Captivating Child Sponsors:

Does Engagement Improve Retention?

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Abstract

In the past, regular giving schemes, such as child sponsorship, experienced a high degree of donor loyalty. However, in recent years the attrition rate of these 'regular' givers has risen to 30% per annum and increases to 50 - 60% when donors were solicited through face-to-face recruiters. This concerning trend, combined with economic instability and increasing competition for donor dollars, means child sponsorship programmes must find more effective ways of retaining current donors if they are to remain viable.

This research investigated 'donor engagement', a relatively new donor retention strategy, which seeks to involve donors in activities beyond purely financial giving. Previous literature and research has indicated that donor engagement can increase the loyalty and longevity of donors. However, such research remains fairly thin and does not deal specifically with child sponsors. Therefore, this research set out to examine child sponsors' attitudes to engagement initiatives as well as their effectiveness as a donor retention tool. The research was carried out in cooperation with a prominent New Zealand based development charity, surveying 547 of their child sponsors as well as conducting a number of follow-up interviews.

The research revealed that engaging child sponsors can produce a wide range of positive outcomes, including increasing sponsors' loyalty and longevity. However, the research also revealed a large proportion of more 'passive' donors who had no desire to be engaged by the organisation. Interestingly, these passive donors reported being equally satisfied with their sponsorship experience and remained very committed to their chosen organisation.

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Chapter One – Introduction

Donations are the lifeblood of charitable organisations and countless charities depend on the regular giving of 'committed donors' for these donations. These committed donors, also known as 'regular givers', commit to making relatively small, but ongoing contributions to a charity. Historically, committed donors have proven incredibly valuable to charities, as they typically demonstrate lower attrition rates, require fewer communications and therefore exhibit a higher lifetime value than their 'occasional giving' counterparts (Sargeant & McKenzie, 1998). However, in recent years these so called 'committed donors' have become far less committed, with the attrition rates of new donors of this type rising to between 30% - 60% per year (Sargeant & Jay, 2004).

In response to this escalating rate of donor attrition, academics as well as charitable organisations themselves have presented several promising initiatives that aim to retain current donors. Donor retention is incredibly important to charities as it allows them to make the most effective use of their resources (Peterson, 1997) as well as allowing them to predict their income and plan for the future (Wroe & Dooney, 2004). This thesis will investigate the potential effectiveness of 'engagement', a relatively new donor retention strategy with little established literature or research.

'Engagement' seeks to involve donors in activities beyond purely financial giving, such as volunteering, activism and online or social media initiatives. Charities that engage donors in these types of activities do so in the hope it will increase their donors' loyalty, longevity and the amount they donate. Furthermore, these charities also hope that engaging and further educating their regular givers will increase their passion and commitment to the cause.

For the purposes of this research, 'regular givers' will be limited specifically to child sponsors. 'Child sponsorship' has been used effectively as a regular giving programme by a wide range of development charities over the past 80 years. However, despite past success, child sponsorship programmes have been hit hard by escalating donor attrition and consequently are seeking more effective ways to retain current donors.

Therefore, this research will investigate the potential of 'engagement' as means of improving the retention of child sponsors. This investigation will seek to answer two related questions:

- How do child sponsors regard engagement initiatives?
- Does the use of engagement initiatives appear to increase the loyalty and longevity of child sponsors?

The ultimate aim of this study is to put the findings of the research to use by making recommendations for child sponsorship programs in the future.

In order to best understand the complex research questions posed above, the following research used a mixed methodology approach incorporating

both qualitative and quantitative data collection. The investigation was of a 'case study' nature, surveying and interviewing child sponsors of a prominent New Zealand-based development charity. The integration of qualitative and quantitative methods allowed conclusions and recommendations to be specific to the chosen charity whilst still having wider relevance to other child sponsorship programs.

This research is significant because, although previous literature has highlighted the importance and potential benefits of effective donor retention strategies, it has failed to address the area of donor engagement sufficiently. While many opinion pieces recommend engagement practices, very little empirical research actually exists. Furthermore, none of the literature reviewed for this research deals specifically with the engagement of child sponsors.

This thesis is divided into seven chapters. This chapter introduces the focus and aim of the study. Chapter Two then provides a review of existing literature, examining existing donor retention strategies and looking more closely at 'donor engagement'. The chapter also seeks to identify gaps in previous literature, which this research may address. Chapter Three goes on to outline the methodology, including the data-gathering methods used and the way in which data will be analysed. Chapter Four reveals the results of the research and is followed by a discussion of the findings in Chapter Five. Finally, Chapter Six offers conclusions and suggests areas for future research. The thesis then concludes with Chapter Seven, which uses the

research findings to make recommendations for child sponsorship programmes in the future.

This first chapter has presented the research questions and outlined the aim of the thesis. In order to understand the subject in greater depth, the next chapter outlines the history of child sponsorship and donor retention. It explores existing literature and seeks to provide a theoretical context for the research.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

The introductory chapter presented the research questions and introduced the concept of 'donor retention'. This literature review will unpack the notion of donor retention further, explaining why it is so important and reviewing and evaluating differing approaches to retaining donors. This chapter will help the reader to put the research in context and to place it within a wider body of academic understanding.

The literature review will first begin by investigating established literature concerning why people donate and what motivates them to donate. The chapter will then seek to define the background of child sponsorship and donor retention. It will then go on to review and critique existing donor retention theories. Finally, it will explore donor engagement literature.

The literature presented in this review was found through a wide search of Massey University's physical library database as well as their extensive online article databases. This search was initially assisted by a research librarian to ensure appropriate search terms and search techniques were used so that all relevant literature could be found.

2.2 Definitions

2.2.1 Child Sponsorship

A Brief History

Different organisations give different accounts of how they first began child sponsorship programmes. However, it remains unclear exactly when the concept of 'child sponsorship' was first created or who was responsible for its creation. Nevertheless, by the 1930's several organisations had initiated their own versions of child sponsorship, including Save the Children (1919), Children International (1936), Plan USA (1937) and Child Fund (1938). Much of this early child sponsorship was directed to European children affected by World Wars I and II. Additionally, some organisations initiated 'internal' child sponsorship that was directed to children badly affected by the depression within that country. Even the very earliest child sponsorship programmes focused not only on meeting the basic needs of children, but also on ensuring the rights of such children were recognised and respected. (All information on the history of child sponsorship programmes was sourced and collated from the websites of Save the children, Children International, Plan USA, Child Fund, Compassion International and World Vision, 2011.)

As the idea of child sponsorship grew in popularity, it also grew in terms of its reach. As the plight of those children affected by World War I and II began to improve, other areas of need became more evident. Gradually, child sponsorship programmes began extending their reach to other parts of Europe as well as Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Pacific. Child

sponsorship programmes were introduced in many communities that were adversely affected by war, natural disasters and post-colonial instability.

In the 1950's the world's two most prominent child sponsorship organisations, World Vision (1950) and Compassion International (1952) were formed. Their area of activity has continued to expand and today World Vision has over four million and Compassion over one million children enrolled in their child sponsorship programmes. While there has been some diversification in their developmental approach, child sponsorship remains their most effective and widely used strategy.

How Child Sponsorship Works

All child sponsorship organisations will function slightly differently, however in general, child sponsorship involves an individual, typically from a 'developed' nation, sponsoring a child in a 'developing' nation. This sponsorship may cover the child's education, basic needs, health support, or a combination thereof (Wroe & Doney, 2004).

Organisations also differ in the way they choose to allocate sponsorship funds. Some organisations choose to use sponsorship to directly support the specific child, eg. to pay for them to attend school and provide them with basic needs. Other organisations choose to use the sponsorship funds to support the community the child lives in, which in turn will benefit the specific sponsored child. Still other organisations will fall somewhere between these

two examples. The amount required to sponsor a child varies across organisations, but is typically between $30 - $50 NZD per month.

Child sponsorship allows donors a more personal link to development projects. Rather than contributing their relatively small donation to a huge project, they can make a significant difference to one child. Typically a child will be sponsored for 5 - 15 years, which allows the donor to see the child grow and develop. Donors can often choose to write to their sponsored children, which further develops their personal connection.

Brief For and Against

While child sponsorship is used widely, development professionals often disagree over whether the approach works or is best for poor communities. Wroe and Dooney (2004) outlined the following 'pros and cons' of child sponsorship in a document produced for the British Department for International Development. This reference is included as it succinctly explains many of the advantages and complexities of child sponsorship programmes.

FOR

- It puts a human face on complex issues – learning about the life of one child connects sponsors to the cause of child poverty, and is a valuable development education tool for sponsors and communities.

- It allows the agency to connect with the community at a family and a household level; and because sponsors typically support a programme for 10 – 15 years, this encourages the development of sustainable practice.

- Sponsorship employs good development practice. Leading UK sponsorship agencies have signed an agreement to facilitate "self-reliance, self-help and participation, guided by the principles in the UN convention on the rights of the child".

- Sponsors can judge for themselves the effectiveness of their contribution by seeing the effects on the child they are sponsoring.

- In the best cases, communities themselves manage the sponsorship processes, through volunteers. Communities know who are most in need and make sure these families are the ones who receive help.

AGAINST

- Child sponsorship carries expensive administration costs – the letters and photos take time and money that could be spent on alleviating poverty.

- Letters to and from sponsors remind children of their dependence on a distant stranger and also give glimpses of lives very different to their own, creating dissatisfaction.

- Child sponsorship delivers education, food and clothes, but does not in itself tackle the larger issues – war, HIV/AIDS,

international trade rules etc. – which are root causes of poverty.

- In most cases "child sponsorship" is a misnomer. It is community development by another name. Sponsor contributions are pooled with other donations and used to support projects designed to support the local community where the child lives, as opposed to being conveyed exclusively to the child.

Benefits of regular gift-giving

As mentioned above, child sponsorship typically requires a monthly commitment from donors. This type of regular gift-giving is incredibly valuable to charitable organisations. Even when the amount pledged is relatively small, regular support allows charities to better predict their income and so plan more effectively. As Wroe and Doney (2004) point out; "Imagine what it is like running a major organisation upon which millions of people depend, but you are unable to predict how much you'll be able to spend as it depends on the whims of donors" (pp.12) This is an important point as it addresses not just the amount donors choose to give, but the way in which it is given. As discussed in the introduction to this thesis, regular gift-giving is incredibly important to charitable organisations, and consequently, addressing the issue of 'donor retention' is crucial.

2.2.2 Donor Motivation

As this thesis is focused on the retention of child sponsors it is important to understand what it is that motivates donors to give, both initially and in an on-going nature. While scholars are divided on precisely which motivating factors are most important and most influential, several key themes emerged. These themes are discussed briefly below.

Firstly, there is the concept that donors are motivated by both intrinsic and extrinsic factors. Batson (1987) defines intrinsic motivators as internal feelings, such as pity, social justice, empathy, sympathy and guilt that motivate a donor to give. Varying slightly, Deci (1971) defined intrinsic factors as a donor's genuine interest in supporting the cause of an organisation. Conversely, extrinsic motivators are external factors such as tax benefits and the social recognition of others (Kottasz, 2004; Sargeant et. al., 2006). Individual donors will be motivated to varying degrees by both intrinsic and extrinsic factors.

Closely linked to intrinsic and extrinsic motivation is the notion of egoistic and altruistic giving. Egoistic giving is giving which seeks some sort of reward. Rewards could be social, financial or the receipt of gifts (Krebs & Miller, 1985; Shelley & Polonsky, 2002). Altruistic giving on the other hand is classed as ideological giving, or giving without external motives (Radley & Kennedy, 1995; Shelley & Polonsky, 2002). While scholars disagree on the weight of importance egoistic and altruistic motivations have on a donor's decision making, in reality both types of motivation are likely to have an

influence. For example, when making a charitable donation, an individual may be influenced by empathetic concerns (altruistic motivation) as well as seeking to avoid guilt or appear generous or caring to others (egotistical motivation) (Shelley & Polonsky, 2002).

Every individual donor has their own specific reasons and motivations behind why they choose to give and why they decide to support a particular charity or cause. This thesis does not conduct an in depth investigation into donor motivations, rather it seeks to understand why donors choose to continue giving. While understanding donors' motivations is part of this, this thesis focuses more closely on what actions a charity can take to ensure more effective donor retention.

2.2.3 Donor Commitment

The concept of donor commitment is strongly linked to donor motivation, however it specifically considers how to maintain donor motivation and donor loyalty over time. Several scholars have identified two distinct types of commitment; active commitment and passive commitment. Active commitment can be expressed as a genuine belief in, or passion for, an organisation or its cause (Allen & Meyer, 1990; Sargeant & Woodliffe, 2005). By contrast, passive donor commitment was more often identified as a product of habit or a sense it was the right thing to do without any strong feeling for the cause (Allen & Meyer, 1990; Sargeant & Woodliffe, 2005).

Sargeant and Woodliffe (2005) conducted important research into what precedes and prompts donor commitment to a charity. They asserted that active commitment was fostered by a number of factors. These factors included; a sense of shared beliefs with an organisation, a personal link to the cause or beneficiaries of the charity, trusting the organisation and being engaged with the charity in multiple ways.

Trust was also identified by Sargeant and Woodliffe (2005) as an important factor in passive commitment. This was on the basis that once passive donors decided they could trust an organisation they were happy to continue giving without further thought. Other factors they noted as being of significance in fostering passive commitment were ease of giving and the availability of alternatives.

Creating committed donors is an incredibly significant aspect of donor retention. Therefore, it is of vital importance that charities understand the factors that contribute to fostering commitment. Additionally, it is also important for charities to recognise and cater for donors who express either active or passive commitment. While active commitment is preferable, passive commitment is still commitment, and ensuring that passively committed donors are appropriately accommodated will positively impact donor retention rates.

2.2.4 Donor Retention

If charitable organisations are to continue doing the important work they do, they need to be able to raise funds, not just short term, but a long-term basis. As this literature review will reveal, the most effective way to ensure a steady flow of donations is not simply to acquire new donors, but to ensure the retention of current donors (Waters, 2008; Sargeant, 2001; Burnett, 1992).

In 2001, Sargeant carried out extensive research on the issue of donor attrition. His research revealed that only one in five donors lapse due to a change in financial situation. He reasoned that this result showed that most other lapses are potentially preventable if effective donor retention strategies are employed.

There are several different factors which impact on donor retention. These include donor motivation, donor loyalty and donor longevity. While donor's ultimately decide their stance on these issues, there is much an organisation can do to maintain donors' motivation, loyalty and longevity.

Donor motivation addresses the reasons people donate. Examples of motivations include donors giving because they feel inspired by the organisation's vision and methods, donors giving because they feel it is the 'right thing to do' and donors giving out of guilt. O'Neil (2006) asserts that donors who give because they feel inspired by the organisation's vision and methods will be the most loyal. Lawson and Ruderham (2009) also claim that donor motivations are changing, and younger generations are less likely to

give out of guilt or responsibility and more inclined to give because they feel inspired by the organisation's work. Furthermore, O'Neil (2006) asserts that donor motivation can change over time. Although a donor may start giving out of a sense of guilt, with the right information and encouragement from the organisation, the donor's motivation can change to one of commitment to the charity's vision or cause.

Donor loyalty refers to the degree of commitment a donor feels towards a given organisation. Research by Sargeant (2001) revealed that many lapsed donors did not cease donating altogether; they simply switched to support another organisation or cause. Improving donor loyalty will decrease donor attrition caused through donors shifting their support to another organisation or cause.

Finally, donor longevity refers to the length of time donors continue to donate to their chosen organisation. Waters (2008) and Peterson (1997) both conducted research which revealed that investing in maintaining current donors is far more cost-effective than recruiting new ones. In their research, the cost of soliciting a donation from a new donor was up to five times higher than the cost of securing a donation from an existing donor. While the acquisition of new donors is incredibly important to the continued success of a charity, it is vital that these donors are retained. Handy (2000) and Peterson (1997) also stress the importance of increasing donor longevity, asserting that generating long-term donors is not only more cost-effective for the organisation, but more meaningful for the donor.

2.3 Charitable Challenges

Charitable organisations face a raft of challenges in trying to secure ongoing donations. With an ever-growing number of charities being established, competition for funds is becoming an increasing concern. Furthermore, the effects of the recent global financial crisis have limited what some donors can give and altered the way in which others give. If child sponsorship programmes are to remain viable in the future, they must find ways to address these challenges.

2.3.1 Economic Instability

Charitable organisations have faced an incredible challenge in the wake of 2008's global financial crisis. Individual givers, the givers that child sponsorship programmes depend on most heavily, have been particularly hard hit by the recession. The donations of individuals are generally reliant on some degree of 'disposable' income and so in times of economic hardship individual donations typically drop (NAIS, 2010). 'Giving USA' found this to be true, as donations from individuals in America dropped by 15% in the period from 2008 to 2009 (Hall, 2011).

Few charities seem immune to this drop in donations. The Bridgespan group, a non-profit consulting group in Boston, reported that 93% of over 100 charities that they surveyed had been adversely affected by the economic downturn, with 80% saying they had lost financial support (Gose, 2009).

Conversely, while there has been a significant drop in funding, nearly half of the charities surveyed had experienced an increased demand for their services (Gose, 2009). Unfortunately, due to the drop in funding, many charities have been forced to limit the range of their work, or at the very least restrict their growth in a time when many of their services are needed more than ever (Hall 2011).

Despite these grim statistics, child sponsorship programmes are not without hope. Research has shown that many donors will strive to continue their giving during tough economic times, even if it is at decreased amounts (NAIS, 2010). Furthermore, donors appear to make a more concerted effort to maintain their donations when the charities they support are seeking to meet basic needs, as child sponsorship programmes do (NAIS, 2010).

2.3.2 Competition for Funds

Another key challenge confronting charitable organisations is the increased competition for funds they face from other charities. The last two decades have seen a rapid proliferation of charitable organisations. Since 1990 the number of registered charitable organisations in the U.S. has more than doubled to over one million (National Centre for Charitable Statistics, 2010). By comparison, the population has grown by just 10.1% in the same time-frame (U.S. Census Bureau, 2011). This incredibly fast rate of growth has meant a far greater number of charities are vying for donations from an only slightly greater population.

This growth has created a new challenge for charities. Not only do charities have to convince potential donors that their cause is worth giving to, but also that they are more effective than other charities supporting similar causes. This challenge is particularly pronounced in New Zealand, which has the highest number of charities per capita in the world (Story, 2002). This and other characteristics and challenges of the New Zealand charitable context are discussed in the following section.

2.4 The New Zealand Context

Much of the literature discussed in this paper is of British or American origin. While many of the assertions made by these authors will still apply within the New Zealand charitable sector, it is important to understand some of the unique complexities of New Zealand's charitable giving environment.

In 2006 charitable (monetary) giving in New Zealand was $1.27 billion. Nearly 35% of this was personal giving, with 7% being donated by businesses and the remaining 58% by trusts and foundations (Philanthropy New Zealand, 2007). Revenue from private giving in New Zealand is estimated to be 1.1% of GDP, however this is reduced to 0.9% if income from private trusts is omitted (Sanders et al, 2008). This level is similar to that of Canada, Australia and the United Kingdom, however it remains significantly less than the USA (Sanders et al., 2008).

Lawrence (1999) states that while there is a commonly-held belief that New Zealanders are amongst the most generous supporters of charities in the

world, they have a tendency to donate to 'events' and 'one-offs' and are less likely to pledge their on-going support to charities. This finding is supported by Philanthropy New Zealand (2007) who state that the most common form of giving in New Zealand is by ad hoc donation of money or goods to an appeal. These donations are most commonly made to community clubs and organisations or local schools (Philanthropy New Zealand, 2007).

Another significant feature of the New Zealand charitable sector is the vast number of charitable organisations that function within a relatively small country. In 2002, New Zealand had more registered charities per capita than any other country (Story, 2002). New Zealand's population stands at just under 4.5 million (Statistics New Zealand, 2012), while the number of charities registered with the New Zealand Charities Commission is nearly 26,000. This number excludes charities that have chosen not to register with the Charities Commission as well as non-profit organisations that aren't also registered as charities (New Zealand Charities Commission, 2012). This huge number of charities paired with the relatively small population creates even greater competition for donor funds.

This information highlights several specific challenges faced by child sponsorship programmes in New Zealand. Firstly, New Zealand donors are less inclined to commit to on-going sponsorship as their preference is for one-off donations (Philanthropy New Zealand, 2007; Lawrence, 1999). Secondly, there is a strong, local community focus for much of New Zealand's charitable giving (Philanthropy New Zealand, 2007), making it

potentially more difficult for foreign development charities to secure funds. Finally, the sheer number of charitable organisations in New Zealand means there is very strong competition for donor dollars (Story, 2002).

2.5 Review and Critique of Existing Donor Retention Strategies

2.5.1 Overview of main donor retention strategies

As discussed above, the issue of donor retention is incredibly important to charitable organisations. Since as early as the 1990s there has been an emerging body of literature that suggests non-profit organisations must seek more effective ways of maintaining current donors (Harvey, 1990; Burnett, 1992). The literature proposes that it is more meaningful for the donor, and more cost-effective for the organisation, when long-term donor-organisation relationships are formed and existing donors are successfully retained (Peterson, 1997; Liswood, 1989).

However, despite much writing on the topic, there is little consistency or consensus around terms used for different donor retention strategies. Because of this lack of accord, the author has chosen to assign broad titles to three different strategies. It should be noted that these titles may differ from the more specific titles assigned by the original writers. The strategies discussed in this paper fall under three broad headings; relationship fundraising, stewardship and engagement.

Relationship fundraising emphasises the value of building relationships with donors and catering to their individual needs. Stewardship stresses the importance of demonstrating accountability and transparency. Finally, engagement highlights the advantages of engaging donors in activities beyond purely financial giving. It must be acknowledged, however, that strong links do exist between these strategies. For the sake of this literature review these strategies have been clearly defined, yet in practice the margins are often less clear and elements of these strategies are often used in conjunction with each other.

2.5.2   Relationship Fundraising

Relationship Fundraising was born out of the business sector strategy of 'Relationship Marketing' (Berry, 1983). Berry downplayed customer acquisition as; "…an intermediate step from which an organisation could subsequently build" (p. 28). His strategy recognised the importance of customer retention and development. It was not until the early 1990s that the potential of this strategy for the non-profit sector was identified. Burnett (1992) was the first to coin the phrase 'Relationship Fundraising' and championed a move toward dealing with donors individually and recognising each donor as unique. Burnett's assertions were based primarily on his interpretation of business-based literature and research.

More recently, Sargeant's research on donor attrition (2001) has confirmed many of Burnett's assertions about the value of forming donor relationships. Sargeant employed a large postal survey of 10,000 donors and lapsed

donors from ten different UK based charities. Sargeant's research revealed the importance of relationships and meeting donors' individual needs, such as determining the correct type and quantity of communication. He also emphasised that organisations must find ways of improving satisfaction and deepening bonds with donors. In assessing the value of this research, it should be noted that his survey is the largest to date dealing with the subject of donor attrition. Sargeant further increases his credibility by including both current and lapsed donors to a wide variety of non-profit organisations in his survey, giving his research more depth and wider applicability than previous studies that were much more limited in scope.

Differing slightly from Sargeant's findings, O'Neil (2006) also researched the link between strong public relationships and donor support. Her findings identified no direct correlation between the strength of donor-organisation relationships and actual contribution amounts. Despite the lack of evidence to link donor-organisation relationships and contribution amounts, her findings still suggested that strong public relationships increase donor longevity and made donors more inclined to suggest supporting the organisation to others.

These findings have been supported by other studies (Handy, 2000; van Diepen, Donkers & Frances, 2009), which like Sargeant, saw strong donor-organisation relationships as an important long-term donor retention strategy. However, O'Neil's research revealed that strong donor-organisation relationships primarily affected long-term outcomes while having much less

effect in the short-term. Nevertheless, in evaluating O'Neil's research, it can be argued that her conclusions should be weighed up with caution, as her study was limited in size and scope. Her findings would hold more weight if she had used a larger study sample and included the perceptions of lapsed-donors as well as current donors and the opinions of the organisations themselves.

Handy (2000), also investigated the needs and preferences of short and long-term donors. He investigated the direct mail campaigns of several charities, particularly looking at the varying content of charity letters aimed at different donors. As direct mail continues to be largest revenue earner for many non-profits, understanding the best way that it can be used is of vital importance.

Handy's research (2000) revealed strong differences between the type and quantity of information provided in letters to first time versus annual or major gift donors. Handy found that first time donors needed much less information. They were happy to give without the information and assurances provided to other donors. Annual and major gift donors on the other hand required much more information, including in-depth information about how funds would be used, indicators of the trustworthiness of the charity and acknowledgement and praise for previous donations. Handy interpreted this research in a similar way to the assumptions made by O'Neil. Handy also asserted that the importance of donor-organisation relationships increased as the amount and or length of sponsorship rise. Conversely, Handy claimed that a lack of

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relationship does not appear to have a negative effect on first time or short-term donors.

Van Diepen, Donkers and Frances (2009) also considered donor behaviour in relation to charitable direct mailings. They explored the effect of irritation induced by this solicitation method. Research has shown an increasing rate of irritation due to the increase of charitable direct mailings in recent years (NFP Synergy, 2004). However, van Diepen et al. found irritation does not negatively affect actual donating behavior. The author's research also revealed that non-profits which allowed donor's greater control over the amount and type of communication they received recorded better rates of donor longevity. This once again indicates that strong relationships and increasing donor choices are effective long-term donor retention strategies, but such effects are less noticeable in the short-term. However, as both Handy (2000) and van Diepen et al.'s (2009) studies only consider direct mail campaigns, their assertions should be used with caution in a wider setting.

The results from all of the above studies indicate that relationship fundraising is a very effective way of maintaining donors on a long-term basis. However, many charitable organisations still fail to take advantage of this technique. Peterson (1997) asserts that non-profits do not use relationship fundraising because of the short-term costs associated with setting up such strategies and the increased staff capacity and training that is required. However, Peterson's research reveals it can cost up to five times as much to acquire a new donor than to secure a donation from an existing donor. He asserts that relationship fundraising is the far more cost-effective strategy once it is in

place. Though Peterson's study wasn't extensive, his results are supported by extensive business-based research on the cost-effectiveness of relationship marketing.

O'Donovan (2002) explored the challenges faced by New Zealand's third sector, conducting interviews with representatives from a range of different New Zealand-based charities. He sought to understand the difficulties these organisations faced in their attempts to raise sustainable funds as well as the methods they found most promising. Once again the importance of effective relationship fundraising became evident, particularly in the way relationship fundraising allowed organisations to better understand why donors chose to support their organisation. O'Donovan's research also revealed the importance of other key relationships, including relationships with the media and the wider public.

All of the literature presented here points strongly toward the use of some sort of relationship fundraising strategy. The research illustrates that moving towards more personalised donor interactions can effectively increase donor satisfaction, loyalty and longevity (Sargeant, 2001; O'Neil, 2006). However, these long-term results must be weighed against the short-term costs associated with setting up an effective relationship fundraising strategy and the ongoing cost of maintaining it (Peterson, 1997). If Peterson's assertions are correct, relationship fundraising will prove to be far more cost-effective in the long-term. Nevertheless, charitable organisations' spending is constantly scrutinised and many donors will be critical if they feel too much money is being spent on administration and relationship fundraising initiatives.

Charitable organisations face constant challenges attempting to keep their donors loyal as well as content with their administrative spending.

2.5.3   Stewardship

Integral to most relationship fundraising strategies and key to donor retention is gaining the trust of donors, as strong relationships cannot exist without trust. The reviewed literature stresses the importance of transparency and donor acknowledgement in the non-profit sector. Waters (2008) asserts that charitable organisations must find ways of demonstrating that donations are accounted for and used with acceptable care. Kelly (2001) labeled this behaviour as good stewardship and stressed its importance in donor relations. She asserted that stewardship is of even greater importance in the non-profit sector, because the traditional exchange of money for goods or services does not exist. Donors will not give unless they trust that an organisation will use their funds responsibly and effectively. Therefore, Kelly argued that organisations must find ways of demonstrating their trustworthiness by putting stewardship strategies in place.

Waters (2008) research confirmed Kelly's assertions. He created a measurement scale for Kelly's stewardship strategies, using the themes of reciprocity, responsibility, reporting and relationship-nurturing. Using the measurement scale he assessed the importance of stewardship in the donor-organisation relationship. His research revealed that emphasising stewardship strategies increased donor's sense of trust, leading to increased donor loyalty and longevity. This result was particularly evident with regard to

major gift donors. However, in assessing the value of Water's results, caution should be excercised, as his study consisted of a small donor sample from a single organisation and would not necessarily apply more generally to other organisations.

Water's assertion that non-profits need not only have good stewardship strategies, but also communicate these with their donors, was echoed by Handy (2000). In his review of non-profit direct mail appeals, Handy identified the use and impact of signals designed to assure donors of the trustworthiness of the organisation. His research found the use of trust-assuring signals impacted positively on donor loyalty and longevity. Handy also discovered these signals were of greater importance to longer-term donors. This research looked specifically at direct mail appeals and so may have only limited applicability in other settings.

Sargeant and Woodliffe (2005) further support the case for effective stewardship strategies. They studied the antecedents of donor commitment and found that in order for a donor to form a sense of commitment to an organisation, they first had to trust that organisation. Sargeant and Woodliffe asserted that the most important key to gaining donors' trust was through demonstrating stewardship. Furthermore, their research also revealed that once an initial decision to trust a charity had been made it was seldom reviewed by donors. Therefore, in order to ensure long-term donor commitment it is highly advantageous for charities to establish trust with donors from the outset of the relationship.

Given the weight of research findings, few would argue against the value of stewardship in non-profit organisations, or its importance to the public. For example, in New Zealand, the Charities Commission has been created specifically to monitor non-profit accountability. The literature above, however, goes further and discusses the potential of stewardship as a donor retention tool. The research indicates that communicating stewardship is a very effective way of maintaining donors. Stewardship's effectiveness appears to be particularly evident in the case of major donors, with some evidence to suggest that regular donors, such as child sponsors, also value stewardship indicators highly.

2.5.4   Engagement

The final donor retention strategy to be explored, and the focus of this research, is engagement. Engagement is a relatively new strategy that emphasises the importance of engaging donors in activities beyond financial donation. Research by The Good Agency (2008) and Rapidata (2009) found that donors' motivations are changing. The new donor no longer talks about giving out of obligation or guilt, but of being inspired and seeking to be 'involved' and 'engaged'.

For the sake of this research, engagement will be defined as 'engaging donors in activities beyond purely financial giving'. These activities can include volunteering with the organisation, campaigning or advocating for their causes, attending events or functions arranged by the organisation,

fundraising on behalf of the organisation or engaging with interactive online material and social media. All of these engagement activities can be divided into two categories, active engagement and online engagement. Active engagement activities include volunteering, fundraising and all other forms of engagement that require physical interaction with others in support of the organisation. Online engagement activities are more limited and include the use of interactive online material and social media.

With the objective of greater donor engagement in mind, Lawson and Ruderham (2009) set out their 'integration' strategy in which donors are encouraged to integrate donating and campaigning activities. They assert the most meaningful donor relationships are formed through face-to-face contact, and that volunteering and campaigning are key ways of achieving this contact. Lawson and Ruderham's integration research found that donors who participated in voluntary activities such as campaigning were likely to donate more and remain more loyal to the organisation. However, the wider application of these assertions should be done with care since their research was carried out in a very limited context and they failed to place their writing within the existing body of literature.

Sargeant and Woodliffe's (2005) research into the antecedents of donor commitment also found engagement to be incredibly important in fostering commitment to an organisation. They discovered a strong association between a donor's level of commitment and the number of ways that the donor had interacted with the organisation. Donors who engaged with an

organisation in multiple ways, such as regular giving, buying from a gift catalogue, campaigning with the organisation, or volunteering or fundraising on behalf of the organisation, expressed much higher levels of commitment than donors who had only engaged with the organisation in one way. These findings demonstrate the effectiveness of engagement as a donor retention tool and further validate the assertions of Lawson and Ruderham (2009).

O'Donovan's New Zealand based research (2002) also found donor engagement to have very positive effects for charitable organisations. He particularly stressed the value of the volunteering donor. O'Donovan's research found that volunteers can provide an effective way of reducing an organisation's costs through the provision of additional skills or services which the organisation could not fund otherwise. Additionally, volunteers can also be used to gather further support by encouraging them to make use of their own existing contacts, and so widen the reach of the charity.

Nathan and Hallam (2009) did not specifically research donor engagement, but rather set out to investigate the reasons donors ceased giving. However, the findings of their research gave strength to the case for donor engagement. Nathan and Hallam found that many donors wanted their value to extend beyond the money they could contribute. That is, they wanted the charity they supported to appreciate not just their financial worth, but to recognise them as individuals. Therefore, the researchers recommended offering donors opportunities for non-financial involvement and non-financial

support. They asserted that such opportunities can serve a dual purpose. They allow donors to feel they are more valuable to an organisation and they increase donors' exposure to the organisation, thereby increasing their sense of commitment.

Hosea (2009), and Ingenhoff and Koelling (2009), proposed a different form of engagement. Rather than focusing on active engagement, they have researched the effectiveness of online engagement. Both Hosea, and Ingenhoff and Koelling, highlighted the ability of social media to communicate with and engage donors in new and innovative ways. Referencing real examples, Hosea emphasises the ability of social media to access a younger generation of donors in an appropriate way, combining sound, image and even interactive 'real-time' communication.

However, both Hosea (2009), and Ingenhoff and Koelling (2009), failed to present the limitations of social media. While organisations are gaining good results and seeing increased participation from their internet-based communication, research suggests that traditional strategies such as direct mail still produce the largest donations (van Diepen, Donkers & Frances, 2009). Lawson and Ruderham (2009) also recognised that online engagement remains somewhat limited. They asserted that while integrating new online strategies will undoubtedly become an increasingly important way of expanding the donor base, organisations must not forget their existing donors and what is appropriate for them.

As the notion of donor engagement as an effective donor retention tool is still relatively new, the academic research and literature remains fairly thin. A wide search of Massey University's physical and online databases revealed relatively little academic writing on the subject. However, there are also a number of articles being produced by people working within the charitable sector who are praising the benefits of engagement. While a lack of academic knowledge and research lessens their authority somewhat, they present some interesting points for discussion. Two of these authors are discussed below.

Rubach (2006) was highly involved in the 'Make Poverty History' (MPH) campaign, perhaps the most successful charitable PR event in history. In her article she attributed the success of MPH to its incredibly engaging nature. Rubach revealed; "Unusually, the campaign was geared entirely around building awareness and taking action, rather than generating funds" (p.21). While she acknowledged that this did not instantly turn participants into donors, she asserted that those participants who did choose to donate would almost certainly become the most loyal donors. Rubach claimed increased loyalty was a natural outcome when donors becoming impassioned about a cause and understand the bigger picture.

Rubach (2006) also interviewed Roger Lawson, a strategy and planning director for one of the United Kingdom's largest charities. While Lawson is a passionate proponent for donor engagement, he is equally aware of the need to raise funds. His experience in the charitable sector has led him to

believe that donor involvement or engagement most often leads to greater loyalty and increased monetary donations. He noted:

> We know that people who volunteer are most likely to leave a legacy, and that those who campaign will also give more. We also know that people who become engaged with a charity, over and above simply giving money, will be more loyal (p.21).

Although engagement is a new field with very little established literature or research, it does present exciting potential. The research and literature outlined in this chapter indicates that many donors are seeking greater involvement with charitable organisations, involvement that extends beyond purely financial support.

This research hopes to reveal more about the effectiveness of donor engagement, particularly as it relates to child sponsors. The following chapter will outline the methodology this research used to further investigate donor engagement and to answer the research questions presented in the introduction.

Chapter Three – Methodology

3.1 Introduction

The previous chapter discussed existing literature, highlighting what is already understood about donor engagement and raising questions for future research. Based on the gaps in understanding presented by the literature review, this research sought to answer two related questions: Firstly, how do child sponsors regard engagement initiatives? Secondly, does the use of engagement initiatives appear to increase the loyalty and longevity of child sponsors?

This chapter will guide the reader through the processes used in this research, from the formulation of the question through to the analysis of the collected data. Furthermore, the chapter will also seek to address the reasoning behind the selection of the particular methods and processes that were used in this research.

3.2 Formulating the Research Question

The literature review revealed limited research in the area of donor engagement, particularly as it related to child sponsors. However, Lawson and Ruderham's research (2009) found that donor engagement activities such as volunteering or campaigning could strengthen donors' sense of

loyalty, as well as increasing the actual amount they donated to their chosen charity. O'Donovan's research (2002) also provided anecdotal evidence to support the use of engagement initiatives from within the charitable sector. Nevertheless, the findings of Lawson and Ruderham, and O'Donovan did not relate specifically to regular givers such as child sponsors.

Hosea (2009) and Ingenhoff and Koelling (2009) addressed a slightly different form of engagement, claiming that interactive online modes and social media are an effective means of involving donors. They found such activities could increase donors' interest in and commitment to their chosen charity. While this type of engagement is not face-to-face, it still includes the crucial element of involving donors in activities beyond purely financial giving.

In light of these findings and the unexplained gaps left by them, this research sought to understand how child sponsors felt about being involved in activities beyond purely financial giving, as well as the actual effects of such involvement. This broad aim was then refined to produce two specific research questions:

- How do child sponsors regard engagement initiatives?
- Does the use of engagement initiatives appear to increase the loyalty and longevity of child sponsors?

The specific engagement activities investigated in this research were volunteering, fundraising and interactive online activities.

3.3 Methods of Data Collection

In order to understand the complex research questions presented above, this research was approached with a mixed methods technique, which collected both qualitative and quantitative data. An online survey was used for the collection of 'big picture' data, which investigated the broad context of information relating to donor engagement. This data was then supplemented with a small amount of more detailed information, provided by post-survey phone interviews with a small number of the survey participants. This approach was used in order to create a multidimensional and comprehensive understanding of the research question (O'Leary, 2010).

3.3.1 The Online Survey

The primary research device used in this investigation was an online survey, which was strongly influenced by Sargeant's (2001) donor attrition survey carried out in Britain. Sargeant employed a huge postal survey of 10,000 current and lapsed donors. He used a mixture of multiple choice and scaled questions to gain information regarding why donors continued to give or why they stopped giving.

In common with Sargeant's work, a survey was seen as an appropriate form of data collection for this research, as it allowed a large number of participants to be included in the research and the data could be gathered within a relatively short time frame. The disadvantage of surveys, is that the response rate is often lower than other forms of data collection and non-

respondents can become and issue in terms of the credibility and validity of the research (Kelley, Clark, Brown & Sitzia, 2003).

While this survey was strongly influenced by Sargent's donor attrition survey (2001), the research methodology had to be altered slightly because of the smaller scale of this investigation. The limited time-frame and practicalities of the research meant that the size of the research sample must limited to 547 child sponsors. However, the advantage of a smaller research sample was that the research was able to not only used closed questions, like Sargeant's, which give participants a fixed choice of possible answers, but also open ended questions. Using this type of survey allowed for the statistical analysis of quantitative data, alongside qualitative information that could provide greater understanding of the context surrounding the research questions. This mixed-method approach was selected in order to give a greater range of information to use in answering the research questions.

This survey further differed from Sargeant's (2001) in the way it was carried out as it was not conducted via direct mail, but online. While online research holds many advantages, it is still a relatively new technique and must be handled carefully. The advantages and disadvantages of online research are discussed below.

3.3.2 Online Issues

The main survey was conducted online, and as such it was important to understand the benefits and constraints of using the Internet to carry out research. While online research has many advantages, such as cost-efficiency and fast return rates, it also has distinct disadvantages. These disadvantages include the possibility of a skewed population, as Internet access is still limited within older and lower socio-economic groups (Foy, 2004) and there is the possibility of misuse of online databases to gain participant email addresses (Foy, 2004). Such risks must be well managed if the research is to yield high quality results and remain ethical.

The Issue of inappropriate use of databases was avoided, in this instance, as the researcher was not granted direct access to the participating organisation's child sponsor records. Instead, information was only released to the researcher once potential participants had given their permission for their details to be released for that purpose.

The issue of creating a sample that was skewed due to variations in internet accessibility was slightly more complex. The participating organisation reported that at least 95% of their child sponsors have access to the Internet. However, despite this very high rate of Internet accessibility, only 60% of the organisation's child sponsors have elected to receive correspondence via email. Because the online survey was sent through an email link, the remaining 40% of the organisation's child sponsors were not able to participate.

The majority of those child sponsors who are not email accessible are those who have sponsored for over 10 years. This trend is largely attributable to email being far less commonplace 15, 20 or 30 years ago when these sponsors initially 'signed up'. The participating organisation reported that the decision to receive correspondence via email is most commonly made at the time of 'sign up', meaning that most of those sponsors who signed up over 10 years ago are less like to have opted to receive correspondence in this way. The research has sought to minimise this issue by selecting a stratified sample to ensure that child sponsors who have donated for more than 10 years are not underrepresented.

As discussed above, many child sponsors are not email accessible by default, due to the fact that when they first signed up email was not as prevalent as it has become in recent years. However, some of the more recent child sponsors have made the decision not to receive email correspondence intentionally. This decision may have been made for several reasons, including a fear of unauthorised sharing of their email address, or concern about the type and quantity of email correspondence they may receive (Sparrow, 2007). While the exclusion from the study of child sponsors who choose not to receive email correspondence is not ideal, it should not impact significantly on the validity of the research sample, as there is no reason to imagine that these non-contactable child sponsors represent any particular groups more than others. Furthermore, although not all of the organisations child sponsors choose to be contactable via email, at

least 95% of the participating organisation's child sponsors have access to the Internet. This fact means that the concern of creating a skewed sample due to a lack of access to the Internet (Foy, 2004) is largely irrelevant in this particular context, as a maximum of 5% of potential participants are excluded through not having internet access. Therefore, no specific age or socio-economic bias is likely to be created.

In the context of this research, the advantages of conducting research online were substantial and the disadvantages were able to be managed appropriately to ensure the quality of the collected data remained high. Due to the time and cost limitations of this research, the fast return rates and minimal cost of conducting research online were important factors. Furthermore, the participating organisation was happy to cooperate with an online survey, but less willing to participate in research conducted via direct mail. Finally, because the research sample contained over 500 participants, conducting the research online made the analysis of data far more simple and effective. Analysis was made even more straightforward as the online survey tool 'Qualtrics' used for the research, contained built-in analysis tools. Had the research been conducted via direct mail, all results would have had to be manually entered into an analysis package, a more time-consuming process and one that also has the potential for human error.

3.3.3 Post-survey Phone Interviews

The online survey described earlier was valuable in terms of collecting a relatively large amount of quantitative data alongside the qualitative data gained from short-answer questions. However, it was decided the research would further benefit from a more detailed understanding of several donor's stories and experiences, adding depth and insight to the numerical data through the inclusion of narratives and dialogue (O'Leary, 2010). Therefore, post-survey phone interviews were conducted with a small number of the online survey participants. These interviews were conducted after participants had completed the online survey. As well as gaining a more detailed picture from a small number of donors, these interviews also sought to allow participants the opportunity to discuss issues that may have been neglected in the survey.

The content of the post-survey interviews was similar to that of the online survey (Interview schedule: Appendix B). This reiteration gave the participants the opportunity to expand on the answers they gave in the online survey. Additionally, participants could also choose to raise any further concerns or ideas they wished to express.

The decision was made to conduct these post-survey interviews by phone as it allowed greater anonymity and greater access to donors around the country without the need for time-consuming and expensive travel (Frey et al., 2001). The researcher decided against conducting face-to-face interviews

in her own city, due to the more limited pool available and the effects of the recent Christchurch earthquakes on potential participants.

3.4 Approaching the Participating Organisation

In order to gain a large and coherent sample of potential participants it was decided the research should be carried out in co-operation with a participating organisation. This collaboration not only provided a large number of potential respondents, it also meant that potential participants had encountered similar experiences. This ensured that differences that were presented were not the product of different organisational practices.

The participating charity was selected because they were a large child sponsorship charity with decades of experience. Furthermore, the researcher had previously had some involvement with the charity, making the initial approach to the organisation easier. A research proposal was presented to the regional manager of the participating organisation, who then passed it onto the national office. Permission was granted with only one requirement. In order to protect the privacy of their child sponsors, the participating organisation would have to make the first contact with potential participants on the researcher's behalf.

As the research progressed, the participating organisation made several minor recommendations regarding the content or phrasing of questions in the online survey. However, it should be noted that all such recommendations

were carefully considered by the researcher and the supervising lecturer, to ensure the independence of the research was not being compromised.

3.5 Limitations and Constraints

This research, while valuable in regard to its exploration of a subject that has previously been insufficiently investigated, is constrained in several ways. A key limitation is the restricted size and scope as only a single organisation was included in the research and a relatively small number of participants were included.

The restriction to a single organisation was made for practical reasons, as the research was conducted with limited time and resources. Given these constraints, it was decided the research would benefit from a more comprehensive understanding of a single charitable organisation, rather than limited understanding of several organisations. Limiting the research to just a single organisation also removed the variables presented by numerous organisations functioning in different ways. While this limitation means the research findings will apply specifically to a single participating organisation, it is the researcher's opinion that this more in-depth investigation will yield more coherent results (Schwarz, Strack, Hippler & Bishop, 1991). It is also the researcher's opinion that although the findings only apply specifically to the participating organisation, the more in-depth nature of the research increases the relevance of the findings to other organisations who use child sponsorship.

The overall number of participants was limited to 547. While this number represents only a fraction of the organisation's 60,000 child sponsors, the deliberate selection of participants based on how long they had been child sponsors helped to produce a more stratified sample. This stratified sample sought to ensure a wider range of experiences and opinions would be represented. Another key issue around a smaller number of participants is the potential issue of non-respondents. Non-respondents can skew a research sample, allowing the over-representation of some demographic or opinion groups and under-representataion of others. Research results are more reliable in terms of the credibility of the information gained, when the proportion of non-respondents is minimised.

The researcher attempted to minimise the issue of non-respondents through the use of an 'opt in' email. To do this, the participating organisation sent an introductory email to a large number of their child sponsors. Those who chose could 'opt in' to indicate their willingness to be included in the research sample. Participants who did 'opt in' were then much more likely to complete the survey than potential participants who knew nothing of the research before receiving the survey (Sheehan, 2001). From the pool of willing participants, the researcher then selected participants based on the length of time they had been child sponsors. By using this method of identifying sponsors who are more likely to participate and then selecting a stratified sample, every effort has been taken to ensure that the problem of non-respondents has not affected the credibility of the data.

An additional issue that must be addressed, is the decision that allowed the participating organisation to make the initial approach to potential participants, rather than the researcher. As discussed above, this choice was made in order to respect the privacy agreement the participating organisation holds with their donors. Nevertheless, it should be noted that this option had the potential to create some bias favouring the organisation. The email sent to potential participants by the participating organisation not only included the basic facts of the research, but also the following quote:

> Your contribution will not only be of help to Ms Down, but also [the participating organisation]. The concluding results of the study will be made available to us, and will be invaluable in helping us to improve our supporters' experience with us.

While this statement is true and in no way unreasonable, the appealing nature of it may prompt some particular child sponsors more than others. That is to say, those child sponsors who regard the participating organisation more positively may be more inclined to 'help' the organisation in this way. While every effort has been made to produce an unbiased sample, it is impossible to know whether all opinions have been represented proportionately. Due to the method used, it is possible that those child sponsors with a less positive view of the participating organisation have been underrepresented.

Finally, this research was also restricted due to the exclusion of former donors from the research sample. While it would have been valuable to

understand the reasons previous child sponsors chose to stop donating, it was not possible to access such participants through the participating organisation.

3.6 Production of Research Instruments

The choice of the questions to be included in the survey was carefully considered. The survey questions sought to gain the information needed to answer two research questions, Firstly, How do child sponsors regard engagement initiatives? Secondly, does the use of engagement initiatives appear to increase the loyalty and longevity of child sponsors? Additionally, there was also a strong emphasis on creating research tools that were user-friendly and easily comprehensible to all participants.

3.6.1 Production of the Online Survey Tool

The online survey questionnaire was created in four sections that built on one another to ultimately answer the research questions (Appendix A). These individual sections have different objectives: The first section sought basic information; including how long participants have sponsored a child and how they came to sponsor a child. The second section went on to explore participant's donating experience so far, as well as how satisfactory they had found their experience. The third section sought to discover how committed participants were to their chosen organisation, and how they felt the organisation could help them to become more committed. Finally, section

four consisted of open-ended questions that allowed the participants to expand on previous answers and raise any additional concerns or issues.

These four sections not only progressed in their objectives, but also in the complexity of the questions asked. The online survey developed from straightforward easy-to-answer questions, to more in-depth questions. This progression was intended to ease participants into the questionnaire and encourage completion. According to Cannel and Kahn (1968): "The early questions serve to engage the respondent's interest without threatening or taxing him [or her] before he [or she] is really committed to the transaction" (p. 571). However, the final survey question returned to a simple, easy-to-answer format in order to leave participants feeling positive about their involvement.

An additional tactic used to maintain participants' focus during the survey was to alter the way in which questions are asked (Rea & Parker, 2005). Rather than using exclusively multiple-choice questions throughout the survey, short answer and scaled questions were also employed. Likert scales were used widely as a means of not only understanding participants attitudes towards a particular subject, but the strength of their attitudes (Albaum, 1997). The integration of different question types was a way of holding the participant's interest, while still allowing some sense of flow and continuity throughout the survey.

A brief breakdown of the types of questions and purpose for these questions is outlined below: The purpose of Section A was to gain introductory information including basic personal information to find out when, how and why participants decided to sponsor a child. This basic information will help the formation of different groups for analysis later on.

Section B then went on to address participants' sponsorship experience. This section asked questions regarding participants' experiences as donors and their donating preferences. This was an important section as it began to establish how satisfied participants were with their sponsorship experience. In doing so, it sought to answer the first research question; how do child sponsors regard engagement initiatives?

Section C progressed to ask donors about their current level of commitment to the organisation and what measures they feel might increase their level of commitment. This section dealt with the second research question; Does the use of engagement initiatives appear to increase the loyalty and longevity of child sponsors?

Finally, Section D consisted of open-ended questions. These questions allowed participants to expand on previous answers and to raise issues that the rest of the survey may have missed.

3.6.2 Production of the Post-survey Interview Schedule

The post-survey interviews followed a very similar direction to the online survey questionnaire outlined above. The purpose of the interviews was not to produce entirely new and different information. Rather, the intention was to allow participants the opportunity to elaborate on previous answers. In order to do this, the interview asked fewer questions than the survey and asked them in a much broader manner. By asking broader questions the interviewees were encouraged to offer more expansive answers than those they provided in the online survey.

The interview schedule (Appendix B) asked participants 10 broad questions, once again working from initial easy-to-answer questions to more in-depth questions (Cannel and Kahn, 1968). However, additional 'sub questions' were also provided in case the researcher needed to encourage the interviewees to answer in greater depth, or keep participants on topic. This flexibility allowed for different types of interviewees; those who discussed the questions freely and those who only provided short answers and required further prompting.

3.6.3 Piloting of the Research Instruments

The first draft of the online survey was discussed with the research supervisor, at which point some editing was required. One of the key issues highlighted at this time was that several of the survey questions were deemed too 'leading'. A leading question is one that will prompt most

participants to answer in a particular way because of the way it is asked. For example, one of the survey questions was phrased as follows:

Receiving more information about my sponsored child would make

donating a more meaningful experience for me'

☐ *Strongly agree*   ☐ *Agree*   ☐ *Unsure*   ☐ *Disagree*   ☐ *Strongly disagree*

This question would likely lead most participants to agree that yes, receiving more information about their sponsored child would make donating more meaningful for them.

Therefore, the question was revised and in fact combined with several other questions to read:

Do you feel any of the following would make your sponsorship

experience more positive or meaningful? (tick all that apply)

☐ *Learning more about how my sponsorship funds are being used*

☐ *Receiving more information about my specific sponsored child*

☐ *Learning more about global poverty and the 'bigger picture'*

☐ *Learning more about the charities development strategies in*

communities facing poverty

☐ *Having opportunities to be more actively involved with the charity*

This change meant that participants were less compelled to simply agree with the statement used in the question. Instead, participants could choose the options they truly agreed with and leave those they felt would not affect

their donating experience. Respondents could choose as many or as few options as they wished, or select none of them.

The online survey was then piloted with a small number of the researcher's personal acquaintances who were known to be child sponsors of the participating organisation. The purpose of this pilot was to ensure that the survey questions were easily readable and understandable to potential participants. While the pilot group was not representative of the full range of sponsors participating in the final survey, it did allow evaluation of the content and phrasing of the questionnaire from the perspective of a child sponsor. The pilot group recommended several minor changes to the phrasing of questions, but the content remained the same.

3.7 Selection of Participants

As this research was conducted with a co-operating organisation, potential participants were selected from that organisations's donor database. The participating organisation has an agreement with their donors that personal information will not be shared with any third party. In order to respect this, the organisation made the initial contact with donors on the researcher's behalf. Once donors had 'opted in' they were identified as willing potential participants and their details released to the researcher.

3.7.1 Online Survey Selection

Once the appropriate information was released to the researcher, the donors who had 'opted in' to be potential participants were arranged into four groups. These groups were based on how long participants had been child sponsors: less than 2 years, 2 – 5 years, 6 – 10 years and over 10 years. Information regarding the length of time participants had been donors was released to the researcher by the organisation. One hundred to two hundred participants were then selected from each of the four 'length of sponsorship' groups. This selection sought to roughly represent the proportions of the organisation's child sponsors as a whole. This selection was made randomly using the 'random selection' function in Qualtrics, the online survey tool used for this research. By selecting participants according to how long they had been donors, a more stratified sample was selected, rather than taking a random sample of all potential participants. A random sample may not have provided sufficient numbers of particular groups, making cross-tabulation of different groups immaterial. The stratified sampling method sought to ensure a wide range of experiences and opinions was represented in the research sample.

This stratified sampling method was valuable as a lower proportion of child sponsors who have sponsored for more than ten years were email accessible. As this research asked how child sponsors regarded engagement initiatives and whether they thought engagement initiatives would increase their loyalty and longevity it was important to ensure that both recent and longer-term donors were represented. Because time restrictions

meant this study could not be longitudinal, the inclusion of donors who have been child sponsors for different lengths of time was intended to provide some indicator of how engagement impacts on donor longevity.

3.7.2 Post-survey Interview Selection

The process used to select post-survey interview participants was similar to that used to select the online survey participants. At the conclusion of the online survey, participants were given the option to 'opt in' to become potential interview participants. A total of 295 participants indicated they would be happy to be interviewed. These potential participants were once again sorted into the four different donor groups; under two years, 2 – 5 years, 6 – 10 years and over 10 years. Three participants were then randomly selected from each group, once again using the Qualtrics random selection tool.

These 12 randomly selected participants were then contacted via email to provide them with further information about the interview and to arrange an appropriate interview time. Only six of the initial 12 participants were eventually interviewed. This was because several participants did not reply to emails sent and one participant decided not to take part after further consideration. A further three interview participants were then selected to ensure that each of the donor groups had at least two representatives and that males were appropriately represented. As 29% of the participating organisation's child sponsors are male, the researcher decided that at least three of the nine interview participants should also be male.

3.8 Distribution of the Survey

The online survey was sent to a selected 741 potential participants via email, using the selection criteria outlined above. This initial email to potential participants included an introduction to the researcher and the research along with a link to the online survey. A more in-depth participant information sheet was also attached to the email for those participants who wished to read further information (Appendices C & D).

The timeframe for the distribution and collection of the online survey was three weeks, not including the initial approach to potential participants by the participating organisation. The initial email sent by the researcher informed potential participants they would have three weeks to complete the survey and encouraged them to do it immediately if they could. This email was followed by a reminder email a week later to those potential participants who had not yet completed the survey. A final email reminder was sent one week prior to the survey cut-off date. This use of reminder emails appeared to significantly improve the rate of return, with return figures surging after each email was sent (Sheehan, 2001).

3.9 Ethical Considerations

Any potential ethical issues presented by this research project were identified and discussed with the research supervisor and the participating organisation. A Human Ethics Application was also submitted to the Massey

University 'Southern A' ethics committee for approval before research began. The key ethical issues identified were: The use of the participating organisation's donor database, informed consent, confidentiality and anonymity, treatment and use of data and data protection.

3.9.1 Use of Database

The participating organisation has an extensive donor database that the participants for this research were selected from. However, because the organisation has an agreement not to release any donor's details to a third party, the researcher could not be permitted direct access to this database. In order to respect this agreement, the participating organisation made the initial contact with donors on the researcher's behalf. Once participants had 'opted in' their details were released to the researcher. Using this approach avoided any ethical issues around questionable sharing of contact information.

3.9.2 Informed Consent

As with all research, it is of vital importance that participants give informed consent. Because this research took place predominantly online, traditional written consent forms were waived. Instead, an introductory email informed participants: "As a participant in this study you have certain rights, including the right to stay anonymous and the right not to answer any particular question. The completion and submission of the online questionnaire implies consent."

Additionally, the introductory email (Appendix C) and Participant Information Sheet (Appendix D) also explained the intention of the research and provided the contact details of the researcher and the research supervisor.

The consent procedure for those participating in the phone interviews differed slightly. Participants in the phone interviews could choose to give their consent to be contacted at the conclusion of the survey (Appendix G). While the phone survey was taking place, the researcher took notes about each of the participant's responses. These notes were then sent back to the participant to ensure that the notes accurately represented their responses. Once the participants had read and made any corrections or comments on the interview notes, the notes were sent back to the researcher along with an emailed consent form (Appendix H).

3.9.3 Confidentiality and Anonymity

Another key ethical concern was how to protect the confidentiality and anonymity of the research participants. Participants were made aware that their personal identities would not be revealed and all information they submitted would be protected. They were also made aware that the overall research findings and the final research report would be released to the charity they support.

3.9.4 Treatment, Use and Protection of Data

Finally, protocols surrounding the use and protection of data had to be defined. The data collected for this research will be used only for the

purposes stated in the introductory email to potential participants. All data

collected will be stored on the researcher's personal password protected

computer, which will be locked in a cabinet at her personal residence. Any

external hard-drives used for back up purposes will be password protected

and stored in a separate lockable cabinet. All data will be deleted from the

researcher's personal computer and any external hard-drives, two years after

the successful completion of the research project. Any physical copies of the

data will also be stored in a lockable cabinet. Once the research is

successfully completed the data will be handed over to the research

supervisor. This data will be held for two years and will then be disposed of

appropriately.

3.10 Analysis of data

After all of the research data had been collected it had to be analysed

appropriately in order to interpret its meaning. The method of analysis used

in this research, focused on using the data to answer the research questions:

Firstly, how do child sponsors regard engagement initiatives? Secondly, does

the use of engagement initiatives appear to increase the loyalty and longevity

of child sponsors?

The analysis began with a thorough reading of all of the data collected (Frey

et al., 2000). During this first reading, the researcher sought to disregard any

preconceived ideas or expectations, allowing the results to speak for

themselves (Keyton, 2006). The results for each question were first viewed in

isolation and then cross-referenced with answers from other questions where appropriate, to allow a deeper understanding of the relationships between answers to different survey questions.

'Qualtrics', the online survey tool used for this research, also included analysis tools that were used to examine the results. The primary analysis function used was the 'cross-tabulation' tool, which allowed the results of two or more questions to be compared.

A wide range of cross-tabulations were used in order to scrutinise different aspects of the research questions and compare and contrast them with the findings of previous donor retention research. For example, to discover whether engagement initiatives had any significant impact on donors' level of satisfaction, the satisfaction scores of those participants who had previously been 'engaged' were compared with the scores of 'non-engaged' participants.

The short answer questions included in the online survey had to be analysed in a more traditional manner. The researcher read participants' answers and identified recurring themes. The answers were then re-read and the frequency of the recurring themes was recorded.

Finally, the results of the post-survey interviews were not analysed independently. This was because no significantly different themes or

concerns were raised. The interview notes were simply used as supplementary evidence, to support the information gained in the online survey.

3.11 Conclusion

This chapter has detailed the development of the research questions and the procedures that have been used in seeking to answer these questions. It has also sought to provide reasoning as to why the particular research methods used were selected. The following chapter will present the findings of this research, detailing the results of both the online survey and the post-survey phone interviews.

Chapter Four – Results

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the results of the conducted research, beginning with a discussion the research respondents and then proceeding to present the data itself. The results from each question will be presented in the order they were asked in the survey. The results fall into three main sections: How participants sponsor, why participants sponsor and the largest section; participants' experiences and preferences as child sponsors. The purpose of this chapter is to present the data gained by the research, the following chapter will then discuss the significance and meaning of the results.

4.2 Respondents

The organisation that participated in this research has a database of just over 60,000 child sponsors, 36,000 of which have provided their email addresses to the organisation. An initial email was sent by the participating organisation to 3,200 of their child sponsors, inviting potential participants to reply if they were willing to take part in the research. This initial sample was stratified in order to ensure that participants that had sponsored for varying amounts of time were represented. Seven hundred and forty one child sponsors responded and were sent an informative email containing a link to the online survey. Of the initial 741 potential participants, 547 (73.8%) responded and

successfully completed the survey. A further 22 (3%) began the survey, but did not complete it. The incomplete surveys are not included in the data set.

This very high response rate is almost certainly due to the fact that the initial 741 potential participants had already 'opted in' to receive the email and survey link. This meant these potential participants had already expressed an interest in participating in the research and were therefore much more likely to complete the survey than if they had been sent the email and survey link without prior contact. The use of two follow-up emails after the initial approach also appeared to improve the response rate, with response numbers surging after each of the reminder emails were sent.

As stated in the methodology, this research sought to examine and compare the responses of child sponsors who had supported the participating organisation for varying amounts of time. Because this research had to take place within a limited time-frame, a longitudinal study was not possible. Therefore, in an attempt to collect data that would reveal the long-term effects of donor engagement the researcher deliberately decided to include participants who had sponsored children for varying amounts of time. At the researcher's request, the participating organisation sent the initial email to sponsors who had donated for; less than 2 years, 2 – 5 years, 6 – 10 years and over 10 years. Segmenting respondents in this way hoped to reveal any differences apparent in longer-term versus shorter-term donors and sought to identify why longer-term donors had continued to give.

As evidenced in the table below, a variety of sponsors have been represented. However, those participants who have been child sponsors for less than two years represented a smaller proportion (16%), and those who have been sponsors over ten years, a larger proportion (34%). Despite this irregularity in the number of certain sponsor groups, the sample was acceptably representative of the participating organisation's child sponsors as a whole (Appendix I).

Table 1: Length of time participants had been child sponsors

	Number of participants	Percentage of participants
Under 2 years	87	16%
2 – 5 years	153	28%
6 – 10 years	116	22%
Over 10 years	187	34%

Different age groups were also well reflected in the research sample. While the 18-24 year age group represented a smaller proportion (11%) and the 45-60 year age group a larger proportion (34%), the distribution of ages represented in the sample mirrored the participating organisation's child sponsors as a whole almost exactly (Appendix J).

Table 2: Current age of participants

	Number of Participants	Percentage of Participants
18 – 24 years	59	11%
25 – 34 years	98	18%
35 – 44 years	126	23%
45 – 60 years	186	34%
Over 60 years	76	14%

4.3 How participants sponsor

The next section of the survey went on to question participants how they chose to sponsor, specifically how many children they sponsored and whether they chose to sponsor independently or with others. The majority of participants sponsored just one child, with only 30% of participants sponsoring two or more children.

Table 3: How many children participants sponsor

	Number of Participants	Percentage of Participants
1 child	384	70%
2 children	96	18%
3 or more children	65	12%

Donors who choose to sponsor a child with others represented just over half of all participants (58%). Forty-eight percent sponsored children independently. These percentages add up to slightly more than 100% as participants who sponsored more than one child could select a different option for each child they sponsored. Of those who chose to sponsor with others, 33% sponsored with their spouse or partner and 21% with other members of their family. Four percent of participants sponsored children either with a friend, as part of a group or in 'other' ways, such as with their church or workplace.

Figure 1: How participants sponsor children;

on their own or with others
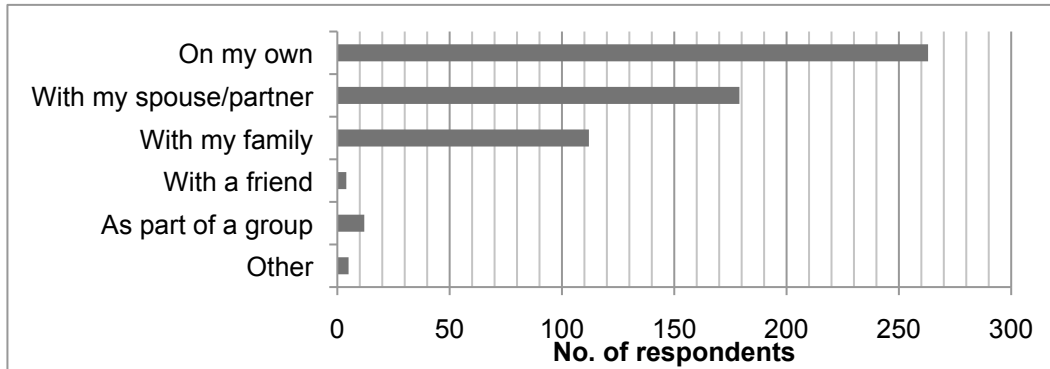
4.4 Why participants sponsor

This section of the survey explored what prompted participants to begin

sponsoring a child and what their motivations for sponsoring were. Forty-four

percent of respondents stated that their decision to sponsor was reached

independently; that is without direct influence from the charity or friends and

family. Seventeen percent said they were prompted at an event where the

charity was present. Thirteen percent answered 'other' and 10% attributed

their sign-up to a television advertisement. A further 9% said that a

representative of the charity had prompted their sponsorship and 7% said

they were prompted to sign-up by a friend or family member.

Figure 2: What initially prompted participants to sponsor a child
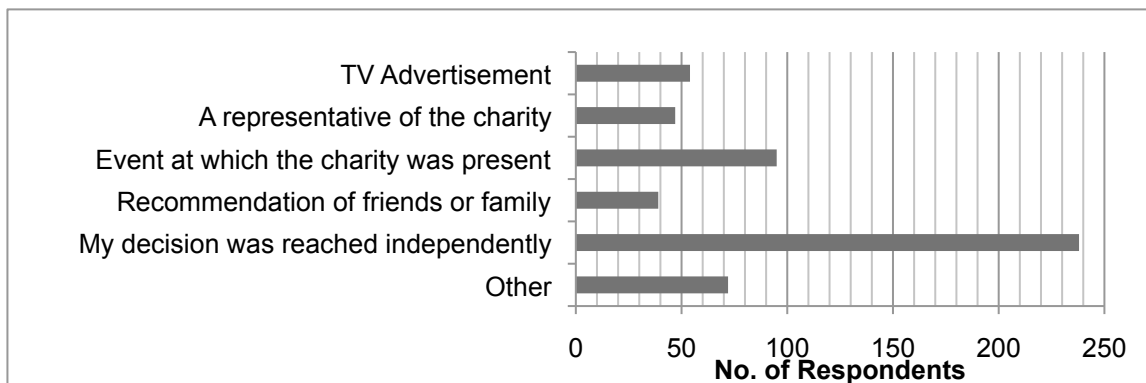
The following graph examines whether there is any relationship between how long participants have been child sponsors and what their initial prompt was. In the over 10 years category the most prevalent prompts were recommendation of friends or family, independent decision and 'other'.

Figure 3: What initially prompted participants to sponsor a child; comparing participants who have sponsored for differing lengths of time
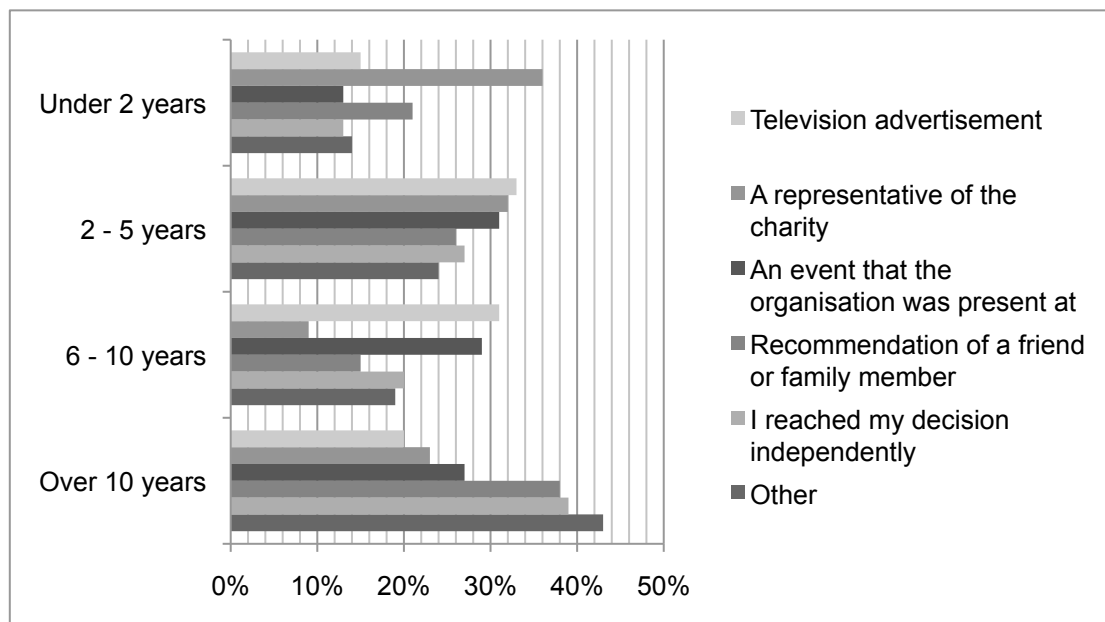
The following question; "If you would like to give further detail about how you became a child sponsor please do so", allowed participants to write their own short answers. These short answers were read through and then arranged into groups to identify dominant themes. These themes are listed below along with their frequencies. The percentages add up to more than 100% as many of the short answers addressed more than one of the key themes. As this was an optional question, only 312 (57%) of the 547 participants chose to answer it.

Table 4: Further explanation of what initially prompted

participants to sponsor a child

Theme:	Occurrences	Percentage
Sense of responsibility to care for the poor	64	21%
Prompted by event/speaker	48	15%
Had intended to sponsor a child for some time	48	15%
Prompted by an advertisement for the charity or representative of the charity	44	14%
Finances now allowed it	40	13%
Admired the example of friends and family who sponsored children	39	13%
Awareness of own wealth (compared with those living in poverty)	37	12%
A practical way to help/contribute to those living in poverty	30	10%
Belief in the effectiveness of the organisation's development strategies	28	9%
Setting an example for own children, making them aware of those less fortunate than themselves	26	8%
Religious values	22	7%
Became aware of the difficulties of living in poverty (through friends, reading, seeing news, documentaries etc.)	22	7%
Had donated or been involved with the organisation in the past.	19	6%
One-to-one contact with the sponsored child appealed	18	6%
Experienced poverty first hand (through travelling or living in other countries)	16	5%
Prompted by a change in life situation	13	4%
Can't remember	10	3%
Sponsored a child in memory of a loved one	9	3%
Sense of attachment to a particular country or region	9	3%
Approached the organisation or their website independently	9	3%

Total Respondents: 312 (57%)

The subsequent question then went on to on to address the 'why' of

sponsorship, seeking to discover more about participants' primary initial

motivation to sponsor. This question gave participants four alternatives,

asking them to identify the option that most accurately described their initial

motivation for giving. The most common response from participants was "It

made me feel good to be doing my part" representing 37%. Twenty six

percent answered with "I felt inspired by the work the charity was doing".

Seventeen percent claimed "I felt guilty about people living in poverty" and

20% answered 'other'. While this question required participants to select only

one option, the short answer question presented below demonstrates that for

most people there were multiple motivators. The basis for only allowing the

selection of one answer in this question was to uncover the predominant

motivator for child sponsors.

Figure 4: The primary initial motivation that caused participants to sponsor a child
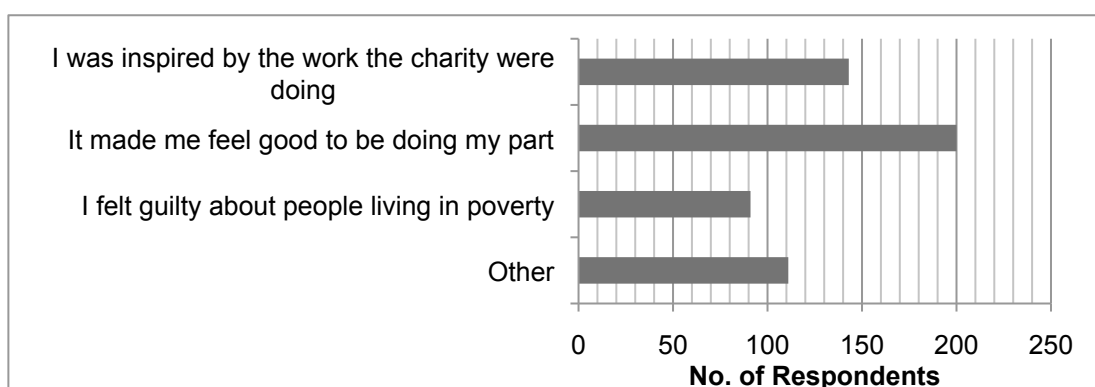
The graph below shows the same question divided into the different age groups in an attempt to discover more about the affect age has on donor motivations. The 18 – 24 age group was the most likely to answer "I felt guilty about people living in poverty". Conversely, the over 60 age group were most likely to answer "I felt inspired by the work the charity were doing".

Figure 5: The primary initial motivation that caused participants to sponsor a child; comparing participants of different ages
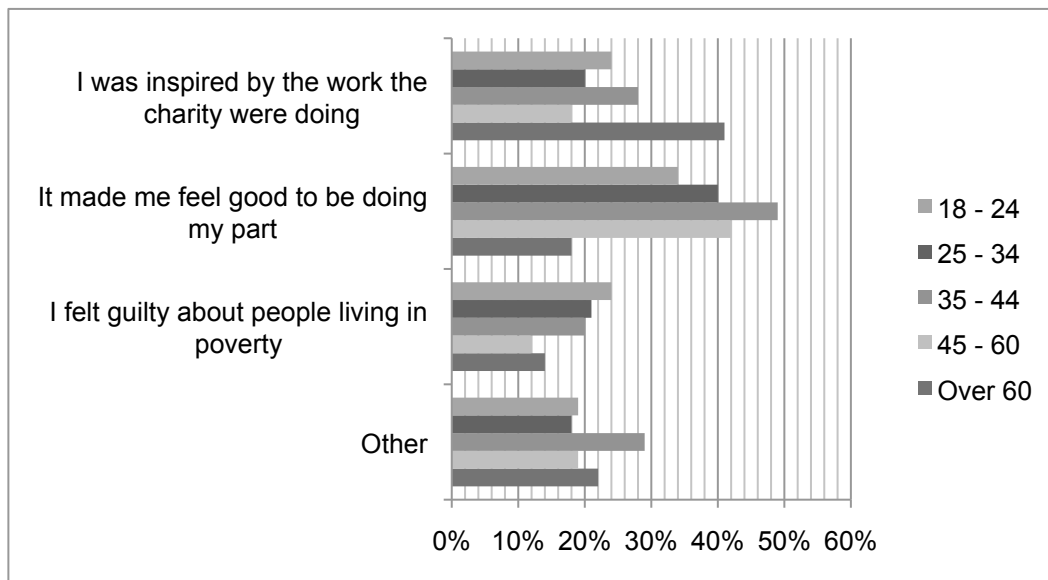
The final graph for this question illustrates how the different motivations correlate with how long people have continued to sponsor. While this does not provide a definitive gauge of how motivation affects donor longevity, it does provide an interesting indicator. The graph on the following page shows that 51% of donors who have sponsored children for more than 10 years were initially motivated by being inspired by the organisation.

Figure 6: The primary initial motivation that caused participants to sponsor a child; comparing differing lengths of sponsorship
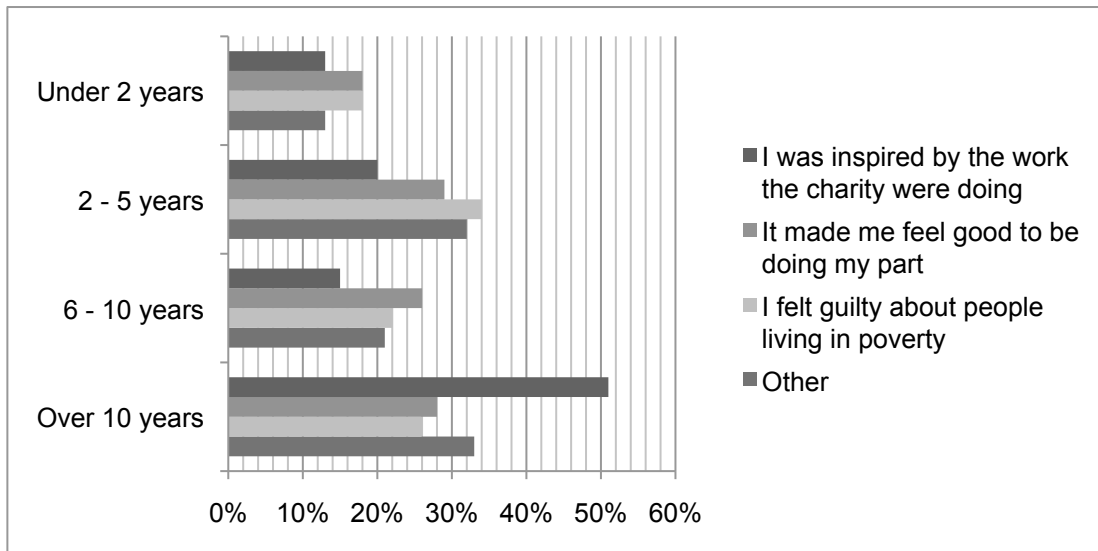
The following question again provided participants with the opportunity to write their own short answers regarding their motivations for sponsoring. The question asked; "If you would like to provide further details about why you became a child sponsor, please do so". The most common themes are presented in the table below. Only 126 participants chose to answer this optional question, representing 23% of all participants. In categorising the responses, once again the percentages added up to more than 100% as many of the short answers respondents provided addressed more than one of the key themes.

Table 5: Further explanation of what initially motivated participants to sponsor a child

Theme	Occurrences	Percentage
Felt like the right thing to help someone living in Poverty (A sense of social responsibility to help those less fortunate)	49	39%
Aware of how privileged I was	23	18%
Wanted to play my part in the fight against poverty, at least for one child	22	17%
A good example to my own children, exposing them to those less fortunate	22	17%
Belief in the value of all human life and the rights of all people to have their basic needs met	19	15%
Belief in the effectiveness of [the organisation's] development strategies and ethos	18	14%
Connection to an individual child	14	11%
Faith based	13	10%
Awareness of the difficulties of living in poverty	12	10%
A positive commitment that made me feel good	10	8%
Had experienced poverty first-hand (through travelling or living overseas)	5	4%
A way of remembering a loved one or special occasion	4	3%
Sponsoring a child is easy and relatively low-cost	4	3%
A regular donation was a practical way I could help	4	3%
Admired the example of friends or family who sponsored children	3	2%
Guilt about my own wealth/situation	3	2%

Total Respondents: 126 (23%)

4.5 Participants' experiences and preferences as child sponsors

This section represents the largest portion of the survey and the most important with regard to answering the research questions, Firstly, How do child sponsors regard engagement initiatives? Secondly, does the use of

engagement initiatives appear to increase the loyalty and longevity of child sponsors? This section asked participants a variety of questions to ascertain their current level of engagement, as well as their desire for future engagement. Those who desired engagement were also asked what types of engagement they would most value.

As one of the key arguments for engagement is that it makes sponsoring more meaningful (Lawson and Ruderham, 2009; Hosea, 2009), this section of the survey began by asking donors how 'meaningful or valuable' they found their child sponsorship experience. Respondents were asked to place their level of meaning or value on a Likert scale, as seen below:

Figure 7: Example of scale to determine how meaningful or valuable partcipants find their child sponsorship experience

Adds **no meaning**
or value to my life

Adds **some meaning**
or value to my life

Adds **significant meaning**
or value to my life

l_____ _____ _____ _____ _____l_____ _____ _____ _____ _____l

| 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
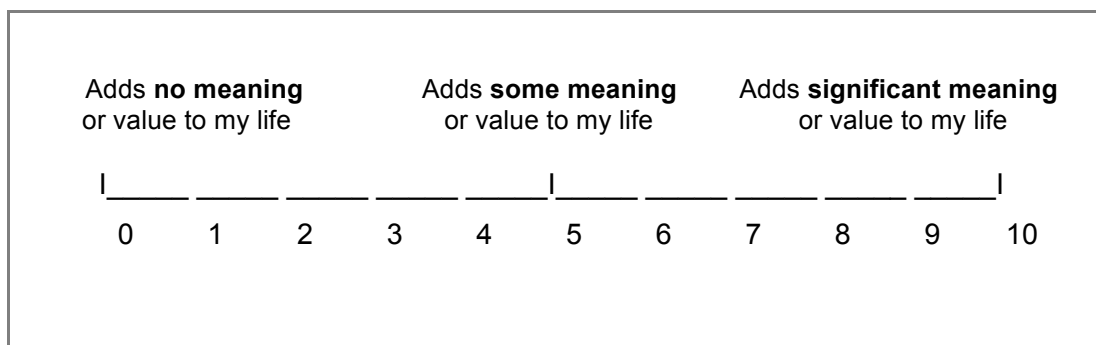
Table 6: Meaning or value added to participants' lives through child sponsorship (Likert scale results)

Minimum	Maximum	Average	Standard Deviation
0	10	6.33	1.97

In order to understand more about the way in which engagement affects how meaningful or valuable child sponsors find their donating experience, the graph below compares the responses of 'engaged' and 'non-engaged' respondents. 'Engaged' respondents are those who are currently, or have previously been, involved with the organisation in a way which extends beyond purely financial giving (eg. volunteering, advocacy and fundraising).

Table 7: Meaning or value added to participants' lives through child sponsorship; comparing 'engaged' and 'non-engaged' participants

	Minimum	Maximum	Average	Standard Deviation
Engaged	0	10	6.47	2.05
Non-Engaged	0	10	6.29	1.94

A different type of engagement, and one which was not specifically included within the 'engagement activities' specified above, was writing to sponsored children (the participating organisation attempts to ensure that all letters written by sponsors to their sponsored children are replied to). As highlighted in the graph on the following page, those donors who chose to write to their sponsored children found their sponsorship experience more meaningful and valuable. This result was particularly pronounced for those donors who wrote to their child two or more times a year.

Table 8: Meaning or value added to participants' lives through child sponsorship; comparing participants who write to their sponsored children with those participants who do not write

	Minimum	Maximum	Average	Standard Deviation
Write to sponsored child	0	10	6.53	1.81
Don't write to sponsored child	0	10	5.63	2.3
Write two or more times a year	0	10	6.92	1.77
Write around once a year	1	10	6.31	1.8
Write less than once a year	1	10	6.35	1.8

The next section of the survey focused on the respondents' sponsorship experience, looking particularly at how satisfied they were with information provided by the organisation. As with the preceding question, this question asked respondents to place their level of understanding on a scale from 0 – 10, as seen below:

Figure 8: Example of scale to determine participants' understanding of how their sponsorship funds are used

I have **no idea** how/where the funds are used

I have **some knowledge** of how/where the funds are used

I have a **detailed knowledge** of how/where the funds are used

```
I_____ _____ _____ _____ _____I_____ _____ _____ _____ _____I
0     1     2     3     4     5     6     7     8     9     10
```
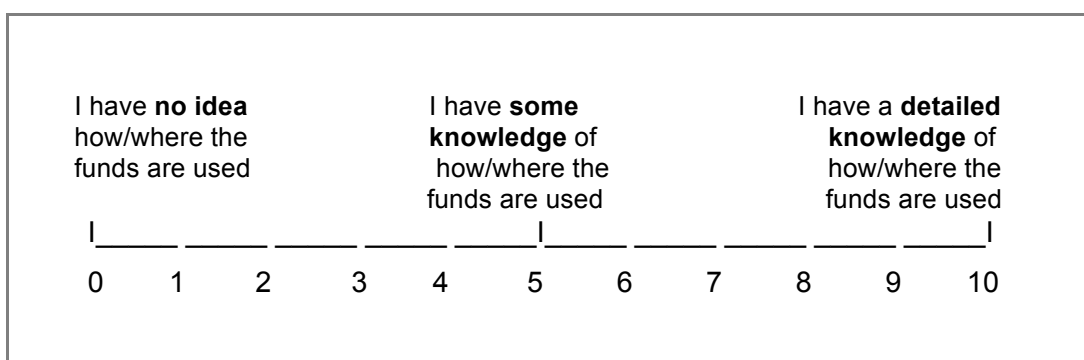
Table 9: Participants' understanding of how their sponsorship funds are used (Likert scale results)

Minimum value	Maximum value	Average Value	Standard Deviation
1	10	6.29	1.7

Sponsoring a child is thought to be one of the more engaging forms of donation as it allows donors a link to a specific person (Wroe & Dooney, 2004). Participants were questioned about how satisfied they were with the amount of information they currently received about their particular sponsored child. Seventy-one percent of respondents said they were happy with the amount of information they received about their sponsored child, and only 1% answered that they received too much information.

Table 10: How participants felt about the amount of information received about their sponsored child

	Number of Participants	Percentage of Participants
I am happy with the amount of information I receive	389	71%
I would like to receive more information	149	27%
I feel I receive too much information	8	1%

In addition to discovering how participants would like to be engaged in future, the survey also sought to understand how much respondents took advantage of the information and opportunities they were given for engagement.

The following question endeavoured to find out how many participants wrote to their sponsored children, as this is a form of engagement which is readily

available to them. Seventy seven percent of respondents took advantage of the opportunity to write to their sponsored child, with 27% writing two or more times a year. Ony 23% had not written to their sponsored child.

Figure 9: The frequency with which participants write to their sponsored children
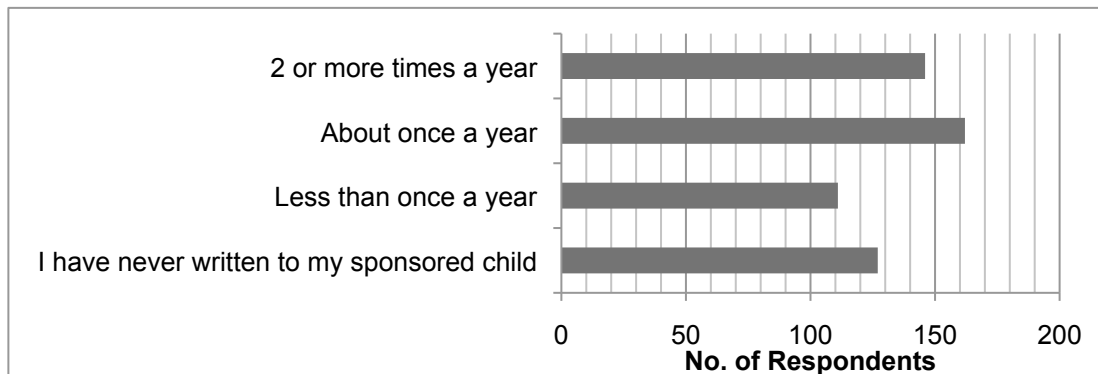
Of those participants who had written to their sponsored child at least once, 60% reported that it made their sponsorship experience more positive or meaningful.

Table 11: Whether participants felt that writing to their sponsored children affected their donating experience positively

	Number of participants	*Percentage of participants*
Yes	250	60%
No	70	17%
Undecided	98	23%

The next question once again addressed the issue of information provision. This time however, it examined participants' responses to the general information the organisation provides, not just that relating to participants' own

75

sponsored children. Thirty-nine percent of respondents claimed that they read everything sent to them by the organisation, while only 1% answered that they do not read any information sent by the charity. Fifty-eight percent chose to read only the information of interest to them, either about their sponsored child or particular subjects or regions of interest.

Figure 10: Participants' attitudes to correspondence from the charity
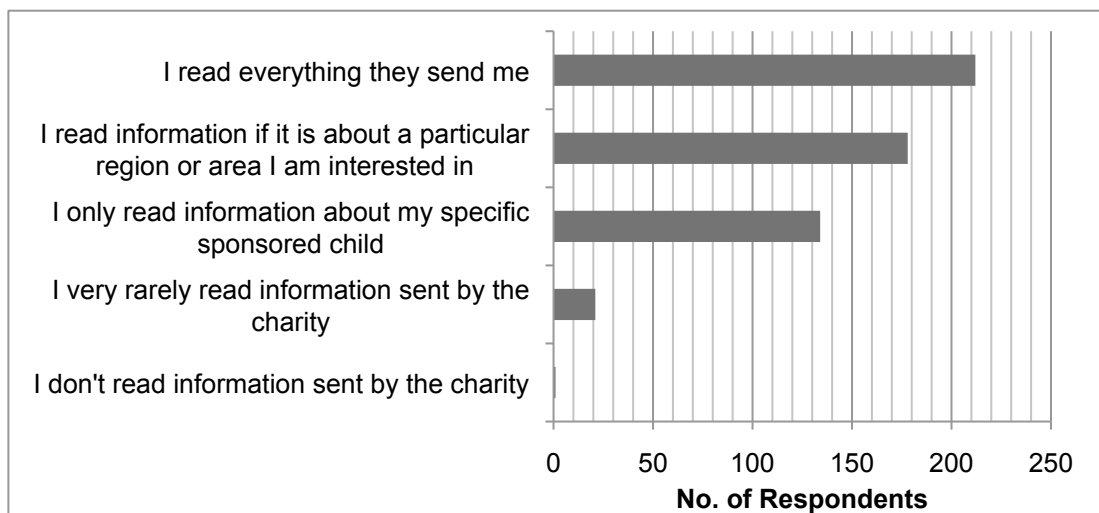
The following graph illustrates the responses to the same question with divisions to show the preferences of donors who have sponsored for differing amounts of time. Those donors who had sponsored for less than two years were more likely to read everything sent to them by the charity than any other group. There was a general tendency for donors to desire less information if they had been child sponsors for between 2 – 10 years. Interestingly however, donors who have donated for more than ten years appear to renew their appetite for information.

Figure 11: Participants' attitudes to correspondence from the charity; comparing participants who have sponsored for differing lengths of time
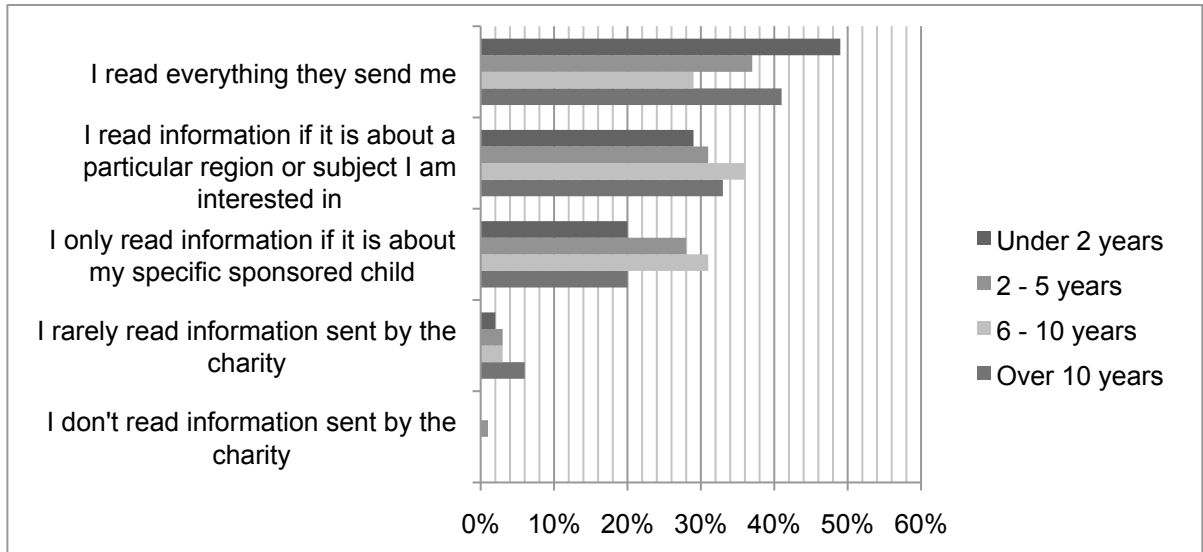
The following graph presents the same responses regarding information received from the charity, however, this graph categorises the answers to show the information preferences of different age groups. The 18 – 24 and over 60 age groups appear to be most interested in the information provided.

Figure 12: Participants' attitudes to correspondence from the charity; comparing participants of different ages
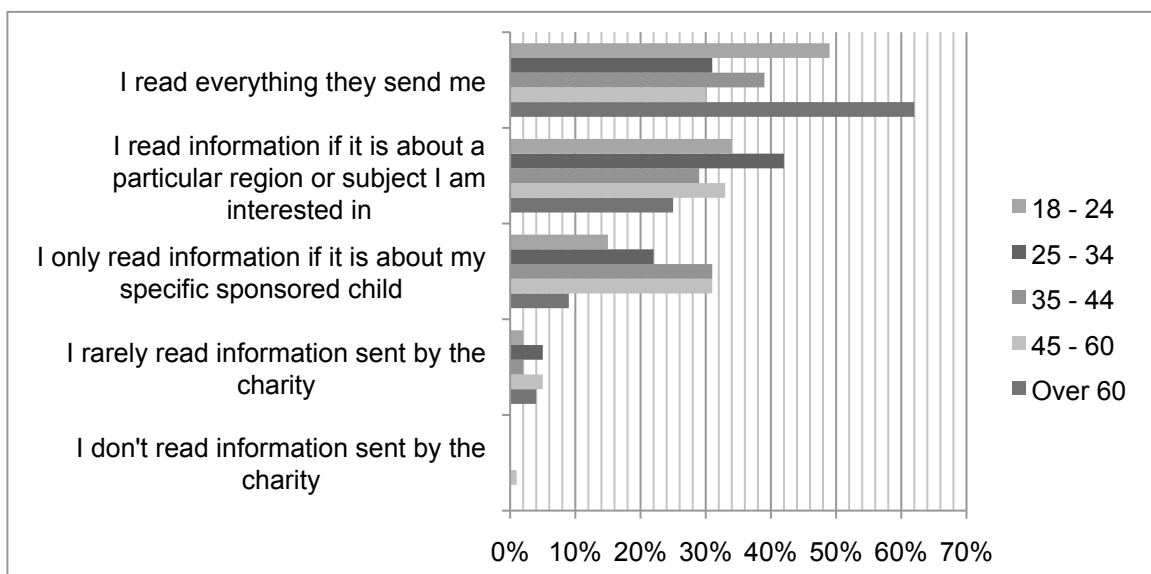
The survey then progressed to question how participants felt their sponsorship experience could be improved. Participants were asked to select ways they thought their sponsorship experience could be made more positive or meaningful from a set list of options.

Sixty-two percent of participants answered that receiving more information about their sponsored child would make sponsorship more meaningful (despite 71% answering earlier that they were happy with the amount of information they received about their specific child). Fifty-five percent said they would like to learn more about how their sponsorship funds were used. Only 27% claimed they would welcome opportunities to become more actively involved with the charity.

Figure 13: Initiatives that participants feel would make their sponsorship experience more positive or meaningful
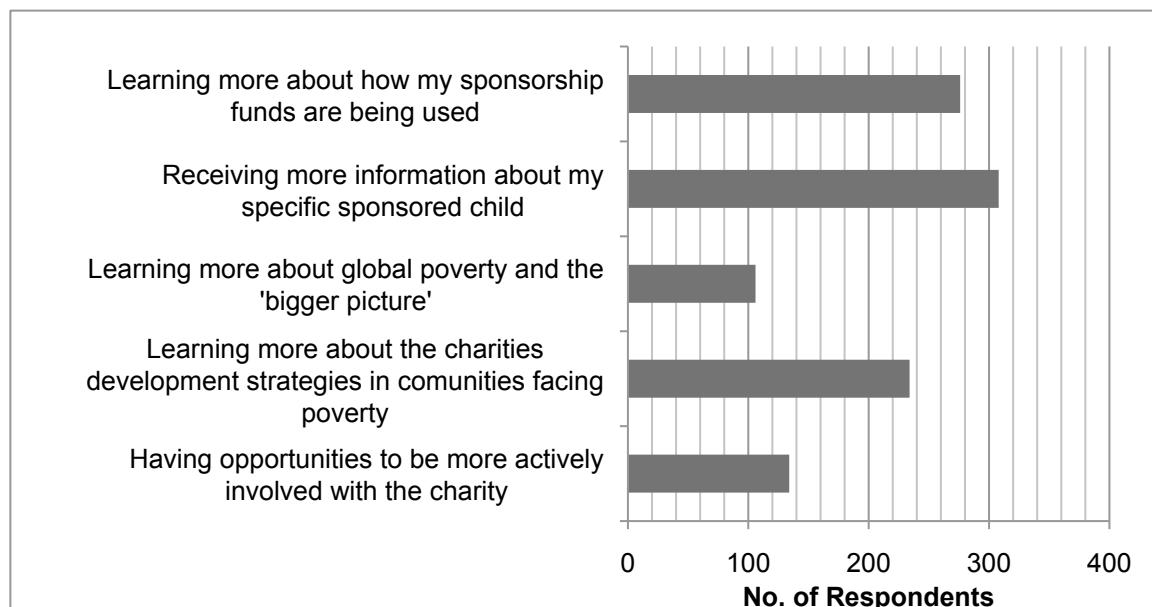
The following graph shows the responses to the above question broken down to show the distribution of different age groups. Participants' responses to the option; "having opportunities to become more actively involved with the charity" showed clear differences across age groups. In the 18 – 24 age group, 64% claimed they would like more opportunities to participate. By comparison only 33% of the 25 – 34 age group and only 12% of the over 60 age group desired more opportunities to participate.

Figure 14: Initiatives that participants feel would make their sponsorship experience more positive or meaningful; comparing participants of different ages
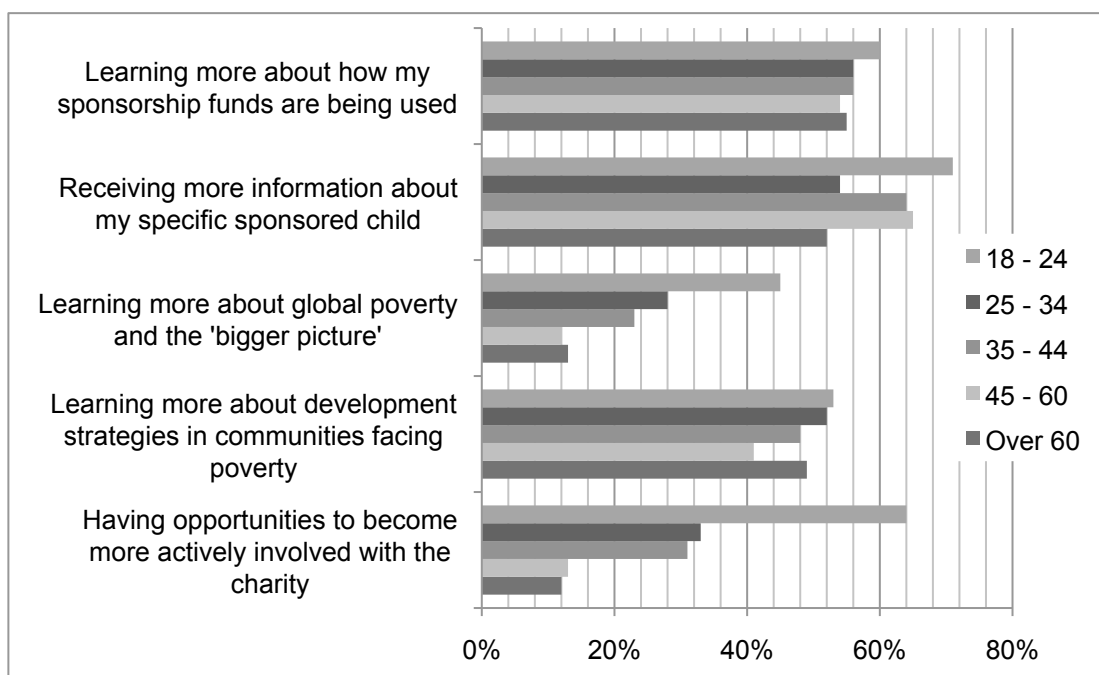
For those participants who answered they would like the opportunity to be more actively involved, a follow-up question asked how they would like to be involved. This question set out a number of options, with respondents being able to select all that applied to them. Seventy-three percent of participants

said they would like to volunteer, 33% they would like to be involved in advocating or campaigning for the poor and 31% that they would like to fundraise on behalf of the charity. A further 16% answered 'other' and suggested different ways they would like to be involved. The most common suggestion was that people would like to visit their sponsored child or volunteer in their sponsored child's community.

Table 12: The kind of involvement those participants who answered they would like opportunities to be more actively involved would like

	Number of Participants	Percentage of Participants
Volunteering with the charity	103	73%
Advocating/campaigning for the poor	46	33%
Fundraising on behalf of the charity	44	31%
Other	22	16%

The survey then questioned all participants whether they had previously been engaged with the participating organisation in any way. Twenty-two percent of respondents answered that they were currently or had previously been involved with the charity in a way that extended beyond purely financial giving.

Table 13: The number of participants that have been 'engaged' with the charity ie. had involvement that extends beyond purely financial giving?

	Number of Participants	Percentage of Participants
Engaged	122	22%
Non-engaged	423	78%

The following graph separated the answers from the above question in order to understand whether different age groups were more or less likely to have been engaged with the organisation. It illustrates that the 18 – 24 age group not only desired more opportunities to become involved, but appeared to be the most likely to take advantage of such opportunities. Of those who had previously been engaged with the charity, 41% were of the 18 – 24 age group. In comparison, 24% were from the 25 – 34 age group and only 17% from the 45 – 60 age group.

Figure 15: The ages of those participants who had been 'engaged' with the charity
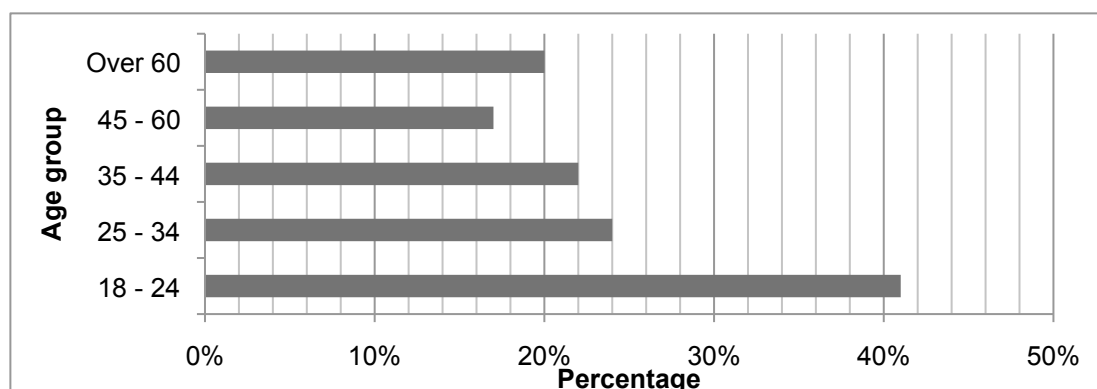
Those participants who had previously been engaged with the participating organisation were then questioned as to the nature of their engagement. This question set out a number of options, with respondents being able to select all that applied to them. Fifty-nine percent of previously engaged participants had been involved in a volunteer capacity and 55% had been engaged in fundraising on behalf of the organisation. A further 18% answered 'other' and stated how they had been involved. One of the most common forms of 'other'

engagement involved visiting sponsored children or community projects of the participating organisation.

Figure 16: The kinds of engagement activities participants had previously been involved in
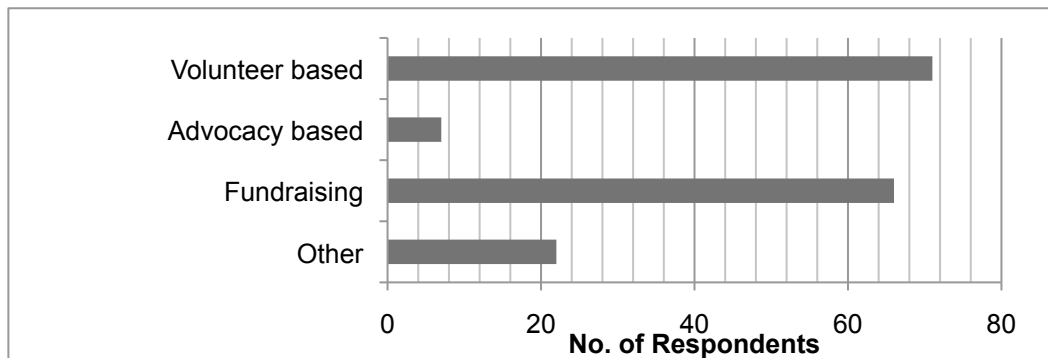
The subsequent question then asked previously engaged participants; 'How do you feel this involvement affected your sponsorship experience?' Respondents provided short answers that were grouped into recurring themes. As this was an optional question it had 99 respondents in total. (The percentages add up to more than 100% as many answers dealt with multiple 'themes').

The most common response theme was 'It was a positive encounter that significantly affected my sponsorship experience' (34%). Only 16% said the experience was unrelated to their sponsorship experience and none reported their experience as being negative. Overall, 84% of the feedback was deemed to be positive and reflect positively on the participating organisation.

Table 14: How participants felt their previous engagement affected their sponsorship experience

Theme	Occurrences	Percentage
It was a positive encounter that significantly affected my sponsorship experience	34	34%
It strengthened my sense of commitment to the organisation and their cause	28	28%
It helped me to understand the organisation better and learn how they worked	21	21%
It was unrelated to my sponsorship experience	16	16%
It was prior to sponsoring, but the involvement lead me to sponsor a child through the organisation	16	16%
It made me feel like I was part of the organisation	15	15%
I enjoyed giving more than just my money, contributing practically as well as financially	13	13%
It helped me to better understand the reality of poverty	11	11%
I gained greater trust in the organisation because I got to see them at work	9	9%
Made it more likely I would recommend the organisation to others	5	5%
Enjoyed the social aspect of volunteering	4	4%

Total Respondents: 101 (18%)

The next question inquired about participants' sense of commitment to the charity, a very important indicator for donor retention. Thirty-two percent of participants reported feeling very committed to the charity and 54% said they were 'fairly committed'. Twelve percent of responsdents stated that they weren't particularly committed, their continued support was more a result of habit than anything else, and finally, only 1% said they were not committed to the charity and would cease to support them very easily.

Figure 17: Participant's current level of commitment to the charity
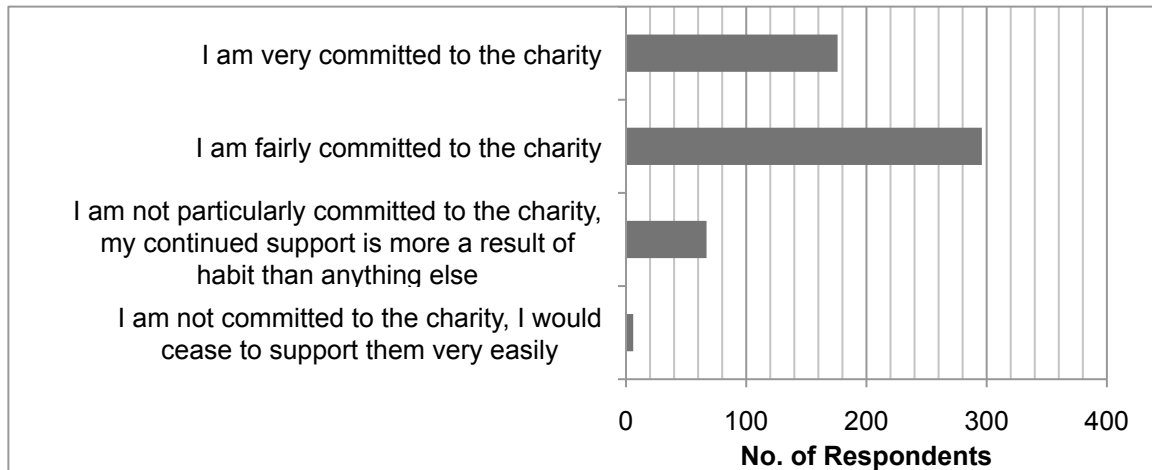
The graph below illustrates the responses to the above question about participants' current level of commitment to the charity, separating the answers of those participants who have previously been 'engaged' from those of 'non-engaged' participants. The results show that previously engaged participants represent a higher proportion of those who said they were 'very committed to the charity', and none of the previously engaged respondents answered 'I am not committed to the charity, I would cease to support them very easily'.

Figure 18: Participant's current level of commitment to the charity; comparing 'engaged' and 'non-engaged' participants
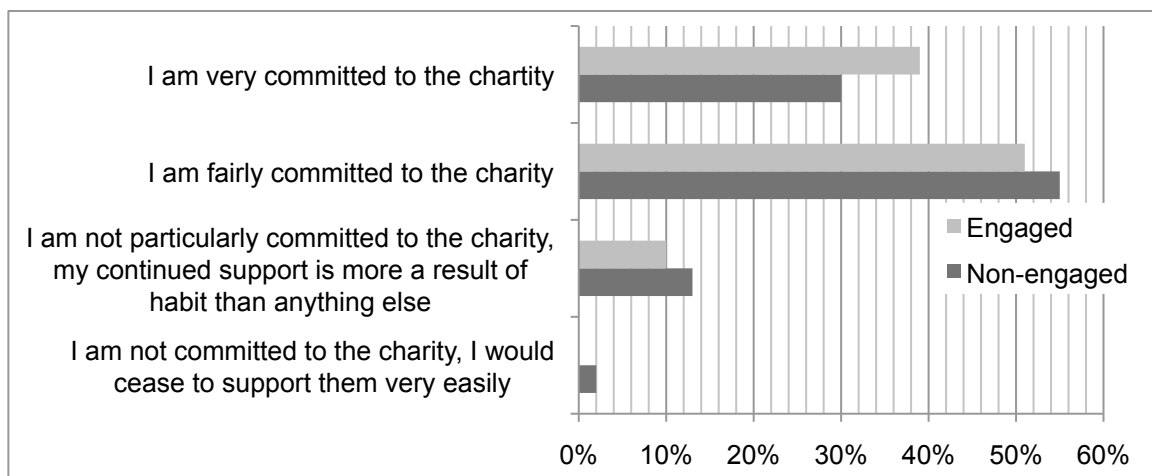
After asking participants about their current level of commitment, the subsequent survey question asked participants what they felt the organisation could do to increase their sense of commitment. This question provided set options and participants could select all options they felt were relevant.

Sixty percent of participants said receiving more information about their sponsored child would increase their sense of commitment to the organisation. Fifty-five percent claimed that learning more about how their sponsorship funds were used would increase their commitment and 22% said that having more opportunities to become actively involved with the charity would affect their sense of commitment positively.

Figure 19: Initiatives that participants felt would increase their commitment to the charity
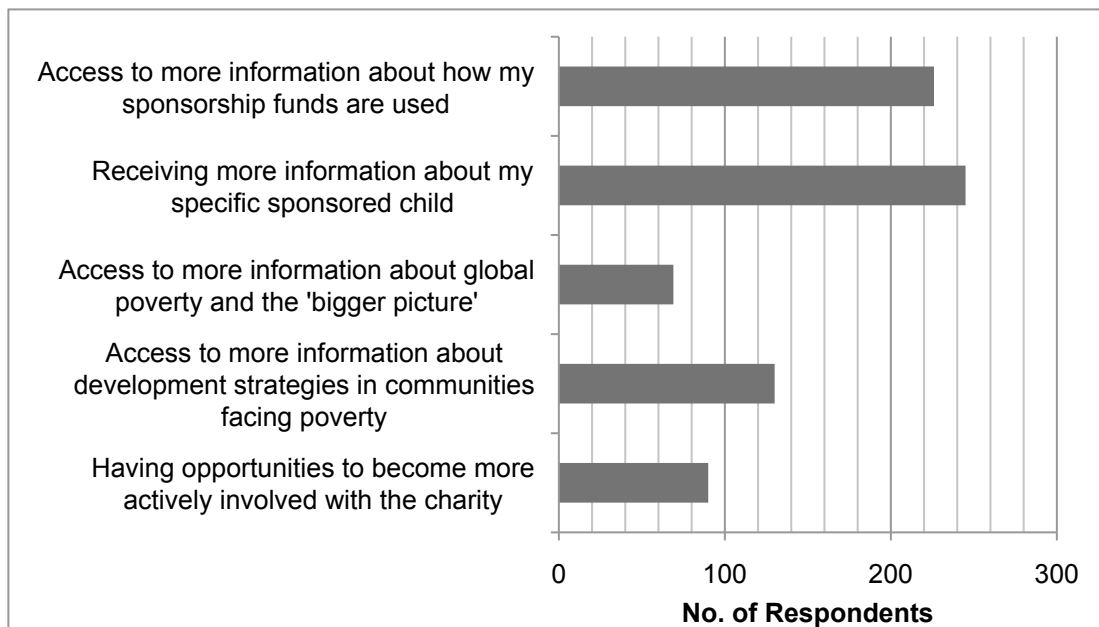
Those participants who answered that they would like more access to information about how their sponsorship funds are used, global poverty or the

organisation's development strategies, were then asked how they would like

to receive this information. Sixty five percent answered that they would like to

receive information via some type of interactive online environment, 43%

would like to receive information via direct mail and 14% would like to receive

information through a lecture series. A further 10% answered 'other' and

provided their own ideas. The most recurrent 'other' answers were online

lectures or sponsor meetings where questions could be asked and information

given by qualified staff.

Figure 20: Participants who answered they would like access to further information, state how they would like to receive such information
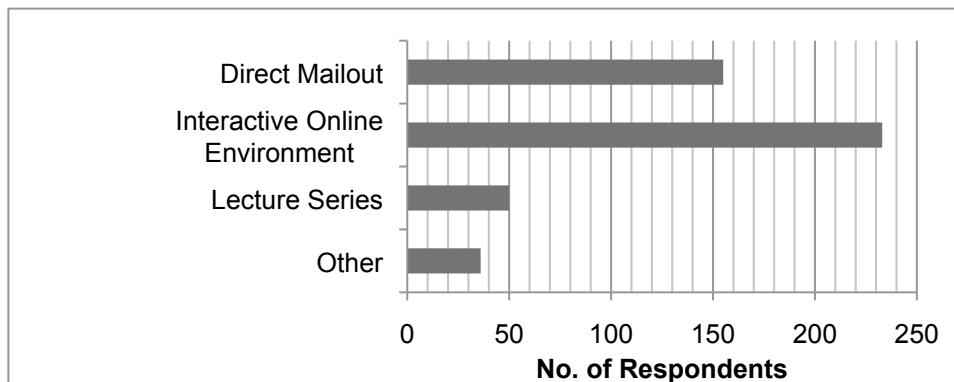
The graph on the following page breaks down the responses participants

gave about the way they would like to receive information, with the answers

separated to show the responses of different age groups. The 45 – 60 age

group demonstrated the highest preference for interactive online information

as well as the lowest preference for direct-mailouts.

Figure 21: Participants who answered they would like access to further information, state how they would like to receive such information; comparing participants of different ages
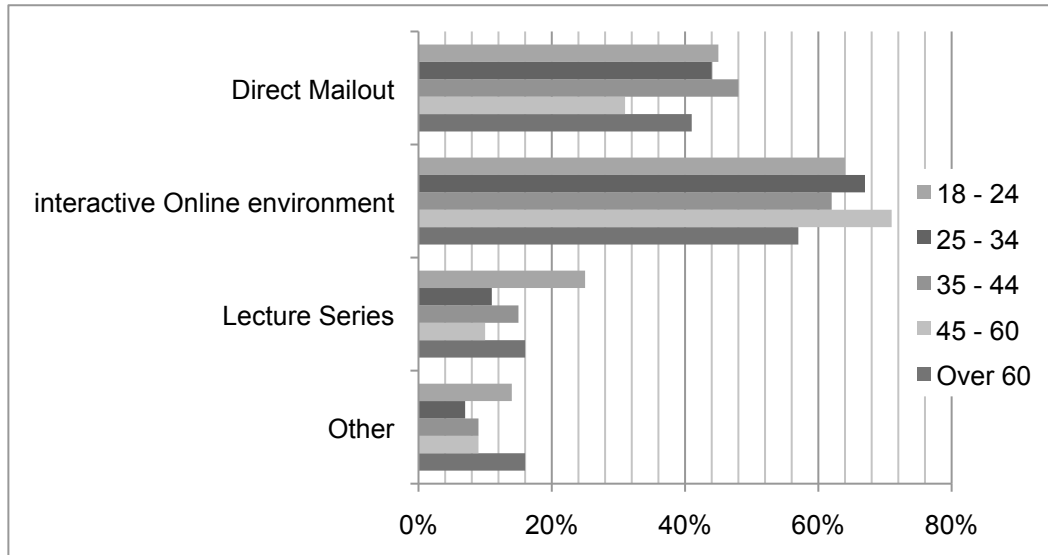
The final section of the survey consisted of short answer questions that allowed participants the opportunity to highlight their ideas and concerns in their own words. These were optional questions and as such not all participants chose to answer them. The numbers and percentages of those who chose to answer are indicated in each of the following tables.

Firstly, participants were asked whether there was anything not already covered in the survey that they felt could make their sponsorship experience more positive or meaningful. Just over half of those who chose to answer (51%) stated that there was nothing that had not already been discussed that they felt the organisation could do to make sponsoring a child a more positive or meaningful for them. The next most common answer was a request for more information about how and what to write to sponsored children and

ideas of things to send to them (9%). Eight percent of participants said they would like more information about how they could visit their sponsored child. A further 8% requested more stories and information to help them understand the day-to-day life and struggles of their sponsored children. The various other themes can be viewed in the table below.

Table 15: Participants' discuss whether there is anything else they feel could make their sponsorship experience more positive or meaningful

Theme:	Occurrences	Percentage
No	166	51%
More information about how/what to write to my sponsored child and any gifts I can send to them.	31	9%
Having information about how I can visit my sponsored child	26	8%
More stories that help me to understand what life is like in these communities, the day to day struggles and what difference child sponsorship actually makes	26	8%
More information about the child's family and their community	23	7%
More information about my specific sponsored child; progress in education, health, wellbeing etc.	18	6%
I sometimes doubt the authenticity of letters I receive from or about my sponsored child, they seem very generic and are often inconsistent.	17	5%
More information about what happens to the children and their communities after sponsorship stops or they become 'self-sustaining'. Even generic information is fine. Better closure about what their future plans are etc.	16	5%
More interactive web content. Possibly videos of communites that allow sponsors to picture what life is like and what changes their sponsorship enables. Question and answer forums or online lectures would also be good.	12	4%
I feel I receive too much glitzy printed infomation, I would rather this money be spent on deveopment (prefer email/web).	11	3%
Better handling of changeovers. New children being assigned with no warning old sponsorship was coming to an end and no consultation about receiving a new child.	10	3%

Theme:	Occurrences	Percentage
Clearer communication of how money is spent in the community and what percentage is used on administration in NZ.	9	3%
Being made aware of volunteering opportunites and other ways I can help beyond just donating money.	6	2%
More opportunities to meet with World Vision staff and other child sponsors	6	2%
I would like the funds I donate to go more directly to my sponsored child.	6	2%
More photos of my sponsored child and their community. I would particularly like to see more 'natural' photos of my sponsored child in their environment.	6	2%

Total Respondents: 325 (59%)

The next question asked participants if there was anything not already discussed that would increase their loyalty to their chosen charity. Sixty-two percent answered no, there was nothing beyond what had previously been discussed that they felt the organisation could do to increase their loyalty. Eight percent of respondents answered that clearer information about how their sponsorship money was spent would increase their loyalty towards the charity.

Table 16: Participants' ideas about things they felt could increase their commitment to the charity

Theme:	Occurrences	Percentage
No	167	62%
Clearer information about how my sponsorship money is spent	21	8%
More information about the progress of community development initiatives	17	6%
My loyalty is to the child or cause, not the specific organisation	13	5%
Remaining transparent about how money is spent and issues facing the organisation	12	4%

Theme:	Occurrences	Percentage
More events where I can learn about World Vision's progress, ask questions and meet other sponsors.	11	4%
Knowing how effective the charity really is at fighting poverty	11	4%
Making more information available online. Interactive Q&A, more photos and videos of projects etc.	10	4%
More money making it to the child and their community, unhappy with administration costs.	9	3%
More information about the child's family and community	9	3%
Better information about writing letters or sending gifts to my sponsored child	8	3%
Not constantly being asked to give more money	8	3%
More opportunities to volunteer or offer non-financial help	7	3%
Decreasing the amount of direct mail which wastes paper and money	7	3%
Religious concerns (for or against Christian ethos)	6	2%
More information about visiting sponsored children, or organized trips to communities supported by World Vision.	5	2%

Total Respondents: 293 (54%)

When asked whether there is anything in particular that could jeopardise their continued support of the charity several answers stood out. Twenty-five percent of respondents indicated that a change in their own financial situation would stop them from giving. Twenty-three percent stated that they would be likely to stop supporting the organisation if they believed that the proportion of their donation received by their sponsored child and their community was inadequate. Eighteen percent of respondents indicated that fraud, corruption or a scandal involving the organisation would cause them to stop donating. A further 22% claimed there was nothing in particular which would jeopardise their support of the organisation.

Table 17: Participants discuss whether there is anything they feel may jeopardise their continued support of the charity

Theme:	Occurrences	Percentage
My own financial situation changing	91	25%
Not enough money making it to the child and their community (too much being spent on admin and advertising	81	23%
No	80	22%
Fraud, corruption or some sort of scandal	63	18%
Continued requests for more funds	41	11%
Raising the price of sponsorship much further	21	6%
Wasting money on glossy advertising, high staff salaries etc.	20	6%
Not being thanked for what I am already contributing	18	5%
Feeling another organisation is more effective or deserving	17	5%
Changing their development strategies and ethos	17	5%
Religious issues for/against	16	4%
Insufficient feed back about how my funds are being spent and the difference they are making	11	3%

Total Respondents: 358 (65%)

In the final open-ended question, participants were asked if there was anything in particular that had ensured their continued support of the charity. Twenty-six percent of respondents answered that the updates, photos and reports they received about their sponsored child and their community had reinforced their loyalty. Twenty-two percent indicated that seeing positive results that illustrated the difference child sponsorship was making had ensured their continued support. Eighteen percent claimed that it was a sense

of connection and commitment to their sponsored child that had encouraged

them to keep donating.

Table 18: Participants discuss reasons for their continued support of the charity

Theme	Occurrences	Percentage
The updates, photos, reports and letters I receive about my sponsored child and their community	88	26%
Seeing such positive results for my sponsored child and their community, feeling that my sponsorship is making a real difference	75	22%
A sense of connection and commitment to my sponsored child	61	18%
Belief in the effectiveness of their development strategies	53	15%
The organisation's good reputation	46	13%
No	42	12%
Trust in the integrity, transparency and effectiveness of the organisation	41	12%
Satisfaction with the amount of money that makes it to the child and their community	40	12%
Great communication from the charity	37	11%
Belief that it is the right thing to do	36	10%
Positive experiences with staff from the organisation eg. by telephone or at events	27	8%
It is a practical way that I can help	26	8%
Faith reasons	26	8%
Being thanked for my contribution	12	3%
Visiting and seeing the success of their work with my own eyes	12	3%
Ease of giving (through automatic payment)	8	2%

Total Respondents: 344 (63%)

Finally, participants were asked to rate their level of satisfaction with their sponsorship experience on a scale of 1 – 10. This indicator was intended to gauge how satisfied participants are with their donating experience overall. This concluding question revealed an average satisfaction value of nearly 8/10.

Figure 22: Example of Likert scale to determine participants' level of satisfaction with their child sponsorship experience

Very Dissatisfied		Dissatisfied				Neutral		Satisfied				Very Satisfied
I_____ _____	_____	_____	_____	_____	I_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	I
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
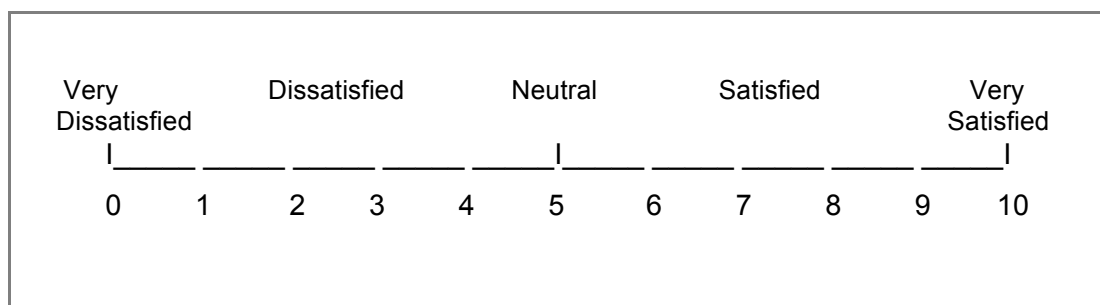
Table 19: Participants' level of satisfaction with their child sponsorship experience (Likert scale results)

Minimum value	Maximum value	Average value	Standard Deviation
1	10	7.77	1.43

Table 20: Participants' level of satisfaction with their child sponsorship experience; comparing 'engaged' and 'non-engaged' participants

	Minimum Value	Maximum Value	Average Value	Standard Deviation
Engaged	3	10	8.16	1.47
Non-engaged	1	10	7.66	1.41

The results presented in the online survey go a long way toward answering the research questions: How do child sponsors regard engagement initiatives? And does the use of engagement initiatives appear to increase the loyalty and longevity of child sponsors? However, in order to gain more detailed data a small number of post-survey phone interviews were also conducted as supplementary research. The outcomes of these interviews are discussed below:

4.6 Post-survey phone interviews

After the online survey was completed, a number of follow-up phone interviews were conducted. The interviews asked similar questions to those asked in the online survey, but sought to gain greater background and contextual understanding. Two hundred and ninety-five respondents, 54% of all survey participants, indicated that they would be happy to take part in a follow-up phone interview. Using the random selection process outlined in the methodology, a small group of potential interviewees were selected using the Qualtrics random selection tool.

Initially 12 participants were approached, three representatives from each of the donor groups (under 2 years, 2 – 5 years, 6 – 10 years and over 10 years). Only six of the initial group were eventually interviewed, as some did not reply and one preferred after further consideration not to take part. These six interviewees provided valuable information, but they did not represent a wide enough spectrum of the 547 survey participants. A further three

participants were selected to ensure that each of the donor groups had at least two representatives and to ensure that males were appropriately represented in the interviews.

The interview consisted of 10 broad questions similar to those asked in the online survey. The questions and answers are outlined below (pseudonyms are used to protect the identities of the interview participants):

4.6.1   Initial participant information

The first questions asked how long participants had sponsored a child and how many children they sponsored. Rebecca and Luke had sponsored for less than Two years. Lee and Jessica had sponsored for 2 – 5 years. Laura and Amy had sponsored for 6 – 10 years and Michael, Charlotte and Anna had sponsored for over ten years. Anna and Charlotte sponsored two children each, with all other interviewees sponsoring just one child.

The following question then asked participants whether they sponsored children on their own or with others. Charlotte, Rebecca, Amy, Chris, Laura and Luke all sponsor children individually. Anna sponsors with her family, but acknowledges, "my family's involvement is pretty minimal". Michael sponsors with his family and his church also sponsors two children. Jessica also sponsors with her family, but her daughter isn't yet old enough to understand the significance of child sponsorship.

Following on from the previous question, those participants who replied that they sponsored with others were asked how this affected their sponsorship experience. Jessica, who sponsors with her family answered: "My daughter is a bit young to understand at the moment, but I hope that in the future it will be a good tool to teach her about the rest of the world and those who aren't as lucky as her".

Anna, who said that her family's involvement in the sponsorship is minimal, hoped that sponsoring children will be a good example to her own children, "Although they don't take a big interest, I still feel it is something very positive for our family and an example of generosity that I want to set".

Michael talked about how his family would discuss their sponsored child from time to time:

> I think sponsoring a child is a great way of exposing my kids to people in the world far less fortunate than us, I hope that will make them more grateful for what they have. I also hope it is something they might consider doing for themselves later in life.

With regard to his church's sponsored children Michael said: "It's not really something that's discussed a great deal, but it is really nice to know they hold the same values that I do".

4.6.2 How participants came to sponsor a child

The interviewees were questioned about what initially prompted them to sponsor a child. They provided a range of different answers, rarely was it a single prompt that led them to sponsor a child. For example, Laura had been

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aware of television advertisements from the participating organisation in the past. While studying at university, she read the book 'Half the sky' which made her more aware of the harsh realities of poverty and gave her a new compassion for the poor. The biggest motivator for her however, was travelling and seeing extreme poverty with her own eyes. She told her story:

> Seeing it with my own eyes really changed things, it really hit me and made me realise I had to do something. I know child sponsorship is something quite small, but it's practical and so it was something I decided I would do when I got home.

Laura was reminded about her decision about six weeks after returning home, when she attended an event the participating organisation was present at. This was the prompt that caused her to actually 'sign up'.

Anna and Charlotte both explained that they had had a desire to do something for people living in poverty for some time. They each approached the organisation independently and signed up to sponsor a child. Anna approached a charity representative in a mall and Charlotte looked up their website.

Jessica and Amy share similar stories, saying their families had always sponsored children when they were growing up. This background had exposed them to the participating organisation and had given them a desire to sponsor a child 'one day'. Each of them signed up at an event the organisation was present at when they felt they could afford to sponsor a child.

Luke explained that he had been thinking about sponsoring a child for some time as his sister sponsored a child and often talked about it. "I was at home one night and an ad came on the telly, it was just the right timing so I made the call and signed up." Likewise, Lee was also prompted by a television advertisement that 'hit at the right time'.

All of the interview participants said that sponsoring a child was something they had considered somewhat before they actually signed up. For some, like Jessica, this had been a long process, "because my family had done, it was something I'd wanted to do for most of my life really". Rebecca on the other hand said: "I'd always thought it was a neat thing to do, but it was the first time that I had really thought seriously about actually taking the step to sponsor a child". Many of the interviewees also spoke about how they had thought about sponsoring a child previously, but this was the 'right time'.

For many of the participants their decision to sponsor a child was strongly linked to a particular life event or time on their lives. For Laura, Amy, Jessica and Luke, the decision to sponsor a child came not long after getting a new job or payrise'. Amy stated: "I knew I was doing OK financially and it was part of growing up for me really". Likewise, Jessica said: "I had my first full-time job which meant I had the money to do this thing I had always wanted to do". Similarly, Charlotte discussed a different type of financial change: "My own children had left home and I was at the stage of life where I now had the financial stability to be able to give".

For others, the decision to sponsor a child was linked to a different kind of life event. For Michael, his wife was pregnant at the time and they decided they wanted to support a less fortunate child. He also talks about his faith as a Christian leading him to the decision "We felt quite strongly that it was something God wanted us to do, a practical way to care for the poor". Rebecca also speaks of her faith playing an important part in her decision: "Coming back to Christianity helped me to look outside of myself again and brought me to a place where I wanted to help those more needy than myself".

For both Lee and Anna there was no specific life event that lead them to sponsor a child, but each of them still talk about 'the right time'. Lee quotes: " I had been thinking about it for a while and then I saw an ad on TV, it just hit at the right time for me when I was both open and able".

4.6.3 Motivating factors

Participants were asked about the different factors that motivated their decision to sponsor a child. This question produced a range of answers and most interviewees discussed several different motivators that contributed to their decision to sponsor a child, including feelings and beliefs that they held. The most prevalent motivator discussed was a sense of responsibility to care for the poor or a general sense that is was the right thing to do.

Amy recalled her motivation: "I had this strong sense of responsibility to care for others who couldn't do it on their own. I knew I had the money and I was very aware of how lucky I was, I just felt it was the right thing to do". Similarly

Anna said: "I had a strong desire for social justice and a sense of responsibility to care for the poor. I was very aware of my own wealth and I wanted to give some of that back and use it to make a difference in some way". Charlotte, Jessica, Laura, Rebecca and Luke all discussed this same idea in their own words. Lee also quoted: "I think there was a little bit of guilt that I had it so good in my life. I thought it was about time I did something positive to make someone else's life a little bit better".

Another common theme that emerged was the way child sponsorship offered a practical way to help those less fortunate. Charlotte discussed:

> I used to feel this sense of powerlessness about poverty. I would watch the news and things on TV and the problem just seemed so big! Though I know I can't change the world, I'm more aware now that something relatively small here can make a big difference over there. That gave me a sense that I could do my bit and make a positive and practical difference for someone.

Luke also discussed this as a very functional way of giving: "I'm a practical guy, to be honest I'd love to go to [my sponsored child's] village and actually help, but since I'm not in the position to do that, this is the next best thing. It seems like a really practical and sustainable way to help the children and their villages".

Michael and Laura both agree that child sponsorship provides a practical way of giving. Both have been exposed to poverty through travel and this exposure played a huge part in their decision to sponsor. Michael stated:

> I had been in the army and as part of my training I went to Kenya. It was my first encounter with extreme poverty and it was a real eye opener for me. Later I started looking for opportunities to do something for some of these people. I had had a little exposure to [the organisation] previously and I really liked their ethos and the idea of child sponsorship.

Laura tells a similar story: "After graduating I travelled a bit, spending time in South East Asia and Central America. Though I thought I knew about poverty, seeing it with my own eyes was a very different experience and really impacted me. I pretty much decided then, that when I got home I would sponsor a child".

The idea of faith playing a part in people's decision to sponsor a child appeared once again in this question. Rebecca stated: "My Christian faith really made me feel like it was the right thing to do". Anna and Michael also discussed how their faith was an important motivator for them. Anna responded: "I'm Catholic and my faith played a really important part for me. It gave me that sense of responsibility and a strong desire for social justice"

The final recurring motivator was trust in the organisation. Anna stated "Another factor was that [the organisation] had such a strong reputation. You had a sense that they would use your money responsibly and effectively".

Michael discussed how his small amount of previous involvement with the organisation gave him confidence and made him choose to sponsor through them. Luke's trust in the organisation was for a different reason: "My sister had sponsored through [the organisation] for a long time. She had always been very positive about them and that made me trust them enough to sponsor".

Interviewees were then asked whether their motivations had changed at all since they first decided to sponsor a child. They all responded that their initial motivations hadn't changed significantly, though for some respondents additional motivators had been added. Anna discussed her motivators: "Those original motivators haven't changed, but now that I have kids I'm also trying to show them how to give back".

In a similar vein, Michael discussed: "My motivations haven't changed, but my circumstances have. I have a family now and have faced some challenges since, but my commitment to sponsoring a child is still very strong".

4.6.4 The value or meaningfulness of child sponsorship in participant's lives

The interviewees were asked whether they felt that sponsoring a child added any value or meaning to their life. All of the respondents answered that child sponsorship was meaningful or valuable to them in some way. When asked in what ways it added meaning or value, many of the participants answered that sponsoring a child enriched their own life by allowing them to make a difference in someone else's life.

Jessica answered: "It's a way that I can help someone else and that's great! I don't think it affects my day-to-day life, but in general I think it's positive and a practical way that I can help". Amy, Michael, Charlotte, Rebecca, Luke and Laura all agreed in their own words. Similarly Michael answered: "When you sit and watch TV you realise there are a lot of bad things in the world, but sponsoring a child is so positive. We can make a difference and that is just so encouraging!"

Another way in which sponsoring a child commonly added meaning to peoples lives was through the contact it allowed participants to have with their sponsored child. Amy answered: "I really like writing to my child and getting letters back. It's a really cool opportunity to make friends with someone who lives such an opposite life to mine". Jessica and Anna also agreed, with Anna responding: "I feel it's so worthwhile, and having that child, that person, really puts a face on it and makes it so much more personal and special".

4.6.5   Ways in which child sponsorship could be made more meaningful or valuable

Participants were first asked whether there was anything they felt the participating organisation could do to make their sponsorship experience more meaningful or valuable. Some of the respondents answered that they didn't feel there was anything specific the organisation could do to make sponsoring a child a more meaningful experience.

Amy answered: "I feel like if I wanted more the opportunities are there and [the organisation] are open to dialogue about it. The responsibility is on me, I think they do a very good job. I have found [the organisaiton] very helpful and personal in the past". Anna, Charlotte and Rebecca also gave similar responses. Anna answered that she doesn't think the organisation needs to do more, she reasoned: "I don't need them to do more, I don't need more info. I think it is unrealistic to ask them to do that as it takes away from what they really should be doing and that makes me uncomfortable".

Other interviewees felt sponsoring a child would be more meaningful if they received more information about their specific child. Lee responded: "I think having more personal contact from the child would help, I would like to know how they are really doing. The school report and everything seems a little contrived sometimes. I guess I want to know how sponsorship is really affecting their life". Jessica and Luke also answered similarly. Luke said: "I

would like to know a bit more about [my sponsored child] and his community, stories and pictures to help me understand more of what life is really like for him".

Michael's answer was not dissimilar, stressing the importance of telling positive stories from the field: "For any sponsor I think it's a good to hear the good stories, lives that have been changed, progress that has been made. I think sometimes there is a misconception about money not making any difference. I think sponsors and others need to hear the encouraging things about what's going on". Michael was less concerned about specific information about his sponsored child, but still craved positive stories. Likewise, Laura answered:

> I'd love to hear more about the positive results of child sponsorship. I'm aware that producing more specific information comes at a cost, so I don't mean that I need more info about my child or their community. I would just love to hear more stories, stories of how sponsored children have gone on after sponsorship, communities that have become self-sustaining, that sort of thing.

Following on from the preceding question, interviewees were asked whether they felt there was anything they could do personally to make their child sponsorship experience more positive or meaningful. The two key answers here concerned being more actively involved with the organisation or writing to sponsored children.

Several of the respondents expressed a desire to write to their sponsored child, though many of them were unsure of how to write appropriately. Anna responded: "I could take the time to contact the child personally. I sometimes feel guilty about the fact that I don't, but I just don't know what to write. Our lives seem so different, I can't very well write to them about my ipad or my big fridge". Lee also gave a similar answer: "I think writing to the child could make it more meaningful, to not just 'splash the cash' but to make it more personal. I tried to write once, but I didn't really know what to say. Our lives just seemed so different and there doesn't seem to be any common ground. I didn't know what would have meaning for them".

Michael, Amy and Luke expressed an interest in becoming more actively involved with the organisation. Michael responded: "I could be more involved, potentially volunteering with [the organisation]. I think I'd probably enjoy it, but to be honest, I'm not quite sure how I would fit that in to my life right now". Luke and Amy also expressed an interest in travelling to visit their sponsored child. Luke responded: "I would love to be more aware of ways I could help [the organisation] out, especially if there were opportunities to volunteer in my sponsored child's community. I'm a builder and I feel like those are skills that could be really useful".

4.6.6 Experiences and attitudes to donor engagement

Interviewees were asked whether they had ever been involved with the participating organisation in a way that extended beyond purely financial giving. Most of the participants answered that they had not been actively

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involved with the organisation. However Jessica, Michael and Laura answered that they had previously been involved in some way.

Jessica, Michael and Laura were then asked how they felt their previous engagement affected their sponsorship experience. As they each had quite different involvement with the organisation their individual stories are told below:

Jessica had previously been involved with the organisation in High School. The organisation runs an annual fundraising event and places a particular emphasis on involving young people to not only raise funds, but to increase awareness of poverty issues. Jessica responded:

> Being involved in [the event] taught me lots and made me more aware of poverty issues. Even though sponsoring a child came a few years afterward, I think [the event] was a really important experience that led me to it. [The event] also made me more aware of how [the organisation] worked. I believed in the way they did things and that made me choose to sponsor through them.

Michael's story is different. He had previously been involved in development and had witnessed some of organisation's work in the field. He quoted:

> I felt they were really effective in what they were doing. I knew their ethos was very similar to that of the organisation I was working for at the time and I really believed in that. I really respected their transparency too, being sure your money is making it to where it should

is really important. I also met some of [the organisation's] field staff and I really admired the dedication they had to see the projects come alive. I thought what they were doing was great and when the time came I decided that was the organisation I wanted to contribute to.

Laura still has some involvement with the organisation, though not as much as she used to. She tells her story:

I used to volunteer with them quite a bit, helping out at events and occasionally even manning their stand in the malls. I loved volunteering, I loved interacting with staff and other volunteers, I thought they were such inspiring people. I also really liked feeling like I was part of the organisation, I knew what was going on and I felt really passionate about their work. I still am really passionate about their work, but I'm not so involved. I still help out from time to time, but there aren't the opportunities that there used to be and I think that's a bit of a pity.

Those interviewees who had not previously been engaged with the participating organisation were asked whether they had any desire to be more actively involved. Rebecca and Lee did not express any desire to increase their involvement with the organisation. Rebecca stated: "No, I don't really have the time to be involved. I recognise that I can help by giving money, so I am very committed to that, but that is all I can give right now". Charlotte and Amy said that while they were not currently able to be involved, they would be very open to being more involved in the future. Charlotte responded: "Not at

the moment, but I am coming up to retirement age and I would like to do something. If I was aware of opportunities to help in New Zealand then I think I would be interested".

Similarly Anna and Luke answered that they were open to being more involved, but they would need to be made aware of what opportunities were available. Both were particularly interested in offering their professional skills if possible. Anna said: "I would really like information about what opportunities there are to volunteer and in what ways I might be able to help. If I knew my time and skills would help then I would be very open to volunteering". Likewise Luke responded: "I'm very open to being more involved, especially in areas that I am skilled, if [the organisation] let me know I could help them I'd be keen".

4.6.7   Participants commitment to child sponsorship

When asked whether they felt committed to child sponsorship all of the interviewees reported that they did feel a sense of commitment. However they were committed to varying degrees and for different reasons. Nevertheless, none of the participants could envisage ceasing sponsorship in the foreseeable future.

Lee and Jessica both said they were 'pretty committed' to child sponsorship. Jessica responded: "I'm pretty committed to child sponsorship, I'd try to keep it up as long as financially possible. I've heard through friends and events what great work [the organisation] are doing and that makes me want to keep giving".

Luke, Amy, Anna, Rebecca, Michael Charlotte and Laura all responded that they were very committed to the organisation, though some for different reasons. Rebecca stated: "I think there should be commitment when you decide to give, so I am very committed and would not withdraw. I am considering sponsorship with another organisation, however this would be on top of my child sponsorship, not in place of it".

Some of the respondents felt such a strong sense of commitment because of their specific sponsored child. Charlotte said: "I'm very committed, I'm committed to making a difference to one person who needs it. It doesn't really have anything to do with [the organisation], I made the decision to sponsor independently and my loyalty is more to the child". Lee Michael and Luke also talk about the commitment they have to their sponsored child. Luke responded: "I really like the wee guy I sponsor, as much as anything I wouldn't like to let him down or make him feel like he doesn't deserve it".

A number of other interviewees spoke about their commitment to the organisation. Michael stated: "We believe in [the organisation] and they have been good to us. In the last couple of years we have been through some tough times financially. [The organisation] were amazing during this time, they didn't pressure us and understood if we were a bit late with our payments sometimes".

Amy too talked about loyalty to the organisation, but also to the way in which it carried out its work: "I like to support [the organisation] because my previous involvement with them showed me that they are ethical and they make good decisions, not too much money gets caught up in admin in New Zealand. I really like their community emphasis too, they seem to have good development strategies". Similarly Anna answered:

> I'm very committed, I really believe in their work. I support other charities, but I feel the strongest commitment to the ones that support people who are really struggling. The charities that can support people in really life-changing ways. I've also been with [the organisation] for a long time now and that gives me a sense of ownership and pride in them.

Following on from the previous question, interviewees were asked whether they felt there was anything the participating organisation could do to increase their sense of commitment. Several respondents stated they couldn't really think of anything at the time and others said they didn't feel there was anything the organisation could do to increase their sense of commitment.

Rebecca answered: "No, not really. It is a personal decision that keeps me committed. I know there are resources available if I want them and information if I want to read it. I feel they do enough and it's up to me if I want to make it more." Charlotte's response was similar: "It just feels like the right thing to do for me, so it's not so much abut the organisation, though I do feel they do a pretty good job."

4.6.8　Participant's information preferences

Interviewees were asked whether there was any information that they did not currently receive that they wished to receive. Although some of the respondents highlighted areas for improvement, everyone said they were generally happy with the kind of information they received from the organisation.

Charlotte, Michael, Luke and Anna all enjoyed the information they received about the progress of their sponsored child and their community. Charlotte responded: "I think they are very good with the info they provide. I like the general overview of the community development as well as the child's photo and school report." Michael also replied: "They send lots of information which I think is pretty good. It's not all asking for more money either. There is a lot that gives positive feedback about things that have been achieved, that's always encouraging."

Anna also felt positively about the information she received, although she highlighted additional information she felt would be helpful:

> I really like the information about the actual development work, I would hate to see less of that. I would really love more help visualising day-to-day life in these communities though. I'd like to know the tangible difference my donations make. For example; now that there is a well in their village they don't have to walk 9km to get water.

An subject which was raised by several respondents was the issue of letters asking for additional funds, this was a contentious subject, with very different opinions emerging. While some respondents loved being made aware of different ways they could help, others disliked frequently being asked for more money.Lee and Luke both disliked the constant appeals for more funds. Lee stated: "I could do with fewer 'begging letters'. I feel there is quite a bit of pressure in those, like I'm not already doing enough." Similarly Luke responded: "I don't really like always being asked for more money, I'm giving what I can and I start to feel guilty that I can't give more. Occasionally I would just like them to say thank you without it being a guise to ask for more money."

Charlotte, Amy, Rebecca and Laura all gave more positive feedback about the appeal letters they received. Amy answered: "I actually really like that they send me letters about other specific things I can donate to. I like the awareness I gain through them. I don't think much about my automatic payment, so it's good to be challenged again and to be made aware of other needs out there. "Rebecca also responded positively: "I don't mind the way they ask for more money, I don't feel there is pressure to give. I know that people need prompting sometimes and if [the organisation] doesn't ask, they wont get what they need."

There was further disagreement over the organisation's sending of birthday and Christmas cards. The participating organisation sends birthday and Christmas cards to child sponsors for them to fill out and send on to their

sponsored children. While some sponsors appreciated this and felt it made contacting their child easier, others felt it was a waste of time and resources.

Rebecca and Luke liked the cards and Luke responded: "I like the cards they send me to send to my child. I'm pretty bad with writing and that sort of thing so it's a good reminder for me." On the other hand, Laura and Charlotte felt these cards were a waste of resources and were often inappropriate, particularly for older children. Charlotte answered: "I think the cards they send to you for you to send to your sponsored child are a bit silly. They're not suitable for all ages and I just don't really think they're necessary. Having said that, I normally send them because I don't want the child to feel left out."

Continuing with the theme of information preferences, respondents were asked how they preferred to receive information. The majority of respondents were quite content with the way they received information. The participating organisation uses a mixture of direct mail and email to correspond with their supporters. Some of the interviewees however felt that too much money and paper was wasted on direct mail and would like to see email used for most, if not all communication.

Charlotte, Rebecca, Luke, Lee, Anna and Michael all said they liked receiving a mixture of online and direct mail from the organisation. Rebecca answered:

> I like that they use a mixture of online and actual mail-outs. Email is
>
> instant and easy, but I'm also less likely to go back to it. There is
>
> something really nice about real paper on the table, it also continues to

prompt me when I see it. I really like receiving information about my sponsored child on paper it somehow seems more personal. Having said that, I am aware of the environmental and financial costs of sending out mail, so I like that [the organisation] use email a lot too. I think they manage to find a good balance.

Michael gave a similar response:

I think it's great to get a bit of both. I go through times I wont check my email for quite a while, so it's great getting 'real mail'. I'm more likely to read it too since it sits around and reminds me. I also like having a hard copy that I can take down to church and let others know what is going on.

In contrast Amy, Laura and Jessica felt they should receive most or all of their information through email. Amy said:

I really prefer to be emailed information. I like that it has different links I can click on and if I ever want to donate more it's much easier and more immediate on line. If I read something on paper I might have the intention to donate, but it's much less likely it will actually happen. I also just like the way it's better for the environment and costs the organisation less.

Laura also preferred receiving information online:

I'd like [the organisation] to operate more online, since more money could make it where it's needed. Not just the letters I get, but maybe a more interactive website too. I always love seeing videos of what they're doing at events I go to. I think it would be great if they had those

available on the website too, I think that's the stuff that really captures people, it definitely captures me.

4.6.9 Positive feedback and areas for imporvement

Participants were asked to identify one thing they felt the organisation did well which positively affected their donating experience. This question produced a range of answers, some respondents couldn't think of anything in particular, but still felt the organisation did a great job. Others highlighted specific actions or values of the organisation.

Rebecca and Luke couldn't identify anything specific, but still felt very positive about the organisation. Luke answered: "There's nothing in particular that I can think of right now, but I think they do a great job and I'm really happy with them!"

Jessica and Lee both highlighted the feedback about their sponsored child as something very positive. Jessica responded: "I really like getting positive feedback about my child, things like her favourite colour, favourite school subject. It's nice to not always hear about famines, but the good stuff as well. I feel it makes it more personal too." Lee gave a similar answer: "I enjoy the personal photos and things like that. It's great seeing them growing up as you sponsor them for a while. Seeing a child at the end of it makes it more real, there is actually a person benefitting."

Amy once again talked about her appreciation for the birthday cards the organisation send for her to pass on: "I really like the way they send me things to send to my sponsored child, like birthday cards and wee paper toys. It's a good reminder to write to them and it's good since I often struggle to know what is appropriate to send."

Michael on the other hand stressed the importance of the good interactions he had had with the organisation: "They are very gracious. As I said earlier, we've not quite done things according to their plan while dealing with our own financial difficulties, but they've been really good. I think this is what has stood out for us the most and kept us loyal even when times have been hard."

Anna and Laura both emphasised the belief they had in the way the organisation works. Anna responded: "I really like their focus on community and the region, it makes it feel much more sustainable. It just seems like better development practice." Laura also answered:

> I believe not just in what they do, but the way they do it. I know aid can breed dependence, but I feel the way [the organisation] works is much more sustainable. They work at grass-roots level with the communities and really empower them. It seems much more deliberate and thoughtful than just throwing money at the problem.

Finally Charlotte responded by saying: "It's not so much to do with the sponsoring, but I like that they are everywhere and able to respond to disasters very quickly. They are very reliable and I like to be able to give

through them when natural disasters and things like that happen. Their crisis management in those times is great!"

The subsequent question asked the interviewees to identify one thing they felt the organisation could do better which would positively affect their donating experience.Several of the respondents answered that they were very content or couldn't think of anything specific the organisation could do to improve their donating experience. Charlotte, Luke and Rebecca all gave similar responses, Rebecca stated: "No, not really I genuinely think they do a great job. Also because of the nature of the charity, I would much prefer they spent money on development rather than keeping me happy!" Similarly Michael and Jessica answered that they couldn't currently think of anything specific. Michael responded: "I think they do a really good job all round. There might be small things they could improve on, but I can't think of anything specific right now."

Lee once again brought up the requests for more funds: "I'd really prefer fewer communications asking for more money. I just switch off from too many and it starts to irritate me sometimes."Amy's response was also somewhat money related: "It would be great if they provided more opportunities for people who can't give much money. Other price points perhaps? $40-$50 per month is too much for some people. Also allowing people to give in other ways like volunteering."

Anna's response was more specific to an issue she had encountered previously:

> I feel they could deal with changes better. On two occasions we have had children 'outgrow' the programme. We were suddenly given 'new children' without any prior warning that a programme was coming to a close or that the children were too old. Is there an age where it stops? It seemed a little presumptuous to just give us new children and we didn't receive any sort of closure from the last ones. I guess we would just like some sense of control, or at least that we were being kept in the loop. A bit more consultation would be nice.

Finally, Laura again raised the issue of online resources:

> I think they do a great job, but I would love more resources available online. Videos and updates, maybe pictures of a typical village so I can picture things a bit better. I don't want them to spend heaps of money doing it, but I've seen videos and things before that they already have that they could just put online. Also maybe blogs from sponsors going to visit their children? Just little things that help to give a clearer picture of what's going on and the difference child sponsorship is making.

4.6.10 Participant's overall level of satisfaction with their child sponsorship experience

In the final interview question, particpants were asked to rate their level of satisfaction on a scale of one to ten, with 10 being very satisfied, 5 being neutral and 1 being very unsatisfied. The average score from the interviewees

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was 8.2 out of ten. The lowest score awarded was 6.5 and the highest was ten out of ten. Several respondents also made comments about why they scored as they did.

Lee, who awarded 6.5 out of ten commented: "I would like it if [the organisation] could make child sponsorship more personal, so I feel less like a number on a database. I'd also like it to seem a bit more real, make things less shiny and just tell me what's actually been achieved."

Rebecca, who awarded ten out of ten responded: "Child sponsorship suits me perfectly. Direct debit means it just keeps happening. I don't need more involvement, I don't have the time for that, but I love feeling like a silent partner in the good work [the organisation] is doing. For me that is all I want."

4.7 Conclusion:

This results chapter has presented the data produced by the online survey and post-survey phone interviews. In doing so, it has begun the process of answering the research questions: How do child sponsors regard engagement initiatives? And does the use of engagement initiatives appear to increase the loyalty and longevity of child sponsors? The following chapter will discuss these results further, seeking to interpret the meaning of the results and gain a more comprehensive understanding of their significance. The results will not only be discussed in terms of how they answer the research questions, but also how they align with previous literature and research concerning donor engagement.

Chapter Five – Discussion

5.1 Introduction

This chapter will examine and analyse the results presented in the previous chapter. It will discuss the research outcomes and seek to answer the initial research questions: Firstly, how do child sponsors regard engagement initiatives? Secondly, does the use of engagement initiatives appear to increase the loyalty and longevity of child sponsors? This discussion chapter will also consider the findings of the research in relation to previous donor retention literature and academic research. In doing so, it will seek to identify similarities and points of contention between the findings of this investigation and previous research.

5.2 Respondents

This research was conducted via email, which meant that only 60% of the participating organisation's child sponsors were eligible to participate, as the remaining 40% had chosen not to provide their email details to the organisation. Because such a significant proportion of the participating organisation's child sponsors could not take part, it is important to investigate whether those who did participate are satisfactorily representative of the organisation's child sponsors as a whole

While it is impossible to establish whether a full range of opinions has been represented in the sample, comparing the demographic information of the participating organisation as a whole alongside that of the research participants will give some indication of the legitimacy of the research sample. Two key indicators were used to establish that the research participants were acceptably symbolic of the organisation's donors as a whole. These indicators were the age of participants and how long participants have been child sponsors.

The online survey produced an acceptably representative sample in terms of the length of time participants had been child sponsors. Despite slight discrepancies occurring, each of the survey's 'length of sponsorship' groups fell within 10 percentage points of the organisation's child sponsors as a whole. While the research sample's 'length of sponsorship' figures are distributed slightly differently from the participating organisation's child sponsors figures as a whole, the numbers are still sufficiently similar to assume that the information gained from participants can be used to make generalisations about all of the organisation's child sponsors.

The other demographic information that was used to indicate the credibility of the research sample was the age of participants. However, the age brackets used in the online survey differed from those provided in the organisation's demographic information. Therefore, in order to make comparisons, new age groups were constructed by dividing the age groups specified in the research to match the organisation's demographic information (see Appendix K). These

newly constructed age groups work on the assumption that the ages of survey participants are evenly distributed throughout each age range. While it is unlikely that this is precisely the case, this approximation provides a reasonable indication of the sample's credibility.

Based on the methodology outlined above the age representation of the survey participants is exactly the same as the participating organisation's donors as a whole. When compared, the 18 – 29 age groups were exactly the same, both with 20%, as were the over 50 age groups, with 37% each. The only difference was in the 30 – 49 age group, showing 1% disparity due to a difference in calculation. Even when allowing some degree of inaccuracy due to the approximation method used, the survey sample is still remarkably representative in terms of age groups.

Although the online survey did not query participants about their gender, the gender of the interview participants was known. The participating organisation's donors are 71% female and 29% male. While there were only nine interview participants in total, the ratio of males to females was very similar with six females and three males. The high proportion of females is quite typical for most charitable organisations (Andreoni & Vesterlund, 2001; Bolton & Katok, 1995).

5.3 Why Participants Sponsor

This first section of the survey sought to understand why participants initially chose to sponsor a child. The rationale for this was to identify whether

particular prompts or motivations are more likely to create loyal, long-term donors than others. While this section did not specifically address the research questions, it allowed important comparisons to be made with previous research and literature as well as increasing understanding of donor motivation.

5.3.1 Donor motivation

Sargeant (2009) asserted that in order to best maintain donors, organisations must understand what motivates their supporters. One of the survey's early questions asked participants to recall their initial motivation for sponsoring a child and gave them the following three options to select from: 'I was inspired by the work the charity were doing'; 'It made me feel good to be doing my part', and; 'I felt guilty about people living in poverty'. Alternatively participants could select the option 'other' and provide their own explanation.

The literature review chapter referred to Lawson and Ruderham's (2009) assertion that donor motivations were changing, with younger donors less likely to give out of guilt and more likely to give because they felt inspired by the organisation. This changing motivation was one of their key arguments supporting donor engagement. However the results of this research appear to contradict their assertions (see figure 5). The 18 – 24 age group represented the highest percentage of those claiming guilt as a key motivator and it was the over 60 age group that represented the highest proportion of participants claiming they felt inspired by the work the charity was doing. These results are

in strong opposition to Lawson and Ruderham's claims and further research would be required to verify or refute them.

O'Neil (2006) made a slightly different claim about donor motivation, asserting that donors who donated because they felt inspired by the vision and methods of the charity were more likely to remain loyal in the long-term. The findings of this research appear to support her assertion (see figure 6). Fifty one percent of those donors who had sponsored a child for more than 10 years reported that their initial motivation was one of inspiration, much higher than the other three motivating options provided. While this does not definitively prove that inspiration creates longer-term donors, it does suggest this may be the case. However, more detailed investigation, ideally of a longitudinal nature and focused on this specific claim, would be required to support this claim more convincingly.

O'Neil (2006) also suggested that donor motivations could change over time, indicating that donors who began giving out of a sense of guilt could later become inspired and motivated by the work of the organisation. While the online survey did not specifically ask participants if their motivations had changed, the post-survey interviews did. Interview participants were asked whether their motivations had altered at all since they first began sponsoring a child. All of the interviewees responded that their initial motivations had not changed significantly. This result appears to challenge O'Neil's (2006) assertion, but, because so few participants were interviewed further

investigation would be required to gain any understanding of the proportion of child sponsors whose motivation for sponsoring changes over time.

However, despite participants claiming that their initial motivation had not altered significantly, several interviewees did discus the way in which additional motivators had been added. For example, Anna discussed how having children had created the added motivation of setting an example of generosity for her children. This result suggests that while donors' initial motivations do not alter significantly, new motivators can be added.

These results all indicate that a donor's initial motivation can have long-lasting effects on their sponsorship experience. Not only this, but a child sponsor's initial motivation could have a significant bearing on how long they are likely to continue sponsoring. Those donors who first give out of sense of inspiration appear to be more likely to become the most loyal donors, whereas donors who first give out of a sense of guilt appear to be the least likely to become ongoing donors. Bearing this in mind, charitable organisations must be mindful of the methods and prompts they use to recruit donors.

5.3.2 Donor prompts

Closely linked to donor motivation is the initial prompt that encourages donors to become child sponsors. These prompts can include television advertisements, representatives of the charity, promotion of the charity at an event or the influence of friends and family.

Considering that donor motivations do not appear to alter significantly over time, the issue of what prompts donors to give becomes increasingly important, as prompts and motivations are closely linked. Figure three shows that those donors who have been child sponsors for the longest length of time were most commonly prompted by the recommendation of friends or family, they reached their decision independently, or they selected 'other'. This result may indicate that these prompts are more likely to produce long-term loyal donors. However, because charitable organisations frequently change their campaigning strategies, this conclusion cannot be drawn definitively. For example, an organisation may use charity representatives to gain new sponsors for several years before placing more emphasis on television advertisements for a time. This means that donors who were solicited at different times are more likely to have been motivated by different prompts. A more in-depth longitudinal study would be required to truly understand how initial prompts affect donors' loyalty and longevity.

5.4 Experiences and preferences of child sponsors

This section of the survey sought to understand participant's experiences and donating preferences. This section is important as it begins to establish how content participants are with their sponsorship experience. In doing so it seeks to answer the first part of the research question; how do child sponsors regard engagement initiatives?

5.4.1 How Meaningful and Valuable Child Sponsorship is

One of the key arguments for donor engagement is that it makes the donating experience more meaningful or valuable for the donor (Rubach 2006, Lawson & Ruderham, 2009). However, the results of this research showed that engaged respondents had only a slightly higher than average 'meaning or value' score (see table 7). Engaged respondents presented an average of Likert scale score of 6.47, which was not much higher than the 6.29 produced by non-engaged respondents.

Interestingly, it was a different type of engagement that produced the more significant results. The 'meaning/value' scores of those donors who chose to write to their sponsored children were considerably higher than those who had never written to their sponsored children (see table 8). The average 'meaning/value' score for those respondents who had never written to their sponsored children was 5.63, significantly lower than the 6.53 of those who had written. Those participants who wrote to their sponsored children two or more times a year reported the highest 'meaning/value' scores with an average of 6.92. This result was also echoed in the phone interviews where several participants noted that the contact with their sponsored child made the experience much more meaningful. For example Amy responded: "I really like writing to my child and getting letters back, it makes them seem more real. It's also a really cool opportunity to make friends with someone who lives such an opposite life to mine".

The following question went on to ask respondents what they felt could make their sponsorship experience more positive or meaningful. Participants were given five different options and were asked to select all that applied. Sixty two percent of respondents said that receiving more information about their specific sponsored child would make their sponsorship experience more meaningful (see figure 13). This result is perhaps not surprising as according to Wroe and Dooney (2004) the one-to-one link with sponsored children is the most compelling aspect of the sponsorship experience for most child sponsors. However, this result should be viewed with caution, as earlier 71% of respondents had answered they were happy with the amount of information they received about their sponsored child (see table 10).

In the same question, 55% of respondents answered that they would like to learn more about how their sponsorship funds were being used. This result is in accord with research conducted by Kelly (2001) and Waters (2008). Waters stressed the importance of reporting back to donors and demonstrating responsibility. These types of activities are often referred to as 'stewardship', another very important aspect of donor retention. Interestingly, in the same question, only 27% of respondents answered that having opportunities to be more actively involved with the charity would make their sponsorship experience more positive or meaningful. This result illustrates that 'engagement' is not a high priority for the large majority of donors who were surveyed. The possible reasons for this are discussed in greater detail later in this chapter.

When participants were asked to write in their own words if there was anything else they felt could make their sponsorship experience more positive or meaningful 51% answered they couldn't think of anything. Of those who did respond, many answered that more information about how to write to or visit their sponsored children would make sponsoring more positive or meaningful for them. This result once again indicates the importance many child sponsors place on one-to-one interaction with their sponsored child. (Wroe & Dooney, 2004). Interestingly, several participants also responded in their own words that sponsoring a child was not about how meaningful or valuable it was for them as a sponsor, but it was about doing the right thing and supporting a great organisation and a great cause.

It is noted that these results must be viewed with caution, as the subjective nature of the terms 'meaningful' and 'valuable' are somewhat ambiguous. This ambiguity is due to the fact that individual respondents will interpret such terms differently. However the results still offer some information regarding the value donors place on child sponsorship.

5.4.3 Information provision and preferences

A large number of questions in the online survey focused on the provision of information and participants' information preferences. Kelly (2001) points out that the traditional exchange of money for goods or services does not exist in the charity sector. Because of this, information that indicates the effectiveness and trustworthiness of the organisation is of paramount importance. Sargeant and Woodliffe (2005) further supported this claim, stating that the provision of

good quality information is of great importance to both active and passive donors. They went on to assert that the delivery of information which proves the good performance of the organisation is especially important to passive donors early on, as once passive donors have decided to trust an organisation they will generally continue to give with very few concerns.

The following question asked donors about their attitude to correspondence from the charity they support. Five different options were given and participants were asked to select the option that most accurately described them. The options were: 'I read everything the charity sends me'; 'I read information if it is about a particular region or subject I am interested in'; 'I only read information about my specific sponsored child'; 'I rarely read information sent to me by the charity', and; 'I don't read information sent to me by the charity'. In order to understand the information preferences of different donors, these results were separated into different groups. Firstly, comparison was made according to how long participants had been child sponsors. Secondly, respondents were divided according to their age groups.

When exploring the link between how long participants have been child sponsors and their information preferences, donors of less than two years were most likely to read all of the information sent to them (see figure 14b). This trend is supported by Handy's research (2000), which found new donors were most interested in information and indicators of trustworthiness. Handy asserted this was because they were still establishing their trust in the organisation and wanted to know their donations were being well spent.

Where the donor relationship was between 2 – 10 years, there was a general trend for donors to read less information. However, those child sponsors who had donated for more than 10 years appeared to gain a renewed interest in information sent to them.

The reason for this increased interest in information is unclear. It is possible that these long-term donors begin moving into the same realm as 'major gift donors'. Sargeant and Woodliffe (2007) and Handy (2000) both state that 'major gift donors' require a different type of care to 'regular gift-givers'. They assert that major gift donors require more information, especially information demonstrating the trustworthiness of the organisation and they need to continue receiving such information. While the ongoing donations of these long-term child sponsors remain relatively small, their sense of care for, and ownership of, the organisation may be what increases their appetite for information. Anna, one of the phone interviewees responded: "I've been with [the organisation] for a long time now, which gives me a sense of ownership and pride in them, so I like to know how they're getting on."

The same question also presented useful information when the responses of different age groups were examined (see figure 15). The over 60 age group provided the highest number of participants who claimed to read all the material sent to them at 62%. As the over 60 age group has the highest percentage of long-term donors, with 65% having sponsored for over 10 years, this may be in part due to the reasons discussed above. Also, as a large proportion of these respondents will be retired or nearing retirement, it

could be speculated that they are more likely to have time to spend reading such information.

The 18 – 24 age group also showed a preference for higher levels of information, with 49% claiming they read everything the organisation sent them. This could be partly attributed to the high level of donors who have sponsored for less than two years (47%) in this age group. In addition, Harris (2001) asserts that this age group has an appetite for information, particularly information about the effectiveness of an organisation. He states: "This young generation of donors wants to hear how you're making a difference. This isn't just some passing phase: it's a permanent change in how much information people want about the impact their donations are having" (Harris, 2001, p.6).

While the discussion above highlights the importance child sponsors place on receiving information, it is also important to determine the way in which they wish to receive such information. The results of the online survey demonstrate a strong preference for interactive online material over direct mail or other forms of information delivery (see figure 22a). Interestingly, this trend is evident across all of the age groups surveyed. A surprising 57% of the over 60 age group responded that they would like to receive additional information in online form (see figure 22b) which counters any assumption that might be made about this age group's comfort level with computers.

Numerous writers have claimed the provision of online information and interaction is becoming increasingly important as the influence of younger

generations continues to grow (Hosea, 2009; Ingenhoff & Koelling, 2009; Harris, 2011). However, the results of the online survey appear to show that it is not only younger generations who desire access to online information. The 45 – 60 age group surveyed showed the highest preference for online information with 71% stating they would like to receive information in this way. By comparison, although the 18 – 24 age group are typically seen as the strongest proponents for online initiatives, only 64% of this category responded that they preferred online information. The underlying reason for this result is unclear and further investigation would be required to understand the preferences of different age groups. Nevertheless it seems that rigid assumptions of donor's information preferences based on stereotypes about their age profile can be misleading.

Although some age groups expressed a strong preference for online information, it remains clear that some use of direct mail is still desired. Twenty seven percent of those donors who stated they would like to receive information online would also like to receive direct mail. This result was echoed in the phone interviews where the majority of respondents said they were happy with the mixture of online and direct mail the participating organisation used.

This mixed approach is further supported by research conducted by van Diepen, Donkers and Frances (2009), which found that direct mail continued to be the largest revenue earner for most non-profit organisations. Therefore it would seem prudent to ensure that some degree of direct mail is maintained.

However, in line with the assertions of Sargeant (2001) and Handy (2000), it appears that allowing donors more freedom to choose the type and quantity of information they wish to receive is likely to yield the best results for charities. This practice of allowing donors choice may also ensure that money and resources spent producing and dispensing information is used most effectively.

Finally, the survey questioned the information content that donors wished to receive. Participants were asked to highlight their preferences within two wider questions; what would make sponsoring a child more meaningful for them, and what would increase their sense of commitment to their chosen charity. Both of these questions contained options specifically pertaining to information content preferences. News about a participant's specific sponsored child was the type of information desired most, with an average of 61% of respondents choosing this option (see figures 15 & 21). Information about donors' specific sponsored children is perhaps the most engaging as it illustrates to them the difference their contribution is making to a real person. As noted above, Wroe and Dooney (2004) assert that this link to a real person is one of the real strengths of child sponsorship programmes and that nurturing this sense of human connection is very important.

The other form of information highly sought after by participants was facts about how their donations were being spent. An average of 55% of participants requested such information (see figures 15 & 21). Many participants also expressed an interest in the charity's development strategies

This result comes as no surprise, as separate studies conducted by Kelly (2001), Waters (2008), Sargeant and Woodliffe (2005) and Handy (2000) all concluded that providing strong evidence to demonstrate the trustworthiness and effectiveness of an organisation increased donor loyalty and longevity.

5.4.3 Engagement preferences

In the literature review chapter, several authors and publications discussed the importance of engagement, particularly to the emerging younger generation of donors (Lawson & Ruderham, 2009; Rubach, 2006; Hosea, 2009; Ingenhoff & Koelling, 2009; The Good agency, 2008; Rapidata, 2009). The results produced by this research provide additional support to their assertions that younger donors are not only more likely to desire opportunities for greater participation, but are also more likely to actually participate. This result is especially evident in the 18 – 24 age group that was surveyed (see figures 15b & 17b).

There are several potential reasons for this result. Rubach (2006) asserts that this is often a time of life where people are rich in time, but not in finances. Few people of this age have their own families to care for or high-stress executive jobs, leaving them more time to volunteer and engage with charities. According to Snar (2003) these young adults are also more likely to volunteer as a form of altruistic self-development.

This age group will also have a higher proportion of students at universities and other tertiary institutions than other groups. Snar (2003) claims that

university student's exposure to, and analysis of, social problems will often increase their sense of social justice. It is this sense of social justice, combined with their knowledge of societal issues, which leads many higher education students to advocate for social change. It is perhaps not surprising then that there is an increased interest in charitable activism and volunteering within the 18 – 24 age group.

According to Rubach (2006), this 18 – 24 age group is an incredibly important one and one which desires engagement. She states: "To connect with the next potential generation of supporters, charities have to develop propositions that will engage and involve them." (p.21). When asked what opportunities they felt would make sponsoring more positive or meaningful for them, the 18 – 24 age group were by far the most eager to be more actively involved with the participating organisation. This result clearly supports Rubach's assertion, that younger age groups desire a high level of engagement. The following question asked whether participants had previously been involved with the participating organisation, and once again the 18 – 24 age group were the most likely to have been engaged. Demonstrating that not only does this age group want opportunities for engagement, but they are also the most likely to take advantage of them. Therefore, it would seem imperative that charitable organisations heed this warning and begin to or continue to provide their supporters with such interactions.

Conversely, while these results seem to support increasing engagement activities for younger supporters, older supporters appear less interested in

such activities. Interestingly however, when asked about their information preferences, the 45 – 60 age group were the most eager for more engaging delivery of information, particularly interactive online information. This result once again gives weight to the idea of 'relationship fundraising', supported by Burnett (1992), Sargeant (2001) and O'Neil (2006), which emphasises the importance of giving donors options and not simply applying a 'one size fits all' approach to donor retention.

5.4.4 Previous engagement and its effects on the child sponsorship experience

The preceding discussion demonstrates that many child sponsors, particularly those in the 18 – 24 age group, desire engagement initiatives. However, the question arises as to what effect engagement actually has on their sponsorship experience.

Participants who had previously been involved in activities beyond financial support were asked how this experience affected their donating experience. Eighty four percent of participants said it positively affected their child sponsorship experience in some way. Sixteen percent answered that it was not related to their sponsorship experience and none gave negative feedback. Through both the online survey and the small number of phone interviews conducted, it became evident that engagement activities can have a wide range of positive effects on people's sponsorship experience.

Participants were asked to write in their own words how their previous engagement had affected their sponsorship experience. Their answers were sorted into dominant themes and the occurrence of each theme was calculated. Thirty four percent of participants answered that their previous engagement had been a very positive encounter that significantly affected their sponsorship experience. Twenty eight percent responded that it strengthened their sense of commitment to the organisation and their cause. Twenty one percent answered that it helped them to understand the organisation better and learn how they worked. These are all incredibly positive outcomes and outcomes which are likely to affect the loyalty and longevity of these child sponsors. These results support the assertions of Lawson and Ruderham (2009) who claim that donors who participate in voluntary activities are more likely to feel passionate about and remain loyal to their chosen organisation.

Another interesting outcome was the 16% of participants who mentioned that their involvement (such as volunteering or fundraising) was actually prior to sponsoring. They claimed that it was this involvement that led them to sponsor a child through the particular organisation. This claim is supported by Rubach (2006), who asserts that involving people in volunteering and advocacy is an effective way of recruiting loyal donors. She claims that such activities can create people who are passionate about the cause and loyal to the organisation before any monetary commitment is required of them.

The post-survey phone interviews provided perhaps the most compelling evidence to support engagement activities. Three participants who had previously been involved with the organisation in very different ways all told positive stories about their engagement experiences. Along with a number of other positive outcomes, all three respondents described how their interaction with the organisation had given them a better understanding of how the organisation worked, as well as making them more passionate and committed to the organisation and their cause.

While this research cannot conclude definitively that engagement increases donors' longevity, it has shown that such interactions positively influence donors' sense of commitment and loyalty to their chosen organisation. Furthermore, the engaged donors included in this research sample demonstrated a 24% higher tendency to continue to donate for more than 10 years.

5.4.5 Commitment to Child sponsorship

Another of the key arguments for donor engagement is that it increases donors' sense of commitment. While this research shows that previously engaged child sponsors have slightly higher levels of commitment, the difference is not extremely strong as shown in Figure 20.

The preceding discussion illustrated that engagement has a range of positive outcomes for donors, including increasing their sense of understanding, passion and loyalty to the organisation. However, when participants were

asked about their level of commitment to their chosen charity, the results

indicated that participants who have not experienced engagement activities

are only slightly less committed to their chosen charity.

Rebecca, one of the phone interview participants, provided a possible reason

for this result when she answered:

> Child sponsorship suits me perfectly. Direct debit means it just keeps
>
> happening. I don't need more involvement, I don't have the time for
>
> that, but I love feeling like a silent partner in the good work [the
>
> organisation] is doing. For me that is all I want.

While engagement appears to have very positive effects for those sponsors

who wish to be engaged, Rebecca's statement draws attention to the fact that

not all child sponsors desire further involvement with their chosen charity. The

commitment results discussed above further illustrate the fact that many

participants who do not experience engagement activities are still very

committed to their chosen charity. The likely reason is that they are content to

contribute financially and wish nothing more from their sponsorship

experience because they are already receiving the sense of involvement they

want from their chosen charity. Sargeant and Woodliffe's (2005) research

supports this claim through creating a distinction between active and passive

donors. They assert that passive donors can still be satisfied donors, they

simply do not wish to be more involved with the charity they support.

This result once again demonstrates the importance of some type of 'relationship fundraising' strategy that allows donors to tell their chosen charities what they want from their sponsorship experience. Easton (as cited in O'Donovan, 2002) supports this point of view, stating: "It's so important to understand who your donors are and what motivates them… talking to them to find out why they support you and what interests them in maintaining that relationship." (p.9)

5.4.6 Satisfaction with child sponsorship

In order to discover the effect that engagement activities had on child sponsors' level of satisfaction, participants were asked to rate how satisfied they were with their child sponsorship experience. The results indicate that engaged participants have slightly higher average levels of satisfaction and are less likely to be very dissatisfied. However, participants who have previously been engaged also produced a slightly higher standard deviation, meaning their answers were more varied than those of the non-engaged respondents (see figure 27).

The reason for this result is likely to be similar to that discussed above. Many sponsors have no desire to become more engaged with their charity, and therefore a lack of engagement does not negatively influence their level of satisfaction.

5.5 Conclusion

This chapter has discussed the results of the research in order to understand their significance. The aims of this chapter have been two-fold, to come closer to answering the initial research questions, and to understand how the results of this research confirm or contest the assertions and findings of previous literature and research. The following chapter will seek to draw together what has been learnt in order to answer the research questions that were posed in the introduction.

Chapter Six – Conclusion

6.1 Introduction

This thesis began by discussing the increasing importance of donor retention in regular giving programmes, and child sponsorship programmes specifically. The introduction also stated the intention to investigate the relatively recent donor retention strategy of 'donor engagement'. Subsequently two research questions were posed: Firstly, how do child sponsors regard engagement initiatives? Secondly, does the use of engagement initiatives appear to increase the loyalty and longevity of child sponsors?

This chapter will seek to answer the initial research questions that were presented in the introduction, summarising what has been discovered. It will then outline the limitations of the research and provide recommendations for future research. The final chapter of this thesis will then use the conclusions drawn in this chapter to make recommendations for child sponsorship programmes in the future.

6.2 Answering the Research Questions

This research has succeeded in answering the initial research questions:

- How do child sponsors regard engagement initiatives?
- Does the use of engagement initiatives appear to increase the loyalty and longevity of child sponsors?

However, while the data relating to the first question gave a very coherent picture of the differences in respondents' attitudes, the second question produced less predictable, more multifaceted, results which are more complicated to interpret.

The first research question asked: How do child sponsors regard engagement initiatives? Two dominant opinion groups emerged in relation to this question. One group of participants had either previously been engaged with the organisation, or they expressed a desire for future engagement. These participants viewed engagement initiatives positively, valuing opportunities for further involvement that they felt added greatly to their sponsorship experience. Conversely, the second and larger group of participants expressed little interest in becoming engaged. Such donors were content for their contribution to the organisation to be purely financial and did not wish for any further involvement. This second group appeared to regard engagement with ambivalence, rather than expressing negative attitudes.

The second research question produced more complex findings. This question asked; does the use of engagement initiatives appear to increase the loyalty and longevity of child sponsors? The first part of the result was unsurprising; those donors who had previously been engaged reported being highly satisfied with their sponsorship experience and stated that they were very committed to their chosen organisation. Engaged child sponsors were also more likely to have been sponsors for more than 10 years, as shown by the fact that there were 24% more of them in the group which had sponsored

for over 10 years. This result is in line with previous donor engagement literature, which asserts that increased satisfaction, loyalty and longevity are to be expected when donors become engaged (Lawson & Ruderham, 2009).

However, while this research supports previous literature by demonstrating that engaged donors are satisfied, committed and more likely to have been sponsors for over 10 years, it also produced some unexpected results regarding non-engaged donors. Those child sponsors who were not engaged reported comparable levels of satisfaction and commitment to those sponsors who had been engaged. This surprising result begs the question; why are the satisfaction and commitment levels of engaged and non-engaged participants so similar?

This question can be answered quite simply by re-examining the results of the first research question, which asked how child sponsors regarded engagement initiatives. The results showed that a large proportion of donors expressed no interest in engagement activities. Therefore, their lack of engagement does not negatively impact on their sense of commitment or satisfaction. These non-engaged child sponsors are content to be 'silent partners' to the organisation and are happy for their involvement to be purely financial.

This result can lead to a certain degree of confusion. If non-engaged donors report feeling as satisfied and committed as engaged donors, is engagement then redundant? The results of the research would suggest not. While a lack

of engagement does not negatively impact on those child sponsors who do not wish to be engaged, a significant portion of participants do desire engagement. The elimination of engagement initiatives would undoubtedly have a negative effect on these donors.

Perhaps more importantly, engagement does not simply placate those donors who desire greater involvement. Many additional positive outcomes are also evident from engagement. Engaged donors demonstrated a higher likelihood of surpassing 10 years of sponsorship, they were more likely to recommend the organisation to others and they were more passionate about the cause they were supporting. Engagement can also help donors to better understand the organisation they support and create a sense of belonging and community with other volunteers and staff.

While the outcomes of donor engagement are incredibly encouraging, only 22% of participants expressed an interest in active engagement. Nevertheless, a far greater proportion of donors were interested in online engagement, as discussed below.

Along with active engagement activities such as volunteering, fundraising and activism, this research also sought to discover child sponsors attitudes to online engagement initiatives. However, the actual effectiveness of online engagement was impossible to test, as the participating organisation does not currently have a significant online engagement programme. Instead, child

sponsors' attitudes to and eagerness for online engagement was investigated in the research.

The results of the research suggested that online engagement initiatives were more widely in demand than active engagement initiatives such as volunteering. Many participants expressed a desire for increased access to online information and a more interactive online environment. Interestingly this desire for online engagement was not limited to younger age groups as expected. Those participants in the 45 – 60 age groups were the strongest proponents for increasing online initiatives.

6.3 Limitations of the Research

While this research succeeded in producing significant results, it was limited in several ways. For practical reasons the size and scope of the study was restricted. The restriction to a single organisation narrowed the scope of the research, as the results only apply specifically to one organisation. While it is anticipated that the results and recommendations will be applicable to other child sponsorship programmes, other organisations may operate differently and such differences would need to be taken into account.

The research was further constrained due to its exclusion of the 40% of child sponsors who were not email accessible. While this restriction was made for practical reasons, it leaves room for uncertainty regarding whether a full range of opinions has been represented in the research sample.

Finally, this research also excluded former donors from the research sample. While it would have been valuable to understand the reasons previous child sponsors chose to stop donating, it was not possible to access these participants through the participating organisation.

6.4 Recommendations for Future Research

This research presented a number of interesting outcomes which warrant further investigation. Several of the findings of this research contradicted the results of previous studies. Most notably, the results of this study opposed the assertions of Lawson and Ruderham (2009) who claimed that younger donors are less likely to be motivated by guilt and more likely to give because they feel inspired by the organisation. By contrast, this research showed the eldest age group was the most likely to be inspired by the organisation and the youngest age group was the most likely to be motivated by guilt. Because this result was in stark contrast to Lawson and Ruderham's findings, further investigation would be valuable to uncover reasons for this difference. This research also appeared to disagree with O'Neil's (2006) assertions that donor motivations can change over time. These differences may relate to the New Zealand context or the context of the participating organisation, however further research is recommended.

The other unexpected finding of this research, that engaged and non-engaged sponsors are equally satisfied with and committed to child sponsorship, definitely merits further study. Although various other authors discuss the advantages of donor engagement, little attention has been paid to their non-

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engaged counterparts. Sargeant and Woodliffe (2005) provide some discussion on the difference between active and passive donors, which are similar to engaged and non-engaged child sponsors, however they accepted that the commitment of passive donors would naturally be less than that of active donors. This research's positive finding regarding non-engaged donors level of commitment was not discussed in any of the literature reviewed by the researcher, and appears to be an original contribution to the field which warrants further investigation.

While this research examined child sponsors' desire for online engagement inititatives, it could not comment on the actual effectiveness of such initiatives, as the participating organisation does not currently have a significant online engagement programme. Further research investigating the actual effectiveness of online engagement programmes would be timely and valuable.

Finally, it is recommended that further research be carried out to investigate a more holistic donor retention strategy. This research has revealed that the strategies of relationship fundraising, stewardship and engagement could exist in coalition very effectively. Although charitable organisations undoubtedly already combine these donor retention methods, as yet no research into strategic multiple retention methods has been carried out. Academic literature appears only to address the separate strategies in isolation.

6.5 Conclusion

The first research question asked: How do child sponsors regard engagement initiatives? Two distinct groups of child sponsors emerged in relation to this question. One group expressed great eagerness for engagement and reported that their previous engagement experiences had positively affected their sponsorship experience.

By comparison, the second, and larger, group that emerged had little desire to be engaged. This group was content to continue their financial contribution, but expressed little interest in engagement initiatives. The exception here was with online engagement initiatives, which were desired by a larger proportion of child sponsors.

In answering the final research question, does the use of engagement initiatives appear to increase the loyalty and longevity of child sponsors? The answer would have to be yes, engagement opportunities do increase the loyalty and longevity of child sponsors. Such opportunities also appear to produce numerous other positive outcomes.

However, the majority of non-engaged sponsors remain equally satisfied with their sponsorship experience and report being just as committed as engaged sponsors. While these sponsors do not present all of the other positive outcomes of engaged sponsors, they are content with their sponsorship experience and do not desire any further involvement.

This research has illustrated the hugely positive potential of active and online donor engagement initiatives. However, engagement in itself does not appear to be the 'magic bullet' of donor retention strategies. Instead it is submitted that the use of engagement initiatives could make a significant contribution to a wider donor retention programme. This research has indicated that the most successful donor retention programmes are likely to be those which integrate donor engagement with the more mature strategies of relationship fundraising and stewardship in order to produce the most effective donor retention results.

Chapter Seven – Recommendations

7.1 Introduction

This final chapter seeks to fulfil the aim outlined in the introduction; 'to use the research findings to make recommendations for child sponsorship programmes in the future'. Three key recommendations have been identified. Firstly, to ensure engagement opportunities are available for those child sponsors who wish to be more involved. Secondly, to provide opportunities for online engagement and to ensure a wider range of information is accessible online. Finally, to seek to find practical and cost-effective ways to further personalise the child sponsorship experience.

7.2 Providing Opportunities for Donor Engagement

This research revealed two somewhat contrary results**:** On one hand, a large portion of child sponsors had little interest in becoming engaged in activities beyond purely financial giving. On the other hand, those child sponsors who had previously participated in engagement activities were more likely to have been sponsors for over 10 years and to recommend the organisation to others. Additionally, engaged child sponsors had a superior understanding of the organisation. While not all sponsors wish to be engaged, the potential benefits from engaging donors are substantial. Therefore, it is recommended that child sponsorship charities ensure engagement

opportunities are available to those donors and potential donors who wish to increase their involvement.

Furthermore, the results of this research also suggested that engagement opportunities should not be restricted principally to current donors. A significant number of participants reported that their first engagement with the organisation was in fact prior to sponsoring. For many participants it was this early engagement experience that inspired their decision to sponsor a child through the organisation later on. Additionally, many of those child sponsors whose first experience with the organisation was of a voluntary nature appear to become the most loyal donors.

Finally, when used appropriately, engaged donors, who offer their time and skills to an organisation, can in fact save the organisation money. While volunteers cannot fill all roles, tasks such as helping out at events or answering phones during a campaign can certainly be volunteer-friendly. Furthermore, many potential volunteers are highly skilled and are more than willing to use their time and skills for a charitable cause. Such volunteers could potentially be used in place of paid contractors for short-term specialist roles. An organisation could 'advertise' volunteer opportunities on their website and potentially decrease the number of employees they have to pay. While using volunteers does require time spent co-ordinating and organising, the benefits can be considerable.

7.3 Personalising the Child Sponsorship Experience

Closely related to donor engagement is the personalisation of the child sponsorship experience. Allowing child sponsors to feel like they are treated as an individual with individual preferences is engaging and can increase their sense of commitment and loyalty to an organisation. The research revealed that child sponsors hold hugely divergent opinions and preferences, particularly with regard to the provision of information. While catering to every individual sponsor's opinions and preferences would be impractical and cost-prohibitive, some degree of personalisation is recommended.

In both the online survey and the post-survey interviews, people expressed preferences for certain types of information, but ambivalence or even objection to others. Establishing a system which allows child sponsors to nominate the type of information they wish to or do not wish to receive could go a long way towards improving donor satisfaction and loyalty.

For example, some child sponsors expressed a strong dislike for repeated appeals for additional donations. Several participants even stated that continued pleas may cause them to cease their ongoing sponsorship. On the other hand, many sponsors liked such appeals as they felt it made them more aware of how and where the organisation was working, as well as giving them opportunities to support the organisation's work in other areas. While an organisation could simply try to find a middle ground by reducing such pleas, they would likely be giving up donations from those donors who are happy to

receive such solicitations, and they may still fail to make those donors who dislike such appeals happy. Therefore, finding a better way to cater to these different opinions and preferences will be likely to produce the best results.

Creating a more 'personalised' child sponsor experience could be achieved through the effective use of databases. An online system could be set up which allowed child sponsors to select how they would like to be involved and the type of information they would like to receive. For example, a child sponsor may be particularly interested in education issues and may feel a strong link to East Africa. Therefore, the organisation could ensure the information they send this donor is primarily concerned with educational projects and updates on projects in East Africa. This would keep the donor satisfied as they are receiving information that they find interesting, but not receiving large amounts of unwanted information. Additionally it could save the organisation money, with funds no longer being spent on producing and distributing unwanted information.

An effective database could also tell an organisation whether a donor is interested in volunteering and what skills they may have to offer, or reveal a sponsor's attitude to requests for additional donations. Furthermore, having a greater understanding of a child sponsor's particular areas of interest could make obtaining additional donations easier, as future appeals could focus on these topics of interest. While a comprehensive database would certainly take time and funds to produce, it could potentially produce more satisfied donors who feel listened to by their chosen organisation.

7.4 Online Engagement and Web Accessible Information

The 'personalisation' plan outlined above would function incredibly well if it were accompanied by an interactive website. The final recommendation of this research is the creation of a more engaging, interactive website. The organisation that participated in this research does not currently use online engagement initiatives widely. Therefore, no definitive evidence regarding the effectiveness of online engagement could be gained. However, the results did demonstrate a desire for meaningful online information. While the participating organisation does have an effective website, it appears to be aimed at potential donors more than current donors. For this reason, the creation of a more engaging website that is aimed at current child sponsors is recommended. (Since conducting this research the participating organisation has overhauled their website and is now heading in the right direction.)

Websites are becoming increasingly interactive and charitable organisations must begin to move with this trend. It is recommended that a website which allows child sponsors to create their own donor profiles is created. Using this donor profile child sponsors could easily select what sort of information they would like to receive, link information or articles they like from the website to their own Facebook or Twitter accounts, and participate in interactive online discussions.

The website would also be an effective forum to answer and discuss common questions. Several key questions kept recurring in the online survey, and the website would provide a perfect channel to discuss these questions. This

could happen through an online Q & A, or alternatively, different questions could be addressed by a qualified staff member each month. This could provide a more in-depth understanding, while allowing child sponsors to ask personalised questions or have their own input.

Another recurring theme presented in the online survey was the way in which sponsors struggled to grasp what life was really like for their sponsored child. While it may be impractical to provide details for every individual child, the organisation could use their website to post photos and videos and stories from the villages and areas they work in. This would give sponsors a clearer picture of what life is like for their sponsored children as well as what the organisation are doing to help. This kind of information is incredibly important as sponsors enjoy hearing success stories. Furthermore, such stories can also help to assure donors their money is making a tangible difference (which is important to both active and passive donors).

7.5 Conclusion

This chapter has sought to make practical recommendations for child sponsorship programmes in the future. The researcher has endeavoured to provide recommendations that are relatively low-cost so as to ensure the highest proportion of donated funds reach their intended destination. These recommendations are based on the results of the conducted research and apply largely to donor engagement. However, previous research and experience should also be considered, particularly the donor retention strategies of relationship fundraising and stewardship.

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Appendix A: Online Survey Questionnaire

Initial

In this section you will be asked about yourself and when, how and why you decided to sponsor a child:

1. What is your current age?

    ☐ 18 – 24

    ☐ 25 – 34

    ☐ 35 – 44

    ☐ 45 – 60

    ☐ Over 60

2. How long have you been a child sponsor?

    ☐ under 2 years

    ☐ 2 – 5 years

    ☐ 6 – 10 years

    ☐ Over 10 years

3. How many children do you sponsor?

    ☐ 1   ☐ 2   ☐ 3 or more

4. Do you sponsor a child on your own or with others? (If you sponsor more than one child tick all that apply)

    ☐ On my own

    ☐ With my spouse or partner

    ☐ With my family

    ☐ With a friend

    ☐ As part of a group

    ☐ Other: _____

5. What initially prompted you to become a child sponsor?

☐ TV advertisement

☐ A representative of the charity (e.g. on the street or in a mall)

☐ Event at which the charity was present (e.g. a concert)

☐ Recommendation of friend or family member

☐ My decision was reached independently

☐ Other: _____

6. If you would like to give further detail about how you became a child sponsor please do so:

_____

_____

_____

7. Which of the following do you think most closely describes your initial motivation for sponsoring a child

☐ I felt inspired by the work the charity were doing

☐ It made me feel good to be doing my part

☐ I felt guilty about people living in poverty

☐ Other: _____

8. If you would like to give further detail about why you became a child sponsor please do so:

_____

_____

_____

Sponsorship Experience:

In this section you will be asked about your experience as a child sponsor and your donation preferences

9. Do you feel that sponsoring a child adds meaning or value to your life?

   (place your answer appropriately on the scale)

Adds no meaning	Adds some meaning	Adds significant meaning
or value to my life	or value to my life	or value to my life

I_____ _____ _____ _____ _____I_____ _____ _____ _____ _____I

0   1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10
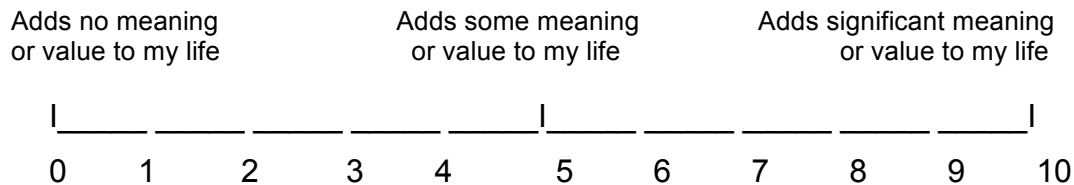
10. How would you describe your knowledge of how your sponsorship funds are used? (place your answer appropriately on the scale)

I have **no idea**	I have **some**	I have a **detailed**
how/where the	**knowledge** of	**knowledge** of
funds are used	how/where the	how/where the
	funds are used	funds are used

I_____ _____ _____ _____ _____I_____ _____ _____ _____ _____I

0   1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10
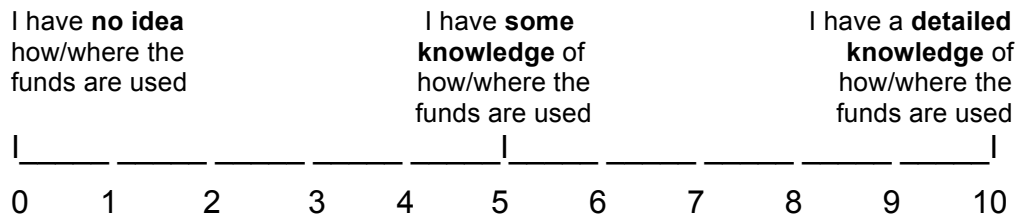
11. How do you feel about the amount of information you receive about <u>your specific sponsored child</u>?

☐ I am happy with the amount of information I receive

☐ I would like to receive more information

☐ I feel I receive too much information

12. How often would you estimate you write to your sponsored child?

☐ Two or more times a year

☐ About once a year

☐ Less than once a year

☐ I have never written to my sponsored child

13. If you do write to your sponsored child, do you feel this positively affects your donating experience?

☐ Yes   ☐ No   ☐ I'm unsure

14. Which of the following statements most accurately describes your attitude to correspondence from the charity you support?

☐ I read everything they send me

☐ I read information if it is about a particular region or subject I am interested in

☐ I only read information about my specific sponsored child

☐ I very rarely read information sent by the charity

☐ I don't read information sent by the charity

15. Do you feel any of the following would make your sponsorship experience more positive or meaningful? (Tick all that apply)

☐ Learning more about how my sponsorship funds are being used

☐ Receiving more information about my specific sponsored child

☐ Learning more about global poverty and the 'bigger picture'

☐ Learning more about the charities development strategies in communities facing poverty

☐ Having opportunities to become more actively involved with the charity

16. If you answered that you would like to be more actively involved with the charity, how would you like to be involved?

(tick all that apply)

☐ Volunteering with the charity (e.g. at events)

☐ Advocating for the poor (e.g. petitioning government about foreign aid policies)

☐ Other_____

17. Do you currently, or have you in the past had involvement with the charity that extends past purely financial giving? (e.g. volunteering)

☐ Yes   ☐ No

18. What sort of involvement do/did you have with them?

(Tick all that apply)

☐ Volunteer based

☐ Advocacy based

☐ Other _____

Level of Commitment:

In this section you will be asked questions regarding your current level of commitment to the charity and how this might be altered if they changed the way they interact with you.

19. Which of the following most closely describes your current level of commitment to the charity you support?

☐ I am very committed to the charity

☐ I am fairly committed to the charity

☐ I'm not particularly committed to the charity, my continued support is more a result of habit than anything else

☐ I am not committed to the charity, I would cease to support them very easily

20. Do you feel any of the following would increase your loyalty to the charity you support? (Tick all that apply)

☐ Access to more information about how my sponsorship funds are being used

☐ Receiving more information about my specific sponsored child

☐ Access to more information about global poverty and the 'bigger picture'

☐ Access to more information about the charity's development strategies in communities facing poverty

☐ Having opportunities to become more actively involved with the charity

21. If you answered that you would like more access to information about how your sponsorship funds are used, the charity's development strategies or global poverty issues, what form would you like that information to take?

☐ Direct mail out

☐ Interactive online environment

☐ Lecture series

☐ Other_____

Open-ended questions:

In this section you will be given the opportunity to tell us…

22. Is there anything that hasn't been covered above which you feel would make donating a more meaningful experience for you?

_____

_____

_____

23. Is there anything that hasn't been mentioned above which you feel would increase your loyalty towards the charity you support?

_____

_____

_____

24. If you have had a relationship with the charity that extended past purely financial giving, how did this affect your donating experience?

_____

_____

_____

25. Is there anything in particular that you feel has ensured your continued support of the specific charity?

_____

_____

_____

26. Is there anything in particular that may jeopardise your continued support of the specific charity?

_____

_____

_____

27. Overall, how satisfied are you with your sponsorship experience?
(place your answer appropriately on the scale)

Very Dissatisfied		Dissatisfied		Neutral		Satisfied		Very Satisfied

I_____ _____ _____ _____ _____I_____ _____ _____ _____ _____I

0   1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10
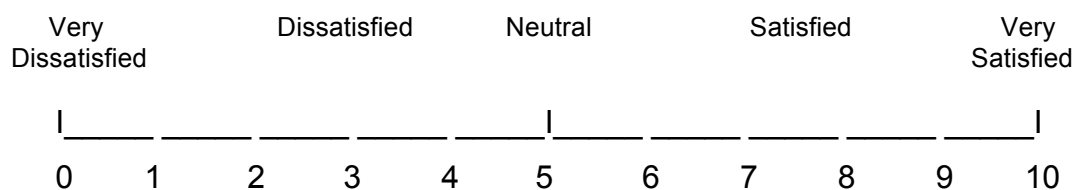
Appendix B: Interview Schedule

 # 1   Initial

     - How long have you been a child sponsor?

     - How many children do you sponsor?

     - Do you sponsor on your own or with others?

        - If you sponsor with others how do you feel this affects your sponsorship experience?

 # 2   Can you tell me about how you came to sponsor a child?

     - What prompted you?

     - Was it something you had considered for sometime?

     - Was there any sort of life event (eg. a new job, having a child) that contributed to your decision?

 # 3   Can you recall some of the motivating factors that influenced your decision? (eg. inspiration or guilt)

     - Are these still motivators for you or has this changed?

 # 4   Would you consider that sponsoring a child adds meaning or value to your life?

     - In what ways does it add meaning or value to your life?

 # 5 **What do you think could make sponsoring a child more meaningful or valuable to you?**

    - Something [the organisation] could do (eg. give you more information about your specific sponsored child)

    - Something you could do personally (eg. write to your sponsored child or volunteer with [the organisation])

 # 6 **Are you now or have you ever been actively involved with [the organisation]** (ie. has your relationship with them extended past purely financial giving?)

    - No: Do you have any desire to be more actively involved with them?
    - If yes, how would you like to be more actively involved with them?

    - **Yes:** How do you think your involvement has affected your donating experience? (eg. has it made you more passionate, made you feel more valuable?)

 # 7 **How committed would you say you are to child sponsorship?**

    -Do you think there is anything [the organisation] could do that would increase your sense of commitment to sponsoring a child? What?

 # 8 **How do you feel about the kind of information that you receive from [the organisation]?**

    - Is there any information that you don't currently receive from them that you would like to receive?

- How do you feel about how you receive information from [the organisation? Would you like to receive information by a different means? (eg. interactive online environment)

 # 9   Can you please identify:

- One thing you feel the organisation does well which positively affects your donating experience?

- One thing you feel the organisation could do better that would positively affect your donating experience?

 # 10 Overall, how satisfied would you say you are with your child sponsorship experience? (on a scale from 1 – 10)

Appendix C: Initial email to potential participants

MASSEY UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF BUSINESS
KAUPAPA WHAI PAKIHI

Subject: Research of child sponsor's experiences as donors

My name is Rachel Yeoman-Down and I am currently undertaking research for my Masters' thesis at Massey University.

I am researching the donor experiences and donor preferences of child sponsors like yourself. I hope you can spare the time to help me with this research by completing a short online survey. The aim of this survey is to better understand what initiatives might ensure the continued support of child sponsors.

This survey is conducted independently from World Vision and your personal answers will remain anonymous in my final report. However, the overall results will be shared with your chosen charity. By sharing this valuable information I hope that your own donor experience will be positively affected as your needs become more evident.

The online survey can be accessed at <qualtrix link> and should take you about 10-15 minutes to complete.

You have three weeks to complete the survey, though if you have a spare 10-15 minutes you may like to do it now. I will also send out a brief reminder email in a week's time.

I have attached to this email a participant information sheet that gives further detail about the research and your rights as a participant. If you have any further questions or concerns at all please do not hesitate to contact me at rachel.down.2@uni.massey.ac.nz

Thank you in advance for your willing assistance.

Kind regards,
Rachel Yeoman-Down
Massey University
Department of Communication and Journalism

The supervisor of this study is Dr Marianne Tremaine, Associate Head of School. She is also happy to answer any questions: M.G.Tremaine@massey.ac.nz (Phone (06) 350 5799 extn. 2390). For more information on Massey University, visit www.massey.ac.nz

As a participant in this study you have certain rights, including the right to stay anonymous and the right not to answer any particular question. The completion and submission of the online questionnaire implies consent.

This project has been reviewed and approved by the Massey University Human Ethics Committee: Southern B, Application 11/57. If you have any concerns about the conduct of this research, please contact Dr Nathan Matthews, Acting Chair, Massey University Human Ethics Committee: Southern B, telephone 06 350 5799 x 8729, email humanethicsouthb@massey.ac.nz.

MASSEY UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF BUSINESS
KAUPAPA WHAI PAKIHI

Participant Information Sheet (Online Survey)

Project Title

Captivating Child Sponsors: Does Engagement Improve Retention?

An Invitation

I would like to invite you to participate in an online survey to share your experiences and preferences as a child sponsor.

What is the purpose of this research?

The purpose of this research is to better understand what child sponsors want from their donating experience. In particular I am interested in what initiatives charitable organisations can use to better retain child sponsors like yourself.

How was I chosen for this invitation?

You will already have received an email from the charity you support regarding this research. The charity randomly selected an appropriate number of sponsors from their database to send the initial email to. You then indicated an interest in participating in this research by replying to that email.

If you wish to participate in the online survey simply follow the link provided in the email. In the event that an appropriate number of

participants have already completed the survey, you will be notified that your participation is no longer necessary.

What will happen in this research?

If you agree to participate in this research, you will complete a 10-15 minute online survey. This survey asks a variety of questions regarding your sponsorship experience and your donating preferences. You have the right to choose not to answer any particular question or to withdraw from the survey before submitting it. Completion and submission of the survey implies consent.

At the conclusion of the survey you will be given the opportunity to volunteer to take part in a follow-up phone interview. There is no pressure if you do not wish to take part in this next stage of the research, your participation in the online survey has already been incredibly valuable.

What are the benefits of this research?

It is my hope that by sharing my findings with your chosen charity they may better understand your needs as a donor. In doing so I hope your own sponsorship experience will be positively affected.

How will my privacy be protected?

If you choose to participate in the online survey, your identity will remain anonymous, both to myself the researcher and to your chosen charity. The final report will reveal overall trends, but no specific answers. You will in no way be identifiable in the final report.

Any personal information released to me (such as your email address) will be carefully protected in line with Massey University's strict ethical protocols. This information will then be appropriately disposed of once the specified research is successfully completed.

What are the costs of participating in this research?

The online survey should take around 10 – 15 minutes of your time.

What will this research be used for?

This research is to be used as the basis for my Masters Thesis. Once I complete my thesis it will be released to Massey University and will be available in their library.

The overall findings of this research will be made available to your chosen charity. This is done to increase their understanding of the experiences and preferences of their child sponsors. It is my hope that by making this information available to them, your own sponsorship experience may be positively affected.

Once the research is complete I will email all participants a summary of the findings. You will also be able to request a copy of the full report from your chosen charity or myself.

What opportunity do I have to consider this invitation?

The online survey will be accessible to you for the next three weeks, this will be your time frame to decide whether or not you wish to participate.

How do I agree to participate in this research?

If you wish to participate in this research, simply follow the link sent to you in this email. Completion and submission of the survey will imply your consent.

Whom do I contact for further information about this research?

Researcher Contact details:

Rachel Yeoman-Down, Department of Communication and Journalism, Massey University. rachel.down.2@uni.massey.ac.nz

Project Supervisor Contact Details:

Dr Marianne Tremaine, Associate Head of School:

M.G.Tremaine@massey.ac.nz (Phone (06) 350 5799 extn. 2390).

Dr Susan Fountaine, Senior Lecturer: S.L.Fountaine@massey.ac.nz
(Phone (06) 350 5799 extn. 81749).

*This project has been reviewed and approved by the Massey University
Human Ethics Committee: Southern B, Application 11/57. If you have any
concerns about the conduct of this research, please contact Dr Nathan
Matthews, Acting Chair, Massey University Human Ethics Committee:
Southern B, telephone 06 350 5799 x 8729, email
humanethicsouthb@massey.ac.nz.*

Participant Information Sheet (Phone Interview)

Project Title

Captivating Child Sponsors: Does Engagement Improve Retention?

An Invitation

Thank you so much for your participation in the online survey. It was greatly appreciated

If you feel you would like to share your sponsorship experiences and preferences in greater detail, I would love to invite you to participate in a follow-up phone interview. The phone interview will take around 30 minutes at a time that suits you.

What is the purpose of this research?

As with the survey, the purpose of this research is to better understand what child sponsors want from their donating experience.

The reason for conducting a small number of follow-up phone interviews is to allow me to understand sponsors experiences and preferences in more detail. It will also help me to put the numbers produced by the survey into context.

How was I chosen for this invitation?

At the conclusion of the survey, you indicated your interest in participating in a follow-up phone interview. Interested participants were organised into

groups according to how long they had been child sponsors. You were then randomly selected from your group.

What will happen in this research?

If you agree to participate in this research, you will participate in a phone interview that should take around 30 minutes of your time.

Through email contact we will arrange a time for the interview that is convenient to you.

During the interview I will ask you questions and make notes of your responses. The questions will be similar to those you answered in the online survey, but you will be offered the opportunity to answer in greater depth. As with the online survey, you have the right to choose not to answer any particular question. You can also choose to withdraw the information collected in your interview at any stage before publication.

The notes produced in the phone interview will be typed out and emailed to you. Doing so will allow you to change any responses you are not happy with, or to agree that the notes are in fact representative of your responses.

Once you feel you are content with the notes from your interview you can email them back to me. Additionally, I will ask you to complete and return a consent form stating you are happy for this information to be used in my research.

You will be given a pseudonym (fake name) in these notes so that you will not be identifiable in my final report.

What are the benefits of this research?

It is my hope that by sharing my findings with your chosen charity they may better understand your needs as a donor. In doing so I hope your own sponsorship experience will be positively affected.

How will my privacy be protected?

If you choose to participate in the follow-up phone interview you will no longer be anonymous to myself the researcher. For practical reasons I will need to know your name, email address and phone number to carry out this second part of the research. However, you will be given a pseudonym (fake name) so that you are not identifiable to anyone else reading the research. This measure will also protect your anonymity in my final report.

Any records regarding your real identity and your pseudonym will be stored separately in order to protect your anonymity.

All personal information released to me (such as your email address) will be carefully protected in line with Massey University's strict ethical protocols. This information will then be appropriately disposed of once the specified research is successfully completed.

What are the costs of participating in this research?

The follow-up phone interview will take around 30 minutes of your time. There will also be a small amount of time involved in correspondence to determine a suitable time for the interview.

Following the interview there will be further correspondence to make sure you are happy with your interview notes. In all, I would imagine the interview and correspondence will take around an hour of your time.

What will this research be used for?

This research is to be used as the basis for my Masters Thesis. Once I complete my thesis it will be released to Massey University and will be available in their library.

The overall findings of this research will be made available to your chosen charity. This is done to increase their understanding of the experiences and preferences of their child sponsors. It is my hope that by making this

information available to them, your own sponsorship experience may be positively affected.

Once the research is complete I will email all participants a summary of the findings. You will also be able to request a copy of the full report from your chosen charity or myself.

What opportunity do I have to consider this invitation?

I would be grateful if you could reply to this invitation within the next two weeks.

How do I agree to participate in this research?

If you wish to participate in this second part of my research, please reply to this email indicating so.

Whom do I contact for further information about this research?

Researcher Contact details:

Rachel Yeoman-Down, Department of Communication and Journalism, Massey University. rachel.down.2@uni.massey.ac.nz

Project Supervisor Contact Details:

Dr Marianne Tremaine, Associate Head of School: M.G.Tremaine@massey.ac.nz (Phone (06) 350 5799 extn. 2390).

Dr Susan Fountaine, Senior Lecturer: S.L.Fountaine@massey.ac.nz (Phone (06) 350 5799 extn. 81749).

This project has been reviewed and approved by the Massey University Human Ethics Committee: Southern B, Application 11/57. If you have any concerns about the conduct of this research, please contact Dr Nathan Matthews, Acting Chair, Massey University Human Ethics Committee: Southern B, telephone 06 350 5799 x 8729, email humanethicsouthb@massey.ac.nz.

Appendix F: Statement of Consent for Online Survey

"As a participant in this study you have certain rights, including the right to stay anonymous and the right not to answer any particular question. The completion and submission of the online questionnaire implies consent."

Appendix G: Consent Agreement for Potential Phone Interview Participants

"Thank you so much for taking the time to complete this survey, I really appreciate your help. Once I have concluded my research I will send you a summary of my findings for your interest.

I would also like to conduct several follow-up phone interviews with a small number of survey participants. Please indicate how you feel about being a potential participant:

☐ *I do not wish to take part in a follow-up phone interview*

☐ *I am happy to be a potential participant for a 20-25 minute follow-up phone interview*

If you are happy to be a potential participant, please provide your contact details below:

Name: _____

Email Address: _____

Telephone number: _____

(Any personal details you provide here will be carefully protected in line with Massey University's strict ethical protocols.)

If you are a selected as a participant, I will notify you by email, at which point you can choose a convenient time for the phone interview to take place.

Thank you once again for your willing participation today.

Yours sincerely,
Rachel Down."

Appendix H: Consent Form for Release of Phone Interview Notes

MASSEY UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF BUSINESS
KAUPAPA WHAI PAKIHI

I, _____ on this day of ___ / ___ / 2011

release this information to Rachel Down for her specified research purpose.

In doing so I agree that:

- These notes accurately represent my responses
- I am happy for my responses to be used as evidence in her final research report
- I understand that my name and any other identifying characteristics will be changed in order to protect my real identity

Signed: _____

Appendix I: Length of Sponsorship and Email Eligibility Information from the Participating Organisation

	Can't Email		Eligible for Email		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Under 2 years	1,304	5%	4,417	13%	5,721	10%
2 – 5 years	2,781	11%	7,327	21%	10,108	18%
6 – 10 years	6,554	27%	11,356	32%	17,910	29%
Over 10 years	14,053	57%	12,266	35%	26,319	43%
Grand Total	24,692	100%	35,366	100%	60,058	100%

Appendix J: Demographic Information of the Participating Organisation

	General Population	Participating Organisation	Online Survey	Phone Interview
Gender:				
Male	48%	29%	n/a	33%
Female	52%	71%	n/a	67%
Age:				
18 – 29 years	26%	20%	20%	n/a
30 – 49 years	38%	42%	43%	n/a
50+ years	37%	37%	37%	n/a
Access to Internet:	95%	95%	100%	100%

Appendix K: Division of Age Groups (Working)

Survey Age Groups	Survey Percentage	Org's Age Groups	Equivalent Percentage	Estimated Survey Percentage	Org's Percentage
18 - 24	11%	18 - 29	11+9	20%	20%
25 - 34	18%		18% ÷ 2 (to represent new age group)		
35 – 44	23%	30 - 49	23 +9+11	43%	42%
45 – 60	34%		34% ÷ 3 (to represent new age group)		
Over 60	14%	50+	23+14	37%	37%