted a justification for myself as the action researcher. Hence, it is appropriate to demonstrate why I was qualified to lead this evaluation prior to discussing my role as lead evaluator. In this section, I provide an overview of my experience relevant to this research, as well as my outsider-within status in Sacllo.

*Expertise and experience.*

I was qualified to conduct this evaluation by way of formal training and field-based practitionership. Program evaluation was a focal point of my master’s degree
program in public administration and international development, albeit not necessarily *participatory* evaluation. Rather, the value of participatory approaches was instilled at the hand of courses on action research, systems thinking, social sector needs assessment, and development project management. I intentionally applied my course-based training in the field, which led to creating the AASD in Perú. Subsequently, I spent the next ten years building relationships with indigenous farming communities, and co-designing, implementing, and evaluating innovative community development projects. Through this experience I gained skills in facilitation, group leadership, team building, conflict resolution, and stakeholder involvement, all of which are requisites for successful participatory processes (Gaventa et al., 1998).

In 2017, I started my doctoral studies in the Educational Leadership, Evaluation, and Organization Development program at the University of Louisville. I completed doctoral seminars in leadership and organization theory, which allowed me to refine my plans to conduct this inquiry and my understanding of related knowledge. As a graduate assistant, I was part of the evaluation team for the Master Educator Course (MEC) - a collaboration between the US Army School of Cadet Command and the University of Louisville to deliver an accelerated Master of Arts in Higher Education Administration to advance the knowledge and skills of US Army cadre to engage in high-quality postsecondary educational practices. My role as an evaluator for the program involved co-facilitating focus groups, analyzing all qualitative data, and writing up findings for the final report. Thus, my formal training and field-based experience qualifies me to conduct an evaluation for this proposed dissertation research.

*Outsider-within positionality.*
Although I come from a middle-class socio-economic background in the United States, living in rural Perú for seven years illuminated a unique and dynamic discernment of indigenous Peruvian lifestyle and cultural norms. In fact, *living* in Perú does not fully exemplify my experience; more accurately, I felt *welcomed* to live in Perú, personified by the days I spent side-by-side working with neighbors in the corn field, participating in traditional festivals and ceremonies, attending birthdays and funerals, or simply spending time sharing meals and stories with others. The hardest part about moving back to the United States to start my doctoral degree was accepting my new status as an outsider, since the community I belong in the most exists in Perú. While I do not purport to relate fully to the reality of life as an indigenous Andean farmer, my status as an *outsider-within* (Herr & Anderson, 2005) helps justify my qualifications for implementing this evaluation. In addition, being an outsider contributes to my role as an evaluator because I am removed from formalized distributions of power. Specifically, I do not have a formal vote in the community assembly process and therefore can offer objective input when necessary.

**Participatory Evaluation Framework Component 2: Participatory Processes.**

The second component of the PE conceptual framework addresses three process dimensions of collaborative inquiry: locus of control, stakeholder selection for participation, and depth of participation (Cousins & Chouinard, 2012). Addressing these dimensions in advance helped shape what the evaluation would like in practice, such as the characteristics, roles, and responsibilities of the evaluator and stakeholder participants. The following sections illustrate each process dimension in detail, along with their relationship to this study.
**Locus of Control.** Establishing control of technical decision-making determines the balance of control between evaluators and stakeholders in the PE’s implementation. Locus of control can range from completely in the hands of the evaluator to being exerted entirely by program stakeholders (Cousins, 1998). As the primary researcher of this proposed dissertation, I was in control of the evaluation’s process and procedure. It was my responsibility to direct and guide the evaluation process, which included but was not limited to conducting all technical work and maintaining technical quality. Throughout the process of a PE stakeholders’ understanding of the process, purpose, and program can shift, in which case locus of control may shift accordingly (Themessl-Huber & Grutsch, 2003), however that did not turn out to be the case in this study.

**Stakeholder Selection for Participation.** Stakeholder selection does not represent who will participate in the production of knowledge from the evaluation, but rather the range of types of participants (Cousins & Chouinard, 2012). Programs typically include a wide spectrum of stakeholders, such as funders, sponsors, managers, implementers, and intended program beneficiaries. Prior to implementing a PE, it is necessary to consider which stakeholders will contribute throughout the process. The extent to which the group is diverse or not is a primary consideration. Some make the case for limited stakeholder diversity because it is susceptible to raising power issues and issues of distrust and politics that might not have otherwise risen to the surface (Díaz-Puente, Yagüe, & Afonso, 2008; Gaventa, et al., 1998). On the other hand, diverse stakeholder selection has shown to increase credibility of findings, improve planning and implementation, lead to more creative solutions, and offer a greater understanding of the context and history of the program (Biott & Cook, 2000; Brandon, 1998; Lentz et al., 2005).
The degree of stakeholder diversity in this study was limited. Although there are various actors with a stake in ISLP Perú, e.g., students, faculty leaders, university administration, and AASD representatives, an explicit purpose of this study was to improve ISLP Perú by incorporating the perspectives of community resident stakeholders. Moreover, this study aimed to represent community resident perspectives in the larger scholarly discussion on international service-learning. Therefore, stakeholder involvement in this study was limited to community residents who participate in and/or are affected by the program. Nonetheless, it was important to distinguish between two categories of community residents in Sacllo based on their level of involvement, influence, and understanding of the program.

The first category consisted of key stakeholders, i.e., those who could significantly influence or are important to ISLP Perú’s success (Dearden et al., 2002). This included community residents who have been involved with the planning, implementation, and/or evaluation of the program. The second category consisted of primary stakeholders, which are community residents who were affected by ISLP Perú yet had low levels of influence and understanding of the program (Dearden et al., 2002). Primary stakeholders were community residents who had not been engaged or involved with ISLP Perú yet were aware of its existence.

**Depth of Participation.** Establishing the depth of participation determines the extent of non-evaluator stakeholder participation in the research. Degrees of non-evaluator stakeholder participation range from shallow and peripheral to deep and integrated (Cousins & Chouinard, 2012). Non-evaluator stakeholders can engage at high levels at any point of the PE and participate in all tasks. Evidence shows high degrees of
utilization of results when non-evaluator stakeholders are involved in the planning and analysis phases of the PE (Weiss, 1984).

This PE incorporated non-evaluator stakeholders at various stages of the evaluation. In the design phase, key stakeholders contributed to the participant recruitment process and the development of the overall line of inquiry. In addition, community residents who participated in the PE were invited to contribute to the process of designing future ISLP Perú programs based on initial findings from the first phase of data analysis. Indeed, as is common with action research, community resident participation also emerged organically in the field, particularly in the second phase of data collection when I was recruiting participants for the study who were familiar with ISLP Peru but had little influence or understanding of the program.

**Participatory Evaluation Framework Component 3: Consequences.** Cousins and Chouinard (2012) noted the importance of thinking about the goals and intent of PE in terms of consequences. Specifically, Cousins and Chouinard (2012) identified proximal and distal consequences as attributable to the evaluation. Proximal consequences refer to the instrumental or conceptual use of findings; distal consequences refer to consequences that are more difficult to observe or measure, such as enlightenment, empowerment, or emancipation.

I targeted proximal consequences in this study because the purpose is to improve ISLP Perú and gain a strong understanding of community resident perspectives relative to ISL. Specifically, the consequences targeted included meaningful knowledge creation, the use of findings, and *process use*. Patton (2008) defined process use as “individual changes in thinking, attitudes, and behavior, and program or organizational changes in
procedures and culture that occur among those involved in evaluation as a result of the learning that occurs during the evaluation process” (p. 155). I created these outcomes by incorporating non-evaluator stakeholders throughout the evaluation process and following participatory action research methodology.

**How ISLP Perú is Situated in Action Research Methodology**

This section shows how action research applied to this investigation. ISLP Perú is grounded in the cycle of construct, plan, act, and evaluate, which Coghlan (2019) presented in the context of doing action research in one’s own organization (Figure 3.7). Prior to constructing the project is a pre-step that involves establishing a project’s context and purpose with relevant stakeholders. Constructing the project involves organizing relevant stakeholders to identify key issues, constructing the initiative, and determining desired outcomes. The planning phase determines initial steps for beginning the process. Taking action involves systematically generating and collecting research data, and evaluating results is a collaborative process that leads to further planning.

**Figure 3.7**

*The Action Research Cycle for Doing Research in your own Organization*
Unaided, this cycle is insufficient to capture how a PE fits into the ISLP Perú action research cycle. To illustrate why, I draw a comparison between Coghlan’s (2019) action research cycle and McNiff and Whitehead’s (2011) depiction of action research (Figure 3.8). Although the phases in each cycle are similar, the defining and differentiating characteristic is the inclusion of *moving in a new direction* by McNiff and Whitehead (2011). This implies action research is not only cyclical, but also develops iteratively.

**Figure 3.8**

*The Action Research Cycle Depicting its Iterative Nature*
As in the clock, where the revolutions of the three hands are concurrent and where the revolutions of the second hand enable the revolutions of the minute hand, and the revolutions of the second and minute hands together enable the completion of the hour hand, the short-term action research cycles contribute to the medium-term cycles, which in turn contribute to the longer-term cycles. (p. 11)

Coghlan (2019) went on to note “the hour hand may represent the project as a whole… the minute hand may represent phases or particular sections of the project… [and] the second hand may represent specific actions within the project, for example, a specific meeting or interview” (p. 10-11). This perspective enables an understanding of how action research applies to this investigation.

This research did not commence nor culminate with participatory evaluation. ISLP Perú is a single intervention embedded within a long-term iterative action research cycle addressing community resident benefit, equity, and representation in ISL. Indeed, ISLP Perú is a product of AASD ISL programs’ findings and outcomes, and as depicted in Figure 3.9, has influence on the development of future AASD ISL programs.

**Figure 3.9**

*ISLP Perú as a Single Intervention in a Long-Term Iterative Action Research Cycle*
ISLP Perú has completed nearly two full iterations of the action research cycle. The first iteration of ISLP Perú underwent explicit and tacit stages of construction, planning, taking action, and evaluation (for a more detailed account see the section above titled *Participatory evaluation framework component 1: Contextual factors and enabling conditions*). Consequently, findings and outcomes, both intended and unintended, fed into the design of the following year’s program. This current research embodied the “evaluating action” component of the program’s second iteration, where findings and outcomes of PE influence the construction and planning of subsequent iterations of ISLP Perú (see Figure 3.10).

**Figure 3.10**

*ISLP Perú’s Iterative Action Research Cycle as Part of the Long-Term AASD ISL Action Research Cycle*
In sum, action research applied to this investigation in a multitude of ways. At the core of this study is ISLP Perú, a program whose purpose is to help a community address issues related to their irrigation system. As part of this research, ISLP Perú was a source of investigative findings to address a larger issue related to community resident representation in ISL. These two streams align with the core premise of action research, which is to address social inequities and community problems (Stoecker & Brydon-Miller, 2013). Further, action research is not finite, but rather a cyclical, iterative process. Acknowledging ISLP Perú as a single intervention as part of a long-term, socially driven process adds further context towards the relationship between this investigation and action research methodology. Altogether, action research applied to this investigation because it addressed a community problem, used an inherently participatory method, and is part of a long-term iterative cycle of construct, plan, act, evaluate, and move in a new direction.

**Research Design and Data Collection**

The research design of this investigation existed in two phases. All data in phase 1 was collected using semi-structured interviews and focus group discussion. Phase 1 represented the data gathering process within the participatory evaluation and created a baseline understanding of community resident perspectives as it related to ISL and ISLP Perú. Initial findings from phase 1 were incorporated into the design of phase 2.

The second phase circled back to Cousins and Chouinards’ (2012) participatory evaluation conceptual framework and represented the outcomes or consequences of PE (See Figure 3.1). Specifically, phase 2 disseminated initial results to participants and built off initial findings by systematizing ISLP Perú. Systematization is a process that involves
reconstructing an experience and placing order to the various objective and subjective elements within that experience to understand, interpret, and thus learn from our own practice (Jara, 2018). In the following section I define each research method, justify their appropriateness for this study, and discuss how each method was implemented. However, prior to discussing the research design and approach for data collection it is necessary to discuss where my ethical values lie as a social science researcher.

**Researcher Ethics and Structured Ethical Reflection**

Contractual and covenantal ethics are two categories of ethics a researcher should consider prior to collecting data in the field. Contractual ethics refers to a widely accepted set of rules designed to protect human participants in the research process (Stevens et al., 2016). With respect to contractual ethics, typically a researcher must receive approval by a university’s institutional review board or ethics committees prior to collecting data in the field. Just as important, covenantal ethics represent a more personalized approach to human subject protection and reflect a researcher’s personal values with respect to participants’ best interests (Stevens et al., 2016). For example, consider how a researcher incorporates values such as mutual respect, trust, and empathy into the research planning or data collection process. It is imperative that a researcher considers contractual and covenantal ethics when planning an investigation, thus what follows is my own ethical stance and how I approached ensuring human subject protection in my research.

Contractual ethics are especially important as researchers negotiate their way into the field to gather data that affects the lives of research participants (Creswell, 2007). One example of a contractual ethic is obtaining informed consent from participants prior to
collecting data. Informed consent provides research participants with an understanding of the purpose of the study, potential benefits, and a plan that protects participants’ confidentiality or anonymity (Creswell, 2007). Contractual ethics also involve leaving the scene of a research study in at least the same condition upon arrival, and in such a way that participants do not feel taken advantage of or exploited. With respect to this research proposal, all forms and protocols related to contractual ethics were finalized and amended to this document upon approval of the research design and methods from my dissertation committee and University of Louisville institutional review board.

Perhaps due to its individualistic nature, covenantal ethics lack an analogous institutionalized system of accountability compared to contractual ethics. Nonetheless, it is equally important for a researcher to consider their personal ethical stance at the onset of the research design process. This is especially relevant in action research because participants are included in the research process and important choices to drive practical action need to be made in present tense throughout the process (Brydon-Miller & Coghlan, 2018; Reason, 2006). Notably, contractual and covenantal ethics are not mutually exclusive. For example, Williamson and Prosser (2002) push action researchers to consider how confidentiality and anonymity can be preserved, how informed consent can be meaningful, and how to avoid doing harm to participants. Walker and Haslett (2002) offer insight towards how ethics in action research is distinct from other types of research - they suggest ethical considerations should be present and reflected upon in all phases of the action research cycle, i.e., planning, acting, evaluating, and constructing.

Structured ethical reflection is an approach to establishing and adhering to a researcher’s ethical and moral values (Brydon-Miller, Rector Aranda, & Stevens, 2015).
Structured ethical reflection identifies a researcher’s core values and examines ways in which a researcher’s individualized principles can be embodied in their research (Stevens, Brydon-Miller, & Raider-Roth, 2016). In essence, the process involves choosing values that represent a researcher’s ethical stance and articulating questions or statements that reflect each value at every stage of the planned research process. Table 3.1 represents my ethical stance represented through structured ethical reflection. The core values I identify in the first column are respect, trust, flexibility, patience, creativity, commitment, and humor. These values are juxtaposed with each phase of the research process identified in the first row and converge to represent my ethical stance at each respective cell.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Values</th>
<th>Developing partnerships</th>
<th>Constructing research questions</th>
<th>Planning project/action</th>
<th>Recruiting participants</th>
<th>Collecting data/ taking action</th>
<th>Analyzing data/ evaluating action</th>
<th>Member checking</th>
<th>Going public</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Respect</td>
<td>Make sure relationships are trust-based and authentic, rather than superficial</td>
<td>Include people’s perspectives that have a stake in the research</td>
<td>Follow contractual ethics, like IRB</td>
<td>Be aware of and respect people’s time</td>
<td>Recognize cultural norms when talking to people</td>
<td>Respect the transcription and translation process</td>
<td>Create a system that is efficient in accordance with participants time</td>
<td>Represent this research as not my own, but all the people who contributed along the way</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trust</td>
<td>Do my best to convey the research process and what that might mean for our partnership</td>
<td>Ask questions that reinforce my intentions</td>
<td>Follow advice from my committee (although don’t follow blindly)</td>
<td>Be honest about my intentions</td>
<td>Do what I say I’m going to do</td>
<td>Remember community residents can offer sound contributions to this process</td>
<td>Incorporate all participant feedback based on their words, not my interpretation</td>
<td>Be open to implementing different processes with different participants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flexibility</td>
<td>Accept that some partners might choose not to participate at any time for any reason</td>
<td>Know that my research questions might change in the field</td>
<td>Understand certain things are out of my control from a timing/planning perspective</td>
<td>Work around people’s schedule</td>
<td>Be aware of emergent themes</td>
<td>Recognize if a certain method is not working and adjusting</td>
<td>Be open to implementing different processes with different participants</td>
<td>Align with associations or journals that might not be the ‘perfect’ fit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Values</td>
<td>Developing partnerships</td>
<td>Constructing research questions</td>
<td>Planning project/ action</td>
<td>Recruiting participants</td>
<td>Collecting data/ taking action</td>
<td>Analyzing data/ evaluating action</td>
<td>Member checking</td>
<td>Going public</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patience</td>
<td>Know that the best partnerships are the ones that develop organically</td>
<td>Continue to challenge the way I frame my questions</td>
<td>Remember that research is difficult and takes time to plan</td>
<td>Not get frustrated if people are apprehensive about participating</td>
<td>Do not rush the process and respect people’s pace</td>
<td>Own and appreciate the tedious nature of data analysis</td>
<td>Do not rush through or overlook this process</td>
<td>Continue to apply even if I don’t get accepted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creativity</td>
<td>Own and enforcing the notion of community ownership in the research process</td>
<td>Stay open minded about what constitutes a proper research question</td>
<td>Use visual depictions when possible to guide complex processes</td>
<td>Trust community residents about who should participate and why</td>
<td>Push myself to use unconventional data collection methods</td>
<td>Be open to discovering a new way to analyzing data</td>
<td>Find ways to make this process fun</td>
<td>Make my writing and presenting appeal to all audiences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commitment</td>
<td>Value collective intelligence as more powerful than anything I can do or produce individually</td>
<td>Ensure data collection methods align with my overarching question</td>
<td>Take the time to reflect, modify and revise as necessary</td>
<td>Ensure gender and age diversity amongst research participants,</td>
<td>Adhere as much as possible to the research design and plan</td>
<td>Represent community resident voice as effectively as possible</td>
<td>Take the time to check in with all participants</td>
<td>Continue to build off my research after each publication or presentation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Humor</td>
<td>Be up front about how I haven’t done this before and might screw things up</td>
<td>Not too sure about this one…</td>
<td>Laugh with community partners as they laugh at me</td>
<td>Somehow involve either guinea pig or chicha into my boiler plate</td>
<td>Tell jokes and laugh (especially if I mess up a word in Spanish)</td>
<td>Laugh at myself when cursing the rigidity of data analysis</td>
<td>Find humor in the mistakes we make</td>
<td>Intentionally incorporate humor and jokes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The values I express in Table 3.1 largely stem from my previous experience collecting data in the Peruvian Andes. One major consideration is my sensitivity to people’s time. Most community residents in Sacllo work full days in the field, so the time they commit to participating in this study comes at the expense of their productivity. To minimize opportunity cost I respected people’s time as a resource and was flexible when scheduling data collection. This is especially relevant because I was collecting data during the busiest months of the year for farming corn. From January through April farmers are harvesting corn; July typically begins the next farming cycle. All interviews and focus groups were scheduled well in advance and towards the end of the workday.

Another value reflected above relates to trusting participants’ insights and contributions to the research process. Given that, it was important to clearly communicate general research principles and the purpose of my own research prior to any data collection. Finally, I acknowledge community resident participation in ISLP Perú has been largely male dominated thus far. In response, I tried to prioritize gender and age diversity during participant recruitment. It was necessary to address my ethical stance with respect to data collection and human subject protection prior to introducing my research plan. Now I will discuss my research methods and how I collected data in more detail.

**Phase 1.1: Semi-structured Interviews**

After ISLP Perú 2019, myself, other representatives of the AASD, and faculty from University of Louisville finalized the deliverables from the program (See Figures 3.5 and 3.6) and presented them to leadership in Sacllo. The next step was to conduct semi-structured interviews (SSI) with community residents in Sacllo. Semi-structured
interviews are structured to address specific dimensions of the research question, while also leaving space for study participants to offer new meanings to the topic of study (Galletta, 2013). Semi-structured interviews are an appropriate data collection method in this research because they are well suited to explore the perceptions and opinions of respondents regarding complex and sometimes sensitive issues (Barriball & While, 1994).

Semi-structured interviews served two purposes in this study. First, SSIs were used to collect data to help answer the research questions. To guide the discussion, I used an interview guide that includes topics such as: community residents’ overall understanding of ISLP Perú; the program’s effect on the community; indicators of program success; and how to improve ISLP Perú in the future. (See Appendix A for more details). Second, SSIs were used as a tool to incorporate SSI participants into the data gathering process. This involved asking SSI participants to consider what information would be useful to learn from other community residents and incorporating responses into the focus group discussion protocol.

**Participant Recruitment for Semi-structured Interviews.** Unlike quantitative research where large, randomly selected groups are preferred, qualitative research focuses on small groups selected purposefully and deliberatively based on the study’s characteristics and research questions (Cresswell, 2007; Hennink, 2007). Participant familiarity with ISLP Perú was imperative to efficaciously discuss strategies for improvement, therefore I used purposeful sampling to recruit SSI participants. The logic of purposeful sampling lies in selecting information rich cases, i.e., “those where you can learn a great deal about issues of central importance to the purpose of the inquiry…” [and
doing so] yields insights and in-depth understanding rather than empirical
generalizations” (Patton, 2002). Hence, inclusion criteria included community resident
involvement in at least one of the following areas of ISLP Perú: 1) planning a previous
iteration; 2) implementing a previous iteration; 3) collecting data with students; 4)
establishing intended community goals or outcomes; and 5) participating in discussions
related to defining the community challenge being addressed. In accordance with these
criteria, I selected and recruited 6 community residents to participate.

Protocol and Procedure. Semi-structured interviews provided the flexibility to
validate the meaning of respondents’ answers and probe unclear or ambiguous words or
phrases (Barriball & While, 1994). As interviewer, part of my process also involved
critical reflection, which “allows for exploring participants’ perceptions and
understandings of the experience in relation to broader social and systemic patterns…and
allows for the participant and researcher to reflect on the emerging narrative as lodged
within layers of complex structural, historical, and relational dimensions” (Galletta, 2013,
p. 93). I used an interview guide (See Appendix A) to ensure I discussed topics that spoke
back to my research questions and created adequate data. However, my process embraced
the logic of Poole and Mauthner (2014), who contend action research interview guides
are flexible and users are allowed to change the wording, sequencing of topics, and
overall direction if necessary. The malleable interview structure was communicated to
interviewees as part of the interview protocol (See Appendix B). All interviews were
conducted in Spanish, which is my second language. I discuss this in more detail in the
section of this chapter titled Translating and Transcribing Data.

Phase 1.2: Focus Group Discussion
Focus group discussion is a qualitative research method involved with discussing a specific set of issues with a pre-determined group of people (Hennink, 2007). I used focus groups to generate data that represented the perspective of community residents who were underrepresented in the ISLP Perú program yet stand to benefit from or contribute to the program. These data informed the research question seeking insights towards ISLP Perú program design improvements, however the specific line of questioning emerged through semi-structured interviews in phase 1 of the study. What follows is an account of participant recruitment and group composition, followed by moderator tasks and considerations, logistics, and how data was recorded. To ensure planning was comprehensive, I leaned on Hennink’s (2007) book *International Focus Group Research*, which guides graduate students through the process of implementing an international focus group.

**Participant Recruitment and Group Composition.** I used purposeful homogenous sampling to identify and recruit interviewees. The purpose of homogenous sampling is to describe a particular sub-group in depth (Suri, 2011). It is suitable for participatory approaches because it supports dialogue with one group about a shared challenge or situation (Suri, 2011). Participant recruitment and line of inquiry in focus groups emerge through SSI results, which include questions to elicit responses regarding who in the community should participate in focus groups. Eligibility criteria included formal membership of the community of Sacllo (defined by community members who attend and participate in monthly community assemblies), high degree of familiarity with ISLP Perú, adults identified as being at least 18 years of age, and fluency in Spanish. Additionally, gender and age balance were considered during participant recruitment.
Conducting the Focus Group. A moderator is the central figure in a focus group and responsible for extracting information from the discussion pertaining to the research questions (Hennink, 2007). As moderator, I used a discussion guide with predetermined questions to gather pertinent data. I employed a mix of directive and non-directive moderation techniques throughout the central discussion. This included active listening, awareness of non-verbal communication, and probing. Probing techniques allow the moderator to peel back the layers of a discussion and access the core of participants’ reasoning for making certain points (Krueger, 1998). I used specific probing techniques, such as: reflective probing, which involved paraphrasing participants’ thoughts back to them for clarification; expansive probing, which prompted individuals to expand on a point or offer an example; silent probing, where I purposefully allowed for silence after a comment to illicit response; group probing, for when it was helpful for the entire group to respond to a particular point; and rank probing, where I asked participants to rate the importance of a point being discussed (Hennink, 2007). Finally, I coordinated and conducted a mock focus group in Perú to test the questions and probing techniques.

Recording and Organizing the Focus Group. It was critical to obtain an accurate record of the focus group discussion to ensure systematic analysis. I used two audio digital recording devices to capture the discussion. Audio digital recording allowed for a verbatim account of the discussion that aided in identifying common themes and theorizing explanations during analysis. I also included visual digital recording in case audio recordings were not sufficient to distinguish between each participant’s voice. Prior to recording, I presented any ethical issues and sought consent to record. To ensure anonymity, I stored and protected all digital recordings on a password-protected
computer only I could access. All hard copies of handwritten notes were stored in a locked drawer only I could access. I coordinated location, seating, refreshments, and other logistics in advance.

**Phase 2: Systematization of Experience**

Systematization of experience is a knowledge generating methodology used to systematically reconstruct and then analyze a past shared experience (Brunelli, 2014; Carillo, 2009; Jara, 2018; Ortiz Aragón & Hoetmer, 2020). It is an inherently participatory process that converges diverse individual interpretations amongst a group and allows for participants to make newfound sense or theory of their shared experience (Ortiz Aragón & Hoetmer, 2020). For this research, the shared experience was participation in ISLP Perú 2018, 2019, and the participatory evaluation process central to this research. Thus, participants included key and primary stakeholders from Sacllo. I implemented a workshop that used participatory methods as a means of facilitating the systematization process. The objectives of this workshop were to:

1. Disseminate and contextualize initial findings from the focus group and SSIs with community resident participants.
2. Incorporate community resident perspectives into the design of future ISLP Perú iterations through a structured process.
3. Establish a larger goal for ISLP Perú and how outcomes from ISLP Perú can aid in the process of Sacllo receiving substantial assistance to improve their irrigation system.
4. Collect data representative of community resident voice with respect to ISL and the various challenges and opportunities that might be considered in ISL program planning.

Workshop methods, instruments, and questions were developed in response to the specific research needs that emerged during Phase 1 of the investigative process. In other words, initial findings from the focus group discussion and semi-structured interviews informed and guided the systematization process. Although the specific methods, instruments, and questions were developed based on the results of Phase 1, in Table 3.2 I organized my research questions alongside various sub-questions that also influenced the systematization process.

**Table 3.2**

*Questions Guiding Systematization of ISLP Perú*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Primary Research Questions</th>
<th>Related Secondary Research Questions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How do Sacllo residents perceive and experience international</td>
<td>- What is ISLP Peru?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>service-learning?</td>
<td>- What is ISLP Perú’s purpose?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Who benefits in ISLP Perú?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- What were your expectations regarding ISLP Perú prior to the student group arriving (if any)?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- What is the role of students?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- What is the role of faculty?</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- What is the role of the AASD?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- What fears do you have about ISLP Perú?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Are there other ways ISLP Perú can support Sacllo?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Discussions and activities that ensued throughout the systematization process were captured using audio and video recording devices and then translated, transcribed, and analyzed as data.

**Translating and Transcribing Data**

All data collection was conducted in Spanish and recorded digitally. Although Spanish is not my mother language, I became fluent after studying Spanish intensively and living and working in Perú. I spoke Spanish daily when conducting meetings with AASD staff and community members, presenting projects and findings to the local municipality, and coordinating with other community-based organizations. Additionally, I have conducted numerous focus groups and semi-structured interviews in Spanish. These immersive and applied experiences contributed to my ability to lead the data gathering process of this investigation in Spanish.

However, research shows a more rigorous translation process was required to prepare and analyze data (Hunt & Bhopal, 2004; Maneesriwongul & Dixon, 2004; Sousa...
& Rojjanasrirat, 2011). According to Hunt and Bhopal (2003), “when data collection methods designed in English are simply translated into another language measurement error can result from inadequate translation procedures, inappropriate content, insensitivity of items, and the failure of researchers to make themselves familiar with cultural norms and beliefs” (p.618). Additionally, Harkness and Schoua-Glusberg (1998) point out that translating words into another language does not necessarily equate to translating meaning because the meaning of words is often dependent on context. To alleviate these concerns, I utilized a direct translation process. In direct translation a trained translator produces a translation to the best of his or her knowledge (Harkness & Schoua-Glusberg, 1998). Direct translation is a common method of translation associated with being an efficient, simple, and cost-effective method (Weeks, Swerissen, & Belfrage, 2007).

Data Analysis Procedure

The process of analyzing data was guided by Saldaña’s (2016) *The Coding Manual for Qualitative Researchers*. Saldaña (2016) described coding as a heuristic where a word or short phrase is symbolically assigned as an attribute to language-based or visual data. The prevailing code represents a construct that symbolizes or translates data, and thus attributes interpretative meaning to each individual datum for later purposes of “pattern detection, categorization, assertion or proposition development, theory building, and other analytic processes” (Saldaña, 2016, p. 4). Coding is a cyclical process, where first-cycle coding are processes that happen during the initial coding of data, and second-cycle coding is a way to reorganize and reanalyze data coded throughout the first cycle. Once all data was collected, transcribed, and translated, I
employed a series of first-, post-first-, and second-cycle coding to draw meaningful content and analysis that responded to the research questions.

Data analysis occurred between June 1, 2020 and June 7, 2021. Overall, the data consisted of recordings and transcripts of SSIs and focus groups, field notes, transcriptions from participatory activities, as well as photos and actual materials that were produced during the systematization exercise. All SSIs and focus groups were collected in Spanish and transcribed by a local educator who had significant transcription experience. After the data were transcribed, I read each transcription closely, and then clarified all talking points that were unclear with the transcriber. The data were analyzed after each phase of data collection.

After Phase 1.1, I employed first cycle coding to identify major codes. I identified 22 codes that could be tied back to my research questions and addressed Saclo residents’ overall perspective of ISLP Peru, as well as ISLP Peru’s greatest strengths and weaknesses. Examples of the codes include communication, student experience, community ownership, economic implications, process, role of the AASD, and problem/solution identification. After the initial analysis of Phase 1.1, I began to document the emergence of major themes and subsequently incorporate them into Phase 1.2’s line of inquiry. For instance, *importance of a program budget* began to emerge as a theme from Phase 1.1, hence I incorporated budgeting as a topic of discussion into Phase 1.2’s SSIs and Focus Groups. In Phase 1.2, I used the same process to code the transcripts and incorporate initial findings into Phase 2’s line of inquiry.

In Phase 2, data was collected throughout a series of participatory activities (see Chapter 4, section titled *Participatory Evaluation Results: Phase 2*). Data from Phase 2
involved recordings and outcomes from participatory activities. All recordings were transcribed; interpretations of all photos, participant drawings, and art were also transcribed and documented accordingly. After Phase 2, I coded and analyzed all data and determined a final set of themes that I present in the next chapter.

**Chapter Summary**

This chapter discussed the foundations of action research and why it is an appropriate methodology for this research. I chose action research because it allows for ISLP Perú to become more representative of community resident perspectives, while still contributing to the scholarly discussion around international service-learning. Action research is also aligned with constructionist epistemology and the concept of practitioner-scholarship, both of which were prevalent constructs in this research. The specific methodology I used to collect data is participatory evaluation, a type of program evaluation that engages stakeholders throughout the process because it leads to enhanced degrees of utilization. This chapter framed this method by discussing the contextual factors, enabling conditions, and process dimensions, followed by a detailed plan for collecting data.
CHAPTER 4: ISLP PERU PARTICIPATORY EVALUATION FINDINGS

In this chapter I present findings from a participatory evaluation of ISLP Perú. The research questions guiding the study were 1) how do Sacllo residents perceive and experience international service learning, and 2) according to Sacllo residents, what are ISLP Perú’s greatest strengths and weaknesses? This chapter is structured into three main sections that correspond with the participatory evaluation’s three phases presented in chapter 3. The first section is an analysis of Phase 1.1, where Sacllo residents who had a direct role in the planning or facilitation of ISLP Perú (key stakeholders) participated in semi-structured interviews. The second section presents an analysis of Phase 1.2, which involved semi-structured interviews and focus groups with Sacllo residents who were not directly involved with ISLP Perú but were aware it exists (primary stakeholders). The third section explores key discussion points and findings from a series of participatory activities involving a mix of all Sacllo residents who participated in the evaluation. To begin, I present an analysis of the participatory evaluation’s first phase of data collection. All participants in this study are identified using pseudonyms.

Participatory Evaluation Results: Phase 1.1

Six key stakeholders from ISLP Perú participated in semi-structured interviews in Phase 1.1 and are referenced extensively throughout this section. Julian and José are both full time staff members with the AASD, and both played an active role in planning and facilitating ISLP Perú. Additionally, they are Sacllo residents who play an active role in all community events, activities, and assemblies. Isabella, and Yony are siblings who
collectively manage Ecohuella, the only organic demonstration farm in Sacllo. Their identity as organic farming experts has made them central figures and natural leaders within the community. Antonio and Jaime both maintain formal positions in Sacllo – Antonio is the President of Sacllo’s Water Committee and Jaime is Vice-President of the Community of Sacllo. Table 4.1 offers a more detailed description of each participant and their roles and responsibilities within ISLP Perú.

**Table 4.1**

*ISLP Perú Key Stakeholder Participants from Phase 1.1 of Data Collection*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Role and Responsibility in ISLP Perú</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Julian</td>
<td>Full-time AASD Staff member</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lead community representative for ISLP Perú</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Presented ISLP to the community in their local assembly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Coordinated all student activities with local participants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Participated in all student presentations to the community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Worked with UofL faculty to decide on final deliverable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isabella</td>
<td>Manages Ecohuella, an organic demonstration farm in Sacllo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Has experience facilitating groups of students and community members</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Participated in all student presentations for ISLP Perú</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Contributed to discussion of community needs regarding the irrigation system</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hosted most meals in Sacllo with students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yony</td>
<td>Works at Ecohuella, an organic demonstration farm in Sacllo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Spent time showing ISLP Perú student participants around Sacllo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Joined student groups during data collection on the canals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Participated in discussions related to identify local challenge and potential deliverables</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hosts other AASD students and has worked with other NGOs in the region</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Antonio  President of Sacllo Water Committee
Participated in all student presentations
Helped students design framework for final deliverable from perspective of local Water Committee

Jaime  Vice-President of Sacllo
Participated in all student presentations and deliverables

José  Full time AASD staff member
Worked with UL staff on deliverable creation
Facilitated various conversations with students
Accompanied students on data collection at times

Throughout Phase 1.1, participants referenced various non-community program stakeholders when speaking about their experience with ISLP Perú. Examples of non-community program stakeholders include the AASD, ISLP Perú student participants, ISLP Perú faculty, and me. Even though all program stakeholders are introduced in Chapter 1 (See sections Origins of this Study and International Service-learning Program - Perú) and again in Chapter 3 (See section Framing Participatory Evaluation), it is necessary to revisit non-community stakeholders prior to presenting the main themes from Phase 1.1. Specifically, it is important to address non-community ISLP Perú program stakeholders within the context of their relationship with Sacllo. Speaking to the relationship between non-community program stakeholders and the community of Sacllo will offer more context towards participants’ responses in this chapter, as well as clarify the identification of certain themes.
Prior to ISLP Perú, the AASD’s primary relationship with Sacllo involved partnering with Ecohuella, an organic demonstration farm in Sacllo. Ecohuella is an education center where farmers who participate in the AASD’s greenhouse program learn about high altitude organic farming. Additionally, Ecohuella is a space for students who participate in AASD experiential education programs to learn about organic farming, agroecology, development in the Sacred Valley, and the history and politics of Perú. Over time, the AASD gained a reputation in Sacllo as an NGO that brings students to its community, and eventually ISLP Perú was created. ISLP Perú is the first formal manifestation of a partnership between the AASD and the community of Sacllo as a whole; as such, certain Sacllo residents still do not draw a distinction between the AASD and ISLP Perú.

Furthermore, Aaron Ebner and I – co-founders of the AASD – are the only foreigners who live in Sacllo. Although our relationship with the community is more personal than professional, nonetheless, most Sacllo residents identify us as AASD Directors. Given that, even informal conversations with Sacllo residents are commonly steered towards the Sacllo and AASD partnership. Notably, program planning for ISLP Perú in Sacllo occurred via these informal conversations. Perhaps this helps explain why some participants in Phase 1.1 refer to the AASD, ISLP Perú, and even me interchangeably when discussing their perceptions of the program throughout this study.

Although at times it appeared confusing for Sacllo residents to decipher between the various AASD roles and representatives in ISLP Perú, participants in Phase 1.1 exemplified a strong understanding of university representatives’ roles and responsibilities in the program. For instance, participants in Phase 1.1 acknowledge the
students’ role as engineering students from the United States participating in a program to investigate Sacllo’s canal system. Further, throughout Phase 1.1, Sacllo residents reference the professionalism, expertise, and level of confidence they experienced working with students. The relationship between students and community was established early in the program when the students formally presented their plan to the community upon their arrival, which was followed by a community-led tour of Sacllo and Sacllo’s canal system. Indeed, it seems early and intentional relationship building between students and community residents ultimately had a positive influence on Sacllo residents’ overall perception of ISLP Perú.

A total of seven themes were identified in Phase 1.1 of the participatory evaluation. Two themes described areas of ISLP Perú that went well: 1) ISLP Perú provided meaningful data and information to the community; and 2) ISLP Perú created trust and confidence between Sacllo residents and Speed School participants. Additionally, five themes were identified as areas of improvement: 3) Consider the program’s budget prior to implementation; 4) Increase community understanding of ISLP Perú prior to student arrival; 5) Incorporate More youth involvement in ISLP Perú; 6) Incorporate more government involvement in ISLP Perú; and 7) Incorporate more cultural exchange activities into ISLP Perú. The following sections describe each theme in detail.

**Theme 1: ISLP Perú Provided Meaningful Data and Information to the Community**

When asked about the overall perception of ISLP Perú, various participants suggested the program provided meaningful data and information because the program focused on issues related to the community irrigation system. To Isabella, focusing on
irrigation in Sacllo was important because it is an agrarian community, and everybody is affected by challenges associated with water loss:

Water is very important because this is an agrarian community, so the program should focus on issues related to the canal system, water loss… all of these sorts of things are very important to our community, right? To then be able to take action, right?

Yony made a similar point. She suggested ISLP Perú addressed an important community problem by comparing it to a hypothetical alternative approach: “Because think about if you had identified a different project, let’s say for example, the absence of a community center. But a community center would not benefit most of the people! I believe that from that point the project is destined to fail.” Hence, to Isabella and Yony, one of ISLP Perú’s strengths was it addresses a problem that is important to everybody in the community.

It also became apparent throughout the interviews that some Sacllo residents either did not have a full understanding of the challenges related to the canal system or were unwilling to accept the situation’s exigency. To Yony, one positive outcome from ISLP Perú was the community has a better understanding of the extent of the challenge. She mentioned this is beneficial because ISLP Perú’s program deliverable confirmed the gravity of the situation and offered an evidence-based argument for people in the community who do not take the problem seriously. Yony said:

What went well is that the program created an awareness amongst farmers and community members by using real data to show that the water loss issue is significant and real. Because before it was like “yes, water is being lost because the canals aren’t constructed well and they are deteriorating”, but there was not
exact data. But now, you can say to them, “look, this is how much water we are losing” and they get it. So, for sure, now I think the people here in the community are realizing that.

José reinforced this point. In response to what ISLP Perú is doing well, he said:

Perhaps what you are doing well with this work with the engineers is gathering valuable information and making it available to the community. And to be able to have that information available and be able to begin to say, “look, this is what the problem is, and it will continue if you do not do anything about it.”

Thus, according to Yony and José, ISLP Perú provided a platform to better understand and communicate challenges related to the community irrigation system.

Moreover, communicating precise data about the problem also helped the community understand what solutions to consider. Julian mentioned that prior to ISLP Perú there was no collective understanding amongst the community about the irrigation problem, and thus, no avenue to a solution. Now, Julian shared a belief that the community is ready to start acknowledging the problem and look at it through a solution-oriented lens. In fact, he did not believe there is an alternative approach to addressing the problem without data:

Look, it’s that no matter what, to solve this problem we need information. And in this case, the information will always need to come along with a map. To know distances, where the damage points are located, what distances are this or that, how many water intakes. So, no matter what, to solve the issues associated with this canal or to do any type of construction or repair of the structure, we are going to need to have a map.
Antonio, confirmed this information is critical for a potential renovation project:

They [the government] always ask us to show them where the problem in the canal is or what the water volume is. So, in this work the engineers did they measured the water and water loss, right? And now we know the water volume we have here and how many cubic liters are being deposited in our reservoir. So, this work has been beneficial for us and now we have the information on record in the document the engineers gave us.

Antonio also spoke to how the information the student participants provided would suffice for creating a proposal to receive formal support to begin repairing the canal:

The work the engineers did for us has been successful because they mapped all the canals that have been cemented and those that are not cemented and with this information we can ask for support or make a proposal to be able to repair the canals.

The information and data the students provided helped community residents understand challenges related to their canal system, gain a better understanding of potential solutions, and communicate the challenge more effectively and efficiently.

**Theme 2: ISLP Perú Created Trust and Confidence between Sacllo residents and Speed School Participants**

One reason ISLP Perú created trust-based relationships between community residents and the Speed School is because the students accomplished what they committed to doing. Consider the following anecdote from Yony, who referenced her experience working with outside organizations and connected achieving a program’s objective with community trust: “Usually they [outside organizations] paint a picture,
like, we are going to do this or that, and at the end of the day, they do not accomplish anything. This is how you take away trust.” According to Julian, that was not the case with ISLP Perú. “Look. I think that the final objective was completed. On the periphery there were some things that did not go perfectly, but the final objective was completed, and I believe that is what is most important.” Thus, according to Julian and Yony, ISLP Perú created a sense of trust because the students achieved their goal of creating a map of Sacllo and incorporating data about the canal system and water loss.

Student expertise and preparedness juxtaposed with the reliability of their deliverable also left the community more confident to take next steps in confronting the canal system’s issues. Julian helped illustrate this point: “Now, we can start bringing this to the mayor with more confidence and say, ‘look, we are bosses, we are experts in this, the students are experts, and they are going to do a good job.” Further, according to Antonio, the student deliverable also created a sense of self-determination and responsibility to fix the canal system:

Look. The students came here to help us. That’s the first thing, right? So, with that help, there is always a next step, or in other words, an objective that the students leave us with. So, we must complete what the students came here to do. It would be very bad to take what they gave us and not execute on our end. So, we must achieve the objective the students left us with.

Prior to ISLP Perú, the community had no plan for fixing the canal system. Now, post-program, the community felt more confident about taking next steps to address the problem.
Finally, ISLP Perú created a sense of trust amongst the community because they were aware of the program’s existence and purpose. According to Jaime, presenting the project formally at the community assembly created a sense of acceptance that a group of students from the United States would be coming to do work in Sacllo:

We have community assemblies and you all explained, who was coming, who was going to work or what type of work the group of *gringos*\(^1\) that are coming will do. And that created a sense of awareness, so I do not think there was any type of discomfort amongst the community members here.

Yony added to this point by connecting community awareness with ISLP Perú’s effective collaborative approach. She said, “so, you must design everything together. You must decide together what the problem is and how to solve it, and from there, share ideas so that together you can design effective projects.” Antonio talked about the ways ISLP Perú can build off the confidence that has already been created amongst the community:

Well, it would be best if we continue to understand each other, create dialogue, above all just talk like we already do, and through that understand each other. I think that is good; like you and I, we are friends, and with you, we have already created more or less this type of confidence.

Overall, ISLP Perú created confidence and trust within the community because the students accomplished what they committed to doing, provided quality service, and the community understood the program’s purpose. This is important because Sacllo residents who participated in the program expressed that the time they committed was worth it and

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\(^1\) Gringo is a slang term commonly used in Latin America to reference White people. The context in which the word is used dictates whether or not it carries pejorative intent. Generally, in Sacllo, the word Gringo does not carry any lack of respect, hostility, or disregard.
the community is better off after ISLP Perú. Further, there was a sense of excitement for what will come next in future iterations of the program. Finally, creating a sense of trust within the community activated a collaborative approach where community participants contribute to planning and executing the program in the community. In sum, the major areas of success within ISLP Perú were it created meaningful data and information for the community about their canal system and created trust within the community. Next, I present themes that highlight areas of improvement in ISLP Perú.

**Theme 3: Consider the Program’s Budget Prior to Implementation**

One shortcoming of ISLP Perú was a lack of acknowledgement about the financial implications that coincided with addressing structural issues in the canal system. José felt the program’s current model of collecting and distributing data was unviable if it did not include a budget to address the identified challenges:

> When it comes to intervening in a community and gathering information and all these things, the engineers should create a completely separate budget that shows the viability of the project. The community understands there is not much water, but to find financing to solve this problem, right now this is like the Achilles heel for these communities.

Julian shared a similar belief. He suggested the program’s impact had not been maximized because a lack of financing impedes on the ability to actually repair the canal:

> “Look, at the moment the program still has not been very impactful, right? But we can say that if through this map we are able to secure financing, then the impact would be strong. A very good impact.” To further his point, Julian also implied without financing ISLP Perú is nothing more than an investigation on the canal system:
I think that when they come, the truth is what we have is a study or investigation on the canal, and it stays right there, it’s only a study. I think that eventually in this study we will also have to look for funding.

Isabella spoke about the importance of being upfront with the community about the program’s budget. She believed there is a connection between program funding and community impact, hence the community often assumes programs such as ISLP Perú are financed. Additionally, Isabella felt being upfront about program financing (or lack thereof) could help manage community expectations: “Many communities relate directly with the topic of funding, and they assume that these types of projects or programs are already funded, but then students come and do various things and afterwards there is nothing to show for us, right? That is why I always say it is important to be up front about the financial situation from the beginning.” Similarly, José looked at financial transparency as a cornerstone for developing community buy-in and participation. He stated: “Look. If there is a reasonable budget, we can work together. You all put in X and we can put in Y. And then we are working together to solve the problem.” Altogether, acknowledging the financial considerations that come with addressing the canal system’s challenges in advance of the students’ arrival may have increased legitimacy and efficacy of the program, as well as created more community buy-in.

**Theme 4: Increase Community Understanding of ISLP Perú Prior to Student Arrival**

Another area of improvement involved increasing community members’ understanding of ISLP Perú prior to the students’ arrival. Isabella believed a lack of community understanding could negatively affect the community’s overall perception of the program. Further, she was concerned a lack of understanding about the program could
create a situation where the program is viewed as a threat. Isabella suggested open communication early in the process may alleviate the community’s instinct of being critical of outsiders’ motives:

Sometimes when you enter a community from the outside without saying anything or advising the local authorities or all of the people it can create an uncomfortable situation and negative commentary. So, more than anything we have to talk about the social part, right? Always some person in some community is going to say, “but why are they coming?” or “what are they going to do.” Sometimes they say, “they are studying us because at the end of the day they want to do mining,” or “they are going to do something to our irrigation source.” So, for this reason things need to be very clear. The majority of communities I have been in they are like this. They always begin thinking about things badly. They do not think positively from the beginning.

According to Julian, community members had a vague understanding of ISLP Perú, which may have contributed to diminished levels of community involvement in the program:

There should be more legitimate involvement from community members in the project. For sure there were some that were involved, right? But 100% of the people still did not know what was going on. Sure, the junta directiva\textsuperscript{2} understood, but the rest still did not understand, so we have to figure out how to get even more people involved.

\textsuperscript{2} The junta directiva is Sacllo’s governing board that is comprised of a democratically elected set of officials, including President, Vice-President, Secretary, and Treasurer. The junta directiva leads community assemblies, coordinates votes on proposed ideas in the community, and ultimately finalizes decisions regarding the community’s development as a whole.
Julian also spoke about who should oversee communicating the program to the community. In the past, Julian presented ISLP Perú at the community assembly, however, in his interview he acknowledged perhaps he was not the best person to represent the program. Instead, he felt it would be beneficial to have more representation from outside organizations in the early planning discussions:

> We had me in charge of presenting to the community, right? In the future, maybe the conversations should be directly between the directors of the community and a representative or whoever is in charge of the project, right? Or perhaps even directly with the universities.

Yony offered a succinct insight with respect to the community’s understanding of the program. She said, “for there to be success, it starts with communication.” Julian’s feedback built off this idea and spoke to the importance of managing community expectations from the beginning:

> Often times these communities overestimate these types of programs. We say we are going to measure the canal, but they do not want us to just measure the canal; so, perhaps they choose to hear that “ah no, they are going to give us a new irrigation system.” Or something like that, right?

Here Julian suggested not communicating clear program outcomes may have created unrealistic expectations amongst the community. To Jaime, a critical form of communication involved informing the community about the program and collectively coming up with a plan as early as possible. He also believed this would have the best way to get the community excited about the program:
What I suggest would be that you get more involved supporting the program in advance and also get the junta directiva even more involved to create more buy-in and enthusiasm about advancing the work and to stay involved all the way through the program’s execution.

More effective communication about the program could have enhanced the program’s legitimacy amongst the community, as well as helped manage their expectations. Further, more community understanding could have created higher levels of community involvement and long-term commitment to the program.

**Theme 5: Incorporate More Youth Involvement in ISLP Perú**

Survey participants in Phase 1.1 of this study suggested it would be prudent to involve the younger generation of community members in ISLP Perú. Here, the term youth reference the 18–25-year-old generation of Sacllo residents. Yony felt the youth in the community would be an appropriate fit for a leadership role in ISLP Perú, mostly because of their capacity to relate to a modern program:

Somehow or other the youth have a more open mind when it comes to understanding these types of situations and managing these types of concepts, so it is easier to explain these things to them (the youth) rather than the president of the community maybe, right?

Yony also shared youth in the community could serve as an effective conduit of information between the AASD and the community:

There needs to be some sort of community bridge between the youth and the Andean Alliance, in such manner that the AASD works directly with the youth, conducts meetings with the youth, explains everything about the problem or
program or projects so that the youth can then collectively go and communicate
with the junta directiva.

Isabella agreed that more youth involvement could have served as a powerful mechanism
for effective and meaningful communication. She said:

I think the younger folks in the community have to explain things to the rest of the
community, at least the junta directiva and the water committee. That is where
they have to present themselves and put pressure on the older folks that have the
power to do something to improve the canal system.

Antonio was also a proponent of more youth involvement in ISLP Perú. In
response to whether there should be more youth involvement, Antonio responded, “It is
very important. I’m going to be very honest with you Mr. Adam, we should start with a
few of the most responsible youths.” When prompted, José also agreed: “Yes, getting
youth more involved would be a good thing. We have to start working more of these
types of things into the project.” Notably, not all participants advocated for creating more
youth involvement in ISLP Perú. For example, Julian was dubious:

Look. The youth – why would they get involved? They are more concerned with
their future. Or in other words, look, we have spoken various times and their
dreams bring them out of the community. They dream about having a job in the
city and living there – that’s their dream, right? And that’s the reason they are not
involved so much. More of them are trying to get into college or some type of
institute to study, but with a desire to find a job after where they can go and live
in a city or some other place, right? This is the reality. And that is why they are
not involved much in the project.
Antonio acknowledged this reality but took a divergent stance. He felt getting the youth more involved in ISLP Perú could be a way to reignite their passion for the community:

Why would we involve the youth? Little by little they are going to abandon the community and become less excited, no? It is much better if they get involved little by little...with just a few of the most responsible youths we can begin.

Ultimately, interviewees shared perspectives that more youth involvement in ISLP would be beneficial for various reasons. More youth involvement in program planning and communication could make ISLP Perú a more impactful and successful program. In addition, creating a concrete role for the youth in ISLP Perú could serve as an incentive for youth to become more involved in the community, and perhaps remain involved in the community in the future.

**Theme 6: Incorporate More Government Involvement in ISLP Perú**

It became evident after initial interviews that more government involvement in ISLP Perú would enhance the program. Julian said getting the government involved from the beginning would lead to a co-creation process where actors from the municipality and the community could work together to address the community’s problems:

Yes, from the beginning we should get the municipality involved. The thing is, the mayor, the president of the community, the president of Sacillo’s water committee, we should all get together and say ‘look, these are the plans,’ and from there, you have the mayor’s team of engineers offer their input to discuss what it is that we should actually be doing. And from there we begin to work together.
Although various interviewees said it should be the government’s sole responsibility to fix the canal system, many participants saw ISLP Perú as a tool for catalyzing any type of municipal involvement. For example, Julian thought exposing the municipality to the program would increase the chances of creating a partnership on these types of projects:

In the future we have to coordinate better and involve the local authority, the mayor. We should talk with them and say “look, we have these engineers that come, so what do you propose? We have a team, we have these things, this is the area in which we are going to work… so tell us what type of project and where should we work.”

According to Antonio, getting the local government involved in Sacllo can be challenging and suggested ISLP Perú can help overcome that challenge. He spoke about using the map ISLP Perú created to help garner support from the local government:

Now, with respect to the map, I would like to see it as a way to raise a little more attention, yes for the people in the community that use the water, but also for the representatives of the municipality – use it as a way to amplify understanding and reach the local authorities more easily.

In fact, Antonio stated that he considered this ISLP Perú’s core purpose:

The purpose of this project is to use the results to get the government involved in fixing the canal system. We did this project for the municipality, or so the municipality can create a project for us to repair these major damage points on the canal.

Yony agreed and spoke about how ISLP Perú should lead to a project in the community, and that project should go hand in hand with the local municipality:
The students came to support the community by doing a study that can serve as a platform for doing future projects, right? So, it would be up to the community to present to the municipality or the different entities within the government that work in the area of water management.

Both Julian and José made an explicit and direct connection between ISLP Perú and the local government’s ability to commit funding. Julian mentioned it would be judicious to collaborate with the local municipality because they already have funding allocated for irrigation projects:

I think that maybe we should work more closely with the local authorities, or in other words, begin to coordinate with them more. The local authority – in this case, the mayor. So together we could coordinate the work in such a way where we can do the study on the canal, and they could figure out the funding.

José spoke about how ISLP Perú could have done a better job using the data and information collected throughout the project to create a budget that can be presented to the local municipality to get them involved in the program. Indeed, he felt that was a responsibility of the program: “What I’m trying to say is that if you’re going to have a project designed around collecting data, that information should be used to get the government agencies involved.” Given that, José also suggested a collaborative approach to fundraising might lead to more significant government support and more overall collaboration between stakeholders involved:

If we start with a project designed around gathering information, we would have a project where we can begin to raise funding, right? Perhaps it wouldn’t be that much money, but whatever we can raise, right?” And with this fund, we can go to
the municipality and say, ‘Hey, look. We have this fund. The community is in this situation and the community is going to contribute this much.’ And from there, the three institutions begin to work together: the AASD, the local community, and the municipality or local government, right?

In the end, more government involvement in ISLP Perú would have enhanced the program. At the least, ISLP Perú could have served as a tool to help get Sacllo on the government’s radar for a potential government funded project. However, more profound outcomes of government involvement in ISLP Perú could include using ISLP Perú’s deliverable to support a government initiative, information and data being openly shared about Sacllo’s canal system, budget creation, and training personnel within the municipality.

**Theme 7: Incorporate More Cultural Exchange Activities into ISLP Perú**

According to various interviewees, exposing students to Sacllo’s local customs and culture would enhance the student experience. Yony said introducing students to local food and language would help bridge cultural differences and bring students into the local reality: “use food and language to bridge the culture gap... also involve various demographics or people from the community.” Jaime acknowledged it was important for students to have a good experience, and when prompted about ways to improve the student experience he spoke about teaching them about the farming work they do: “we could teach the work we do here, such as planting corn all the way up to the harvest, and the whole process of that activity.” Yony and Jaime’s responses suggest creating intercultural activities for students would be a nice gesture, however other participants spoke of intercultural exchange as a program necessity.
Julian responded emphatically when asked whether the program should incorporate more cultural activities for the students: “Absolutely! Look, if I give you something, you need to give me something.” This response revealed Julian’s position that it is the community’s responsibility to facilitate intercultural activities to offer students something in exchange for their work. Antonio took a similar position when he suggested extracurricular activities around cultural exchange is a program necessity: “It is very necessary to all get together and give us the opportunity to extend our customs to them, such as make them traditional foods, no, from our community.” Hence, Julian and Antonio both felt a sense of responsibility to create intercultural exchanges between students and the community.

Notably, both Julian and Antonio also felt intercultural exchange could create an opportunity to improve the program. Antonio offered the following insight when asked to expand upon why sharing local customs and food should be considered a program necessity: “this way, in this manner, we can share food and at the same time share our ideas.” Julian shared a similar sentiment: “In the future, we can have a dinner with everybody, no? Like a going away celebration with the students, where everybody is there, including the president, talking, right?” In other words, getting together with students is not only a means to expose them to their culture, but also a way to catalyze conversation about the project.

Finally, Jaime saw intercultural exchange as an opportunity for mutual learning. He said, “with the experience the students have and other understandings they can share with us within the community, we can also learn a lot from them.” He went on to say, “we could also have an experience where they teach us things, and they also learn about some
experiences from us.” Here, Jaime referenced that while community members can teach students about their customs and local practice, he also saw an opportunity to learn from students about their experience and expertise. In a sense, Jaime’s belief that intercultural exchange offers mutual benefit to all program participants encapsulated the overall perspective of the interviewees. More intercultural exchange activities would ultimately benefit student participants, community residents, and the overall program.

**Summary of Phase 1.1 of Participatory Evaluation**

Phase 1.1 of this participatory evaluation involved conducting semi-structured interviews with Sacllo residents who are key stakeholders in ISLP Perú, i.e., Sacllo residents who had a direct role in the planning or facilitation of ISLP Perú. In Phase 1.1 there were a total of seven themes identified. Two themes help describe what went well in ISLP Perú, and five themes illuminate areas of improvement within ISLP Perú.

The first theme with respect to what went well within ISLP Perú suggests that ISLP Perú provided meaningful data and information to the community. It became clear through the first round of interviews that ISLP Perú’s focus of improving Sacllo’s canal system is a meaningful purpose of the program. The majority of Sacllo residents are farmers and depend on the community canal system for irrigation, thus it is important to learn more about the canal system’s challenges and have information to convey those challenges. The second theme with respect to what went well within ISLP Perú suggests the program created trust and confidence amongst Sacllo’s residents who participated in the program. Some participants alluded to Sacllo’s lack of trust towards outside organizations or institutions, yet that was seemingly avoided with ISLP Perú. According to the participants in Phase 1.1, this program created trust and confidence because the
community was aware of its existence, the students accomplished what they said they were going to, and the service and deliverable was quality.

However, areas of improvement within ISLP Perú largely involve getting the community more prepared for ISLP Perú prior to student arrival. For example, although participants reported that they had a strong understanding of ISLP Perú, a theme from Phase 1.1 was that more overall community awareness could enhance the program. Particularly, more overall community awareness could increase the degree of community involvement and minimize doubt or skepticism. Additionally, another theme representing areas of improvement was that ISLP Perú would be better off if more attention was given to the financial implications of repairing the canal system. Considering financial implications of the program could lead to the community taking the program more seriously, managing their expectations of the program, and transforming the program from being investigative in nature to one where the goal is creating actionable solutions to the community challenge.

Other areas of improvement involved improving the structure of the program when students are in Perú. For instance, in Phase 1.1 of data collection, another theme was incorporating more youth involvement in ISLP Perú. Increasing youth involvement would lead to a more creative planning process and secure a more explicit role for youth in community activities and decision making. It was also a theme that participants felt there should be more intercultural activities for ISLP Perú students. Intercultural activities could be a way to compensate the students for their time, create pride amongst the community, and become a catalyst for more informal discussions about program planning. The final theme with respect to areas of improvement for ISLP Perú was
incorporating more government involvement in ISLP Perú. Most participants felt government involvement has been noticeably absent and incorporating the municipality into ISLP Perú would help legitimize the program, create co-collaborative approaches to planning and financing, and ultimately lead to actionable solutions to fixing the community canal system.

These aforementioned areas of program success and improvement come from the perspectives of Sacllo residents who had a direct role in the planning or facilitation of ISLP Perú. Now, I will present the results of Phase 1.2 from the participatory evaluation. Phase 1.2 involved hearing from Sacllo residents who were not directly involved in ISLP Perú, yet aware of the program’s existence. I begin the following section by revisiting the approach to data collection in Phase 1.2, introducing the participants, and discussing the line of inquiry. Then I present the key ideas that arose throughout the semi-structured interviews and focus groups, which concludes the first part of the participatory evaluation.

**Participatory Evaluation Results: Phase 1.2**

Subsequently, Phase 1.2 of data collection involved capturing the perspectives of community residents who were underrepresented in ISLP Perú. I previously propose using solely focus groups during Phase 1.2, however semi-structured interviews were incorporated because in certain cases it was unrealistic to coordinate focus groups during the busy corn harvest season. In the end, Phase 1.2 included two focus groups and two SSIs. All focus groups and SSIs from Phase 1.2 were implemented during May and June 2021. Due to Covid-19, over two years had passed since the last iteration of ISLP Perú, so prior to each focus group and interview I offered a brief recap of ISLP Perú that
involved walking participants through the final ISLP Perú deliverable and showing pictures of the student group.

The first two interviews were with Javier and Ivan, who identify as youths in the community. The head of the Sacllo irrigation committee suggested Javier and Ivan were interested in ISLP Peru and recruited them to participate in the evaluation. The third interview was with Feliciano, the current president of Sacllo. The first focus group was with Carlos, Jorge, and Leo, all of whom identify as farmers in Sacllo. Carlos and Jorge are brothers who grew up in Sacllo; Carlos is directly involved with the community water management committee. Leo is an elder in the community and has lived in Sacllo his whole life. The second focus group was with Lorena and Flor. Lorena manages the only store in Sacllo that sells everyday necessities, and Flor is a young mother who spends her time supporting her family and working in the farm.

In accordance with the emergent nature of action research methodology, initial results from Phase 1.1 guided participant selection and topics of discussion in Phase 1.2. Indeed, this approach also aligns with the participatory evaluation framework which, at its core, brings the voices of those affected by the program being evaluated into the data collection design and process (Cousins & Chouinard, 2012). All major themes identified in Phase 1.1 were incorporated into the line of inquiry in Phase 1.2, yet only the following three emerged as significant topics to report on in this analysis: 1) community awareness and involvement in ISLP Perú; 2) the role of youth in ISLP Perú, and 3) intercultural exchange in ISLP Perú. However, prior to presenting how these themes manifested in Phase 1.2, it is worthwhile to acknowledge which themes from Phase 1.1 participants did not have much to say about, and why.
The following themes from Phase 1.1 did not ignite a strong response from participants in Phase 1.2: 1) ISLP Perú provided meaningful data and information; 2) ISLP Perú created trust and confidence amongst community residents; 3) Consider financial implications prior to implementation; 4) Increase community understanding of the ISLP Perú; and 5) More government involvement in ISLP Perú. Notably, Phase 1.2’s participants were specifically identified as primary stakeholders, defined as Sacllo residents who were “affected by [ISLP Perú], yet had low levels of influence and understanding of the program” (Dearden et al., 2002). Perhaps this classification impeded on the participants’ ability to speak about program strengths and weaknesses to the same extent as participants from Phase 1.1. However, participants in Phase 1.2 brought a unique and welcomed perspective to the study by sharing a newfound vision for ISLP Perú with respect to what the role of youth could look like in the program, as well as specific examples for incorporating intercultural exchange. Further, a new theme emerged in Phase 1.2, which has to do with the importance of community awareness and involvement.

**Community Awareness and Involvement in ISLP Perú is Important**

Nearly all participants in Phase 1.2 thought creating more overall community awareness about ISLP Perú was important. Carlos felt creating community awareness should be the initial step in facilitating ISLP Perú in Sacllo because it creates community understanding:

If more students are going to come, the first step needs to be making sure the community understands that more students are coming, and these are their
motive. That way everybody in the community will have a better understanding of the program.

Participants who agreed it is ideal to raise community awareness about ISLP Perú early in the process suggested presenting at the community assembly. Feliciano said:

We would have to call a meeting, an assembly, so that you and I could explain the project and the community could start to see the big picture. And then we would see what the community has to say about it, and if they want to move forward with the project or not. See if it is something they want.

Javier spoke to how presenting ISLP Perú at the assembly is important for raising awareness, as well as garnering community input. He said, “It should be that you participate in the assembly, a meeting, right, and inform everybody about the project and how it is advancing and teach everybody so that they can also offer their opinion and push the project forward.” He builds on his point by suggesting that gaining community approval also creates an opportunity for decision making power amongst the community: “And from there, they can analyze what you say and decide whether to continue the project or stop or decide where we go from here.” Thus, according to Javier, presenting ISLP Perú at the community assembly is necessary for informing the community about the program and ultimately seeking approval to move forward with the program.

Participants also suggested the absence of information about ISLP thus far may have impeded on the program’s success. For example, Javier felt a lack of community awareness may have left Sacllo residents hesitant to participate:

Maybe there was not much participation from the community because they have some doubts about the project, like what is the plan and what is going on with the
information, what is the ultimate goal…perhaps the people in the community were not informed about these things, so they were left somewhat in the dark or misinformed.

Additionally, a lack of awareness of ISLP Perú may have affected the extent to which the program deliverable was utilized. For example, Javier was not surprised to hear the map created through ISLP Perú had not been used even though I presented it to the municipality: “Of course. It probably would have been better if you went with the community directives.” Although some interview responses suggested raising community awareness about ISLP Perú may lead to more participation and utilization of results, Ivan acknowledged that communicating ISLP Perú to the community is easier said than done.

Ivan believed building awareness could be challenging, especially because of the language barrier. He pointed out that the older generation only speaks Quechua, and they would have a difficult time understanding or participating in anything facilitated in Spanish. He said:

It could definitely be that the older people in the community need somebody to explain things to them in their own language for them to understand, right? And you know that what we primarily speak here is Quechua, right? So yeah, if you speak to them in Quechua they will understand, and if they understand, the project will move forward as intended.

He went on to suggest minimal understanding of the project might create doubt amongst the community with respect to ISLP Perú. To address that challenge, Ivan believed having somebody explain the program in Quechua would improve the overall level of understanding and allow for the program to be approved without any issues. In sum,
raising community awareness and understanding of ISLP Perú is critical for garnering community support, approval, and participation. Further, more community awareness could also lead to the utilization of program outputs and deliverables.

**The Role of Youth in ISLP Perú**

In Phase 1.1, a lack of youth involvement in ISLP Perú was referenced various times as an area of improvement. However, most participants in Phase 1.2 did not take a strong stance regarding youth involvement. For example, when Feliciano was informed that various community members suggested youth should be more involved in the program, he responded, “Yes, sure… but would we have to give them a piece of land?” Perhaps this can be interpreted that he thought youth involvement would be fine but was unwilling to sacrifice much in exchange for their participation. Participants in focus group 1 and 2 also acknowledged they supported youth involvement but did not have much to say about the topic in detail. However, Javier and Ivan saw getting youth more involved in ISLP Perú as an opportunity.

Ivan felt ISLP Perú could be a segue to create more overall youth involvement in the community:

Little by little we are formalizing as a group, holding meetings, and we are trying to become an even bigger group so we can be formally involved in the community. Before, they didn’t allow us to be involved; I think this is the first year that they are letting the majority of the youth into the conversation. So, we are offering our ideas and now they are letting us participate in the community workdays, the assemblies, and in all of those types of things. We have our opinions, and we can say whether something is good or if something is bad. And
thankfully, the people are telling us as a group of youth to become more and more involved. So, this project is very interesting to be honest with you.

Ivan also expressed concern about the junta directiva’s involvement in ISLP Perú. He suggested they bring an antiquated perspective, and it is challenging for them to think outside of the box. Ivan felt he and his generation could bring a more youthful and creative perspective to the junta directiva: “Well, the junta directiva or the people here in the community don’t understand these types of projects. But now we have a group of youths, and we are ready.” He spoke in more detail about how they could help the junta directiva understand the program better:

We can present in advance and talk about how the students are going to come and do this or that… whereas otherwise they might not understand, but if we explain it to them ourselves, I think they will understand.

Everything considered, Ivan felt the youth in Sacllo could bring a new perspective to the overall community understanding of the program as a conduit of information. He also felt youth involvement in ISLP Perú could be an avenue for more general involvement in the community and decision making that will affect the community.

Javier also supported the idea of the youth’s engagement in the program but was unsure what it would look like. In response to whether he wanted to be more involved, Javier responded: “Yes, of course, we can work as a group of youth, no? Brainstorm some ideas or give a hand. Help out somehow.” Given that, he also expressed doubt because of a current lack of organization amongst his peers: “Well, we are still lacking in organization amongst the youth and getting together before we can offer support, right?” He went on to speak about why their role could be important: “We should get involved so
that the project continues to move forward, right? And so that this project continues to
develop and does not experience barriers anymore.” Hence, Javier felt youth involvement
would lead to a more sustainable and successful program.

**Intercultural Exchange in ISLP Perú**

In Phase 1.1 of data collection, various participants suggested ISLP Perú presents a
unique opportunity to expose community residents in Sacllo to a different culture and
celebrate their own culture and traditions. Overall, participants in the second phase of
data collection agreed. For instance, when prompted to respond to whether ISLP Perú
presents an opportunity for cultural exchange, Jorge suggested “a soccer tournament or a
talent show would be interesting”, and Leo wondered if homestays had ever been
considered: “Have they ever said anything to you about wanting to stay here with us?
Where they stay here and share our culture?” Javier suggested that “we could have an
exchange of customs,” and when asked to expand, said “umm, well, maybe the students
could stay in the community, and one day they have breakfast with one person and then
lunch with another person or something like that.” Meanwhile, Lorena and Flor had more
to contribute for what intercultural exchange could look like as part of ISLP Perú. First
and foremost, Lorena and Flor suggested ISLP Perú students should be exposed to the
local customs and traditions of Sacllo. Lorena’s initial instinct was to bring students into
their agricultural practices:

> We can teach them here what the majority of people dedicate themselves to,
> which is planting and harvesting corn. We can teach them the different varieties
> of corn because more than anything here in Calca it is the big corn, big white
corn.
They built off this conversation by mentioning other local crops, and eventually suggested agriculture could serve as a tool for a mutual exchange of cultures: “Also Andean potato, beans, green peas, all of that stuff, right? Let them know more about it and they can also let us know more about what they do in their country.” Thus, agriculture was Lorena and Flor’s primary approach to intercultural exchange in ISLP Perú.

At this point, the discussion segued towards the role women can play in intercultural exchange, specifically with respect to food and farming. The conversation started with Flor discussing what they need to do first:

First, we need to get the dates for when the students will be here and make typical dishes of food from here, for example, *cuy al palo* (guinea pig on a stick) or *chicha de jora* (traditional corn beer). The women are in charge of everything having to do with cooking. And during that time, we bring the food out to the farms for the farmers working in the field. So, we could invite the students, no? They could accompany us, right? The whole trajectory of us cooking the food to bringing it out to the farms.

They also spoke about exposing students to the traditional practice of tilling land with the *yunta*. Yunta refers to a farming practice where a bull pulls a heavy wooden till to prepare the land for planting corn. Lorena spoke more about women’s role in the yunta: “When they farm with the yunta they plant seeds behind the yunta. You’ve got the bull pulling the yunta and women are behind the bull putting the seeds in the ground and adding compost.”
Lorena’s contribution about the yunta piqued a new idea for Flor, who said, “Oh yeah, there are also many women who participate in the deshoje.” Deshoje is a traditional farming practice where the community comes together to harvest all the corn plants and shuck them in the field. She also mentioned “women are also in charge of the chicha, right, the drink that we call chicha. From breakfast to lunch to dinner. All day we bring out food and drink.” The final idea Lorena and Flor offered regarding women’s role in the community was how they work with guinea pigs. Lorena said, “I dedicate myself to raising guinea pig. We take care of separating out the male when they reach a certain age. Here we call that male the cututu.” From here, the conversation moved on to other ideas Lorena and Flor had for cultural activities in Sacllo.

In addition to the role of women and agriculture, Lorena and Flor also felt there was a role for youth and elderly people in the community. Lorena said:

Here we also have many kids that dance. Almost all of the children here participate in traditional dances that are here during the festival of the saints… I would also want to show them the children here also participate in a lot of housework and on the farm.

With respect to the role of elders, Lorena mentioned:

There are still people here who were around when they were creating the local committee, people that worked for the haciendas, when this land had an owner and all of the people that were from here and lived here were just workers.3

Finally, Flor suggested homestays: “Live together, right? What I mean is students can stay with families and experience each family and what it is they do each day, from when

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3 Prior to Peruvian land reform legislation in 1969, the country’s agrarian infrastructure was dominated by haciendas where indigenous peasants worked for the landowners or patrones.
they wake up to when they go to sleep.” All in all, Lorena and Flor had various suggestions for incorporating intercultural exchange into ISLP Perú. Notably, their suggestions involved bringing women, youth, and elderly community members into ISLP Perú – three demographics that have not had a formal role or contribution in the program thus far.

**Summary of Phase 1.2 of Participatory Evaluation**

In conclusion, participants from Phase 1.2 of the participatory evaluation contributed to three themes identified in Phase 1.1. First, nearly all participants agreed it was important to raise levels of community awareness and involvement in ISLP Perú. This finding was largely driven by the idea that ISLP Perú should be formally approved by the community, which would further lead to lower levels of doubt about the project and greater levels of buy-in and participation. Second, while most participants in Phase 1.2 agreed youth involvement is important in ISLP Perú, Javier and Ivan had more specific ideas to contribute with respect to why, and what youth involvement could look like in the program. Javier and Ivan felt youth involvement would contribute to more overall community understanding of the program, creative approaches to program design, and ultimately more youth involvement in the community above and beyond ISLP Perú.

Finally, Lourdes and Liliana had various ideas for incorporating intercultural exchange activities into the program. Their suggestions ranged from exposing students to local farming and agriculture practices to highlighting the role of women in the community. They also felt there was a role for the older and younger generations in facilitating intercultural activities for ISLP Perú student participants. These suggestions are important because they create opportunities to involve a more diverse population of
community residents in ISLP Perú, while also increasing the cultural integration for ISLP Perú students. All the themes and ideas identified in phases 1.1 and 1.2 are revisited and broken down further in the next section, which analyzes results from the participatory activities facilitated in phase 2 of this study.

**Participatory Evaluation Results: Phase 2**

The purpose of the second phase of data collection was to build off phases 1.1 and 1.2 to make newfound sense or theory. This process of systematization (Brunelli, 2014; Carillo, 2009; Jara, 2018; Ortiz Aragón & Hoetmer, 2020) involved convening most participants from phases 1.1 and 1.2 to partake in a series of participatory activities. A total of nine people (64%) participated and the whole process took approximately four hours. The activities took place in a common workspace in Sacllo where ISLP Perú is headquartered when students are in Perú. The first activity, “Which Side Are You On?,” was intended to gain clarification on six divergent ideas that emerged from an initial analysis of Phase 1.1. The second activity, “Rich Picture,” (Bell & Morse, 2013; Bell et al., 2019) was a visioning exercise where participants brainstormed and drew what ISLP Perú should look like in 5 years. The third and final activity, “Where Do We Go from Here?,” offered participants a set of prompts to think about actionable next steps for ISLP Perú. Each activity is described and discussed in more detail below.

**Systematization Activity 1: Which side are you on?**

The first participatory activity was titled “Which Side Are You On?.” The activity’s purpose was to gain clarification on divergent ideas uncovered in phases 1.1 and 1.2 of data collection. Three steps were involved in facilitating this activity. First, two divergent ideas were written individually on separate blank papers, taped to the wall on different
sides of the room, and presented to the group. Second, as facilitator, I read each idea to
the group and instructed participants to walk towards the idea they agreed with the most.
Third, once all participants were situated on one side or the other, conversation ensued
amongst the two groups to defend their position (See Figure 4.1).

**Figure 4.1**

*Sacillo Residents Participating in Activity 1 “Which Side Are You On?”*

In total, there were six pairs of divergent ideas (See Table 4.2). This section presents an
overview of the group’s discussion for each pair of divergent ideas. At the beginning of
each divergent idea, I present the percentage of the group that sided with each stance.

**Table 4.2**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Divergent Idea 1</th>
<th>Divergent Idea 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>This project is not worth it if it does not come with financing</td>
<td>This project is worth it, whether it comes with financing or not</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
To solve the problems with the canal system, it is necessary to involve the municipality. The municipality doesn’t do anything for us, we can solve the canal system’s problems from within the community.

The map is most useful as a tool to communicate within the community. The map is most useful as a tool to communicate with people outside of the community.

The information included in the map is sufficient. The map is missing useful information.

The students should receive something in exchange for the work they are doing. The only priority with the students is they compete and submit their work.

The students are best suited to come up with solutions to the canal system’s challenges. The community should oversee defining solutions to the canal system’s challenges.

Idea 1: This project is not worth it if it does not come with financing (89%) vs. This project is worth it, whether it comes with financing or not (11%). The conversation began with Carlos emphasizing ISLP Perú is worth it for the community, whether it comes with financing or not. To him, gaining a better understanding of the challenges related to the canal system is most important, especially considering there are various ways to get funding from the municipality or other independent organizations. However, Carlos was the only participant with this viewpoint. José agreed the program should first and foremost be seen as a tool to understand the challenges in the community better but did not think that excludes getting the program financed. Further, he did not share Carlos’s confidence that depending on the municipality to fund the project is reliable and suggested looking at other sources of funding:
This is the type of project that takes many years to solve. And we have seen with the municipality that they have done multiyear studies and investigations into certain areas, but the project never gets realized. So, that is why it is important to look for funding from the start.

José’s point prompted further group discussion about the role of the municipality, the junta directiva, and who should oversee program financing.

Antonio came into the discussion and shared he was skeptical about getting funding from the municipality to support this project. He said:

They have their own way of working and doing things, and if they see that we have already been doing a project with these students they wouldn’t pick up on what’s going on and would be less likely to get involved or provide funding.

In addition, Antonio suggested program funding is important, but somewhat irrelevant until there is more buy-in and acknowledgement from the junta directiva. His opinion was that “while the project is great, the fact is it has not really gotten anywhere with funding because of the lack of acknowledgement from the junta directiva.” These comments prompted Isabella to reinforce her line of thinking that “this project needs to come with financing because it is a human rights issue – one that relates to the health and nutrition of the community.” Because of that, she thinks financing should come from public institutions and not be the responsibility or burden of the students. Although Isabella did not agree financing should be part of the students’ role, both Lorena and Javier felt the students could help create a budget for what would be necessary to address the challenges they are identifying.
Idea 2: It is necessary to involve the government when addressing issues with the community canal system (100%) vs. we can address issues related to the canal system from within the community (0%). Not a single participant felt this program should proceed without government support. Carlos did not feel ISLP Perú should be any different than previous collaborations between the community and the government where “the community puts in manual labor and the government provides the financing.” José and Antonio agreed. José said, “definitely yes” that the municipality should be involved, and when prompted with the question “How?” he said “Economically. And the community contributes manual labor.” Antonio said, “the work the students did was good, and we have the information we need. The only thing left is for the mayor to fund the project.” The ensuing discussion steered back to what municipal funding would look like.

Some participants offered specifics about the municipality’s role when it comes to financing. Isabella pushed back on Lorena and Javier’s earlier suggestion that the students could help create budgets for the program: “the students should not come up with a budget because it is complicated, and I am not sure they would be able to do it. I think it makes more sense for the municipality to take on that role.” Isabella had more to say about the role of the municipality:

I think there is a role for the municipality in this project by having their engineering specialists come and join the students while they are doing their work, collecting their data, etc. so they can get excited about the project and make it easier to work with the junta directiva.
Antonio built off this idea and suggested the community reach out to the mayor to say, “look, here is the study that we did. What else would you want? What else do you need to come up with a budget or some financing?” Notably, at this point, Carlos turned to Vicente and reminded him that a few years ago they made repairs to the canal, but it was not government funded. It is worth it to chat with the mayor and see if it is something he would want to get involved with.

Idea 3: The information included in the map is sufficient (55%) vs. There is information that the map is missing that would be beneficial (45%). Here, discussion ensued about what information would be more useful to incorporate into the map of the canal system. Carlos felt more information on the smaller canals that shoot off the main canal would be valuable. He specifically mentioned including the names of the smaller canals, their location, and being able to search the name of the canal and get relevant information such as distance in meters and where the damage points lie along them. Antonio thought it would also be useful to have a better idea of why water levels are going down. José, agreed, and reiterated that having a budget to go along with the damages would be useful information. Carlos concluded the conversation by adding he is interested in learning more about the “caídas” (little waterfalls in the canal system), and if they are useful or are they creating any challenges. Based on this discussion, the current map can be improved by adding more relevant information to the community.

Idea 4: The map is most useful as a tool to communicate amongst the community (33%) vs. The map is most useful as a tool to communicate with people outside of the community (67%). Carlos mentioned the map is useful to the community and also as a tool to share with people outside of Sacllo: “amongst the community it is
helpful because we can share information about the challenges being faced in the community. It is helpful outside of the community because it would give somebody who is not from Sacllo insights about the reality of the community.” Antonio responded that he saw the map mostly as a tool to communicate outside of the community. He said:

If you went to the mayor or municipality to ask them for help in addressing a challenge in the community, they ask where the problem is, and maybe they will send out a technician, but it would take 4-5 days. But with this map, you can say to the mayor, look, here is the map, here is the challenge.

As facilitator, I responded by asking, “Why hasn’t that happened yet?” Carlos said “there isn’t enough awareness of the map in the community. For example, the junta directiva of the community water committee should be here now and should know about the map.” Although this idea prompted little response from the group, apparently the map could be a source of communication inside and outside the community.

Idea 5: The students should be in charge of finding a solution to the problem (0%) vs. The community should be in charge of finding a solution to the problem (100%). All participants responded in unison “the community” after posing these divergent ideas. I immediately followed up by asking if anybody thought the students should be involved in the process of solving the problem and, again in unison, all participants responded “no.” However, as I began to move on to the next set of divergent ideas, Antonio stopped me and said, “the students simply come to help us, right? And that should be the impetus for the community to continue with their part in the project.” Carlos agreed, yet pointed out that:
when it comes down to determining what the solution should be, that should not involve the students – only the community… the students could help the community see the problem, but the ones who should care the most about the problem is us (the community members), because we are the ones that use the canal.

In response I presented the question, “if the students were able to offer different versions of potential solutions, would you be interested in hearing about that?” The unanimous response was “yes.” In short, participants felt the community should be in charge of confronting the challenge related to the canals, however they are open to students offering potential solutions.

Idea 6: The students should receive something in exchange for the work they are doing (89%) vs. The only priority with respect to the students is they complete and turn in their work (11%). Carlos’s response to this prompt was there would be no way of compensating the students with money because of Sacllo’s economic situation yet offered transportation to support the study. In response, Lorena quietly suggested from the background “or the food.” Carlos said, “or something. We should do something.” I asked Lorena to expand, and she said, “it doesn’t always have to be in money.” From here, Lorena offered her perspective on student compensation, which opened a larger conversation on intercultural exchange with the group.

Lorena began by pointing out the importance of the students’ work: “It’s our water!” she exclaimed, “most people that live here, their main form of sustenance is growing corn. So it could be that we give them something that is customary to here, such as food or traditional meals.” Both José and Javier agreed with Lorena and pointed out
that food is a great way to show gratitude and appreciation. Antonio also built off Lorena’s comment:

of course, the best thing we could do is offer them insights and experiences to our customs and traditions. This would be one of the best things we could offer the students. Perhaps we could organize traditional dances to satisfy the students.

Carlos responded, “of course! A cultural exchange!” and went on to clarify his sentiments:

Look. It is important that the students feel good and have the motivation to come, because if we do not treat them well, a person that comes from far away is not going to want to return. But, if we say, ‘you’re welcome here’, I think their work and support will be even better.

At this point in the conversation participants began to offer detailed suggestions for incorporating intercultural activities into ISLP Perú. Isabella suggested there could be an element of rural tourism. She thought students could spend time with – or even live with – a family in the community during their time in Sacllo. Lorena agreed and noted they could “create groups within the community and teach the students things like local traditions and foods.” Carlos, who originally had doubts about student compensation, could not help but agree at this point: “Wow. That would be interesting, wouldn’t it?” Carlos’s comment brought closure to the conversation on student compensation. It became clear through this conversation that the group felt their greatest gift to the students is exposing them to Sacllo’s culture and traditions.

Summary of Systematization Activity 1
The purpose of this activity was to gain clarification on divergent ideas identified during phases 1.1 and 1.2 of data collection. In some cases, more clarity was reached, yet others highlighted the complexity of certain issues. For example, the group had mixed feelings about program financing and government involvement, and it is still unclear what those program components should look like in ISLP Perú. Conversely, the group agreed on issues related to intercultural exchange and the community’s role and responsibility in solving the canal system’s challenges. There is also more clarity on what the map should be used for and what information it needs to contain. Despite the wide range of results from this activity, it still felt like progress was made by the end of the conversation.

José began to sum up the whole conversation towards the end of the activity. His contribution was the following:

To make any of this happen, we need to start organizing as a community. For example, to be able to come up with a formal agreement from within the community with the institution. Because if the institution is going to bring students, they have to work directly with the junta directiva and go to the assembly to coordinate. This could be the main thing missing. Because when the students come there is very little coordination or involvement from the community. This is something we could potentially do for the next group.

Carlos also contributed a final thought:

We haven’t really been involved enough up to this point, but now we have a better understanding with respect to what they have already been doing. It would be great to go back and really revisit the work they did. Present it at the assembly
on a projector and say, “this is the work the students did during the time we had those visitors in the community.” And also, to say they are going to do more and even better work. It would be great to involve more of the community. Because if we don’t show a certain degree of involvement, it almost seems as if we don’t respect the work they are doing.

José and Carlos’s final comments offer important takeaways from this activity.

Regardless of where the group landed on each divergent idea, the community needs to take leadership and get organized for this project to be successful. ISLP Perú requires coordination from within the community and support from the junta directiva. Finally, the community needs to be involved in the program, but that cannot be achieved until the community is more aware of ISLP Perú.

**Systematization Activity 2: Rich Picture**

The second systematization activity was a visioning exercise called Rich Picture (Bell & Morse, 2013; Bell et al., 2019). Participants were split into two groups and provided large white paper and colored markers at their designated table. They were prompted to 1) discuss as a group what ISLP Perú looks like in 2025, and 2) draw that vision in as much detail as possible. Each group had approximately 20 minutes to complete their task. After the drawings were complete, one representative from each group presented their rich picture to all participants (See Figure 4.2 and Figure 4.4).

**Figure 4.2**

*Group 1 Drawing and Presenting their Rich Picture*
Figure 4.3

Final version of Group 1’s Rich Picture
Isabella presented the first group’s rich picture (See Figure 4.3). She said the image portrays the types of projects or studies the students can do in five years. She revealed their group spoke extensively about the ways students can help improve 1) the livelihood of community members in Sacllo, and 2) the quality of their farming production. As a group they decided that “the most important area to focus on is conserving the watershed by doing a reforestation project with native plant species to help maintain the water.” The group felt this was an area the students could offer a lot of help in – not only because of their engineering skills, but also because they could help raise money to support this type of project. Isabella then went on to identify the following potential projects students could get involved with:

1. Harvesting rainwater through the construction of reservoirs.

2. Conducting a study to identify where are the most ideal spots along the current water system to put wells for collecting and sourcing water.
3. Conducting a study where students identify geological failures in the canal. She mentions this is because there are challenges with landfalls that damage the canal and make it difficult to decide where to build new farms because of erosion.

Isabella summed up her group’s discussion and recommendations by pointing out the importance of accessing as much water as possible so they can diversify what they grow, and not only depend on “corn, corn, corn.” Here, Antonio reiterated how access to water is a major issue and maybe the students can help them come up with ways to capture the water or get water more efficiently from the river, especially in ways that are economically efficient and low cost.

**Figure 4.4**

*Group 2 Drawing and Presenting their Rich Picture*
Carlos presented the second group’s rich picture (Figure 4.5). He began by offering an overview of how their group envisions the community in 5 years. He talked
about how things might be different because private businesses collaborated with the local municipality to put in a gondola-style chairlift to take tourists from Sacllo to the Huchuyqosqo ruins above the community. He goes on to mention how they just started preparing land for farming on the sides of the mountains, so in 5 years they want to be growing fruit on the side of the mountain.

From here, Carlos continued describing the rich picture. The group sees the students as specialists in water, so they felt it would be helpful for them to figure out the best and most efficient way to irrigate peach trees on the side of the mountain. Further, they felt it would be helpful to know how much water is necessary for growing other fruits. Carlos then spoke about how Sacllo has a natural water source above the community, but unfortunately, they were unable to capture water over the past two years and in some parts, they are losing water. He then highlighted the community’s interest in crop diversification and incorporating new crops that are more profitable than corn, but under the condition they consume small amounts of water. He concluded the presentation by stating:

But until then, given the crops that we do have, it would be really interesting and helpful to look for another form of irrigation to support the crops that we do have, such as corn… because right now, the only thing we really know how to grow is corn! Some people are starting to get involved with growing strawberry because perhaps strawberry is more profitable. So maybe in 5 years we leave corn behind and start focusing on other crops, no?

In conclusion, in five years, group 2 saw ISLP Perú primarily focusing on issues related to water and irrigation. Specifically, this included creating more efficient irrigation
practices, understanding more about the amount of water specific crops require, and exploring innovative forms of irrigation.

**Summary of Systematization Activity 2: Rich Picture**

After being prompted to discuss and draw what ISLP Perú should like in five years, each group identified specific ways students could support Sacllo. Interestingly, there were many similarities between each group’s vision. Primarily, the groups spoke about maximizing or learning more about irrigation systems. In most cases, their suggestions for student projects were investigative in nature, such as conducting studies on where water should be sourced from, harvesting rainwater, learning more about why their current system is failing, and gaining a better understanding on how much water certain crops require. This information will help with future ISLP Perú project planning.

**Systematization Activity 3: Where do we go from here?**

The third and final systematization activity built off the conversations from activities 1 and 2 and concluded the workshop by creating actionable next steps. As facilitator, I offered two sets of prompts to guide the discussion. First, participants were prompted to think of next steps in terms of: 1) What are we doing next?, 2) Who should do it?, 3) When should it be done?, 4) Where should it occur?, and 5) Why are these next steps important. Next, participants were prompted to discuss and decide: 1) As a community, what steps should be taken before students arrive to Sacllo?, 2) As a community, what steps should be taken while students are in Sacllo?, and 3) As a community, what steps should be taken after students leave? In the same groups as the previous activity, each group wrote their responses to the prompts on construction paper and taped them on the wall (See Figures 4.6 and 4.7).
Participants’ responses to this prompt fell short of my expectations. Responses were overly simple in nature; perhaps, this was an outcome of being too directive by offering five guiding questions. Nonetheless, responses were useful for the sake of this study. For Group 1, next steps involved organizing as a community starting now. Group 2, spoke to involving the junta directiva and other leadership committees in Sacillo and continuing to focus on the canals to improve the community irrigation system. Table 4.3 offers the exact responses from each group.

**Figure 4.6**

*Group 1 and 2’s Responses to the First Prompt for Next Steps in ISLP Perú*
Table 4.3

Responses to Next Steps for Group 1 and 2

<table>
<thead>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Group 1</td>
<td>Organize ourselves</td>
<td>The community</td>
<td>Starting now</td>
<td>In the place where they will do the project</td>
<td>It is necessary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group 2</td>
<td>Studies that will be executed and organization of the community</td>
<td>Leadership of the junta directiva and the local committees</td>
<td>August 2022</td>
<td>The canals in Sacllo</td>
<td>It is a necessity and the improvement of the water</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For the second set of prompts, participants were tasked with identifying actionable next steps for the community before, during, and after student arrival for the next group. Both groups referenced planning the activities as the primary task prior to student arrival. With respect to community tasks while the students are in Sacllo, Group 1 mentioned facilitating and supporting the project’s execution and Group 2 referenced accompanying the students. Actionable items for the end of the program involved gratitude and a social gathering according to Group 1 and a student exhibition of their initial work and gratitude from the community for Group 2. Table 4.4 shows specific responses from this activity.

Figure 4.7

*Group 1 and 2’s Responses to the Second Prompt for Next Steps in ISLP Perú*
Table 4.4

*Group 1 and Group 2 Second Response to Next Steps*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Before student arrival</th>
<th>During student arrival</th>
<th>After students leave</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Group 1</strong></td>
<td>Identify and plan for the activities that will be carried out with the project</td>
<td>Facilitate and support the project’s execution</td>
<td>Gratitude and fraternization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Group 2</strong></td>
<td>Plan activities</td>
<td>Accompany the students</td>
<td>Student exhibition and gratitude from the community</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Although responses to this activity were also less robust than anticipated, they still offer interesting insights about next steps for the community. Results indicate the community supports ISLP Perú and is prepared to remain involved. Participants acknowledged the importance of community involvement and organization for the program to be successful.
Further, based on the discussion around next steps, it became clear there is more work to be done with respect to the community irrigation system. Finally, responses also indicate participants are willing to plan for the program in advance, participate when students are in Sacllo, and offer support and gratitude to ensure students feel heard and appreciated for their support.

**Chapter Summary**

In this chapter, I presented an analysis of a participatory evaluation of ISLP Perú. The purpose of the evaluation was to explore how Sacllo residents perceive and experience ISLP Perú. I conducted a series of interviews, focus groups, and participatory activities where the community interrogated ISLP Perú. The data illuminated various successes and areas of improvement, all of which were addressed extensively in this chapter. The evaluation’s findings offer at least two types of meaningful results.

First, the evaluation’s results provided specific insights to consider when planning for the next iteration of ISLP Perú. Broadly speaking, some examples include government and community resident involvement, budget considerations, incorporating intercultural activities, and identifying future areas of investigation that are important to Sacllo residents. Second, although findings from this evaluation were specific to ISLP Perú, there were also macro-level takeaways to distill and contribute to the larger conversation on international service-learning. Results from this evaluation can be used to help guide ISL program planning, design, and evaluation in any given context. In the next chapter, I will present specific ways this evaluation will influence future iterations of ISLP Perú, as well as offer guidance to university faculty interested in facilitating international service-learning.
CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

As discussed in Chapter 1, the research questions guiding this study were: 1) How do Sacllo residents perceive and experience international service-learning? and 2) According to Sacllo residents, what are ISLP Perú’s greatest strengths and weaknesses? I begin the chapter by discussing how the outcomes from the participatory evaluation respond to these questions. However, as you will see, some of the evaluation’s outcomes diverge from the originally stated research questions. The process of creating and following research questions became an iterative process throughout this research, particularly as participants’ voices began to emerge during the data collection process. The originally purpose of this study was to capture community resident perspectives on international service learning; hence, while my research questions provided a frame to accomplish that task, ultimately, it was the Sacllo residents who participated in this study that defined what was most important to share with our audience.

After discussing the participatory evaluation’s outcomes, I introduce the International Service-learning Framework for Faculty (ISLFF) – a practical tool to guide faculty through the process of partnering with community residents in international service-learning. Then, in the section Implications for Research, I discuss what this research means for ISL policy, practice, and future research. I offer three areas of focus: 1) next steps for ISLP Perú, 2) the natural congruence of ISL research and action research methodology, and 3) a plea to re-consider the value of a transactional approach to ISL. Finally, the chapter culminates with the study’s limitations, which include a discussion on
the scope and breadth of the study, as well as the restrictions (and strengths) of implementing the study in a second language. Now, I begin the chapter with the participatory evaluation’s primary outcomes.

**ISLP Perú Participatory Evaluation: Outcomes**

This section represents Sacllo residents’ perspectives of ISLP Perú based on the participatory evaluation’s outcomes. There were two larger purposes for using the participatory evaluation method in this study. First, it served as a mechanism for capturing program stakeholders’ perspectives to better understand and improve ISLP Perú. Second, it served as a response to calls for research (see Bringle et al., 2009; Clayton et al., 2010; Crabtree, 2008; Cruz & Giles, 2000; Giles & Eiler, 1998; Sandy & Holland, 2006; Stoecker, 2016) to better understand community resident voices and perspectives with respect to ISL, as well as the structure of campus-community partnerships. The primary outcomes from the participatory evaluation included in this section are: 1) Build community awareness and understanding about the program, 2) Incorporate youthful community residents into program design and planning, 3) Provide a meaningful deliverable to the community, 4) Consider the program’s financial implications, and 5) incorporate intercultural exchange.

**Build Community Awareness and Understanding about the Program**

One outcome from the participatory evaluation suggests ISLP Perú could be improved with greater overall community awareness and understanding of the program. Based on my experience facilitating ISLP Perú, as well as other ISL programs in the field, I was not surprised that minimal levels of community understanding and awareness led to 1) the deliverable, i.e., the map of Sacllo’s canal system, being underutilized, 2)
unrealistic expectations of what the program and/or the students would be providing, and 3) an overall level of doubt and negative perception of the program. These program challenges can be addressed with more intentional communication prior to student arrival. In this section, I offer three considerations for improving communication with Sacllo residents about ISLP Perú prior to the students’ arrival.

First, it is important to consider what message is being communicated to the community in a program’s early stages and who is communicating that message. It was somewhat problematic that Julian – a community resident and representative of the AASD – presented ISLP Perú to the community. Julian was tasked with this responsibility because he typically represents the AASD in communities but is also a Sacllo resident. However, at the time, Julian did not have a strong understanding of the program’s purpose or structure, which resulted in the community having a low-level of understanding of ISLP Perú. Moving forward, it would be judicious to have a diverse set of stakeholders represent the program to the community, such as representatives from the AASD or university. Having a more diverse set of program stakeholders present to the community would add legitimacy to the program, as well as create a platform for open discussion about the program where questions or concerns can be addressed with accuracy. In addition, this would create a platform to begin a co-creation process designed around determining community needs and program deliverables.

Second, it is important to consider the audience. Sacllo adheres to a strict democratic structure, thus not communicating more directly with the junta directiva was an oversight on my part as facilitator. Participant responses from this study suggested ISLP Perú was not taken seriously because of the junta directiva’s minimal role and
understanding of the program. Similarly, a lack of formal support from the junta directiva diminished community participation and the utilization of the deliverable. Javier suggested a more formal vote and approval process via the junta directiva would increase community buy-in and participation. Moving forward, the junta directiva will be central in any decision or presentation related to ISLP Perú in Sacllo.

Finally, it became clear the final deliverable was underutilized because certain Sacllo residents were either unaware it existed or did not understand its purpose. Engaging community residents early in a co-creation process of program deliverables would increase community understanding and awareness about the program, and further the utilization of program outputs. Thus far, the prominent people deciding on and designing ISLP Perú’s deliverable were the AASD, faculty from the Speed School of Engineering at the University of Louisville, and Julian as a community representative. A more robust and inclusive process of working with the community to understand and design the outcomes of the program will add value to the overall program and enhance its potential for success.

**Incorporate Community Youth into Program Design and Planning**

To help streamline the process of creating effective communication channels about the program, participants suggested bringing a more youthful demographic of Sacllo residents into the design and communication processes within the program. Bringing more youth into the program is a way to communicate the program and receive approval from the junta directiva more effectively. Various interviewees referenced how the program needs to be approved by the junta directiva, however challenges to gaining their approval and buy-in include having to overcome a traditional worldview that is
generally unfamiliar with international education programs, as well as language barriers. One avenue for rising above these challenges is to coordinate program planning and communication with the youthful generation of community residents. Interview findings suggest a younger generation of community residents are more likely to understand and co-design creative approaches to working with international universities and creates a new avenue for communicating the program to the community.

Bringing the youthful population into an ISL program is also beneficial for the community. Rural-urban migration is a common challenge in the Cusco region, where younger generations of farmers leave their rural communities in search of higher paying jobs in urban areas. Antonio acknowledged this is the reality in Sacllo and suggested getting youth involved in ISL could be a way to disrupt rural-urban migration and preserve the future of the community. Jaime, a member of this demographic, also suggested ISLP Perú could serve as an important platform for his generation to become more involved in the community. He believed ISLP Perú was a way to give his generation a newfound voice and purpose in the community. In sum, the youthful generation should be considered as key stakeholders in ISLP Perú because they create helpful channels for designing and communicating ISLP Perú, and their participation could also contribute to preserving the presence of the youthful generation in Sacllo.

Provide a meaningful deliverable to the community

Various interviewees referenced the importance of designing the program around water access and irrigation because it is an issue that affects nearly all Sacllo residents. Yony summed up the community’s stance when she said, “if you had built a community center, nobody would have supported the project because that is not what we need.” ISLP
Perú student and faculty participants provided the community with a data-driven virtual map of the canal system that offered newfound insights and understandings about the canal system’s challenges. For instance, now Sacllo residents who were aware of ISLP Perú and the final deliverable recognize they are losing more than half of their water due to severe damage points along the canal. Certain Sacllo residents also acknowledge the map as a tool to easily share their story, particularly with the local municipality.

The map also helped raise awareness about Sacllo’s water scarcity issues amongst Sacllo residents. According to Yony, while many community residents acknowledged water was being lost, some did not recognize the gravity of the situation. ISLP Perú student participants measured the canal’s water flow, and discovered it was losing up to 50% of its water at certain points along the canal. Thus, the map created by ISLP Perú offers an evidence-based argument about the extent of the water shortage challenges in Sacllo and confirms the seriousness of the situation. Although the original intent of ISLP Perú was to create a map that could help communicate the challenge to an audience outside of the community, this evaluation exposed there is value in directing information towards an audience within the community as well.

Finally, the participants shared how the program affected their perspective of the program and ways to improve the deliverable in the future. For example, participants spoke about how the students created trust amongst the community by simply accomplishing what they originally committed to doing. According to Isabella, outside organizations typically do not contribute meaningful results to the community, which creates distrust and diminishes community confidence. Given that, the participatory evaluation also created a platform for community residents to discuss what additional
information would be useful to include in the map. Based on participants’ feedback, the next iteration of ISLP Perú will improve the map by including specific information on smaller canals, such as their name, location, and relevant information such as distance in meters and damage points.

**Consider the program’s financial implications**

Program financing was commonly referenced throughout Phase 1.1 and Phase 2 of the evaluation as an area of improvement. For example, José spoke of program financing as the Achilles heel of community programs and felt ISLP Perú was superficial because it lacked financing. Julian felt ISLP Perú could not reach its potential for impact without financing and said the project is “just a study” until the canal system is fixed. Similarly, Isabella spoke about how Sacllo residents simply assume an external project also comes with a budget and are commonly disappointed when nothing tangible is produced in the long run. Therefore, program financing is a determinant of how the community views and understands ISLP Perú.

It appears Sacllo residents did not fully understand ISLP Perú’s purpose and financial situation. ISLP Perú’s primary purpose was to create data driven information to help Sacllo residents understand and communicate the challenge they were facing. Financing a canal reconstruction project was never part of ISLP Perú’s programmatic framework. The aforementioned comments suggest a lack of program financing created misleading expectations, programmatic limitations, and a distorted view of ISLP Perú’s intended impact. Primarily, this means Sacllo residents assumed part of ISLP Peru involved reconstructing the canal in Sacllo, which was never the case. Thus, an outcome
of this evaluation is to have open communication about the ISLP Peru program budget to help manage Sacllo residents’ expectations of the program.

Notably, being transparent about finances does not negate José, Julian, and Isabella’s position that program financing is important. For instance, despite José’s stance that a lack of financing made the program superficial, he also identified this as an area of opportunity. Specifically, he felt community residents would be more inclined to contribute their time and resources if they saw the program was financed. Moving forward, perhaps the AASD or university stakeholders such as students, faculty, and administration should be more intentional about raising funds for ISLP Perú. Certainly, this suggestion does not come at the cost of the community’s role in finding financing or other types of support to address the challenge they face.

Sacllo residents made it clear during the systematization activity that the community should be responsible for solving the challenge with their canal system – not the students. Likewise, they referenced how more government involvement is necessary in ISLP Perú. Sacllo residents felt using the map to communicate the challenge to the mayor could lead to potential financing or some other form of municipal intervention. In fact, Antonio considered this ISLP Perú’s ultimate purpose. While the idea of involving the local municipality was mostly connected to program financing, participant responses also suggested more government involvement would help legitimize the program within the community, increase community participation, and lead to a government-led initiative to address the canal system.

*Incorporate intercultural exchange*
Another outcome of the participatory evaluation is that Sacllo residents want to incorporate intercultural exchange into ISLP Perú. According to this study’s participants, there are at least four reasons why intercultural exchange is important:

1. Community residents in Sacllo are proud of their culture and want to share it with visitors from other countries.
2. Community residents see it as a form of compensation for the work students are doing.
3. Creating more intercultural exchange opportunities is a way to include a diverse set of stakeholders into the program, such as women, youth, and elderly.
4. Intercultural exchange offers opportunities for informal relationship building and discussion to advance the program.

Participants offered specific examples of activities they would be interested in facilitating with students. They suggested exposing students to traditional meals, farming practices, oral history, and other day-to-day elements of the community’s culture. Below are examples of activities that can be incorporated into ISLP Perú based on Sacllo residents’ perspectives.

Participants expressed interest in teaching students how they prepare and serve traditional food and drink. For example, Lorena and Flor spoke about showing ISLP Perú students how Sacllo residents raise, prepare, and serve *cuy*, i.e., guinea pig, which is a traditional dish that is considered a delicacy in Sacllo. Other activities include brewing *chicha* (corn beer), preparing *tamal* (corn dough steamed in corn husk), and sun drying corn. Activities designed around cuisine would also incorporate the traditions that
accompany eating and drinking. Some examples of local traditions include making offerings to Pachamama (mother earth), packing and bringing food out to the farm, and eating together as a group.

Exposing students to local agriculture and farming practices could be another form of intercultural exchange in Sacllo. As referenced various times throughout this study, Sacllo is a farming community that primarily grows maize. Various participants in this study spoke about their interest in showing students how they work in the field. Examples include yunta demonstrations, i.e., how they plow the land using traditional method of bull and till, and how they work together in ayni, the traditional Inca communal work philosophy based on reciprocity. This was also an area where participants of this study thought it would be interesting to learn more from student participants about farming practices in the US.

Sacllo residents had other interesting suggestions for ways to expose students to their traditions and culture. One suggestion involved creating homestay opportunities, where students would live with families and get full exposure to their day-to-day lifestyle. Other examples involved bringing children between the ages of 8-13 from the community into the program to demonstrate traditional Inca dances, play soccer, or even a talent show. Finally, participants offered the idea of bringing the older generation of Sacllo residents to give an oral history of the community. Notably, all these examples create opportunities to involve a more diverse set of stakeholders into the program.

In concluding this section, it is worth noting the extent to which there was consensus from the participants on these findings. For example, all participants, regardless of their level of involvement with ISLP Perù, felt the program would be better
off if the community had a better understanding of the program. Similarly, all participants saw value in incorporating intercultural exchange and creating a meaningful deliverable to the community. However, with respect to the latter, there were different opinions regarding what is considered meaningful. While some participants felt continuing to focus on the canal system was a priority, others seemed to think more outside the box and were interested in exploring new forms of irrigation or diversifying the community’s main crops.

Other outcomes did not demonstrate consensus amongst participants. For instance, while some participants felt getting youth involved was important, others felt ambivalent, or even pushed back on this idea. Ultimately, incorporating the youth into ISLP Peru was determined important because the youth residents themselves who participated in this study expressed passion about getting involved. In addition, while all participants felt it was necessary to consider the program’s financial implications, participants’ perspectives for how that looks in practice varied. All participants felt the government should get involved and support the program, but there were divergent stances with respect to whether the school, the AASD, and/or Sacllo itself should contribute funding to the program.

**Implications for Practice**

In this section, I present the international service-learning framework for faculty (ISLFF). As pointed out in Chapter 2, section titled *International Service-learning as Campus-Community Partnership*, various actors comprise the campus – community partnership. According to Bringle et al., 2009, there are at least five potential dyadic relationships that can influence the campus - community partnership, i.e., the potential
relationships between students, organizations, faculty, university administration, and community residents. However, based on my experience as an ISL practitioner, faculty are commonly tasked with taking the lead on ISL programs, often with little understanding or context of international service learning, experiential education, or how to navigate complex international community challenges. The ISLFF is a guide to help faculty navigate the process of creating and facilitating ISL programs, based on community residents’ perspectives.

The ISLFF is a necessary contribution to ISL literature and practice because it is the first ISL framework to fully represent community resident voice. Examples of community residents’ practical recommendations included in the ISLFF include how to define local challenges, engage with community, determine what stakeholders to partner with, communicate the program effectively, and bridge interculture exchange. Ideally, faculty who follow the ISLFF will create ISL programs that are more responsible, impactful, and mutually beneficial. Notably, the ISLFF is not intended to replace other service-learning guides, curricula, frameworks, and checklists that exist within academic literature, but rather extend and enhance them. Thus, I begin this section with a review of literature that contributes to best practices for designing, planning, and implementing international service-learning programs, and conclude the section with a series of actionable prompts and questions based on the existing literature to help faculty prepare for the initial stages of engaging with ISL.

Literature Relevant to the International Service-learning Framework

In *An Interactive and Contextual Model of Community-University Collaborations for Research and Action*, Suarez-Balcazar, Harper, and Lewis (2005) propose a model for
developing and sustaining community-university partnerships. Part of this model includes entering the community, which the authors reference as “the stage in which the basis for the relationship is formed” (Serrano-Garcia, 1990, p. 176). According to Harper et al. (2004), entering a community involves getting to know the community by learning about their culture, history, and vision for the future. Specific strategies include touring the community, visiting and volunteering at the setting, and conducting informal interviews. Suarez-Balcazar, Harper, and Lewis (2005) suggest that university representatives taking the time to “develop entry” into a community, learning about the local setting, respecting the local diversity, and meeting different stakeholders develops trust and respect, which is an important characteristic of responsible international service-learning (Worrall, 2007).

The model proposed by Suarez-Balcazar, Harper, and Lewis (2005) complements Bringle and Hatcher’s (2002) article titled *Campus-community partnerships: The Terms of Engagement*. Central to this article is the idea of conceptualizing the campus-community partnership as a relationship. Within this context, Bender (1993) points out the complexity of the campus-community partnership, largely due to the cultural differences that exist between higher education and the community in terms of generating knowledge and solving problems. Bringle and Hatcher (2002) go on to highlight the distinction between campus-community partnerships rooted in charity rather than justice, where the former occurs when “resources and surplus are given from one community to another community”, and the latter is demonstrated when “resources are considered as mutual resources and shared among members of the same community” (p. 506). Through this lens, the article suggests a campus-community partnership grounded in charity can
contribute to challenges associated with effective communication, respect, and coordinated action toward mutual goals and vision.

Bringle and Hatcher (2002) offered suggestions for initiating a campus-community relationship that is grounded in justice. Although they suggest it is ideal for the relationship to be established by the community, that is challenging and unlikely in the international service-learning realm. Therefore, with respect to initiating a relationship, Bringle and Hatcher (2002) borrow two tasks that Wright (1999) identified for each member of the relationship: 1) “deciding what type of relationship we would like to pursue (if any) and, 2) conveying our interest (or lack of interest) to the other person” (p. 506). In addition, initiating a relationship requires evaluating and communicating potential rewards and costs of the relationship, having the capacity to fulfill each other’s expectations, and having an idea of what contributes to a relationship that is mutually beneficial or unsuitable (Bringle & Hatcher, 2002).

In addition to relationship building and bridging the campus community partnership, the extent to which service-learning is institutionalized on a university campus should be a consideration for faculty engaged in ISL. According to Furco 1999), high degrees of institutional support will foster greater levels of awareness, leadership, incentives/rewards, agency, and voice amongst all actors, and ultimately lead to a program with higher changes of success and impact. Furco (1999) offers a rubric to gauge service-learning institutionalization efforts on a university campus. The rubric identifies three stages of development towards institutionalizing service-learning on a campus: 1) Critical Mass Building, where campuses are beginning to recognize service-learning and are building a campus-wide constituency for the effort; 2) Quality Building,
were a campus is focused on ensuring the development of “quality” service-learning activities; and 3) Sustained Institutionalization, where a campus has fully institutionalized service-learning into the fabric of the institution. The degree to which a university has committed to institutionalizing service-learning has implications for the faculty, students, and communities involved in a program.

Bringle and Hatcher (1995) highlighted the importance of training for faculty members interested in or engaged with service-learning. Bringle and Hatcher (1995) offer a series of development activities designed to train faculty in service-learning. One area of focus involves familiarizing faculty with service-learning pedagogy. Some approaches to this type of training could include but are not limited to: offering a definition of service-learning that fits within the institutional context; distinguishing between service-learning and other forms of experiential learning and/or volunteerism; providing a general introduction for how to design and implement a service-learning course; raising practical concerns about establishing good community relationships; structuring reflection; and supervising and evaluating students. Another area of training faculty in service-learning involves a discussion (or workshop) on reflection, where faculty can become familiar with what reflection is, why reflection is critical to service-learning, and how to effectively select and integrate reflection activities into service-learning (p. 115).

Bringle and Hatcher (1995) also acknowledged building community partnerships as a “fundamental aspect of the success of a service-learning course.” (p. 116) One reason is because faculty need to hear from community representatives to effectively plan for the program. Thus, Bringle and Hatcher (1995) suggest bringing community representatives into the early planning process to 1) hear about and understand their expertise and
experience, and 2) create two-way communication as early as possible. Part of this early collaboration includes creating a platform for faculty to discuss the nature of service-learning with community representatives.

Finally, Suarez-Balcazar, Harper, & Lewis (2005) suggest potential challenges and threats to a community-university partnership should be addressed, such as power and resource inequality, time commitment, conflicts of interest, budget cuts, and end of funding. (p. 86). Grusky (2012) points out the potential of ISL can only be realized after addressing the complex issues that exist within ISL. In *International Service-learning: A Critical Guide from an Impassioned Advocate*, Grusky (2012) identifies seven loaded issues that if addressed can bring international programs closer to achieving their transformational potential. The seven pitfalls are: 1) Attitudes toward street urchins, beggars, and street peddlers; 2) Gender politics: The female student experience; 3) Gender politics: The male student experience; 4) Money matters: Food and entertainment; 5) Money matters: Giving it away; 6) The superpower mentality internalized; and 7) What is a Gringo anyway? (p. 858). Grusky (2012) states that if these issues are left unaddressed, service-learning can become little more than tourism that contributes to a passive acceptance of socioeconomic disparities in the world. Figure 5.1 is a compilation of prompts taken from the literature reviewed above that offer guidance for faculty engaging with international service-learning.

**Figure 5.1**

*Prompts and sample questions based on literature to guide faculty involved in early stages of an international service-learning program*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Prompt</th>
<th>Questions</th>
</tr>
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172
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Understand service-learning</th>
<th>Are you familiar with:</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Various definitions of service-learning?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- General goals and objectives of service-learning?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Service-learning pedagogy and course design?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Critiques of service-learning?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Intercultural competency?</td>
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<td>- Student reflection?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Service-learning compared to other forms of experiential learning?</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service-learning is supported at the university’s institutional level</th>
<th>Is the university invested in the quality or impact of the program?</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Do systems exist to train faculty in service-learning?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Does the university offer resources to sustain a campus-community relationship?</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Are there reward systems for achieving quality service-learning outcomes?</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Consider the dynamics of the campus-community partnership?</th>
<th>To what extent are you building the campus-community partnership into a relationship?</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Is the relationship with the community grounded in justice (rather than charity)?</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Have you taken steps to build trust and mutual respect within the community, such as familiarizing yourself with the local setting and different stakeholders?</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gain entry into a community (Responsibly)</th>
<th>Have you met and spoken with community residents?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Have you visited the community or taken a tour?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Are you familiar with the community’s culture, traditions, and history?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
- Have you familiarized yourself with community stakeholders that are not residents, such as local organizations or government representatives?
- Is there an approval process?
- Are you familiar with critical perspectives of service-learning?
- Have you explored critical models for service-learning, such as Global Service-learning or Fair-Trade Service-learning?
- Have you assessed power and resource inequalities between the campus and community?
- What time commitments or other restrictions exist?

**International Service-learning Framework for Faculty**

The ISLFF is a response to the outcomes from this study’s participatory evaluation, the critiques of ISL addressed in Chapter Two (see section titled *International Service-learning through a Critical Lens*), and my own professional experience facilitating service-learning programs in Perú. The framework includes six actionable approaches faculty engaged with ISL might consider when designing or improving an ISL program. The six components of this framework are: 1) Identify and understand a community defined challenge; 2) Co-create a meaningful and feasible program deliverable; 3) Assess and access resources: Financing; 4) Assess and access resources: Human capital; 5) Incorporate intercultural exchange; and 6) Communicate the program formally to the community. Discussion on each topic includes guiding principles for faculty as they navigate the complex campus-community partnership, as well as the practical improvements that will be incorporated into future iterations of ISLP Perú. Each
section culminates with a series of prompts and guiding questions, which ultimately comprise a single, comprehensive framework (See Appendix C).

**Identify and understand a community-defined challenge.** Building relationships with community stakeholders in ISL is a critical component for identifying and understanding a community defined challenge. Initial steps to relationship building involve determining prominent community insiders and outsiders with a stake in or understanding of the partner community. Examples of community stakeholders could include community residents, community leaders, representatives from community-based organizations, and/or representatives of a local municipality. Faculty should talk with community stakeholders about their vision for a program and the opportunities (and threats) that accompany a campus-community relationship. Further, they should engage with community stakeholders to gain a well-rounded understanding of the community’s realities and challenges. Topics worthy of discussion might include why the challenge exists in the first place, what effect the challenge is having on community residents, the extent to which the challenge affects the whole community, and what solutions have or have not been considered.

Although it is important to form relationships with community stakeholders that allow for a better understanding of a community challenge, it is also necessary to speak about the challenge from a level of expertise. Contributing to a discussion about a community challenge can help create confidence and trust in the relationship building process. According to Sacillo residents, the trust that emerged from being exposed to student and faculty expertise in ISLP Perú left the community more confident to address the community challenge. Further, speaking to the challenge from a level of expertise
will fill in gaps about the reality of the challenge and create a collective understanding of the situation. Faculty should discuss potential solutions to address the challenge as the relationship advances, but also have continuous open dialogue about what is and is not feasible so there is a collective understanding on the university’s commitment.

**Figure 5.2**

*Prompts and Sample Questions to Guide the Process of Identifying and Understanding a Meaningful Community Challenge*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Prompt</th>
<th>Sample Questions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Engage with community insiders and outsiders to gain a well-rounded understanding of the challenge</td>
<td>- How are different people viewing the challenge?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- What is the effect the challenge is having on people?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Why does the challenge persist?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- What needs to happen to address the challenge?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Have any solutions already been considered?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- What percentage of the community is being affected by this challenge?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commit to relationship building with community stakeholders familiar with the local reality</td>
<td>- Who are the community insiders and outsiders?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- What is their stake in the community?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- What are the most effective ways to communicate and build relationships with them?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Why should they commit to a relationship-building process with you?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understand and speak to the challenge through a level of expertise</td>
<td>- Have you seen the challenge?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Can you reiterate the challenge to community insiders and outsiders you have relationships with?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Co-create a meaningful and feasible program deliverable. Facilitating a co-creation process between all primary actors involved in a program is one way to achieve a program deliverable that is feasible and meaningful to the community. This suggestion derives from Yony’s stance that ISLP Perú would not have been impactful or taken seriously if the deliverable had been a community center. According to Yony, organizations from outside the community have implemented projects without consulting or involving the community. This is problematic because it can lead to meaningless program outputs, wasted resources, and diminished trust of outside organizations. These challenges can be avoided by using a collective process to determine a program deliverable that is both meaningful and feasible.

In the case of ISLP Perú, each major actor played a role in determining a meaningful program deliverable. The AASD initially bridged conversations and leveraged their understanding of Sacllo’s and University of Louisville’s local contexts and realities. When Sacllo residents offered suggestions for ways to address the community challenge, university faculty responded through a professional lens to address what was possible or impossible. This dialogue ultimately led to program representatives agreeing that collecting data on the canal system and disseminating it through a map would serve as a useful communication tool for the community. Indeed, according to the participatory evaluation, creating a meaningful deliverable was considered a strength of ISLP Perú.
ISLP Perú participants also decided on a *feasible* program deliverable. Early in the process, Sacllo residents suggested reconstructing the canal system as a program deliverable; however, this was not feasible because the university was unable to commit the resources, time, or skill sets to execute such a major endeavor. Despite the infeasibility of their suggestion, university faculty used their expertise and knowledge of student capabilities to suggest other program deliverables, which eventually led to a collective decision to map the canal system. At that point, the university committed to providing drones and other mapping equipment, training students in specific skills associated with map creation, and faculty time and expertise to create the map as a final deliverable. University faculty played a critical role in suggesting a meaningful and feasible deliverable by understanding the community challenge, as well as the limits of their capability, expertise, students, and resources.

**Figure 5.3**

*Prompts and Sample Questions to Guide the Process of Co-creating a Meaningful and Feasible Program Deliverable*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Prompt</th>
<th>Sample Questions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Determine who should be involved</td>
<td>- Which community residents have been most affected by the challenge? \</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in deciding a program deliverable</td>
<td>- Who within the community has the greatest understanding of the challenge? \</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Who within the community has tried solving the challenge or has ideas about how to solve the challenge? \</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Who within the university has the greatest level of expertise about the challenge at hand?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decide on a meaningful deliverable</td>
<td>- Is there a role for local organizations or institutions, such as NGOs or the municipality?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decide on a feasible deliverable</td>
<td>- Are community residents involved in determining the program deliverable?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- To what extent do actors involved in determining the program deliverable understand the local challenge, context, and reality?</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>- Is there dialogue between community residents and other actors about the program deliverable?</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Does the community make the final decision about the deliverable?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- What resources and/or budget would be necessary to achieve the deliverable?</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- How much time is necessary to complete the deliverable?</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- What resources does the university have access to?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- What is the program’s budget and/or financial reality?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- What do experts say about the deliverable?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Can students contribute to achieving the deliverable?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Can community residents contribute to achieving the deliverable?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Can community residents maintain the deliverable after students leave?</td>
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</table>
Assess and access resources: Financing. Participatory evaluation results suggested minimal program financing negatively affected the community’s perception of ISLP Perú. Participants in the evaluation felt a lack of financing minimized the impact of the program and made it difficult for community residents to take the program seriously. Yet, in reality, Speed School faculty proposed and received approval for a budget from university administration allocating financing for equipment, such as advanced drones, GPS tracking machines, and water flow measurement tools. Indeed, the final deliverable would have been impossible without those resources. Program financing is an important consideration because it can affect: 1) the ability to achieve a meaningful deliverable, 2) community expectations of the program, and 3) levels of community buy-in, participation, and contribution of resources.

Faculty implementing or planning international service-learning should assess the availability of financial resources to support the program. Prior to agreeing on a final deliverable with the community, faculty should have a firm understanding of a university’s willingness to support and/or finance the program. If university financing is limited or unavailable, consider alternative sources of financing such as grants, foundation support, partnerships with local organizations, or fundraising campaigns. Additionally, communicate directly and explicitly with community residents and/or leaders about the financial reality of the program. Early and honest communication with community residents about program financing will help manage community expectations and catalyze a discussion around a meaningful and feasible program deliverable given available resources.

Figure 5.4
**Prompts and Sample Questions to Guide the Process of Assessing and Accessing Program Financing**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Prompt</th>
<th>Sample Questions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Assess budgetary and financial realities of | - What equipment or services are necessary to accomplish the deliverable?  
                                              | the program                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
|                                              | - Is university administration willing to allocate funds to support the program or deliverable?  
                                              |                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
|                                              | - Does the university have a campus-based office for development? If so, does that office have an avenue for funding?  
                                              |                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
|                                              | - Are there off-campus funding sources interested in supporting the program, such as foundations or corporate giving programs?  
                                              |                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
|                                              | - What are local sources of financing, such as the local municipality or NGOs?  
                                              |                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| Consider financial implications for the     | - How does the community understand the budgetary and financial realities of the program?  
                                              | community                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
|                                              | - What should the community expect or not expect given the budgetary and financial realities of the program?  
                                              |                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
|                                              | - Does the community expect to be compensated for their time and participation?  
                                              |                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
Consider financial implications for students
- What are the financial requisites for the program, such as program logistics, flights, lodging, food, program fees?
- What financial responsibilities will students be expected to assume?
- Are there grants or scholarships to support student participation?

**Assess and access resources: Human capital.** The role of students, government representatives, and non-governmental representatives all played a role in shaping community resident perspectives of ISLP Perú. The level of students’ professionalism, training, and expertise led to increased levels of community trust and confidence in the program. Similarly, the AASD, a non-governmental organization who had a relationship with Sacllo, facilitated the program and therefore contributed to building community trust and confidence. However, a lack of government representation de-legitimized the program, which led to lower levels of participation and utilization of the deliverable. Given these examples from ISLP Perú, there are actionable ways faculty can leverage human capital to create a robust and impactful program.

The main reason students added value to the program was because they were effectively trained and prepared vis-a-vis a credit-bearing, two-month long, on-campus course prior to traveling to Perú. The AASD and Speed School faculty co-designed and co-taught the course, allowing for a multi-disciplinary curriculum designed around the realities of Perú and engineering. Students were introduced to Peruvian and Sacllo culture, the challenge in Sacllo, and importantly, the specific skills they would be using in the field, such as data collection, flying drones, and measuring water flow. Faculty and
administrative commitment to the program made the pre-departure course possible because they were willing and able to jump through the hurdles that sometimes accompany course approval. Faculty engaged with ISL might consider incorporating a similar course-based model designed to train and prepare students for their ISL experience.

Faculty engaged with ISL should also consider partnering with local organizations or institutions. The AASD contributed to ISLP Perú because of its ability to facilitate and streamline all phases of the project. The AASD’s insider knowledge of the challenges and realities in Sacllo, and the needs and desires of the Speed School, allowed the AASD to 1) bridge conversations between actors, 2) contribute to the pre-program curriculum, 3) coordinate in-country logistics, 4) facilitate day-to-day activities in Sacllo, and 5) facilitate cultural activities for students and faculty in Perú. The AASD’s role was critical in ISLP, thus faculty might consider partnering with an appropriate local organization to help design and facilitate the program. Organizational characteristics faculty might consider when seeking a partnership with a local organization include: 1) duration of the relationship with the community, 2) history of successful programming, 3) strong relationship with the community, 4) understanding of the culture of the community, 5) speaks the local language, and 6) commitment to a long-term partnership with a university that involves facilitating the in-country experience.

Finally, a major critique of ISLP Perú is the program lacked sufficient support from the local municipality. During the systematization activity, participants spoke to how Sacllo typically partners with the municipality on community projects, suggesting their absence in ISLP Perú was palpable. In response to this feedback, the AASD and
Sacllo representatives will ensure municipal representatives are aware of the program moving forward and involve them as deemed appropriate by the community. Faculty engaged in ISL should inquire with the community about their relationship with the local government and determine collectively whether there is a role for the municipality in the program. Roles of the municipality could include financing, fundraising, expertise, and networking opportunities.

Figure 5.5

Prompts and Sample Questions to Guide the Process of Assessing and Accessing Human Capital

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Prompt</th>
<th>Sample Questions</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assess student preparedness</td>
<td>- How are students being trained for the experience?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- How can the university or university administration create formalized ways to train and prepare students?</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Who are the most appropriate people to train students for the experience?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Are there particular skills students should be trained in?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- How are students learning about the community challenge?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- What are the cultural characteristics of the host-country students should be trained in prior to their in-country experience?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assess local organizations</td>
<td>- What local organizations should participate in this program?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- What have been the organization’s greatest successes and failures?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
- Does the organization have a healthy relationship with the community?
- Does the organization understand the community’s culture?
- How does the organization understand the community challenge?
- How long has the organization been in existence?
- Can the organization communicate with the community in the local language?
- Has the organization ever worked with students or universities?
- Has the organization ever worked in tourism?
- Can the organization commit to a partnership?

Assess the local municipality
- Does the community support partnering with the local municipality?
- Is the municipality aware of the community challenge?
- Is the municipality aware of the program?
- Is there a department within the municipality that aligns with the program’s purpose and/or deliverable?
- Does the municipality have financing to support the program and/or deliverable?

**Incorporate intercultural exchange.** Perhaps the greatest oversight of ISLP Perú was not incorporating intercultural exchange activities into the program’s itinerary. According to Sacllo residents, intercultural exchange is a way to compensate students for their work, manifest the pride Sacllo residents have for their culture, create diverse participation from Sacllo residents in ISLP Perú, and create a platform for informal dialogue between campus and community representatives about the program. Thus,
moving forward, intercultural exchange will be a priority of ISLP Perú. In practice, this means Sacllo residents will create an intercultural exchange committee to design and plan activities with the AASD for future programs. Examples of activities will include exposing students to local food and agriculture, as well as interactive activities with youth and elders such as traditional dance and oral history of Sacllo.

Faculty engaged with ISL should consider promoting the idea of intercultural exchange in early planning phases of the program. First, faculty should become familiar with the community’s local culture and traditions by spending time in the community, reading relevant literature, visiting local museums, and talking to locals of all ages. Determine who within the community would be interested in facilitating activities and discuss what elements of their lifestyle and culture would be interesting to coordinate activities around. For a deep cultural experience, faculty might also consider coordinating homestays, where students live and eat with local families for part or all the program. Finally, in response to Lorena’s suggestion that it would be interesting to learn about the students’ own culture, faculty can also prepare their own students to share an activity with the community about experiences in their own country.

**Figure 5.6**

*Prompts and Sample Questions to Guide the Process of Incorporating Intercultural Exchange*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Prompt</th>
<th>Sample Questions</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Become familiar with the community’s culture and tradition</td>
<td>- What components of the community’s culture are a source of pride?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- What is the community’s history?</td>
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</table>
- Are there common skills or practices unique to the community?
- Are there typical foods or community activities associated with making or serving food?
- Are there traditional social activities, such as dance or sport?

Consider how to organize and coordinate intercultural exchange
- Who within the community would be interested in facilitating cultural activities with students?
- What is the best way to coordinate and organize cultural activities? Is a local committee possible?
- What percent of the time spent in the community should incorporate intercultural exchange?

Create activities for students to share with the community
- What activities can students create to share their own culture with the local community?
- What would be interesting for the community to learn about the students and their culture?
- What do the students’ communities look like?
- How do students connect with food, dance, or social activities?
- In what ways are the two cultures similar? Different?

**Communicate the program formally to the community.** Insufficient communication with the community about ISLP Perú was a program weakness. Minimal levels of community knowledge on ISLP Perú resulted in mistrust, misinformation, low levels of participation, and underutilization of the deliverable. Faculty involved with ISL
should give close attention to how, who, and what they are communicating with the community. Faculty should consider formally presenting the program to the community. Considerations for a formal presentation include: 1) who should represent the program, 2) who is the audience, and 3) what information should be presented.

Coordinating a well-rounded team of program representatives is an important component of presenting a program to the community. A team of presenters should be able to effectively represent the program’s purpose, framework, expectations, limitations, and financing. In the case of ISLP Perú, this will include a representative from the AASD, faculty from the University of Louisville, a community representative with a leadership role in the program, and a government representative who can speak to the municipality’s level of commitment to the program. Additionally, consider language barriers - who can represent the program so most of the audience can engage in a question-and-answer process? In the case of ISLP Perú, a representative of the youthful population will play a role in overcoming language barriers to effectively communicate the program moving forward.

With respect to the audience, it is critical to understand how decisions within a community are made and by whom. In Sacllo, decisions affecting the community are made through a democratic process. Each month, the board of governors lead an assembly, which involves an agenda on topics affecting the community and a formal voting process when decision-making is necessary. It is a requirement that each family in Sacllo is represented at the assembly; hence, when ISLP Perú is on the agenda, there is a diverse array of community residents learning about the program. University faculty
engaged with ISL should become familiar with the community’s decision-making process and who within a community would make decisions regarding an ISL program.

One consideration with respect to decision making within a community involves recognizing and negotiating internal power dynamics. For example, in Sacllo, all ages and demographics are represented at community assemblies, however the discussion is typically dominated by adult males. Faculty presenting and/or conversing with community residents about ISL should engage with a wide range of demographics, especially women and minorities. If that is unacceptable or uncomfortable in a public forum, consider organizing a separate time and location outside of the public forum where anybody in the community is welcome to visit and share their feedback and opinions about the program. Another option involves creating a diverse set of sub-committees that represent a wide range of voices from within the community to facilitate discussion and feedback.

Finally, consider what information should be presented to the community. For example, what might a partnership between the community and a university look like? What would be expected from the community before, during, and after student arrival? What type of results should the community expect or not expect? What resources and/or financing will be necessary for a successful program? In Sacllo, all these questions will be addressed with the entire community at the assembly.

**Figure 5.7**

*Prompts and Sample Questions to Guide the Process of Communicating a Program Formally to the Community*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Prompt</th>
<th>Sample Questions</th>
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</table>

189
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Determine an appropriate setting for a formal presentation and QnA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Does the community have a formal assembly process?</td>
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<tr>
<td>- How are decisions that affect the community made?</td>
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<tr>
<td>- How are community programs or projects typically decided upon?</td>
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<tr>
<th>Determine the most appropriate program representatives</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Who can speak to the program’s purpose, framework, expectations of the community, limitations, and budget/financing?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Who can speak to what a campus-community partnership would look like?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Who can talk about what international service-learning is?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Who can speak the local language, and understand the perspective of the campus and community?</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Know your audience</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Is there a leadership structure within the community?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Who is likely to be involved in the program?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Who are the decision makers?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is the audience diverse, i.e., gender, age, experience with ISL?</td>
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<tr>
<th>Consider important topics to discuss</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- What is the purpose of the program you are presenting on?</td>
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<tr>
<td>- What should the community expect, and similarly not expect through participating in the program?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- What is the budget or financial reality of the program?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- What are the realistic outcomes and limitations of the program?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- What is expected from the community with respect to their participation before, during, and after student arrival?</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
- Is the community open to creating local committees to engage with program implementation, deliverable design and utilization, and/or intercultural exchange?
Would the program need to be approved? If so, what does the approval process look like?

Prior to concluding this section, it is important to recognize that the ISLFF was derived from the outcomes of a participatory evaluation of ISLP Perú, an ISL program with unique characteristics. The specific context in which the ISLFF was created may raise concerns about the framework’s utility in other contexts. Specifically, ISLP Perú was created and led by the Andean Alliance for Sustainable Development, a social change organization in Perú that has been facilitating ISL programs and building trust-based relationships with local communities for over ten years. Thus, some examples of an ISL program’s characteristics that may or may not influence ISLFF’s utility include a specific country’s culture, local community context, community challenge, and the nature of the relationships between community, local organization, and university. Given that, the generalizability of the ISLFF is yet to be proven, and should be considered as an implication for practice, as well as an area for future research.

Additionally, the ISLFF is not intended to stand alone as a singular guide for faculty beginning to engage with ISL, but rather as an additional tool to complement the vast literature and resources that already exist on this topic. At the beginning of the framework, I offer a series of assumptions and resources for faculty to consider prior to getting involved with ISL and engaging with local community. This information is based on published literature, as well as my own experience creating and facilitating ISL programs as a practitioner. Examples of ways faculty can prepare for engagement with
ISL include becoming familiar with the various definitions of ISL, experiential learning theory, the critiques of ISL, campus – community partnerships and engaged scholarship, their own university’s philosophy and level of commitment to community engagement, and potential threats, challenges, and pitfalls of ISL. In addition, the ISLFF should catalyze faculty to build their own capacity and understanding of ISL, including relationship building, building communities of practice, and being assertive about challenging one’s own world view and cultural biases.

In this section, I presented how the participatory evaluation’s outcomes have practical implications in the field of ISL. Specifically, I offer the ISLFF (Appendix C), a series of prompts and questions that stem from an analysis of each major research finding. Although the ISLFF is not the first or only resource intended to assist faculty engaged with ISL, it is unique from other guides, curricula, frameworks, and checklists because it is a sole representation of community residents’ perspectives. The primary community residents’ suggestions for faculty included in the ISLFF are: 1) Identify and understand a community defined challenge; 2) co-create a meaningful and feasible program deliverable; 3) Assess and access resources: Financing; 4) Assess and access resources: Human capital; 5) Incorporate intercultural exchange; and 6) Communicate the program formally to the community. Next, in the following section, I discuss this study’s implications for research with respect to ISL and ISLP Perú.

Implications for Research

In this section, I offer suggestions for further research based on the findings of this action research investigation. Findings from this investigation have implications for ISL policy, practice, and theory. The section begins with an argument for emphasizing
the value of using action research methodology in ISL research. Then, I present an argument for reconsidering the value of transactional approaches to ISL. Transactional approaches to ISL are sometimes seen as being lower quality than ISL programs that prioritize transformation (Bringle et al., 2009; Enos & Morton, 2003), yet outcomes from this participatory evaluation suggest a more hybrid approach could be worthwhile of investigation. Finally, I discuss the implications for future research with respect to ISLP Perú, given its inherently action research-oriented identity.

**Implications for research: International service-learning and action research methodology**

Outcomes from this participatory evaluation suggest ISL researchers and practitioners should consider participatory action research methodology. ISLP Perú was successful in identifying and addressing a community challenge. This outcome was largely due to participatory methodology that involved capturing community residents’ voice, understanding their challenges, and collaborating to centralize ISLP Perú around the most appropriate challenge in Sacllo. Consequently, community residents who were directly involved with ISLP Perú have a better understanding of the challenge and vision for how to address it. Identifying and addressing a challenge are central to both action research methodology and international service-learning, and this study showed implementing them in concert can be effective in galvanizing an impactful campus-community relationship.

Similarly, implementing Cousins and Chouinard’s (2009) participatory evaluation method for ISLP Perú led to various positive program related outcomes. As discussed in Chapter 3, section titled *Research method: Participatory evaluation*, scholars suggest
non-evaluator stakeholder involvement in the evaluation process can lead to higher
degrees of utilization of results, quality and timeliness of evaluative knowledge, shifts in
organizational or programmatic processes, and/or participant empowerment (Brandon,
1999; Cousins & Chouinard, 2012; Greene, 1998; Papineau & Kiely, 1996). In hindsight,
this study not only supports this stance, but also contributes to the discussion on the
effects of participatory evaluation in ISL. For instance, this study’s participatory
approach may have been the catalyst for higher levels of community buy-in, increased
engagement in the design of program deliverables and future program planning, and more
diverse community participation. Hence, the effects of using the participatory evaluation
method specifically in conjunction with international service-learning is an avenue for
future research.

Finally, action research methodology and the participatory evaluation method
enabled me to leverage the various roles I assume in ISLP Perú, such as facilitator,
researcher, intermediary, NGO representative, and outsider-within. Although some argue
such intimate involvement in this research has the potential to skew data, the research by
Glesne (2006) and Patton (2002) suggest my closeness to the study adds validity to the
investigation. Indeed, I believe the rich and honest responses found throughout the data
would not have been possible without the trust-based relationship I have garnered with
Sacllo residents over the years. Further, I argue more traditional research that delineates
clear separation between the researcher and subject of study would create barriers to rich
and honest community responses in civic engagement research, particularly in the
international realm. Future international service-learning research should consider the
importance of building relationships between scholars and community members and the
effect a relationship-based approach to ISL research has on an investigation’s data and findings.

**Implications for research: Re-consider the value of a transactional approach to international service-learning**

Transactional campus-community partnerships are considered lower quality compared to transformational partnerships (Bringle et al., 2009; Enos & Morton, 2003). This stance stems from international service-learning’s common critiques discussed in Chapter 2 (see section titled *International Service-learning through a Critical Lens*), particularly with respect to program outcomes predominantly favoring students despite the implication community impact is central to the program’s service-oriented identity. In response, the field has seen an emergence of more progressive, social justice-oriented forms of service-learning centered around community growth and change, i.e., transformation (See Hartman et al. 2014; Hartman & Kiely, 2014). While community transformation is undoubtedly a program outcome worth aspiring for, I challenge it should necessarily outweigh the importance of tangible community benefit through a campus-community partnership. Results of the participatory evaluation suggest more research is necessary to explore the value of a hybrid approach to service-learning that incorporates both transformational and transactional approaches to service-learning.

For example, consider how ISLP Perú embodies a hybrid model of service-learning that is both transactional and transformational. ISLP Perú is transactional in nature because engineering students help Sacllo residents understand and communicate an important community challenge, and in exchange, the community provides students with an opportunity to apply their studies in the field while experiencing unique cultural
immersion. According to Enos and Morton (2003), a transactional partnership is short-term, task-oriented, lacks a larger purpose, and offers benefit to one or both parties, but no growth. Although ISLP Perú embodies some of these characteristics (i.e., short-term iterations, task-oriented, and offers benefit to one or both parties), it pushes back on the notion that a transactional partnership cannot have a larger purpose, nor lead to community growth. This is evidenced at least by Sacllo residents stating that ISLP Perú creates: 1) an avenue for Sacllo to work with the local government to fix a major community problem, and 2) areas of growth related to community pride and confidence. Therefore, this study exposes transactional and transformational partnerships do not necessarily need to be mutually exclusive, and perhaps a more hybrid model is worthy of consideration and research.

**Implications for research: ISLP Perú**

Initial next steps in response to this participatory evaluation involve incorporating results into subsequent iterations of ISLP Perú. This means sharing and discussing the evaluation’s results with Sacllo residents who participated in this study, as well as the community at large. Evaluation results will also be shared and discussed with faculty and administration from the Speed School of Engineering and the AASD. As facilitator of the program, I will gauge feedback from all parties involved and begin incorporating changes into ISLP Perú 2022. Currently, all parties have expressed interest in revitalizing ISLP Perú post-Covid.

This participatory evaluation also illuminated various processes to incorporate during the planning, implementation, and evaluation phases of any ISL program. Hence, this evaluation has implications for communities besides Sacllo, especially other farming
communities in Perú. AASD works with various communities who face similar challenges as Sacllo and have expressed interest in participating with the AASD on ISL programs. Similarly, the Speed School of Engineering has also expressed interest in expanding their model to work with other communities. As such, subsequent iterations of ISLP Perú will begin to incorporate other communities in Perú’s Sacred Valley.

Finally, there is an additional way to make ISLP Perú more impactful for all parties involved. The SOFAR structural framework for relationships (Bringle et al., 2009) portrays at least four other main actors in addition to community residents that comprise the campus-community partnership: students, organizations, faculty, and administration. Bringle et al. (2009) speak to the importance of well-rounded civic engagement and state that:

one of the defining characteristics of contemporary models of civic engagement is mutually beneficial collaboration, in which all persons (italics added to offer emphasis) contribute knowledge, skills, and experience in determining the issues to be addressed, the questions to be asked, the problems to be resolved, the strategies to be used, the outcomes that are considered desirable, and the indicators of success. (p. 1)

Thus, a logical next step in this research involves expanding the participatory evaluation to include Speed School of Engineering faculty, administration, and students, as well as the AASD.

In this section, I discuss the implications of this research through three different lenses. The first has to do with recognizing the natural congruence of ISL research and action research methodology. Indeed, any ISL researcher should consider action research
given the overlap in certain core characteristics, such as identifying and addressing a community challenge, collaboration, participation, reflection, and the flexibility to assume various roles as a scholar-practitioner. The second implication for research this study illuminated has to do with reemphasizing the value of a transactional partnership in ISL. While community transformation is certainly worth aspiring for in ISL, it should not necessarily be mutually exclusive from tangible community benefit.

The third implication for research has to do with what the outcomes of this participatory evaluation means for ISLP Perú and its subsequent iterations. Given ISLP Perú is centralized around participatory action research methodology, unsurprisingly, next steps with respect to research are inherently actionable. Action items include: 1) share and discuss results from the participatory evaluation with all relevant stakeholders; 2) begin scaling out the ISLP Perú model to include other communities in Perú’s Sacred Valley; and 3) expand the participatory evaluation to capture the perspectives of other key stakeholders in ISLP Perú, such as university representatives and the AASD.

Research Limitations

One limitation of this investigation is that it captures community resident perspectives from a single community, within a single context. Ideally, the findings from this study can impact any ISL program by making it easier to incorporate the community partner’s voice into a program’s design. Indeed, outcomes from the participatory evaluation offer sound insights towards Sacllo residents’ perspectives for how to improve ISLP Perú. However, this perspective is only representative of a single community (Sacllo), program (ISLP Perú), and context (rural Andean Perú). Although this study’s findings may be applicable in other communities who share Sacllo’s culture and context,
it is possible Sacllo residents’ insights may not be equally applicable in other countries, cultures, or contexts.

Another limitation of this study has to do with the extent to which ISLP Perú can be improved based on the evaluation’s outcomes. One reason I implemented a participatory evaluation in this study was to hear how Sacllo residents felt ISLP Perú could be improved. While the evaluation’s outcomes demonstrate various tangible areas of improvement, implementing the evaluation also exposed a gap in knowledge about ways to improve the program. Specifically, the evaluation fell short of acknowledging the perspectives of other program stakeholders besides community residents, such as UL students, faculty, and the AASD. While capturing a broader representation of stakeholder perspectives may have been outside the scope of this study, a more inclusive understanding of other stakeholders’ perspectives could lead to newfound improvements in future program planning and design.

Finally, this study was partially limited by language restrictions. All data collection was conducted in Spanish, which is both my second language, as well as the second language of Sacllo residents. Although I am confident all major points were successfully communicated, suffice it to say smaller details may have been lost in translation. Nonetheless, I believe a “gringo” speaking directly with community residents about improving a community program enabled exceptionally honest and valid responses - more so than working with an outside translator. Although this study was limited by a second language, ultimately it also became a strength because it led to less skewed participant responses.

**Final Reflection**
Throughout this dissertation, I have reflected extensively on my positionality within this research. In Chapter 1, I spoke about how my identity as an outsider-within represents a duality within my researcher positionality. For instance, on one hand, the trust-based relationships I have built over the past ten years living and working in Perú deserves recognition with respect to being a researcher. On the other hand, I will always be an outsider and unable to fully relate to the local challenges and realities in Perú. It is worth reflecting on how my positionality influenced this research as I conclude this study.

Overall, I believe my outsider-within positionality added veracity to this study. Some may argue having close relationships with my research partners and participants would impede on my ability to maintain an objective stance or create bias, however I contend being an outsider-within was the primary catalyst for capturing accurate data. I believe the research participants felt comfortable sharing honest responses with me, a claim which can perhaps be supported by the prevalence of ISLP Peru program critiques and areas of improvements in the participatory evaluation’s outcomes. Further, there were outcomes of this study that I was not anticipating and took me aback. For example, not being clear about program financing and overlooking the importance of intercultural exchange were major oversights on my part as the program facilitator, and I am grateful the community felt comfortable enough to share that with me. A major takeaway from my doctoral research is that relationship building between the researcher and research participants should be considered a core tenet of social science research.

In Chapter 1, I also spoke about how my roles as researcher, director of the AASD, and primary facilitator of ISLP Peru could influence the study’s design,
implementation, and interpretation. Looking back, it is interesting to consider how I compartmentalized these different roles throughout different phases of the study. For example, during the design and implementation phase of this study, I intentionally distinguished between being an action researcher and a professional/practitioner. In practice this meant first being aware of when and how community voices were emerging through the participatory process, then making sense of it as a researcher, and finally interpreting it all through a professional or practitioner lens. Prioritizing my role as an action researcher in the early phases of this study allowed for the participatory evaluation’s framework to emerge organically, and most importantly, as a representation of community participants’ voice.

During data analysis, I tried to completely silence my professional and practitioner stance to offer a pure representation of Sacllo residents’ perspectives as the data. This was important because it allowed for community residents’ voices to stand alone in this study, which after all was the purpose. However, as I began to make sense of the data and consider the study’s implications, I revitalized my professional and practitioner stance. Particularly with respect to the ISLFF in Chapter 5, I re-integrated all my roles and built off the community resident perspectives to create an all-encompassing and hopefully far-reaching resource. Creating the ISLFF was an opportunity to contribute something unique to ISL scholarship that first and foremost represents community resident perspectives, but also my own personal and professional experience.

In conclusion, I feel more passionate than ever that social science research should embody action-oriented, participatory methodology. Researchers in training should be encouraged to have or build trust-based relationships with the people central to an
To me, a relationship-oriented approach to qualitative, social science research will help frame research more accurately, make it meaningful, and collect honest data that is fully representative of the participants. Additionally, I feel a researcher with practical and professional experience adds value to a study, with respect to defining a study’s implications for practice. In sum, I believe higher education should support research that emphasizes a relationship-oriented approach juxtaposed with practical or professional experience because it will ultimately create more meaningful and impactful outcomes – and if those are not priorities in social science research, then what is the point?

**Conclusion**

This study contributes to the field of civic engagement, campus-community partnerships, and ISL by offering a sound representation of community resident perspectives on ISL. Further, this study offers the ISLFF - a guide to help faculty navigate the complex web of international campus-community partnerships. It is important to state this study would have been impossible in the absence of participatory processes. Participatory action research methodology allowed me to capture and illuminate the voices of the community residents who should be central to any ISL program, yet somehow exist on the periphery in both practice and research. Given that, I feel it is necessary to acknowledge the Sacllo residents as owners of this study’s contributions to the field, and I am the lucky messenger.

In Chapter 2 section titled *The Server versus Served Dichotomy*, I quote Ivan Illich (1968), who told a group of student volunteers: “I am here to entreat you to use your status, your money, and your education to travel to Latin America. Come to look.
Come to climb our mountains and enjoy our flowers. Come to study. But do not come to help.” This quote represents an ever-growing critical stance amongst the ISL community who believes there is an appropriate place within the campus-community partnership for students to benefit from international immersion, however the extent to which they can deliver tangible impact should be reconsidered. For many years I agreed with this critique; however now, in hindsight, I am inclined to challenge this stance. While it is undeniable that ISL programs designed irresponsibly can be a threat to community partners, this study demonstrates ISL also has the potential to help communities if implemented responsibly and inclusively. While some may argue this position is far-fetched or utopian, I contend it aligns with higher education’s original purpose. The idea of the academy helping to address the world’s most complex challenges through international service learning will remain far-fetched until universities truly commit the time, energy, and resources to creating lasting and meaningful campus-community partnerships.
REFERENCES


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www.doi.org/10.14434/josotl.v15i4.13432


www.doi.org/10.1136/jech.2003.010074


Appendix A: Semi-structured interview protocol

Time of interview:
Date:
Place:
Interviewee:

Background
What is your name?
Where are you from?
Where do you live now?
What do you do for a living?
What is your role in the community?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Sub-topic/Question</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Understanding of program</td>
<td>• Familiarity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Describe program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Purpose of the program</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Success</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- What does this mean to you?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Who is critical for this?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Overall Process</td>
<td>• Before</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• During</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• After</td>
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<tr>
<td>Role</td>
<td>What went well</td>
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<td>Community involvement</td>
<td>Importance</td>
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<tr>
<td>Working with students</td>
<td>Is their experience important?</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Working with actors or institutions</td>
<td>Experience with this?</td>
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<tr>
<td>from outside the community</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Problem identification and solution</td>
<td>What is the problem being addressed as part of this program?</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Impact/effect program has on Sacllo as a whole</td>
<td>Benefits</td>
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<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
What like to learn from rest of community?

Anything else?
Appendix B: Focus group discussion guide

Pre-Focus Group
Welcome and thank you
Purpose of research
Reinforce why everybody was chosen to participate
Focus Group guidelines and what to expect
Brief description of how information will be used
Assure confidentiality
Discuss and get informed consent
Purpose of tape recording and seek permission to record
Indicate expected duration

PART I: Collect data that represents primary stakeholder perspectives on what program outcomes would make ISLP Perú program a success and how to improve the overall design of ISLP Perú.

Introductory Prompt
Tell me about your participation in ISLP Perú

Community residents’ perspectives of outcomes that would make ISLP Perú a success.
Show of hands: Who feels the community of Sacllo has benefited from their participation in ISLP Perú?
   - If yes, how? If no, why not?

Tell me about the specific moments of success in ISLP Perú?
   - What made these moments successful?
What are some things your community expects to gain from ISLP Perú?

What would make this program successful?

**How can the design of ISLP Perú be improved based on community resident perspectives?**

Tell me about the specific moments that could have been improved in ISLP Perú?
- How might these moments be avoided in the future?

Can you describe the relationship between the engineering group and Sacllo?
- What would make the relationship better?

What are some other ways the community of Sacllo can benefit from hosting programs like ISLP Perú?

What would community residents recommend to the AASD for implementing ISLP Perú in a different community?

In your opinion, why do students participate in this program?

**Conclusion**
Are there any questions I forgot to ask?
What other comments do you have?
Any questions for me?
# Appendix C: International Service-learning Framework for Faculty (ISLFF)

## Due diligence in the early stages of facilitating an international service-learning program

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Understand service-learning</th>
<th>Are you familiar with:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Various definitions?</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- General goals and objectives of service-learning?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Service-learning pedagogy and course design?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Critiques of service-learning?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Intercultural competency?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Student reflection?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Service-learning compared to other forms of experiential learning?</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service-learning is supported at the university’s institutional level</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Is the university invested in the quality or impact of the program?</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Do systems exist to train faculty in service-learning?</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Does the university offer resources to sustain a campus-community relationship?</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Are there reward systems for achieving quality service-learning outcomes?</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Consider the dynamics of the campus-community partnership?</th>
<th>To what extent are you building the campus-community partnership into a relationship?</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Is the relationship with the community grounded in justice (rather than charity)?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Have you taken steps to build trust and mutual respect within the community, such as familiarizing yourself with the local setting and different stakeholders?</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Gain entry into a community (Responsibly)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Have you met and spoken with community residents?</td>
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<td>- Have you visited the community or taken a tour?</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Are you familiar with the community’s culture, traditions, and history?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Prepare for potential challenges, threats, and/or pitfalls</td>
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<td>------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Have you familiarized yourself with community stakeholders that are not residents, such as local organizations or government representatives?</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Is there an approval process?</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>- Are you familiar with critical perspectives of service-learning?</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Have you explored critical models for service-learning, such as Global Service-learning or Fair-Trade Service-learning?</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Have you assessed power and resource inequalities between the campus and community?</td>
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<td>- What time commitments or other restrictions exist?</td>
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</table>

**Identify and understand a community defined challenge**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Engage with community insiders and outsiders to gain a well-rounded understanding of the challenge</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- How are different people viewing the challenge?</td>
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<tr>
<td>- What is the effect the challenge is having on people?</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Why does the challenge persist?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- What needs to happen to address the challenge?</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Have any solutions already been considered?</td>
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<tr>
<td>- What % of the community is being affected by this challenge?</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Commit to relationship building with community stakeholders familiar with the local reality</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Who are the community insiders and outsiders?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- What is their stake in the community?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- What are the most effective ways to communicate and build relationships with them?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Why should they commit to a relationship-building process with you?</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Understand and speak to the challenge through a level of expertise</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Have you seen the challenge?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Can you reiterate the challenge to community insiders and outsiders you have relationships with?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Can you speak to the challenge from your level of expertise?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Co-create a meaningful and feasible program deliverable**
| Determine who should be involved in deciding a program deliverable | - Which community residents have been most affected by the challenge?  
- Who within the community has the greatest understanding of the challenge?  
- Who within the community has tried solving the challenge or has ideas about how to solve the challenge?  
- Who within the university has the greatest level of expertise about the challenge at hand?  
- Is there a role for local organizations or institutions, such as NGOs or the municipality? |
| Decide on a meaningful deliverable | - Are community residents involved in determining the program deliverable?  
- To what extent do actors involved in determining the program deliverable understand the local challenge, context, and reality?  
- Is there dialogue between community residents and other actors about the program deliverable?  
- Does the community make the final decision about the deliverable? |
| Decide on a feasible deliverable | - What resources and/or budget would be necessary to achieve the deliverable?  
- How much time is necessary to complete the deliverable?  
- What resources does the university have access to?  
- What is the program’s budget and/or financial reality?  
- What do experts say about the deliverable?  
- Can students contribute to achieving the deliverable?  
- Can community residents contribute to achieving the deliverable?  
- Can community residents maintain the deliverable after students leave? |

**Assess and access resources: Financing**
| Assess budgetary and financial realities of the program | - What equipment or services are necessary to accomplish the deliverable?  
- Is university administration willing to allocate funds to support the program or deliverable?  
- Does the university have a campus-based office for development? If so, does that office have an avenue for funding?  
- Are there off-campus funding sources interested in supporting the program, such as foundations or corporate giving programs?  
- What are local sources of financing, such as the local municipality or NGOs? |
|---|---|
| Consider financial implications for the community | - How does the community understand the budgetary and financial realities of the program?  
- What should the community expect or not expect given the budgetary and financial realities of the program?  
- Does the community expect to be compensated for their time and participation? |
| Consider financial implications for students | - What are the financial requisites for the program, such as program logistics, flights, lodging, food, program fees?  
- What financial responsibilities will students be expected to assume?  
- Are there grants or scholarships to support student participation? |
| Assess and access resources: Human capital | |
| Assess student preparedness | - How are students being trained for the experience?  
- How can the university or university administration create formalized ways to train and prepare students?  
- Who are the most appropriate people to train students for the experience?  
- Are there particular skills students should be trained in?  
- How are students learning about the community challenge?  
- What are the cultural characteristics of the host-country students should be trained in prior to their in-country experience? |
| Assess local organizations | - What local organizations should participate in this program?  
- What have been the organization’s greatest successes and failures?  
- Does the organization have a healthy relationship with the community?  
- Does the organization understand the community’s culture?  
- How does the organization understand the community challenge?  
- How long has the organization been in existence?  
- Can the organization communicate with the community in the local language?  
- Has the organization ever worked with students or universities? Tourism?  
- Can the organization commit to a partnership? |
|--------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Assess the local municipality | - Does the community support partnering with the local municipality?  
- Is the municipality aware of the community challenge?  
- Is the municipality aware of the program?  
- Is there a department within the municipality that aligns with the program’s purpose and/or deliverable?  
- Does the municipality have financing to support the program and/or deliverable? |
| Incorporate intercultural exchange |  |
| Become familiar with the community’s culture and tradition | - What components of the community’s culture are a source of pride?  
- What is the community’s history?  
- Are there common skills or practices unique to the community?  
- Are there typical foods or community activities associated with making or serving food?  
- Are there traditional social activities, such as dance or sport? |
| Consider how to organize and coordinate intercultural exchange | - Who within the community would be interested in facilitating cultural activities with students?  
- What is the best way to coordinate and organize cultural activities? Is a local committee possible? |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Create activities for students to share with the community</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- What percent of the time spent in the community should incorporate intercultural exchange?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- What activities can students create to share their own culture with the local community?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- What would be interesting for the community to learn about the students and their culture?</td>
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<tr>
<td>- What do the students’ communities look like?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- How do students connect with food, dance, or social activities?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- In what ways are the two cultures similar? Different?</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Communicate the program formally to the community</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Determine an appropriate setting for a formal presentation and QnA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Does the community have a formal assembly process?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- How are decisions that affect the community made?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- How are community programs or projects typically decided upon?</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Determine the most appropriate people for representing the program</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Who can speak to the program’s purpose, framework, expectations of the community, limitations, and budget/financing?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Who can speak to what a campus-community partnership would look like?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Who can talk about what international service-learning is?</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Who can speak the local language, and understand the perspective of the campus and community?</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Know your audience</th>
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<tr>
<td>- Is there a leadership structure within the community?</td>
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<td>- Who is likely to be involved in the program?</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Who are the decision makers?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Is the audience diverse, i.e., gender, age, experience with ISL?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Consider important topics to discuss</td>
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<tr>
<td>- What is the purpose of the program you are presenting on?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- What should the community expect, and similarly not expect through participating in the program?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- What is the budget or financial reality of the program?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- What are the realistic outcomes and limitations of the program?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- What is expected from the community with respect to their participation before, during, and after student arrival?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Is the community open to creating local committees to engage with program implementation, deliverable design and utilization, and/or intercultural exchange?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Would the program need to be approved? If so, what does the approval process look like.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CURRICULUM VITA

Adam Stieglitz
adam.stieglitz@louisville.edu

EDUCATION

University of Louisville  |  (2017 – Current)
Doctoral Candidate: Educational leadership, Evaluation, and Organization Development
Dissertation: Voices of the Served: An Action Research Investigation on Community Resident Perspectives in International Service-Learning

Middlebury Institute of International Studies at Monterey  |  2011
Master of Public Administration, focus on International Development

University of Miami  |  2004
Bachelor of Arts: Business Management and Administration

RELEVANT PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Andean Alliance for Sustainable Development  |  2011-Present
Co-Founder and Director of Operations
www.alianzaandina.org

Action Research Podcast  |  2020-Present
Co-Host

University of Louisville  |  2017-2019
Graduate Assistant

TEACHING AND EXPERIENTIAL EDUCATION

On-Campus and Virtual Courses

Intercultural Competency Workshop  |  2020
University of St. Thomas

**International Service-Learning: Topics in Civil and Environmental Engineering | 2017-2018**
University of Louisville

**Community Social Change | 2013**
Middlebury Institute of International Studies

**Policy and Research Field Methods | 2011-2014**
Middlebury Institute of International Studies

**Guest Lectures**
- Qualitative Research Methods (2018)
- Finance & Budgeting (2017, 2018)
- Citizen Diplomacy (2017)
- Systems Thinking (2015-2016)
- Communicating Social Change (2015)
- Organizational Sustainability (2013)
- Policy Analysis (2012-2014)

**Field Based Experiential Education**

**International Service Learning: Peru | 2017-Present**
Partnering with and facilitating faculty and students from the University of Louisville’s Speed School of Engineering to help the community of Sacllo address water scarcity issues in the Andes.

**AASD Service-Learning Program | 2015-Present**
Creating partnerships with third party providers to bring high school and gap year students to Peru. Programs are designed to expose students to the culture and traditions of the Andes while participating in meaningful service.

**AASD Faculty-led Programming | 2014 – Present**
Partnering with faculty from various universities to design course- and field-based curriculum for students to apply skills relevant to their area of their study in the field.

**AASD Summer Practicum | 2012 – 2021**
Designed and facilitated an eight-week international education program for university students in Peru. Each iteration was designed around the needs of the AASD. Examples
of program foci include conducting program evaluation, community-based research, and community needs assessments.

**AASD January Term Program**  |  2012 – 2017; 2021  
Designed and facilitated three-week intensive international education program for university students in Peru. Each iteration was designed around the needs of the AASD. Examples of program foci include program design and assessment, monitoring and evaluation, business planning, and gender rights and equality.

**Team Peru**  |  2009-2011  
Facilitated students from Middlebury Institute of International Studies in various activities, courses, and programs designed around international education, public administration, and international development

---

**RESEARCH**

---

**Research Interests**  
Action research methodology, international education, international service learning, critical theory, qualitative inquiry, and analysis.

**Community Based Participatory Action Research**

**Café Orígenes**  |  2020-Present  
Addressing challenges related to coffee production, quality, and income generation with coffee farmers in the Mapacho Basin.

**International Service Learning: Peru**  |  2019-Present  
Capturing and disseminating community resident perspectives in international service learning using the participatory evaluation method.

**Calca Region Family Greenhouse Program**  |  2012-Present  
Partnering with farmers to produce and commercialize organic agriculture in high altitude Andean communities.

**Sacred Valley NGO Network**  |  2011-2015  
Created and facilitated a network of NGOs in Peru’s Sacred Valley of the Incas to raise awareness about responsible development practices, improve communication channels, and foster collaboration.

**Lares District School Greenhouse Program**  |  2010-2017  
Partnered with middle and high schools to produce organic produce and incorporate harvests into the school lunch program.
Presentations

### Action Research Network of the Americas | 2021
*The Action Research Podcast: Conversations with the Team*

### International Congress of Qualitative Inquiry | 2021
*The Action Research Podcast: A Next-Generation Method for Action Research and Knowledge Democratization*

### International Education Engineering Conference | 2019
*Creating a Sustainable Authentic Capstone Engineering Abroad Experience: Faculty-supported, Not Faculty-led*

### Ashoka U Conference Big Idea Talk | 2019
*New Perspectives in Service-Learning: Achieving Transformation through a Transactional Approach to the Campus-Community Partnership*

### University of the Incarnate Word | 2018
*The Student Always Wins in Service-Learning: A Critique and Action Research Proposal for generating mutually beneficial relationships with local communities*

### Ashoka U Conference Presentation | 2018
*The Importance of Intermediary Organizations when Campuses from the Global North Partner with Communities in the Global South*

### Spring Research Conference | 2018
*Revisiting Mutual Benefit in Service-Learning*

### Social Justice Research Symposium | 2017
*Introduction to Participatory Action Research (Panel)*

### Middlebury College | 2016
*What are the Hidden Strengths that Emerge from Poverty?*

### Planet Forward Food Summit | 2015
*Supporting Community-Led Development in the Highlands of Peru*

### Grassroots Leadership Symposium | 2013
*Panel Participant*

### AWARDS AND PROFESSIONAL ENGAGEMENTS

### Community Engagement Academy | University of Louisville
Cooperative Consortium for Transdisciplinary Social Justice Research | University of Louisville

Young Alumni Achievement Award | Middlebury Institute of International Studies

Student Project Award – Team Peru | Middlebury Institute of International Studies