AN ANALYSIS OF FOSTERING INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCE
AMONG HOST COMMUNITIES IN HOSTELS
(CASE STUDY: HOSTELLING INTERNATIONAL SANTA MONICA)

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PROJECT: AN ANALYSIS OF FOSTERING INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCE AMONG HOST COMMUNITIES IN HOSTELS (CASE STUDY: HI SANTA MONICA)

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ABSTRACT

The tourism industry is one of the world’s largest industries, contributing over seven trillion U.S. dollars in 2014 (The Statistics Portal, 2014). It is also frequently highlighted as a possible agent in promoting peace, as well as improving cross-cultural understanding. In particular, tourist accommodations can allow for such opportunities. This research analyzes how hostelling, in particular, Hostelling International Santa Monica, serves as an avenue to foster intercultural competence for host communities. This study uses a combination of grounded theory and ethnographic research methods, in order to conceptualize a process model of fostering intercultural competence. Conceptualizing the hostel as an intercultural space, this research identifies the importance of purposeful facilitation to foster engagement, self-reflection and behavioral transformation for improved intercultural competence. This study illustrates hostels as an embassy to improving cross-cultural understanding. It recognizes the potential for hostelling to foster diverse understanding and cultivate intercultural competence. It also serves to solidify Hostelling International USA’s contribution to broadening cultural exchanges, encouraging intercultural dialogue and educating for peace.
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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

“Tourism matters because it provides both a lens onto and an energy for relationships with everyday life. It invites us to engage in exchanges of life with others, and to remind us thereby of its most precious and vulnerable aspect: the intricate relativities of defining people who are not us. Tourism matters because, in a world of confusing connections and disconnections between human beings, our lives with others matter.”


In the U.S., direct spending by resident and international travelers averaged $2.5 billion dollars a day in 2015, $105.8 million dollars an hour, $1.8 million dollars a minute and $29,398 dollars a second ("U.S. Travel Answer Sheet", 2015). In addition to the economic impact of this ever-growing industry, tourism is also associated with being “an agent of peace and a key to improving cross-cultural understanding (Bowen & Daniels, 2011, p. 189)”. Beyond its economic impact, tourism is paramount because it breaks down barriers and provides us with opportunities to engage in exchanges of life. A tourist’s accommodation allows for such opportunities, creating an environment to encourage or discourage cross-cultural interactions (Bowen & Daniels, 2011). Within the tourism accommodation sector, hostelling is a neglected research area. Hostels are designed for members to engage in social interactions through its physical space, design structure, and provided events. The most common sleeping arrangement in hostels consist of dormitory style rooms with bunk beds which allow between four to ten travelers per room.

Hostels also provide accommodations at a fraction of the cost of a traditional hotel room. These low-cost social accommodations provide an economic benefit for travelers on a budget. In addition, hostels differ from a traditional hotel due to their event offerings, creating opportunities for engagement and interaction with one another.
Within Hostelling International USA (HI USA), hostels are more than a form of accommodation for low budget travelers. The experience of hostelling through HI USA’s mission serves “to help all, especially the young, gain a greater understanding of the world and its people through hostelling” (Hostelling International USA, 2014). HI USA operates more than 50 hostels across the nation, with the top three largest hostels in New York, Chicago and Boston. Hostelling International Santa Monica, a 260-bed hostel, is one of Hostelling International’s main visitor hubs in the U.S.

In addition to the economic benefits, the tourism industry also brings socio-cultural impacts to the local community in varied ways (Zaei & Zaei, 2013). It has largely been associated with improving cross-cultural understanding and contributing to respect between peoples and societies. Within the tourism structure, the local community serves as an important stakeholder. Intercultural interactions between tourists and local residents have been proven to directly affect tourist satisfaction and cross-cultural attitudes (Richardson, 1996; Pizam, Uriely, & Reichel, 2000; Nyaupane, Teye, & Paris, 2008; Yu & Lee, 2014).

Despite the importance of the local community, limited research has been done on how tourism impacts the community members’ intercultural competence (Su & Wall, 2010). In addition, limited research on tourism and host-guest interactions has focused on a particular segment of accommodation (Bowen & Daniels, 2011). The outcomes from this research can be shared and implemented by HI Santa Monica to bolster their future operations and engagement strategies. Although researchers Bowen & Daniels (2011) have documented hostelling as a pathway to cross-cultural understanding amongst hostel guests and travelers, in-depth investigation is needed to explore the impact among the host community.

Recognizing the potential for hostels to cultivate intercultural understanding, the current study aims to explore the impact of Hostelling International Santa Monica (HI Santa Monica) in fostering intercultural competence among the local community of Los Angeles. Local community members include local stakeholders, hostel staff, volunteers, and managers.
Study Setting

Located in Santa Monica, a trendy tourist destination west of Los Angeles, Hostelling International Santa Monica (HI Santa Monica) offers accommodation for up to 260 guests. Constructed as a purpose-built hostel in 1990, the building is tucked away on 2nd street in between Broadway and Santa Monica Blvd. Many often unknowingly pass its location without noticing the existence of the facility. Beyond the sliding glass door entranceway and to the left of the reception, visitors will find the Rapp Saloon, a historic structure built in 1875. The Rapp Saloon is also uniquely the oldest surviving brick building in the city (Santa Monica Conservancy, 2004).

Architect William Rapp constructed this small brick building as a beer hall. Over the years, this structure has served myriad purposes including its function as a Salvation Army meeting hall, radiator repair shop, and a storage facility for one of the first movie studios in the Los Angeles area Vitagraph Film Co. In 1888, it also served as Santa Monica’s City Hall for two years (Santa Monica Landmark Properties, n.d.).

When a visitor closely examines the walls closest to the entrance, the visitor will notice old painted signs that memorialize some of these occupants. This unique landmark serves as an important part of Santa Monica and Hostelling International. American Youth Hostels acquired the building in 1984 after the building was threatened demolition with no viable purchaser (Santa Monica Conservancy, 2004). Since then, it’s been a crucial part of HI Santa Monica’s events, playing host to the hostel’s weekly poetry readings and open mic performances.

On the right side of the hostel, the LA adventure and tour operator has an office and provides tour packages in and around Los Angeles on a daily basis. The hostel located just two blocks to the beach and Santa Monica pier, guests are constantly out and about exploring the city.

After walking through the sliding glass doors into the lobby of the hostel, the door to the Rapp Saloon is located to the left, and beyond it, the calendar of events for the week. In the center of the lobby, the visitor will see the reception, and a locker room to the right. Recently re-painted and decorated, the hostel provides a welcoming atmosphere reflecting the sunny, relaxing beach
vibe by which it is surrounded. Outside of the lobby, keycard access is required for entrance into the guests’ only section where visitors will find the common spaces including a lounge with a fireplace, kitchen, a courtyard, and the kitchen. In the lounge, guests can be found unwinding from their days reading books, sending emails from their Internet enabled devices and scribing postcards. As each night progresses, and the weather cools, guests will linger by the fireplace and converse with one another.

The dining hall houses multiple long wooden tables, designed to encourage travelers to engage one another as they sit in the same table. Throughout the day, guests linger and challenge one another to a game of pool or converse while cooking in the kitchen. The kitchen contains all utensils and standard kitchen-ware, but individuals must clean their dishes after using them. This encourages independence and sustains the communal spirit of hostels. Guests may also store any groceries in the communal refrigerator as long as their food is properly labeled with their names and check-out dates. The rest of the common area is located on the second floor of the property, in which guests may find laundry machines, a movie room, and computers to use.

See appendix A for images of the property.
CHAPTER 2
Literature Review

Hostels

Youth hostels are lodging accommodations that have traditionally been associated with backpacking travelers as well as foreign independent travelers (FITs) who often travel on a shoestring budget and seek less-expensive accommodations (Timothy & Teye, 2009). The most common sleeping arrangements are dormitory style rooms with bunk beds, allowing anywhere between four to ten travelers per room. These rooms can be single-gendered or co-ed rooms. To adapt to the changing global demand, many hostels have updated their inventory to offer single or double rooms that are not shared with other travelers. Another unique characteristic of hostels is the shared facilities and common areas, such as bathrooms, reading lounge, television area, Internet desks, and kitchen. These common spaces allow for a more sociable atmosphere. Different from hotels or large franchises, every hostel property can be unique in itself. They can vary with regards to their service offerings such as meal options, types of rooms, length of stay allowed, and daily events.

The concept of hostels originated in Germany around 1902 by Richard Schirrmann (Timothy & Teye, 2009). Schirrmann was leading a group of students on an excursion when they found themselves in the midst of a thunderstorm. A nearby school offered them accommodation in the classroom, and some milk for their evening meal. At that time, Schirrmann had an idea for “Volksschülerherbergen (hostels for pupils of ordinary state schools), in which schools could be used for temporary accommodation and villages could host a youth hostel to welcome young explorers during the holidays. Over ten years later in 1912, the first official youth hostel was born in an old castle in Altena. Since then, the movement has spread all over the world benefitting travelers of all ages and background (Hostelling International Canada, 2014).

There are many advantages to staying at a youth hostel. Some of these include free Internet, opportunities to cook as oppose to eating out, and social activities to embark on in local
communities—especially for independent travelers looking to meet other travelers. Hostelling also benefits travelers through its affordability. Several studies have shown that the experience of hostelling, which allows guests to meet like-minded travelers from different countries, can help facilitate cross-cultural understanding and promote peace building (Bowen & Daniels, 2011; Timothy & Teye, 2009). Common disadvantages in hostels include the lack of privacy and not being able to rest due to the close proximity of other travelers (snoring, others’ staying up late, etc.). Sickness can also be transferred easily among travelers. However, knowing these disadvantages has not discouraged hostel visitors from staying in this form of accommodation.

**Hostelling International USA**

Hostelling International (HI), also known as International Youth Hostel Federation (IYHF), is a global network of youth hostels operating 4,000 hostels in 90 countries worldwide. HI USA was formed in 1934, founded as American Youth Hostels with the first hostel operating in Northfield, Massachusetts. Today, HI USA is the biggest hostel chain in the US, with over 50 hostels across the nation hosting more than 1 million overnights annually (Hostelling International USA, 2014). Founded on the belief of the power of travel, HI USA’s mission “To help all, especially the young, gain a greater understanding of the world and its people through hostelling”, aims to contribute to intercultural dialogue and educating for peace (Hostelling International USA, 2014). Hostelling International has also been recognized by UNESCO for their work as a peace-building organization (Hostelling International USA, 2014).

Hostelling International Santa Monica is a major hub for hostel visitors in the U.S. In addition to overnight stays, HI Santa Monica also offers a wide range of programs for both the guests and the host community. They have had a strong presence in Santa Monica for over twenty-five years and are highly valued by the local community. Through the relationship with the Chamber and Visitor Bureau, HI Santa Monica hopes to increase awareness of hostels in the US. They have also received the Santa Monica Sustainability Award two years in a row (City of Santa Monica, 2013).
Tourism and Intercultural Interaction

The rapid growth of international and domestic tourism has increased the opportunities for intercultural interactions as well as generated a growing interest in cross-cultural encounters. In 2015, 1.184 million people traveled internationally, a 4.4% increase from 2014 (UNWTO World Tourism Barometer, 2016). The basis of these international travel experiences are formed by interactions with people of different cultural backgrounds, making tourism a driving force in developing intercultural relationships (Fisher & Price, 1991; McIntosh & Johnson, 2004). The most common and simplest form of encounter occurs through transactions between locals and tourists (Huxley, 2004; Reisinger & Crotts, 2010). This interaction between locals and tourists are important to emphasize because it is an essential variable directly affecting tourist satisfaction and cross-cultural attitudes (Dovidio, Gaertner, Kawakami, & Hodson, 2002; Huxley, 2004).

Intercultural contact between tourists and local residents has been found to enhance positive attitudes and mutual understanding between the two parties (Amir & Ben-Ari, 1985; Richardson, 1996; Nyaupane, Teye, & Paris, 2008). Richardson (1996) conducted a qualitative study of international tourism experiences to identify the effects of interaction between tourists and local residents. Her interviews with American tourists who had traveled overseas shown that intercultural contact stimulated the “discovery of the self” for the tourists. In another study focused on tourists in Israel found that positive interactions with the host community led to an attitude shift from negative to positive feelings toward their host (Pizam, Uriely, & Reichel, 2000).

Nyaupane, Teye and Pars (2008) studied the impact of study abroad programs on the travelers’ attitude change toward hosts using a pre-trip and post trip comparison. Regardless of prior expectations about their host country and its residents prior to their trip, most of the students’ attitudes were positively shifted based on their activities and interactions during the trip. However, some students’ reported negative post-trip attitude change depending on the country visited. Therefore, this study is insufficient in suggesting that intercultural contact always
promotes a positive attitude change (Nyaupane, Teye, & Paris, 2008). Situational and individual elements should be taken into consideration when determining the effect outcome of intercultural interaction.

Recently, Yu and Lee (2014) examined the structure of interactions between tourists and local residents to understand the variables influencing the impact of these interactions. Through a series of ethnographic interviews, the study found that intercultural interaction led to three types of experiences. The first is a reflective experience that brought about a discovery of the self. Secondly, a comparative experience developed by recognition of cultural differences between two countries. Lastly, a comprehensive experience developed by recognition of the world aside from a tourists’ home culture. This process of experiences influenced tourists’ attitudes towards the destination (Yu & Lee, 2014). The intercultural interaction between hosts and guests was as a crucial element for positive attitude change.

**Intercultural Competence**

Intercultural competence is a term that is frequently used in intercultural communication research and yet, scholarly literature and academic debates over the last few decades have demonstrated the difficulty and complexity in defining intercultural competence. The roots of the study of intercultural communication can be traced to the post World War II era in which the United States began to dominate the world stage. During this time, government and business workers found themselves working overseas with little knowledge of how to best communicate and work among different cultures.

To better equip these personnel, the U.S. government passed the Foreign Service Act in 1946 and established the Foreign Service Institute (FSI) (Martin & Nakayama, 2010). The FSI hired anthropologists and linguists to help develop pre-departure trainings, and thus, began the establishment of the field of intercultural communication. Theorists at the FSI examined various theories of culture and communication, but found that the workers were more interested in incorporating practical guidelines into their behavior in different countries. This emphasis on
practicality led to the development of cross-cultural training, diversity training, and interpersonal skill sets to enhance workers intercultural communication competence prior to departure (Martin & Nakayama, 2010).

There are a variety of definitions for intercultural competence. These include ‘impression management that allows members of different cultural systems to be aware of their cultural identity and cultural differences, and to interact effectively and appropriately with each other in diverse contexts by agreeing on the meaning of diverse symbol systems with the result of mutually satisfying relationships’ (Kupka, 2008, p. 16), ‘the appropriate and effective management of interaction between people who, to some degree or another, represent different or divergent cognitive, affective, and behavioral orientations to the world” (Spitzberg & Chagnon, 2009, p. 7), and ‘the ability to behave effectively and appropriately in interacting across cultures’ (Martin & Nakayama, 2010).

For the purpose of this research, we focus on one definition coined by Dr. Darla K. Deardorff (2009). Deardorff (2009) defines intercultural competence as “appropriate and effective communication and behavior in intercultural situations” (p. 1). In Deardorff (2006, 2009)’s national study conducted in the United States, she provides a research-based framework that serves to identify the building blocks for intercultural competence.

Pyramid model of intercultural competence

This pyramid model of intercultural competence (see Fig. 1) comprises of five elements: attitudes, knowledge, skills, internal outcomes and external outcomes. Each element is of equal value, and combines to create a framework that can be applied to a variety of programs and context in regards to intercultural competence development.

The key attributes that emerge under the attitude element are respect, openness, curiosity and discovery (Deardorff, 2011). Respect is critical, since it is a way to demonstrate that the other party is valued. Respect can be communicated through a display of interest in their identity, their
culture, and their families, or it may come in the form of simply learning to listen. The ability to empathize is also a key element of respect and of intercultural communication.

As Martin and Nakayam (2010) denotes “empathic skills are culture bound. We cannot really view the world through another person’s eyes without knowing something about his or her experiences and life” (p. 469). Openness, curiosity and discovery are key attributes that motivate an individual to risk and explore outside of one’s comfort zone. These attitudes are the foundation for further development of knowledge and skills for successful intercultural exchange.

Secondly, the knowledge component of this framework addresses various cognitive aspects of communication competence. Specifically, for intercultural competence, Deardorff (2011) points to cultural self-awareness, culture-specific knowledge, deep cultural knowledge and lastly, sociolinguistic awareness. When an individual is culturally knowledgeable, then they may begin to understand the world from others’ perspectives.

Skills are the third component of the framework that enables the development of effective intercultural competence. These skills include effective observation, listening, analyzing and interpreting (Deardorff, 2011). One requires a combination of knowledge and skills for the most successful communication. In other words, intercultural communication competence consists of learning how to put knowledge into practice and adapting to different kinds of behaviors in different cultures (Deardorff, 2011; Witte & Harden, 201).

According to Deardorff (2011)’s framework, “the attitudes, knowledge and skills ideally lead to an internal outcome that consists of flexibility, adaptability, an ethnorelative perspective and empathy” (p.39). Successful attainment of the described internal outcome depends on that individual’s level of attitudes, knowledge and skills. Lastly, the combination of attitudes, knowledge and skills and internal outcomes produce external outcomes that are demonstrated through the communication and behaviors of the individual. Thusly, these external outcomes are the tangible behaviors that indicate the level of intercultural competence that individual possesses.
Figure 1. Pyramid Model of Intercultural Competence

(Deardorff, 2004)
Grounded Theory

Grounded Theory is a systematic approach in qualitative research that involves the construction of theory through the analysis of data (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). It was introduced in the mid-twentieth-century by sociologists Barney Glaser and Anselm Strauss. They published the *Discovery of Grounded Theory: Strategies for Qualitative Research* and constructed a theoretical framework to build a “theory from inductively analyzing social phenomenon”, rather than testing a theory. As is many other forms of qualitative research, the researcher is the primary instrument of data collection and analysis.

Many professional fields, in addition to anthropologists and sociologists, are frequently interested in using a grounded theory approach to comprehend social and cultural phenomena. This approach uses a systematic set of procedures and processes of data collection and analysis to develop an inductive derived theory about a phenomenon. A unique characteristic of grounded theory is the identification of a core category. A core category is the central element connected to all other categories (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Through analyzing patterns of interaction among categories and social units, the researcher aims to produce conceptual theories to showcase these relationships among (Strauss & Corbin, 1998).

Grounded Theory is a well-developed inductive research method and is suitable for this type of investigation because (1) little is written about the relationship between hostels and the host community, (2) grounded theory has a set of established guidelines that encourages objectivity when conducting qualitative research (Goulding, 2002), and (3) grounded theory is an established and credible qualitative methodology.

Ethnography

The Ethnography Systematic Approach takes into account the intersection of anthropology and sociology. Originating from the field of anthropology, ethnography is a research process that leads to a detailed write-up of the ethnographic findings. In other words, it is both a process and a product. Today, researchers from all fields and disciplines engage in many
different forms of ethnographic studies. However, the focus on human society and culture is the basis of all forms of ethnography.

The analysis of culture in ethnographic research is conveyed through a term known as “thick description” (Geertz, 1973). “Thick Description” is a description composed of not only facts but also of interpretation and commentary towards the context in which it occurs. The way to understand a culture in detail is to spend time with the group (Geertz, 1973). Van Maanen (1982) describes the result of ethnographic inquiry and the process to attain those results:

“The result of ethnographic inquiry is cultural description. It is, however, a description of the sort that can emerge only from a lengthy period of intimate study and residence in a given social setting. It calls for the language spoken in that setting, first-hand participation in some of the activities that take place there, and, most critically, a deep reliance on intensive work with a few informants drawn from the setting.”

The method of data collection in ethnographic research is a combination of interviews, analysis of documents, and researcher’s personal field notes from observation. Critics of participant observation say this technique is highly subjective and thus, leads to unreliable results; however, observations are important to help triangulate findings in qualitative methods. Conducting observation provides a first-hand account of what is happening in the setting. Elements involved in participant observations include: physical setting, participants, activities and interactions, conversation, and perhaps most importantly, the researcher’s own behavior (Geertz, 1973).

The challenge in ethnography is keeping a balance between participating and observing. A fieldworker will normally fall in one of four possible categories in the spectrum of being a full participant to a complete observer. The four categories are: complete participant, participant as observer, observer as participant and complete observer (Gold, 1958). Rarely do researchers fall into the categories of complete participant or complete observer. As a researcher falling in the
spectrum of participant as observer or observer as participant, the researcher runs the risk of bringing about behavioral changes in both the observed and themselves. It is the responsibility of the researcher to identify those effects and “manage the tension between engagement and detachment” (Patton, 2002).

As the primary instrument for data collection and analysis, subjectivity and interaction are assumed. In other words, instead of attempting to prevent research bias, the researcher has identified and will monitor how personal subjectivity shapes the interpretation of the data. The ethnographic results requires more than description of the data, it requires the researcher to convey meanings found from the data with interpretation (Wolcott, 2005). Through inductive thinking, the researcher interprets the data from field notes to conceptual theories with their understanding of the cultural meaning behind the researched phenomenon.

In this paper, the qualitative methodology for data collection and data analysis was appropriate to analyze Hostelling International Santa Monica’s efforts to foster intercultural competence among host communities. The following qualities comprise this qualitative study: natural setting, human instrument, participant observation, inductive data analysis, and grounded theory (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).
CHAPTER 3
Methodology

Data Collection

Data was gathered in the form of both semi-structured interviews and field notes from participant observation. Interviews took place for three weeks. There was a cross-section of interview subjects from HI Santa Monica: five guests, five volunteers, five staff, and three managers.

The interviews were semi-structured, with questions designed with a broad direction so the responses could trigger further discussion from the interviewees. Each interview had a set of ten questions, with four consistent questions across all of the interview groups. The others had minor variations relative to the specifics of their relationship and involvement with HI Santa Monica. The major interview consistent questions were as follows:

1. Do you feel the hostel experience facilitates communication with other guests or staff?
2. What are some strengths and weaknesses of HI Santa Monica in fostering intercultural communication skills?
3. How do you think HI Santa Monica currently benefits the host community?
4. Do you think HI Santa Monica adheres to their mission, “to help all, especially the young, gain a greater understanding of the world and its people through hostelling”? Why or why not? Any suggestions to improve reaching this mission?

In total, the researcher conducted eighteen qualitative interviews, including five informal in-person interviews (ranging between 30 and 60 minutes in length) and thirteen interviews received in an electronic format. For the in-person interviews, handwritten and typed notes were used for analysis. For the electronic interviews, the response time ranged between two to three weeks. Time was not a limiting factor in their responses, in order to allow respondents to carefully answer in detail. Throughout this research, the names of the interviewees are withheld in order to respect the anonymity and privacy of interview subjects.
In addition to interviews, the researcher also spent one week at the hostel collecting field notes as both a non-participant observer and participant observer. Over the course of the week, the researcher had a structured time frame on a daily basis in which to observe in a particular space in the hostel. Observation times and spaces were selected to analyze the times with heavy foot traffic.

As a participant observer, the researcher interacted with visitors, observed behaviors and participated in events and activities lead by the hostel. The methods used for recording data consisted of handwritten notes and virtual data, including photos. The qualitative interviews and field notes were guided by a literature review of tourism and its relation to intercultural communication. The current activities, programs, framework and guidelines relating to Hostelling International Santa Monica were also consulted.

Data Analysis

The analysis process began with ordering the data from the observation field notes chronologically by date and time. The interview data was also categorized by interviewee’s relation to the hostel. These categories include volunteers, staff, managers and guests. This allowed for inductive and comparative analysis of the research processes as well as examination of the raw data. Followed by a systematic open coding process in which the researcher performed a line-by-line analysis of interview transcripts and ethnographic field notes to represent key ideas from each statement.

Secondly, the researcher employed axial coding through a process that involved seeking, selecting and categorizing recurring themes in the codes (Corbin & Strauss, 2007). The researcher’s interpretation and reflection of codes is the key to axial coding. Each piece of raw data was analyzed multiple times to identify units of data that gave a broad understanding of the context in which it occurred. The process required comparing one segment to another, seeking recurring regularities in the data.

The categories were identified through the researcher’s analysis of the data and concepts
from the literature review. It began as an inductive data analysis process, and turned into a primarily deductive process over time. After categories were identified, the researcher further analyzed of the relationship between categories and how they influence one another to tell a larger story. This last part is known as selective coding. Through the process of drawing inferences and analyzing the relationship between each category, the following process of fostering intercultural competence was fully conceptualized.
CHAPTER 4

Findings and Discussion

The major findings of the interviews have been organized and presented in Fig 2. Three types of findings are reported: (1) the exact quotes from the interviews, (2) key factors emerging from the interviews and field observation, and (3) program details received from the hostel.

The model begins with two categories of participants: guests and host community. Host community involves all local stakeholders: staff, managers, volunteers, local student groups and local community members. Following the process of fostering intercultural competence (Fig.2), the guests and the host community participate in the hostel experience, with the hostel functioning as what Arasaratnam (2009) calls intercultural space. This space is designed to encourage and guide intercultural interaction between visitors.

The next step towards the goal of improved intercultural competence is conducting facilitated programs within these intercultural spaces. These programs vary from weekly events to organized programs targeting local community groups. Through these facilitated events, three factors of impact are conceptualized: engagement, self-reflection and behavioral transformation. All of this leads to an improved holistic sense of intercultural competence.

Further explanations of each step are described below.
Figure 2. Process of fostering Intercultural Competence

1. Intercultural Space
   (Hostel)

2. Purposeful Facilitation
   (Hostel programs)

3. a) Engagement
   b) Self-Reflection
   c) Behavioral transformation

4. Improved Intercultural Competence
Process of Fostering Intercultural Competence

1. Intercultural Space

“HIUSA’s mission is to provide low-cost accommodations that are built in an intentional way to be communal, to bring people together, to initiate conversations and the sharing of meals and bedtime stories”. – Interviewee 11

“It is all the following: an economical place to stay, a resource regarding the opportunities here and source of diversity and trans-culturalism within SM” – Interviewee 13

“HI also serves as an “embassy” for local residents and can help educate and facilitate their travel to other HI hostels.” – Interviewee 14

“The hostel offers daily activities for guests and the Rapp Salon hosts events and programs that both Hostellers and community members can attend, thereby providing a space for crossover and local-visitor conversations to take place.” – Interviewee 17

Intercultural interaction today is no longer simply interaction between individuals from two different countries, but any communication between individuals with cultural differences. Understanding this phenomenon, Arasaratnam (2011) discusses intercultural communication as communication that unfolds in intercultural spaces. Intercultural space is defined as: “a symbolic representation of an instance when communication between individuals is affected by cultural differences in a way that would not have been noteworthy in the absence of these differences” (Arasaratnam, 2011, p. viii).

To understand this definition, we must first clarify what Arasaratnam means by cultural differences. Cultural differences can be explained as differences in thought communities (Arasaratnam, 2011). Thought communities are characterized by the existence of shared meaning, values and beliefs within a group of people or culture. Within this definition, we characterize the hostel space as an intercultural space, occupied by individuals from different thought communities (Arasaratnam, 2011).

The hostel is a space, an arena, and an embassy for hostel guests and fellow host community members to interact with one another. The physical layout of the hostel is designed to encourage interaction, and serve as a facilitator of cross-cultural communication. The bunk bed
style dormitory rooms allow guests to engage one another in close proximity. For example, an individual who was getting ready for bed one night found himself without toothpaste to brush his teeth. Instead of going out to buy a brand new toothpaste, he approached other guests in the room to ask if he could use some of theirs. This simple interaction prompted further conversations later on in the night.

During meal times, it is common to find guests cooking in the kitchen and using the opportunity to converse with other travelers. When an individual enters the realm of the kitchen space, they quickly learn how to navigate the space. In HI Santa Monica, the stoves are situated in the middle of two counter tops, in which the drawers beneath hold various kitchenware. In practice, when one guest is using the stove, another is walking back and forth to find the kitchenware they need. This short moment of learning to navigate the kitchen enables these two guests to start a conversation. The communality of the kitchen, including the physical kitchenware items, encourage interaction during the cooking process (Jack & Phipps, 2005)

The Rapp Saloon serves as a community space that is commonly used by both guests and host communities. This intercultural space is a landmark in Santa Monica, and widely known for hosting weekly comedy nights that brings in local comedians to perform for fellow community members and guests alike. Other activities that occur in the Rapp Saloon include film screenings, music festivals, and travel workshops.

2. Purposeful Facilitation

“I think common spaces are a great place for encouraging cross-cultural communication. However, just having spaces aren’t enough for this… I think once these spaces are built into the fabric of the hostel, activities need to occur here to encourage conversations.” – Interviewee 18

“Bringing people in for the Big Blue Bus story series or the hostel concert series allowed people of the community to interact with and share their talents with guests from all over.” – Interviewee 11
“Having volunteers run the events allow the guests to talk to people from the community who have multiple experiences which allows them to see and hear different parts of the world.” – **Interviewee 2**

While the intercultural space is embedded into the facility, literature suggests that the environment that may foster intercultural competence does not simply occur; it must be intentionally addressed and developed (Kohls, 1996; Storti, 1997). There are various types of facilitated events at HI Santa Monica, from weekly events that are run by volunteers such as beach tours or comedy nights to educational programs such as Cultural Kitchen. These programs will be further described in this paper.

On a weekly basis, volunteers lead activities such as the Venice Beach walking tour, Downtown LA walking tour, Trivia night and the most well-attended are the Wednesday night pub-crawls. These events serve to not only connect hostel guests with one another, but also provide them complimentary tours of the various parts of Los Angeles. Other weekly events include Friday comedy nights, in which local standup comedians perform in the Rapp Saloon. This event is open to the public and offers a space for guests and locals to mingle. For many comedians, it is also a learning experience in absorbing the different intercultural communication styles from the audience and learning to navigate the many styles of humor.

Attending these events may be uncomfortable for many people, this study finds a shift in attitude occurs when an attendee steps out of their comfort zone. This idea is also prominent in the design of study abroad programs. Tenhaken (2014) focuses on Kurt Lewin’s theory of change management in designing study abroad programs to develop global competencies for the 21st century organization. This theory states that the “unfreezing of current comfortable behaviors” is the first step to bring about change in behavior. The change does not occur simply by and studying another culture in the classroom. “The disorientation that enables the “unfreezing” of one’s current approach to everyday situations happens when one is immersed in the experience of living and working in another culture that is unfamiliar and uncomfortable” (TenHaken, 2014).
Events such as free comedy nights are an opportunity for local community members to immerse themselves in an unfamiliar culture without studying abroad or traveling.

HI Santa Monica also facilitates education and learning programs that directly target the host community; specifically, these support local student groups. These education programs provide an even greater opportunity to foster intercultural competence, in both breadth and depth. There are five types of HI USA education programs: topical discussions/workshops, travel scholarships, social/cultural education, environmental education and travel education.

The travel scholarship gives those who lack the financial means to travel the world, which for such travelers constitutes the opportunity of a lifetime. Recipients of the scholarships attend pre-departure trainings and workshops with HI USA staff to attain competencies in budgeting, itinerary planning, intercultural learning and basic trip planning. They also stay at HI USA hostels and participate in various hostel events during their trip. This scholarship requires participants to fulfill educational or service orientated goals during their travels.

Cultural Kitchen is a staff facilitated program for local students, to engage in experiential learning by staying overnight at HI Santa Monica hostel. In addition, participants are required to research a particular country’s cultural traditions and norms, adding to the knowledge component of Deardorff (2011)’s intercultural competence framework. The research serves as the focal point for comparison with their own cultural identity, while they engage in self-reflection throughout the stay. To conclude the program, participants are required to give a presentation to the local community and hostel guests, as well as prepare a traditional meal of the culture. By facilitating this intercultural space in which hostellers and cultural kitchen’s participants interact with one another, participants are immersed in an international environment without leaving their city.

Another program targeting local student groups, is the Community Expressions program. Rather than turn the intercultural lens outward as is the goal for Cultural Kitchen, Community Expressions asks participants to reflect on their own identities and how they can make a difference in their community. This program asks participants to research and reflect on the
meaning of cultural identity through various activities and assignments. These activities include identifying important cultural aspects of their community, dissecting stereotypes by facilitating difficult discussions and getting to know their community by identifying strengths and weaknesses. Each student is to also record their own reflections in a journal at the end of every lesson.

At the end of the program, the participant is required to create an original piece of art expression that represents their community and their thoughts on cultural identity. Both the Cultural Kitchen and Community Expressions programs provide an opportunity for local students and community groups to explore cultural identity in different forms. The intentional, cohesive and coordinated process approach of the programs foster motivation to learn about other cultures (Witte & Harden, The Notion of Intercultural Understanding in the Context of German as a Foreign Language, 2000).

Lastly, Exchange Neighborhoods is a program unique to its own. This program pairs classrooms from two different high schools to host one another’s students and prompt exploration about the others’ culture. This is a month long program in which students participate in classroom-based lessons where they learn and research cultural themes and how those may be reflected in their own communities. From the new knowledge they acquire, they are able to develop presentations about their own culture, neighborhoods and communities to present to the other school. The presentations are held when the students visit one another’s school and neighborhood, followed by returning to the hostel where they cook together and hang out for the evening.

HI Santa Monica also provides myriad travel workshops for community members to attend. These workshops range from more generalized topics such as Women Solo Travel 101, Intro to Travel 101 to more specific travel workshops such as Traveling South East Asia and Euro by Rail. These opportunities give participants an opportunity to foster curiosity and discovery through enhancing their knowledge and skills. HI USA’s intentional facilitation and coordination
of their hostel’s daily activities, and unique educational programming cultivate engagement within the host community. These programs have created long-lasting impact among those involved whether as a volunteer, staff, or guest performer for events. These impacts are further described below.

3A. Engagement

“…my volunteer activities provide an opportunity to continue to directly interact with those from different backgrounds and cultures, continuing growth of my intercultural understanding.” – **Interviewee 14**

“I didn’t really have expectations when I started working here at HI SM, to be honest I did not know what a hostel was until I started working. When I first working here at HI-SM, to be honest I did not know what a hostel was until I started working… I didn’t realize how different every culture is and working here longer just makes me want to make more friends from all around the world.” – **Interviewee 9**

“My favorite part about working in Santa Monica is all the people I meet. I also love that it gives me more confidence when conversing with people because before I wouldn’t really know much about other places, people’s beliefs other than what I would see on television or read on the Internet. Being able to communicate and have conversations with people who experience things first hand is just as awesome and gives a better insight to how the people are there.” – **Interviewee 10**

One of the impacts of purposeful facilitation within intercultural space is creating a sense of engagement, fostering more curiosity and generating discovery for both guests and host participants. An individual’s attitude, including respectfulness, openness, curiosity and discovery, is the basis of Deardorff (2011)’s intercultural competence model. The interaction that occurs is a part of experiential learning, an “incorporation of active, participatory learning opportunities in the course” (Hawtry, 2007, p. 143).

HI Santa Monica staff and volunteers have expressed their change in openness to other cultures after being involved with the hostel in various capacities. Many of them had few expectations and were unfamiliar with the environment of a hostel, but now they recognize the importance of learning about other cultures.
During one of the comedy nights at HI Santa Monica, one of the comedians, engaged a guest in the audience who was a member of the Hmong culture. He then acknowledged, “This is a learning experience, it’s like I’m in a history lesson learning from everyone. It’s cool to see what’s relatable to every culture”. This is the in-between-space for experiential learning Sobre-Denton & Bardham (2013) describes in which students and travelers are in the same city but engage in dialogues with the culturally different other.

Another comedian who specializes in blending together comedy and music during her acts spoke to the importance of free comedy events for both the guests and the local performers. Performing at HI Santa Monica where audience members come from all over the world, she utilizes the space to gauge whether her act will resonate with an international and culturally diverse audience before traveling to another country to perform. In addition, she acknowledged the need for a space in which host communities and travelers can connect because “to understand one another, especially in different cultures, goes beyond studying and education. Studying something doesn’t make sense until you see it”.

With the educational programs, Cultural Kitchen participants have been found to express a greater cultural curiosity and desire to travel after engaging in this program (Sobre-Denton & Bardhan, 2013). Spending a few days imagining a world and a culture outside of their comfort zone evokes a sense of discovery and curiosity to explore in the future. Sobre-Denton & Bardham (2013) also found that there was more agency for students to participate in future travel and engage their cultural curiosity after meeting travelers and communicating with them through facilitated activities.
3B. Self-Reflection

“...I am able to internalize intercultural experiences more profoundly than the average person who goes on vacation because I seek these experiences –the uncomfortable, the new, the awkward, the unknown, the speaking with gestures.” – Interviewee 13

“It has made me more aware of other cultures on a human level...having quick conversations really puts news in a different perspective which I think gives me a depth in understanding other cultures that I didn’t have before.” – Interviewee 7

“New encounters, eye contact, the ways people dress and celebrate together are also examples of intercultural communication. Further self-reflection on my part allows these travel experiences to live in my memory…” – Interviewee 1

Through participating and engaging in facilitated programs in intercultural spaces, interviewees found themselves reflecting on their personal transformation towards intercultural competence. Self-reflection is an integral part of the intercultural competence development process (Deardorff, 2011). They found themselves with a different perspective than before volunteering or working for HI Santa Monica. This realization may only occur through being exposed to the intercultural space, and engaging in activities with culturally different participants.

An ongoing awareness and reflectivity about the cognitive, affective and psychological changes is critical in an individual’s development of intercultural competence (Witte & Harden, Intercultural Studies and Foreign Language Learning, 2011). HI USA’s programs, which include Cultural Kitchen, Community Expressions and Exchange Neighborhoods, are more facilitated and intentional in spurring awareness and reflectivity about one’s cultural identity. They offer greater depth in the quality of creating more intercultural awareness. These programs seek to ask participants to question ‘who they are’ in their own cultures and communities as well as question their assumptions about other cultures.

The process of developing intercultural competence involves not only the facilitation of meaningful interactions and experiences, but also critical reflection. Through self-reflection, participants’ acquired knowledge and skills lead to an internal outcome consisting of flexibility,
3C. Behavioral transformation

“Skills wise I have broader background and experience now in dealing with a range of people. It has also I think increased my awareness to those who were previously outside my experience range.” – Interviewee 6

“Working here has opened me up realizing that not everyone acts the same and don’t have the same beliefs. I have noticed some people aren’t as sarcastic as others and certain cultures do not enjoy it. So this place also helps me to learn to not say certain things and to be considerate of people.” – Interviewee 7

“If there is a language barrier, you must talk differently sometimes so things are not lost in translation to the best of your abilities but as long as you smile and listen with an open ear, most of the time you will come out on top.” – Interviewee 10

Internal shifts in self-awareness and cultural openness can be seen through the interviewee responses included throughout this paper, especially in the engagement and self-reflection section. However, engaging in hostel facilitated events and programs not only leads to an internal shift in attitude but also in external behaviors. Desired external outcomes are described as effective and appropriate communication and behavior in an intercultural situation (Deardorff, 2011).

This project has found those host communities’ members who are involved with Hostelling International Santa Monica, whether they are volunteers; staff members or managers have experienced more effectiveness in their intercultural interactions. For example, some have reflected on the differences in verbal communication by understanding that sarcasm may not be acceptable or comprehended in all cultures while others have learned how to communicate more effectively with those who speak a different language.

Most of the time, the behavioral transformations that occur are realized through reflecting on their experiences. The next time these interviewees are involved in an intercultural interaction,
they are able to bring in what they’ve learned from their experiences at the hostel and approach
the interaction with improved intercultural competence.

Despite the positive impact HI Santa Monica has on travelers, it certainly is not without
weaknesses. Though staff and volunteers may have a genuine curiosity to learn about other
cultures, some expressed a need for more guidance and structured tools to implement these
facilitated programs effectively. These tools are necessary for everyone that may have the
opportunity to facilitate an event, such as volunteers, staff or managers.
CHAPTER 5

Conclusion

Intercultural competence is an integral part of today’s global community and work environment. From global skills to intercultural skills, many scholars tend to agree that intercultural competence consists of being able to appropriately and effectively communicate in intercultural situations. The development of intercultural skills is crucial to today’s work environment and global community. A 2011 Quacquarelli Symonds Global Employer Survey of over 10,000 recruiters worldwide showed that employers seek and give preference to college graduates who had studied abroad, which bolsters the credibility of intercultural experiences (Molony, Sowter, & Potts, 2011).

In reflecting upon the analysis of Hostelling International Santa Monica in fostering intercultural competence among host communities, several key points were raised. Firstly, the hostel space, in addition to spaces that HI USA conducts its programs, is what Arasaratnam (2011) calls as intercultural space. These are spaces occupied by individuals with diverse thinking, and occupied by instances of intercultural interaction where cultural differences between participants are present.

Secondly, purposive facilitation within intercultural spaces guides both guests and host participants to a stage of engagement, self-reflection and an intercultural impact. It’s important to note that developing intercultural competence is a life-long process. HI Santa Monica and Hostelling International USA serve to complement and enhance an individual’s intercultural competence journey.

This analysis shows the power of tourism accommodations to impact and encourage intercultural exchange through providing a space for experiential learning. Whether one participates as a guest, a volunteer, a staff, or a local student in a program, hostelling provides an avenue for them to learn by doing. As Hawtry (2007) suggests, the central principle of intercultural learning is explorative and experiential. These experiences are powerful in
encouraging participants to think about culture and the various constructs that make up our identities. Learning that takes place outside of experiential learning may have little to no impact on an individual’s understanding until they are given the chance to engage in intercultural environments. This allows them to understand the relevance of their knowledge in relation to their personal models of the world (Witte & Harden, Intercultural Studies and Foreign Language Learning, 2011)

HI Santa Monica encourages host community members to think bigger, to denote the notion of travel exclusivity by connecting them to the travelers and inspiring them to envision new places and cultures unknown to them. HI USA aims to bridge the gap between community members and travelers to “inspire a genuine understanding of people, places, and cultures to build to more tolerant world”. They seek to achieve their goals by fostering intercultural competence for all (Hostelling International USA, 2014). As our world continues to grow more global, intercultural competence will continue to be of utmost importance in helping us learn to live together.

Limitations/Future Studies

It is important to note the limitations involved with this project. Due to the nature of this project as a case study, the findings of this project cannot be generalized to other hostels or tourist accommodation properties. The activities and programs mentioned are unique to Hostelling International USA. As mentioned in the methodology, language also proved to be a limitation for the interviews due to the fact that the researcher could only interview English speakers, thus not able to reach out to the Spanish speaking staff at HI Santa Monica.

The data collection methods and sample size can be perceived to be a limitation in generating thorough conclusion. Further triangulation in this qualitative study would benefit and add to the validity of the findings. These suggestions include, replicating the above project with multiple hostels within the region or nationally across the United States, involving other community stakeholders such as community organizations, city council members and local
students in the interview process or partnering with another researcher for cross-comparison in observational research. In addition, further projects can focus on specific HI USA projects in researching their effectiveness in fostering intercultural competence.
References


APPENDIX A

Photos

Image 1. Rapp Saloon Wall

Image 2. HI Santa Monica Lobby
APPENDIX B
IRB Approval

CAL POLY POMONA
Memorandum
California State Polytechnic University, Pomona
Institutional Review Board – Office of Research Compliance
Federalwide Assurance 00001759 – IRB principles: respect for persons, beneficence, and justice

Date: Mar 15, 2016
PI Name: Joanne Lam, Department/College: CCHM
Co-PI(s): Neha Singh

IRB protocol number: IRB-16-75
Protocol Title: The impact of Hostelling on fostering Intercultural Communication among Host Communities
Submission Type: Initial; Review Board Type: review by CPP IRB members
Review Type: Expedited
Decision: Approved

Dear Investigator(s),

The protocol as described above has been reviewed by the Cal Poly Pomona Institutional Review Board (IRB) by the expedited review method. It was found to be in compliance with applicable federal and state regulations and Cal Poly Pomona policies regarding the protection of human subjects used in research. Thus, the Cal Poly Pomona IRB grants you approval to conduct the research. On its behalf, I thank you for your adherence to established policies meant to ensure the safety and privacy of your study participants. You may wish to keep a copy of this memo with you while conducting your research project.

You may initiate the project as of Mar 15, 2016, and it must be completed by Mar 15, 2017. Federal regulations limit the IRB approval of studies for up to one year. If you find the need to renew your protocol, please remember to submit a request to the IRB at least six (6) weeks before this end date to ensure continuous human subjects’ protection and IRB approval. The Cayuse system will remind you, however the responsibility lies with the study investigators.

It would be appreciated that you advise the IRB upon the completion of your project involving the interaction with human subjects. Please use the “Closure or termination of the protocol” form in the Cayuse system.

Approval is conditional upon your willingness to carry out your responsibilities as the principal investigator under University policy. Your research project must be conducted according to the methods described in the final approved protocol. Should there be any changes to your research plan as described, please advise the IRB, because you may be required to submit an amendment. Additionally, should you as the investigator or any of your subjects experience any “problems which involve an undescribed element of risk” (adverse events in regulatory terms), please immediately inform the IRB of the circumstances. There are forms for both in the Cayuse system.

These are additional notes from the Board:
The committee wishes you success in your future research endeavors. If you need further assistance, you are encouraged to contact the IRB.

Sincerely,

Jeffrey S. Mil PhD
Chair, Institutional Review Board
Professor, Psychology
College of Letters, Arts, and Social Sciences

This message has been automatically generated by the Cayuse system installed at Cal Poly Pomona by Evisions. Please contact the IRB office (irb@cpp.edu or 909.869.4215 or 3713) if you have questions or you believe you have received this message in error. Thanks for your compliance with the regulations while conducting human subjects research.
APPENDIX C
Interview Questions

Guests (5):

Q1: What bought you to stay at HI Santa Monica? Explain.

Q2: What was your expectation of this hostel experience and how has it differ? Explain.

Q3: What is your past travel experience or training with intercultural communication?

Q4: Do you feel the hostel experience (property layout, events, etc.) facilitates communication with other guests or staff? Explain.

Q5: What is the favorite part of your hostel experience?

Q6: What are some challenges you have endured during your stay? Explain.

Q7: Have you attended hostel-led events? How have they impacted you?

Q8: Do you feel your stay has impacted your intercultural communication skills? How? Explain.

Q9: What are some things you wish HI Santa Monica could change or improve to provide a better cross-cultural communication experience with other guests, staff, or locals?

Q10: Do you think HI Santa Monica adheres to their mission, “to help all, especially the young, gain a greater understanding of the world and its people through hostelling”? Why or Why not? Any suggestions to improve reaching this mission?

Volunteers (5):

Q1: How did you come to volunteer for HI Santa Monica? Explain.

Q2: What is your role as a volunteer? Explain.

Q3: What was your expectation prior to volunteering and how has that differ?

Q4: What past experiences or training do you have in regards to intercultural communication?

Q5: How has your volunteer experience impacted you and your intercultural communication skills?
Q6: During your volunteer experience, what are some incidences of successful intercultural communication or lack thereof intercultural communication between guests, staff and/or the host community?

Q7: In your opinion, what are some strengths and weaknesses of HI Santa Monica in fostering intercultural communication skills?

Q8: As a volunteer, how do you think HI Santa Monica can benefit the host community? Explain.

Q9: How important do you think it is to have HI Santa Monica integrate with the host community? Explain.

Q10: Do you think HI Santa Monica adheres to their mission, “to help all, especially the young, gain a greater understanding of the world and its people through hostelling”? Why or Why not? Any suggestions to improve reaching this mission?

Staff (5):

Q1: When and how did you begin working for HI Santa Monica? How long have you been working for HI Santa Monica?

Q2: What was your expectation prior to working for HI Santa Monica and how has that differ?

Q3: What is your past experience or training on intercultural communication skills?

Q4: How do you feel the hostel experience (property layout and events) either encourages or discourages cross-cultural communication among staff, guests and the host community?

Q5: What is your favorite part about working for HI Santa Monica?

Q6: What are some challenges of working for HI Santa Monica?

Q7: How do you feel your work experience has impacted your own intercultural communication skills?

Q8: How do you think HI Santa Monica currently benefits the host community? Explain.

Q9: In your opinion, what are some opportunities the hostel can undertake to better integrate with the host community?
Q10: Do you think HI Santa Monica adheres to their mission, “to help all, especially the young, gain a greater understanding of the world and its people through hostelling”? Why or Why not?

Any suggestions to improve reaching this mission?

Managers (3):

Q1: When and how did you begin working for HI Santa Monica? How long have you been working for HI Santa Monica?

Q2: What was your expectation prior to working for HI Santa Monica and how has that differ?

Q3: From a manager’s viewpoint, what are the strengths and weaknesses of HI Santa Monica in fostering intercultural competence?

Q4: What are some changes HI Santa Monica has undergone through the time you have worked here that you feel has either encouraged or discouraged intercultural communication between guests, volunteers and staff?

Q5: What is the relationship between the hostel and the LA community?

Q6: What do you feel is the importance of the hostel connecting with the host community?

Q7: How do you feel the current HI Santa Monica programs impact cross-cultural understanding for guests and the host community?

Q7: In your opinion, what areas does HI Santa Monica need to work on?

Q8: What are the current obstacles and challenges that HI Santa Monica is facing?

Q9: How do you feel HI Santa Monica may or may not benefit from various forms of integration with the host community?

Q10: Do you think HI Santa Monica adheres to their mission, “to help all, especially the young, gain a greater understanding of the world and its people through hostelling”? Why or Why not?

Any suggestions to improve reaching this mission?