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# **Voluntarily ending aid dependence**

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# 1. Introduction

## 1.1. Voluntarily ending aid dependence

Foreign aid has been the foundation for most international development activities the last fifty years (Martinussen & Engberg-Pedersen 2003). It was an important part of the Marshall Plan from 1947; it formed the development projects of the Cold War and is essential for most actors in the current world of development initiatives. Lately, however, aid has come under criticism. Critics like Moyo (2009), Tandon (2008) and Mwenda (2007) claim aid has several negative impacts which also should be considered; in addition critics argue being dependent on overseas contributions, that quickly disappear if the opportunity arises, is not sustainable.

One opportunity is the current financial crisis; a crisis originating in the U.S. with direct effects on most countries in the North, has also started to affect the South in the form of falling exports, investments and remittances.<sup>1</sup> Furthermore Emmanuel Frot<sup>2</sup> shows through figure 2.1 that foreign aid transfers will most likely fall as well. Even though one obvious solution to future problems related to aid is simply aid abstinence, it requires a viable alternative. I will in this paper present the alternative for some forms of aid as volunteerism. Little literature has been written on this subject in connection to aid and it may therefore not be the ideal topic for a bachelor thesis. Still, because of how important and interesting the subject is I choose to examine it closer in the form of this explorational paper.

I will in the continuing present my question. Then describe theory on aid dependence and volunteerism in correspondingly section two and three. In section four I present the field study conducted for this paper and the methods used; afterwards, in section five, I present my findings. In section six I discuss my question before I round up with a conclusion.

## 1.2. Question and explanation

**Will the involvement of more volunteers in southern Zambia lower aid dependence of development projects in the area, without compromising the quality of the projects?**

Although the concepts of the question will be elaborated through the paper I present a brief summary below:

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<sup>1</sup> [http://crisistalk.worldbank.org/files/Oct\\_31\\_JustinLin\\_KDI\\_remarks.pdf](http://crisistalk.worldbank.org/files/Oct_31_JustinLin_KDI_remarks.pdf) (24.05.09)

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.voxeu.org/index.php?q=node/3562> (24.05.09)

<b>Concept</b>	<b>Explanation</b>
Volunteers	Narrowed down to local volunteers and voluntourists. Concepts described in section 3.2 and 3.3.
Aid dependence	Dependent on funding from overseas, elaborated in section two.
Development projects	Here defined as projects with the purpose of increasing the life quality of people in the local surroundings.
Project-quality	Any aspect related to results delivered by project

Table 1.1 Brief summary of concepts in question

## 2. Aid dependence?

### 2.1. Aid critique

Aid is a broad concept; I will in this paper narrow it down to economic aid, the voluntary transfer of money from one country to another. Furthermore I will focus on the transfer from governments in the North to development projects in southern Zambia. Besides leaving out a huge geographical area, this focus leaves out several other aspects of aid; including bilateral government support and emergency and humanitarian aid (Clemens et. al. 2004). I have also excluded private transfers of money or transfers from organisations that are financed through private donors. My characterisation of aid is thus a narrow one, but still covers an important part of foreign aid. I will in the following present five critiques of aid; there are others as well and there is critique of the critique again, but I have chosen to focus on shortly depicting these five:

<b>Factor</b>	<b>Explained</b>
Passivity	Transfer power and responsibility out of recipient to country
Conditionalities	Set specific requirement on transfers not necessarily in recipient country's interest
Corruption	Aid may breed corruption
Inflation	Vast transfers of aid may create inflation which lowers export
Donor self-interest	Aid motivated by donor's own interest will not have the recipient's needs in focus.

Table 2.1 Summarising possible negative aspects of aid

The first factor is the passivity aid dependence may create, as Mwenda (2007) stated: “What should we do about Africa’s despair? Feed the hungry, cure the ill and send peace keeping troops? In the process Africa has been stripped of self initiative.” He therefore claim aid becomes an excuse for governments in the South; transferring responsibility and power to donors, especially in the case of conditionalities depicted in next paragraph. Tandon (2008) shares this view, but focuses more on the people. His first step in his seven step guide to end aid dependence is indeed adjusting the mindset of the people; making it natural to take the destiny of the country into one’s own hands. He too stresses the importance of loosening the ties between donors and recipients to create self-determined development.

Aid can also come with conditions attached.<sup>3</sup> One example is the Structural Adjustment Programmes of the World Bank and IMF: conditionalities put on loans and aid given as budget support to countries in the South (Bull 2006). If a country accepted these terms it would have to, among other things, start privatise state-owned companies, deregulate markets and reduce public spending. As I will show in section 5.3 of my paper; project aid can also be tied and dependent on the politics of the donor country.

Corruption is an important part of Moyo’s (2009) critique of aid. She argues that aid in fact increases the intensity and scope of corruption and therefore undermines economic growth, abhorrent to the purpose of most types of aid. She states that as much \$100 billion of World Bank (WB) lending since 1946 has been lost to corruption, and that the figure doubles if other multilateral development banks are included. “Vast sums of aid not only foster corruption – they breed it” (Moyo 2009, p: 52).

Another important point Moyo (2009) brings up is inflation. Large transfers of money to the people of a poor area might do more harm than good. People who are not able to travel much will have to use their money locally and as the demand for merchandises increase, the prices do as well. Local producers or importers might be caught off guard and will not have the capacity to quickly update their assortment. Therefore, Moyo (2009) claims, prices will rise and create inflation, which makes it more expensive for consumers to manage and decreases the competitiveness of local producers.

Hjertholm & White (1998) conclude in their review of foreign aid that donor’s self interest has been an important part of the relationship between donors and recipients the last four to five decades. “The foreign aid of several of the larger donors has been firmly established as a foreign and commercial policy tool, designed to achieve a range of political, strategic, economic, but also genuinely humanitarian objectives” (p:59).

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<sup>3</sup> <http://www.aidwatch.org.au/where-is-your-aid-money-going/abbreviations-and-acronymsglossary> (25.05.09)

Even though this review of aid has been a negative one, it is important to note that aid has several positive aspects as well and is in many circumstances vital for many lives. This section is to legitimate my question’s focus on finding alternatives to aid. In the next section I will focus more on the negative aspects of donor-recipient dependence.

### 2.2. Unreliable dependence

As mentioned in the introduction, the world is currently experiencing what we like to call the Financial Crisis, a financial downturn in most countries in the North.<sup>4</sup> As these countries lose revenues due to the recession and increase their expenditures in order to save their economies (the U.S. will for instance spend \$789 billion to stimulate their economy);<sup>5</sup> cuts are needed for balancing the national budget. According to David Roodman<sup>6</sup> these cuts will partly be made in aid spending. He points to former financial crises in Japan and Scandinavia when he states that we probable will see a decline in aid transfers over the next five years. In figure 2.1 some financial crises are shown together with net official development assistance (ODA).

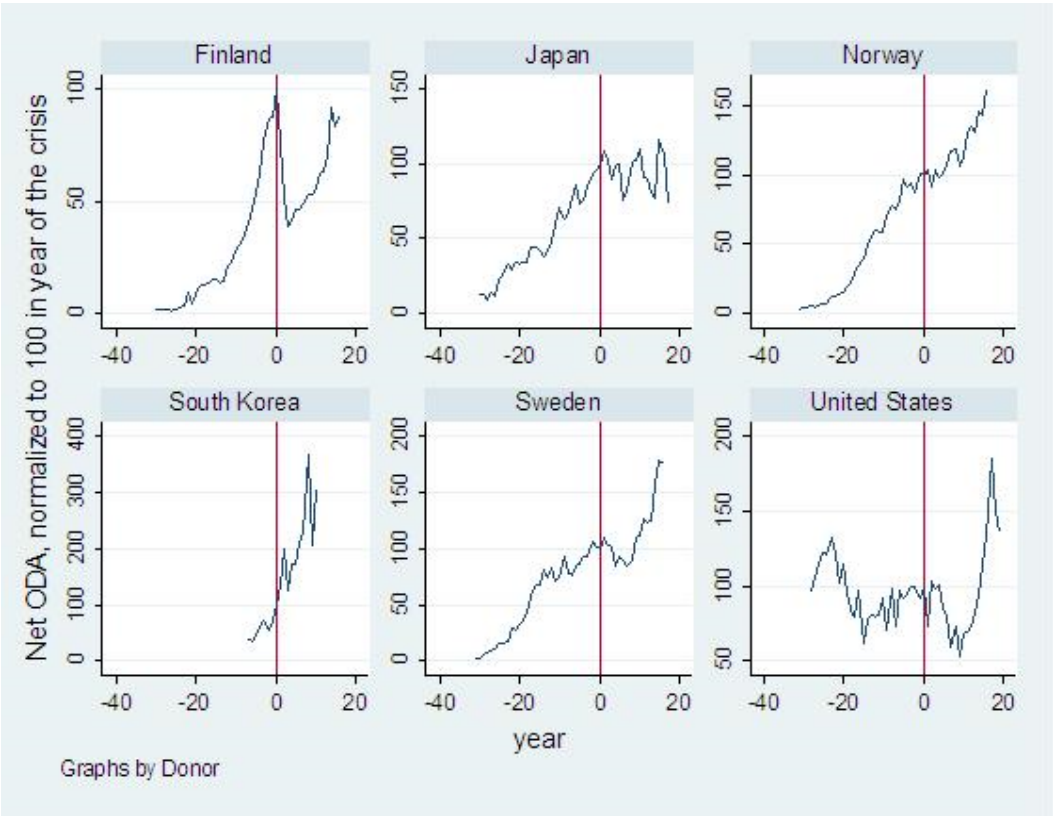


Figure 2.1 Aid falling after financial crises, represented by the vertical lines.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/04/16/AR2009041602484.html> (08.05.09)  
<sup>5</sup> [http://topics.nytimes.com/top/reference/timestopics/subjects/u/United\\_States\\_economy/economic\\_stimulus/index.html?scp=1-spot&sq=economic%20stimulus&st=cse](http://topics.nytimes.com/top/reference/timestopics/subjects/u/United_States_economy/economic_stimulus/index.html?scp=1-spot&sq=economic%20stimulus&st=cse) (11.05.09)  
<sup>6</sup> <http://blogs.cgdev.org/globaldevelopment/2008/10/history-says-financial-crisis.php> (11.05.09)  
<sup>7</sup> <http://www.voxeu.org/index.php?q=node/3562> (24.05.09)

Not everyone agrees to Roodman's analysis. Paxton & Knack (2008) believe aid is not so much related to economic factors as to political factors. They argue aid is influenced by religiosity, international awareness, belief about the causes of poverty and institutional trust. In that way aid will change in lesser extent because of decreasing revenue, but because of change of governments, general trends; and conflicts and cooperation between states.

As I have argued for in section 2.2, aid can fluctuate. In the context of this paper the reason for this fluctuation is not as important as the fact that it does and therefore is an unreliable source of income for development projects. One example is the American "Mexico City policy", which bans funding to family planning organisations promoting abortion. The policy was signed by Reagan in 1984 and has since been overturned by Clinton and resigned by Bush, before overturned again by Obama<sup>8</sup>. Family planning aid from the U.S. is therefore an unreliable source of income for organisations promoting abortion.

The argument of this section is accordingly that being dependent on an unreliable source of income is not sustainable. Still, as I will show there is no golden path alternative and in many circumstances there are no alternative to aid at all. In the next section I will, however, present a possible alternative for one aspect of aid.

## 3. Volunteerism

### 3.1. Introduction

Volunteering has in many societies and over many years been a major force for development. (..) The difficulty in assigning "real" or "accurate" monetary values to volunteers' contributions has obscured their actual importance to national development.

Pratt (2002) p: 103

As mentioned in the introduction, there is limited literature on volunteerism in the South, especially when it comes to local volunteerism. I will in this section, however, present the literature available on the subject. According to Wilson (2000) volunteering can be defined as "any activity in which time is given freely to benefit another person, group, or organization" (p: 215). He continues by stating that this does not preclude volunteers from benefit from their work. Volunteering is furthermore an activity based on the intent to help which, unlike the spontaneous act to help a victim of an assault, is proactive, not reactive, and require some commitment of both time and effort.

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<sup>8</sup> [http://www.whitehouse.gov/the\\_press\\_office/MexicoCityPolicy-VoluntaryPopulationPlanning/](http://www.whitehouse.gov/the_press_office/MexicoCityPolicy-VoluntaryPopulationPlanning/) (18.05.09)

The activity can be found in numerous contexts. In this paper I will focus on volunteerism in relation to development projects in southern Zambia; both Zambians volunteering at development projects in their local community and volunteers who pay NGOs or companies to volunteer at development projects, here described as voluntourists. Even though the definition of volunteerism I put forth treats these activities equally, there are important differences between the two. I will return to these below

### **3.2. Local volunteers**

In this paper I define local volunteers as people who give time and effort to development projects in their local community without receiving payment, with the focus on the area of southern Zambia. This is a subject that somewhat lack literature and theories. I will therefore rely more on the empirical data I found during my fieldwork than on literature. Still, some background information on the subject is necessary, especially is it necessary to look on the incentives for local volunteering to assess its reliability.

It would be meaningless to argue that aid is an unreliable source of income and then come up with an alternative which is just as unreliable. Some might argue that people in poor areas do not have the time to volunteer as they spend much time on making a living. Others again might argue that as people get richer they will volunteer less in the development of their local community. This, because they the more they volunteer the less time they have earning money. Of the latter group are income rational choice theorists. They assume, according to Wilson (2000), that the efforts of volunteers are inversely related to wages, simply because as wage rises the opportunity cost does too. Wilson (2000), however, finds mixed results. He points to several different papers that all have examined the amount of volunteering related to income of Americans, three findings are shown in the figures below.

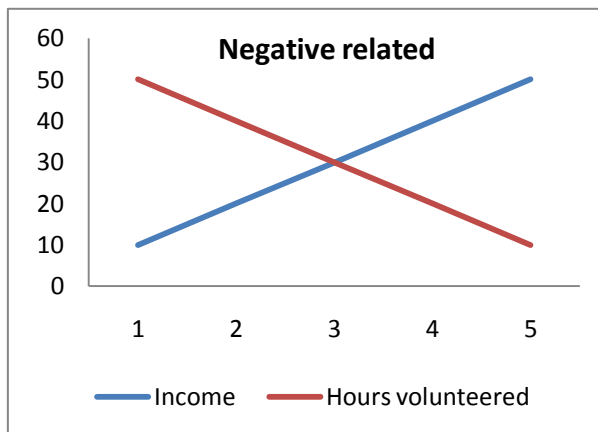
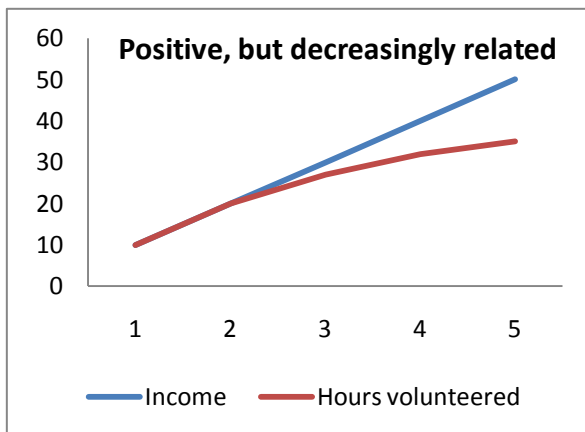


Figure 3.1 Menchik & Weisbrod (1987) in Wilson (2000) p: 8 Figure 3.2 Segal (1993) in Wilson (2000) p: 8

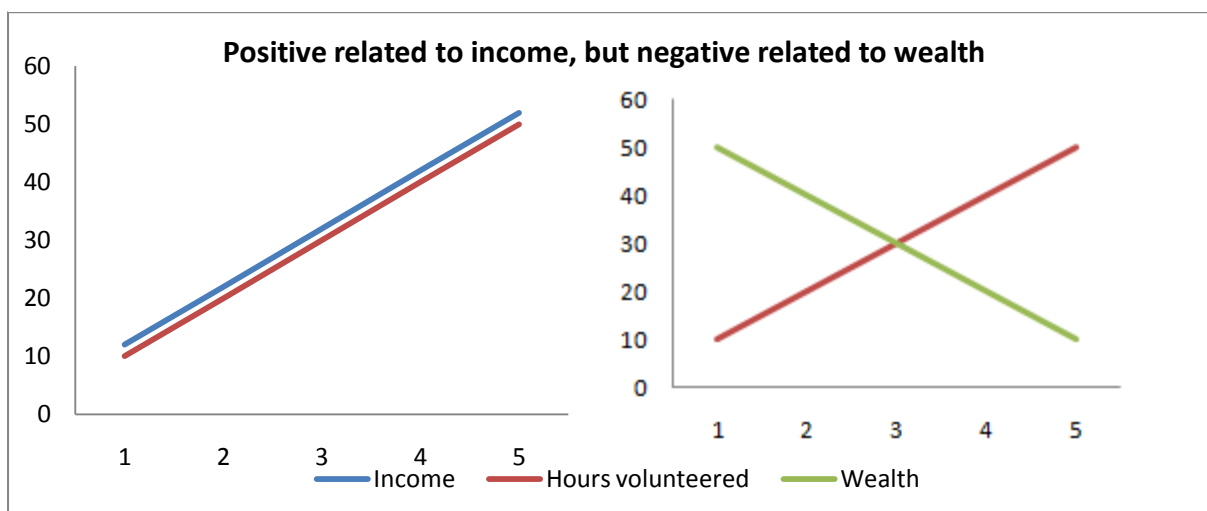


Figure 3.3. Freeman (1997) in Wilson (2000) p: 8

It is worth discussing if these models can be transferred from the U.S. to southern Zambia. I believe they can because they only show how time spent volunteering change according to increasing income and wealth; many would however disagree and say this cannot be generalised through cultures. If they can, the results are in total ambiguous as shown in figure 3.1-3.3. Wilson (2000) uses the data from these surveys and his own to conclude that volunteer rates in the U.S. have been and still are either stable or increasing.

It is on the basis of Wilson (2000) analysis reasonable to assume that the supply of local volunteers in southern Zambia will be relatively stable in the nearest future, if the findings can be transferred from the U.S. to southern Zambia. I will discuss this more thoroughly in section 6.1.

### 3.3. Voluntourism

I have narrowed down the question of my paper to voluntourists; excluding other ways of international volunteers like Peace Corps- and Red Cross volunteers. I have done this because the focus of my paper is aid dependence, and as I will argue can voluntourists be an alternative source of

income for development projects in southern Zambia. In contrast to e.g. American Peace Corps volunteers who is dependent on American aid. Voluntourists might therefore be more important for the fees they pay as tourists than the work they do as volunteers.

As with local volunteers it is important to discuss the reliability of the supply of voluntourists. This supply is closely linked to the supply of tourists. I here therefore rely partly on literature written about tourism in the South. For an area to be interesting for tourists Vanhoe (2005) put forth three pillars of importance: attractions, services/facilities and infrastructure. The same is true for voluntourists, but in lesser extent. Attractions can range from nature sights to buildings or monuments to social attractions like ethnic groups and way of life of the destination's population. Services/facilities refer mainly to accommodation, but also restaurants and other places to eat and drink. The last pillar is infrastructure and refers to both transport infrastructure and public utilities like electricity, health care etc. Transport infrastructure is necessary for access to the area and to achieve mobility after arrival, while some level of public utilities is requested by tourists. Another important precondition for tourists is political stability. I will return to this and the three pillars in section 6.3.

## 4. Methodology

### 4.1. Data collection

The empirical data of this paper is collected through my field work from 18<sup>th</sup> of March to 23<sup>rd</sup> of April 2009, in and around the city of Livingstone, Zambia. As base I used a project run by African Impact (AI), a company that offers volunteer travels, where I lived together with the volunteers of the project and its staff. In this way I had constant access to information about AI and their views on volunteerism. The second week of my fieldwork I spent with Response Network (RN), a rights-based organisation utilising several local volunteers in their work. We travelled in the rural areas around Livingstone for the whole week and I attained relatively good insight in their work and their views on aid dependence and local volunteers.

Together with other quantitative data, this paper is based on the qualitative study I did in Zambia, through a few in-depth interviews and observations. Both primary interviews with persons involved in and affected by the development project I looked at; and secondary interviews with persons about the topic in general. The paper therefore uses a triangulation method combining the qualitative and the quantitative method. Tables of interviews and observations follows:

<b>Informant</b>	<b>Position</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Gatekeeper</b>
<b>Håkon Spigseth</b>	Director, RN	Siluyasila	24.03.09	NCA
<b>Westone Sianchongwe</b>	Senior training officer, RN	Siluyasila	24.03.09	None
<b>Gilbert Muulu</b>	Village headman, Likukela	Siakalima	25.03.09	None
<b>Felix Mungo</b>	Volunteer for RN	Siakalima	25.03.09	None
<b>Beatrice Nkonde</b>	Volunteer for RN	Simango	26.03.09	None
<b>Edward Nkonde</b>	Retired teacher, villager of Simango	Simango	26.03.09	None
<b>Jan Köttner</b>	Local NGO advisor, DED	Livingstone	31.03.09	Spigseth
<b>Lucy Pollock</b>	Former project coordinator, AI	Livingstone	14.04.09	AI employee
<b>Agatha Simubali</b>	Project coordinator, Cooridors of Hope II	Livingstone	20.04.09	USAID

<b>Observation</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Date</b>
<b>Community meeting</b>	Siluyasila	24.03.09
<b>Community meeting</b>	Siakalima	25.03.09
<b>Community meeting</b>	Simango	26.03.09
<b>Community meeting</b>	Simango	27.03.09
<b>An AI project</b>	Mosi oa-Tunya National Park	28.03.09 – 22.04.09

I learned that it was through observation I gathered the most information. With the privilege of working with the volunteers of AI and travelling in the field with RN I found myself in numerous situations where I could observe the work they do. After observing I conducted interviews to learn why they do as do and to ask other questions that cannot be answered through observation, e.g. about funding and history. The informants were selected by strategic sampling; they represent different genders and fill different roles in the connection to the projects. I sadly did not get the opportunity to meet people affected by one AI project; I did however cover the other aspects of my paper through the few qualitative interviews and observations I conducted.

I got informed consent of every person I interviewed. I also asked if the interviewees wanted to be anonymised, but in fact every interviewee wanted me to use their real name. I then had the dilemma if I should anonymise the informants against their will or follow their wishes and use the real names. The arguments for anonymising the interviewees against their will are to make sure their opinions are safe. Even though they do not want to be anonymised they might not know the full extent of the consequences of their opinions. It is after all my responsibility to not harm my informants and even information that seems harmless can negatively affect the life of the informant source. On the other hand should I respect their wishes and not review them on the basis that “I know better”. The informants made the statements I use and they therefore have the ownership of them, it will then be unethical of me to change their names. In addition it would be hard for me to anonymise the informants completely as they either come from small villages or have positions I cannot anonymise.

I therefore chose to not anonymise my informants, mainly in respect of my informants' wishes and their information I have the privilege of using in this paper.

## **4.2. Travelling with Response Network**

My first interview was conducted with Håkon Spigseth, the director of RN. I contacted Mr. Spigseth before I travelled to Zambia, through the Norwegian Church Aid (NCA) who funds the organisation and I agreed to travel with RN in their field week. I do not see any problems with NCA directing me to RN. The second week of my fieldwork I travelled in the rural areas with the organisation. The interview was conducted in Norwegian. The other interviews this week were conducted outdoors and relatively private. The interviews with Nkonde, Muulu and Nkonde were conducted as they walked home from the community meetings; by following my interviewee a stretch I made sure nobody was disturbing the interview, moreover my informants seemed comfortable and I did not feel I was wasting their time. Mungo and Sianchongwe were interviewed in private the evenings before a community meeting. I do not think the setting disturbed their answers either; they both seemed comfortable with the situation.

I was completely free to choose my informants without the influence of anyone in the RN or the villages. The only limitations I had was the time people had for me and the language barrier. As I did not have an interpreter and had to rely on someone from RN to interpret I chose to interview only English speaking informants. There was, luckily, a fairly high level of English skills among parts of the village populations; so even though it decreased my selection I do not think it decreased the quality of the data collected. All the interviews this week was conducted in a semi-structured manner using as much open ended questions as possible, I had a few pre-planned formulations and subjects I wanted to bring up. Still, I tried to make a conversation of the interview and direct it in a natural manner.

The community meeting was conducted in the local language of Tonga so whenever Spigseth, or any of the other English speakers talked, Sianchongwe or a volunteer translated to Tonga. When Sianchongwe or other Tonga-speakers talked; one of the volunteers translated for me. I have no reason doubting the translation was correct; especially since I got it quality tested through hearing the RN presentation four times, each time translated by someone else. Observing the community meetings was a good way for me to collect data on the works of RN. I received data on the background of the organisation, their motives and what they want to do. Afterwards I could talk to Spigseth or Sianchongwe to have them elaborate or explain. I have no reason to believe the meetings were altered because of my presence; how the speakers related to each other, and the community, told me that this was a well tested "performance" carried out in the same way as many times before.

### **4.3. African Impact observation and interviewing**

The four other weeks of my fieldwork I stayed with the AI project outside Livingstone. I got in contact with the company through a fellow student who also conducted field work at this site. The AI project carries out a lion rehabilitation programme in the Mosi oa-Tunya National Park; I lived at the site and participated in some of the daily routines of the voluntourists. Through observations I collected data on AI and the role of the voluntourist. However, because the project cannot be described as being developmental motivated I chose to also look at a health clinic project based in Livingstone, also run by AI. There I interviewed Lucy Pollock, the former project coordinator of two AI projects and now manager of AI's foundation: Happy Africa. I got in contact with her through an employee at the lion rehabilitation project. There should be no reason for the employee not to direct me to the person most relevant for me. The interview was useful for me and was carried out at her office in a more structured fashion than the previous ones, but I would still characterise it as semi-structured.

I was tempted to describe my observation at AI as participatory observation, but because the staff and voluntourists knew why I was there, and I did not participate fully and over a longer period of time it would not be a correct description of my observation. However, because I participated in many of the daily routines of voluntourists I got unique insight in their role in the project. Furthermore I understood the interaction between AI and their local partner.

### **4.4. Other**

The two other interviews conducted were with Agatha Simubali and Jan Köttner. The interview with Simubali was appointed through USAID, who is funding the Corridors of Hope II (COH II) project she is the project coordinator for in Livingstone. Mr. Spigseth recommended Jan Köttner for me; he is acting as an advisor for local NGOs, but employed by the German Development service. He possesses information about volunteer activity in the area of Livingstone. I believe Mr. Spigseth put me in contact with Mr. Köttner more as a favour than to influence my paper so I find this unproblematic. Both interviews were conducted in a semi-structured way in the privacy of their offices where they seemed comfortable.

## 5. Empirical data

### 5.1. Response Network

#### 5.1.1. About the organisation

RN is a Norwegian/Zambian rights-based organisation founded in 2004 that works in the southern part of Zambia, around the cities of Livingstone and Kalomo. Their vision is:

“to empower local communities to know their rights by encouraging them to start their own “know your rights and Governance clubs” and other Self-help education activities in order to learn how they can satisfy their basic needs like education, water, food and health, until the government of Zambia will be able to take full responsibility”

(Robie & Karlsen 2008 p: 4)

The organisation is, according to Spigseth a small NGO with a small budget of 1 million NOK and only 8 employees. Still, the villages they have visited have started up 555 self-help activities focusing on extreme rural poverty in the year of 2008, as a result of RN’s programmes. According to Sianchongwe the organisation is also affiliated with about 70 volunteers who all have been trained by RN and receive some compensation for their work.

#### 5.1.2. The approach

RN work with Kalomo and Livingstone as bases, from there they travel out to rural areas in Southern Zambia one week at a time, but in three groups. The first group does the “reconnoitre” work which implies travelling to villages to conduct interviews and collect data. This group also talks to all the traditionally chosen chiefs and village headmen in the area, together with the political elected counsellors of the area, to get their blessing to return.

About one month later the second group travels out, this group attends community meetings arranged by a nearby volunteer. In the meetings I attended Spigseth, Sianchongwe and a volunteer held most of the presentations where they informed the community about their rights and where they can claim them. In addition, informed them about their duties and what they can do to improve their own situation. RN makes and distributes 13 hand outs they presented on the meetings, the topics range from “let’s start our own literacy class” and “let’s start our own community school” to an information brochure on organic vegetable growing. They are all written in Tonga.

After some time the third group will visit the village. Their objective is according to Sianchongwe to help the community in problems they have encountered since last time and to motivate further activities. RN will in dialogue with the local volunteer decide when this visit is necessary and what the solutions can be, in this way they are able to do considerable poverty-reduction work with limited aid dependence. Below is a summary of RN’s approach to a new village.

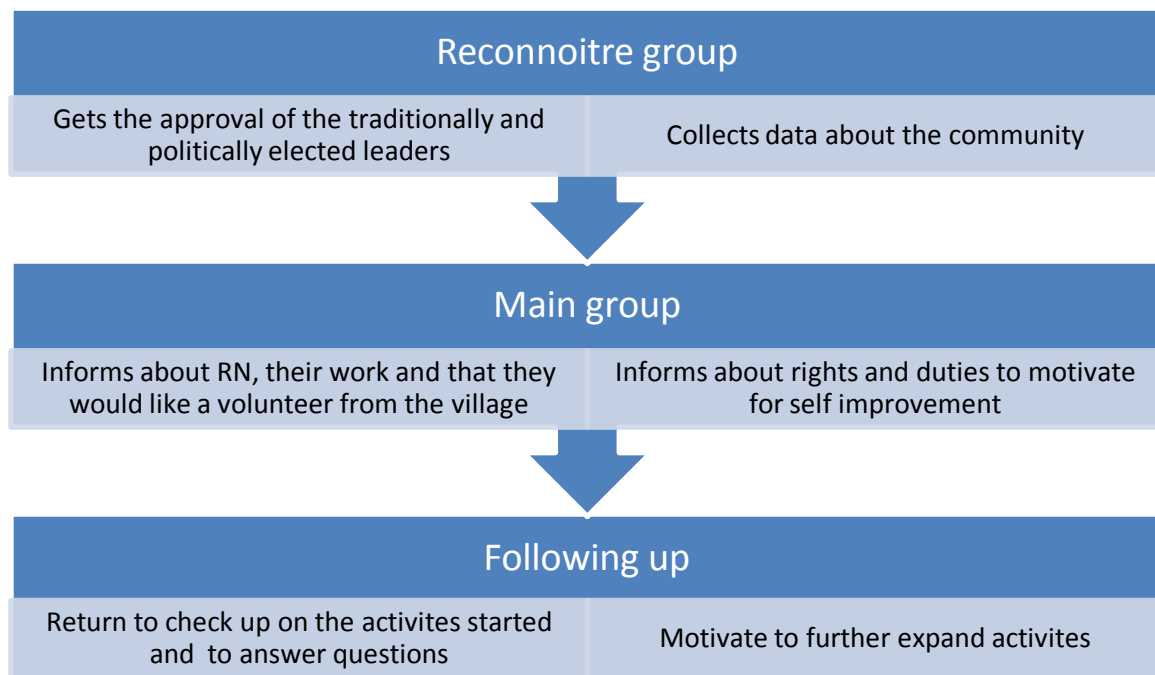


Figure 1. Summary of RN's approach

### 5.1.3. The volunteer

Muulu explained for me that he was inspired by the talk, and after RN leaves their village the community will get together to look through the hand-outs, decide which activities are most relevant for their village and chose a volunteer. He emphasises the volunteer chosen must have the time and resources to fulfil their tasks. Mungo explained me this is jointly decided by the community or just by the village headman. To be chosen is looked upon as an honour and the person has little choice than to accept the honour. According to Sianchongwe, the volunteer will then be sent to Livingstone for a weekend's training seminar held and paid by RN. Afterwards they will return to the village with the tasks to arrange meetings, motivate the community to take up the activities described in the hand-outs and report back to RN.

Spigseth told me he stresses the importance of arranging meeting for just one village at a time to the volunteers; nevertheless it soon becomes apparent that about five villages are present at each meeting I attend. Inviting more than one village to a community meeting will, according to Spigseth, lower the quality of the meeting as fewer people attend and it is harder for the speakers to address problems related to specific villages. In this way it becomes evident that the communication between RN in Livingstone and the volunteers in the villages is not optimal. The limited amount of training they receive through the weekend course is also not enough to fully understand the ideas and concepts of RN.

## 5.2. African Impact

### 5.2.1. About the company

AI is a company based in Gweru, Zimbabwe that works all over southern and eastern Africa. According to Pollock they have altogether about 200 employees who are involved in running several development and environment projects, for instance a preschool and primary school teaching project in Cape Town, South Africa and an African whale shark conservation project in Tofo, Mozambique.<sup>9</sup> The projects I looked into are a lion conservation project and a clinic and medical assistance project based in the area around Livingstone.

Through observations I learned the lion conservation project is run in cooperation with ALERT, the African Lion & Environmental Research Trust, and that the purpose is to breed lions whose offspring will be released into the wild. It consists of about 27 employees who, with five exceptions, all are locally hired together with about four volunteers. From the interview with Pollock I learned that the clinic and medical assistance project is run by AI in cooperation with local communities. The idea is that voluntourists will assist government run clinics, a hospice and on home visits.<sup>10</sup> As AI does not require any qualifications for their voluntourists, the work assignments within medicine are limited. The project has at the moment 15 volunteers, with room for 36, and a staff of about 20.

### 5.2.2. Funding

According to Pollock, AI gets all their income from voluntourist fees and about 20% of the fees are directly transferred to managing the projects the voluntourists are involved in. However, because AI is not obliged to deliver any information concerning their finances there is no way to verify these numbers. I do not think Pollock lied about it, but there is in AI's interest to show that a high portion of the voluntourist fee is returned to the local project to legitimate their work and their fee. This number may therefore be exaggerated and will not be an important part of my analysis.

AI cooperates with organisation in some projects and works more independent in others. As we will see, the two projects depicted underneath are run quite differently. The projects are nevertheless linked together with each other and 28 other AI projects. These links create a safety net for each project. Pollock explains that this safety net makes the projects more sustainable since AI will distribute the income so projects with low revenues will manage to keep their project running. This is currently happening with a lion rehabilitation programme in Zimbabwe. It can only be seen as a short time solution, Pollock still pointed out that AI has never closed down a project.

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<sup>9</sup> <http://www.africanimpact.com/volunteers/> (19.05.09)

<sup>10</sup> <http://www.africanimpact.com/volunteers/medical-volunteering-zambia/#more> (19.05.09)

### 5.2.3. The role of the volunteers

I observed and took part in many of the daily routines of the voluntourists at the lion project. The tasks consisted mainly of walking the lions, cleaning of enclosure and feeding. These tasks were done together with the project's staff, who helped out when necessary, between the hours of 6:30 and 17:00. AI also organised tourist excursions, for instance to the Victoria Falls and Chobe, Botswana for the voluntourists to attend for an extra fee. Altogether I got an impression that the voluntourists' efforts were not vital for the daily running of the project; they were more tourist than anything else.

### 5.2.4. Other

In table 5.1 the number of arrived voluntourists at the clinic project is summarised according to the last 7 months, which I received from a co-worker of Pollock. Yet, it is hard stating a general trend of the number of arrivals. There is a dip in December, but this can correlate more to Christmas than anything else; the low numbers from March can be because the rainy season does not end until April. What can be noted though is that the financial crisis has not hit the project noteworthy hard, yet.

Month	Voluntourists
October 2008	24
November	11
December	6
January 2009	19
February	10
March	12
April	13

Table 5.1 Number of arrivals at clinic project, Livingstone

## 5.3. Corridors of Hope II

The \$11 million<sup>11</sup> COH II project's focuses on reducing HIV infections in southern Africa (COH II 2008). According to the same source it continues the work done by COH I from 2003-2006 and is likewise just a three year project which will have to be restarted July 2009.

Through my interview with Simubali I learned that COH II is entirely funded by USAID through Family Health International. COH I was funded by both USAID and the Japanese aid agency, but when it needed restarting in 2006 the Japanese pulled out. Simubali do not know why, but she fears USAID might pull out as well this July. The project was started as a part of Bush's American President's Emergency Plan for ADIS Relief (PEPFAR) and it is not certain that the new president share the same approach towards HIV/AIDS in South Africa. Simublai said they already have felt a change in

<sup>11</sup> <http://zambia.usembassy.gov/root/pdfs/missionkitfinal.pdf> (21.05.09)

approach with the lifting of the Mexico City policy, which now allows COH II to focus more on condom advocating. Simubali also mention the financial crisis as a possible reason for USAID to pull out as their budget will suffer cuts.

## **5.4. Other**

Through Köttner I learned about the Livingstone youth parliament which is started and run entirely voluntarily by youths in the town. Their mission is to improve the lives of youth in the area by making connections to NGOs and pressing the government. Köttner says this is a good example of a project not dependent on aid, but in the same time he emphasises the amount of effort and sacrifices the youths have made to be successful, and the things they could achieve with just some funding.

# **6. Analysis**

## **6.1. Local volunteers**

### **6.1.1. Aid dependence**

In section two I presented theory suggesting local volunteers lower the development projects' need for aid and consequently their dependence on it. I experienced this is true in the case of RN. Yet, local volunteers provide no alternative income to aid; it just lowers the need for it. RN has no earnings besides the limited aid they receive.

RN is as mentioned dependent on funding from NCA; their operations can therefore be considered dependent on aid from the Norwegian government, channelled through NCA. Expanding to new projects will thus be difficult without paid staff and financed transportation. I will on the other hand argue, on the basis on my impression of the organisation and the amount of volunteers involved, the existent projects will manage to run without the RN staff visiting them.

### **6.1.2. Quality of development projects**

Through the theory I have depicted in section two I would argue that there is a point avoiding aid as defined due to the dependence it creates. With the empirical data presented in section 5.1 and the theory in 3.2 there is possible to argue that local volunteerism will lower the need for aid and therefore the aid dependence of development projects in southern Zambia. Despite RN's limited budget of \$150 000 and eight employees they have managed, through the involvement of their 70 volunteers, to start 555 self-help programmes in 2008. The quality of the programmes is on the other hand not as easy to measure. I have in the table 6.1 summarised how the quality of the RN projects is affected by the use of local volunteers.

#	Description	Effect on project
1.	Volunteers are unskilled workers	Significantly lowers the quality
2.	Require high level of organising and coordination by management	Lowers the quality of management and volunteers
3.	Not necessarily previous relevant experience	Lowers the quality of project
4.	Know their local community and area well	Significantly increases the quality
5.	Limited responsibilities	Decreases significance of argument 1 and 3.

**Table 6.1 Summary of effects of local volunteers**

First, the only training the volunteers receive is the RN crash course. The result is volunteers who are not fully aware of what their tasks are or the motives behind them. It would therefore be easy to argue that an educated development worker, engineer or agricultural expert could have done a better job in the village. Then again, that would strengthen the aid dependence and have other implications I will return to in point four.

Second; the 70 volunteers RN manages, require much effort from their few employees.. Just simple tasks, like returning outlays to volunteers, takes time for already hard-pressed staff; not to mention the time put in educating new volunteers and keeping track of volunteers reporting back activity from their village. RN has an own volunteer coordinator who also is a volunteer to do some of these tasks. Still, it is clear that the time administrating volunteers hamper other aspects of management's work.

Third, the volunteers, coming from poor rural villages, have often limited relevant experience. In fact one of the volunteers I talked to, Beatrice Nkonde, had just finished middle school and knew little about rights and self-help. The confusion on how many villages should attend the community meetings could be avoided, along with better communication in general, by employing persons with better English skills and experience in planning and communicating.

Fourth and on the positive side; the volunteers possess valuable information about their local community, the problems it faces and the resources that exists within the community and the area around. Information that is important for RN in addressing local problems and finding specific solutions. In addition; because the volunteer is a part of the village, the RN experiences an increase in the participation of the whole community and therefore increases its sustainability (Sharp 1992). The

latter statement is disputed, but many development organisations now acknowledge the need to involve the local community in their work to ensure sustainability.<sup>12</sup>

Fifth; since the volunteers' tasks are limited, experienced or skilled workers will often be unnecessary. This partly makes arguments one and three invalid. Still, one might argue that professional workers could take up more responsibilities than the volunteers do and therefore would increase the quality of the project.

All in all I believe the quality of the RN's projects is not compromised by the use of local volunteers. In fact some aspects of the projects, like adaptation to local needs, increase the projects' quality. Other aspects on the other hand decrease their quality. This is particularly true when it comes to communication and planning. I will therefore claim that, in the instance of RN, the quality of the projects would not increase by replacing local volunteers with professionals from the outside. This is however due to the nature of the projects; consequently, the statement cannot be applied to all development projects in southern Zambia.

## 6.2. Voluntourism

### 6.2.1. Aid dependence

In section two and three I presented theory suggesting aid dependence can partly be replaced by revenues from voluntourists. I argued aid dependence is negative and may be substituted by a steady supply of voluntourists. As I lack the theory and statistics on the supply of voluntourists I used data from studies done on tourism which stated tourism may be stable with the three pillars. The area of Livingstone has the three pillars; it is an area with nature attractions, especially the Victoria Falls, together with the cultural attractions of people and exotic customs which might particularly attract voluntourists. The area also has services and facilities to cover most needs together with a relatively developed infrastructure. In addition Zambia has enjoyed a fairly stable political climate since independence in 1964.<sup>13</sup> The projects in Livingstone therefore attract more voluntourists than the project in Gweru; even though this area, I learned through observation at AI, also possesses the three pillars.

Is, however, tourism in general a steady source of income? When Chang (2009) analysed the effects of the financial crisis on the countries in the South he did not focus on falling aid, but on falling

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<sup>12</sup><http://www.oxfam.org/en/about>,  
<http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/NEWS/0,,contentMDK:21843840~menuPK:141311~pagePK:34370~piPK:34424~theSitePK:4607,00.html>, <http://www.usaid.gov/az/sehife637b.html?lang=eng&page=020106>  
(21.05.09)

<sup>13</sup> <http://www.acdi-cida.gc.ca/zambia> (22.05.09)

demand on the countries' export articles. One of the most important sectors of the Zambian economy is the tourism sector.<sup>14</sup> A downturn in tourists would therefore hit the economy hard, as well as the development projects reliant on voluntourists. Still, it is important to note that the financial sector affects most parts of the economy, not just the tourism sector.

### **6.2.2. Quality of development projects**

As mentioned in section 5.2.3 the tasks of the voluntourists are limited. AI sets no prerequisites for potential voluntourists and the voluntourists acquire little experience in the short space of time they spend at the project; thus the voluntourists contribute little to the projects, besides the fees they pay. In fact; I would argue, after observing the AI lion project that all aspects of the project could have been run by the employees without the efforts of the voluntourists. Their effect on the quality of the development project is hence non-existent. If anything, their presence hampers the project as the housekeeping staff needs to take care of more people.

The voluntourists-fees are in contrast vital to the existence of the projects. I did not achieve access to the AI's finances, but on their website<sup>15</sup> it becomes clear that a four week stay at the lion project costs \$3'590, and \$2'590 at the clinic project. If one then is to believe Pollock's 20%; \$718 are directly transferred to the lion project for each voluntourist staying for 4 weeks, while the clinic project receives \$518. For the fees from the 19 voluntourist arriving at the clinic project in January, \$9'842 are accordingly transferred directly to the project. Although being an unreliable number it indicates that parts of the fee returns to the project; after all, it is in AI's interest to keep the projects running.

Even though it is in AI's interest to keep the projects running one must consider the motives of AI to understand how. The company must compete with other operators in tempting potential voluntourists to choose their projects, which might not coincide with the goals of the local partner or in the best interests of the beneficiaries of the projects. For instance will it be hard for AI to attract clinic volunteers to treat highly contagious diseases. I am not doubting AI's good intentions, but since their existence rely on attracting voluntourists it is important to see that the considerations management must do differ to NGOs and other organisations within international development.

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<sup>14</sup> <http://www.zambiaembassy.org/business.html> (22.05.09)

<sup>15</sup> <http://www.africanimpact.com/volunteers/> (21.05.09)

## 6.3. Ethical Aspect

### 6.3.1. Local volunteers

There are ethical aspects worth considering in both forms of volunteering; even if the involvement of more volunteers would decrease aid dependence without decreasing quality, it should be reconsidered if it is unethical. In the case of local volunteers there might be problematic asking poor people, already struggling to make ends meet, spend their time volunteering. One would have the right to argue this is wrong considering the wealth people in North is enjoying. On the other hand, one of the purposes of RN and this paper is to illustrate that being dependent on foreign aid is not a reliable source for development. Also, as I have shown, many development actors today focus on the need to involve local knowledge and resources in development projects in the South. Another counterargument is that in the case of RN the volunteer is chosen by the local community themselves. The two volunteers I spoke to were both capable of volunteering without it depraving their life-quality. Nkonde is still young and supported by her family while Mungo has a flexible job. Still, it is an important subject which should be considered and examined in each individual case.

### 6.3.2. Voluntourists

*Ride a friendly elephant and brighten up the lives of adorable children in need.*

i-to-i.com<sup>16</sup>

There are also some ethical considerations when it comes to voluntourism. The concept itself might at times resemble what some call poverty tourism (Scheyvens 2001), travelling to experience impoverished areas. It has several critics with arguments like: "This kind of slum tourism, it is a clear invasion of somebody's privacy....You are treating humans like animals."<sup>17</sup> Voluntourists separates themselves from others visiting impoverished areas in the way that they stay for longer periods of time and actively take part in the lives of the people in the area. Still, it is an important subject to consider and a subject without clear, universal guidelines. I argue that the intentions the voluntourists I met during my stay with AI, together with what they contribute to the projects in form of their fees, justify the ethical problems that may arise with their stay.

## 6.4. Transferability

Because my question refers to development projects in southern Zambia in general I must consider the transferability of my findings. Development project, as defined in introduction, is a wide concept referring a range of diverse projects. After examining the projects I looked at I realise there are some

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<sup>16</sup> <http://www.i-to-i.com/adventure-travel-in-thailand.html> (29.04.09)

<sup>17</sup> <http://www.smithsonianmag.com/people-places/10024016.html> (22.05.09)

aspects special to these projects and therefore cannot be generally transferred, the most important ones summarised below:

<b>RN similar projects</b>	<b>Vs.</b>	<b>RN dissimilar projects</b>
Limited volunteer-role		Expanded volunteer-role
Volunteers elected by community		Volunteers elected from outside
Rural development		Urban development
Extreme poverty		Moderate poverty

**6.2 Summary of development projects utilising local volunteers**

<b>AI similar projects</b>	<b>Vs.</b>	<b>AI dissimilar projects</b>
Works with local partners		Operates independently
Parts of fee is transferred to local project		Nothing is returned
Has the three pillars		Missing one or more pillars
Link of projects creating a safety net		No safety net

**6.3 Summary of development projects utilising on voluntourists**

Through the tables above it becomes apparent that this paper cannot say much about projects that use local volunteers and for instance focus on moderate, urban poverty; or voluntourists projects placed in areas without the three pillars and which are not connected through a safety net. Projects valid for this paper are, however, local volunteer-projects fulfilling the characteristics on the left column of table 6.2 and volunteer-projects fulfilling the same column in table 6.3.

**6.5. Conclusion**

The case of COH I, perhaps also COH II, shows how aid can be an unreliable source of income for development projects; furthermore the theory I presented also showed other problematic aspects of aid. I therefore argue aid dependence is something which should be avoided, but only if proper alternatives are available. My question asks if relying on local volunteers and voluntourists is the alternative for development projects in southern Zambia, my answer is unclear. On one hand I have argued that the projects run by RN involving local volunteers are lowering the need for aid, without compromising the quality of the projects. On the other hand are there specific requirements depicted in table 6.2 that need to be met if this is to be true for other projects in southern Zambia.

The AI projects have shown that voluntourists are an alternative to aid since part of the voluntourist-fees are returned to local projects. Like the case of local volunteers, are there also problems making this argument valid in other development projects in southern Zambia. The project and area must meet the requirements set in table 6.3, only then may voluntourism decrease the aid dependency of

a project without notably compromising the quality. In addition one has to weigh the decline in aid dependency against the potential fall in quality in each particular case.

My answer is consequently that the involvement of more volunteers in development projects in southern Zambia will lower aid dependence, but may negatively affect the quality of development projects if certain requirements are not fulfilled.

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