

Attracting and Maintaining Volunteers: A Case Study

Dr. Patrick Dougherty

Abu Dhabi Men's College, Higher Colleges of Technology

Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates

For you, what are the intrinsic benefits of the THT volunteer experience?

Professional development, friendship, community, learning, moments of pure joy.

- A Teachers Helping Teachers Volunteer

Abstract

Colleges, schools, communities, charitable organizations, all require the services of volunteers to maintain operations. Indeed, in the case of the United States, in 2008, 61.8 million Americans, or 26.4 percent of the adult population contributed nearly 8,000,000,000 hours of volunteer service (Sounding, Listening Post Project, 2009). Volunteers are essential to most non-profits, either as support staff, or, as is the case of the organization, Teachers Helping Teachers (THT) which is the source of the first-person data for this report, the structure of the entire organization. Examining the benefits of volunteering, and exploring what compels people to volunteer, will assist charitable and non-profit organizations to recruit volunteers and maintain them as part of the organization. It will allow THT to augment and maintain its all-essential legion of volunteer teacher trainers.

Background: Teachers Helping Teachers

Teachers Helping Teachers (THT) is a grassroots organization founded by members of the Himeji chapter of the Japanese Association for Language Teaching (JALT) in 2004. THT declares in its literature that it is dedicated to the aid and assistance of fellow educators and students in the developing nations of the Asia Pacific region. It fulfills this mission by providing teacher-training workshops that “*exhibit practical, student and teacher friendly approaches to English education that are informed by current research in the field*” (Dougherty, 2005, p. 2). As a report on a program put on in 2008 in Mindoro Oriental, the Philippines, described the methodology of a THT set of workshops, most programs are based on “. . . *presentations that mix theory with practice and keep the interests and needs of working teachers always in mind*” (THT Website, 10/29/08). THT teamed with JALT in 2008 as a Special Interest Group for the purpose of obtaining non-profit status in Japan (Dougherty, 2008, p. 1).

THT has a formal membership of approximately thirty members, meaning that members have

paid a membership fee to both JALT and THT. Formal membership is not requisite to volunteer to participate in a THT conference, however, and approximately fifty individuals have volunteered to conduct workshops and seminars. Volunteers have mostly been language teachers (English, Spanish, Japanese, and German) who reside in Japan, but their nations of origin have included Germany, Argentina, New Zealand, Australia, Canada, the United States, Great Britain, Russia, as well as Japan. As the normal language of presentations at a THT conference is English, all THT volunteers are expected to be reasonably fluent in English.

The author was one of the founding members of the organization, and for two years its president and, in those capacities was continually involved in volunteer recruitment; hence, identifying the benefits of volunteering also identifies reasons for volunteering that can be offered to potential volunteers and, it is speculated, increase the chances of individuals offering to volunteer. Further, identifying what motivates an individual to offer to volunteer is essential if the process of volunteer recruitment is to bear fruit.

Data Collection

The core data was compiled from an internet survey and articles written by volunteers for the organization's quarterly newsletter. This was supplemented by research reports from the Corporation for National and Community Service.

Findings

The internet survey of volunteers, begun October 15, 2009 and completed November 14, 2009, forms the core of the discussion of findings. It has been supplemented by information from interviews, newsletters, and research reports.

The first question of the survey asked respondents to identify how many THT programs he or she participated in out of the fourteen programs that have been held up to that point. The findings showed that one volunteer had participated in nine programs; one in eight, one in six, one in five, five in three, two in two, and four participants had participated in one THT program. Though not asked to do so, several of the respondents listed the countries visited, and that information gave the researcher justification to say that the pool of respondents had members who visited each of the five countries THT has been active in -- Bangladesh, Vietnam, Laos, the Philippines, and Kyrgyzstan.

The second question of the survey asked participants to state how they heard about THT. Findings showed that five of the respondents were introduced to THT at national and local conferences in Japan, three through colleagues, and the remainder (seven) through meeting or knowing the founder of the organization. In one report written by a volunteer who had attended a program in Bangladesh, she explained that she attended her first program with a “*colleague and dear friend*” who was going on her second trip to Bangladesh with THT at the time (Brown, 2009).

According to a report by the Corporation for National & Community Service (CNCS), personal invitations to serve are more appealing to possible volunteers (CNCS, 2009). According to the report, 43.7 percent of volunteers made the decision to volunteer in response to a direct request by a friend or family member. As explained in the report, “*A common theme underlying current volunteers’ entrée into volunteering was that a friend or family member asked them to serve* (CNCS, 2009, p. 3).”

Question three asked what had attracted the volunteer to THT. Responses were varied, but the theme of sharing came up in many of the responses. One response was typical:

Mainly the possibility of sharing ideas and material with colleagues in different countries and, if possible, leave materials, propose ideas, try to help in the sense that, if many of those colleagues cannot attend international conferences, THT seminars can offer a good opportunity to them.

Two responses mentioned a professional interest in teacher training. One theme came up in six responses, the attraction of travel. This was often teamed with the idea of travel not just to travel but, as two respondents put it, to “*travel with purpose,*” and to travel and “*not be a tourist.*”

Question four of the survey asked participants to reflect on what “compelled” them to join THT. Three of the respondents pointed out that their friendship with the leadership of THT influenced them to participate, one mentioned wanting to travel to one of the host countries and to do so in a way that would provide more than the regular tourist-like experiences. Two respondents offered that they felt motivated to assist teachers in developing countries. Of the two, one wrote, “*I had been looking for an opportunity to help teachers in developing countries, but also the presentation in which several past THT volunteers told about their experiences made it seem really interesting and worthwhile.*” The other responded, “*The possibility of organizing workshops where we can have more extensive and intensive interaction than what we can have*

in one-way presentations given at conferences where interaction is more limited.”

The fifth question of the survey asked each participant who had participated in more than one THT program to explain what it was about his or her first experience at a THT event motivated him or her to sign up for another THT volunteer experience. As statistics from a CNCS report explain, 35.5 percent of volunteers drop out of service each year (CNCS, 2009). Another study showed that, of the 61.7 million people who volunteered their time to a host of charitable activities in the United States in 2006, fully 21.7 million, or about one-third did not donate any time during the next calendar year (Eisner, et. al., 2009). Such a high turnover rate can impact the effectiveness of any organization, and THT, as it requires a high level of independence and flexibility on the part of volunteers, is best served by delegations that have a core of returnee volunteers who understand the system and philosophy of THT.

Regarding the question, thirteen of the respondents offered comments and, in each comment, the enthusiasm of the seminar audiences and the positive feedback from participants was offered as one of the major factors in causing the volunteer to decide to join another THT program. This was summed up by one respondent:

My first THT experience was in Bangladesh (March 2006). I met warm people, (and) a large hard-working audience that made me feel that they appreciated what I had prepared, and encouraging and supportive THT volunteers. After a few minutes of my first workshop I thought: it is really worth spending time and effort to prepare all this material. Actually, I did not think what or why, and simply decided that I wanted to go on participating in the THT seminars.

Other comments cited the support of the THT delegation leaders, the “*camaraderie*” of the fellow THT volunteers, and the “*general atmosphere*” of the experience. According to CNCS (2009), one of the chief reasons cited by focus group participants for volunteering again was the show of appreciation that volunteers received for their service. One first-time volunteer, reflecting on his service, stated that he felt it was a worthwhile experience and that he hoped to join another THT program in the near future (McCoy, 2009, p. 4).

Question 6 asked participants to reflect on the intrinsic benefits of the THT volunteer experience. One of the respondents mentioned the sense of being valued as a professional; another discussed the chance to reflect on their own situation in light of the difficulties experienced by the teachers in the host countries. There was also a sense in some of the responses that the chance to give

back to the profession or society was greatly satisfying. One respondent went into detail:

Quite a few. It's much more rewarding to present at THT than at a regular conference because of the participants' eagerness to learn and gain new expertise. I made friends with Bangladeshi teachers. I learned a lot of about Bangladeshi education and also culture, which I've been trying to expand after I returned home by reading. Also, it was my first visit to a developing country and I gained the confidence that I can survive and teach outside of my comfort zone. It's also good to remember that Japan is pretty cushy gig for an English teacher, when held up against the global standard.

Another respondent focused on renewing his appreciation for his own work environment, as he stated, “. . . seeing the conditions of other teachers made me appreciate my own situation more (a mere 40 students in a class is nothing!!).

These responses correlate with studies that examine the connection between volunteering and social psychological factors such as the volunteer's ability to build social networks that decrease social isolation and also to factors that deal with “role theory.” Role theory argues that increasing the number of social roles that an individual has, i.e. parent, student, teacher, volunteer, provides the individual with a sense of meaning and purpose, enhancing the integrity of self-worth and self-confidence (CNCS, 2007). As argued in one study, volunteer activities led to stronger social ties that, in turn, led to a sense of social-psychological security during difficult times and to a greater sense of self-worth and trust. Hence, volunteering can give an individual a purposeful social role (CNCS, 2007). As one participant recounted in her report on the experience, “*The enrichment gained from participation far outweighs one's own meager contribution* (Brown, 2009, p. 3).”

The seventh question asked respondents to focus on the extrinsic benefits of the THT volunteer experience. Most of the participants mentioned the opportunity to travel in an in-depth manner, being “. . . shown around a new place by nice people . . . visiting the homes of local people” or “*experience(ing) a culture first hand.*” Others mentioned the chance to add presentation experience to their resumes or journal articles to their CVs (THT has a yearly academic journal). In an article about her experience, one volunteer mentioned that she was happy she went due to the “*unforgettable*” set of experiences that she enjoyed, everything from “*the wonderful sight-seeing tours of Dhaka and Sylhet to the Bengali/English sing-along with BELTA (Bangladesh English Language Teachers Association) members, it was a series of unforgettable experiences* (Howard, 2009, p. 5).” Another volunteer, interviewed for an article

on the Bangladesh THT program stated that he felt that the teachers he worked with in Bangladesh were some of the most enthusiastic and active he had worked with (Dougherty, 2009, p. 1). This was mirrored by another volunteer reflecting on his experience in Vietnam (Palmer, 2009). Still another volunteer stated that the participants he encountered were so enthusiastic that he was challenged to match their energy in his own work (Wolfe, 2009).

Networking was stated as an extrinsic benefit by several of the respondents. In at least four cases, THT volunteers were invited back as individual scholars-in-residence or researchers, invitations that probably would not have been offered had the host institutions or members of the audience not met the individuals at THT sponsored programs. Another volunteer explained how witnessing how the officers of THT organized the seminars gave her insight on how she could better construct and organize her own programs as an officer of a Spanish language teachers association. One participant, breaking the mold, chose to focus on the extrinsic benefits the volunteer experience had on the greater community. In other words, how the volunteers, and their experience, could benefit society. As stated,

Ideas and information flow to a wider group. Teachers in host countries that are struggling to keep up with more developed countries are able to learn and share useful information with their own colleagues. A wider dialogue can be created. Hopefully the quality of English language teaching in host countries will be enhanced in the long term. Improved English skills among the general population of host countries means improved opportunities across the board in an increasingly competitive global context. THT programmes can, therefore, go some way to improving the balance between privileged and less privileged nations. Ongoing collaboration increases the motivation for peaceful co-existence between all kinds of people.

This sentiment was mirrored by one of the hosts of THT, who commented that the host institution was grateful to the THT team for contributing to the professional development of teachers in Bangladesh. She admired what she identified as the “*voluntary spirit, enthusiasm and exemplary commitment of the THT forum to help teachers in developing countries.*” (Dougherty, 2009a, p. 2)

Question 8 asked respondents to imagine that they were making a case to a friend or colleague to join a THT program. The question required the respondents to detail how they would “advertise” the benefits of the volunteer experience to encourage the friend or colleague to join THT. One respondent referred to an occasion when she had been able to encourage a colleague to join a THT program, as she explained, “*I actually managed to convince a colleague to*

participate in the last program . . . I mentioned the enthusiasm of the participants and the fact that you can make much better connections with people than you can by traveling.” Many of the survey responses were elaborate and colorful. One such is below:

Do you want to be more than a presentation number, off in a cold dark corner of a huge conference center, giving your presentation to three people who didn't have anywhere else to go that afternoon? If so, join THT, give the first plenary of your career, be astounded by the support and encouragement of hundreds of attendees, all wanting to hear you and to share their own stories.

Question 9 asked participants whether the THT volunteer experience benefited them at work. Approximately three-fourths of the respondents said yes, that there were some direct benefits for them at work. Some cited publications being generated from the experience, other said that their departments at their universities viewed such volunteer work positively, and two respondents stated that they felt that the experience, and documentation from it in the form of a letter of recommendation, or citations on resumes, influenced their hiring or re-hiring at their current work places.

Question 10 asked if volunteering to present at a THT program benefited the respondents outside of work. Fourteen of the respondents said yes in a few or many words, and one was unsure. One of the more succinct responses said simply, *“It’s given me a sense of fulfillment.”* A more elaborate response had a great weight in ideas and reasons, and is quoted in its entirety, as a summary would not do it justice:

I think have a greater understanding of the needs and aspirations of a wider range of people. I think I understand a little more about the world as it is today. I have a wider circle of friends and acquaintances, and I feel I am spending my time and using my skills in a way that brings some benefit to other people. My training and experience is not being used solely for enhancing my own career or maintaining my own lifestyle, or just the betterment of my own small group of students. By having input into the professional life of fellow teachers, I have the chance, through them, to contribute (hopefully positively) to the lives of a greater number of people.

Question 11 asked if the respondents had maintained contact, post-program, with audience members or hosts. Fourteen said yes, and the majority of them stated that they had maintained e-mail contact, Facebook entries, and three of the respondents have made additional, non-THT visits to the host countries either as tourists or as guest lecturers.

Question 13 offered the respondents a chance to add additional comments concerning the

benefits of volunteering for a THT program. Eleven of the respondents offered further comments and thoughts. One focused on the fact that, not only does a volunteer offer wisdom from his or her own experience in the classroom, but the volunteer also gains insight from the experiences of others. Another respondent said the experiences were “. . . *great conversation starter(s) for the language teaching profession.*” Finally, one respondent said that it helped you to remember that it isn’t about “*you,*” it’s about “*them.*”

Conclusions

Two main points regarding recruitment may be distilled from the research. They are adumbrated thus:

- (1) Use current volunteers to recruit new volunteers.
- (2) Emphasize the positive aspects of the volunteer experience to encourage participation in volunteer programs.

To attract volunteers use those who have volunteered. They can make that important personal invitation to service. This is suggested by CNCS, and has worked for THT. Six THT volunteers have given presentations to their peers at workshops and conferences in Japan, Korea, and the UAE. Others have spoken to friends and colleagues about the program and even brought new volunteers with them on programs (Brown, 2009).

Also, as cited in CNCS documents (2009) and supported by THT volunteer comments in the survey, newsletters, and interviews, both attracting and influencing current volunteers to repeat their service, an organization should emphasize the positive aspects of the volunteer experience. In the case of THT, this can be to give the first plenary address of one’s career, give presentations to hundreds rather than the typical few attendees at most conferences, have an opportunity to go beyond the usual tourist experience and get to know the locals and the community, or, on the practical level, the chance to build on one’s skill set, as one volunteer stated in the survey, participation gave him, “. . . *a chance to extend (his) professional skills and to learn from a wide range of other teachers that I would otherwise never meet.*” When asked, as part of the survey, to give an imaginary pep talk to potential volunteers, a volunteer stated that the experience was

. . . the best investment you could ever make. The amount of time, money, and work a THT volunteer invests is returned a thousand fold. The people in country are an inspiration. While THT volunteers are, at least to some degree, presented as

visiting experts, they are not - and they know it. They are mirrors for the teachers in-country, helping them to come up with their own solutions and ideas.

So, to summarize, the best impetus to volunteering and encouraging repeat volunteers is grounded in making personal appeals through friends and colleagues that center on issues of positive self interest that overlap with community concerns and needs. Have volunteers work as a spokespeople for the organization, seeking out new volunteers from their networks at work and in society. Have them explain both the practical benefits and the community benefits of the volunteer experience, and in so doing, encourage participation. This will allow an organization to attract new volunteers and maintain a cadre of “repeaters,” those volunteers who continue to give of their time, energy, sweat, and treasure.

References

Brown, C. (2009) A first visit to Bangladesh. *Teachers Helping Teachers Newsletter*, Volume III, Issue IV. Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates.

Corporation for National and Community Service, Office of Research and Policy Development. (2007). *The health benefits of volunteering: A review of recent research*. Washington, DC.

Corporation for National and Community Service, Office of Research and Policy Development. (July, 2009). Research brief. *Pathways to service: Learning from the potential volunteer's perspective*. Washington, DC.

Corporation for National and Community Service, Office of Research and Policy Development and Listening Post Project. (July, 2009). *Sounding*, Washington, DC.

Dougherty, P. (2005) *Teachers Helping Teachers*. Himeji, Japan (Pamphlet).

Dougherty, P. (2008). *Teachers Helping Teachers Newsletter*, Vol. II, Issue II. Himeji, Japan.

Dougherty, P. (2009a). *Teachers Helping Teachers Newsletter*, Vol. III, Issue IV. Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates.

Dougherty, P. (2009b). *Teachers Helping Teachers (THT) and the benefits of volunteering*. Survey on quia.com.

Eisner, D.; Grimm, R.; Maynard, S. & Washburn, S. (Winter, 2009). The New Volunteer Workforce. *Stanford Social Innovation Review*.

Howard, A. (2009). A second Bangladesh experience. *Teachers Helping Teachers Newsletter*, Vol. III, Issue IV. Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates.

McCoy, P. (2009). Reflections on 2009 THT/BELTA. *Teachers Helping Teachers Newsletter*, Vol. III, Issue IV. Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates.

Palmer, R. (2009). Hue, Vietnam teacher training workshop in February, 2009. *Teachers Helping Teachers Newsletter*, Vol. III, Issue II. Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates.

Wolfe, Steve (2009) Bangladesh: Land of poetic spirit. *Teachers Helping Teachers Newsletter*, Vol. III, Issue IV. Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates.

Appendix A

Internet Survey Results

Survey: Teachers Helping Teachers (THT) and the Benefits of Volunteering
15 respondents took this survey.

Question Summary

	Question	Question Type	% of Respondents Submitting
Details	Question 1	Free response	100.00%
Details	Question 2	Free response	100.00%
Details	Question 3	Free response	100.00%
Details	Question 4	Free response	100.00%
Details	Question 5	Free response	86.67%
Details	Question 6	Free response	100.00%
Details	Question 7	Free response	100.00%
Details	Question 8	Free response	100.00%
Details	Question 9	Free response	100.00%

Details Question 10	Free response	100.00%
Details Question 11	Free response	100.00%
Details Question 12	Free response	100.00%
Details Question 13	Free response	80.00%

top

Question 1 (Free response) 15 of 15 respondents answered this question.		
How many THT programs have you participated in, and in which countries?		
	Number of Respondents	Percent
1 - in Laos	1	6.67%
1-Bangladesh	1	6.67%
2	1	6.67%
3 Bangladesh, Vietnam and Laos	1	6.67%
3 - Laos, Phillipines, Bangladesh	1	6.67%
5--Vietnam 2, Laos, Philippines, and Bangladesh	1	6.67%
6 events in 3 countries (1 in Vietnam, 2 in Laos, 2 in the Philippines, 1 in Kyrgyzstan)	1	6.67%
I have participated in 8 programs (Laos, 3 times; Bangladesh, 3 times; Vietnam, 1 time; Philippines, 1 time)	1	6.67%
Nine	1	6.67%
one - bangladesh	1	6.67%
One programme in Bangladesh (2009)	1	6.67%
Three in Laos.	1	6.67%
Three Programs 2nd, 3rd, and 4th Hue/Vietnam Seminars	1	6.67%
two, both in Bangladesh	1	6.67%
Vietnam (Maggie's helper), Laos (Maggie's helper) and the Philippines (Presenter)	1	6.67%
Total	15	100.00%

top

Question 2 (Free response) 15 of 15 respondents answered this question.		
How did you hear about THT?		
	Number of Respondents	Percent
A friend of mine introduced me to Bill at Jalt 2005 and he explained the THT project to me. From the very beginning I thought there was a fine combination: a great academic project and Bill's modesty and encouraging personality.	1	6.67%
At a presentation for JALT 2006	1	6.67%
Bill Balsamo	1	6.67%
Bill Balsamo was a close friend	1	6.67%

From Bill.	1	6.67%	
I learned about it at a JALT conference.	1	6.67%	
JALT	1	6.67%	
Presentation by Bill Balsamo, Pat Dougherty, Aya Dougherty at Peace as a Global Language 2005 (at Kyoto Sangyo University?)	1	6.67%	
Through a colleague I work with who is a member.	1	6.67%	
Through Bill Balsamo	1	6.67%	
Through Bill Balsamo.	1	6.67%	
through JALT	1	6.67%	
Total	15	100.00%	

top

Question 3 (Free response)

Total	15	100.00%	
-------	----	---------	--

top

Question 4 (Free response)			
15 of 15 respondents answered this question.			
What propelled you to join your first THT program?			
	Number of Respondents	Percent	
A chance to see Bangladesh and help out there.	1	6.67%	
A strong interest in Vietnam	1	6.67%	
An opportunity to make a contribution.	1	6.67%	
As I mentioned above I had been looking for an opportunity to help teachers in developing countries, but also the presentation in which several past THT volunteers told about their experiences made it seem really interesting and worthwhile.	1	6.67%	
Bill's invitation, a longstanding desire to go to Bangladesh and the idea that I could perhaps be helpful	1	6.67%	
Bill's spirit and energy to help people in developing countries further their educational experiences and his personal enlightenment.	1	6.67%	
I had already booked a flight to Hanoi for a week's vacation. It was fairly easy to change my plans. I just booked a flight from Hanoi to Laos for the duration of the THT program there.	1	6.67%	
I had never been to Vietnam before and the idea of giving something back.	1	6.67%	
I happened to be in Laos at the time and wanted to do something that might have been of benefit to local people in Laos.	1	6.67%	
I wanted to go to Laos but not as a tourist.	1	6.67%	
My friendship with Bill and the desire to help him put on a good program. Plus, I had family connections with Bangladesh.	1	6.67%	
See above	1	6.67%	
see above, plus it fitted with my work schedule	1	6.67%	
The fact that THT aims to support teachers, who in many cases have limited professional development opportunities. The opportunity to learn about how English language teaching/learning is being conducted in other parts of the world and the chance to meet and discuss issues with like-minded colleagues. The fact that this takes place in parts of the world I would otherwise not have a chance to visit is also an attraction, but is not the main reason I participate.	1	6.67%	
The possibility of organizing workshops where we can have more extensive and intensive interaction than what we can have in one-way presentations given at conferences where interaction is more limited.	1	6.67%	
Total	15	100.00%	

top

Question 5 (Free response)			
13 of 15 respondents answered this question.			
If you have been involved in two or more THT programs, what about the first experience made you want to join another program?			
	Number of Respondents	Percent	
Definitely the good reception we get from the participants and the various host institutions.	1	7.69%	
Great team to work with, great individuals, the extreme enthusiasm of the participants, caring and competent leader (Pat)	1	7.69%	

Meeting students and volunteers and the general atmosphere	1	7.69%	
My first THT experience was in Bangladesh (March 2006). I met warm people, a large hard-working audience that made me feel that they appreciated what I had prepared, and encouraging and supportive THT volunteers. After a few minutes of my first workshop I thought: it is really worth spending time and effort to prepare all this material. Actually, I did not think what or why, simply decided that I wanted to go on participating in the THT seminars.	1	7.69%	
n/a	1	7.69%	
NA (yet)	1	7.69%	
People's enthusiasm; colleagues I enjoyed getting to know	1	7.69%	
The camaraderie, the feeling of making a contribution, the appreciation for what we do and the opportunity to live an adventure.	1	7.69%	
The experience of learning from others and helping them at the same time.	1	7.69%	
The fact that the program was held in a location where I spend a lot of my vacation time plus the fact that I really really enjoy working with Lao students and educators.	1	7.69%	
The participants	1	7.69%	
The sheer excitement and support of the Bengalis who attended. I had done international conferences before, but this was amazing. I was exhausted but enlivened spiritually by the experience.	1	7.69%	
The work of the first experience--doing the actual workshops--was quite rewarding since I got very positive feedback. However, I was really sick my last day in Dhaka after all the other participants had left and that wasn't particularly positive. So I didn't want to leave Bangladesh with bad memories and I wanted to go and have a positive experience (which I did).	1	7.69%	
Total	13	100.00%	

top

Question 6 (Free response)		
15 of 15 respondents answered this question.		
For you, what are the intrinsic benefits of the THT volunteer experience?		
	Number of Respondents	Percent
All of the above, but also what I learn from student participants.	1	6.67%
An opportunity to help promote English education in countries that are developing and have limited resources and opportunities for educational advancement. It is a chance to help out less fortunate people.	1	6.67%
Being a teacher for many years, it feels that my knowledge and expertise reaches further through these activities. Instead of reaching one class of students, you might be influencing several classes through those who participate in your workshop/seminar.	1	6.67%
Being involved with high schools in Laos was one of the high lights of my THT experience. The local teachers struggle against great odds to bring a quality of education to their students and the students in turn value their teachers. Seeing this has been an enlightening and positive experience for me and left me with the feeling that I might be able to offer something positive at a grass roots community level.	1	6.67%
Combining volunteer work with research/travel. Seeing how other countries' English education systems work.	1	6.67%
feeling you are helping other teachers in a tiny way, seeing the conditions of other teachers made me appreciate my own situation more (a mere 40 students in a class is nothing!!)	1	6.67%
I'm writing this in Vientiane, Laos. Because of the THT trip to Laos, I got to know Ginny Van Ostrand, and she invited me to return if I could. With the help of the Asia Foundation, both in 2008 and this year I have been spending a month at Lao American College, both teaching content in American Studies and working with teachers who have relatively little experience. And this is rewarding.	1	6.67%

Many benefits, I will mention three of them. One: I am fond of literature and I am really enjoying the preparation of workshops based on literature of the countries where we go. Two: At the university, as an English student, I did not do a good job in Phonetics and thought: someday I will do something about it. Now I want to do my best in THT and that made me start taking classes to improve pronunciation. Three: I have been teaching Spanish at beginning level for years ... so I find particularly enjoyable to prepare workshops for teachers in practice and students in training courses, always a highly motivated audience. Thus, I learn a lot and come back to my office willing to go on studying.	1	6.67%
Meeting the Lao teacher and being welcomed into her classroom, and into her home, was priceless. My preconceptions melted immediately after the first hour or so. Also, gaining first-hand experience of the Lao culture was an absolute honor. I was even invited to join the family for the 5:00 a.m. tradition of giving alms to the monks.	1	6.67%
Opportunities to help other people in other countries who do not have access to further educational programs or people with much experience in this area.	1	6.67%
Professional development, friendship, community, learning, moments of pure joy	1	6.67%
Quite a few. It's much more rewarding to present at THT than at a regular conference because of the participants' eagerness to learn and gain new expertise. I made friends with Bangladeshi teachers. I learned a lot of about Bangladeshi education and also culture, which I've been trying to expand after I returned home by reading. Also, it was my first visit to a developing country and I gained the confidence that I can survive and teach outside of my comfort zone. It's also good to remember that Japan is pretty cushy gig for an English teacher, when held up against the global standard.	1	6.67%
The sense of being valued as a professional. I did not get that alot in my work in Japan.	1	6.67%
to interact with people of different cultures; to share the joys of poetry; to feel satisfied about helping as a volunteer.	1	6.67%
To me, a chance to extend my professional skills and to learn from a wide range of other teachers that I would otherwise never meet. For the participants, the chance to upskill their professional skills and knowledge without having to meet the expense of travelling outside their home countries. Creating a stronger network with fellow ESOL / EFL teachers and academics and building personal relationships is a privilege.	1	6.67%
Total	15	100.00%

top

Question 7 (Free response)		
15 of 15 respondents answered this question.		
For you, what are the extrinsic benefits for the THT volunteer experience?		
	Number of Respondents	Percent
A chance to meet other like minded participants, experience a culture first hand, travel to an exotic location, and prepare presentations/papers for professional development.	1	6.67%
Because I wanted to represent THT well, I had to revisit some themes so as to better articulate presentation material. This rethinking, of one particular method, has helped me develop material that I intend to present on at an international conference this winter. I may not have been so motivated had it not been for the THT experience.	1	6.67%
getting to be shown around a new place with by nice people seeing things you wouldn't see as a tourist e.g. visiting the homes of local people getting new ideas from other participating teachers making new friends and meeting interesting and dedicated people	1	6.67%
I believe that I might have been making some ripples in a pond that would have a positive effect on the lives of the people whose paths I crossed.	1	6.67%
I had conferences I could put on my cv and publication records. I submitted journal articles. I was able to	1	6.67%
I really can't separate the intrinsic and extrinsic	1	6.67%
I shared several moments with Bill, one of the most encouraging persons I have ever met. I shared several moments with Pat, one of the best-organized persons I have ever met (not to mention his high academic level and energy for work) I am in the company of nice and interesting people in the	1	6.67%

high academic level and energy for work) I am in the company of nice and interesting people in the countries where seminars are held. I used to observe Bill and then Dr. Pat to learn how to organize groups and seminars (this is useful for my work in the Spanish association) I met Jeremy Harmer!			
I'm a teacher trainer in Japan, so I gained some expertise about situations for language teachers that I can pass on to my students. I also have students who want to do volunteer work internationally and I'm able to talk to them about my experience.	1	6.67%	
Ideas and information flow to a wider group. Teachers in host countries that are struggling to keep up with more developed countries are able to learn and share useful information with their own colleagues. A wider dialogue can be created. Hopefully the quality of English language teaching in host countries will be enhanced in the long term. Improved English skills among the general population of host countries means improved opportunities across the board in an increasingly competitive global context. THT programmes can, therefore, go some way to improving the balance between privileged and less privileged nations. Ongoing collaboration increases the motivation for peaceful co-existence between all kinds of people.	1	6.67%	
Learning about English education in Asia	1	6.67%	
Networking, chance to improve my C.V. Travel subsidised by my uni.	1	6.67%	
Opportunities to Publish. Opportunities to develop speaking skills. Opportunities to build on your resume.	1	6.67%	
Seeing that we've really made a valuable contribution to the lives of others.	1	6.67%	
This kind of overseas work is not that common among my colleagues and is thus highly regarded.	1	6.67%	
Would the above be extrinsic? I certainly don't need these experiences for a c.v. . . One additional benefit: getting to know the wonderful student who was my aide and guide in Hue. I hope to be able to keep up a connection with her.	1	6.67%	
Total	15	100.00%	

top

Question 8 (Free response)		
15 of 15 respondents answered this question.		
If you were encouraging a friend or colleague to join a THT sponsored program in any country we are involved in, what would you say?		
	Number of Respondents	Percent
"It's like the Peace Corps, only for teachers." "The hardest job you'll love."	1	6.67%
all the above it's a great way to spend a holiday Bangladesh is a beautiful country and for people who are nervous about visiting that kind of poor country, it is a gentle way to try it, as you are so well-looked after and treated like a VIP. The Aristocrat Inn is the nicest western style hotel I have stayed in for ages. After Japanese western hotels it is like paradise.	1	6.67%
Do you want to be more than a presentation number, off in a cold dark corner of a huge conference center, giving your presentation to three people who didn't have anywhere else to go that afternoon? If so, join THT, give the first plenary of your career, be astounded by the support and encouragement of hundreds of attendees, all wanting to hear you and to share their own stories.	1	6.67%
Go! Be prepared for program changes, unexpected situations, etc., so be flexible. But you will return energized and very happy that you participated.	1	6.67%
Here's a wonderful opportunity to make a real difference where it matters.	1	6.67%

I would say regarding the Lao experience that it is possible to both offer your skills as a teacher and as a mentor and that in turn you may well end up being taught and mentored by the local people. Many of the education professionals working in Laos are innovative and have an energy and vitality to bring to their work that is exciting and energizing to be around.	1	6.67%	
It is a great way into a culture by helping people and it also provides an opportunity for professional development.	1	6.67%	
It's the best investment you could ever make. The amount of time, money, and work a THT volunteer invests is returned a thousand fold. The people in country are an inspiration. While THT volunteers are, at least to some degree, presented as visiting experts, they are not - and they know it. They are mirrors for the teachers in country, helping them to come up with their own solutions and ideas.	1	6.67%	
That you will get more out of the experience than you could ever give.	1	6.67%	
This is a great opportunity to travel not as a tourist but as a professional. Many of the teachers who attend these events have very few opportunities for professional development and are both eager and grateful.	1	6.67%	
You can share your research with a large responsive audience You can help colleagues in other countries by sharing your ideas and preparing material You can learn to become flexible and enjoy that You can publish	1	6.67%	
Total	15	100.00%	

top

Question 9 (Free response) 15 of 15 respondents answered this question.			
Has volunteering to present at a THT program benefited you at work? If so, how has it done so?			
	Number of Respondents	Percent	
I have been involved in Faculty Development and the THT events add credence to these efforts. These activities may have also influenced the hiring committee when applying for my current position.	1	6.67%	
I plan to publish two papers based on presentations given at the conference. These will be included			

Yes, it always gives me new ways of looking at my classes and opens up new possibilities. Plus I get refreshed from the excitement of the THT programs. Also, it makes one very flexible.	1	6.67%	
Yes, it has certainly benefited me at work. The current president of THT, Dr. Pat, wrote a beautiful letter of recommendation and no question that it helped a lot to be hired again at Tohoku University. Besides, not only some of the theory I read and ideas I gather for my THT presentations but also the ideas I hear in presentations by other volunteers, can be adapted and used in my Spanish classes.	1	6.67%	
Yes, it has helped me establish myself as a staff development specialist.	1	6.67%	
Total	15	100.00%	

top

Question 10 (Free response)			
15 of 15 respondents answered this question.			
Has volunteering to present at a THT program benefited you outside of work? If so, how has it done so?			
	Number of Respondents	Percent	
all the above	1	6.67%	
As above, in "intrinsic benefits"	1	6.67%	
I have been able to establish links with countries that have allowed me to pursue my own research interests.	1	6.67%	
I met some great people.	1	6.67%	
I think have a greater understanding of the needs and aspirations of a wider range of people. I think I understand a little more about the world as it is today. I have a wider circle of friends and acquaintances, and I feel I am spending my time and using my skills in a way that brings some benefit to other people. My training and experience is not being used solely for enhancing my own career or maintaining my own lifestyle, or just the betterment of my own small group of students. By having input into the professional life of fellow teachers, I have the chance, through them, to contribute (hopefully positively) to the lives of a greater number of people.	1	6.67%	
I think so as Lao people are just exceptionally pleasant to work with. This pleasantness and hospitality reminds me of the value of these attributes and the importance of taking time to smell the roses and value the colleagues and students whom I have the privilege of working with.	1	6.67%	
Is there anything outside of work? I think it's helped make me a better person, but becoming a better person is the most important part of becoming a better teacher.	1	6.67%	
It has changed many aspects of my life and I have good friends in Vietnam and a much stronger interest in the Philippines	1	6.67%	
It has helped me to understand other cultures better and to become more humble.	1	6.67%	
It has provided me with a wonderful experience that I will never forget.	1	6.67%	
It has widened my realm of intercultural experience and in general given me a greater sense of accomplishment by thriving in various cultures.	1	6.67%	
It's given me a feeling of fulfilment.	1	6.67%	
Not sure.	1	6.67%	
Outside of work, I am grateful for the people I meet in each THT adventure, hosts and THT volunteers. Among many enjoyable things in the THT events I particularly like the chance of interacting with local people and sometimes, even being invited to their houses.	1	6.67%	
See above.	1	6.67%	
Total	15	100.00%	

top

Question 11 (Free response)			
15 of 15 respondents answered this question.			

Have you maintained contact with our hosts, or host country attendees, after completing a THT program? If so, how have you done so (later visits, exchanges, e-mails, etc.)?			
	Number of Respondents	Percent	
Conducting guest classes, hosting visitors from THT countries.	1	6.67%	
Definitely, in Laos.	1	6.67%	
Email exchanges.	1	6.67%	
Have been in contact with a few participants and helpers from host institutions. Mostly through e-mail and Facebook.	1	6.67%	
I helped Dr. Rubina Khan with a presentation she gave at the Asia TEFL conference in Thailand. I am Facebook friends with some of the people I met in Bangladesh.	1	6.67%	
I keep in touch with several participants through Facebook.	1	6.67%	
Mostly with volunteers, one of whom is now an new lecturer at Hue University	1	6.67%	
Sorry to say I Haven't been in touch with any of the host countries.	1	6.67%	
The teacher with whom I was matched with in Laos has emailed me several times.	1	6.67%	
Yes Emails	1	6.67%	
Yes I have through visits and e-mails. This for me has been a great benefit of the program.	1	6.67%	
Yes, eventually with some of the attendees, by e-mail.	1	6.67%	
Yes, I have been in e-mail contact with various hosts and participants, and I have become very close with my first student facilitator in Vietnam.	1	6.67%	
Yes, mostly through Facebook and e-mail.	1	6.67%	
Yes. I keep in touch by visiting on further visits and through e-mail exchanges quite frequently.	1	6.67%	
Total	15	100.00%	

top

Question 12 (Free response) 15 of 15 respondents answered this question.

Yest	1	6.67%	
Total	15	100.00%	

top

Question 13 (Free response)			
12 of 15 respondents answered this question.			
Do you have any thing else to add in response to this survey concerning the benefits of volunteering for a THT program?			
	Number of Respondents	Percent	
I am actively promoting it among my colleagues.	1	8.33%	
I am proud of being part of a community of educators and researchers. I loved our work in Mindoro: no tech! I know that work in rural areas requires a particularly careful organization for both parts, the THT coordinator and the host. I like to observe and learn how to organize people, time and places, and also consider many many details. My home-stay in Vientiane (March 2009) allowed me to observe how other people do their best at teaching, studying and living in difficult conditions. I can do without technology but I still have to learn how to do without lots of color handouts, copies and material in paper: in many places paper is expensive and there is no copy machine. That is my homework.	1	8.33%	
I hope THT continues for a long time to come and the number of participants grows. On the other hand, if the world were a fairer place, wouldn't it be great if there was no longer any need for such organisations.	1	8.33%	
I'm sorry I haven't been in a position to aid THT, but I hope the Japan-based people and others like you, Pat, can keep it going. Not only does it continue Bill's work, it is valuable. Here at LAC I continue to hear enthusiasm about the THT program.	1	8.33%	
Just to say that it is a win/win situation no matter how you look at it.	1	8.33%	
None that I can think of.	1	8.33%	
Not only is it an opportunity to share what we've learned teaching, but it's an opportunity to learn from the participants. It's meaningful.	1	8.33%	
Pat I would like to sincerely thank you for carrying on the programs Bill started and preserving the integrity, caring, and sensitivity which was the hallmark of how Bill so successfully originally set up these programs.	1	8.33%	
THT activities are a great conversation starter for the language teaching profession. These activities also give volunteers some insight into language teaching in different contexts as well as more general areas of life in host countries.	1	8.33%	
THT programmes help you to remember that it's not about you, it's about them. Volunteering for a THT programme will benefit your soul - even if you don't believe that you have one.	1	8.33%	
THT programs are always exciting adventures that demand flexibility and are rewarding in so many ways.	1	8.33%	
We need to be able to say what the benefits of each particular visit is since they are so different	1	8.33%	
Total			