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International Development and I-O Psychology in Sub-Saharan Africa: Perspectives from Local and Expatriate Standpoints

Inusah Abdul-Nasiru and Alexander E. Gloss

Summary

This chapter describes the work of the two authors who served separately to help improve the quality of education in different sub-Saharan African countries: Ghana and South Africa. While both authors were not I-O psychologists at the time, their experiences involved applying industrial and organizational (I-O) psychology principles and helped shaped their current perspectives, and careers, as I-O psychologists. While both authors were associated with development initiatives tied to the United States, their perspectives represent different sides of traditional development projects as one brought the perspective of someone from the United States to South Africa while the other brought a local Ghanaian perspective and expertise to his project in Ghana. The authors' projects involved a range of topics from I-O psychology including motivation and organizational development, but they highlight select challenges and priorities that are frequently prominent in development work, namely, communication difficulties, the importance of strengthening relationships between stakeholders, and physical security. They discuss and explore the ramifications of these challenges and priorities, including how they reflect on the importance of issues of identity, power, and justice in international development work.

Introduction

Many forms of work contain at least the implicit goal of improving or "developing" others. From teachers to business consultants,

improving the welfare of other people is frequently an important goal of many occupations. People in these occupations deal with a host of psychological issues that pertain to the dynamics of one person helping another to improve, including learning, training, self-efficacy, and empowerment. The complexity of forms of work devoted to developing others increases only when the social, political, historical, economic, linguistic, or cultural identity of one person involved in the process is different from others. This complexity rises further as entire organizations, communities, and nations become involved either as those providing development assistance or as targets of that assistance. Finally, these forms of work take on especially unique, and potentially perilous, dynamics when particularly marginalized and vulnerable populations are targeted as the recipients of assistance.

International development work typically combines all of the sources of complexity mentioned above. This chapter contains two case studies of the authors' divergent, yet related, experiences in conducting work within the international development system. We highlight our experiences because they both led and have influenced our careers and interests in I-O psychology. More importantly, we believe these experiences include examples of important challenges and priorities that are often salient in international development work. In particular, we highlight the frequent challenges inherent in communication across boundaries of sociocultural identity and in settings with limited transportation and communication infrastructure. Moreover, we also highlight the importance of building strong and respectful relationships with a diverse range of stakeholders in development projects. Furthermore, we mention and discuss the difficulties that both authors had in accessing relevant research from I-O psychology germane to their settings and forms of work. Finally, through comparisons of the experiences of both authors, we highlight the important distinction between expatriates and host-country nationals and the associated role of identity, justice, and power in international development work. The authors hope that the topics considered in this chapter will give the reader a more thorough understanding of the synthesis of I-O psychology's topics and methods with international development work in lower-income settings which house the vast majority of the world's population.

Before discussing the work that both authors undertook, it is useful to give some additional background both on international development and on how the authors came to be involved in this work.

International development

Broadly speaking, the international development system is concerned with the deliberate widespread enhancement of human welfare. The enhancement of human welfare, or human “development,” is often conceptualized along three basic and seemingly universally valued dimensions: health, education, and income (United Nations Development Programme, 2010). That is, development can be measured in part by a person’s or people’s life expectancy, years of education, and financial income. Efforts to enhance or accelerate development can be characterized based upon whether they are more short term and/or crisis related, or whether they are more long term and better integrated into everyday activities. The former efforts are commonly referred to as humanitarian aid while the latter efforts are known as development work. For example, a response to a natural disaster by a non-governmental organization like the Red Cross or Red Crescent would be characterized as a form of humanitarian aid while a long-term project by an intergovernmental organization like the United Nations to supply clean water to lower-income nations would be considered development work. The work of both authors of this chapter is perhaps best considered to be a form of international development work.

Humanitarian aid and development work are carried out by a broad variety of actors operating both within individual countries and internationally. Distinctions between the organizations involved can be made based upon whether they are public (e.g., country governments), for-profit private businesses (e.g., Land Rover), non-profit and non-governmental (e.g., Save the Children), or part of partnerships or agreements between country governments (e.g., the United Nations). Another distinction can be made between aid and development efforts that are carried out by fully salaried professionals, by volunteers with varying degrees of qualifications or training, or by individuals mandated to serve for a specified period of time.

As an estimate of the size of the professional humanitarian aid and development system, the Active Learning Network for Accountability and Performance in Humanitarian Action (2011) estimates that the flow of finances to humanitarian emergencies totaled \$16 billion in 2010 and involved over 274,000 field staff. These figures notably do not include non-emergency outflows of funding and support nor do they reflect the number of people involved in supporting those field staff. Getting a picture of the number of people involved in volunteering efforts related to international development and humanitarian aid proves more difficult,

but two statistics reflect the tremendous number of people and resources involved. In 2011, 17% of the US population or approximately 52 million people, were engaged in travel related to volunteering for civic and religious activities on a given weekend or holiday (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2012). While many of the people might not be traditionally considered engaged in a form of humanitarian aid or development work, the act of assisting in the improvement of the welfare of others is obviously quite common and widespread. While many people volunteer to provide humanitarian or development assistance, many others are mandated by various governmental authorities to serve their communities or the communities of others. For example, in Ghana, university graduates are required to complete a one-year term of community service that doubles as a chance to gain work experience related to their education. During the 2010–2011 time period, approximately 53,420 individuals were enrolled in this program (Ghana National Service Scheme, 2013). Non-military mandatory service schemes also exist in other countries from Nigeria's National Youth Service Scheme to Israel's Sherut Leumi program.

Civic service

Like many who have participated in the international development system, both authors of this chapter found themselves in international development work through civic service programs organized by the governments of their home countries. Inusah joined Ghana's National Service Scheme while Alexander joined the US Peace Corps. In Ghana, students who graduate from tertiary institutions are required under law to complete one year of civic service. With an undergraduate degree in psychology and interest in community development, Inusah was selected to work as a district facilitator on the Community School Alliance (CSA) project led by the Education Development Centre (EDC) – an international non-profit specializing in education, health, and economic development. The CSA project in Ghana is devoted to improving the effectiveness of primary education by building community participation with those schools. The project is funded from a prominent development donor organization – the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) – which is the United States' official entity for foreign development assistance.

In contrast with the system in Ghana, the United States does not make civil service a mandatory requirement for its youth or tertiary graduates. Instead, a wide range of options are available for voluntary service

within the country or around the world through both private and public civil-service organizations. One major public entity that provides opportunities for civic service abroad is the US Peace Corps. Founded in 1961, the Peace Corps is an independent agency in the US government that is charged with the threefold mission of providing technical assistance to foreign countries, helping people outside of the United States to understand US culture, and helping US citizens to understand the cultures of other countries (www.peacecorp.gov). After completing his undergraduate education in international relations, Alexander chose to undertake the US Peace Corps' standard 27-month assignment and was appointed to work in the School and Community Resource Program in the Republic of South Africa. Similar to the CSA project, this program has as its aim the enhancement of education via the direct support of schools with technical assistance and the building of stronger community participation with schools.

Our experiences

To give an in-depth understanding of the work of both authors, we provide narrative accounts of our work in Ghana and South Africa. Following these narratives, we reflect on their potential broader implications for international development work and organizations in developing settings.

Community School Alliance Project, Kadjebi District, Volta Region, Ghana: Inusah Abdul-Nasiru

Daily life and objectives

I worked as a Cohort-IV District Facilitator with the CSA project. CSA was responsible for community mobilization toward education development and was a key component of USAID's Quality Improvement in Primary Schools (QUIPS) project. At CSA, I worked with selected primary schools in five communities in the Kadjebi District, located in the Volta Region of Ghana. To begin my work, I had moved from Accra, the capital of the country, some 200 kilometers away. However, I was familiar with the rural and remote environment of the area because I had grown up in Chinderi, a small town in another district in the same region of the country. While in the Kadjebi District, I lived in one community and would then spend a night or two in other communities in order to successfully complete an initiative. This was necessary because transportation between the various communities was a major challenge.

The communities were more than ten kilometers apart, and the road network was very poor and vehicles were often either unable or unavailable to provide transport between my schools. There were instances when projects and trips to communities had to be cancelled due to transportation issues. On some occasions, I would have to walk several kilometers through the bush using farm paths to be able to make it to some of the partnership school communities. In addition, using phones was frequently difficult; in fact, at the time, there was only one public telephone booth, serving the towns and communities in the whole district, and this comes with its challenges – having to queue for several hours to be able to place a call and then to wait for feedback. Other modes of communication like videoconferencing were impossible.

As a project, our general objective was to build the capacity of community members to participate in, and take ownership of, the educational system. In general, I served as the link between the CSA and several stakeholders, including school administrators, community chiefs/elders, parents, teachers, pupils, and general community members in the communities surrounding our partnership schools. Our ultimate aim was an improvement in the number of contact hours between teachers and students and an improvement in the quality of the learning and teaching environment at the school. Put another way, we were seeking to bring about change in the fundamentals of schooling: ensuring that children came to school on a daily basis, stayed in school from year to year, and enjoyed an environment at school where they could learn. These are particularly important goals in Ghana because the education system in the country is struggling to tackle large social issues – consider, for instance, that the literacy rate for men is 78.3%, and 65.3% for women (Central Intelligence Agency, 2013). On a national and big-picture level, my activities were designed to meet two overlapping purposes: helping to make the projects of the CSA sustainable, and helping realize aspects of the Ghanaian government's goals of providing and requiring free and compulsory universal basic education.

On a daily basis, I concentrated my efforts on supporting the specific objectives in each community's School Performance Improvement Plans (SPIPs) that were drafted, reviewed, and approved jointly by community members and the CSA. In order to support community members in achieving the goals set in the various SPIPs, I participated in everything from planning community meetings (known as *durbar*), holding training sessions, helping to run school drama performances, and inducing communal labor activities toward school developmental projects. In addition, I occasionally organized training sessions in a number of

topics, including, building trust in the school system, improving relationship between teachers and community members, monitoring school pupils' performance, and improving collaboration between community members and district authorities. As a specific example of a challenge that I faced, at least one of the schools I worked at had identified that pupils' reading and mathematics abilities far behind where they needed to be. We believed that part of the problem was that children were not spending enough time working on homework when they returned home from school. We formed committees of parents and community leaders that helped to find and promote ways to get children to study.

Building community ties

The success of my job revolved around my ability to win the confidence of a wide number of different stakeholders. The CSA project involved people of all sorts – from expatriates from Western nations, and Ghanaians from all over the country, to members of the very communities we were working in. While it was helpful that I was a Ghanaian, and could speak the local dialect, it was not always easy to build trust with local community members. It should be mentioned that my background in psychology and appreciation of 'individual differences' helped in handling some of these challenges. Moreover, regular communication was challenging in the sense that because of communication-infrastructure limitations, once I left a community, it was extremely difficult to stay in touch until I returned there physically. This situation was only exacerbated by the difficulty in transportation mentioned earlier.

Winning the confidence of stakeholders became easier during the course of my one year as a district facilitator. I found that I was more successful when, in conjunction with stakeholders, we set specific goals and then worked together with those stakeholders to accomplish those goals. Only in reflecting back on these behaviors as an I-O psychologist do I now fully understand what it was that I was doing – namely, I was employing goal-setting techniques and adopting the participant-observer method to both understand and change the behavior of those I was working with. This method was helpful because it allowed me to build and develop both rapport with community members and maintain a sense of progress.

Performance management

A big part of my role was monitoring the success of the various initiatives that I was engaged in. In turn, every month I would communicate

these results to the CSA project headquarters in the form of official reports. One of our most important measures of success was pupil learning as evaluated on standardized tests. However, these test scores would not capture all of the change that was taking place in the schools and communities that I worked in. On a daily basis, my visits to schools would involve monitoring progress made on different initiatives – like those meant to sharpen the management skills of school administrations as well as improvement in relationships between teachers on one hand and community members on the other. In addition, we would collect feedback on our initiatives from the community by bringing parents and community leaders together in *durbars*. Despite these metrics and sources of feedback, it was not always easy to evaluate the success of my work – especially when it came to individual training projects on topics that were more interpersonal than concrete (e.g., trainings designed to improve collaboration between community members and district authorities).

Reflection

Personally, I place great importance on being part of positive social change and the values and objectives of the CSA were in alignment with this desire. My experiences as a district facilitator during my national service were a major turning point in my life. It was this service that interested me in improving my skills in areas such as training and performance management. I had only limited exposure to I-O psychology through undergraduate courses, and when combined with some basic insights from my course in community psychology, I could see how important an understanding of psychology's role in work at the interface of formal organizations and the community could be for the sake of regional development. Not only did I see the important role of topics like training in the welfare of my entire nation, but I also saw that the development of that welfare, and movement on important metrics like literacy, was dependent on a holistic approach that included a broad swatch of stakeholders like community leaders that might not otherwise be included in a training program.

During the course of my service, I decided to enroll in a graduate program in I-O psychology. I knew that a greater understanding of I-O psychology and its tools could help me, as well as others, to do an even better job helping to serve the underserved. However, I-O psychology had not fully taken root in Ghana – indeed, while there are gifted professors with backgrounds in I-O psychology, there are currently none that had been educated in Ghana beyond the masters' level – the few

with PhD qualifications were educated outside of Ghana. At the time of writing up this piece, I am likely to become the first doctoral student in I-O psychology to graduate from a university in Ghana. I hope many more will follow me and will devote their efforts to tackling many of the issues that our society faces.

The School and Community Resource Program, Northern Cape Province, South Africa: Alexander E. Gloss

Daily life and objectives

I lived and worked for 27 months in the Northern Cape Province of South Africa for the US Peace Corps' School and Community Resource Program. On a typical day, I would wake up in the room my host family had generously lent me for the duration of my stay. My accommodations were modest, but comfortable. My room was approximately 3 × 3 meters and covered by a tin roof. I lived in a densely populated community known as a township – a planned community which was formed under the racist apartheid regime as a place to house non-white South Africans. The township I lived in, which housed approximately 100,000 people, was not only a bustling and vibrant place, but also riddled by extremely high levels of violence and crime. According to the rules of the Peace Corps, I could not drive a car to work – so after eating breakfast, I would set out on my bicycle for a half-an-hour ride to make rounds at one or more of the three local primary and secondary schools I was charged with assisting. This mode of transportation was helpful because it meant I was not reliant on others to provide me a ride and could move quickly between schools – attending to a number of different priorities in an efficient fashion. Despite its benefits however, this mode of transportation was also problematic. On two separate occasions during the first two years of my service, I was physically assaulted on my bicycle; luckily both times I managed to escape with minor bumps and bruises. The motivations of my attackers were unclear, but because of the attacks Peace Corps moved my residence from the township to a neighboring predominately white and affluent neighborhood. After the move, I kept working in the township schools and commuting on bicycle, but I had lost much of my connection to my host family in the township.

Normally I would try and visit at least two schools per day. I would typically arrive and greet the school management and office staff and begin work on any number of initiatives that we had jointly agreed to undertake. My mission from Peace Corps was deliberately vague and

they strongly encouraged me to spend at least several weeks observing, speaking with, and learning from the school management, teachers, and district officials before my specific projects were solidified. At some schools, it was decided that I should try and undertake a collaborative school-management reform initiative wherein I would assist the school principal to hold regular meetings devoted to reforming the school's constitution, revamping its management plans and policies, and strengthening channels for communication with and management of the school's teachers. At other schools, it was identified that teachers desired further assistance in the delivery of their mathematics curriculum.

Challenges and resources

Having scant pedagogical training or education, and having only recently graduated from university, I knew that I was hopelessly unqualified to engage in this work by myself. Yet being an outsider and foreigner, it seemed that many people deferred to my opinion, trusted me, and were usually ready and willing to listen to and try my suggestions. To overcome my lack of experience, and to maximize the effect of my role as an outsider, I worked closely with the principals and managers at the schools I was assigned to and helped them to carry out their reform agendas. In practice, this meant everything from drafting policies and plans, designing a new supplementary mathematics curriculum and training program, to convening school meetings as an impartial moderator. Without a background in education or I-O psychology, approaching these tasks proved to be especially difficult as they required conducting customized research into curriculum development, training, and motivational interventions. Unfortunately, locating research customized to a non-Western or lower-income setting was extremely difficult and often best-practices from Western and high-income countries like the United States were used in lieu of more contextualized solutions.

Drawing upon best-practices and research from places like the United States proved problematic as many of the realities present in the schools I was assigned were dramatically different from the educational settings that were assumed in the literature I was able to locate. Outside of questions of local culture and traditions, a large share of students came from families living in deep poverty and faced profound social issues like one of the world's highest prevalence of HIV/AIDS and high levels of shockingly brutal violence and crime. School facilities were often dilapidated due to neglect and an inefficient use of funds. Worse, a culture

of learning and teaching was often entirely absent. A large segment of teachers would actively teach for far less than half of the school day and large numbers of children would be wandering the school grounds aimlessly at any given time. Nevertheless, many teachers would frequently demonstrate great passion, talent, and devotion to their profession in the face of overwhelming obstacles including a lack of resources and students who had been passed on through the years without having learned to read, write, and conduct simple arithmetic.

Motivation

As my time in South Africa wore on, I began to pay greater attention to the issue of teacher motivation. I had identified that South Africa, by many measures the most prosperous country on the continent, spends well above the global average on education in relation to their gross domestic product but it lags far behind many African countries on basic measures of literacy and numeracy (South African Human Resource Development Council, 2010). This gap between expenditure and performance was quite perplexing and, based upon existing research from the field of economics (e.g., Van der Berg et al., 2011) and my own observation, I began to put a large share of the blame on often poorly trained and disillusioned teachers who were frequently neither supported nor held accountable by the managers of their institutions. Another reason for my increased focus on motivation was my realization that the teaching and management resources and systems that I, and many others, had helped to develop were often ineffectual or useless without being adopted by a stakeholder who was both able and interested in implementing them.

To tackle the issue of motivation, I developed and video-recorded a motivational presentation and workshop. Without a deeper understanding of motivational theories, I appealed to the social justice sensibilities of the teachers I was working with (many of whom helped to lead the historic fight against the apartheid regime) by highlighting the degree to which educational disparities were creating new social inequalities in the post-racial democratic South Africa. Through an evocative imagery and compelling statistics (e.g., that unemployment for South Africans who had not completed their secondary education was over 66% in 2007 while only 0.7% for South Africans with a university degree; South African Human Resource Development Council, 2010) I made the case that the country's teachers were the new freedom fighters for South Africa's impoverished, predominately black African, youth. I argued that freedom and opportunity were no longer inhibited by racist laws – they

were now inhibited by illiteracy and economic inequality and the resulting social ills of disease, crime, and social discord.

Identity and inequality

For some time I had begun to notice that my identity as a young and white man from the United States was a barrier to my work. This was the case for two reasons; first, I realized that my understanding of many situations and issues were skewed by my own background and cultural assumptions about the work-related norms, values, and priorities of the people I was working with and second, many of the teachers and school managers I interacted with dismissed initiatives I was involved in as arising from an irrelevant or inappropriate foreign perspective. Despite the fact that many aspects of the projects I was engaged in were developed by the managers I was working with, my identity sometimes became an excuse, and other times a legitimate reason, for inaction or opposition.

Unfortunately, the realities of the interlocking matrix of educational failure, inequality, and the high levels of crime and violence that South Africa was plagued with intervened in my own life toward the end of my Peace Corps service. While riding my bicycle to deliver the second part of my two-part motivation workshop at one of the secondary schools I was working at, I was ambushed by three gang-members just meters away from the school entrance. They had intended to murder me as an initiation ritual but luckily I managed to escape with serious but not life-threatening knife wounds. Out of a concern for my safety, Peace Corps removed me from my site entirely and relocated me to their headquarters in the capital of the country. Two of the three gang-members were arrested, the third one having been killed in a neighboring township, so I was asked to stay for the duration of my service to testify against them in trial. This allowed me to finish some, but not all, of my work with the schools. During the trial, I learned that one of my attackers was a former student at the school I was traveling to when I was assaulted. He was only a teenager, and despite having made it to secondary school, he was functionally illiterate. The failures of the schooling system in South Africa had quite literally nearly cost me my life and undermined the support I was providing to those very schools.

Reflection

My experience in South Africa convinced me that the issues covered by I-O psychology are crucial to the development of nations. I set out on an entirely new career track to pursue study in the newly founded sub-discipline of Humanitarian Work Psychology which promised to

integrate perspectives and priorities from lower-income settings with the broader discipline's set of theories and tools.

I-O psychology's engagement with international development

Reflecting on the narratives of our experiences working to assist the education systems in two countries in sub-Saharan Africa, we were both struck by the many similarities and important differences. Focusing first on the similarities, both authors were connected to, and in ways employed by, programs from the United States to enhance the performance of schools in challenged educational systems. Both authors were working relatively underprepared to deal with the issues they faced in these systems and were charged with engaging alongside a diversity of stakeholders in their schools and communities.

By looking at these narratives we can see at least three important common themes. First, in both Ghana and South Africa, the authors encountered difficulties in communication with project stakeholders; second, a key element in both authors' projects was the importance of building connections to a variety of stakeholders; and third, both authors ran up against limitations of existing literature and theories in I-O psychology in relation to the work they were conducting.

The course of both authors' projects were shaped by the inability to communicate effectively, but this inability emerged from different sources. While Inusah was hindered by a lack of efficient transportation and communication infrastructure, Alexander was prevented from the most efficient collaboration due to the intersecting divisions of nationality, culture, race, and age. Both of these communication limitations are representative of the types of challenges often found in international development work. We look more closely into each in turn.

In Alexander's case, communication was limited by various aspects of personal identity, including nationality, culture, race, and age. Some of these limitations to effective communication and collaboration – that is, culture – are relatively well researched in the field of I-O psychology (see, e.g., Erez, 2011). What seems to be less appreciated in organizational psychology's consideration of international forms of work are potential limitations to communication and collaboration that emerge from socioeconomics and power. The socioeconomic and power aspects of differences in identity might not be as obviously manifest as race, nationality, and age – but they are certainly important underlying

dynamics in interpersonal relations in a country with incredibly high rates of poverty, extreme socioeconomic inequality, and a long history of racial oppression. Alexander is a young Caucasian man with a livelihood secured by the US Peace Corps – a branch of a government that once actively supported the racist apartheid policies of the South African state. While many of the precise issues mentioned above are somewhat unique to the South Africa–US bilateral relationship, they are broadly indicative of trends within international development scenarios wherein former colonial powers send volunteer and professional assistance to lower-income countries. MacLachlan, Carr, and McAuliffe (2010) highlight both power and identity as two of three fundamental dynamics that can inhibit effective international development work. The third dynamic – that of justice – was perhaps no less present in Alexander's case. Perceptions of justice – especially from the standpoint of teachers whose jobs might have been affected by his work are likely to have been strong determinants of interpersonal relations at the schools where he worked. Continued research into the aspects of interpersonal work relations that result from socioeconomic and historical injustice will go a long way toward a better understanding of interpersonal dynamics in international development work.

In Inusah's case, the ability to build trust, rapport, and accountability was not constrained as much by differences in identity as by limited transportation and communication infrastructure. Again, this seems to be broadly representative of many forms of work in lower-income settings. In terms of communication infrastructure, despite extraordinary growth in many communication media, a divide in information and communication technology (ICT) prevalence remains deep between lower- and higher-income countries (International Telecommunications Union, 2010) and an advanced and efficient transportation infrastructure is closely tied to levels of economic modernization and industrialization often not present in some lower-income settings. A great deal of research in I-O psychology has sought to understand the ramifications of ICTs on the workplace – especially in forms of work that involve great physical distance (see, e.g., Leung and Peterson, 2011). However, Inusah did not encounter difficulties emerging from particularly great amounts of physical distance, but instead, physical divides that were particularly difficult to efficiently traverse either physically or virtually. Greater research into the effects of limitations in transportation and communication infrastructure will go some way to better understanding the unique challenges to forms of work in lower-income settings.

In addition to difficulties in communication, both narratives reflected the importance of building ties between multiple stakeholders, both inside schools and within the broader community. The need to conduct work with a complex and diverse group of stakeholders is certainly not unique to international development work. What is perhaps somewhat unique is the relative importance of the ties between those stakeholders to the outcomes of such work. Often, the strengthening of community and organizational ties are both a means to an end and an end in themselves. Indeed, these ties are often important components in the socio-structural elements of individual, group, and community empowerment (Spreitzer, 2008). The importance of working cooperatively with, and aligning one's efforts to the priorities of, a diverse range of stakeholders is highlighted by important standards of best-practice within the humanitarian/international development community – including the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness. This declaration, adopted in 2005 by over 100 countries, "defines the principles and commitments by which donors and partner governments intend to ensure that aid is as effective as possible in contributing to the Millennium Development Goals and other internationally agreed objectives" (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2009, p. 3). The declaration includes five principles of best-practice, including the need for "harmonization" and "alignment" which mandate the coordination of any humanitarian/development initiatives with existing efforts and the orientation of those efforts toward the goals of relevant stakeholders. As the Paris Declaration makes clear, the efficient management of humanitarian/development work, and its effectiveness in accomplishing tangible project outcomes like the improvement of student homework performance, is only one important consideration in a project's success. A project's ability to have capacitated community empowerment through stronger social ties is often a second, and critically important, outcome. As seen in Inusah's case, international development work can focus explicitly upon the ties between a formal organization and the broader community. Increased research in I-O psychology has begun to be conducted on this subject through the guise of triple bottom-line accounting which emphasizes the social impact of an organization on its community (see, e.g., Aguinis, 2011). We call for increased research on the nature of these organizational-community ties and the ways to enhance them that maximize the empowerment of stakeholders and the effectiveness of development projects.

Alongside the themes of communication difficulties and the importance of ties between stakeholders, both authors' narratives also highlighted the limitations of research in I-O psychology. Both authors found existing work in I-O psychology to be of limited relevance to their work because it often did not account for the unique cultural and socioeconomic dynamics of the settings in which they were engaging and because it did not account for the unique nature of the work in which they were engaging. This assertion is simply a reflection that, as has been pointed out above, research in I-O psychology has not substantially engaged with organizational dynamics in lower-income settings, with work that involves individuals from higher- and lower-income countries, and with work that emphasizes building social ties and empowerment as an end in itself. Part of this claim was echoed by Gelfand, Leslie, and Fehr (2008) in their reflection on the limitations of the field. There, they pointed out that organizational psychology has limited its attention to concerns and realities of the predominately high-income "post-materialist" world where material and physical security are better established than in lower-income settings.

In addition to the similarities and common themes, there were also several important differences in our experiences. One author worked in a distinctly rural environment while another operated in a dense urban environment. In addition, the narratives noted the prominence of concern for physical security in South Africa and the relatively absence of such a concern in Ghana. Finally, and perhaps most fundamentally, Alexander engaged in his work from the standpoint of an expatriate while Inusah worked in his home country alongside other host-country nationals. Perhaps just as importantly, Alexander's identity was that of someone from a nation traditionally responsible for providing international development assistance, whereas Inusah's identity was that of someone from a nation who traditionally receives such assistance.

As highlighted in Alexander's narrative, but not as prominent in Inusah's, lower-income settings are not merely defined by limitations in physical security (United Nations Development Programme, 1994). This includes issues of warfare, crime, and political instability. As is obvious from Alexander's case, these issues can directly affect the course of international development work. However, considerations of physical security can also directly affect organizational behavior in important ways. For example, in the case in South Africa, considerations for students' and teachers' physical safety were concerns that necessarily defined the work setting and overrode other considerations such as task

performance and job satisfaction. While issues like job satisfaction and organizational commitment are likely important in any setting, they are likely to be greatly influenced by variation in physical security of the surrounding community. Existing research on military personnel and others operating in physically insecure conditions might yield important insight in this regard but more direct research in lower-income settings that suffer from physical insecurity will be key to properly understanding international development work.

While the motives of all of Alexander's attackers were never fully determined – it was clear that his identity as a white man in a predominantly black African area contributed to him being targeted. However, issues of identity in Alexander's case were not limited to race as his national background and age also helped to shape unique dynamics of power and privilege between him and those he worked with in his schools. In this way, Alexander's narrative provides a useful example of the difficulties inherent in development work that involves expatriates. In contrast, Inusah's narrative – while certainly not determinative evidence – is a good example of how challenges relating to identity might be avoided by employing host-country nationals in international development projects. The importance of the distinction between expatriate and host-country national is not accidental; this distinction is central to the dynamics of power, identity, and justice that Carr et al. (2012) put forward as central to the success of international development work. Research into the implications of the expatriate/host-country national for organizational behavior has begun to play a more prominent role in I-O psychology (see, e.g., Carr et al., 2011).

Conclusion

As demonstrated through the narratives of our authors' experiences in civic service in the education sector in sub-Saharan Africa, international development work is often complex, challenging, and potentially perilous. Yet, this work serves as a way to potentially benefit some of the world's most marginalized populations. As has been demonstrated through our personal experiences, there are a number of issues that I-O psychology needs to consider for it to most usefully engage with international development work and work in lower-income settings in general. These considerations include the impact of a region's transportation and communication infrastructure, the importance of building ties between multiple stakeholders, physical security, and the implications of the expatriate/host-country national distinction.

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