

STAKEHOLDER EXPECTATIONS: A MIXED METHODS STUDY OF
SERVICES PROVIDED BY SHARE, A FAITH-BASED
INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the extent to which the expectations of stakeholders are met by an international, faith-based nonprofit organization. The organization selected for this mixed methods case study is SHARE Education Services, which is registered as a nonprofit organization in the United States and is headquartered in Budapest, Hungary.

Expectations for and satisfaction with the parent education, assessment, and consulting services of SHARE are examined in this study. The 162 survey participants, 12 focus group participants, and seven interview participants are all clients of SHARE and are residing in Europe or Central Asia with their families. Quantitative data were collected through a survey which addressed the participant's expectations for the services of SHARE, as well as the extent to which those expectations are satisfied by the organization. Qualitative data were collected through focus groups and interviews, as well as open-ended survey questions. Background data were also collected to determine if responses varied according to gender, number of years lived overseas, proximity to SHARE's offices in Budapest or Prague, or geographic region.

The study results indicate that the clients of SHARE are satisfied with its parent education, assessment, and consulting services. Additionally, an analysis of the data yields several conclusions. First, services needed by client families vary by the length of time they have lived overseas. Results suggest that parent education is needed more by families new to living overseas, while assessment and consulting services are needed more by experienced families. Second, participants indicated that they want more

applicable workshops at SHARE's conferences led by individuals with some understanding of cross-cultural living. Third, the qualitative data in particular highlighted a desire by client families to be connected with one another at SHARE events or via the internet. Finally, the current assessment practices of SHARE are in contrast with current best practice in the field, and suggestions for more alignment between the two are presented.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Expatriate North American families live throughout the world for a variety of reasons. Those employed by multi-national corporations, educational institutions, government, and the military often benefit from structures that deliver or support the education of their children. Examples of this are embassy schools for children of its employees or Department of Defense schools for children of military personnel. In most cases, employees of mission or humanitarian organizations do not benefit from such supports. They must balance their desire for an appropriate education for their children with their desire to perform what they believe to be important work and the availability of assignment locations. Oftentimes, these families are left to make decisions in relative isolation regarding the education of their children (Blomberg & Brooks, 2001). Furthermore, these employees often work in remote areas, where educational options for their children are limited to host country national schools or home schooling. If options such as international schools would be financially feasible, they are not, in many cases, geographically feasible.

The education of workers' children has long been an area of cooperation between mission organizations, evidenced by a number of MK (missionary kid) schools all over the world. For example, there are 14 MK schools or homeschool co-ops throughout Europe, located primarily near capital cities (Mission:Teach, 2009). Still, with only a handful of such schools per continent, and the aforementioned remote locations of many of these workers, the education of their children remains an unaddressed and under-supported issue for many families.

In the early 1990s, Eastern European countries became more open to those who perform mission or humanitarian work, so those countries experienced an influx of such workers. With few international schools and no MK schools yet established, leaders in mission organizations represented in the region came together in 1993 to find a solution for the educational support needed by families who worked in Eastern Europe (N.W. Elwood, personal communication, September 30, 2008). Out of these meetings came SHARE Education Services, an educational organization that was not a school, but provided educational support to the families of missionaries through consulting and resources. SHARE's charter limited its services to families living in Europe, Russia, and Central Asia. Less than 10 years later, the Asia Education Resource Consortium (AERC) began providing services to similar families living throughout Asia. In 2007, mission leaders in Africa began plans for a similar organization, now called the Anchor Project, which began services to families in January, 2009. In 2008, mission education leaders in South America began forming plans for an entity that would provide similar educational support for families living on that continent.

These faith-based educational organizations are unique in many ways. Without many points of comparison given the limited number of organizations which deliver these services, and without the somewhat easily-identified outcomes of a school or a corporation, it is difficult to measure concepts such as success or quality. However, with an increasing number of organizations providing such services around the world, (such as those discussed in the previous paragraph), and with SHARE as the oldest of such organizations in its fifteenth year of service, questions of quality assurance and accountability to stakeholders are timely and relevant.

Rationale

Questions of quality assurance and accountability to stakeholders can be raised in relation to many nonprofit or non-governmental organizations, particularly when they operate internationally and stakeholders may be spread throughout the world. Many measures of effectiveness, or quality assurance, might be suggested; however, as nonprofit organizations are generally started to help with a social or environmental problem, generally on behalf of a group of people in some sort of need, stakeholder expectations can be seen as especially critical. Balser and McClusky (2005) discuss the management of stakeholder relationships in nonprofit organizations, and summarize the issue this way: “In other words, effectiveness is based on the responsiveness of the nonprofit to stakeholder concerns” (p. 296).

However, the diversity of stakeholders and their expectations often draw an organization in many directions. Several researchers have written about these competing pressures (e.g., Ospina, Diaz, & O’Sullivan, 2002), but Balser and McClusky (2005) assert that, “...there is little research studying the relationship between stakeholder management behaviors and organizational effectiveness, as well as what organizations can do to enhance perceptions of responsiveness” (p. 299).

The issue of stakeholder perceptions is faced by most nonprofit organizations (Balser & McClusky, 2005; Herman & Renz, 2004), and research has been conducted studying stakeholder management within nonprofit organizations. However, “despite these efforts to examine stakeholder management...studies do not typically tie stakeholder management practices to measures of organization effectiveness” (Balser & McClusky, 2005, p. 297). This suggests a gap in both practice and literature related to

nonprofit organizations actively linking the concepts of stakeholder expectations and organizational effectiveness. This study seeks to add to the body of knowledge in this area, and rests on the theory (Balser & McClusky, 2005) that nonprofit organizational effectiveness can be measured by stakeholder satisfaction.

Study Purpose and Research Questions

As stated earlier, there are few international educational organizations such as SHARE operating today (one in Asia, one beginning in Africa, and one in formation in South America). Despite the uniqueness of such organizations, effective models of evaluation and self-study can be applied to determine the extent to which such an organization is achieving its goals, or is effective. The management of stakeholder relationships is discussed in current professional literature, and Balser and McClusky (2005) assert that “effectiveness is based on the responsiveness of the nonprofit to stakeholder concerns” (p. 296). This suggests that the concept of organizational effectiveness can be tied to satisfaction of stakeholder expectations. SHARE and similar organizations were established with the broad goal to meet the educational needs of its client families. The purpose of this study is to examine the extent to which an international faith-based, nonprofit organization meets the educational needs of expatriate families. The three research questions guiding this study are:

1. What are the expectations of SHARE’s client families for the consulting, assessment, and parent education services provided by the organization?
2. To what extent do the services offered by SHARE satisfy the expectations of its client families?

3. Do the expectations of stakeholders vary by gender, proximity to SHARE's offices in Budapest and Prague, length of time the stakeholder has lived overseas, or geographic region?

A mixed methods case study approach is appropriate for addressing these questions. The quantitative portion of this study includes data collected through surveys of SHARE's client families throughout Europe and Central Asia. Survey questions were developed which were specifically related to each of the research questions above. Qualitative data were gained through open-ended questions in the survey and through focus groups and interviews conducted at a SHARE conference held in Hungary.

Definitions of Terms

Faith-based: In the case of SHARE, families with "faith-based" organizations are primarily those assisted, labeled as such because the members of these organizations are conducting religious and/or humanitarian work in their countries of service.

Additionally, all staff members are technically employed by faith-based mission organizations and are "on loan" or "seconded" to SHARE. SHARE endeavors to deal equitably with all Protestant Christian organizations.

Nonprofit: A nonprofit organization is registered as a 501(c)(3) organization in the United States whose primary mission is not related to income-generating activities.

Effective: "Effective," as used in this study, can be defined as producing results, or producing favorable impressions (Encarta, 2008).

Consulting services: SHARE staff members consult with client families (parents) about issues such as educational planning, evaluation of educational options, and educational testing. This educational consulting takes place at SHARE conferences, via email, by phone, and in SHARE's offices.

Assessment services: SHARE offers client families assessment services in the form of academic achievement tests and psycho-educational evaluations. These assessments are always provided at SHARE conferences, and may additionally be available at mission organization-sponsored conferences to which SHARE has been asked to offer this service.

Parent education services: At SHARE conferences and other agency conferences in which SHARE staff participates, workshops and seminars are provided to parents covering a wide variety of topics pertaining to expatriate families educating their children abroad. These sessions are taught by SHARE staff members as well as volunteers from North America or the United Kingdom who are considered to be educational experts on a particular topic.

TCK: A third culture kid is a child whose primary cultural identity is not entirely that of their parents' home culture or that of the foreign culture in which they live.

Stakeholders: The stakeholders of SHARE are client families (who may or may not belong to a member organization); board members, each representing a member organization; SHARE staff members; members of "sister" organizations, similar to SHARE in structure and services, serving different geographic regions; and mission agency home office staff members who are responsible for providing educational support for families (often by referring them to SHARE).

Limitations of the Study

There are two primary limitations to this study. First, its design as a single case study limits its external validity significantly (Yin, 2003). While its results may be of particular interest to organizations similar to SHARE as well as those in the field of children's education within mission organizations, its findings should be regarded as having limited generalizability and should be used carefully. Additionally, the study focuses on an extremely homogeneous group in terms of race, religion, socio-economic status, and educational level.

Second, the researcher's role as an insider in the organization renders her inherently subjective. There are many advantages to insider research, including a greater understanding of contextual factors related to the work of the organization and its client families. However, there is a possibility that the researcher's association with the organization might skew the data favorably, particularly in the collection of qualitative data through interviews and focus groups. Furthermore, the researcher's function as a core staff member in the organization means that she was part of the decision-making process for the delivery of services to client families, and is again inherently subjective in her examination of these services.

Potential Outcomes of the Study

There are a number of potential outcomes related to this study. Broadly, this study endeavors to add to the body of literature related to organizational effectiveness and stakeholder expectations. As discussed above, scholars have identified a gap in the literature related to both of these concepts (i.e., Balser & McClusky, 2005). The

specific results of this study add to the body of knowledge related to the services examined: parent education, assessment, and educational consulting, particularly associated with expatriate families.

While the actual results of the study will be limited in terms of external validity, it may provide guidance for SHARE and similar organizations that wish to engage in regular program evaluation. Determining the extent to which the expectations of client families are satisfied can be a large task for a small organization with limited time and resources. Models such as this study may make regular program evaluation achievable for such organizations.

Finally, the findings of this study provide feedback to SHARE and its stakeholders. Valuable information can be gained for the organization through this identification of stakeholder expectations. Results related to stakeholder satisfaction with its parent education, assessment, and consulting services can be used within the organization to affirm and/or improve its services to client families. Specific data related to stakeholder factors such as gender, number of years lived overseas, geographic region in which they live, and proximity to SHARE's offices may be useful in designing the focus of services in the future.

This study is divided into five chapters. The first chapter contains an introduction to the study and a brief rationale for this research in light of current professional literature. The specific study purpose and research questions are identified, as well as definitions of terms that will be used frequently throughout the study. Finally, potential limitations and outcomes for the study are discussed.

An in-depth review of the current professional literature is found in chapter two. Factors related to faith-based nonprofit organizations are examined, including effectiveness measures, organizational change, and staffing issues. Next, current best practices related to parent education, assessment, and consulting services are reviewed. Finally, literature related to expatriate families is discussed.

In chapter three, the methodology of this study is discussed in detail. A full description of the context of this study is found first, followed by a discussion of the research paradigm and specific research methods used. A description of the methods used for analysis and interpretation of the data follows.

The results of the study can be found in chapter four. This begins with a full description of the sample, and is followed by a discussion of results related to each research question. Themes identified through the qualitative and quantitative data are identified and discussed in this chapter.

The final chapter contains a summary of the conclusions identified throughout the data. This is followed by a discussion of the implications of the results for SHARE and similar organizations. Finally, study limitations and suggestions for future research are acknowledged.

CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Two common issues are faced by nonprofit organizations everywhere – quality assurance and stakeholder expectations (Balsler and McClusky, 2005). Faith-based nonprofits in particular encounter the tension between a sense of “calling,” expectations of stakeholders, and the quality of services they provide. In order to examine problems related to quality assurance and stakeholder expectations, issues such as leadership and volunteerism within nonprofit organizations, funding of faith-based nonprofits, and models of services provided by educational nonprofits must be examined.

In this chapter, factors particular to faith-based nonprofit organizations will be examined through the lens of current literature. First, issues related to faith-based nonprofit organizations and the leadership of volunteers will be explored. Second, the research questions put forward in this study demand that the services provided to constituent families by international education organizations be examined in light of current best practices in the fields of education and nonprofit leadership. This will begin with an exploration of literature related to consulting services. Then, the testing and assessment services will be examined through current research, and then parent and adult education will be considered. Third, factors will be discussed related to the literature regarding Third Culture Kids, a term used for children whose families are often the clients of faith-based international education consulting organizations.

Faith-Based Nonprofit Organizations

There is no clear definition of the term “faith-based organization” (Sider & Unruh, 2004, p.109). In current North American politics, the definition of “faith-based”

has become hotly contested as religious groups continue to apply for government funding for social services, so scholars continue to refine the definition of this term. Some have identified a list of organizational attributes by which an organization could be measured in terms of their integration of religion (Jeavons, 2004; Sider & Unruh, 2004). Others have attempted to identify the nature of, in particular, social service organizations and how religion is integrated (or not integrated) into the services they provide to the community (Goggin and Orth, 2002). According to Sider and Unruh (2004), many international education organizations could clearly be categorized as “faith-permeated organizations”:

...the connection with religious faith is evident at all levels of mission, staffing, governance, and support. Faith-permeated programs extensively integrate explicitly religious content. The religious dimension is believed to be essential to the program’s effectiveness, and therefore participation in religious elements is often required. (p. 119)

An interesting work by Cameron (2004) offers a European response to the religious characteristics of many international nonprofits in operation. She suggests three criteria for such organizations:

1. The group should be able to articulate its beliefs about a program;
2. The group should be “willing to enter into a dialogue about how its beliefs about God and human well-being, and the way in which those beliefs are held, will affect its program?”;
3. Are they willing to offer choice to “service recipients about how they engage with the program?” (p. 149)

An important characteristic of faith-based organizations, particularly those categorized as “faith-permeated” (Sider & Unruh, 2004), is that they are funded almost entirely by the religious community through individuals and foundations. Preissler (2003) discussed a literature base for religious giving he endeavored to establish, and found that there is a substantial base of literature in this area. He also finds that while overall religious giving has increased in the US, as a portion of income, giving has fallen to its lowest level in 30 years.

Current trends and changes within faith-based organizations are important issues to explore and are relevant to this study. Within faith-based nonprofits, it is not uncommon for leaders to have read, discussed, and acted upon ideas found in popular leadership books in the U.S. (e.g., *Good to Great*, *Leading Change*). This trend toward adopting for-profit business practices is noted in the UK charity retail sector by Parsons and Broadbridge (2004). In a study of charity retail shop managers, the authors called this trend “professionalism,” and added that change strategies “imported” from the business sector aren’t immediately applicable in a nonprofit context (p. 231). They also note that change in any organization typically comes from the bottom up and is usually unplanned, as opposed to top down management edicts. Benz (2005) also identified this trend, stating that, in the last decade, nonprofits have exhibited, “... a strong tendency to introduce concepts taken from the business sector” (p. 173).

Regardless of whether an organization is faith-based or is classified as a nonprofit, it shares many characteristics and challenges common to any organization, and “change” is likely a common theme. In *Leading Change*, (1996), Kotter identifies an eight stage process for effective change management. The stages are:

1. Establish a Sense of Urgency
2. Creating the Guiding Coalition
3. Developing a Vision and Strategy
4. Communicating the Change Vision
5. Empowering Broad-Based Action
6. Generating Short-Term Wins
7. Consolidating Gains and Producing More Change
8. Anchoring New Approaches in the Culture

Puccio, Murdock, and Mance (1997) assert that leaders are generally catalysts for change, that creativity is a core competency for effective change leadership, and that this skill is something leaders can learn. In Fullan's book *Leading in a Culture of Change* (2001), he describes five keys to leading organizational change:

1. A sense of moral purpose must be pervasive within the organization.
2. There must be a broad understanding of change and its consequences.
3. Relationships lend stability in times of change.
4. Knowledge must be built within the organization by converting tacit knowledge to explicit knowledge.
5. The leader is responsible for making the consequences change coherent to all involved.

While these principles presented by the above authors for leading organizational change employ different paradigms, all provide useful models with which to determine how effectively an organization has navigated change.

A significant issue faced by many nonprofit organizations, whether faith-based or not, is the leadership and management of volunteers. Volunteers are often the lifeblood of service organizations as they donate their time and skills with no compensation from the organization. However, issues of accountability and quality assurance become critical when workers are under no contract and are unpaid by the organization. While a broad discussion of leadership would be relevant to any organizational study, this section is limited to the literature concerning leading volunteers.

A study published in 2002 found that the leadership of volunteers was the third-highest area of training need for nonprofit leaders (Dolan, 2002). The employment issues found in many international education organizations are described well by Leonard, Onyx, and Hayward-Brown (2004). They assert that the lack of financial loss experienced by a volunteer should they leave an organization has the largest implication for the management of volunteers; additionally, the authors identify the freedom of a volunteer to pick and choose their tasks, allowing for less control by leaders and managers. In this, their study regarding volunteer perspectives on nonprofit leadership, these authors also found that most effective leaders of volunteers utilized a nurturing style of leadership, characterized by strong relationships and communication.

Jaskyte (2004) studied the interplay of transformational leadership, organizational culture, and innovativeness within nonprofit organizations. Particularly relevant to this study is her assertion that “the degree of buy-in to the leader’s culture-related messages determines the homogeneity or heterogeneity of organizational culture” (156). While many international education nonprofits are composed of a culturally diverse staff, others are fairly homogenous organizations operating in an

international context, with the staff and constituents sharing a cultural background. The cultural diversity of any organization is a relating factor when buy-in to the overall organizational vision is considered.

Caers, Du Bois, Jegers, Gieter, Schepers, and Pepermans (2006) maintain that nonprofits often struggle with output measurements in general (as they are not economically driven) as well as with the relationship between manager and volunteers. Typically, nonprofit workers are assumed to be driven by commitment to the mission of the organization for which they work. However, these authors assert that this may not be the case if workers sense that an organization lacks "...efficient principals and output measures" (p. 31). In other words, when an organization struggles with identifying and reaching output measures, it may complicate the relationship between managers and volunteers.

Non-US-American nonprofits were also of interest in this research because of the international focus of this study. Borzaga and Tortia (2006) examined incentive structures found in nonprofit organizations in Italy, and how factors such as worker satisfaction and loyalty to the organization were influenced by worker motivation and incentives. Regarding worker satisfaction, religious nonprofit workers were found to be most satisfied, followed by those in social cooperatives. Religious nonprofit workers were also identified as the most loyal, along with workers in nonreligious nonprofits. The data were broken down in the three categories of individual behaviors and the incentives offered in each area. In the area of self-regarding incentives, nonprofit workers were found to be most satisfied with career advancement, working hours, and relations with volunteers. The authors discovered that nonprofit workers also had the

highest scores in the area of process-related aspects such as professional development, worker involvement, the variety and creativity of the job, and the fairness of decisional processes. Seniority in the organization was identified as negatively correlated to worker satisfaction, but there seemed to be no significant differences among age groups or by gender. A positive relationship between time spent directly with clients and worker satisfaction was found as well.

Job satisfaction and other unique characteristics of US- and UK-based nonprofit organizations were examined by Benz (2005), and have implications for nonprofit leadership. He compared the job satisfaction of nonprofit and for-profit workers, and found that empirical analysis verifies that nonprofit workers experience higher levels of job satisfaction. He also discovered that wages would need to be doubled (in the US) or tripled (in the UK) for for-profit workers to equal the same job satisfaction experienced by nonprofit workers in the same country.

Consulting Services

The mission of many faith-based nonprofit organizations is to provide services, rather than goods, to their target constituency. In the case of social service and educational organizations, these services include counseling or consulting with those they endeavor to help. Many international education nonprofit organizations provide services to expatriate families, oftentimes missionaries living outside of their home country. As a group, missionaries are described as above average in terms of education level (Powell, in Bowers, 1998, p. 437). These parents are typically highly involved in making decisions regarding their child(ren)'s education, due in part to the absence of a

local, free, mother-tongue/culture school where they live. This involvement, as a hallmark of consulting with this particular set of parents, is important to examine within current literature. Pollack and Van Reken (2001) assert that, "...[expatriate] parents often face this major decision [regarding educating their children] with little or no awareness of the different types of opportunities available for schooling in a cross-cultural setting, let alone the pros and cons accompanying each method" (p. 216). Several authors acknowledge the importance of developing education plans for missionary families (Bowers, 1998; Renicks, in Bowers, 1998; Blomberg & Brooks, 2001).

The involvement of parents in the education of their children is examined extensively in the field of education. Upon examination of the literature regarding parent-professional education consultations, the vast majority of research conducted deals with schools endeavoring to increase parent involvement in the education of their children or typical parent-teacher conferences. The nature of services provided by many international education nonprofits differs from both of these situations; rather, in consulting with families, these organizations may assist in developing overall education plans for their children.

The first section below discusses the wide body of literature that affirms the influence of parent involvement on student achievement. In spite of the differences between international education nonprofits and typical North American schools in consulting with parents, a number of researchers identified key skills needed in effective parent-professional collaboration. These are discussed below in the second section.

The Effect of Parent Involvement

Henderson and Berla (1994) suggest that, “To those who ask whether involving parents will really make a difference, we can safely say that the case is closed” (p. x). Schools, teachers, and other professionals who deliver educational services agree that parent involvement does make a difference in student achievement. Grolnick and Slowiaczek (1994) defined parents’ involvement in children’s education as their dedication of resources to the academic arena of children’s lives (cited in Pomerantz, Moorman, and Litwack, p. 374). Some researchers (e.g., Hoover-Dempsey, Walker, Sandler, Whetsel, Green, & Wilkins, 2005, Downey, 2002, Becker & Epstein, 1982) differentiate between home-based parent involvement and school-based parent involvement. Regardless of this distinction, Hoover-Dempsey et al. (2005) confirm that parent involvement positively influences common indicators of student achievement (teacher ratings, grades, and test scores) across all grade levels.

For the purposes of this study, home-based involvement was of particular interest as it relates more closely to the involvement that expatriate families served by many international education nonprofits are able to have. Becker and Epstein (1982), and later Pomerantz et al. (2007), distinguish home-based involvement as activities related to school that occur outside of school. Pomerantz et al. describe home-based involvement as having children take part in intellectual activities, such as reading and museum visits, which are not directly related to their formal schooling. Downey (2002) identified home discussion as another effective aspect of home-based involvement.

Fan and Chen (2001) conducted a meta-analysis of quantitative research studies related to the effect of parental involvement on student achievement and vice-versa.

They found a "...small to moderate, and practically meaningful, relationship between parental involvement and academic achievement" (p. 1). In a review of family involvement studies, Henderson and Mapp (2002) assert that credible relationships were found between parental involvement and benefits for students across all demographic lines. Griffith (1998) found that there were correlations between enrollment in the gifted and talented program, being in the second grade, having more than one child from the same family enrolled in the school, and perceptions of the school as safe, positive, and empowering and higher participation in school activities.

While most studies and meta-analyses regarding parent involvement found positive relationships between this involvement and student achievement, Watkins (1997) specified that parent and child perceptions of parental involvement, rather than any particular activity or help they provided their children, were important factors for future study. While most studies suggest that parent involvement is always beneficial, there is a question that the authors of one study addressed in their discussion: is the expectation that a parent become involved in their child's education a cultural construct? Coll, Akiba, Palacios, Bailey, Silver, and DiMartino (2002) suggest that this is the case, writing that this expectation is a "cultural ideal rather than particular practice" (p. 319).

Several factors might motivate a parent to get involved in educational decision-making. Anderson and Minke (2007) suggest that parents are driven in large part by their beliefs about their own efficacy. Hoover-Dempsey et al. (2005) indicate that "...an increasingly multidisciplinary body of research supports the assertion that parents' attitudes, behaviors, and activities related to children's education influence

students' learning and educational success" (p. 106). Parent expectations and their effect on student achievement are discussed broadly in the literature. Parental expectations are consistently related to a child's academic performance (Downey, 2002; Fan & Chen, 2001), and in their quantitative meta-analysis of quantitative literature related to parent involvement, Fan and Chen identified parental expectations as having the strongest positive relationship with student achievement.

Parent-Professional Educational Consulting Skills

Core consulting skills.

Many international education nonprofit organizations provide consulting services to its constituents. Because of the nature of these consultations, studies in the field of education were especially germane to this discussion, and a number of core consulting skills emerged from a review of education literature. As stated above, most studies that were conducted in this area concerned school-parent or teacher-parent partnerships. While not the same as the context of the type of consulting considered in this study, several core consulting skills were identified and are discussed below. These skills could be relevant to the counseling or consulting conducted by any nonprofit organization.

The consulting skill most identified broadly was that of respect for the family. Both Murray, Christensen, Umbarger, Rade, Aldridge, and Niemeyer (2007) and Wang, Christensen, Umbarger, Rade, Aldridge, and Niemeyer (2007) suggest that professionals need to respect the values of the family, even if they are not in agreement with the professional's own personal values. Murray et al. (2007) write, "...for parents one of the most important ways that professionals can support the family is by

recognizing, accepting, and showing respect for the family's values as a guiding source for decisions concerning the child" (p. 114). Hoover-Dempsey et al. (2005) also recommend showing respect for the life and context in which families are operating. Respecting a family's concerns and requests, rather than focusing on a professional-initiated agenda, is an issue identified by Wang et al. (2007).

Exhibiting respect in all of these areas leads to a relationship of trust between parents and professionals (Blue-Banning, Summers, Frankland, Nelson, and Beegle, 2004). Wang, Mannan, Poston, Turnbull, and Summers (2004), Dinnebeil and Hale (1996), and Blue-Banning et al. (2004) also stress that professionals should treat families as equals in the decision-making process, and Wang et al. (2007) and Murray et al. (2007) suggest that families should be treated as the experts regarding their children and family.

Respect for families aligns closely with discussions regarding parent or family empowerment. Murray et al. (2007) suggest that professionals develop the ability to live with "professional dissonance" when families make choices that reflect different philosophies or opposite choices of what's been recommended. This ability to respect a family's choice allows for a mutually collaborative relationship. Murray et al. also advise the empowerment of families by regarding them as the experts in their own families and with their children, then recognizing the family's strengths, and finally, giving the family the time to process information and make decisions. Blue-Banning et al. (2004) add that professionals need to actively work to empower families and validate their perspectives.

Communication is another key area in consulting with families. Both Wang et al. (2007) and Blue-Banning et al. (2004) urge professionals use jargon-free speech. Blue-Banning et al. (2004) proceed to recommend that communication remain positive, honest, open, and tactful. Essentially, these authors recommend that professionals exhibit strong interpersonal skills all around, which the authors suggest, along with Wang et al. (2007), is exhibited in how a professional talks and how he or she listens. Blue-Banning et al. (2004) claim that both parents and professionals identify interpersonal relationships as integral to any collaborative partnership. Listening without judgment is also one of the keys to improving partnerships, according to Wang et al. (2007). Murray et al. (2007) argue that professionals must ask open-ended questions in order to obtain the most helpful information from parents.

Professional competence is key in any parent consultation. Blue-Banning et al. (2004) suggest that this includes knowing when to admit, “I don’t know,” and being able to find important information parents need. These authors also stress the importance of professionals demonstrating best-practice strategies in working with families.

Murray et al. (2007) and Hoover-Dempsey et al. (2005) urge professionals to offer options to families, along with the pros and cons of those options, in a non-biased manner. Hoover-Dempsey et al. (2005) indicate that by offering options, a professional is able to improve the parent’s role construction and sense of efficacy regarding their child’s education. This sense of efficacy is a factor in decision-making and the determination of parents to meet goals. Additionally, self-efficacy theory asserts that parents with a higher self-efficacy are more apt to consider likely outcomes of their

actions. Wang et al. (2007) also maintains that professionals will be able to avoid conflict by presenting options in a non-biased fashion. Blue-Banning et al. (2004) state that, “An equal partnership includes a sense of harmony or ease in the relationship” (p. 176). Two additional consulting practices recommended by Wang et al. (2007) are focusing on the strengths of the child and family, and maintaining the confidentiality of all proceedings.

Murray et al. (2007) provide recommendations for professionals from the perspectives of parents. A synthesis of these suggestions from parents’ perspective yielded the following themes:

1. Focus on the family’s and child’s strengths;
2. Acknowledge that the family knows the child and situation best;
3. Allow the family time to process decisions;
4. Share all options available to the family along with pros and cons;
5. Respect and support whatever choice the family makes.

Given the breadth of information above, one might ask if a nonprofit organization would be able to teach its staff members, or consultants, to exhibit effective consulting skills. Murray et al. (2007) acknowledge that effective consulting skills, such as guiding families through decision-making as collaborators rather than experts, are not generally taught to educators in their preparatory coursework.

Summers, Hoffman, Marquis, Turnbull, Poston, and Nelson (2005) add, “A better understanding of needed skills and behaviors would enhance training and practice, and appropriate measures would ensure effective evaluation of various intervention models provided within the context of a partnership” (p. 66). Blue-Banning et al. (2004) add

that “The types of behaviors and attitudes these study participants suggest as the components of positive partnerships on the whole do not require a major investment in new resources for education or other service systems” (p. 181).

Implications for consulting with families in cross-cultural educational settings.

While a discussion of issues specific to Third Culture Kids follows, there is some current literature that is particularly relevant to consulting services provided to expatriate families. “Feeling guilty about potentially “messaging up” their children’s lives through the circumstances of service overseas is a common malady among expatriate families the world over” (Blomberg & Brooks, 2001, p. 4).

Many expatriate families choose to educate their children in local national schools, which bears significantly on the consulting process. DeCarvalho (2007) maintains that more studies are needed focusing on family-school relationships in which cultures do not match in terms of values and home-based learning. This is complicated by that fact that it is not uncommon within expatriate families for the children to acquire both language and culture more quickly than one or both of their parents. In a study of Korean-American parents, Kim (2002) found that the English proficiency of parents was strongly related to their involvement in their children’s education. This issue may be relevant when families seek consultation from international nonprofits at a crisis-point in their child’s education, particularly when the child is in national school.

Especially when a third culture kid (TCK) is attending local national schools, obstacles involving language, culture, social interactions, and learning styles often arise. That is to say, opportunities for negative experiences related to competence may be

greater in this situation than when a child is in school in their home country. Pomerantz et al. (2007) state:

One attribute of children that may play a particularly significant role in determining the effects of the quality of parents' involvement: children's competence experiences (e.g., their achievement and perceptions of their ability)...Children with negative experiences may be particularly sensitive to the quality of parents' involvement because such children have a heightened need for the resources important to skill and motivational development. (p. 390)

This research has implications for consulting done by education-related nonprofit organizations. The resources and recommendations given by consultants working for such organizations need to acknowledge this heightened need of the children of the families with whom they consult.

Parent involvement of religious parents

The work of many faith-based nonprofit organizations centers broadly, if not specifically, around religion. When its constituents are primarily people who would identify themselves as religious, the work of the organization must take this factor into consideration. Many families, particularly missionary families, served by international education nonprofits would be categorized as fundamentalist Christians in terms of their religious beliefs. A study conducted by Sherkat and Darnell (1999) examined what effect, if any, parents' fundamentalism had on the educational attainment of their children. The data, from a study conducted in 1989, were broken down by gender and fundamentalism (shared beliefs with their parents) of the child. The authors drew three conclusions. First, non-fundamentalist daughters appeared to be "hampered" (p. 24) by

their parents in their educational attainment. Second, fundamentalist parents have about the same effect as non-fundamentalist parents on educational attainment for non-fundamentalist males and fundamentalist females. Third, fundamentalist parents appear to significantly “boost” (p. 24) the educational attainment of fundamentalist male children.

It was clear that the authors of this article held a bias against fundamentalism. The primary evidence of this lies in their speculation regarding correlations found in the data, which consistently painted fundamentalist parents negatively. For example, they speculate that, “young male nonbelievers may actually rebel against their parents’ anti-intellectual orientations...” (p. 30), clearly revealing to the reader that they equate “fundamentalist” with “anti-intellectual.” The authors cited fundamentalist literature throughout the study; however, they cited books not newer than 1984, particularly when explaining how fundamentalist families only believe in domestic futures for their daughters. Even in non-fundamentalist circles, career options for women have broadened significantly since 1984. This study was of particular interest as many international education nonprofits support families who many would label as fundamentalist. However, the biased nature of the study, using data that were 18 years old and defining fundamentalism in terms that were nearly 30 years old, yielded little that could inform practice in 2008.

Parent involvement in organizational activities

Finally, it is important to acknowledge that parent involvement in the education of their children does not take place in a vacuum. Many nonprofit educational organizations afford parents the opportunity to connect to professionals and one another

outside the walls of a particular school. By simply affording parents the opportunity to expand their social and professional networks, educational nonprofit organizations may be enhancing parent involvement among constituent families.

Sheldon (2002) found that the degree to which parents were involved at home or at school could be predicted by the size of the parents' social network. He added:

To the extent that network size may be considered a measure of the potential social capital to which a parent has access, my study shows that those with access to more social capital are more likely to be involved in their child's education. (p. 311)

Hoover-Dempsey et al. (2005) found that the self-efficacy of parents was strongly influenced by their child's school and important people in their lives. These opportunities, according to Hoover-Dempsey et al. (2005), would be likely to influence parents' role construction because it is shaped in part by the expectations of those in a parent's social group.

Another way nonprofit organizations may influence parental involvement is by offering resources to parents. Kim (2002) found that parent involvement is often dependent upon the resources available to them. This is relevant as several international education nonprofit organizations endeavor to make mother-tongue resources available to expatriate families, and some have even published their own resources for families (e.g., SHARE's *Fitted Pieces*).

Assessment Services

Most educational, faith-based nonprofit organizations are not regulated by government mandates affecting its services to constituents. In the current US political climate, testing and assessment are highly regulated activities that bear on future government approval and funding. International education nonprofit organizations are not subject to the same regulations, and so, in some sense, there is limited accountability for their assessment services.

Therefore, to inform the current study, current best practices in the field of assessment must be examined, along with the roles of parents and students in state-of-the-art assessment. Alternate types of assessment, particularly authentic or performance assessment, have emerged as alternatives to high-stakes testing, and due to the nature of the research questions proposed, need to be examined. A number of frameworks are suggested by different authors as tools to examine assessment practices. Finally, cultural factors within assessment tools and practices must also be examined, as this is a significant factor related to assessment and the proposed target group.

Best Assessment Practices

Many authors suggest that a wide variety of information and multiple means of assessment are needed in order to make critical decisions in education. Abrahm and Madaus (2003) affirm the need for multiple means of assessment to be considered instead of only one test when making educational decisions. Sandoval (2002) asserts that there must be "...use of observation, informal objectives-referenced testing, conferencing and portfolios to derive important information about achievement and other constructs" (p. 261).

In an article reflecting on his 25-year career researching assessment, Ysseldyke (2001) makes a number of recommendations regarding best assessment practice. He writes that educators must consider opportunities to learn, skill levels of the student and instruction, and other academic factors beyond measurement. He also adds, “We must consider home-school partnerships, community support, and other contextual factors in our effort to understand student performance and progress” (p. 304).

Another best practice regarding assessment concerns the training of assessors. Marzano (2002) found that the accuracy of measurement is positively related to the training of assessors, and that, “Perhaps the tasks of designing, scoring, and interpreting classroom assessments are important enough to deserve the benefits of more standardization and collective wisdom” (p. 265).

Several authors suggest frameworks for examining assessment tools and programs. Ysseldyke and Bielinski (2002) maintain that if testing data are to be used in order to draw conclusions about the effectiveness of special education services, it should not be cross-sectional, but rather longitudinal.

Marzano (2003) asserts that in 35 years of research, 11 school, teacher, and student factors have been identified that determine academic achievement. He categorizes them as:

School level factors:

1. A guaranteed and viable curriculum
2. Challenging goals and effective feedback
3. Parent and community involvement
4. A safe and orderly environment

5. Staff collegiality and professionalism

Teacher-level factors:

6. Instructional strategies

7. Classroom management

8. Classroom curriculum design

Student-level factors:

9. Home atmosphere

10. Learned intelligence and background knowledge

11. Student motivation (p. 58)

This suggests that any comprehensive assessment program would include many of these factors. However, Marzano warns against any school adopting without question all 11 of the factors above.

Uses of assessment

There is a wide variety of assessment uses, and as the current study questions are considered, the possible and appropriate uses of assessment information must be considered. Many authors consider the uses of norm-referenced tests, and Ysseldyke (2001) asserts that most have not been used to plan instruction for individual students, but rather to evaluate or provide accountability for schools and programs. Marzano (2003) agrees, stating plainly that, "Using measures of student learning that are not sensitive to the actual learning occurring in classrooms is the first mistake" (p. 56).

Recognizing that some believe that norm-referenced testing may be useful when linked to the curriculum, Ysseldyke (2005) maintains that it is a well-known fact that norm-referenced achievement tests do not match the curriculum taught in schools and

should, therefore, not be used to measure an individual student's achievement. He also adds that most curricula "defy analysis" (p. 127). Agreeing that in most cases, norm-referenced tests are not directly matched to curricula taught in the classroom, Marzano (2003) calls this "indirect learning data," stating,

When schools and districts use indirect learning data from standardized tests or standards-based state tests as the primary measure of student learning, they are operating like an individual who wants to improve his or her physical fitness and collects data by weighing him- or herself on a scale. (p. 57)

Kohn (2004) is opposed to high-stakes testing and norm-referenced testing, and strongly states that norm-referenced tests are not adequate measures of learning or instruction. He elaborates,

Thus, the least useful and most damaging testing program imaginable would be one that uses a norm-referenced exam in which students must answer multiple-choice questions in a fixed period of time and must do so every year, beginning when they are in the primary grades (The only way to make such a program more destructive, as we will see, is to attach high stakes to the results.) (p. 319)

An important question is related to the student's role in assessment, and if involvement in the assessment process leads to a greater sense of ownership of their education. Stiggins (2004) answers, stating, "The time has come for us adults to deepen our understanding of the relationship between assessment and student success *from the student's perspective*" (p. 25). In contrast to the typical idea that teachers and sometimes parents are the ones who use assessment information, Stiggins characterizes the student as the user of assessment information, calling them "...crucial instructional

decision makers whose information needs must be met” (p. 25), helping students identify their own strengths.

In an earlier article, Chappuis and Stiggins (2002) also considered student involvement in assessment, and maintained that students should take responsibility for their own learning by becoming assessment users themselves. They suggest,

Students engage in the assessment for learning process when they use assessment information to set goals, make learning decisions related to their own improvement, develop an understanding of what quality work looks like, self-assess, and communicate their status and progress toward established learning goals. (p. 41)

Chappuis and Stiggins (2002) see student independence in directing their own learning as the end goal of assessment.

The role of parents in assessment and their perceptions of the testing services provided by international education organizations are a critical component of the proposed study. Ysseldyke and Nelson (2004) discuss a perhaps unintended benefit of high-stakes testing – engaging parents. They write, “If parents are asking better questions regarding skill levels, standards’ requirements, and how to help improve their children’s learning and success, then this is a really important consequence [of high-stakes testing] that deserves further study and documentation” (p. 90). Further, they add that high-stakes testing may foster better communication between schools and parents regarding individual aspects of a child’s education, allowing both to play important assessment roles.

Characteristics of Authentic Assessment

Many forms of alternative assessments are discussed in the literature.

Quenemoen and Thurlow (2002) offer the following framework for examining the characteristics of alternative assessments:

1. There has been careful stakeholder and policymaker development and definition of desired student outcomes for the population, reflecting the best understanding of research and practice.
2. Assessment methods have been carefully developed, tested, and refined.
3. Professionally accepted standards are used to score evidence (e.g., adequate training, dual scoring, third party tie breakers, reliability tests and rechecks of scorer competence).
4. An accepted standards-setting process has been used so that results can be included in reporting and accountability.
5. The assessment process is continuously reviewed and improved. (p. 3)

In his book *Performance Assessment and Standards-based Curricula: The Achievement Cycle* (1998), Glatthorn identifies performance assessment, or what many educators call authentic assessment, as key in the classroom and in educational decision-making. He describes the following as characteristics of performance assessment: longitudinal, authentic, open, nonbiased, use of generative knowledge (requiring production and then use of knowledge), process-oriented, and student-oriented. Roach and Elliot (2005) suggest that all students need to have identified goals and objectives, and that a Likert-type scale be completed for each goal by the assessor/teacher. The authors maintain that this process, very similar to the IEP process

involving special education students, reflects more accurately and authentically the goals and achievement of students in the classroom.

Cultural Framework of Assessment Practices

Children of expatriate families are not being educated in typical US-American schools, and yet US-American norms are often applied to evaluate their test scores. Therefore, some level of cultural bias may come into play in the testing provided by these organizations. Authors such as Greenfield (1997) believe strongly that most standardized testing represents some level of cultural bias. She suggests that tests of academic ability presuppose a certain cultural framework, and that intelligence and cognitive ability tests are, in themselves, cultural genres. However, she adds a caveat that these tests may be appropriate at times for assessing the abilities of immigrants or other minorities within a dominant culture.

Research related to the Native American population and assessment is of particular interest, as this group shares with the proposed target group English mother-tongue status, and frequent use of US-American assessment tools without, in many cases, the experience of a US-American cultural background. Demmert (2005) discusses the problems of assessment within the Native American culture. He suggests that, "Unknown to a large extent are the influences of culture, environment, and other factors (e.g., offensiveness of materials; level of a students' acculturation; behavioral issues, perspective, or context) on a student's ability to do well on standardized tests" (p. 17). He identifies seven cultural factors in assessment:

1. Genetics, experiences, and culture significantly influence a person's cognitive development and understanding of the world in which he/she lives.

2. Cultural attributes are not static and evolve across generations.
3. Each of us has a different set of intelligences that may be predetermined or learned, but that we can build upon."
4. The context in which information is presented, or in which learning takes place, may enhance or impede a person's understanding.
5. One is not able to understand mental activity unless the cultural settings and resources are taken into account.
6. There is much to learn before we understand all of the nuances of testing and assessing groups outside of our own spheres of experiences and perspectives.
7. There is an ethical responsibility to develop a true collaboration with indigenous people when conducting research involving assessment of Native students. (p. 21)

Demmert also suggests these considerations be taken into account when assessing Native students:

- 1) the language of the home and the language of instruction, 2) the context and perspective from which questions are asked, 3) compatibility between the background knowledge of the student and the questions asked of the student, 4) the values and priorities of the community(ies) from which the student comes, 5) the ability of the assessor to create an atmosphere in which the students feel safe and comfortable, and 6) the vocabulary of the student and whether he or she understands the meaning of the words used in the assessment tool (p. 21)

These considerations are each directly applicable to assessment situations that children of expatriate families face. Berardi, Burns, Duran, Gonzalez-Plaza, Kinley, and

Robbins (2003) also conducted research regarding assessment issues regarding Native American students. They concluded that typical assessment methods “do not account for the cultural and contextual setting of a program” (p. 18).

Sandoval (2002) is concerned with “construct irrelevant variance,” which he defines as “the degree to which a test measures something extraneous to the construct the test was designed to measure” (p. 252). This is relevant to the current proposed study regarding the assessment of children not educated in their home culture. He identifies this as an opportunity-to-learn problem, stating that children who have not been educated in quality schools in the United States or other dominant Western cultures will not have the background knowledge needed to consider typical assessment measures an adequate measure of their skills or abilities. He adds that the problem of second-language learners could also be experienced, in terms of assessment, by those who do claim English as their mother tongue, but who are not typical of the group with which the test was developed. Sandoval adds one caveat: assessment in a second language or culture may in fact be relevant and necessary when language proficiency is the object of testing, or to determine admission to higher education settings in which the second language will be the student’s academic language.

Concerning the process of assessment, Sandoval (2002) encourages assessors (particularly psychologists) to ask questions regarding the familiarity of processes and materials, as well as knowledge or skills, to the test taker. He also encourages assessors to consider whether or not they have been sufficiently trained to reduce the effect of irrelevant constructs that are produced by low acculturation. He suggests the following process to achieve culturally sensitive assessment:

1. Identify preconceptions
2. Develop complex schemas or conceptions of client groups
3. Triangulation
4. Actively search for disconfirmatory evidence as well as confirmatory evidence
5. Resist a rush to judgment
6. Seek supervision
7. Distrust memory
8. Be conservative in interpreting tests
9. Consider construct irrelevant variance (pp. 256-57)

Thompson and Thurlow (2002) suggest that those who create assessments should approach the task much the way an architect endeavors to create a home using the principles of “universal design,” with a goal of developing assessments that allow the widest range of students to participate. They add that “...universally designed assessments must remove all non-construct-oriented cognitive, sensory, emotional, and physical barriers” (p. 3). The authors recommend that future assessments be more flexible, responsive to increasingly diverse, inclusive, and accountable schools.

Parent Education Services

The third service provided by many international education nonprofit organizations that needs to be examined through the lens of current literature is that of parent education. Many nonprofit service organizations provide education and/or training to their constituents, and many of these constituents are adults. Parent

education is almost entirely the work of schools or other nonprofit organizations, and findings related to parent education can be applied to any educational organization that works with both children and their families.

The conferences and workshops provided by nonprofit educational organizations differ from many examples found in adult education literature in that the context of the workshops is neither higher education nor parent training for parents in disadvantaged life situations. First and Way (1995) assert that, “There is no single conceptual or theoretical framework that guides the development of parent education programs” (p. 104). However, principles of state-of-the-art adult education should be examined in any analysis of parent training services offered by any educational nonprofit organization.

The transformative potential of adult education is a theme running throughout the literature. First and Way (1995) refer to adult education pioneer Freire, who wrote *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1970): “In Freire’s view, adult education should seek to raise consciousness regarding personal and societal oppression and serve to foster emancipatory action that may enhance human development” (p. 106). The life experience that adults bring to their studies is another key distinctive of adult education (Belzer, 2004; Knowles, Holton, & Swanson, 1998). The pedagogy of adult education centers on experiential education. In a study of best practices at adult-centered institutions, Mancuso (2001) identified that the most effective institutions exhibit a flexible, individualized, and adult-centered culture.

Below, current literature regarding transformational learning will be examined, followed by an examination of adult education literature in the related themes of authenticity and constructivism. Finally, two further characteristics of effective adult

education will be explored: job-embedded learning, and individualization of learning experiences.

Transformational Learning

Scholar Jack Mezirow is credited with the introduction of the concept of transformational learning in his 1990 book *Fostering Critical Reflection in Adulthood: A Guide to Transformative and Emancipatory Learning* (First & Way, 1995).

Transformational learning is regarded as the leading learning theory addressing the question of how adults best learn (Kiely, Sandmann, & Truluck, 2004, p. 22). Merriam (2004) provides a succinct explanation of transformational learning:

In transformational learning, one's values, beliefs, and assumptions compose the lens through which personal experience is mediated and made sense of. When this meaning system is found to be inadequate in accommodating some life experience, through transformational learning it can be replaced with a new perspective, one that is ... more developed. (p. 61)

Kiely et al. (2004) add, "Mezirow predicates his theory of transformational learning on the assumptions that most people are unaware of the origin of the meaningful structures that make up their worldview and justifications on which they base their beliefs, values, and actions" (p. 23).

Critical reflection is key to transformational learning (Cranton & Carusetta, 2004; Merriam, 2004; Brookfield, 2000). Mezirow (1997) asserts that the central tenants of transformational learning are, "critical reflection on assumptions, discourse to validate the critically reflective insight, and action" (p. 60). Cranton and Carusetta (2004) suggest that, "Transformative learning is a process by which previously

uncritically assimilated assumptions, beliefs, values, and perspectives are questions and thereby become more open, permeable, and better validated” (p. 6). Le Cornu (2005) found that critical reflection was a common theme among adult learning theories. Kiely et al. (2004) suggest that “disorienting dilemmas” engage adult learners in the processes suggested by Mezirow’s theory by helping them recognize their own distorted paradigms. In an exploration of parent education outcomes, First and Way (1995) recall the work of Apps, who posited that facilitating transformative learning occurs through teaching critical thinking:

This involves helping learners develop awareness of new and deeper ways of thinking that guides their decisions (on parenting), helping learners explore alternatives (to parenting) that may run counter to what they have long believed, helping learners work through transitions from familiar ideas or behaviors to new ways of thinking and acting (regarding parenting), helping learners achieve integration of new ideas with existing cognitive structures, and helping learners take action when it is appropriate to do so. (p. 108)

Mezirow (1990) himself stated that, “Every adult educator has a responsibility for fostering critical self-reflection and helping learners plan to take action” (p. 357).

According to “age theory,” reflection on life experiences naturally occurs more as people grow older (Trotter, 2006). Belzer (2004) suggests that the focus of theory and practice in adult education is often on the role of experience in building new knowledge. Lindemann, another of the early pioneers in adult education, wrote, “Experience is the adult learners’ living textbook” (cited in Belzer, 2004, pp. 9-10).

Self-reflection and self-assessment are recommended throughout adult education literature. Mancuso's (2001) study of adult-centered educational institutions identified an emphasis on self-assessment in effective adult-centered institutions. She also found that effective adult learning institutions used "prior learning assessment programs" to give credit for previous learning and plan for future coursework (p. 172). In a discussion of effective professional development practices for teachers, Hawley and Valli (2000) agree, adding that teachers should be involved in identifying what skills they need to learn and how they are to learn them.

Kiely et al. (2004), however, put the impetus of reflecting on prior learning on the adult educator rather than the student. They suggest that adult educators should learn as much as possible about their students, including their learning styles and personality types, to better teach to students' strengths and weaknesses. In a discussion of effective professional development practices for educators, Darling-Hammond and McLaughlin (1995) also encourage adult educators to allow opportunities to "observe, assess and reflect on new practices" and to be "participant driven and grounded in enquiry, reflection and experimentation" (p. 598).

Authenticity

Authenticity is a prevalent theme throughout adult education literature, and closely relates in many ways to the discussion of transformational learning above. Kreber, Klampfleitner, McCune, Bayne, and Knottenbelt (2007) maintain that the concept of authenticity is primarily a North American construct, and that, in the North American context, this construct has been discussed from the perspective of transformational learning theory. The authors discuss the panacea-like status of

authenticity, writing: ““Authenticity” is seen, for example, to make individuals more whole, more integrated, more fully human, more aware, more content with their personal and professional lives, their actions more clearly linked to purpose, “empowered,” better able to engage in community with others, and so forth” (p. 24).

Cranton and Carusetta (2004) clearly link authenticity and transformational learning in adult education, specifically stating that teachers who engage in self-reflection are more likely to be authentic. Jarvis (1992) maintains that “authentic action is to be found when individuals freely act in such a way that they try to foster the growth and development of each other’s being” (p. 113). Kreber et al. (2007) regards the role of authenticity in adult education as having been recognized widely as an important construct related to learning and development of teachers and students.

Constructivism

Constructivism is defined in educational professional development literature in the following way: “Constructivists believe that learners build knowledge structures rather than merely receive them from teachers” (Sparks, 1994, p. 27). Constructivism also closely relates to transformational learning. Constructivists use many of the same terms as transformational learning theory, and define constructivism as “...exploring, defining, reflecting, theorizing, and applying” (Belzer, 2004, p. 44). Interaction with prior experience is key in both transformational and constructivist learning theories. Erickson (2007) asserts that “Constructivists assume knowing to be an active process of constructing meaning or making sense of experience. Knowledge construction is an adaptive activity (von Glaserfeld, 1995) requiring interaction with experience” (p. 163). LeCornu (2005) agrees that knowledge construction involves reflection on experiences:

“Learning through experience contributes to the wider constructivist perspective that understands people to construct fundamental dimensions of themselves through the learning process” (p. 167).

Constructivism is generally described as a collaborative, social process. Kiely et al. (2004) suggested that, “Adult learning viewed through the context lens is fundamentally a social process that begins with adults as individuals and also, importantly, as “persons-in-society” (p. 193). Kegan (1994), in a discussion of the research of Magolda with university students, wrote that one of Magolda’s primary pedagogical principles is that “learning itself is conceptualized as mutually constructing knowledge” (p. 30). Citing the research of Alexander and Murphy, Hawley and Valli (2000) identify as one of their five broad principles: “Learning is a socially, as well as an individually, constructed enterprise” (¶ 22). Writing about effective professional development practices in education, both Darling-Hammond and McLaughlin (1995) and Hawley and Valli (2000) cite the effectiveness of collaborative problem-solving.

Job-Embedded Learning

Another primary tenet in adult education is that learning should be life- or job-embedded to the greatest extent possible (Mancuso, 2001; Trotter, 2006). Again citing the work of Magolda, Kegan (1994) identifies “learning situated within their experience” as a core pedagogical principle in educating university students (p. 30). The relationship between learner motivation and job-embedded learning is well-maintained by Trotter (2006), who found higher motivation in students when learning was related to their current role or transition. Knowles (1984) and Knowles et al. (1998) delineate characteristics of adult learners that distinguish them from child

learners. These characteristics include many traits that relate to the effectiveness of job-embedded learning for adults, such as more experience, a readiness to learn based on real-life situations, the relevancy of their current learning to current problems, and a stronger need to know why they are learning something.

Literature in the area of professional development in K-12 education is laden with recommendations for job-embedded learning. Examples of this can be found in Sparks (1994) and Darling-Hammond and McLaughlin (1995). Hawley and Valli (2000) suggest that,

“job-embedded” learning not only links learning to problems, but also allows teachers to see new strategies modeled, practice them, engage in peer coaching, acclimate students to new ways of learning, use new teaching and learning strategies on a regular and appropriate basis, and see the effects of newly learned behaviors. (¶ 10)

Much of the relevant literature found relates not only to adult education rooted in experience, but to instructional strategies which are themselves experiential. Brookfield (1995) readily acknowledges that adult learners learn best when they are actively involved in their own learning. Kiely et al. (2004) state that “For practitioners, situated cognition means finding ways to engage adult learners in more authentic activities that require learning for real-life problems and situations” (p. 25).

Individualization of Instruction

Another hallmark of effective adult education is individualization, tailoring the curriculum and teaching strategies to the individual needs of adult learners. This is not unique to adult education. Tomlinson (2001) and many others have written extensively

regarding differentiated instruction for students of all ages. The multiple intelligences and learning styles of adult students should be considered, according to Mancuso (2001). These researchers identified 13 key findings related to adult -centered institutions, and two of them relate directly to individualization. They are: the individual needs of adult learners are considered in curriculum design, and multiple instructional strategies are used to help adult learners meet their goals. In terms of specific strategies, many researchers discuss and recommend a shift from teacher-focused instruction to learner-focused instruction (Hawley and Valli, 2000; Kiely et al. 2004).

Third Culture Kids

When any service organization decides to evaluate its services, a close look must be taken at its stakeholders, and particularly those whom they purport to serve. International schools and education organizations often serve expatriate families. “Third Culture Kids” is a frequently-used term, identifying children who are raised in a culture other than their parents’ home culture. Pollock and Van Reken (1991) define the term thus:

A Third Culture Kid (TCK) is a person who has spent a significant part of his or her developmental years outside the parents’ culture. The TCK builds relationships to all of the cultures, while not having full ownership in any. Although elements from each culture are assimilated into the TCK’s life experience, the sense of belonging is in relationship to others of a similar background. (p. 19)

Pollack and Van Reken (2001) stress that no single factor should be used to define TCKS, but rather that the intersection of these factors is important to any discussion regarding TCKs: cross-culturally living, high community mobility, and occurrence of these during a child's formative years.

Some research has been conducted focused on internationally mobile adolescents. Gerner and Perry (2000) reanalyzed data from a previous study, and found some significant gender differences in examining the difference between those who have grown up overseas and those who have not. Their statistically strongest finding suggests that living overseas is a "crucial experience" for females to develop interest in international careers. Wrobbel (2005) studied the effect of an education in national schools abroad on the future college/university success of students in their home culture (the United States). She found that there was no statistically significant negative influence found on the subjects, and positive effects were seen in mean SAT scores and college/university grade point averages.

One question regarding a program of assessment for TCKs coming from a variety of educational settings and backgrounds relates to the standards against which they are measured. Glatthorn (1998) defines standards as a "statement of expected quality or performance" (p. 55), and suggests that educators look at the following in order to develop standards: state standards, state tests, professional organization standards, district curriculum, district tests, and teacher priorities. Of course, it is difficult to identify a single set of standards against which TCKs could be measured. Chapman and Snyder (2000) described the challenge of creating standards that applied across many African nations as part of an endeavor to assess and compare these nations.

Ultimately, fundamental quality levels were established which reflected agreed-upon minimum standards for schools in Africa.

How can one norm-referenced test be applied to TCKs who have been educated in a variety of settings? Glatthorn (1998) discusses “opportunity to learn” standards, defining them as a “specification of the resources needed by all students to achieve the content standards” (p. 23). Could opportunity to learn standards be measured for TCKs who are being educated in a wide variety of settings, including national (local government) schools?

Eagan (2003) makes an interesting distinction between socializing curriculum and academic curriculum that could come into play as educational services for TCKs are examined. He suggests that socializing curriculum has to do with what we want or expect children to know at points along the way in their education. He characterizes academic curriculum as a search for truth in the Platonic sense. As parent expectations for assessment are measured, it may be useful in the future to identify the socializing curriculum valued by these US-American parents raising their families overseas.

Conclusion

A case study of an international, faith-based, education organization has a distinctive perspective to offer by studying the organization’s unique combination of characteristics: faith-based, led and staffed solely by volunteers, and operating in a somewhat homogenous environment cross-culturally. This chapter has examined the current research literature related to these characteristics, as well as the services provided by many such organizations to its constituent families. A review of the

literature suggested three points of consideration. First, there appears to be little research regarding parent involvement in education which does not directly relate to schools and/or teachers. Second, the unique situation of TCKs and their families create unusual, and for the most part, unstudied, assessment challenges. Third, few studies were identified that involved parent education similar to that which is provided for expatriate families.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

This chapter shifts from the previous discussion of current relevant professional literature to the research study itself. The context of the study will be described first, and will be followed by a discussion of the research paradigm and specific research methods employed in the study. Finally, methods employed for the analysis and interpretation of the data will be described.

Context

SHARE Education Services is a faith-based, nonprofit international organization that was selected as the focus of this research. The mission of SHARE Education Services is: “SHARE Education Services exists to provide information, counsel, materials, and human resource support to help client parents in Europe, Russia, and Central Asia meet the education needs of their children” (SHARE Education Services, 2002). SHARE Education Services is a faith-based nonprofit organization headquartered in Budapest, Hungary, and the organization is registered as a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization in the United States. While the scope of the organization’s work is international, the staff and organizational structure might reflect that of a typical small, US-American nonprofit. SHARE focuses its services on the educational needs of children of North American families residing abroad. Other organizations, primarily the mission or humanitarian organizations by which these parents are employed, meet needs not directly related to K-12/academic education such as cross-cultural training and transition assistance (N.W. Elwood, personal communication, September 30, 2008).

SHARE was created in 1994 in Budapest, Hungary in response to the expressed need of mission organizations to provide educational support for their workers with children, in particular for families moving into newly-opened, post-Communist countries in Central and Eastern Europe (N.W. Elwood, personal communication, September 30, 2008). SHARE is a particularly homogenous organization in terms of its racial and religious makeup. All staff members are North American with the exception of two who are citizens of the United Kingdom. All staff members are white, college-educated, and would be classified as evangelical Christians by most. SHARE primarily, but not exclusively, provides services to North American families conducting mission or other non-profit work in its target region. Nearly every client of SHARE is white, US-American or Canadian, and highly educated. In a typical missionary family, both parents hold bachelor degrees, and in most couples, at least one person holds a graduate degree as well (Wrobbel, 2005). Some of the children in these families are being educated in the national schools of the host country, some are being home schooled, and a few attend international schools. Services are provided to families by offering workshops, conferences, educational testing, and consulting via email, phone, and in its offices. These services are discussed more thoroughly below.

Because SHARE is a small organization, it has a fairly flat organizational structure (see Appendix A). The President of SHARE resides in the United States, traveling to the SHARE office in Budapest four to five times a year. His primary responsibilities include fundraising and recruiting. The Executive Director resides in Budapest, overseeing all day-to-day operations of the organization. Both the President and the Executive Director participate in strategic planning for SHARE. Three Area

Directors report to the Executive Director, and are responsible for planning and implementing all activities in their assigned geographic region. The wide geographic scope is broken into three areas: Western Europe, Eastern Europe, and Western Russia/Central Asia. All other staff members work on one of the three area teams and report to that Area Director, but also may report directly to the Executive Director for organization-wide responsibilities. For example, the bookkeeper reports to the Executive Director regarding finances, but to the Central Area Director in that area's event and travel responsibilities.

In some sense, the staff of SHARE may be considered volunteers. Every staff member raises the funds for his or her own salary through churches and individuals in order to be employed by a North American mission organization. Each individual is then officially 'seconded' to SHARE by their mission organization. SHARE has no control over staff salaries, and though everyone does receive a salary for their work, it is, in a sense, self-supplied. This model of compensation is not atypical of mission organizations and other nonprofit ministries operated in the US (N.W. Elwood, personal communication, September 30, 2008). These factors make studies of the leadership and management of volunteers relevant to the current study.

In another sense, the staff of SHARE would not categorize their work with the organization as "volunteer work." The work that they do within the organization is their primary job, and they do receive a salary, though it is paid through the mission organization through which they raise funds and are officially employed. However, the relationship between SHARE and its staff is somewhat different than a typical employer-employee relationship. Staff members are encouraged to find their own niche

within the organization rather than receiving a defined role, and most decisions are made by some form of group consensus rather than by the leaders alone. When there are conflicts, either a leader within SHARE or an involved staff member usually brings their mission organization into the resolution process.

The board structure of SHARE is not unique among ministry/missions organizations (N.W. Elwood, personal communication, September 30, 2008). SHARE's primary constituents are missionary families, and as such, the organization's relationship with mission organizations is vital. Mission organizations may join SHARE for a fee, for which they receive the following benefits: reduced rates for SHARE conference attendance and testing for their families, SHARE personnel in attendance and available to consult with families at their annual conference, and a seat on the Board of Directors of SHARE. As of July, 2008, 15 organizations are members of SHARE and send representatives to the annual board meetings.

The SHARE budget for the 2007-08 fiscal year reflected income primarily generated from foundation grants (11%), gifts and contributions (13%), conference fees (25%), and organizational membership in SHARE (19%). Expenses related to direct services for client families totaled 51% of the overall budget (SHARE Education Services, 2007).

Unofficially, two "sister" organizations exist that have relied on SHARE heavily in their inceptions (AERC, 2008). The first is the Asia Education Resource Consortium, or AERC, and this organization's mission statement is: "The Asia Education Resource Consortium (AERC) exists to meet the educational needs of many expatriate families living in Asia. It provides important support and targeted services

through a network of regional conferences, family consultations, testing services, resource centers, and online resources” (AERC, 2008). AERC began providing services for families in 2001, and received its US non-profit status in 2006 (J.R. Blomberg, personal communication, August 4, 2008). The organization shares a similar service, staff, and board structure with SHARE, and serves similar constituents. Another similar organization is the Anchor Project, which represents an effort by at least four mission organizations to start a SHARE-like organization on the African continent. Its first conference is scheduled to be held in Niamey, Niger in January, 2009. One of the chief catalysts behind the Anchor Project is one of the founders and the first President of SHARE (D.R. Brooks, personal communication, May 18, 2007). These “sister” organizations have no official relationship with SHARE; however, the leaders of these organizations regularly interact, and share many of the same speakers and non-staff personnel (e.g., childcare workers) for their conferences.

SHARE staff and constituents would likely characterize SHARE as a missions support organization or a missions “member care” organization (N.W. Elwood, personal communication, September 30, 2008). “Member care” is a term used frequently among mission organizations, and refers to services available to workers in areas such as personal counseling, professional training, and family services – in general, services not directly related to the mission or humanitarian work being done day-to-day by one or both parents in a family. The stakeholders of the organization have a strong belief in the value of world missions, and believe that the work of SHARE contributes to that work.

While SHARE regularly solicits evaluation data from event participants, the organization has not engaged in formalized habits of continuous reflection and improvement, which may make the management and assessment of stakeholder expectations very difficult. The educational services of SHARE that will specifically be examined in this study are its consulting services, assessment services, and parent education services. These services are described in detail below.

Consulting Services

SHARE provides consulting services to its client families, and these consultations with parents take place via email, in person, and by phone. Typically, these consultations are parent-initiated, and occur when the family is at an educational crossroads or when a crisis in their child's schooling occurs. Issues such as educational planning and the implications of educational options (such as homeschooling) are common foci of consultation sessions. SHARE only initiates consultations with parents when their child has participated in SHARE-administered achievement or psycho-educational testing at a SHARE or mission agency conference. When SHARE provides testing services, every family who has a child tested receives a follow-up consultation with a staff member.

At conferences, staff members meet formally and informally with parents and consult with them on educational matters. Emails are received from parents who have learned of SHARE through their agency or from colleagues, and those are handled by the staff member with the appropriate expertise. Phone calls are also accepted and, less frequently, families visit SHARE offices in Budapest or Prague, where small resource centers are located.

Throughout its history, SHARE has attempted to provide training and support for its consultants. All staff members understand that educational consulting is part of their job description, and the amount of consulting each staff member performs varies from person to person. Some staff members only occasionally consult with parents to explain achievement test scores. Other consultants travel to most SHARE events to provide consulting services to client families. These assignments are generally made by the Executive and Area Directors.

Every fall, a Staff Training meeting is held for three days in order to further equip staff consultants. The Executive Director organizes and determines the topic(s) for these sessions. In some years, one or two speakers provide training with a targeted focus, such as homeschool curriculum. In other years, staff members each prepare a session in their area of expertise with a goal of presenting the most up-to-date information to other consultants. Generally, Staff Training meetings focus on areas in which SHARE consultants are frequently called upon to answer questions of client parents. Examples of these areas include second language issues, national school issues, and teaching reading. SHARE has also supplemented fees for consultants to attend a week-long workshop entitled “Sharpening Your Interpersonal Skills,” which is offered several times a year throughout Europe and is targeted toward those in missions-related work. New staff members are trained by sitting in on two to three consultations (with permission granted by the parent) with a more experienced consultant and then by leading two to three consultations with a more experienced consultant present. There is no formal follow-up to this process for new consultants.

Evaluation of SHARE's consulting services has been limited. At SHARE conferences, a conference evaluation generally asks participants if they participated in an individual consultation session at the conference and about their satisfaction with this service. Results of these questions are compiled by the Executive Director, with only general remarks shared with the entire staff. Consulting that is provided by other means, such as at mission conferences, via email, or by phone, has never been evaluated by SHARE.

Assessment Services

SHARE provides academic achievement testing and psycho-educational testing services to families at conferences and in its offices throughout the year. The ages of children tested range from kindergarten through 10th grade, with the majority between 3rd and 8th grade. Some parents have their children participate in annual achievement testing (such as the Iowa Tests of Basic Skills) in order to meet homeschool requirements in their US state of residency or origin. Others have their children tested periodically for their own information, particularly when they are homeschooling their child or when their child attends local national schools. Generally, parents express great interest in understanding how their child is progressing academically as compared with their same-age or same-grade peers in the United States.

From 1994 until 2004, SHARE offered achievement testing only via the Woodcock Johnson Tests of Achievement-R and Woodcock Johnson Tests of Achievement-III (WJIII). In 2004, a team of SHARE staff members began to research best practices and other options available for providing families with assessment services. This team made the recommendation to begin providing the Iowa Tests of

Basic Skills (ITBS) to families for the bulk of the testing load. The following reasons were given for this recommendation (SHARE Education Services, 2005):

1. Individually administered achievement tests (such as the WJIII) are designed to test for exceptionalities, not as a “check-in” for kids who are performing normally.
2. Group achievement tests actually cover more depth because the tests are designed and normed for children at a specific grade/age.
3. Group achievement testing will allow us to test more children at once, resulting in less testing time for SHARE consultants.
4. Less specialized training is needed for SHARE consultants to administer group tests; therefore, arrangements can be made more easily to offer testing in our satellite offices.
5. Currently, during conferences SHARE consultants who also test are unavailable to parents except during test consults because of the testing load.
6. Annual achievement testing is becoming a requirement of organizations such as SCAIHS [South Carolina Association of Independent Homeschoolers] with which our families are involved. Testing with an individual test such as the WJIII is not appropriate annually, even if forms A and B are alternated.

In the 05-06 fiscal year, SHARE began offering the ITBS to families at its own conferences. In response to increasing parental demands for tests of early reading skills and readiness, SHARE also began offering the Early Reading Diagnostic Assessment-R in 2006. This individualized test was recommended by an associate staff member with expertise in early reading development.

As of 2008, the qualifications of SHARE staff members who conduct testing are as follows. The Woodcock Johnson III Tests of Achievement are provided for families who have concerns regarding their child's academic progress but are not interested in a full psycho-educational battery of tests. The three staff members who primarily conduct this testing have master's degrees and experience in special education or experience in working with children with disabilities. All staff members have been trained in procedures related to conducting ITBS testing and scoring as this is the test most widely-offered by SHARE. The ERDA-R, which is designed for use by classroom teachers in kindergarten through third grade, is administered by SHARE staff members with early childhood or reading development experience. On occasion, training has been provided to relevant staff members regarding the ERDA-R and ITBS protocol and procedures. The only feedback solicited from client families regarding assessment services is captured through the SHARE conference evaluation survey described above. These conference evaluations ask which test the participant's child(ren) were administered, and about the ease of determining which test was correct for their child.

At one or two SHARE conferences each year, a US-licensed educational psychologist is available to perform a battery of psycho-educational tests (tests vary by child and psychologist) for parents who suspect that their child is struggling with a learning disability or ADHD. Generally, a different psychologist is recruited for each event by the President, Executive Director, or Area Director organizing the conference, with only a few being invited to work at more than one event. Informal feedback and conference evaluations suggest that parents are generally satisfied with the reports or

diagnoses they receive for their child, but complaints have been noted regarding the educational psychologists' awareness of services and resources that are not available to expatriate families.

Parent Education

SHARE conferences are conducted approximately four times a year, and afford missionary families the opportunity to interact with others in similar situations. The largest SHARE conference takes place in Hungary every year in late February or early March. In 2008, there were 267 participants at this conference. Smaller SHARE conferences take place four to five additional times throughout the year, and are coordinated by the Area Directors. Conference evaluation results indicate that families attend these conferences for a variety of reasons, the highest-rated being the opportunity to learn more about the educational situation of their children, and the opportunity for their children to participate in an English-language educational experience (at SHARE conferences, a "kids program" is provided during the day while parents are attending workshop sessions).

The plenary and workshop sessions at SHARE conferences are determined by the Executive Director or Area Director organizing the event. At the largest conference, the five-day conference held annually in Hungary, the Executive Director determines which workshops are needed by families new to the conference, and generally assigns these workshops to a SHARE staff member to conduct. Examples of these topics include TCK characteristics, transitioning between educational settings, and second language issues. The remainder of workshop slots is determined by the available space and speakers. The Executive Director is contacted by six to 12 people each year who

request the opportunity to conduct workshops at the next conference. These people generally have an area of educational expertise in the United States and express a desire to volunteer their time in order to assist missionary families, though in general, few of them have experience in living cross-culturally. The Executive Director selects workshop speakers based on these outside requests and the formal and informal feedback received from families regarding topics for workshop sessions. As stated above, conference evaluations are distributed and collected at SHARE conferences. Each plenary and workshop session is rated with a Likert scale of items, and the Executive or Area Director compiles the results. The general results of the conference evaluation are shared with the conference staff.

In addition to SHARE conferences, SHARE staff members act as support staff at a minimum of five conferences held per year by member agencies. At these conferences and workshops, SHARE's own staff members, as well as educators from the United States or Canada, may participate in providing a number of services. These include speaking on educational topics of interest to families, providing educational achievement testing (with tests such as the Iowa Tests of Basic Skills), and making themselves available to consult with families as needed.

Research Paradigm

As stated earlier, the purpose of this study is to examine the extent to which a faith-based, nonprofit organization meets the educational needs of expatriate families. Stated another way, this study endeavors to understand the educational needs of

expatriate families and the services provided to them by SHARE Education Services.

This is reflected in the primary research questions:

1. What are the expectations of SHARE's client families for the consulting, assessment, and parent education services provided by the organization?
2. To what extent do the services offered by SHARE satisfy the expectations of its client families?
3. Do the expectations of stakeholders vary by gender, proximity to SHARE's offices in Budapest and Prague, length of time the stakeholder has lived overseas, or geographic region?

A case study approach was selected for this research, with mixed methods of data collection strategies. Creswell (2003) defines case studies as an approach "in which the researcher explores in depth a program, an event, an activity, a process, or one or more individuals. The case(s) are bounded by time and activity, and researchers collect detailed information using a variety of data collection procedures" (p. 15). A case study approach is particularly appropriate when a program is individualized (Patton, 2002), which is true of programs offered by organizations such as SHARE.

Yin (2003) identifies two technically critical features in the research design of case studies. The first is that the investigation occurs within its "real-life context" (p. 13), particularly when the boundaries between the context and the phenomenon studied are unclear. The second feature, concerning data collection and analysis strategies, is that case studies are appropriate when qualitative variables are of interest that will need to be triangulated by the researcher. This study benefits from the use of case study research and these features of study design in order to answer the research questions

posed. The context and the services of SHARE, discussed in detail above, are intrinsically linked, with critical contextual factors such as educating children overseas, and educational options available in particular overseas locations. Both quantitative and qualitative data were needed to answer the research questions posed in this study.

According to Patton's (2002) typology of research purposes, the purpose of this study aligns most closely with formative evaluation as it is user-focused and its purposes include suggesting actions for improvement in the services of SHARE and similar organizations. This is not incompatible with a case study research design. Yin (2003) writes that case studies hold a distinctive place within the realm of evaluation research, and identifies five possible applications for case studies within this realm. The first is to explain the "causal links" (p. 15) in interventions that are too complex for surveys or experiments to illuminate. Second, case studies may be applied to describe both an intervention and its context. Third, a case study can serve to illustrate aspects of an evaluation, and fourth, can explore situations in which no set outcomes have been identified for an intervention. Finally, a case study may serve as a meta-evaluation. The results of this study can be utilized in particular for the second and fourth applications. The data describe both interventions (the services of SHARE) and the context in which those services are provided. No specific outcomes have previously been identified by SHARE in these service areas, and this situation can be explored more thoroughly through case study research.

This case study is based upon a single case: the program of services offered by SHARE Education Services. Yin (2003) identifies five possible rationales for the selection of a single case for case study research. The first would be if the case

represents the critical case, meeting all conditions called for in order to test a theory. The second is when a single case represents an extreme or unique case, and the third rationale would be when a single case is the representative or typical case. Fourth, the case may be a relevatory case which was previously unavailable for researchers. Finally, a rationale for a single-case study is the longitudinal case, when the same case is studied at two or more points of time. This study meets the criteria for the third rationale for the selection of case study research. SHARE Education Services is a representative case of a faith-based educational nonprofit organization serving expatriate families, and is therefore appropriate as a single case (Yin, 2003). As discussed previously, SHARE is one of three such organizations in the world, the others serving families in Asia and Africa. As of 2008, another is in the very early formation stages in Central and South America.

A final important aspect of this study is that it meets the definition of “backyard research,” (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992) as the researcher was a staff member of the organization being studied. There are several benefits to this type of insider research: there is a greater understanding of the context, less need to rely on second-hand information, and opportunity to see things that may elude those who aren’t as familiar with the programs (Patton, 2002).

Research Methodology

Mixed methods were used in this study to answer the research questions posed. In order to answer the research questions, the case had to be examined from a number of perspectives, which is one of the primary reasons for using multiple measures

(Fitzpatrick, Sanders, & Worthen, 2004). These data were collected simultaneously over the course of two months, consistent with a concurrent, mixed-methods design (Creswell, 2008). Quantitative data were collected through a survey of families served by SHARE throughout its target region. However, surveys alone are not able to illuminate the context of a program as well as case studies (Yin, 2003). Therefore, consistent with the sources of evidence most commonly used in case studies described by Yin (2003), qualitative data were also collected through focus groups and interviews with a sample of client families of SHARE, as well as open-ended questions on the survey itself. Yin (2003) asserts that “one of the most important sources of case study information is the interview” (p. 89). Below, strategies used in the development of the survey instrument and format of focus groups and interviews will be described.

Survey Instrumentation and Procedures

A 29-question survey was developed in order to ask subjects about their experiences with SHARE and about themselves. This was an original survey designed by the researcher in order to address the research questions. In order to determine if expectations are being met by SHARE, expectations of client families needed to be identified, as stated in the first research question, “What are the expectations of SHARE’s client families for the consulting, assessment, and parent education services provided by the organization?” To accomplish this, survey participants were asked what they believed to be the educational information and service needs of families new (in their first two years) to overseas living. Participants were also questioned regarding families more experienced (three years or longer) in overseas living. Regarding

assessment, information was solicited about their reasons for seeking testing in order to ascertain their information needs that resulted in requests for testing.

Once expectations were established, survey questions could address the second research question, “To what extent do the services offered by SHARE satisfy the expectations of its client families?” Subjects were asked about each of the services of SHARE on which this study focuses: consulting, assessment, and parent education. For each service, participants were asked about their use of the service (frequency), their reasons for seeking out the service, and their satisfaction with the quality of service SHARE provides. One open response question was offered regarding each service. The final research question, which asked if expectations for SHARE’s services varied by gender, geographic region, proximity to SHARE’s offices, or number of years lived overseas, was addressed by collecting demographic information at the end of the survey. The survey can be found in Appendix B.

Two adults who raised children while working as missionaries overseas completed a pilot version of the survey. Neither of these adults were part of the subject sample for this study as neither has school-aged children at present and one no longer lives overseas. Based on their feedback, minor adjustments in the survey instrument were made.

In some cases, missing data were assumed to be “no” responses. For example, if a participant did not indicate that they had a child in a local national school, it was recorded as a “no” response. In most cases, however, missing data were left as missing. Therefore, while the total number of surveys submitted was 162, N does not always equal 162 in many of the statistical operations.

Focus Groups and Interviews

Interviews, both with individuals and groups, were selected as the primary source of qualitative data for this study. Creswell (2008) states that interviews are particularly useful when participants cannot be observed directly, which is certainly the case when discussing with an individual the education of their children overseas. Focus groups were selected as a data collection method in addition to individual interviews for several reasons. First, focus groups are an efficient method of understanding underlying factors and forces (Krueger, 1994). Second, Kvale (1996) maintains that the interaction within focus groups can lead to “spontaneous and emotional statements about the topic being discussed” (p. 101). Finally, Krueger and Casey (2000) assert that focus groups can enhance data quality by providing checks and balances on the information offered.

To guide interviews and focus groups, a flexible question guide was developed by the researcher based on the study research questions (see Appendix C). Yin (2003) asserts that case study interviews are generally open-ended, where respondents are asked about both facts and their opinions. First, participants were asked questions regarding the experiences of families educating their children overseas, and the discussion was delineated by asking questions about families new to overseas living and those with more experience. Next, participants were questioned about each specific service of SHARE addressed in this study (parent education, assessment, and consulting). Questions regarding their use of, expectation for, and satisfaction with each service were posed. Finally, participants were asked to complete the open-ended sentence “I really wish that SHARE would (blank)” in order to elicit suggestions for improvement in SHARE’s services.

Two focus groups, one composed of six men and the other of six women, and seven interviews were intended to help identify what challenges are faced by expatriate parents as they educate their children abroad, and how SHARE has or has not helped families facing these challenges. Both focus groups lasted approximately 90 minutes. Interviews were conducted with four women and three men, and lasted from 30 to 45 minutes. Specific focus group and interview questions can be found in Appendix C. This flexible question guide was used, along with additional queries regarding specific responses when appropriate. Interviews were conducted in person during the 2008 SHARE Family Education Conference, held in Balatonfüred, Hungary. Digital recordings were made of these sessions with the permission of all participants in order to allow the researcher to listen and determine appropriate queries.

Subject Recruitment

All missionary parents who attended SHARE conferences in the spring of 2008 (N=282) were invited to participate in this study, either through participation in focus groups, interviews, or surveys. Additionally, the entire population of parents who lived in Europe in SHARE's database was invited to participate through an Internet survey. The only client families not invited to participate in this study were families who live in Russia or Central Asia and who did not attend one of the three SHARE conferences in that region during the spring of 2008. Some of these families are working with non-faith-based NGOs (non-government organizations), and any identification with Christian mission organizations might put their work and/or families in jeopardy, so SHARE asked that emails inviting them to participate in any survey related to the work of SHARE, an organization with known faith-based roots, not be sent.

Survey participant recruitment

All adults who attended a SHARE conference in the spring of 2008 (N=282) were invited to participate in the survey. In a general conference session, the survey was introduced, with benefits to SHARE and of this study explained. The surveys were contained along with conference materials in a folder or distributed at this time. It was emphasized that participation was entirely voluntary and anonymous, and locations of where they could turn in the survey and those of whom they could ask any questions were designated. A small incentive was offered to those who participated in the survey at the Hungary SHARE conference. When each survey was submitted, the participant received a number for a drawing held at the end of the week for one small gift bag of American grocery items such as brownie mixes and cookies.

For those recruited for participation in the internet survey, the internet survey link was contained within an email (see Appendix D) inviting participants to click on the link and take the survey (which was identical to the survey administered in person at SHARE conferences). The purposes of the study were explained, as well as an explanation of why participants were included in the survey. The researcher's email was included for those with any questions, along with an assurance of anonymity. No person other than those to whom the link was emailed had access to this internet survey. Recipients of the email link received one reminder via email encouraging their participation.

Focus group and Interview recruitment

For focus groups and interviews, participants at the SHARE Family Education Conference were chosen for a number of reasons. First, this site would yield the most possible participants in one place at one time. Patton (2002) states that researchers

should “pick the site that would yield the most information and have the greatest impact on the development of knowledge” (p. 236). Second, it was beyond the budget of this study to travel throughout Europe, Russia, and Central Asia. Maximum variance sampling was employed to select participants with the widest range of characteristics including number of children, gender, geographic area, and past participation in SHARE conferences. This case sampling illustrates what is “typical, normal, [and] average” (Patton, 2002, p. 243).

Potential participants were selected using the registration roster for the 2008 Hungary Family Education Conference. Using maximum variation sampling, invitees were selected by considering factors including their country of residence, number of children, and past participation in SHARE conferences. Those who were invited to participate in a focus group or interview received an email approximately one week before the conference (see Appendix E). In the email invitation, the purposes and nature of the research study were explained, along with how participants were chosen, and the pertinent times, dates, and locations. Those invited were assured of complete confidentiality, and given the researcher’s email to which they could respond to the invitation and/or ask any questions.

Data Analysis Strategies

Quantitative Data

Quantitative data were collected through a survey offered to all adult participants in a spring 2008 SHARE conference, as well as all adults who are parents living and educating their children in Europe and existing in SHARE’s current database. In order to

address the first research question, “What are the expectations of SHARE’s client families for the consulting, assessment, and parent education services provided by the organization?”, data collected in response to these questions were analyzed through descriptive statistics regarding the frequency and percentage of responses. Responses to questions determining expectations of SHARE, which were not scaled data, were put into frequency charts, and are reported as the percent of respondents who selected each expectation by gender, geographic region, or length of time overseas.

In order to address the second research question, participants were asked about the extent to which SHARE satisfies their expectations regarding parent education, assessment, and consulting services. Participants were asked specific questions regarding the helpfulness of each of the services provided, and then asked about their overall satisfaction with each service. These data were analyzed separately and then grouped together by service (i.e. all conference satisfaction scores) to determine means and percentages for overall satisfaction scores for each service.

The final research question was addressed by asking if these expectations varied by gender, proximity to SHARE’s offices in Budapest and Prague, length of time families have lived overseas, or geographic region. In order to determine if any statistically significant correlation existed between client satisfaction and variables involving satisfaction scores, linear regression and ANOVA analyses were conducted in SPSS 16.0. The appropriate analyses were conducted between each individual rating and possible predictors (gender, etc.), as well as between composite conference, testing, and consulting scores and possible predictors. Scatterplots, best fit lines, residuals and standard error of estimates were examined in order to explore the fit of the model.

Qualitative Data

Qualitative data were collected through two focus groups and seven interviews, as well as open-ended survey questions. Throughout the data collection process, themes found in the interviews and focus groups were identified and then addressed in later interviews and focus groups. Digital recordings of interviews and focus groups were later transcribed, and transcriptions were coded by color according to topics and themes identified. After a second review, all comments and notes coded in the same color were cut and pasted into a second document, which were reread to analyze the information. A summary was then compiled regarding each topic, and basic simple statistics were calculated (i.e., percent of interviewees who mentioned a particular topic). Quantitative and qualitative data were analyzed concurrently and converged by the researcher in order to determine a comprehensive analysis (Creswell, 2008). Additionally, areas of consistency or disagreement with the quantitative data results were identified.

Summary

This study examines the extent to which a faith-based, nonprofit organization meets the educational needs of expatriate families. A mixed method, case study approach was used in this study to address the research questions posed. Qualitative data were collected through focus groups and interviews conducted with participants at a family education conference conducted by SHARE Education Services, as well as through open-ended survey questions. These data were then analyzed by identifying themes and topics which ran through several interviews and/or focus groups. Quantitative data were collected through a survey completed by 162 participants who are client families of

SHARE, and analyzed through appropriate statistical measures. The quantitative data are given context and illustrated by the qualitative data.

CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS

The purpose of this study is to examine the extent to which a faith-based, nonprofit organization meets the educational needs of expatriate families. The following research questions are asked:

1. What are the expectations of SHARE's client families for the consulting, assessment, and parent education services provided by the organization?
2. To what extent do the services offered by SHARE satisfy the expectations of its client families?
3. Do the expectations of stakeholders vary by gender, proximity to SHARE's offices in Budapest and Prague, length of time the stakeholder has lived overseas, or geographic region?

A mixed-method case study approach was used to answer these research questions. The quantitative data were obtained from a survey administered to 162 participants. Qualitative data from two focus groups and seven interviews, as well as open-ended responses to survey questions, serve to illustrate and add depth to the quantitative data. This chapter begins with a description of the sample. The remainder of the chapter is organized according to the research questions.

Description of the Sample

To address the research questions, the sample for this study included expatriate missionary parents of school-aged children who are currently clients of or eligible for services from SHARE Education Services, who are spread throughout the target region of the organization.

Rationale for Selection

The subjects are all missionaries who are employed by North American mission organizations, which is the primary clientele of SHARE. At least one parent, and in nearly every case both parents, is from the United States or Canada. A higher percentage of women responded to the invitation to participate in this study. Seventy-two percent of survey participants were women, and fifty-seven percent of interview participants were women. Every subject had at least one child who was under the age of 18. Most subjects (96.8%) had children who would be considered “school-aged,” or ages six to 18.

SHARE provides services to expatriate families who are living in Europe, Russia, and Central Asia. To the maximum extent possible, sampling was varied by geographic region. Participants were invited to complete surveys at SHARE conferences in Hungary, Turkey, Uzbekistan, the Kyrgyz Republic, and Tajikistan. All members of SHARE’s database of families across Europe were invited to participate in an internet version of the survey (internet surveys were not sent to families serving in Central Asia and Russia due to security concerns discussed above). Table 1 reflects the geographic diversity of the survey sample. Eleven participants did not respond to the question regarding what country they live in, and this is indicated in Table 1. Fifty-four percent of these respondents indicated that they lived in the capital city of the country in which they lived.

Table 1

Survey Participants by Country

<u>Country</u>	<u>Number of survey participants</u>	<u>Country</u>	<u>Number of survey participants</u>
Albania	1	Kosovo	7
Austria	2	Macedonia	7
Belgium	1	Morocco	2
Bosnia	1	Poland	2
Bulgaria	15	Portugal	1
Croatia	6	Romania	4
Czech Republic	7	Slovak Republic	5
Estonia	1	Spain	2
Finland	1	Sweden	2
France	1	Tajikistan	19
Germany	5	Turkey	11
Greece	4	Ukraine	8
Hungary	6	Uzbekistan	12
Ireland	1	Not reported	11
Italy	1		
Kyrgyz Republic	16	TOTAL	162

For the qualitative research (focus groups and interviews), participants were selected and invited using maximum variation sampling of factors including geographic diversity. Focus group one was composed of six women, two of whom lived with their families in the Czech Republic, and the others in Macedonia, Albania, Kosovo, and Turkey. Focus group two was composed of six men, with two living in Ukraine, and one living in Sweden, Austria, Macedonia, and Bulgaria. Seven interviews were conducted with four women and three men. Participants lived in Croatia, Greece, Kosovo, Albania, and the Slovak Republic.

Number of Subjects

Survey participants

There was a potential sample pool of 183 for participation in the survey in person at a SHARE conference in Europe or Central Asia during the spring of 2008.

Additionally, the SHARE database for Europe available for internet surveys (the total database minus the emails of those who had participated in conferences) was 285. Sixty-five emails inviting participation in the internet survey bounced back, leaving a total of 220 valid email addresses. Therefore, the total number available for participation in the survey was 403. There were 162 surveys returned, for an overall total return rate of 40.2%. The average return rate at SHARE conferences was 66.7%, while the return rate for internet surveys was 18.18%. Results are summarized in Table 2 below.

Table 2

Survey Rate of Return

	Population	# surveys returned	Rate of return
At SHARE Conferences	183	122	66.7%
Via internet	220	40	18.2%
Total	403	162	40.2%

Focus group and interview participants

Nine men and nine women were invited to participate in focus groups at SHARE's 2008 Family Education Conference. Four women and four men were invited to participate in an interview at the same conference. With 99 adults in attendance, this constituted a sample of 26, or 26.3% of adult participants in the conference. Nineteen

people actually participated in a focus group or interview, making the overall sample size 19.2% of the total of participants.

The Survey Sample

A total of 162 surveys were received, with 72% female and 23% male respondents (five percent of respondents left “gender” blank). Respondents lived in countries throughout SHARE’s target region, with the highest percentage of respondents (19, or 11.7%) in Tajikistan (see Table 1 above). Twelve respondents indicated that they have lived overseas for more than 15 years. Of those who have lived overseas less than 15 years, the average number of years lived overseas is approximately 7.5. Twenty percent of survey participants have lived overseas three years or less. Table 3 indicates the distribution of the number of years respondents have lived overseas.

Table 3

Number of Years Survey Respondents have Lived Overseas

<u>Years Overseas</u>	<u>Percent of survey respondents</u>
In first year overseas	5.8
2 to 3	14.2
4 to 5	10.3
6 to 7	12.3
8 to 9	14.2
10 to 15	35.5
More than 15	7.7

Another important characteristic of the sample had to do with the schooling option(s) in which their children were participating. Over half (53%) of respondents, both new and experienced in overseas living, had at least one child educated through home schooling. Table 4 indicates the percentage of use among survey participants of all education options. The data are broken down by whether a participant has lived overseas for three years or less, or more than three years.

Table 4

School Options Used by Children of Survey Respondents

School Option	Percentage of survey respondents who have a child educated through this school option	
	Participants with 0-3 years overseas	Participants with >3 years overseas
Homeschooling	58.1	54.0
Local national schools	41.9	34.7
MK (missionary kid) schools	19.4	20.2
Other	9.7	5.6
Other international schools	3.2	10.5
Internet schools	0	12.1

Note. Percentages do not add up to 100 percent because some respondents have more than one child and may not use the same school option for each child.

Survey respondents were also asked about the ages of their children. Nearly 36 percent had at least one child who was 13 to 14 years old. Only 5.5 percent had children who were 19 years old or older. Table 5 details the distribution of ages of children of all survey respondents.

Table 5

Ages of the Children of Survey Respondents

<u>Ages of Children</u>	<u>Percentage of respondents who have at least one child this age</u>
Infant	6.2
1 to 2	18.5
3 to 4	21
5 to 6	34
7 to 8	37
9 to 10	34
11 to 12	34
13 to 14	35.8
15 to 16	26.5
17 to 18	9.9
19 or older	5.5

Research Question One: Expectations of SHARE's Services

The expectations of SHARE's client families for the parent education, assessment, and consulting services provided by the organization are identified by answering the first research question.

Results Related to Expectations for Parent Education Services

Families New to Overseas Service

Survey results

Only 27.6% of survey participants indicated that they were "adequately prepared" or "very well prepared" for educating their children overseas. In other words, 72.4% of survey participants felt that they were inadequately prepared for educating

their children overseas prior to moving overseas. In order to determine what educational information was most needed by families who were in their first two years of overseas service, survey participants were asked to indicate the highest priority needs out of a list of eight choices (including “other”). The results are indicated in Table 6 below. By more than double any other item, “pros and cons of various educational options” was indicated by nearly 73% of all respondents as one of the highest priority educational information needs of families new to overseas living. The next-highest need was “typical language development for children related to learning a second language,” indicated by nearly 38% of participants.

Table 6

Survey Results Indicating the Primary Information Needs of Families New to Overseas Living

Information Needs	Percent of survey participants indicating this issue is a chief parent education need
Pros and cons of various educational options	72.8
Typical language development for children related to learning a second language	37.7
Characteristics of Third Culture Kids (TCKs)	35.2
Methods related to home schooling or supplementing national schooling	32.7
The importance of developing a family education plan	32.1
How learning styles impact the education of children	20.4
Normal developmental milestones for children as related to language and learning	19.1
Other	8.0

One open question was included regarding the information needs of families new to overseas living. Responses included a need for information regarding helping children with special needs, transition issues, and specific academic expectations appropriate for children at every level. Two respondents indicated that the need for information depended on the ages of the children in the family. One participant indicated a need for information regarding the “educational and child raising values of the culture where they are living.”

Focus group results

A few of the focus group participants indicated that prior to moving overseas they had attended an educational seminar for families which is co-sponsored by SHARE and Interaction International, a US-based nonprofit focused on serving the needs of TCKs (third culture kids). A male focus group participant stated that the highest priority need of families who are new to educating their children overseas was to have an educational plan in place.

Several participants indicated that new families need to be connected with families who are more experienced in educating their children overseas. Two male participants encouraged SHARE to develop a network of coaches, parents who had lived overseas and educated their children for many years, and who could dedicate a percentage of their time to serving as a mentor. Another participant affirmed this thought in the women’s focus group, suggesting that the most important service SHARE could provide for families new to the field was reassurance and availability from SHARE and veteran parents.

Issues related to attendance at local national schools were the most-mentioned topic when asked about information needed by new families. A female participant emphasized the critical role that attendance in national schools could play in language learning for children. Other benefits of national schooling mentioned were helping with children's acculturation and in making friends.

Several additional expectations were stated for SHARE in the area of parent education for new families. A female participant noted a North American paradigm of viewing education in SHARE's conferences, and remarked that this was not particularly helpful for a family new to educating their children overseas. One example she gave of this was from a workshop concerning home schooling curricula she had attended earlier in the day. One of the speakers, a North American home schooling mother and expert with no experience living overseas, emphasized that if curricula were purchased that parents later found to be inappropriate for their child, they could return it through the mail or sell it used to other home schooling parents. This focus group participant felt that this was impractical information for many of the families in attendance, including herself, as mail service in their area of Eastern Europe is unreliable and opportunities to post materials for sale online were difficult given frequent power and internet outages.

Interview results

A few interviewees indicated that they had attended an educational seminar for families prior to moving overseas. An additional interviewee stated that he had attended a pre-field seminar for families sponsored by a mission support agency. One female interviewee did not receive any basic information related to raising or educating children overseas before her family moved to Eastern Europe. She stated that this

would have been helpful, but that she probably would not have fully grasped the issues prior to her experience of living overseas.

Issues related to attendance at local national schools were the most-mentioned topic when asked about information needed by new families. The need for help in adjustment to national schools was underscored by one female interviewee, as well as a desire by her and other parents to be present and visible in the school in order to thwart anti-American sentiments and teacher cruelty. Two male interviewees emphasized the critical role that attendance in national schools could play in language learning for children. Other benefits of national schooling mentioned were helping with children's acculturation and in making friends. Another male interviewee also mentioned that families may experience a mismatch between a child's learning styles and preferences and the teaching style often found in national schools.

One male interviewee indicated that the primary need of families who are new to educating their children overseas was to have an educational plan in place. He told of a family who had no such plan in place and moved their children often between educational settings. He indicated that these children are now ill-adjusted both socially and educationally. A female interviewee also emphasized the need for new families to understand what the educational options were for each child. Two other interview participants, one male and one female, stated that the primary need of new families was cultural adjustment. One female participant believes that this is especially true for those who homeschool, and shared her observations of several homeschooling families who moved overseas with no interruption in their education and maintained a somewhat insular lifestyle.

Several participants indicated that new families need to be connected with families who are more experienced in educating their children overseas. One female interviewee stated that this would be the “most beneficial” and “very most helpful” service that SHARE could provide for new families. Another interviewee suggested that SHARE network more among its clients and member organizations in order to locate new families, as many new families may not know of SHARE’s services.

Families Experienced in Overseas Living

Survey results.

To determine what educational information was most expected by families who are experienced (three years or longer) in overseas living, survey participants were asked to indicate the three primary needs out of a list of eight choices (including “other”). The results are indicated in Table 7. Results indicate that the information most needed by veteran families regarded the characteristics of Third Culture Kids (TCKs), with 29% of respondents indicating this as a highest priority need. This was followed closely (28.4%) by a need for information regarding methods of home schooling. One open question was included regarding the informational needs of families experienced in overseas living. Responses included a need for information regarding transition issues, methods for teaching specific subjects, and college preparation. Five respondents answered that it greatly depended on the age or “make-up” of the children in the family.

Table 7

Survey Results Indicating the Primary Information Needs of Families Who Have Lived Overseas Three Years or More

Information Needs	Percent of survey participants indicating this issue is one of the primary three needs
Characteristics of Third Culture Kids (TCKs)	29.0
Methods related to home schooling or supplementing national schooling	28.8
How learning styles impact the education of children	24.1
Normal developmental milestones for children as related to language and learning	19.1
The importance of developing a family education plan	16.7
Typical language development for children related to learning a second language	10.5
Pros and cons of various educational options	8.6
Other	6.8

Focus group results.

Results were varied regarding educational information needed by families who had lived overseas three years or longer. Two male focus group participants indicated that additional information was needed by families of high-school-aged children, both because of the more rigorous academics called for in homeschooling situations, and in order to prepare both academically and emotionally for the transition from high school to college back in the family's home country.

Another male participant mentioned that SHARE could support families in dealing with the repercussions of homeschooling, particularly in Western Europe. He

elaborated on the need of parents for support and information as they dealt with local education officials and with colleagues, especially non-North-American colleagues, regarding their choice to home school. A female participant stated that one of the primary challenges for homeschooling families was the distance from libraries or other resources needed to support homeschooling. Another female participant echoed a sentiment also expressed by many regarding families new to the field, stating that families in any stage could benefit from the experience of those who are more experienced in terms of number of years overseas or in terms of the ages of their children.

One significant topic of discussion in the men's focus group had to do with the role of fathers in the education of their children. One male participant mentioned this as a "growth area for SHARE" in terms of parent education. Regarding homeschooling, helping fathers understand their role in academics, motivating their children and career exploration were indicated as needs. Another man suggested that he would benefit from knowing how other fathers interact with their child's national school.

An additional suggestion was made for SHARE in its services to veteran families by one female participant. This participant echoed what she had said for services to new families, indicating that advising and presenting workshops from a North American perspective was frustrating for families, particularly those in more remote locations without access to the resources (such as reliable mail or internet service) of those in large cities.

Interview results.

The information gleaned from interviews suggested little in terms of specific information needed by veteran families across the board. Rather, interviewees responded with specific stages or events that might trigger a need for educational information. Interviewees mentioned national school issues and transition to homeschooling as situations in which more or different educational information would be needed by veteran families.

One male and one female interviewee mentioned a need for specific, situation-based information, and both expressed the opinion that this need is best met when consultants visit them where they live. The female interviewee had experienced such a visit from SHARE consultants while her children were transitioning from national school to homeschooling, and she stated that this information was, "...much more personal, specific, and much more encouraging." The male interviewee believed that better information regarding children in national school could be given if a consultant were to, "...observe the situation at the school, and maybe whatever difficulty it is, that might need on-site counseling."

Another male interviewee stated that veteran parents have "a spiritual and moral obligation" to help educate families new to overseas living. He suggested that SHARE develop a "web" of experienced parents in each country who could be called upon to share information with newer families. Other suggestions for how SHARE might deliver information regarding children's education to veteran families included newsletters or emails from SHARE containing new resources and details regarding SHARE events.

Summary of Expectations of SHARE for Parent Education

Several themes emerged when all qualitative and quantitative data were integrated. First, all sources of data confirmed that information about the available educational options was the primary information need of families new to the field. The feedback was mixed regarding whether or not this information was helpful prior to a family's actually moving overseas. Some qualitative feedback focused on a need to know more about specific options, such as national schooling or homeschooling, or the implications of specific options, such as homeschooling without a local library. A second theme had to do with a need to connect families new to overseas living with those who had more experience. This comes primarily from the qualitative data, and was confirmed across both focus groups and several interviews conducted.

Results regarding the information needs for more experienced parents were mixed. Survey results suggest that the highest priority information need for these parents was regarding TCK (Third Culture Kid) characteristics; however, while one interviewee also identified TCK issues as a high information need, most qualitative data suggest that experienced parents have the highest information needs in times of transition, such as high school graduation, or education-related crises.

Results Related to Expectations for Assessment Services

Survey Results

Survey participants were asked about the primary needs of families both new and more experienced in overseas living. Only 16% of participants indicated that educational testing was one of the high priority needs of families new to overseas

living, while nearly 67% of participants indicated that this was a high priority need for experienced families.

Survey respondents who had had a child participate in the educational testing provided by SHARE (54.9% of survey participants) were asked what their reasons were for seeking testing. By far, the primary reason that survey participants had their children participate in SHARE testing was to determine how their children were progressing relative to their peers in North America. Nearly 47% of all survey participants had had children tested by SHARE for this reason. The next highest reason indicated, at eight percent, was the desire for test scores to assist with grade placement decisions upon return to North America. The overall percentage of respondents to each choice is indicated in Table 8.

Table 8

Reasons for Seeking SHARE's Testing Services

Reasons for testing	Percent of survey participants indicating that this was a reason for having their child tested by SHARE
To find out how my child was progressing relative to children his/her age/grade in the U.S.	46.9
We were returning to North America soon, so I wanted these testing scores to help with grade placement decisions.	8.0
To meet my North American home schooling organization's achievement testing requirement.	4.3
Other	3.7
My agency requires regular testing for my children.	0.6
I had specific academic concerns which I thought testing would shed light on.	0.6

When broken down according to gender, geographic region, and length of time living overseas, the highest response was consistent across all categories. The second-highest response also remained consistent across almost every category.

Focus Group Results

Half of the participants in the men's focus group mentioned that the testing provided by SHARE was important because families had no other means of obtaining objective feedback. Two of the participants also expressed a desire for more of an explanation regarding the testing offered by SHARE. They asked questions about whether testing presented a "fair, honest view," and whether test results were accurate for children being educated overseas, particularly those attending national schools. When asked about their expectations for testing services, participants in the women's focus group expressed that the variety of locations at which SHARE offers testing is necessary. Two of these female participants also stated that specific SHARE staff members involved in testing had made the experience more positive for their children, and that they now expected the same positive experience with all testing personnel.

Interview Results

Two of the interviewees mentioned that the testing provided by SHARE was important because families had no other means of obtaining objective feedback. One male interviewee added that this feedback is especially critical for those who homeschool or who have their children enrolled in local national schools. He also felt that testing was a vital aspect of preparing to return home from overseas. A female interviewee felt that this feedback was important for parents who are not trained educators, stating, "I didn't know where they were. I'm not an educator. I don't have

that kind of background so I didn't know how they were doing." She also added that testing feedback was very helpful if children experienced learning difficulties.

Summary of Expectations of SHARE for Assessment Services

A synthesis of the data reveals that the major expectation of parents for the assessment services of SHARE was for feedback regarding how their child is progressing in relation to peers in North America. This need for feedback was underscored by comments in the qualitative data regarding homeschooling, national schooling, and preparing to return to North America, and confirmed in the quantitative data as nearly 67% of participants expressed this as a major need for experienced families who had lived overseas three years or more. Additional expectations expressed included further explanation or interpretation of test scores, a variety of opportunities at which to have their children tested (i.e., SHARE conferences, mission agency-sponsored conferences, at-home visits, etc.), and a positive experience with SHARE's testing personnel.

Results Related to Expectations for Consulting Services

Survey Results

Forty-eight percent of survey participants had met or corresponded individually with a SHARE consultant in person or via phone or email. Survey participants were asked about the primary educational needs of families both new to and more experienced in overseas living. For both new and experienced families, survey participants expressed that individual educational consultation was a high need. Over 48 percent of participants indicated that "time to meet individually with a SHARE consultant about specific educational issues" was one of the main three needs for

families who had lived overseas three years or more. Over 30 percent of participants indicated that this was a primary need for families new to overseas living.

Focus Group Results

In both the men's and women's focus group, an expectation that SHARE would provide consulting in times of educational crisis was expressed. One male participant told of a crisis point reached by his son in a bullying situation in a national school, and noted that the services of an educational psychologist provided by SHARE were instrumental in helping his son through this time and in adjusting to a different educational setting. Several male participants expressed an expectation that SHARE expand what they called the "second tier" of consultants, or people who are not on the staff of SHARE but provide consulting at conferences based on their areas of educational expertise. Referring to interactions among parents, one of these participants stated that this already happens among parents at SHARE conferences: "...there's a lot of consulting that goes on that maybe you guys don't even know about." Another male participant cautioned that SHARE should strive to find volunteers who are able to understand cross-cultural issues, stating, "Just make sure that people who come and are doing some of the counseling or some of the seminars aren't totally American in their mindset. Sometimes it comes across as, 'well that would work in America,' but wouldn't work here."

One male and one female participant stated an expectation that SHARE would expand its consulting services through internet-based resources and interaction, such as blogs and forums. Two male participants stated that it would be helpful to have national school experts available for every country where SHARE services are

available. Three participants felt that other, more experienced families could provide consulting to newer families, and one male participant in particular recommended that SHARE be proactive in connecting new and veteran families.

Interview Results

One male and one female interviewee expressed an expectation for SHARE consultants to be available by phone and/or email to answer specific questions for families. Another male interviewee noted that veteran families should be playing a role in advising families newer to overseas living regarding education. Based on a past experience with SHARE consultants, one female interviewee expressed the expectation that SHARE consultants would ask many questions and then provide resources, either immediately or later via email, which could help a family in educating their children.

Summary of Expectations of SHARE for Consulting Services

Overall, the expectations of client families for SHARE's consulting services seemed to match what is presently provided by the organization. In other words, responses regarding their expectations for consulting services consistently seemed to be based upon prior experiences with SHARE consultants, and the expectation that future experiences would replicate the services they had received in the past. Crises and transitions were underscored as times when SHARE's consulting services are most needed.

One prevalent theme throughout the qualitative data was that of connecting new and experienced families. The experience and cross-cultural awareness of more experienced families were viewed as assets in consulting. Expectations that SHARE's consulting would become more internet-based were also expressed, which might also

allow new and experienced families to interact more readily and conveniently with one another as well as with SHARE consultants.

Research Question Two: Satisfaction of the Expectations of Client Families

The extent to which the services of SHARE meet the expectations of client families, which are identified in the section above, is ascertained through an investigation of the second research question.

Results Related to Satisfaction with Parent Education Services

Survey Results

Three questions were asked on the survey that reflected satisfaction with SHARE's conferences, the organization's primary vehicle for parent education. Percentages of responses to the question asking about overall conference satisfaction are reflected in Table 9. Participants were asked about the helpfulness of SHARE conferences for families newly arrived overseas versus more experienced families; response percentages for each of these were not significantly different statistically from those reported in Table 9 below.

Table 9

Participant Ratings of Overall Parent Education Satisfaction

<u>Level of satisfaction</u>	<u>Percentage of responses</u>
Very satisfied	59.3
Somewhat satisfied	21.0
Somewhat dissatisfied	1.9
Very dissatisfied	0
Have not attended conference	17.8

There were 120 comments made on the open-ended question regarding satisfaction with SHARE's conferences. The majority of comments (80%) were positive. One respondent wrote that conferences offered "good practical advice for different schooling situations," while another felt that the conferences provide "something to fit every parent and child's needs." Regarding the conference sessions for parents, one participant wrote, "Strategies, challenges and possible solutions are usually presented in the workshops. These are helpful and informative. They are also a great resource for recent teaching trends, methods, books and curriculums."

Twenty-four, or 20%, of comments made indicated some level of dissatisfaction with SHARE's parent education services. A synthesis of all comments revealed several themes. Several survey participants remarked that workshops at SHARE conferences were too broad or didn't provide enough practical application. There were also many comments regarding workshop speakers from the US who didn't seem to understand the differences between their audiences of expatriate families versus typical families living in the US. A few comments were made signifying dissatisfaction with workshops in general, while others specifically reflected a belief that workshop offerings were repetitive.

Focus Group Results

Several positive aspects of SHARE conferences were mentioned in focus groups. One male participant reiterated the helpfulness of SHARE conferences for families new to the field, and another male focus group participant stated that his family had brought five families from their country of residence with them to the conference because they believed that they needed the information provided. Three female focus

group participants mentioned that some congruence in what parents and children are learning throughout the week is helpful. One male and one female participant suggested that they are more satisfied with conferences when many educational options (i.e., homeschooling, national schooling) are represented in the workshops and seminars.

However, of the 12 participants in focus groups, half expressed some level of dissatisfaction with the workshops (as opposed to plenary sessions) available during SHARE's conferences. One male participant noted that they were "repetitive," while a female participant remarked that, "it seems like the workshops still tend to be very generic, and they still tend to be a little bit American-biased or something." Another female participant echoed this sentiment of workshops not offering information from any other than a US-American perspective. A few of the women's focus group participants expressed a desire for workshops to be more "personal" rather than "generic." Several male focus group participants stated a need for SHARE workshops focused on the roles and issues of fathers who participate in the education of their children overseas.

Many focus group participants noted that one of the highest educational values at SHARE conferences was gained through interactions with other parents rather than in formal conference sessions. Two female participants added that they gained "energy" from these interactions.

Interview Results

Interview participants made the following positive comments regarding their satisfaction with the parent education services of SHARE. Almost all interview

participants noted that one of the highest educational values at SHARE conferences was gained through interactions with other parents rather than in formal conference sessions. One male interviewee commented on the helpfulness of SHARE conferences for families new to the field. A female interviewee described how her application of what she had learned in conference plenary sessions was going to change the way that she homeschooled one of her daughters, and three interviewees expressed appreciation for information regarding the transition into college for them and their children. One male interviewee mentioned that he found the congruence in what parents and children are learning throughout the week to be helpful.

Several of the interview participants expressed some level of dissatisfaction with the workshops (as opposed to plenary sessions) offered during SHARE's conferences. A male participant expressed a concern that workshops were not providing information from any other than a US-American perspective. Two male interviewees stated a need for SHARE workshops focused on the roles and issues of fathers who participate in the education of their children overseas. One female participant suggested that she is more satisfied with conferences when many educational options (i.e., homeschooling, national schooling) were represented in the workshops and seminars.

Summary of Satisfaction with SHARE's Parent Education Services

While nearly 60% of survey participants indicated that they were "very satisfied" with SHARE conferences, much of the qualitative data suggest that parents were not highly satisfied with the parent education provided by SHARE within conferences. This discrepancy may be due to the fact that, while the intent was to find out how satisfied survey participants were with the parent education aspects of a

conference, it is likely that some participants were rating the overall conference experience rather than only the aspects of parent education within conferences. It should be noted that SHARE conferences include parent education, testing, and consulting, as well as informal times of interaction among families.

In particular, the negative comments found in the qualitative data were received regarding the workshop sessions of SHARE conferences. Criticisms of the workshop sessions included a US-education bias, redundancy of workshop topics, and a lack of opportunity to exchange information with and learn from others in similar situations (i.e., fathers, homeschoolers) during workshop sessions. These data also suggest that education gained through interaction with families in similar circumstances was one of the primary sources for quality parent education at SHARE conferences.

Results Related to Satisfaction with Assessment Services

Survey Results

After survey participants were asked to indicate their reasons for seeking SHARE's testing services, they were asked how helpful the testing provided was in meeting that need of client families. The mean satisfaction scores are reported in Table 10, with zero being "no help at all" and three being "very helpful." One should bear in mind that the primary reason participants had their children tested, at almost 50%, was "To find out how my child was progressing relative to children his/her age/grade in the U.S.", and the second most frequent reason for seeking testing, at eight percent of participants, was "We were returning to North America soon, so I wanted these testing scores to help with grade placement decisions."

Table 10

Satisfaction Related to Reasons for Testing

<u>Reason for Testing</u>	<u>Mean satisfaction score</u>
To find out how my child was progressing relative to children his/her age/grade in the U.S.	2.7
We were returning to North America soon, so I wanted these testing scores to help with grade placement decisions.	2.6
I had specific academic concerns which I thought testing would shed light on.	2.4
To meet my North American homeschooling organization's achievement testing requirement.	2.3
Other	1.3
My agency requires regular testing for my children.	1.0

When asked about overall satisfaction with the testing services offered by SHARE, over 90% of respondents reported that they were “very satisfied,” while nearly 10% indicated that they were “somewhat satisfied.” No respondents indicated that they were “somewhat dissatisfied” or “very dissatisfied.”

On the open-ended question regarding satisfaction with SHARE's testing services, 65 participants responded. Four comments indicated some level of dissatisfaction with SHARE's testing services. One participant remarked that more information regarding the Iowa Tests of Basic Skills, particularly a reminder of “American mathematical symbols,” would have been helpful prior to his/her child's participation in testing. Another participant complained that a promised email never came following testing, while another regarded a tester that “we didn't enjoy” who provided no new information to the family following testing.

The remaining comments were positive in nature. One participant remarked, “I especially appreciate that you consistently have many of the same testers back each year. This is good for the kids and also as parents we appreciate talking to the testers and getting personal feedback.” One participant requested that SHARE explore testing for Canadians, while another also asked about testing for “non-English speaking kids.” Another participant asked if TCK test norms were available on the tests provided by SHARE.

Focus Group Results

Qualitative data gathered in focus groups indicate that participants are satisfied with the testing services provided by SHARE. Positive comments were made about the SHARE personnel who conduct testing. One female participant noted that the testers were encouraging to her son who was reluctant to participate in testing, stating, “But for a 10-year-old to say that he enjoys a test, that means that they’ve done a good job.” In the men’s focus group, one participant noted that there was a consistency in the testing personnel, and that this was good for building trust with children and parents. Two members of the women’s focus group stated an appreciation for the many locations where SHARE provides testing, noting that testing was available at their own mission’s conference, SHARE conferences and even in their home when SHARE staff members were traveling.

A small number of criticisms were noted as well. One male participant expressed a need to better understand “the big picture” of testing, including the meaning of test scores. He also expressed a desire that educational psychologists, brought in by SHARE to provide diagnostic educational testing, needed to understand MK

(missionary kid) issues more fully. Another male participant wondered about the validity of test scores for children who made mistakes due to the differences in the local national school education (such as mathematical notations) and typical US-American education. A female focus group participant was not aware that SHARE offered testing at all, and encouraged more publicity about the service.

Overall, feedback from focus group participants regarding the testing services of SHARE was positive. When asked a hypothetical question, “If SHARE had to eliminate its conferences, testing, or consulting services, which one should it be?” no focus group participant indicated that testing was the least valuable. One female participant responded, “You have to have testing!” to which several other participants immediately agreed.

Interview Results

Many positive comments were made in interviews regarding SHARE’s assessment services. One male interviewee commented, “I think it’s great and it’s a very good, very good service, especially with those that are in other options like national schools...” He added that, “when you have a standard to measure by and you can...make it a little bit more objective...I think it meets a real need, especially in the diverse world of MK education.” One female interviewee stated that she used the assessment services of SHARE because “it was just good to get a benchmark idea” regarding the academic progress of her children.

Several interviewees relayed negative feedback regarding their experiences with the assessment services of SHARE. One female interviewee described the difficulty she had when her daughter was the last one tested by the educational psychologist at a

SHARE conference and there was not time for a full consultation session regarding the results. Two interviewees noted that their children didn't like participating in testing at SHARE conferences because this meant that they missed a portion of the children's program.

Two interviewees made suggestions for improvement in SHARE's assessment services. One female interviewee questioned the validity of test scores for children who made mistakes due to the differences in the local national school education (such as mathematical notations) and typical US-American education. One male interviewee stressed that SHARE needed to consider providing testing to missionaries from other cultures (he mentioned Korea specifically) who need such information before returning to their home culture.

Summary of Satisfaction with SHARE's Assessment Services

Both qualitative and quantitative data reveal that SHARE's client families seem to be satisfied by the assessment services provided by the organization, indicating that testing is helpful in meeting the need that families have for feedback regarding the progress of their children relative to their North American peers. A few themes were identified in the concerns noted across the qualitative data. One of these concerns regards the cross-cultural awareness of testing staff, particularly educational psychologists from the U.S. who have volunteered their services for diagnostic educational testing. There were also concerns noted about the validity of the test results for children educated overseas.

Results Related to Satisfaction with Consulting Services

Survey Results

Overall, nearly 78% of survey respondents indicated that they were “very satisfied” with the consulting offered by SHARE. Overall results are reported in Table 11.

Table 11

Survey Participant Ratings of Overall Satisfaction with SHARE’s Consulting

<u>Overall consulting satisfaction rating:</u>	<u>Percentage of respondents:</u>
Very satisfied	77.9
Somewhat satisfied	18.2
Somewhat dissatisfied	3.9
Very dissatisfied	0

Survey participants were also asked about how equipped SHARE consultants were to answer their questions, as well as to what extent their questions or concerns were addressed. Results indicated that nearly 70% of respondents felt that SHARE consultants were equipped “to a great extent” to answer their questions, and over 71% felt that their questions or concerns were addressed “to a great extent.” Table 12 indicates the percentage of responses to each rating of specific consulting satisfaction measures.

Table 12

Survey Participant Ratings of Specific Consultant Skills

Survey Question	To a great extent	To some extent	To a slight extent	Not at all
To what extent was the consultant equipped to answer your question?	69.6	27.8	2.5	0
To what extent were your questions or concerns addressed by the consultant?	71.1	25.0	3.9	0

Note. The values represent percentages of responses to each item on the rating scale.

Sixty-one comments were made on the open-ended question regarding consulting satisfaction. Most of the comments supported the data indicating that participants were satisfied with consulting services. One participant remarked, "I feel that each consultant really cares, even if they might not fully understand the European complexity of life here at times. But whatever they have to offer, it is always helpful." Another wrote, "She was able to ask professionals in the States and she got right back to me. She also gave me info that I had no access to or idea of how to obtain."

There were also a few comments which indicated some level of dissatisfaction with the consulting services provided. Two participants stated that it took a long time to receive an answer back from SHARE (presumably from an email). One participant noted that the SHARE consultant was unwilling to give concrete advice, writing, "I just couldn't get specific info, it was just more whatever I wanted to do, and I wanted specific help. Maybe they have been so trained not to tell someone what to do that they shy away from being really specific." Another indicated that, "I felt that I knew the needs and abilities of my child better than I was given credit by the SHARE rep."

Focus Group Results

Overall comments about satisfaction with SHARE's consulting services were positive in focus groups. One male participant commended SHARE as a learning organization, observing that its consultants often ask families many questions in order to better consult and to learn more about, for instance, their local national schools. When asked the hypothetical question, "If SHARE had to eliminate its conferences, testing, or consulting services, which one should it be?" two participants selected consulting for elimination. One female participant felt that other parents could be more instrumental in parent education. Three participants strongly defended consulting as one of SHARE's most valuable services, with one female participant emphasizing the need for consulting particularly when a family has a child with special needs. Two focus group participants were unaware of SHARE's consulting services.

Interview Results

Many positive, general comments were made in interviews regarding satisfaction with SHARE's consulting services. One female interviewee had SHARE consultants travel to visit her in her home, and stated that this was an extremely positive experience. She said that this was due to the fact that, "...they would ask questions a lot and then when they realized they might have a resource that could help us, they were very good and would go back and send the resource or whatever the situation required." One male interviewee was not aware that SHARE provided consulting services outside of its own conferences

Summary of Satisfaction with SHARE's Consulting Services

The quantitative data suggest that SHARE's client families are "satisfied" or "very satisfied" with the consulting services provided by SHARE. Survey results also indicate an overall belief that SHARE consultants are well-equipped and answer families' questions effectively. Some qualitative data imply that the personalization of SHARE's consulting services, such as home visits, are what evoked the most positive remarks from participants. A few participants expressed a desire to see SHARE initiate more peer consulting between experienced and new families, and in believing this, seemed to value the services provided by SHARE consultants slightly less.

Research Question Three: Predictors of Client Expectations and Satisfaction

Questions about whether the expectations and satisfaction of stakeholders varied by gender, proximity to SHARE's offices in Budapest or Prague, the number of years lived overseas, or the geographic region in which the participant lived were reflected in the third research question.

Results Related to Expectations for Services

Parent Education Services

Families new to overseas living.

Regarding SHARE's parent education services, the primary information need of new families indicated was "pros and cons of various educational options" among all categories of geographic region, gender, proximity to SHARE's offices, and years lived overseas with one exception. Participants who have lived overseas more than 15 years indicated that "typical language development" was the primary information need of

families new to overseas living (see Appendix F). “Various educational options” refers to the settings available to these expatriate families for the education of their children, such as international schools, national schools, or home school. Regression analyses and one-way ANOVA tests were conducted to determine if statistically significant relationships existed between responses regarding the information needs of new families and each of the above categories.

On one-way ANOVA tests used to determine gender differences and responses to questions concerning the primary information needs of families new to overseas living, two statistically significant relationships were identified. Female survey respondents were more likely than male respondents to identify “typical language development for children regarding learning a second language” as one of the three priority information needs of families new to overseas living; 40.52% of females and 21.62% of males identified this as a priority need. Male respondents were more likely to indicate that “the importance of developing a family education plan” was a primary need for new families; 48.65% of males and 27.59% of females indicated that this was a primary need. Table 13 contains the statistical analyses for both of these relationships.

Table 13

Analysis of Variance: The Impact of Gender on Ratings of Specific Parent Education Needs of Parents New to Overseas

Item	SS	DF	MS	F
Typical language development				
Between groups	1.037	1	1.037	4.567*
Within groups	34.062	150	.227	
Total	35.099	151		
Family education plan				
Between groups	1.214	1	1.214	5.630*
Within groups	32.339	150		
Total	33.533	151		

* $p < .05$.

One-way ANOVA testing was also conducted to determine any relationship between the geographic region in which survey respondents live and their choice of the major information needs of new families. Each country of residence represented in the sample was coded as “Western Europe,” “Central/Eastern Europe,” or “Central Asia” in order to perform these operations. No statistically significant relationship existed between these variables. Regression analysis was conducted using the variables of years lived overseas and each choice of information needs for new families, as well as proximity to SHARE’s offices in Budapest, Hungary or Prague, Czech Republic, and no statistically significant relationships existed in the data set. Therefore, neither the length of time a survey respondent has lived overseas, the geographic region in which they live, or the proximity of their home to one of SHARE’s offices appear to have an effect on the respondent’s expectations regarding education for new families.

Families experienced in overseas living.

The raw data regarding the information needs of families experienced in living overseas yields several observations. First, “how learning styles impact the education of children” was one of the primary three information needs of experienced families indicated by survey participants regardless of the length of time they have lived overseas (see Appendix G). Second, across all geographic regions, “methods related to home schooling or supplementing national schooling” and “characteristics of Third Culture Kids (TCKs)” were selected as one of the primary information needs of families who have been living overseas three years or more (see Appendix H). Two information needs of experienced families, “characteristics of Third Culture Kids (TCKs)” and “how learning styles impact the education of children” are consistent across men and women (see Appendix I).

Regression analysis was conducted to determine if any statistically significant relationships existed between the length of time survey participants have lived overseas and their indication of the primary information needs of families who have lived overseas three years or longer. Results indicated that a positive relationship exists between the number of years a respondent has lived overseas and their indication that “methods related to homeschooling or supplementing national schooling” is a high priority need. Additionally, a positive relationship existed between the number of years lived overseas and the indication that “how learning styles impact the education of children” as a primary information need for experienced families. Table 14 contains the results of these analyses. In other words, the longer a respondent has lived overseas, the more likely they are to believe that information regarding homeschooling (whether full-

time or to supplement national schooling) and learning styles is needed by experienced families.

Table 14

Regression Analysis: The Influence of Number of Years Lived Overseas on Ratings of Specific Parent Education Needs of Experienced Families

Item	B	SE B	β	F	R ²
Home schooling methods	0.18	.009	.173	4.299*	0.03
Impact of learning styles	-0.20	.008	-.192	5.351*	0.037

Predictors: (Constant), Years overseas; *p<.05.

One-way ANOVA testing also indicated that there is a statistically significant relationship between the geographic region in which a survey participant lives and their selection of “the importance of developing a family education plan” as a major information need for families experienced in overseas living (see Table 15). Survey participants who live in Central Asia were statistically more likely to indicate this as a major need than participants who live in Western or Central/Eastern Europe.

Table 15

Analysis of Variance: The Impact of Geographic Region on Ratings of Specific Parent Education Needs of Experienced Families

Item	SS	DF	MS	F
Family education plan				
Between groups	1.142	2	.571	4.225*
Within groups	17.969	133	.135	
Total	19.110	135		

*p<.05.

Finally, one-way ANOVA tests revealed two statistically significant relationships between a survey participant’s gender and their indication of the primary

information needs of families experienced in overseas living. First, female respondents were more likely to indicate “methods related to homeschooling or supplementing national schooling” as a significant information need of experienced families. The total of respondents who indicated this as a significant need who were female was 75.9%. Second, testing revealed that men were more likely than women to indicate that a major information need of experienced families is “normal developmental milestones for children regarding language and learning” (see Table 16).

Table 16

Analysis of Variance: Impact of Gender on Ratings of Specific Parent Education Needs of Experienced Families

Item	SS	DF	MS	F
Homeschooling methods				
Between groups	.853	1	.853	4.015*
Within groups	29.319	138	.212	
Total	30.171	139		
Normal developmental milestones				
Between groups	.863	1	.863	5.247*
Within groups	22.708	138	.165	
Total	23.571	139		

*p<.05.

Assessment Services

Regarding expectations of SHARE’s testing services, the primary choice of “to find out how my child was progressing relative to children his/her age/grade in the U.S.” was consistent across gender, geographic region, proximity to SHARE’s offices, schooling option used by the family, and years lived overseas. Raw data are indicated in Appendices J, K, and L.

The Chi-Square statistic was calculated between each category (gender, geographic region, proximity to SHARE’s offices, and length of time lived overseas) and reason given by survey respondents for their child’s participation in testing provided by SHARE in order to determine if statistically significant relationships existed between any variables. Three positive relationships were revealed in this analysis regarding the reasons respondents had their child(ren) tested by SHARE. The first relationship is between respondents living in Central/Eastern Europe and their selection of “I had specific concerns which I thought testing would shed light on” as one of their reasons for having their child tested (see Table 17).

Table 17

Chi-Square Analysis: Relationship between Geographic Region and Testing for Specific Concerns

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	8.125	2	.017
Likelihood Ratio	7.718	2	.021
Linear-by-Linear Association	6.814	1	.009
N of Valid Cases	136		

A second positive relationship existed between selection of the reason “To find out how my child was progressing relative to children his/her age/grade in the U.S” and number of years lived overseas (see Table 18). Third, the number of years a respondent lived overseas also related positively to selection of the reason “We were returning to North America soon, so I wanted these testing scores to help with grade placement decisions” for having their child tested by SHARE.

Table 18

Chi-Square Analysis: Relationship between Number of Years Overseas and Testing for Progress Relative to US Peers

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	14.753	6	.022
Likelihood Ratio	15.265	6	.018
N of Valid Cases	155		

Summary

Regarding expectations for SHARE's parent education and assessment, 10 statistically significant relationships were identified related to gender, the number of years lived overseas, and the geographic region in which the participant lives. These responses are summarized in Table 19.

Table 19

Background Factors that Influence Expectations for SHARE's Services

Factor	Relationship
Gender	Females are more likely to indicate that information regarding typical language development is important for families new to living overseas (parent education)
	Males are more likely to indicate that the development of a family education plan is important for families new to living overseas (parent education)
	Females are more likely to indicate that information regarding home schooling methods are important for families experienced in overseas living (parent education)
	Males are more likely to indicate that information about normal developmental milestones in language and learning is important for families experienced in overseas living (parent education)

Factor	Relationship
Years Abroad	The longer a participant has lived overseas, the more likely they are to indicate that information regarding home schooling methods is important for families experienced in overseas living (parent education)
	The longer a participant has lived overseas, the more likely they are to indicate that information about a child's or childrens' learning styles is important for families experienced in overseas living (parent education)
	The longer a participant has lived overseas, the more likely they are to have had their child tested by SHARE to find out how they are progressing relative to same-age peers in North America (assessment)
	The longer a participant has lived overseas, the more likely they are to have had their child tested by SHARE because they needed the information for their return to North America (assessment)
Geographic Region	Participants who live in Central Asia are more likely to indicate that information regarding home schooling methods is important for families experienced in overseas living (parent education)
	Participants who live in Central/Eastern Europe are more likely to indicate that they had their child tested by SHARE because of specific concerns they had for their child (assessment)

Results Related to Satisfaction with Services

Several statistical tests were conducted in order to determine if any demographic factor (gender, length of time lived overseas, proximity to SHARE's offices, or geographic region) related in a statistically significant way to responses of satisfaction

with SHARE's services. No statistically significant relationships were identified between any factor and indicators of satisfaction with SHARE's assessment or consulting services. The only relationship of statistical significance identified in the area of satisfaction with parent education is in the relationship between years lived overseas and opinions of the helpfulness of SHARE's conferences for families new to overseas living. There is a positive relationship between the number of years lived overseas and positive ratings regarding the helpfulness of SHARE conferences for families new to overseas living, as reflected in Table 20.

Table 20

Regression Analysis: Relationship between Number of Years Lived Overseas and Conference Satisfaction for Families New to Overseas Living

<u>Item</u>	<u>B</u>	<u>SE B</u>	<u>β</u>	<u>F</u>	<u>R²</u>
<u>Conference satisfaction</u>	1.585	0.76	.177	4.351*	0.031

Predictors: (Constant), Years overseas; *p<.05.

In summary, only one of 56 possible relationships was statistically significant regarding satisfaction with SHARE's services. Therefore, it appears that gender, proximity to SHARE's offices in Budapest or Prague, number of years lived overseas, and geographic region are not overall reliable predictors of satisfaction with the services offered by SHARE.

Sensitivity of Survey Instrument to Ratings of Client Satisfaction

In this study, there could have been a significant difference between responses received via in-person surveys and internet surveys. In order to determine whether there was any difference, three key survey questions were selected which were related

to overall client satisfaction with SHARE's parent education (conference), assessment (testing), and consulting services. Table 21 exhibits the difference in mean percentages of responses between in-person survey responses and internet survey responses.

Independent sample t-tests were conducted to determine whether statistically significant differences existed between in-person and internet responses, and there was no significant difference between responses modes.

Table 21

Response Differences between In-Person and Internet Survey Responses

	In-person (Percentage)			Internet (Percentage)		
	<u>VS</u>	<u>SS</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>VS</u>	<u>SS</u>	<u>SD</u>
Overall conference satisfaction	72.8	24.6	2.6	68.4	31.6	0
Overall testing satisfaction	92.3	7.7	0	82.4	17.6	0
Overall consulting satisfaction	80.8	17.3	1.9	72.0	20.0	8.0

Note. VS="very satisfied"; SS="somewhat satisfied"; SD="somewhat dissatisfied"; zero "very dissatisfied" responses were received.

Summary

The quantitative and qualitative data were integrated and presented in this chapter. Expectations for SHARE's services were identified in response to the first research question, "What are the expectations of SHARE's client families for the consulting, assessment, and parent education services provided by the organization?"

In the case of parent education, these expectations were delineated by educational needs of families new to overseas living and families who have lived overseas three years or longer. Quantitative results indicate that the greatest expectation for families new to overseas living was to better understand the educational settings available to them.

Regarding SHARE's assessment services, quantitative results indicate that the primary reason that families seek the assessment services of SHARE is to find out how their child is progressing relative to his/her peers in North America. Times of crisis and transition were underscored as times when SHARE's consulting services are most expected, and a prevalent expectation stated throughout the qualitative data was that of connecting new and experienced families for informal consulting opportunities.

The second research question is "To what extent do the services offered by SHARE satisfy the expectations of its client families?" Both quantitative and qualitative data suggest that client families are satisfied with SHARE's parent education, assessment, and consulting services. However, the prominent areas of weakness identified through the qualitative data include two factors in the area of parent education: conference workshops and formalized, or SHARE-initiated, opportunities through which parents new to overseas living and parents more experienced can connect. Participants gave a number of suggestions for improvement in these areas which were discussed in this chapter.

In addressing the final research question, the expectations and satisfaction of stakeholders were investigated to determine if they varied by the participant's gender, number of years lived overseas, geographic region, or proximity to SHARE's offices in Hungary or Czech Republic. Eleven statistically significant relationships were identified related to these factors and survey responses. In the final chapter, implications of these results for SHARE and similar organizations will be discussed.

In the final chapter, the primary conclusions based on the results presented in this chapter will be described in detail. A major finding was related to the differences

in parent education needs between families new and more experienced to overseas living. Conclusions based on the criticisms of SHARE's current parent education model are discussed, as well as important facets of educational consulting identified by the study participants. Following these conclusions, three major implications for SHARE are identified, and include facilitating parent-to-parent interactions, improving conference workshops, and aligning assessment services with current best practices in the field.

CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION

This research investigated the extent to which the expectations of client expatriate families are met by a faith-based, educational nonprofit organization, and whether satisfaction with the services provided by the organization vary by gender, proximity to organizational offices, years lived overseas, or geographic region. Qualitative and quantitative results were presented at length in the previous chapter. In this chapter, conclusions will be discussed, along with implications for SHARE and similar organizations. Finally, the limitations of the study will be presented, along with suggestions for future research.

Conclusions Based on Study Results

The results of this study indicate that SHARE Education Services is satisfying the expectations of its clients, who are primarily North American families serving as missionaries in Europe, Russia, or Central Asia. Quantitative data reveal that 80.3% of study participants are “very satisfied” or “satisfied” with SHARE’s parent education services, 100% are “very satisfied” or “satisfied” with SHARE’s assessment services, and 96.1% are “very satisfied” or “satisfied” with the educational consulting provided by SHARE. Overall themes in the data are discussed below, as well as comments offered in the qualitative data that suggest areas of growth for SHARE.

Services Needed by New Versus Experienced Families

An integration of all qualitative and quantitative data suggests that the primary need of families who are new to overseas living is for information, or parent education, especially related to the pros and cons of the educational options available to them. The

same data suggests that for families experienced in overseas living, assessment and consulting services are needed more than parent education. The expectation that families new to overseas living need information affirms the assertion of Pollack and Van Reken (2001) that expatriate parents new to overseas living often make important decisions regarding the strengths and weaknesses of available educational options with inadequate information. The quantitative data collected on two particular survey questions confirms this. Participants were asked to indicate the three highest priority needs for families new and experienced in overseas living. For new families, the primary three needs indicated were all for information: advantages and disadvantages of various educational options (73%), typical language development related to learning a foreign language (38%), and characteristics of TCKs (third culture kids) (35%). Only 16% of respondents indicated that assessment was a primary need of families new to overseas living, while 67% responded that this was one of the primary three needs for experienced families. Only 30% of participants indicated that educational consulting was a major need for new families, while 48% responded that this was a major need of experienced families.

Historically, SHARE has not differentiated its services between families new and experienced in living overseas. This research suggests that newer families have a higher need for the parent education services of the organization than more experienced families. One might conclude that SHARE should begin targeting its parent education towards these new families, which has implications for marketing/advertising conferences, the selection of topics and speakers, and the locations at which conferences are held.

In this study, seven statistically significant relationships were identified between demographic factors (gender, years lived overseas, and geographic region) and indications of the parent education needs of new or experienced families (see Table 19). A few of these may be explained by some logical conclusions. In this research, females were more likely to indicate that information regarding homeschooling methods were important for families experienced in overseas living. Among missionary families, the parent primarily responsible for homeschooling is the mother, so the fact that significantly more women than men indicated this as a need may simply be a function of that fact. The research also showed that the longer a participant has lived overseas, the more likely they were to indicate that they had their child tested to find out how they were progressing relative to their North American peers or that they had their child tested because they needed the information upon their return to North America. One might logically conclude that families who have been away from North America only a year or two would be less likely to indicate either of these as reasons for testing, as they would have left North American schools recently and may not be returning to North America as soon as the families who have been overseas a longer amount of time.

The other statistically significant relationships identified do not immediately lead to conclusions regarding SHARE's parent education services. For example, the fact that significantly more participants living in Central Asia indicated a need for information regarding homeschooling methods may suggest a direction for the East Area Director to bear in mind as he plans future SHARE conferences in the area. However, this does not lead to the conclusion that expectations in this area are or are not currently being satisfied as asked in the research questions. Additionally, four

relationships were identified between gender and the information needs of new or experienced families. All four information needs are provided for by the typical SHARE workshops offered (i.e., an educational planning workshop is conducted at nearly every SHARE conference), and all workshops are available to both men and women. These relationships are interesting statistically, but cannot lead to conclusions about the extent to which client expectations are currently being met in this area or to suggestions for future practice.

Weaknesses in SHARE's Parent Education Services

Conference workshops, SHARE's primary parent education vehicle, received the most comments indicating dissatisfaction in this research. In the qualitative data, over half of focus group and interview participants and 20% of open-ended comments made by survey participants indicated some level of dissatisfaction with conference workshops offered by SHARE. There were two primary areas of dissatisfaction. First, criticisms often included words such as "repetitive," "too broad," and "generic," which suggests that SHARE may provide the same workshops too often and that they may not contain enough opportunities for practical application. The second primary area of dissatisfaction related to the workshop presenters, particularly those from the United States who were perceived as biased towards US-style education or ignorant as to the cross-cultural implications and logistics of educating children outside of one's home country.

Several conclusions might be made about SHARE, given these data. First, the recycling of workshops by conference organizers is a practice that bears examination. Many client families perceive this practice as resulting in ineffective workshops which

do not satisfy their expectations. Second, conference organizers may be relying too heavily on educational experts from North America for delivery of workshop sessions. Client families appear to perceive bias and/or a lack of understanding regarding the implications of educating children overseas.

Important Facets of Consulting Services

In this study, SHARE's educational consulting services satisfied client expectations. The qualitative data suggest that understanding of cross-cultural issues is critical in client satisfaction with educational consulting provided by SHARE staff or at SHARE events. Two themes were identified in suggestions or criticisms received regarding consulting. First, suggestions were made across focus groups and interviews related to connecting parents new to overseas living and experienced parents. Participants indicated that more parent-to-parent informal consulting was desired and extremely helpful. Second, several participants suggested that SHARE offer more internet-based consulting services.

This leads to several important conclusions for the organization regarding its consulting services. First, the educational consulting provided by the organization is satisfying client expectations; therefore, current training and consultant education practices appear to be effective when measured in terms of client satisfaction. Second, SHARE has not availed itself of what could be a rich source of informal consulting for client families: other parents. Perhaps there has been a perception of parents only as information-seekers and North American experts as information-givers that needs to be examined. Third, the internet could be a valuable vehicle through which SHARE could

provide client consulting and education. There seems to be a perception that SHARE is not harnessing web-based opportunities to provide these services.

Implications for SHARE and Similar Organizations

This examination of the strengths and weaknesses of SHARE's services to client families, in concert with a review of current professional literature, suggests three implications for practice by SHARE and similar organizations. The first two discussed below, facilitating parent-to-parent mentoring and improving conference workshops, directly flow from the results of the study and were identified through the convergence of several data sources. The third implication, aligning assessment services with best practices, is indicated by a comparison of the present services of SHARE and best practice as reflected in current research literature.

Facilitating Parent-to-Parent Mentoring or Consulting

Across the qualitative data collected through focus groups, interviews, and open-ended survey questions, SHARE's client families expressed a desire to assist and be assisted by one another. The many criticisms received regarding workshop presenters with a US bias or a lack of understanding regarding cross-cultural issues may serve to illuminate this desire. It seems that these expatriate parents desire to learn from those who have experienced overseas living, and that the more one's experiences align with theirs, the more desirable they are as a workshop presenter, consultant, or mentor. The group with the most similar experience and background would be other expatriate parents. For example, several participants in the women's focus group expressed a desire to learn from other expatriate homeschooling mothers who were more

experienced in terms of years lived overseas, who had older children, or who had used the same curriculum. In the men's focus group, over half of the participants suggested that fathers be given a specific time and venue in which to connect and learn from one another.

The theme of the value of parent-to-parent interactions was obvious throughout the qualitative data. Many of the focus group participants and almost all interviewees stated that one of the primary benefits for parents from SHARE conferences was the *informal* interactions they had with other parents. These participants indicated that these interactions were more critical than the formal workshop or consulting sessions provided by SHARE. In particular, participants expressed a desire to be connected with families more experienced than they in terms of years lived overseas, ages of their children, or a particular school option used (i.e., homeschooling). Additionally, several participants also expressed a willingness to help families who were newer to overseas living.

The review of current professional literature affirms the beneficial nature of parent networks. Hoover-Dempsey et al. (2005) determined that the self-efficacy of parents was strongly influenced by their child's school and important people in their lives. These authors suggest that a parent's role construction is significantly affected by those in their social networks. Additionally, Sheldon (2002) found that the degree to which parents were involved at home or at school could be predicted by the size of the parents' social network. This suggests that SHARE could encourage and increase parental involvement by providing opportunities to expand a parent's social network.

An educational organization such as SHARE should encourage any means of parental involvement in the education of their children.

The data and professional literature suggest that SHARE might provide more opportunities for parents to connect with one another. This could be accomplished through formal and/or informal programs. Formal mentoring or coaching relationships could be established between new and experienced families (in terms of years lived overseas) with the assistance of SHARE. As suggested in the men's focus group, SHARE could identify a "second tier" of consultants who are actually experienced parents living throughout Europe, Russia, and/or Central Asia. By connecting parents who come to SHARE with questions with these second-tier consultants, SHARE could encourage parent-to-parent interaction, and in some cases, provide client families with the most current information. For example, if SHARE were to receive an email inquiring about national schools in Poland, the most current information would likely come from another parent with their child in Polish national schools rather than from a SHARE consultant living in Hungary.

Results suggest that opportunities for informal connections with other parents are highly desirable, and venues for informal connection could be provided in a variety of ways. The internet could afford opportunities for parent connection through email forums, message boards, and/or blogs written by parents. At conferences, parents could participate in designated times of interaction, perhaps aided by grouping together fathers, homeschooling mothers, or those that have children in national schools.

Improving Conference Workshops

Conference workshops received the most criticism from those who participated in this study. These comments indicate that workshops should be more specific, repeated fewer times, and contain practical application. Additionally, they suggest that workshops should be conducted by people who have some degree of understanding related to the educational issues of cross-cultural living. These criticisms strongly support current best practices in adult learning theory, as addressed more specifically below.

Both the qualitative data and an examination of current professional literature suggest that SHARE's parent workshops should be as practical and applicable as possible. As found in the review of current professional literature, job-embedded learning is an important tenet of effective adult education. Characteristics of adult learners include many traits that relate to the effectiveness of job-embedded learning for adults, such as more experience, a readiness to learn based on real-life situations, the relevancy of their current learning to current problems, and a stronger need to know why they are learning something (Knowles, 1984; Knowles et al., 1998). Job-embedded learning allows an opportunity for modeling new strategies, peer coaching, and seeing the immediate effects of recent learning (Hawley & Valli, 2000).

If one were to consider that a job of an expatriate parent is to oversee the education of their children, applying job-embedded teaching and learning strategies could be more effective in satisfying client families. The forum most highly-criticized by study participants would be described as a lecture-style workshop related to education from the perspective of a North American public classroom teacher.

Applying the strategies of job-embedded learning might result in a workshop or series of workshops, for example, in which homeschooling mothers develop and leave with an annual plan in place for the coming school year. Active involvement in their own learning would be a key for participants in effective workshops (Brookfield, 1995).

Individualization is another characteristic of effective adult education identified in current professional literature. Individualization could be viewed as the opposite of “generic,” a word used more than once in describing SHARE’s conference workshops. As stated above, individualization of workshops may result in smaller, more focused workshops or conferences which meet more specific education needs of fewer client families at a time.

Transformational learning, a widely-upheld adult learning theory, involves “critical reflection on assumptions, discourse to validate the critically reflective insight, and action” (Mezirow, 1997, p. 60). These three tasks call for a workshop format that contrasts with the typical SHARE parent workshop. Time for critical reflection is generally not accommodated in lecture-style workshops. The need for discourse may also closely align with the expressed need to connect with other families indicated by study participants. And the call for action echoes the desire expressed by some study participants who called for more “hands-on” and “applicable” material in workshops.

Applying the principles of job-embedded learning, individualization, and transformational learning would involve a change in paradigm for SHARE regarding parent education. Within the context of conference workshops, one way that these principles could be applied might be through specifically-themed conferences or conference tracks that focus on one particular educational option. For example, in a

region in which many families send children to local national schools, SHARE might conduct a conference with workshops related to second language development and transitioning into North American universities from national schools. Another focus might be on a particular task related to educating children overseas, such as annual planning for homeschooling mothers or educational planning for families new to overseas living. In light of the findings of this study which suggest that families new to living overseas have a higher need for parent education than more experienced families, some conferences might be targeted to new families. Narrowing the breadth of workshops available at a SHARE conference would allow more time for peer interaction and critical reflection. This would also likely decrease the number of attendees, which would present a choice for SHARE of whether to offer services to a large number of families broadly or a smaller number of families specifically. This would also have organizational implications in terms of finances and geographic locations for conferences.

Currently, the only vehicle for parent education is conference workshops or plenary sessions. In addition to improving conference workshops, other vehicles for parent education that reflect adult learning theory might be utilized which are individualized, context-embedded, practical, and allow time for critical reflection. As opposed to workshops that conference participants attend once a year, programs involving follow-up with and interaction among families could be considered in order to provide more effective parent education.

The results of this study clearly indicate that the client families of SHARE strongly prefer not to attend workshops led by speakers with a monocultural US

perspective. Participants expressed a strong desire to learn from those with cross-cultural experience, and in particular, one another. One way that this might be accomplished could be by inviting parents experienced in educating their children overseas to co-present or co-facilitate workshops for other parents along with a more experienced presenter or facilitator. The US bias commented upon often by research participants would likely be eliminated, and the expressed need to connect with more experienced parents would also be met. The data suggest that, in order to better satisfy client family expectations, SHARE should minimize or even eliminate workshops presented by educators with little or no experience and understanding of cross-cultural living and educational issues in order to increase the satisfaction of client parents.

In summary, results of this research indicate that SHARE should examine the future and delivery of parent workshops. To better satisfy the expectations of client families for parent education, these workshops need to be more specific to particular educational issues, and would need to provide opportunities for immediate application whenever feasible. Workshops would also need to be led or facilitated by people with first-hand knowledge regarding cross-cultural living and education when possible. Finally, options for parent education other than the annual conferences offered should be examined.

Aligning Assessment Services with Best Practices

One of the key resulting questions of this study relates to the assessment practices of SHARE and similar organizations. Why is it that, when compared to the other services of SHARE included in this study, assessment services apparently satisfy the expectations of client families to the highest degree, and yet have perhaps the least

amount in common with best assessment practices identified in current professional literature? The assessment practices of SHARE were described in detail in chapter three. Briefly, SHARE provides US-normed achievement tests (such as the Iowa Tests of Basic Skills) for its client families, whose demand for this testing, according to this research, primarily stems from a desire to understand how their child's educational progress relates to same-age or same-grade peers in the United States. Additionally, volunteer educational psychologists from the United States provide psycho-educational testing at SHARE conferences when requested to diagnose the presence or absence of specific learning disabilities and/or ADHD.

Best assessment practice as reflected in the current professional literature is discussed at length in chapter two. Multiple means of assessment are recommended when making educational decisions (i.e., Abrahm & Madaus, 2004, Sandoval, 2002). Sandoval (2002) asserts that observations, informal objectives-referenced tests, conferences, and portfolios are needed to determine information regarding student achievement. Glatthorn (1998) identifies performance assessment, or what many educators call authentic assessment, as key in the classroom and in educational decision-making.

Many of these scholars are making these recommendations for students in classrooms of their own culture. For the children of client parents of SHARE and similar organizations, there are further considerations. Ysseldyke (2001) urges educators to consider opportunities to learn, skill levels of the student and instruction, and other academic factors beyond measurement. He also adds, "We must consider home-school partnerships, community support, and other contextual factors in our effort

to understand student performance and progress” (p. 304). Important contextual factors would certainly include cross-cultural and/or second language settings. Marzano (2003) encourages educators to use measures of student learning which are sensitive to what is actually being learned in the classroom. For example, it would be difficult to claim that the Iowa Tests of Basic Skills is an accurate measure of student learning for a fourth grade US-American TCK attending a Bulgarian national school.

But the testing services of SHARE are not necessarily completely invalid. Ysseldyke and Nelson (2004) offer a reminder that a perhaps unintended benefit of high-stakes testing is the engagement of parents. They write, “If parents are asking better questions regarding skill levels, standards’ requirements, and how to help improve their children’s learning and success, then this is a really important consequence that deserves further study and documentation” (p. 90).

It is difficult to conceive how the stated need of client parents for objective information concerning the academic progress of their children relative to their peers in the United States can be met without the measures provided by standardized achievement tests. While professionals might argue that these standardized tests are not criterion-referenced or do not measure skills thought to be critical for the 21st century, the client parents of SHARE appear to be highly satisfied by the scores generated through their child’s participation in this kind of testing. In order to align its assessment services more closely with current best practices, SHARE will need to reexamine both the merits and weaknesses of standardized tests, and perhaps better educate client parents as to reasonable expectations and accurate interpretations of standardized test scores.

Applying the best practice of assessment which encourages multiple measures of assessment could be a key. Perhaps an informal “tool” or rubric should be developed that includes standardized test scores along with additional indicators of academic progress. If any such tool were to be developed, the recommendations made by Demmert (2005) could provide appropriate guidelines for consideration:

- 1) the language of the home and the language of instruction, 2) the context and perspective from which questions are asked, 3) compatibility between the background knowledge of the student and the questions asked of the student, 4) the values and priorities of the community(ies) from which the student comes, 5) the ability of the assessor to create an atmosphere in which the students feel safe and comfortable, and 6) the vocabulary of the student and whether he or she understands the meaning of the words used in the assessment tool (p. 21).

For TCKs, this might include indications of linguistic and cultural proficiency and observations of their classroom teachers. Another key could be the inclusion of the child in assessing his or her own academic progress. Stiggins (2004) emphasizes that the student is the primary user of assessment information. SHARE leaders may want to formalize the participation of the TCK in the development of any portfolio indicating academic progress. The discussion above would suggest that new organizations similar to SHARE should study best practices related to assessment before providing any services.

Limitations of this Study

The external validity of this study is limited by several factors. Yin (2003) confirms that when only one case is studied, as in this research, external validity will naturally be weak. Additionally, there was a low overall return rate for the survey, which was the means of quantitative data collection. The overall return rate was 40.2%. The return rates were over 61% for participants at SHARE conferences, but only a little over 18% for surveys collected online (see Table 2). This percentage of internet surveys returned was undoubtedly impacted by the fact that participants received only one reminder email. The conference return rate of over 60% would be considered “good” according to the Babbie (1973) response rate rule, but the overall return rate of just over 40% would not meet the criteria for “adequate.”

There are two limitations regarding the protocol used for data collection. First, the survey, focus group, and interview questions were designed by the researcher, and do not reflect the validity of a standardized survey instrument. Second, one particular question and the resulting data may be considered invalid upon further reflection. Survey participants were asked to rate their overall satisfaction with SHARE conferences, and this measure was meant to glean information regarding their satisfaction with the parent education provided by SHARE. It is likely that participants were indicating their satisfaction with all of the services offered at a SHARE conference, which include children’s programs, testing, consulting, meals and accommodations, and parent workshops. As indicated in the previous chapter, these results should be viewed with caution.

Another limitation of the study regards the geographic diversity of the sample. SHARE provides services to families in Europe, Russia, and Central Asia; however, no parents who live in Russia were included in this study. No conference attendees at SHARE's spring 2008 conferences lived in Russia. Additionally, permission was not gained to elicit feedback from client families in Russia via the internet survey due to security concerns. Therefore, the only way data could have been collected from families living in Russia would have been to travel to Russia, which was beyond the means of this study.

Another limitation of this study relates to the researcher's proximity to the organization, rendering her inherently subjective. There is a possibility that any non-blind feedback received from parents with whom SHARE works may have been positively biased due to this proximity. A further limitation of this study is that it focused on an extremely homogeneous group in terms of race, religion, socio-economic status, and educational levels, which further limits the generalizability of its findings.

Suggestions for Future Research

A number of specific issues arose over the course of this research that suggested areas for future research. Rather than only analyzing the results of satisfaction scores in terms of gender, one might ask whether satisfaction scores varied by whether the participant was the primary parent in charge of education in the family. For instance, in many cases, mothers are the primary educators in families who have chosen to homeschool their children. However, it may be that in a family whose children attend local national schools, the father is the primary liaison with a child's school and/or

teacher because of his mastery of the language. It could be more helpful to determine if the services of SHARE satisfy the expectations of both the primary and secondary parent in terms of education rather than simply gender.

Also useful could be an analysis of the extent to which such an organization satisfies the expectations of families who have chosen different educational options for their children. For example, SHARE may satisfy the expectations of families who have their children enrolled in international schools to a greater extent than the expectations of families who homeschool. While quantitative data were collected regarding which educational option survey participants chose for their children, the data were not collected in such a way as to allow for the statistical analyses necessary to address this question fully.

A final important area of further research would focus on the assessment needs of expatriate families. By collecting data related to the concept of effective student learning and progress for TCKs, perhaps some informal measures could be established which would meet the assessment information needs of expatriate parents without relying solely on US-normed standardized test scores.

The aim of this study was to explore the extent to which the expectations of client expatriate families were satisfied by the educational services of an international faith-based educational organization. The case selected for this study, the services offered by SHARE Education Services, appears to be satisfying the expectations of its client families. However, the qualitative data in particular illuminated several areas for improvement that need to be addressed in order to better meet these expectations.

Ultimately, this study rests on the theory (e.g., Herman & Renz, 1998) that stakeholder judgments of organizational effectiveness are a valid measure of the effectiveness of nonprofit organizations. To assess the effectiveness of the organizations they lead, nonprofit leaders will need to initiate measures such as those included in this study to determine the extent to which the organization is satisfying stakeholder expectations, and therefore, to determine overall organizational effectiveness. It does appear that SHARE Education Services is satisfying the expectations of its stakeholders, one of which offered the following regarding the services offered by SHARE: “If [SHARE] hadn’t been there I don’t know what - I think we’d just wander around blind.”

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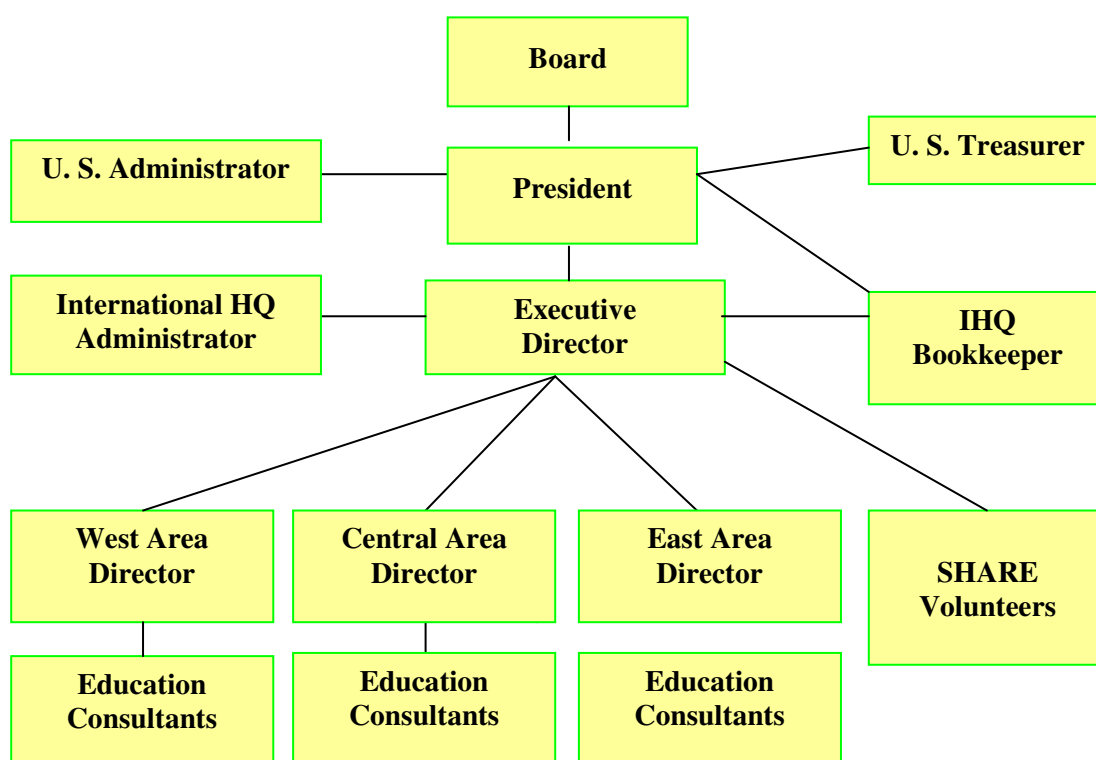
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APPENDIX A

Organizational Chart of SHARE Education Services



APPENDIX B

Survey

SHARE services survey

SHARE's mission is "to provide information, counsel, materials, and human resource support to help client parents in Europe, Russia, and Central Asia meet the education needs of their children." This survey is part of a research project with an aim to find out how well SHARE meets this mission. Your answers will remain anonymous.

Thank you for taking the time to help by completing this survey!

1. When you first arrived on the field with your family, how prepared were you for the rewards and challenges of educating your children overseas?

- Very well-prepared Adequately prepared
 Somewhat prepared Not prepared at all

2. How long were you on the field before you heard about SHARE?

- I became aware of SHARE before we came to the field In our second or third year on the field
 In our first year on the field In our fourth or fifth year on the field
 In or after our sixth year on the field

3. Besides SHARE, where have you gained information about your children's education on the field?

- Our mission Other: _____
 Professionals in my home country _____
 Professionals in the country where we live _____
 Advice from other parents on my field

SHARE Conferences and Workshops

Consider the SHARE conferences and workshops you have attended, including this one.

4. What information or services do families who are **new to the field** (in their first two years of service) most need when they attend a SHARE conference or workshop? (*check up to THREE*)

- pros and cons of various educational options (such as national schools, home schooling, etc.)
 methods related to home schooling or supplementing national schooling
 characteristics of Third Culture Kids (TCKs)
 typical language development for children related to learning a second language
 how learning styles impact the education of children
 the importance of developing a family education plan
 normal developmental milestones for children as related to learning and language
 educational testing for their children
 time to meet individually with a SHARE consultant about specific educational issues
 other: _____

5. How helpful are SHARE workshops and conferences to families who are new to the field?
 very helpful helpful somewhat helpful no help at all

6. What information or services do families who have **been on the field three years or more** need when attending a SHARE conference or workshop? (*check up to THREE*)

- pros and cons of various educational options (such as national schools, home schooling, etc.)
- methods related to home schooling or supplementing national schooling
- characteristics of Third Culture Kids (TCKs)
- typical language development for children related to learning a second language
- how learning styles impact the education of children
- the importance of developing a family education plan
- normal developmental milestones for children as related to learning and language
- educational testing for their children
- time to meet individually with a SHARE consultant about specific educational issues
- other: _____

7. How helpful are SHARE workshops and conferences to families who have been on the field three years or more?

- very helpful fairly helpful slightly helpful no help at all

8. Overall, how satisfied are you with the conferences/workshops offered by SHARE?

- very satisfied somewhat satisfied
 somewhat dissatisfied very dissatisfied

9. Why are you satisfied or dissatisfied with SHARE conferences/workshops?

SHARE Testing

10. Has your child ever been tested by SHARE?

- Yes No

*If you checked "No," please skip this section and go to item number 14.

11. What were your reasons for having your child tested? (*check all that apply*)

- To find out how my child was progressing relative to children his/her age/grade in the U.S.

*If so, how helpful was the testing you received in meeting this need?

- very helpful helpful somewhat helpful no help at all

To meet my North American home schooling organization's achievement testing requirement.

*If so, how helpful was the testing you received in meeting this need?

very helpful helpful somewhat helpful no help at all

My agency requires regular testing for my children.

*If so, how helpful was the testing you received in meeting this need?

very helpful helpful somewhat helpful no help at all

We were returning to North America soon, so I wanted these testing scores to help with grade placement decisions.

*If so, how helpful was the testing you received in meeting this need?

very helpful helpful somewhat helpful no help at all

I had specific academic concerns which I thought testing would shed light on

*If so, how helpful was the testing you received in meeting this need?

very helpful helpful somewhat helpful no help at all

Other: _____

*If so, how helpful was the testing you received in meeting this need?

very helpful helpful somewhat helpful no help at all

12. Overall, how satisfied are you with the testing services offered by SHARE?

very satisfied somewhat satisfied

somewhat dissatisfied very dissatisfied

13. Why are you satisfied or dissatisfied with SHARE's testing services?

SHARE Consulting

14. Have you ever met privately or emailed with a SHARE education consultant?

Yes No

*If you checked "No," please skip this section and go to item number 19.

Consider the information you were hoping to gain from your meetings with SHARE consultants.

15. In your last meeting or email with a SHARE consultant, to what extent was the consultant equipped to answer your questions?

- to a great extent to some extent to a slight extent not at all

16. In your last meeting or email with a SHARE consultant, to what extent were your questions or concerns addressed by the consultant?

- to a great extent to some extent to a slight extent not at all

17. Overall, how satisfied have you been with the consulting services offered by SHARE?

- very satisfied somewhat satisfied
 somewhat dissatisfied very dissatisfied

18. Why are you satisfied or dissatisfied with SHARE's consulting services?

About You

The following information will be used for statistical purposes only. This information is **strictly confidential**, and will in no way be used to identify you.

19. I am:

- Female Male

20. I live in:

- | | | | |
|-----------------------------------|------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bosnia | <input type="checkbox"/> Greece | <input type="checkbox"/> Romania | <input type="checkbox"/> Ukraine |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bulgaria | <input type="checkbox"/> Hungary | <input type="checkbox"/> Slovak | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Croatia | <input type="checkbox"/> Kosovo | Republic | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Czech | <input type="checkbox"/> Macedonia | <input type="checkbox"/> Slovenia | |
| Republic | <input type="checkbox"/> Poland | <input type="checkbox"/> Turkey | |

21. I live in the capital city of the country

- Yes No

22. How long have you lived overseas with your family?

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> We are in our first year overseas. | <input type="checkbox"/> eight to nine years |
| <input type="checkbox"/> two to three years | <input type="checkbox"/> ten to fifteen years |
| <input type="checkbox"/> four to five years | <input type="checkbox"/> More than fifteen years |
| <input type="checkbox"/> six to seven years | |

23. The number of SHARE Family Education conferences I have attended, including this week, is:

- 1 4 or 5
 2 or 3 6 or more

24. The number of SHARE conferences or workshops outside of the Budapest/Hungary area I have attended is:

- 0 4 or 5
 1 6 or more
 2 or 3

25. Where were your children tested by SHARE? (*check all that apply*)

- at the SHARE Family Education Conference
 at a SHARE workshop/seminar outside of Hungary
 at a SHARE office in Budapest or Prague
 at my mission's conference
 other: _____
 not applicable – my children have never been tested by SHARE

26. Approximately how many times have tests been administered by SHARE to your children?

- 0
 1 to 3
 4 to 6
 7 to 9
 10 or more

27. Other than consultations related to SHARE testing, approximately how many times have you met with or emailed a SHARE education consultant to discuss education questions regarding your children?

- None
 1 or 2
 3 or 4
 5 or more

28. My children are educated at present through: (*check all that apply*)

- National schools where we live
 Home schooling
 MK schools
 International schools (non-MK)
 Internet courses
 Other: _____

29. The ages of my children are: (*check all that apply*)

- | | | | |
|--|---|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> infant (<1 yr.) | <input type="checkbox"/> 5-6 years old | <input type="checkbox"/> 11-12 years old | <input type="checkbox"/> 17-18 years old |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1-2 years old | <input type="checkbox"/> 7-8 years old | <input type="checkbox"/> 13-14 years old | <input type="checkbox"/> 19 or older |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 3-4 years old | <input type="checkbox"/> 9-10 years old | <input type="checkbox"/> 15-16 years old | |

Thank you

APPENDIX C

Focus Group and Interview Question Guide

1. I'd like for you to share what your first two years on the field were like in terms of educating your children. What were the unique challenges and rewards of that time?
2. What support did you receive, be it from your agency, your home church, SHARE, or any other organizations or schools, during your first two years on the field in terms of issues regarding your children's education? (Follow-up query) How did that compare with what you needed?
3. Thinking back on these experiences that you had, what kind of educational support is most needed by families their first few years on the field?
4. In what ways did SHARE help your family during those first few years? (Follow-up query) In what ways could they have helped you better?
5. In your experience, what was one of the more difficult challenges in educating your children on the field after the initial acclimation took place?
6. If you could identify one or two services (or changes in service) SHARE could offer that would be most helpful to families who have lived on the field for three or more years, what would you recommend?
7. What is the most helpful service SHARE has provided to your family?
8. SHARE: conferences, consulting, and testing. If we had to suddenly eliminate one of those services, which would you choose? Why?

9. What is the most important way that SHARE could improve its conferences?
10. What is the most important way that SHARE could improve in the consulting offered to families?
11. What is the most important way that SHARE could improve the testing it offers to families?
12. I'm going to need you to speak very frankly now, and this is very important. Please finish this thought: "I really wish that SHARE would (blank)." How would you finish that sentence?

APPENDIX D

Email Invitation to Participate in Online Survey

Dear _____ ,

Would you be willing to participate in a brief electronic survey to benefit SHARE Education Services?

SHARE's mission is "to provide information, counsel, materials, and human resource support to help client parents in Europe, Russia, and Central Asia meet the education needs of their children." This survey is part of a study with an aim to find out how well SHARE meets this mission. As a parent experienced in educating your children overseas, your input is valuable to us. The information collected in this study will be very useful to SHARE and similar organizations as they look for ways to serve families on the field more effectively. Your answers will remain completely anonymous.

To participate in the survey, click on this link: (web address). The survey should take approximately 5 to 10 minutes to complete. If you have any questions, feel free to contact me at walke425@umn.edu.

Thank you!
Melissa Walker Shipman
SHARE Education Services

APPENDIX E

Email Invitation to Participate in Focus Group or Interview

Focus Group Invitation

Dear _____ ,

I am conducting a study to determine how well SHARE meets the needs of the families served by the organization. During the SHARE Family Education Conference next month, I will be conducting focus groups, interviews, and surveys in order to find out how SHARE's services meet the needs of its client families and how those services might be improved. I would like to invite you to participate in one of two focus groups that will be conducted during the SHARE conference next month.

Focus group participants will be parents living in countries served by SHARE. I am inviting your participation based on the country in which you are living and the number of children you have. Your perspective in this area of educating children overseas is very valuable. This study will be useful to SHARE and similar organizations as they look for ways to more effectively serve families on the field.

The focus group will last approximately 90 minutes, and American snacks and coffee will be served. I am inviting you to be a part of the focus group meeting on _____, March ____ at ____ p.m. in Room 238. I will be asking some specific questions about the educational needs of families serving overseas, and about how well SHARE is meeting these needs. The focus group will be composed of five to ten participants of the same gender.

Your comments during the focus group will remain completely confidential in my study report and from anyone not participating in the focus group. I will be using the information from the focus groups to identify the strengths and weaknesses of SHARE's services to families, and the personal information of participants will not be disclosed to anyone else in the organization or included anywhere in the study.

If you would be willing to participate in this focus group, please reply to me at walke425@umn.edu by _____, February ____.

I look forward to your valuable feedback about educating children overseas!

Gratefully,
Melissa Walker Shipman
walke425@umn.edu

Interview Invitation

Dear _____,

I am conducting a study to determine how well SHARE meets the needs of the families served by the organization. During the SHARE Family Education Conference next month, I will be conducting focus groups, interviews, and surveys in order to find out how SHARE's services meet the needs of its client families and how those services might be improved. I would like to invite you to participate in an interview with me to be conducted during the SHARE conference next month.

Interview participants will be parents living in countries served by SHARE. Your selection as a possible participant is based on the country in which you are living, the number of years you have lived overseas, and the number of children you have. Your perspective in this area of educating children overseas is very valuable. This study will be useful to SHARE and similar organizations as they look for ways to serve families on the field more effectively.

The interview will last approximately 45 minutes, and American snacks and coffee will be served. I'd like to meet with you on _____, March ____ at _____ p.m. in Room 238. I will be asking some specific questions about the educational needs of families serving overseas, and about how well SHARE is meeting these needs.

Information collected during the interview will remain completely confidential. I will be using the information from interviews and focus groups to identify the strengths and weaknesses of SHARE's services to families, and your personal information will not be disclosed to anyone else in the organization or included anywhere in the study.

If you would be willing to participate in an interview, please reply to me at walke425@umn.edu by _____, February _____. If you are willing to be interviewed but the time above is not convenient for you, please email me so that I might schedule a more convenient time with you.

I look forward to your valuable feedback about educating children overseas!

Gratefully,
Melissa Walker Shipman
walke425@umn.edu

APPENDIX F

Percentage of Participants that Chose each Information Need of New Families,
by Years Participants have Lived Overseas

Information Needs	Years Lived Overseas						
	<u><2</u>	<u>2-3</u>	<u>4-5</u>	<u>6-7</u>	<u>8-9</u>	<u>10-15</u>	<u>>15</u>
Pros and cons of various educational options	77.7	59.1	81.3	73.7	63.6	78.2	8.3
Methods related to home schooling or supplementing national schooling	22.2	22.7	50	36.8	18.2	32.7	50
Characteristics of Third Culture Kids (TCKs)	44.4	18.2	43.8	31.6	36.4	36.4	41.7
Typical language development for children related to learning a second language	44.4	40.9	31.3	10.5	40.9	38.2	58.3
How learning styles impact the education of children	0	22.7	18.8	21.1	13.6	27.3	16.7
The importance of developing a family education plan	33.3	50	25	42.1	18.2	29.1	33.3
Normal developmental milestones for children as related to language and learning	22.2	22.7	18.8	26.3	18.2	16.4	16.7
Other	0	13.6	0	0	9.1	7.3	33.3

APPENDIX G

Percentage of Participants that Chose each Information Need of Experienced Families,
by Years Participants have Lived Overseas

Information Needs	Years Lived Overseas						
	<2	2-3	4-5	6-7	8-9	10-15	>15
Pros and cons of various educational options	0	4.5	12.5	10.5	9.1	9.1	8.3
Methods related to home schooling or supplementing national schooling	0	18.2	18.8	36.8	31.8	34.6	41.7
Characteristics of Third Culture Kids (TCKs)	22.2	27.3	25	26.3	22.7	32.7	50
Typical language development for children related to learning a second language	22.2	18.2	6.3	0	13.6	9.1	16.7
How learning styles impact the education of children	44.4	22.7	31.3	31.6	31.8	47.4	16.7
The importance of developing a family education plan	11.1	9.1	31.3	15.8	9.1	52.6	16.7
Normal developmental milestones for children as related to language and learning	33.3	13.6	18.8	47.4	13.6	42.1	16.7
Other	0	9.1	0	0	18.2	18.2	8.3

APPENDIX H

Percentage of Participants that Chose each Information Need of New and Experienced Families, by Geographic Region of Participants

<u>Information Needs</u>	<u>Western Europe</u>		<u>Central Europe</u>		<u>Central Asia</u>	
	<u>New</u>	<u>Vet.</u>	<u>New</u>	<u>Vet.</u>	<u>New.</u>	<u>Vet.</u>
Pros and cons of various educational options	64.3	10.7	81.1	5.4	68.1	12.8
Methods related to home schooling or supplementing national schooling	28.6	32.1	41.9	29.7	21.3	25.5
Characteristics of Third Culture Kids (TCKs)	42.9	17.9	29.7	35.1	38.3	31.9
Typical language development for children re: learning a second language	42.9	17.9	33.8	6.8	40.4	12.8
How learning styles impact the education of children	17.9	17.9	20.3	28.4	19.2	21.3
The importance of developing a family education plan	28.6	7.1	29.7	10.8	36.2	27.7
Normal developmental milestones for children as re: lang. and learning	14.3	25	17.6	16.2	19.2	23.4
Other	10.7	7.1	8.1	6.8	6.4	8.5

APPENDIX I

Percentage of participants that chose each option as one of the primary three information needs of new and veteran families, broken down by gender

Information Needs	Female		Male	
	New	Vet.	New	Vet.
Pros and cons of various educational options	76.72	10.34	64.86	2.7
Methods related to home schooling or supplementing national schooling	33.62	32.76	29.73	16.22
Characteristics of Third Culture Kids (TCKs)	24.14	31.03	40.54	29.73
Typical language development for children re: learning a second language	40.52	10.34	21.62	13.51
How learning styles impact the education of children	18.97	22.41	24.32	29.73
The importance of developing a family education plan	27.59	17.24	48.65	13.51
Normal developmental milestones for children as re: lang. and learning	19.83	15.52	16.22	32.43
Other	11.21	7.76	0	5.41

APPENDIX J

Percentage of respondents from each geographic region
who selected each reason for testing

Reason for testing	<u>Geographic Region</u>		
	W. Europe	C. Europe	C. Asia
To find out how my child was progressing relative to children his/her age/grade in the U.S.	50	58.11	38.30
To meet my North American homeschooling organization's achievement testing requirement.	10.71	4.05	2.13
My agency requires regular testing for my children.	0	1.35	0
We were returning to North America soon, so I wanted these testing scores to help with grade placement decisions.	10.71	10.81	4.26
I had specific academic concerns which I thought testing would shed light on.	25	33.78	8.51
Other	7.14	4.05	2.13

APPENDIX K

Percentage of respondent length of term overseas who selected each reason for testing

Reason for testing	Years Lived Overseas						
	<2	2-3	4-5	6-7	8-9	10-15	>15
To find out how my child was progressing relative to children his/her age/grade in the U.S.	2.2	27.3	43.8	52.6	54.6	63.6	25
To meet my North American homeschooling organization's achievement testing requirement.	11.1	4.6	0	0	4.6	7.3	0
My agency requires regular testing for my children.	0	0	0	0	0	1.8	0
We were returning to North America soon, so I wanted these testing scores to help with grade placement decisions.	0	0	6.3	0	9.1	18.2	0
I had specific academic concerns which I thought testing would shed light on.	0	4.6	18.8	36.8	31.8	30.9	16.7
Other	0	9.1	0	0	4.6	3.6	8.3

APPENDIX L

Percentage of respondents by gender who selected each reason for testing

Reason for Testing	Female	Male
To find out how my child was progressing relative to children his/her age/grade in the U.S.	48.3	51.4
To meet my North American homeschooling organization's achievement testing requirement.	5.2	2.7
My agency requires regular testing for my children.	0.9	0
We were returning to North America soon, so I wanted these testing scores to help with grade placement decisions.	9.5	5.4
I had specific academic concerns which I thought testing would shed light on.	25.9	18.9
Other	4.3	2.7

APPENDIX M

Permission to Conduct Research from SHARE



February 8, 2008

SHARE Education Services is aware of and supports the research study involving our organization that Melissa Shipman is conducting. We look forward to reading the results of the study.

A handwritten signature in dark ink on a light blue background. The signature reads "Nancy Elwood" in a cursive script.

Nancy Elwood
Executive Director