The Perceptions of Dutch and Ugandan NGOs on Their Roles in Co-financing Partnerships

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Abstract

Over 300 billion dollars in aid has gone to Africa since 1970 (Moyo 2009). Is this equivelant to the progress in development that has been witnessed in the same time? This and topics like it are heavily debated today. Changes in the way that development is carried out need to be realized. Development is multi-dimensional; therefore there is no one way of improving development. However, one good place to start is to take a sociological look at the relationships within development. This paper looks at the co-financing partnership between Dutch and Ugandan NGOs, and more specifically looks at the perceptions the NGOs have of their roles in the partnership. Interestingly the perceptions are different. This ambiguity in the definition and understanding of the various roles that should be played in the co-financing partnership has meant that NGOs have not been collaborating in the most optimum way. It has resulted in reports being faked in order to keep donors happy, and donors looking the other way for lack of a solution to the problems in the partnership.

Key terms: Co-financing partnership, NGOs, Uganda, the Netherlands, Foreign Aid, development, sociology.

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1. Introduction

"[…] there is far more taking place in development projects […] than is normally described in the official project literature." (Lewis 1998) This is no big secret, yet it is something of concern especially for those that are funding these projects (and often also the ones not informed of the peripheral activities). But the statement not only refers to unauthorized activities, it also refers to the relationships between actors at different platforms that are not always what they seem. Questions can be asked such as how participatory is participatory development? How bottom-up are contemporary projects?

"Less Pretension, More Ambition" is the title of the latest WRR report that explores the big question of whether aid makes a difference(WRR 2010). The WRR (Wetenschappelijke Raad voor het Regeringsbeleid) is the Dutch government's independent scientific *think-tank* on matters concerning development; specifically, government policies related to development. The report touches upon many issues and generally calls for changes to be made in the way the Dutch government deals with aid.

Indeed change is necessary as can be seen in the growing criticism on the effectiveness and purpose of Development Assistance. Writers such as Dambisa Moyo are leading a school of thought that states that aid should be scrapped altogether. According to Dambisa Moyo "Africa is addicted to aid" (Moyo, 2009: 75) and this is an addiction wrapped in dependency, corruption, bad policies, to name a few. She talks about ulterior motives of donor countries; political and economic motives that do not have its recipients' best interests at all at heart.

It seems very unlikely that donor countries will suddenly refrain from giving aid and therefore, what Dambisa Moyo, William Easterly and others like them suggest is not plausible; at least not in the near future. Instead, the process in which aid is given needs to be changed; preferably improved. One place to start with such change is to understand the process better. To do this we need to know more about those involved, what their roles are, or perhaps more correctly, what they *think* or *understand* their roles to be.

Background

The Netherlands is currently one of five countries (Denmark, Luxembourg, Norway and Sweden) that already spend over 0.7% of their country's GNI on Official Development Assistance (ODA).

(UNDP) The 0.7% target is one that has been agreed upon in several agreements over the past 40 years; the most recent being the Financing for Development Conference in Monterrey, Mexico in 2002 (MillenniumProject 2006). Several other countries are making efforts to reach this target by 2015. The 0.7% target was set in order to create a resource to use to help achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and thus reduce global poverty (MillenniumProject 2006).

There are several channels through which aid is given by the Dutch Government. The following table shows these channels and the percentage of the total expenses for each channel.

Table 1 Uitgaven per kanaal (Expenses per channel)

Kanalen (Channels)	**2003**	**2004**	**2005**	**2006**	**2007**	**2008**	**2009**	**2010**
Bilaterale Kanaal (Bilateral Channel)	29%	30%	34%	32%	37%	36%	33%	27%
Multilaterale kanaal (Multilateral Channel)	29%	32%	27%	24%	25%	26%	26%	26%
Maatschappelijke organisaties (Civil society organizations)	23%	22%	21%	24%	20%	23%	23%	23%
Bedrijfsleven (Businesses)	4%	3%	5%	9%	5%	7%	8%	7%
Schuldkwijtschelding (Debt Cancellation)	6%	4%	6%	5%	6%	1%	1%	6%
Overige (Other)	9%	7%	7%	6%	6%	8%	9%	11%
Totaal (Total)	*100%*	*100%*	*100%*	*100%*	*100%*	*100%*	*100%*	*100%*

Source: (MinBuza 2010)

The table shows that the majority of development assistance funds go through bilateral and multilateral channels; however the civil society organizations like International NGOs are also a popular option making it a relevant channel to look at. In most donor countries, not more than 3.3% of ODA is channeled through Civil Society Organizations making the Netherlands a unique example (Ruben and Schulpen 2009). Ruerd Ruben and Lau Schulpen summarize the reason for the interest by the Dutch government for using this channel into three main viewpoints all of which refer to the organization’s capability of reaching the beneficiaries. These viewpoints are autonomy, effectiveness and impact. Autonomy because compared to the other large channels namely the bilateral and multilateral, the co-financing channel has shown to be the most able to reach even the sectors that are often neglected. Effectiveness because they are better able to include “key beneficiares in the delivery of development goods and services.” (Ruben and Schulpen 2009) And this also gives an indication of the impact that co—financing has.

At present, 36 countries receive bilateral aid from the Netherlands; 15 of these countries are in Africa (MinBuza 2010). The main underlying aim of the aid no matter which country it goes to is to contribute to the achievement of the MDGs. Not all the partner countries are at the same level in terms of achieving these goals, therefore the Dutch government has separated the countries into 3 profiles. The first profile, which is called Accelerated Achievement of MDGs, is, as the title suggests, targeting countries that are behind schedule on achieving the MDGs. The countries have the potential of getting back on track but need "harmonization, alignment (bringing donor aid in line with policy and procedure in the partner country) and a better allocation of responsibilities" (MinBuza 2010) in order to do so. Unlike the next profile, these countries are relatively stable. Countries that are part of this profile include for example Uganda, Rwanda and Ethiopia.

The next profile, which is called Security and Development, focuses on countries that are unstable and vulnerable to conflict. These are countries such as the Democratic Republic of Congo, Brundi and Sudan. This instability hampers these countries from having the capacity to achieve the MDGs. Therefore, the focus is on restoring some kind of stability in order to enable the countries to then be able to take the next necessary steps towards reaching the MDGs (MinBuza 2010).

The third profile, called Broad-based Relationship, is made up of countries that are on the right track to achieving almost all of the MDGs. These are countries like Egypt, South Africa and Cape Verde. The focus in this profile is then on the MDGs that they are not on track for. In addition to this, importance is placed on "broadening the development of the country"(MinBuza 2010). This involves trying to direct these countries away from using donor funding as a primary source and looking at themselves as a means of funding their development and progress (MinBuza 2010).

Each profile contains countries from Europe, Asia, Latin America and Africa. The profile with the most African countries is Profile 1. These countries include Benin, Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Mali, Mozambique, Rwanda, Senegal, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia (MinBuza 2010).

The country of interest is Uganda. Uganda is a land-locked country in East Africa bordered by Kenya to its east, Tanzania to the south, Rwanda to its south-west, the Democratic Republic of Congo to its west and Sudan to its north. The region has seen some instability; even Uganda is trying to resolve the nearly two-decade long civil war that has maintained civil unrest in the north of the country. Despite all of this, Uganda has shown progress in terms of poverty reduction (MinBuza 2010).

The countries in Profile 1 are quite dependent on foreign aid. Uganda is no exception; 45% of the country's government budget comes from donors like the Dutch government, which gives 50-60 million Euro a year in aid (MinBuza 2010). As was mentioned earlier the focus of Profile 1 is on helping these countries achieve the MDGs. In order to reach the MDGs Uganda has revised their Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs) that highlight several targets similar to those of the MDGs. Therefore, the aid from the Netherlands goes into assisting the achievement of the targets set by the PRSPs (MinBuza 2010). The word *revised* is used here because Uganda already had what they called the Poverty Eradication Action Plan (PEAP) that was set up in 1997 as a means of using participation to eradicate poverty (WorldBank 2002). Thus, the idea already existed and Uganda should have, in theory, had a head-start on achieving what were to become the MDGs.

A key component of the PRSPs is the participatory nature of it (WorldBank 2002). It recognizes the complexity of poverty and the important role Ugandan citizens play in fighting it; it goes beyond looking at institutions and looks at the people themselves. Institutions such as government departments and civil society organizations still play an important role. One role is being the recipients of foreign aid and thus also having the responsibility as a channel for the aid to reach the people it is ultimately meant for.

Both Uganda and the Netherlands have their fair share of NGOs. In 2008 the Netherlands had 60 registered NGOs of which 26 were operating in Uganda (OxfamNovib, Cordaid et al. 2008). Uganda on the other hand currently has 125 registered local NGOs (AfricaPhoneBooksUganda 2010). These NGOs work on projects and programmes ranging from empowering the disabled to training farmers on sustainable resources management. With 125 NGOs it is understandable that to organize and regulate all these organizations would be a large task for any body or organization, let alone the government. The 26 Dutch NGOs working in Uganda gave out a total of 23,242,735 euro in 2008. The 5 top organizations, Cordaid, Oxfam NOVIB, Stichting Vluchteling, ICCO and Hivos gave out € 4,327,494, € 2.485.324, € 2,248,428 € 2,042,519 and € 1,962,399 (see appendix A) respectively in 2008 (OxfamNovib, Cordaid et al. 2008). The 5 largest receiving sectors of this aid are humanitarian aid, agriculture, and government and civil society each at 14% and other social infrastructure and services at 11% and health at 10% (see appendix B) (OxfamNovib, Cordaid et al. 2008).

Local NGOs would fall under the sector of government and civil society, which means that with this funding, for example, capacity building and advocacy can be achieved. Foreign NGOs try to take on the role of advisor with the intention of having the local NGOs carry out the actual development work. However, the line between advisor and the one who carries out development can be very ambiguous at times, especially when so much money is involved. Understandably, foreign NGOs want their money to be used in the most effective way possible, so the more involved they are the more they can ensure that this happens. However, this lack of trust or faith comes at the expense of effective long-term sustainable development.

Problem statement

The debate surrounding this topic is a very heated one, on the one side you have a group led by economists such as Jeffrey Sachs who argue that more aid needs to be pumped into the South in order for the MDGs to be reached, and on the other side you have a group led by another economist, William Easterly, who believe that aid has only made things worse and will continue to do so. Since 1970, more than $300 billion in aid has gone to Africa (Moyo, 2009: 27). The results of this investment are in Moyo's view not equivalent to the inputs. Both sides present good arguments and thus it is better to step away from this debate and to not ask or judge whether aid works but instead it may be better (as will be later discussed) to look at *how* aid works in development, to ultimately better understand how development aid works.

It has been pointed out by authors such as David Lewis and David Mosse, a relevant aspect of development that needs much more attention is the relationships. Relationships, not policies, drive development (Mosse 2004). One such relationship, which is also the focus of this paper, is the co-financing partnerships between Nothern and Southern NGOs. Of the numerous relationships that exist, it is one of the least discussed or written about relationships, but is relevant, especially financially since millions of dollars is channeled through this relationship.

This paper looks at the co-financing partnership between Dutch and Ugandan NGOs, and is more specifically interested in the way these NGOs understand or perceive the roles that they play in the partnerships. By exploring the different (or similar) perceptions these NGOs have, we can then begin to unravel the complexities that surround for example the implementation of policies.

The research question

To better understand the nature of the partnership between the NGOs the following research question can be posed:

What are the perceptions of Dutch NGOs and Ugandan NGOs on their roles in their foreign aid partnerships?

To go about answering this research question, the following sub-questions will be explored;

First, the actually process should be discussed; how the aid goes from the NGOs in the Netherlands to those in Uganda:

- How does donor aid from the Netherlands reach local NGOs in Uganda?

Once we understand the process the next step would be to now look at the partnerships.

A good place to start would be to ask what is assumed by policy documents/makers to be the role of the Dutch and Ugandan NGOs in the co-financing partnership.

Next, and more interestingly, what do Dutch NGOs perceive as their roles?

And of course also what do Ugandan NGOs perceive as their roles?

After we have made clear what the perceptions are we can look at the similarities and differences and determine how these affect the development work they do.

Answering these questions will hopefully shed some light on the importance of looking not at the obvious things such as policy adjustments as a way of improving development but also at the more sociological aspects such as relationships between actors.

Theoretical Framework

Literature Review

The literature available on the issue of foreign aid is vast. The necessity and efficiency of aid is a topic that has been and is still being debated by economists, politicians, celebrities etc. While there are several standpoints, one thing is clear, aid is important and its existence or elimination affects many from the poorest to the richest, from individuals to whole continents.

To better understand what foreign aid is, a quick look at the history of aid is necessary to understand when and why it came about. Using the online Britannica Encyclopedia, a comprehensive history of foreign aid can be put together. In addition to this, sources such as Moyo's book *Dead Aid* and Gardener and Lewis' *Anthropology, Development and the Post-modern Challenge* will also be used to draw up a comprehensive background on the beginnings and transformations of aid over the years to what it currently is.

When I started with this research I was under the assumption that very little literature existed on the topic of co-financing partnerships between indigenous and international NGOs. This seemed to be the case; a lot of the available literature focuses on bilateral agreements or on the relationship between the beneficiaries and the NGOs helping them (Mohan 2002). This could be attributed to the shift in development practices. When focus was placed on more bottom-up approaches and more participatory projects and policies, more research was done on this and therefore more literature became available on this. Other books and articles looked at the relationship between the state and NGOs. One such book is *Reluctant Partners* co-authored by John Farrington and Anthony Bebbington with Kate Wellard and David Lewis(Farrington, Bebbington et al. 1993). While the book mainly looks at the relationship between the NGOs and the state in agricultural settings in Asia, Africa and Latin America, chapter four touches upon more than just the relationship with the state and tries to put NGOs in the wider context that they operate in. The NGOs are influenced by more than just the state; there are the donors, the needs of the communities they are supposed to assist and other NGOs and grassroots organization.

As I progressed through the literature, refining my search terms, I came across different ethnographic papers and books that explored co-financing partnerships and more specifically the roles of the different partners. These start to be published around the turn of the millennium. They may coincide with the attention being brought upon the fact that policies do not seem to link theory and practice, and are therefore not practical. Examples of such ethnographies are David

Lewis and David Mosse's book *Development brokers and translators: the ethnography of aid and agency*, which is a compilation of articles. One article that stands out is chapter 2 of the book titled 'Aid Policies and Recipient Strategies in Niger: Why Donors and Recipients Should Not Be Compartmentalized into Separate "Worlds of Knowledge"' written by Benedetta Rossi. The chapter is written in the context of Niger for a project called the Keita Project where the author analyzes the relationship between what she calls 'grassroots' organizations and the 'peasants'. The relevance of this article to this paper is her analysis of the role of the civil servants in the grassroots organizations, and also their own perception of their role, as brokers and mediators.

David Lewis, in addition to the above, also takes an ethnographic look at a project in Bangladesh in an article titled *Partnership as process: building and institutional ethnography of an inter-agency aquaculture project in Bangladesh*, where he explores the numerous partnerships that are forged (not just between International NGOs and indigenous NGOs) and the challenges facing these partnerships.

In his article *Good Policy Is Unimplementable? Reflections on the Ethnography of Aid Policy and Practice*, David Mosse takes a closer look at policies and argues that policies do not have as much power over development practices as relationships and culture of organization do. In looking at this he focuses on the relationship between local civil servants and farmers and their families in India. In doing so he paints an interesting picture of civil servants; how they behave in regards to policies and the motivations behind these behaviors. He concludes, what this paper intends to also reitterate, that "[...] while the coherence of design unravels in the practical unfolding of a project, everybody is particularly concerned with making, protecting, elaborating and promoting models with the power to organise authoritative interpretations, concealing operational realities, re-enforcing given models and limiting institutional learning. (Mosse 2004) Using his experiences he shows how policies, while they are central to the process of development, do not direct development. Using Mosse's idea to look at the roles of the NGOs in the partnership we see that it is important to look at cause and effect and also identities. In this paper, by exploring what roles NGOs perceive themselves to have in the co-financing partnerships we are also looking at the identities of the NGOs; this can help to better understand the cause and effect around aid for development and how it is driven if not by policies.

The above articles mainly center on the indigenous NGOs or grassroots organizations as they are referred to by the authors. Arend Jan Boekestijn's *De Prijs van een Slecht Geweten (The Price of a Bad Conscience)* looks at, among other things, the relationship between Dutch NGOs and the Dutch government in an effort to outline one of the reasons why, in his view, development does not work. He explains that NGOs receive three quarters of their funding from the government, and are thus influenced by the different political agendas (Boekestijn 2009). This relationship is important because it may explain the characteristics and behaviors of the Dutch NGOs when dealing with their Ugandan partners. They not only are monitoring and evaluating indigenous NGOs, but are they themselves also being monitored and evaluated. Results are expected of them and they too have restrictions. With the changes being made in the cabinet, Dutch NGOs will like their indigenous counterparts, be competing to continue receiving funding.

The following article, *Strengthening North-South Partnerships for Sustainable Development* by Darcy Ashman, looks expressly at the co-financing partnership between Northern and Southern NGOs. In this paper Darcy Ashman deals with Private Voluntary Organizations (PVO) from the United States of America, and four NGOs from two African countries; Kenya and Ethiopia. The paper conducts a comparative analysis looking at the co-financing partnership and the barriers they face to be good partnerships. It also gives five recommendations to improve the partnership suggesting that a stronger partnership will lead to better and more efficient development. The article highlights, among other aspects, the differences in perspectives as one of these barriers. The author blames this on the internal systems of the PVOs. She explains that the policies together with the behavior create for an inequitable partnership. She divides the problems with the internal system into those of formal agreements and those of partnership management. In formal agreements the problem the African NGOs face is of the conditions that come with the aid. These conditions undermine the position and the extent of their influence over the projects. In the case of partnership management the issues raised by the African NGOs about the PVOs are the constant changing of employees especially organization directors, the largeness of the PVOs meaning that they have several projects over which they divide their attention, the inflexibility of the PVOs when it comes to procedures, and the occasions when staff do not comply with the agreements made (Ashman 2001).

What is interesting about this article is that it seems to put all the blame on the PVOs and assumes that if PVOs change so will the partnership. The research in the article does use the perceptions of both the African NGOs and the American PVO to highlight the problems, which is what has also been done in this research, *however*, the article uses these perceptions to analyze the PVOs and their role in the partnership, not so much that of the African NGOs. Thus, this research paper will try to get perceptions of *both* the Dutch and the Ugandan NGOs' roles to possibly highlight flaws on both sides of the partnership.

There is a growing pressure on NGOs, governments and institutions to get development right. As authors such as Dambisa Moyo have pointed out, a lot of money has been spent on development, but it is questionable as to whether it correctly equates to the progress that has been observed in the development of the South.

For Southern NGOs that have Dutch donors the pressure is described in the WRR's 84th report entitled *Less Pretention, More Ambition*.

The WRR, which stands for Wetenschappelijke Raad voor het Regering (Scientific Council for Government Policy), serves, as its name states, as an advisory body to the Dutch Government on policies they make. Their academic advise can be used to "readjust existing policy, to develop new policy or as support for decision making." (WRR 2010) The WRR looks into issues ranging from the economy to cultural identity. The WRR website publishes not only reports for the Government but also for example investigations and background studies.

In this report, advice is given to consider the reduction in number of countries that should receive foreign aid from the Netherlands. The suggestion here is to have only 10 countries that can be focused on by for example ensuring that aid is given in a context-specific manner; drawing attention towards the types of relationships or partnerships that NGOs have, ensuring for quality of aid over quantity.

This decision can greatly affect the co-financing partnerships in that it may increase uncertainty over the future of the partnership.

In addition to the WRR there are of course the Governments of the two countries that have ministries that are tasked with monitoring and distributing aid, and keep tabs on the activities of the NGOs in their counties. With the move for more transparency and openness the Government websites (as well as those of the NGOs) can be used to construct an idea of the quality of development with the amount of aid that is given for it. An example is the Uganda Ministry of Finance Planning and Economic Development, and more specifically their Budget for the Financial Year 2010/2011, which discusses aid as it is an important source of revenue for the country. The country's resources are mainly made up of "domestically raised revenues, foreign donro aid in form of grants and loans, and financing from the domestic banking system." (Ministry of Finance 2010) The document discusses how there has a reduction in the percentage from the Foreign and encourages this continued trend.

With the abovementioned literature I am convinced of a few things; first, that the understanding of the roles of actors within development has been, and still is, very important and many authors are busy with this. Second, not only the roles, but also the interaction of these roles are important; hence, the relationships such as partnerships between NGOs. And third by researching more specifically on the roles within co-financing partnerships between Ugandan and Dutch NGOs I will not be repeating already conducted research, but will hopefully contribute to the ongoing studies on co-financing partnerships and how to possibly improve them.

This paper is written with the intended audience being those involved or simply interested in development, however, it should not be assumed that all terms used are common knowledge. Additionally, defining key terms is important as often terms such as development and capacity-building have multiple definitionsand are interpreted in different ways. To ensure that the those reading this research have a similar understanding of the terms used in this paper, some key terms should be defined.

Some major terms that need to be clear from the start are *development, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs)* and what is meant by *partnership*. These terms, or their concepts, will be referred to throughout the paper, thus it is important that the reader knows what definition I have chosen.

Development

Development is multi-dimensional and very complex, so to define it concisely is very difficult and would not do the term any justice. Whole articles and books have been written about development and what it is. The Online Oxford Dictionaries has several definitions for the term development. All refer to a process whereby something is changing, progressing, advancing or growing (Oxford_University 2010). The definition is very broad as it applies to also other disciplines such as medicine where one can have developments of illnesses or in literature where one talks of development of plots and characters. Economists look at development in terms of economic growth; i.e. an expansion of the economy and in increase in per capita income. This means then that development has become quite normative with the advantage that it becomes measurable.

In order to determine whether one country is more developed than another many institutions used to resort to looking at economic growth or national income as an indicator. Using this number gave economists and politicians alike a variable that could be used for example to identify current patterns and trends and predict future trends. But there is more to development than just the economics; there are also the social and political aspects to it. (Seers 1989)

The following table gives interpretations of development; the good and bad,

Table 2 Alternative Interpretations of Development

Good	Bad
Development Brings economic growth	Development is a dependent and subordinate process
Development brings overall national progress	Development is a process creating and widening spatial inequality
Development brings modernization along Western lines	Development undermines local cultures and values
Development improves the provision of basic needs	Development perpetuates poverty and poor working and living conditions
Development can help create sustainable growth	Development is often environmentally unsustainable
Development brings improved governance	Development infringes human rights and undermines democracy

Source: (Potter, Binns et al. 2004)

These interpretations, while from 2004 and an alternative interpretation, are still relevant. When looking at development programs, projects and even articles, one sees these interpretations mentioned; both the good and the bad. What this table also clearly shows is how broad development is. It affects or is affected by economics, culture, politics, human rights, and the environment.

The literature also distinguishes between types of development. One such development practice is participatory development. Participatory Development is part of a development approach called the alternative or populist approach. This opposition to the very Eurocentric approach of development already existed as early as the 1960s, but was properly taken into consideration in the 1990s. This approach shifted development practices away from the top-down way of doing things to a more bottom-up way (Potter, Binns et al. 2004). By top-down we mean that decisions are made at the top most level which is usually at the head office somewhere in the North with little or no consultation with the beneficiaries. Bottom-up is then the opposite of this, whereby the beneficiaries are given the opportunity to participate in the decision-making or planning by for example giving advice or information. Development in this way thus moves away from being understood as normative to development as a process of negotiation between various groups, individuals and institutions; development is shaped by the interactions between them. Development thus appears analytically as negotiated which will assist us in answering my main question about the nature of the interactions between those involved in foreign aid.

Non-Governmental Organizations

An important component of development is of course the Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs). NGOs, sometimes incorrectly interchangeably used with Civil Society, make up part of the Civil Society. “NGOs do not set development policy or pass legislation, but they increasingly subscribe to development ideologies [...] and their role in influencing policy formulation and implementation has risen rapidly in the past two decades.” (Potter, Binns et al. 2004). NGOs have gradually taken on a more central role in development; governments are channeling billions of dollars through NGOs to finance projects and programs in developing countries (Potter, Binns et al. 2004).

NGOs are taking on a central role due to the fact that the state is losing its power over services, to the private sector simply because the state is becoming more and more incapable of delivering (quality) services to its citizens, especially the marginalized (Gardner and Lewis 1996). The state is as it were, subcontracting some of its tasks to NGOs

The advantages the NGOs are argued to have, are that they are more flexible, are more willing to listen to the people, are more able to reach the people both efficiently and effectively and generally are more likely to cultivate a relationship with the people than the state is (Gardner and Lewis 1996).

The exact role of an NGO differs from NGO to NGO since there are different types of NGOs. They differ in “scale and between local, national and international spheres of activity.” (Gardner and Lewis 1996).

Van Rooy describes NGOs as many things. One of these things is as activists. They serve as whistle-blowers for an improvement in governance both at national levels and at more global levels like at UN summits. They are not only encouraging awareness on a local scale but also at a global scale (Van Rooy 2000).

However, the common key element is the notion of change and betterment of living standards.

So far we have looked at NGOs as organizations or institutions, but like other organizations and institutions, they are made by, run by and constituted by people. Just like their organizations, these people are organized into formal structures linked by their relationships. The different positions in the hierarchy of the organizational or institutional structure come with different roles and responsibilities. Ideally, to best understand an NGO, it needs to be studied ethnographically to document the everyday life of a particular NGO, in a particular time and place.

Partnership

For this paper we look at neither the bilateral nor the multilateral partnerships, instead we look at what will be termed co-financing aid partnerships, which are the aid partnerships between NGOs from developed countries or the *international/foreign/Northern* NGOs, and NGOs from developing countries, or the *local/indigenous/Southern* NGOs. The relationship between these NGOs is referred to as a partnership. The respective governments are not directly involved, however the Dutch NGOs, because they receive some of their funding from the Dutch government, need to be accountable to the government and of course the Ugandan NGOs must also work within the law and be held accountable to the people they are assisting.

At a *World Development* Overseas Development Institute Symposium held in London in 1986, the topic of partnership between Northern and Southern NGOs was brought up and NGOs were urged to get rid of the paternalistic and dependent 'partnerships' they had and replace them with the following values and principles, "mutual respect, trust, and equity; transparency or reciprocal accountability; understanding of each others' political/economic/cultural contexts and of institutional constraints; openness to learning from each other; and a long-term commitment to working together." (Drabek 1987). This is a good way of operationalizing a partnership, and as will be seen in a later section, is also the way many development professionals view a good partnership to be. This is however, what would be seen as the view of a collaboration theorist. It does not take factors considered as "structural or relatively predetermined by resources and social structures in partnership environments" (Ashman 2001) into consideration. Ashman argues that the relationship choices, behaviors and outcomes between partnerships are affected by the partnership environment (Ashman 2001).

This is interesting because this 'environment' is something that can only be best described by those working in that environment i.e. the development professionals. Therefore, in order to understand a partnership we need to understand its environment and to best understand its environment we need to ask the professionals for their viewpoint or their understanding of the partnership. Thus perceptions are key to understanding partnerships.

Armed with the knowledge of the relevant literature for this paper and the definitions of some of the terms that will be used in this paper, we can now proceed into the core of the research.

3. Methodology

Methods

To answer the question of how Dutch NGOs and Ugandan NGOs perceive their roles in co-financing partnerships, a sociological approach will be used. The conceptual framework has shown that a sociological approach to explore relationships within development is not uncommon as authors such as David Mosse, David Lewis and Darcy Ashman have used it in their own ethnographies. Focusing more on the works of David Mosse, he explains in *Good Policy is Unimplementable? Reflections on the Ethnography of Aid Policy and Practice* that often people have chosen to take either an instrumental or a critical view when looking at development. The instrumentalists would focus on the policies and how best to implement them, whereas those taking the critical view would look more at the power within for example the relationships focusing on the hierarchical nature of the process (Mosse 2004). Mosse goes further to explain that an approach should not just be one or the other because the risk then is that a "more ensightful ethnography" (Mosse 2004) will not be practiced. He suggests an ethnographic approach where the question asked should not be *whether* development works, since the opnion on this is so divided without a forseable compromise, but instead we should concentrate on *how* development works (Mosse 2004). Thus, this study will take an ethnographic angle looking at the issue of partnerships through the eyes of those involved.

The information for this research was gathered from both secondary and primary sources. The secondary sources were mainly gathered from the Wageningen University and Research Centre Library. Both hard copy books and digital articles were used. In addition to this information was also gathered from Government websites and development organization websites.

The secondary sources were used to create a picture of the current situation by defining the terms, throwing light on the countries and their NGOs, and through describing the process of foreign aid exchange between Dutch NGOs and Ugandan NGOs.

In addition to the secondary sources, also primary sources were used. These were e-mail correspondences between me and development professionals and also notes I had taken while doing an Internship in Uganda with a Ugandan NGO.

The emails consisted of four questions that I asked the development professionals to answer. These questions were the following:

- Looking at the partnerships created through co-financing agreements between Dutch and indigenous NGOs are there any significant values and principles in the partnership? Are these perceived in the same way by each partner?
- Are there certain roles played by the Dutch and indigenous NGOs that are hampering an effective co-financing agreement?
- Are there roles that are not popular and thus not taken by either side?
- What is the basis for the perceptions of the Dutch NGOs and the indigenous NGOs?

For all the above questions I asked the respondents to illustrate their answers, where possible, with own experiences and to give as elaborate an answer as possible. Also because these questions are potentially sensitive I gave the option of the responses to remain anonymous, which was requested by all the respondents.

It is perhaps important to explain what is meant by each question. The first question simply sought to give attributes to or characterize the partnership that the NGOs have and to determine whether both partners were in agreement on the fundamentals of the partnership. Here some of the respondents also described the roles that they assume the NGOs play in the partnership.

The next question delves further into these roles and tries to ascertain whether the development professionals recognize some roles that either NGO has taken on that have proven to be counterproductive towards good and effective development.

The third question now explores the roles that are *not* taken on by either NGO because one or the other feels it an undesirable role to play; perhaps it places too much responsibility on them or requires one to step out of their comfort zone to take on a role they are unfamiliar with.

The last question tries to find the roots of these perceptions. Or at least what the professionals feel the roots of these perceptions may be. This is order to explain and better understand the nature of the co-financing partnerships.

The other primary source that was used was from the notes taken during an internship that I completed with a Ugandan NGO based in Kabarole district in Uganda. I worked with this NGO, JESE (Joint Effort to Save the Environment), for four months in 2009. During my stay with the NGO I was assigned to the department of Sustainable Organic Agriculture and Natural Resource which did most of its work in the neighboring district called Kyenjojo. While with this NGO I was able to see first hand how proposals for funding are written and the processes behind this. In addition to this I was present on a few occasions when employees of the donor organizations would visit. Also in my first month there I attended a multi-stakeholders meeting that was held to discuss the different stakeholders' roles in the management of a river basin for a river called River Mpanga. On this occasion many different actors involved with development were present; some from different departments in the Government, others from local NGOs, from International NGOs etc. I was able to see how these different actors interact with each other to see what dynamics there were during this meeting.

To answer this research question no field research has been done. Much more information would have been gathered if onsite data collection, this is to say that if I had gone to Uganda and interviewed different NGO employees, had been conducted. This was unfortunately not possible and this will be further discussed in the discussion part of this research.

Delimitations and limitations

The paper will be limited to the co-financing agreements between two countries, the Netherlands and Uganda. The focus will be on development NGOs in these two countries who have partnerships with NGOs from the other country.

Uganda and the Netherlands have good relations with each other; therefore, partnerships made between organizations from the respective countries would not be complicated.

I have picked the two countries partially out of personal interest but also for other reasons.

The Netherlands because this is where I reside and therefore, potentially have access to information and people, more so than if I were in another country. In addition to this, the Netherlands does not have a political history with Uganda in terms of for example colonization. So their relationship is less complicated and also more recent than a country like Great Britain.

In the Netherlands the political sphere is currently very active with the changes being made in the cabinet. A new coalition was formed while writing this paper and the issue of aid for development was also being discussed. Changes are expected in the year 2012 including cut-backs in the ODA budget (Broere 2010). This makes the Netherlands a relevant country to look at.

Uganda was selected because I recently finished an internship there with a local development organization, Joint Effort to Save the Environment (JESE) based in Kabarole district in Western Uganda, which receives some of its funding from Dutch NGOs (Hivos and Simavi). Therefore, I have a bit of insight into how local NGOs in Uganda operate.

In addition to this, Uganda is a relatively stable country economically, socially and politically and has been so for at least two decades. I use the term *relatively* because there is some political instabilty in the North and North-West due to rebels (Moroso 2004). However, the civil unrest in these regions have not spread to the rest of the country and have even decreased; thus it can be argued that conflict or any other civil unrest cannot be a contributing factor to decisions made in terms of development and how it is structured and carried out.

Uganda is, however, still struggling to reach its Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) or those set in its Poverty Eradication Action Plan (PEAP). Much work is still needed if Uganda is to develop at the pace needed to see some significant results by 2015.

The paper's focus is not specifically on one or two specific NGOs, but instead looks at a more general picture using different NGOs as examples where relevant. Both countries have many NGOs that have co-financing agreements with NGOs from the other country.

The paper will be primarily literature-based and will also draw on relevant experiences encountered while in the field. This will be further supplemented by interviews conducted via e-mail with professionals. Some interviews are also available on-line and will be used where possible (Bieckmann 2010).

Not much literature is available on co-financing agreements between Dutch and Ugandan NGOs and even less on the perceived roles of the NGOs in the co-financing partnerships. Nevertheless it is still an important and relevant field to be explored.

4. Findings

Foreign Aid Then, Foreign Aid Now

To better understand foreign aid there needs to be a clear but brief insight into the roots of foreign aid and the changes and developments it went through to become what it is today.

The history of foreign aid is a story of powerful nations and organizations with dubious motives funding weak groups or nations, using them like pawns in an elaborate game.

Financial aid given from one country to another dates as far back as the 18th century when aid was used to fund the military in warfare. Later, foreign aid, in its more humanitarian form, began in the 19th and then the 20th centuries, with colonization, the European colonialists began giving aid to their colonies especially to install infrastructure mainly for economic reasons (Britannica 2010).

Aid in the second half of the 20th century, after World War II, is nicely summarized by Moyo as follows,

> "Post-war aid can be broken down into seven broad categories: its birth at Bretton Woods in the 1940s; the era of the Marshall Plan in the 1950s; the decade of industrialization of the 1960s; the shift towards aid as an answer to poverty in the 1970s; aid as the tool for stabilization and structural adjustment in the 1980s; aid as a buttress of democracy and governance in the 1990s; culminating in the present-day obsession with aid as the only solution to Africa's myriad of problems."

(Moyo 2009)

In the first two eras the focus was on the reconstruction of Europe. The war had destroyed Europe's social, physical and economic infrastructure; it was decided at the Bretton Woods conference that the solution to this was to pump money back into the countries to put them back on track to becoming strong nations economically, politically and socially. In order to do this the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank were established. Their roles evidently later changed from dealing mainly with reconstruction to dealing with funds for global development-related issues (Moyo 2009).

In 1947 the Marshall Plan was proposed by US Secretary of State George C. Marshall and implemented between 1948 and 1952. The United States provided 14 countries in Europe with a total of about US$ 13 billion (Moyo 2009).

While the plan successfully brought Europe back on its feet, it also benefitted the United States because it ensured that they had great influence in Europe and also that they remained a powerful nation.

While the United States funded the reconstruction of Europe, which had been the task of the IMF and World Bank, the two institutions could now focus their money and attention elsewhere; Africa.

The late 1950s and 1960s marked a great turning point in Africa. The days of colonization finally came to an end as all around Africa one-by-one nations gained their independence. However, the relationship between Africa and the West did not end there; in fact it almost remained the same with the former still financially dependent on the latter. After independence, the new African states still received aid from their former colonizers (and the United States). The aid was labeled as aid for infrastructure such as roads, railway, bridges and sewage systems. Since the Marshall Plan had been such a success in Europe, the assumption was that the same plan should work in Africa. Except, infrastructure was not the only motive for the millions of dollars being poured into the newly-independent African states; the vast untapped resources that still remained in Africa gave the Western states geopolitical motives to uphold the relationship. In addition to this, the African states, along with others around the world, involuntarily became drawn into the Cold War between the Soviet Union and United States. A game of manipulation ensued, with aid as the manipulation tool; countries had to choose whether they were capitalist or communist, which in turn determined whether they received aid and new infrastructure or not (Moyo 2009). This meant that the quality of leadership was not importance but instead the loyalty of the leader, allowing for dictators such as Mobutu in Zaïre (Democratic Republic of Congo today) to plunder his country's resources, including the aid it received, and amass millions for himself.

This Cold War period also introduced the shift of aid as revenue for reconstruction to aid as a means for development, starting with the World Bank (Gardner and Lewis 1996).

The end of the Cold War brought some changes to foreign aid. The *humanitarian* side began to shine through, yet many like Dambisa Moyo and Andrew Mwenda still have their doubts as to whether the new found altruism of the donor countries is genuine. The end of the Cold War also introduced an era in which good governance was seen as a vital missing component needed for Africa's development. "Good governance was a euphemism for strong and credible institutions, transparent rule of law and economies free of rampant corruption." (Moyo 2009).

Some other changes that have been noted with foreign aid are the size of the donations, the increased number of countries and organizations contributing to the funding and also the importance of the transparency of these transactions (Britannica 2010). More than US$ 1 trillion has been spent in Africa alone since World War II (Moyo 2009). And while it used to come from mainly powerful wealthy western countries such as the United States, Britain and France, now foreign aid comes from all over the world. The first non-European or non-American aid came from Japan, who mainly aided Asian countries. With the growth of its economic power also came an increase in its foreign aid expenditures and the number of countries that receive it. Japan became one of the two largest donor countries (the other being the United States) of the world and is a member of an organization called the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and is also part of the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) that is a committee of the major donors that come together discuss development-related matters (Britannica 2010).

In the 1990s China and Vietnam, which were both former communist nations, also became significant donors (Gardner and Lewis 1996). This strengthened the global component of aid making it not purely a West-giving-to-South arena. Therefore, the term *North* is used now instead of *West*.

The issue of 0.7% of GNI that was agreed upon by donor countries as the lower limit for the amount of aid that should be given by each country is one that is still raised at United Nations assemblies.

Only five countries including the Netherlands have met this agreed target and about eleven others expect to have done so by 2015 (MillenniumProject 2006).

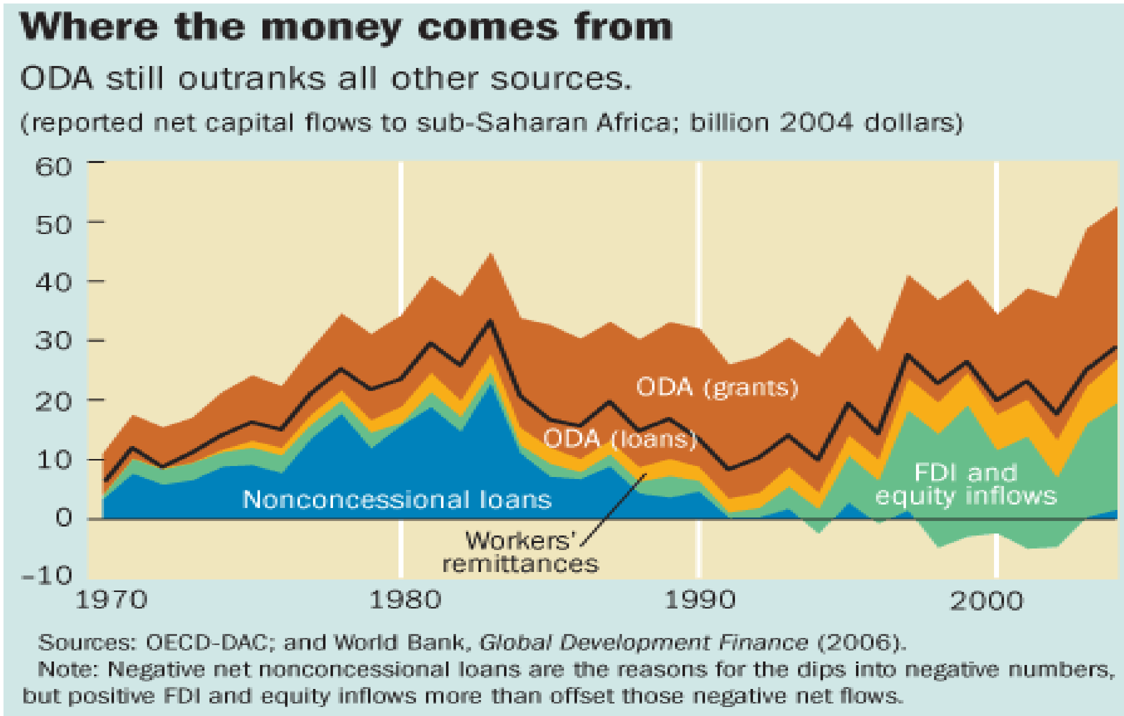
The 0.7% target is expected to help achieve the Millennium Development Goals and also assist in advancing efforts towards global security and stability. For the Millennium Development Goals, less than the 0.7% target is already enough to put poorer countries on the right path towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals, "To achieve the Goals, aid from industrialized countries should rise to 0.44 percent of the industrialized nations' GNP in 2006 and reach 0.54 percent of GNP by 2015- less than the global target 0.7 percent of GNP reaffirmed by world leaders at the Monterrey conference of financing development in 2002." (MillenniumProject 2006).

For security and stability globally, recommendations were made at the UN Security Council that it be made extremely important that countries take responsibility and fulfill the targets they agreed upon such as the 0.7% target (MillenniumProject 2006).

This commitment by the United Nations to push forward the 0.7% target to increase Overseas Development Aid is an indication that development aid is something that will continue to be there for years to come; and will maybe even increase if the targets are met by for example the two largest donors the United States and Japan who are also currently one of the countries who are far below the 0.7% and have also not indicated that they intend to achieve the target by 2015 (MillenniumProject 2006).

The general trend of foreign aid given to Africa is steadily increasing, however, it has had ups as well as downs as figure 1 (Sundberg and Gelb 2006) shows. The ups and downs were caused by external factors, usually political external factors. The largest drop in aid was seen in the 1990s, which is also

Figure 1



(Sundberg and Gelb 2006)

around the time the Cold War came to and end. The Cold War motives for giving aid to African countries were geopolitical, so when it ended both the Soviet Union and the United States lacked the incentive to give out as much aid as they had been doing, "Donors could now pick and choose when, why and to whom they doled out aid – if t all any." (Moyo 2009). However, this drop in aid only lasted till the late 1990s and began to pick up again. The late 1990s into the 2000s marked the start of a culture of aid with celebrities like Bono and Bob Geldof leading the way. With the developments in technology the goal became to spread awareness; make the plights of those in the poorest parts of the world be heard by those in the rich parts. Organizations, politicians and celebrities alike talk of the moral obligation that people have, to help others where and when they can.

Making donations has even become much easier. In the Netherlands, for example, they have what is called Giro 555, which is coordinated by the Samenwerkende Hulporganisaties (SHO), which translated means cooperating aid agencies. The organizations that are involved in this are ICCO and Kerk in Actie, Oxfam Novib, Nederlandse Rode Kruis, Cordaid, Mensen in Nood, Tear, Terre des Hommes, UNICEF Nederland, Save the Children, World Vision, and Stichting Vluchteling. The system is very straightforward; when a large humanitarian crisis occurs, like the current floods in Pakistan, these ten organizations join their efforts together and open up the bank account 555 to which people can send donations as small as 3 euro. Donations can be sent through a simple banking transaction or even via a text message (Samenwerkende_Hulporganisaties 2010). The process is not only made simple for the public, but it is also much more organized since it is a coordinated effort, which means the effort is more effective and thus the public is more willing to donate.

Referring back to figure 1, it is important to note that foreign aid can come in the form of grants or loans. In addition to the ODA loans are the nonconcessional loans, which are loans from banks. The two combined have placed poor countries heavily in debt. They have created what is termed as the debt-trap which leads to the poverty trap. Over the years countries, starting with Mexico in 1982, announced that they would not be able to pay back the debts (Moyo 2009). The debt crisis was hampering any chances of development for poor countries since any profit they made was used to pay off their debts instead of investing in their own development. The solution: more loans to pay off the other loans. Campaigns started for debt relief for these countries. Understandably, allowing for all these countries to default on their debt repayments would cause an economic collapse. The IMF and World Bank, seeing how successful they had been in Asia, decided to encourage free-market policies in Africa. This involved first stabilization of the country followed by structural adjustment (Moyo 2009). As can be seen by the current state of many African countries, this was not and has not been very successful.

Figure 1 shows that grants continue to be the more preferred form of foreign aid as opposed to loans. This is most likely due to the debt crisis. A grant is a gift, therefore unlike a loan the recipients do not have to worry about paying the money back and can focus entirely on investing the money in the most effective way possible. However, the criticism over grants is that because it is free money, the donors are taking a great risk since they are investing with no guaranteed returns. This has resulted in the situation where donors want to have more control over the projects or programs they are financing, leaving little freedom for the recipients. These actions would be counter-productive for effective development. Because of the risk attached, grants are also usually given for small-scale projects, and loans more for larger projects that require a substantial preliminary investment to start (Iimi and Ojima 2008).

Figure 1 also shows a rise in workers' remittances. However, the history shows that this is an unstable source of money. Nevertheless, an increase in remittances can mean a decrease in dependency on foreign aid. The power of remittances should not be underestimated; a good example is Zimbabwe. The crisis that hit Zimbabwe saw "94 percent unemployment, hyperinflation, and a humanitarian crisis." (IRIN 2009). Yet, the country managed to survive the crisis and this can be attributed to the foreign currency that entered the country in the form of remittances. If not for the remittances, many would have died from hunger and malnutrition as basic food and commodities were near to impossible to buy with the worthless Zimbabwean currency.

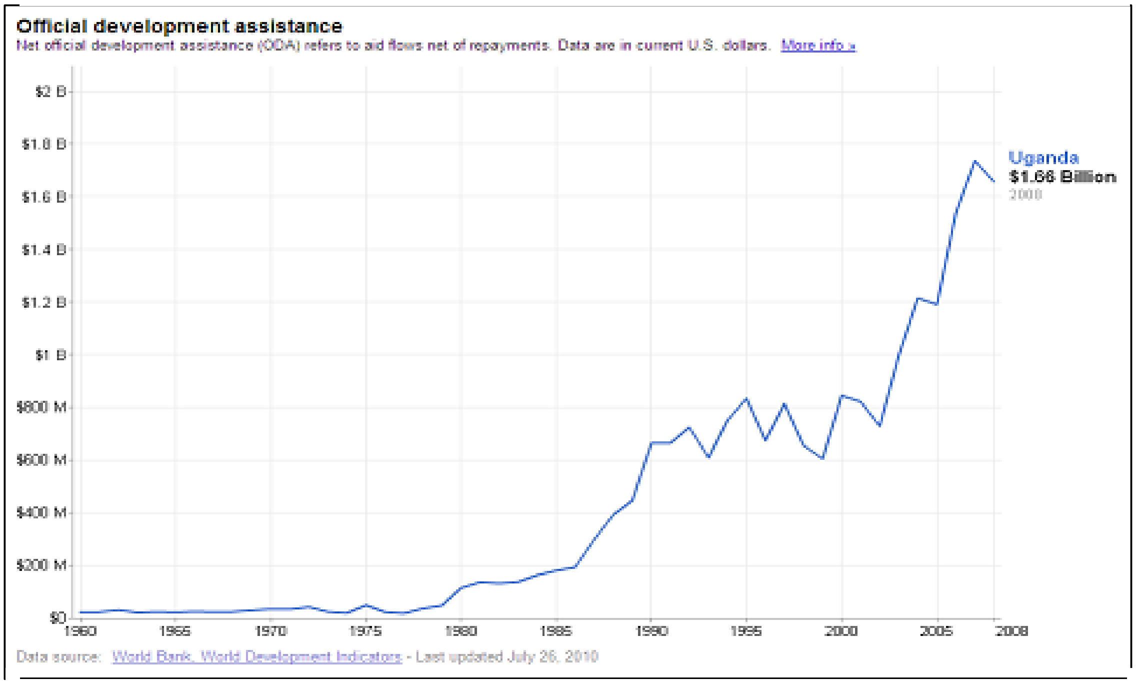
Remittances are still a long way from overtaking foreign aid as a source of money for developing countries; however it is a steadily growing source with fewer strings attached.

A significant turning point in ODA history is the end of the Cold War. As was mentioned before, during the Cold War, third world countries received aid from the West or the Soviet Union depending on where their loyalties lay. For example, Ethiopia received 58% of the US$ 300 million the Soviet Union was giving to Africa every year (Moyo 2009). However, as soon as the Cold War ended in 1991, so did the need to buy over the loyalties of the third world countries. The Soviet Union stopped giving money and the West could now choose more freely which countries to assist. Thus a shift in distribution of development assistance came about. Countries such as Ethiopia and Mozambique that had been receiving money from the Soviet Union saw a drop in the early 1990s in the amount of development assistance received (WorldBank 2010). However, the numbers increased again when countries began giving aid in the form of humanitarian aid for the different crisis's that occurred such as natural disasters and the food crisis's that ensued.

If we look more specifically at the ODA flows to Uganda, figure 2 shows just how foreign aid to Uganda has seen an overall increase over the last 40-50 years, especially since the start of the new millennium. From 2007 to 2008 a drop in ODA can be seen but the amount of foreign aid in 2008, which was at $1.66 Billion, is still a substantial amount of money (WorldBank 2010). This decrease may be an indicator of declining dependency or perhaps simply a decrease in amount of funding or number of committed donors (Ministry of Finance 2010).

If we look further back we see that the first real increase in development assistance coincides with

Figure 2



(WorldBank 2010)

the current President, President Yoweri Museveni's, coming into power in 1986. With him came some sort of stability to the country after unstable regimes under Milton Obote and the more renowned Idi Amin Dada. However, stability is not a prerequisite for aid since there is also humanitarian aid which is destined for war-stricken areas. This means though, that the foreign aid received is more likely to be used for development projects and programs as opposed to humanitarian ones like reconstruction.

We have already looked at the Netherlands and the foreign aid it gives to Uganda in the section discussing the background. Here we will look at the future changes that are to occur in terms of the ODA the Netherlands will be giving.

After the elections in June 2010 for a new cabinet, the process of forming a coalition followed, which took months. Finally at the end of September a coalition was formed between the conservative-liberal VVD (The People's Party for Freedom and Democracy), the centre-right CDA (Christian Democratic Appeal) and Geert Wilders' PVV (Party for Freedom).

The new coalition's changes will take into affect in 2012, so for the coming year things will remain as the former cabinet had it. The first change in the area of development aid was to reduce the 0.8% pledge of the country's GDP to 0.7%. (Stouwe 2010) This is arguably still within the agreed minimum agreed upon. The calculations made by Paul Hoebink from the Centre for International Development Issues Nijmegen (CIDIN) estimate that the cut-backs in development aid will reach up to 860 million euro. (Stouwe 2010) It is hard to determine whether this is a win or a loss what with the moral implications behind it. Nevertheless, the Netherlands is still doing far better than most donating nations in keeping to the pledge of 0.7% of GDP.

In addition to the cut-backs other changes that are expected to occur include the redefining of what falls under the umbrella of Development Aid. The VVD and CDA would like Development Aid to also include the costs for protecting UN Peacekeeping missions and also the costs for receiving asylum seekers. (Stouwe 2010) The argument put forth against this is that, as the title of this article states, the Netherlands has been seen as a guiding country, setting the standards for its neighbors. If the Netherlands then starts changing the definition of what Development Aid can and cannot be used for then there is nothing stopping other countries from doing the same. (Stouwe 2010) This will in turn reduce the overall aid that will actually be used for the fundamental goals of development such as the eradication of poverty.

With the reduction in available funding and also the plans to focus on fewer partner countries, these decisions made by the new coalition will have a great affect on the partner countries and perhaps even Uganda.

The Partnership

We began this paper by saying that a lot more goes on in development than development employees officially record.

So let us start with what is officially known or expected of a partnership between a Dutch NGO and a Ugandan NGO.

On the 4th of April 2009 a policy memorandum was put forth to the House of Representatives in the Netherlands called 'Samenwerken, Maatwerk, Meerwaarde' (Co-operate, Customize, Added Value) that looked amongst other things at the partnership between Dutch NGOs and Southern NGOs. The memorandum gives an idea of what policy makers in the North perceive the partnership to be like.

The first thing that was mentioned is how the Southern NGOs have become stronger partners. They have dramatically changed over the years and grown to the extent where they themselves initiate partnerships with other organizations, even in the North. This they attribute to working together and to capacity building over the many years. In addition to this they see that the financial relationship has changed to a more equal partnership where both partners realize that they need each other and therefore the focus is more on the "substantive and strategic value" of the partnership and less on solely the "financial resources". This has also allowed for Southern NGOs to gain legitimacy both locally and internationally. With this legitimacy they can then more easily establish additional partnerships expanding their network in the process (MinBuza 2009).

The policy memorandum continues to discuss how the Northern partners should establish an environment where a stronger input and more accountability from the Southern NGOs can be encouraged. Furthermore, with a good partnership with several organizations more of a meaningful impact can be realized (MinBuza 2009).

We have established what the policy-makers in the Netherlands expect from the partnerships that are created in the South between Dutch and indigenous NGOs. Now we can look at what employers in the Dutch and Ugandan NGOs have to say about the partnership. To do this we will look at the responses received from some questions asked to professionals from different NGOs operating in Uganda, and the observations made during my Internship in 2009 with a small Ugandan NGO.

I will go through each question asked and give the general points given by the respondents. The responses will then be illustrated with examples from the internship I conducted and this all will then be further analyzed in the next section.

The first question asked the respondents whether there are any significant values and principles in the partnership between Dutch and Ugandan NGOs. A few respondents rightly mentioned that this of course varies from partnership to partnership because individual personalities, length of relationships and the history of the relationship can all affect the type of partnership. However, if we are to make generalizations on some common values and principles that the respondents thought to be significant, there are that funding is provided in return for certain services, that there is trust, openness, equity/equality, commitment, accountability, respect, transparency, clarity, flexibility, honesty, learning and change. The values or principles that were repeated amongst the respondents were that of trust, respect, accountability and the idea of things being clear and transparent.

A respondent also looked at principles and values that were expected from both NGOs. For Dutch NGOs she mentioned that they expect delivery according to the contract and the results of the contract, transparency and accountability. Also they have a role as a buffer between the Ugandan NGO and the back donor, whether the Ugandan NGO is aware of it or not. Their role as the international partner also means that they often can make the rules and are also more comfortable or free to ask. However, they are still dependent on Ugandan NGOs' ideas and knowledge.

She then also mentions that for the Ugandan NGO planning is difficult because economic processes take long and plans do not always go accordingly. They are also more directly faced with the hard reality of the problems they are trying to solve as opposed to the theory of it or what is written in reports. There is also a constant uncertainty in their role because what is expected of them is not always clear and for how long the funding will continue is also uncertain.

The second part of the question explores whether both the Dutch and Ugandan NGOs perceive the same values and principles in their partnerships. The general consensus on this part of the question is that the perceptions are different. While the Dutch NGO may be more inclined to see these values and principles as they are, the Ugandan NGOs see a different picture where there is hierarchy, where there is a giver/provider and a dependent receiver. The Dutch NGO is not seen as an equal partner but as a donor; a donor who must be kept content if the funding is to continue.

The following question looked at roles performed by either or both NGOs that negatively impact the success of the co-financing agreement. There were different responses to this question. One that appeared several times was the danger of Dutch NGOs crossing the line from monitoring or advising to controlling. Sometimes it is also the case that Ugandan NGOs are easily submissive, they do not identify the needs like capacity building by themselves. They wait for the Dutch NGO to suggest it and only then take up the initiative. In addition to this Dutch NGOs structure and plan their policies with their back donors in the Netherlands with little or no input from the Ugandan NGOs. This can mean that inappropriate policies are made, yet the Ugandan NGOs, wanting the funding, will rather adapt than speak out. This behavior of Dutch NGOs coupled with politics and the public can lead to the situation where the Ugandan NGOs feel that they are not taken seriously by their partners. However, it is pointed out by one of the respondents that Ugandan NGOs, because of the uncertainty that was mentioned earlier, will see mobilizing funds as a competitive platform and so will try to please the Dutch NGOs in any way possible. Examples include turning up to workshops or conferences if asked or take up certain topics even if they have other priorities.

Another point raised is the issue of reporting. Going back to the fore mentioned aspect of controlling, the Ugandan NGOs can have the tendency to feel that with all the reporting they are expected to do, the requirements they are expected to meet and the visits by employees from the donor agencies there is a lack of equality in the partnership. The respondent however argues that the flip side to this is that through the reporting and the requirements and the visits there is more exchange occurring so a better understanding and a building of trust and capacities. Still on the subject of reporting, another respondent pointed out that Ugandan NGOs complain about the reporting requirements; that they are not necessarily suited for the activities that they do.

A respondent referred to the partnerships as 'game play'. By this he means that because of the differences in power the principles and values that were discussed in the first question are not actualized. Ugandan NGOs will then resort to for example making up 'fake' designs of projects, present 'fake' results and accountability sheets. All to give the Dutch NGOs what they expect

One more role, or better yet roles, that can potentially hamper a good partnership is explained by one respondent as follows. He looks at the way the funds are channeled from the Dutch Government and identifies the two roles that Dutch NGOs have, both as receivers and providers at the same time. He says that if the Dutch NGOs are not careful and fail to properly understand the two as separate roles and not mix them up, they could complicate the partnership. They have to remember that they are a channel for the funds and should not abuse the power of the position the funding puts them in. The same can be said for indigenous NGOs that do not use the money for service delivery but instead fund other smaller organizations. Therefore, they too need to be aware of the difference in roles.

The third question tries to get the respondents to identify roles within the partnership that are not popular and perhaps thus also not taken up by either NGO. One respondent stated that one of the biggest roles that are avoided, if possible, is one of taking responsibility. The problem here is that NGOs understandably do not want to be held accountable for things that go wrong. However, for example indigenous NGOs are representatives for communities so *must* take on this responsibility and should be held accountable.

Furthermore, Dutch NGOs expect Ugandan NGOs to actively advocate for change in the Government, something the Ugandan NGOs are not willing to do because of the extremely difficult nature of this; something Dutch NGOs often seem unaware of.

Closely related to the issue of responsibility is when Dutch NGOs have to take on the role of nothing more than a facilitator. There is the tendency for them to want to do more than that since a lot of money is involved; they will try to have more control. They need to acknowledge the fact that their role is a temporary one; a change agent.

Another respondent looked at roles that were hard to implement. She listed some examples, capacity building, brokering, and lobbying and advocating. For example, she explains that capacity building is not valued; it is not what they want. Sometimes it is not a lack of interest, sometimes the roles are valued but dangerous to implement. She gives the example of Ethiopia where lobbying is not at all appreciated and can result in a jail sentence. It is instead seen as organizations or individuals supporting dissidents.

An idea given for the unwillingness to take on these roles is because of the dynamics within the partnerships and also the politics.

This brings us to the fourth question which asked the respondents what they thought was the basis for the difference in perceptions. Looking first at the Dutch NGOs, one observation made is that the perceptions are based on for example experiences and research like the one contributed by Wageningen University. In addition to this, another respondent stated that the differences can be attributed to the politics, economic situation, the interdependency, organizational capacity, the pressure for results, and if we view aid as a chain with different positions the two types of organizations are at different positions.

One respondent nicely summarizes the basis for the perceptions into four things; power relations, cultural differences, lack of effective communication and contextual differences. The power relation within the partnership is unequal. This inequality has been shown repeatedly in the responses given; it goes hand-in-hand with uncertainty. Ugandan NGOs do not have the assurance that the funding will continue. As one respondent puts it, the perception is today there is money, what happens tomorrow is not clear. Ugandan NGOs are of the impression that the priority is to live up to the expectations or else the funding stops. This done at the expense of good development because as was mentioned earlier, the NGOs then produce reports that the donors want to see and not a report of what the donor *should* see.

The uncertainty is also reflected in the fact that jobs are not secure in Uganda, so it is hard for someone to focus on the target population's needs when they are unsure that their own will be met.

There is also a power relation in which the Dutch NGO is the weaker. This is with the back funders such as the Dutch Government. The Government expects results for the money they are giving. Sometimes they want them at a rate and quality that seems adequate in the Netherlands, but is not feasible in the field due to perhaps technological barriers or other logistical reasons. Therefore, Dutch NGOs too will give altered reports to please the donors.

The next point was cultural differences. As the previous example illustrates, there is a culture of fast pace and efficiency in the Netherlands that cannot be matched in Uganda. Another difference is the culture of expressing oneself. Dutch NGOs see it normal for one to voice their opinion, whereas this is not the case with Ugandan NGOs. In addition to this, it is more common in Dutch culture to take on an unpopular stance than it is in Ugandan culture, so this may result in a false assumption by Dutch NGOs that Ugandan NGOs will do the necessary even if it puts them for example at odds with their Dutch partner.

The next issue is that of communication, or more precisely, the lack thereof. This can relate back to the cultural differences, the power structure and the uncertainty. The example given is if unforeseen changes occur in a project requiring the Ugandan NGO to do something different, the fear of losing the funding (or future funding) means that it will be difficult to communicate honestly.

The last aspect mentioned is that of contextual differences. For example, the Netherlands recently came to an end of a politically charged period where many changes were made to the cabinet, which in turn affected the decisions made on amount of funding. This in turn puts pressure on Dutch NGOs who then put pressure on Ugandan NGOs that are in an entirely different context.

The summary of the responses given hopefully gives a clear overview of the opinions of professionals on the perceptions and misconceptions they have of their organization's roles in the partnership.

Using my experiences from my internship with JESE I can further illustrate the points raised by the development professionals with examples that I witnessed during my four months with the organization.

First, as was mentioned before, I attended a multi-stakeholders meeting on the management of the river basin of River Mpanga. One of the first aspects that stood out during the meeting was the different stakeholders. They had different backgrounds and in many cases also very different interests. The meeting was organized by Protos a Belgian NGO and SNV a Dutch NGO. The people who attended were representing all sorts of stakeholders; organizations such as WWF were represented, the National Forestry Association, the National Water and Sewerage Corporation, a small Sri Lankan Hydro Power company etc. This meeting, or forum, was facilitated by Protos and SNV to bring all these different stakeholders together to discuss how to best manage the River Mpanga Basin and still satisfy as many of the interests as possible. The stakeholders had different priorities, for example those of the Sri Lankan Hydro Power Project were different to those of the National Forestrty Association. The former's main interest or priority was to set up a hydropower dam on the river to generate electricity to supply the rural electrification program that was being planned for the area. The latter's concern is the conservation of primarily the flora around the river. Both stakeholders can ligitimze the importance of their interests with one saying that the dam will contribute to the development of the communities in the area, and the other reminding us that if the area around the river is not conserved then the river may also in time disappear.

Another thing that was obvious at the meeting was that politics does play an important role both in the distribution of funding and also the way in which the different stakeholders interract with each other. The loudest stakeholders were those that came from well-funded influential Government departments or the large organizations like the WWF, and the quietest were the small NGOs. The Hydro-electric project that was discussed had some hushed opposition as it was a danger to the ecosystem of the basin but was given the go-ahead by the National Environment Mangament Authority (NEMA), which is the government body that is supposed to ascertain whether a certain activity can or cannot be realized due to the possible impact it may have on the environment. When the representatives of the Hydro Power Project gave a (not too convincing) argument that they would plant cycad trees as a means of contributing to conservation efforts, eyebrows were raised but not a lot was said. Later on it became clear that this project had a lot of government backing. No one wanted to get too involved as they would be treading on political eggshells.

Protos and SNV hoped that with this meeting they could encourage data sharing and get the stakeholders to communicate and hopefully continue communicating after the meeting. However, the event also seemed to be used as a PR opportunity. Some stakeholders seemed more interested in networking than finding a solution to the river basin management. This is an example of a difference in perception by the international organizations and the local ones. While this forum was meant as an opportunity for the different stakeholders, Protos and SNV at least knew well enough (perhaps from previous experience) that to ensure a decent turn out, food, accommodation and transport needed to be provided; which they did.

This was a general picture that hopefully gives an insight into the general attitudes and approaches of the different Ugandan organizations to help understand why they act the way they do. Now we can take a closer look at the interaction between a Ugandan NGO and its partner NGOs.

To begin with, the organization that I interned with was slightly different to those described by the development professionals in that its Team Leader continuously emphasized and encouraged his staff to be more open, transparent and accountable. He reminded them at the beginning of each meeting of their status amongst their donors as one of the most accountable Ugandan NGOs in the region. He was pushing for a culture of openness within the organization. In the General Staff Meetings at the end of every month, staff were lectured on the benefits to the organization if they try to be as transparent and honest as possible. The Team Leader hoped that by changing the sttaff culture he would also be able to change the organizational culture. However, even for him there was only so far that he could go with this.

In the department I was assigned to the leader also tried to enforce this culture, but to not much avail. He got more information out of the department staff in an informal setting like in the evenings when we all had dinner while in the field. There was a fear of repercussions for speaking out, especially in the formal setting of a meeting where minutes are recorded. It can be argued that the department leader did this more to show the Team Leader that he was putting an effort, than that he actually thought the staff would change and open up.

Looking at the responses given by the development professionals we see the issue of the perceived roles and what came out was that while it is meant that the roles should be equal with mutual respect, founded on trust, the Ugandan NGOs feel that the partnership is more a hierarchical relationship where the donor NGO has the upper hand. This was also the perception at the NGO I interned at. Its main international partners at the time I was there were SNV, Hivos, Protos and Care. SNV and Protos both have a branch in Fort Portal so had more contact with JESE than the other organizations, by contact I mean for example more visits to the JESE office. The atmosphere in the office changed when a visit was expected. Everyone was more serious, tense and busy. In addition to this was also the report-writing process, especially proposals. When a proposal needed to be wrritten or a monthly report, the staff made sure that they emphasized the pros and either briefly mentioned the cons or did not mention them all. It never happened the other way round; JESE staff did not go to the SNV or Protos office to see whether they were doing well, or did not ask Hivos to produce a progress report at the end of each month. Therefore, clearly there was a difference where only one was monitoring the other.

Looking further at the report-writing, the respondents pointed out that Ugandan NGOs complained about the reports. Similarly to this NGO staff complained about the writing of reports. There indeed was a sense of a controlling power. They felt like every step was being monitored. They did not think of it as an opportunity to exchange ideas with their partner NGOs. In addition to this there was also a complaint of the expectations of the contents of the reports. For example, one expectation was the staff needed to get testimonials from the farmers to use as examples for best practices. To get these testimonials was very time-consuming; it meant having to find a farmer willing to do the testiminial, then what often happened is that the farmers did not write the testimonials unless they were constantly reminded, so JESE staff found themselves going back and forth (over great distances) to get a testimonial. Additionally, a report was expected at the end of every month. One month I was there, there were no results to write of; at least nothing that had not already been mentioned the month before. However, something needed to be written, so we wrote anticipated results as if they had happened.

What was clear to me was that the JESE staff knew to quite some extent what roles were expected of them as individuals but also as an organization; this may be partially attributed to the monthly meetings in which the Senior Management Team of the organization repeatedly explained what the donors expected, and partially due to their own experiences. For example, one month we used more fuel for the motorcycles than had been planned for in the budget because on several occasions farmers needed to be mobilized door-to-door to get them to come to a meeting that had been planned in advance. To explain this in the report would make the JESE staff look disorganized, so instead they rearranged the expenditures so that the money went into supplies such as visitors' books for the farmers, flip charts and pens etc. This they believed would not upset the partner NGO.

Thus the biggest reason for staff writing slightly falsified reports is due to circumstances in the field, which they believe will not be as well understood in a different context like in the head office of Hivos. There were many other frustrations the staff faced. For example in the Hivos funded project Sustainable Natural Resources Management and Livelihoods Improvement Project the staff needed to *simply* distribute seedlings to farmer groups. This required the farmers to register themselves as a group and indicate how many seedlings they needed and for whom. In addition to this the farmers were also trained on how to prepare the holes for the coffee seedlings. Therefore, the farmers needed to be registered, have handed in an application for seeds and prepared the wholes in order for them to receive the seedlings *and* they had almost two months to do this. At the end of the two months not all farmers were registered, most farmers had not prepared the holes, some were prepared incorrectly, some application just gave the total of seedlings they wanted but not for whom they were for, and the list goes on. The farmers live literally kilometers apart, so to check each farmer has done everything properly is not feasible. With such uncooperative farmers the staff cannot achieve the results expected of them by the end of the month and this reflects badly on them. They cannot shift the blame because they are the ones in charge and therefore should take the responsibilities.

At the end of this the department decided to request for at least one more staff. However, the organization had just recruited someone and was financially stretched so the department was told to find an alternative such as to identify a possible extension agent amongst the farmers who could help the staff. This had already been tried before but the agent (who even got training from the JESE staff) wanted to be paid for his services, which was just not possible. The department finally got a temporary volunteer.

This example shows the (monthly) frustrations of the staff. However, they are in a different context to that of the back-funders in for example the Netherlands. The context is something that was also mentioned by one of the respondents as one of the reasons for the difference in perceptions between the NGOs. It has hard to explain to someone who cannot begin to imagine the context that the staff work in, the challenges they face. The pressure that the staff feel comes from the pressure that is exerted on the organiztion by their partners to produce results. However, it is also true that the partner organization branches in Uganda have to answer to their headquarters in the Netherlands and need to give them results too. And they in turn need to show some success stories to legitimize themselves as a receiver of funding from the Dutch government.

Hopefully these examples have illustrated a picture to make clear just how complicated the context in which the NGO partnership occurs is. It is something that the staff in that situation can only fully understand and therefore are the ones that were questioned for this research.

With this we can now proceed to analyze this information and highlight some significant points.

5. Discussion

Analysis

With the findings made in the previous section, it is now time to analyze and determine what this all means.

First a quote: "There is a growing radical critique of NGOs which argues that, rather than promoting deep-rooted change, they actually preserve the status quo by setting up a system of patronage based on the flow of development assistance, which undermines and depoliticizes local grassroots organization." (Gardner and Lewis 1996).

Is this truly the case, or is this just one of many perceptions? The responses received via e-mail from different development professionals showed one thing for certain about co-financing partnerships, there are different perceptions of the roles the partners have, even though there are written guidelines as was shown in a previous section with the policy memorandum document.

From the findings we established that Dutch NGOs tend to share a similar perspective on the partnership as the policy-makers in the Netherlands. Their assumptions and expectations of the partnership is that both partners are interacting on a level playing field. What is assumed and expected at organizational level can be very different to what individuals within the organization assume and expect. I say this because most of the respondents were of Dutch NGOs and were very aware of the reality in the partnership. They identified the differences in perception; they knew of the lack of communication that existed, the lack of clarity, honesty and trust. They were aware of the inequality that existed because of the money and the provider-receiver relationship it fostered.

From my own experiences I noticed a similar thing. Uganda NGO staff were aware of the roles that they were expected to play which helped them in writing the reports that the Dutch Ngos wanted to read. While representing their organization employees from both Dutch and Ugandan NGOs used buzz-words like accountability, transparency and capacity building when talking about the partnerships and what they brought, but when talked to individually, a more pessimistic side was revealed.

There seems to be a dichotomy between the private and the public. In the public sphere, which can also be seen as the official sphere, policy has control over development and how it works. Then there is the private sphere, which is the actual reality revealed through the personal experiences of both

Dutch and Ugandan staff when not representing the viewpoint of their organizations, where relationships control development. David Mosse summarizes this as follows, “development interventions are driven not by policy but by the exigencies of organizations and the need to maintain relationships.” (Mosse 2004). In Benedetta Rossi’s chapter in David Lewis and David Mosse’s *Development Brokers and Translators: The Ethnography of Aid and Agencies* she looks at Christian Lund’s idea of duplicity in roles of development workers where he divides it into “front-stage discourses and back-stage commentaries”. (Lewis and Mosse 2006) She also cites Olivier de Sardan on his idea that the workers see themselves in a “schizophrenic situation” (Lewis and Mosse 2006).

One of the things mentioned in the responses was that policies are made between the Dutch NGOs and the funders such as the Dutch Government, without much influence from the Ugandan NGOs. This means that the policies, which may be great in theory, are not at all suitable in practice. While this is the case, nothing is being done about it. This brings us back to the dichotomy mentioned above. In the public sphere the policy looks like it works, so the funding keeps coming. What is interesting then is what happens in the private sphere.

One thing that happens is what David Mosse terms as ‘mirroring’. In David Mosse’s example the relationship is between grassroots organizations and farmers, whereby the farmers adapted their needs to suite what was offered, making it look like the system worked. Transferring this concept to the co-financing partnership it can be argued that the indigenous NGOs, when writing proposals or reports, try to write them so that they ‘mirror’ the policies set out. However, to do this means also that they cannot be entirely honest. If a project fails they may have to write that it went well, or in order to get a little extra funding for other perhaps more useful projects, proposals may add a few extra euro or dollars here and there to scrape together enough to fund the projects.

The Dutch NGOs are not always oblivious to this and are actually also not completely innocent themselves when it comes to ‘mirroring’. One respondent described the pressures that Dutch NGOs get being the buffer between the Ugandan NGOs and the back funders. They are expected to deliver results to the funders but have limited control over the activities of the Ugandan NGOs. Under this pressure they too will stretch the truth in reports to keep the funders happy.

However there is more than just ‘mirroring’ occurring in the implicit private sphere of the partnership. If we expand on the mirroring we can say that “institutions compensate agents who abide by their rules, making conformity a more convenient, albeit not only, option.” (Lewis and Mosse 2006) This is the perception that the responses from the professionals seem to indicate that the Ugandan NGOs have and in some cases also Dutch NGOs. From their experience it does seem to be the case. Practice has not given them a reason to think otherwise.

One respondent said that money is conflicting with the partnership. She is right in that money determines the hierarchy with at the top the donors in the Netherlands, followed by the Dutch NGO

and then the Ugandan NGO. The Ugandan NGO will always be the receiver dependent on the provider. Some of the responses mentioned how a good partnership needs to be based on equality; unfortunately it seems the funds have tipped the balances.
The problem also with the money is that it further cultivates the inequality because it gets in the way of the growth of the Ugandan NGO. One of the respondents gave an example of capacity building. Only because the Dutch NGO asked the Ugandan NGO to work on capacity building did they do so. They in fact did not see the value that capacity building would have for them. To them the more important point was getting the funding. Ugandan NGOs that do not think for themselves can not develop and grow to be sustainable organizations; and will forever be dependent.

The success of the partnership is also held back by the looming uncertainty felt by the Ugandan NGOs. There is harsh competition for funding and with the new Dutch cabinet's plan to cut the funding by almost a billion euro there will be still less funding in the future. The perception then for the Ugandan NGO is that the partnerships are not at all long term; which in some cases they are not. One respondent explained that because the length of the partnership is unclear and thus they try to take as much out of the partnership as possible (in terms of funding) in as little time as possible. The competitive nature of mobilizing funds can also be bad not only be bad for the partnership but also for the development industry in Uganda. Instead of collaborating, you will instead have NGOs seeing each other as rivals. While in Fort Portal, Uganda I was able to note that some of the NGOs operating in the area were funded by the same partner organizations. While they put a lot of effort into keeping their donors informed on their activities, less time was spent on trying to perhaps link up with another Ugandan NGO; pool resources to produce quality development work.

Despite the problems that currently exist in the co-financing relationship there is a general sense of hope mainly amongst the Dutch professionals; hope that with time things will change. Some respondents viewed the relationship as a process. One explained that she saw from experience that with time the organizations can achieve a balanced relationship where trust has built, which has led to more transparency and clarity, and thus a clearer and similar understanding of the roles in the partnership.

The partnership between Ugandan and Dutch NGOs is one that is complicated and not operating at its optimum. There are many issues at hand that boil down to the perceptions of the roles the NGOs have assumed in this "game play" that is a partnership.

Evaluation and Suggestions

Before we start with the conclusions of this report, it is necessary to look at the process that was undertaken to put together the report. Looking critically I can say that there are certain things that did not go as planned or things that I would do differently the next time around. In addition to this, there are also suggestions I have for further studies.

I had originally hoped to make the interviews a more central aspect of this thesis. However, in the end I decided to use other works as well as my own findings. The reason for this was the low response rate to the interview requests. I conducted the interviews via e-mail. Basically four questions were asked in order to get opinions of professionals. Where necessary, e-mails were also exchanged to get clarification on answers or to follow up on some interesting remarks or comments made by the respondents.

By conducting the interviews by e-mail, as opposed to physically interviewing them, I was limited in several ways. One, if I had physically gone to the professionals and requested an interview I may have received more respondents. By not physically being there I was also not able to follow up on the requests I had made in a more persuasive manner. Had I been in Uganda I could have offered to for example come to their places of work. In doing so I may have also been able to interview colleagues or been advised on other organizations to also visit.

Two, in an oral interview, (which arguably also could have been done via phone) I would have been able to clarify confusions that the interviewees may have had with the questions. Many of the respondents said the questions were quite difficult to answer and indeed in some occasions the answers showed that the interviewees had understood the questions differently. However, this did work to my advantage in that I sometimes got more information than I had expected and I got answers to questions I had not thought to ask. In addition to the point of the questions being difficult, I expect that perhaps this is the reason that many of the people I contacted did not respond.

Three, in a physical interview, much more information can be gathered. I only asked four questions, and thus received four answers. In a semi-formal physical interview one question can lead onto another question, so that I could possibly get more information and I could have also revised my interview questions and possibly improved them by making them clearer and easier to answer.

Another limitation I faced was that I received more responses from Dutch professionals. In fact I only received responses from one non-Dutch interviewee. This would of course not help me very much with genuinely getting to know the perceptions of professionals in the Ugandan NGOs. However, two things made up for this limitation. The first was my own experience in a Ugandan NGO that was in a co-financing partnership with two Dutch NGOs. The second was that the respondents were not naïve; they knew very well what perceptions the partners had of each other. For example, they were aware that there was still the hierarchical image of the relationship as one of donor-recipient, and they knew that reports were sometimes not entirely representative of what was really going on. Comparing these responses with my own experience I can say that their take on the perception of Ugandan NGOs on Dutch NGOs is valid.

One last point that is often mentioned in reflections on research is the one of time. It has almost become a cliché to mention the constraint of time as a limitation; nevertheless, I too will mention it. I spent a lot of time waiting for responses to the interview questions, to the point where I was slowly running out of time. I considered not using the interviews, but I am glad I did. Interviews are a good way of getting opinions and insights into perceptions of people. These interviews were done with the guarantee of anonymity, so people were not representing the views of their organizations but their own. People were therefore, honest and open about what they were seeing happening around them. With more time, more interviews could have been conducted and more opinions (perhaps even more from Ugandan NGOs) could have been gathered to construct a more complete and also more reliable picture of the perceptions that NGOs have of each other in their co-financing partnerships and why.

Thus, in hindsight, what I would have done differently is to go to Uganda and do the interviews from there, increasing the number and variety of respondents.

For my suggestions for further study there is first one thing that should be reiterated. This study was not intended to give solutions to any problems. It was meant to explore the partnership and identify, if any, the problems with the partnership. Other researchers have however done this, like Darcy Ashman who in addition to discussing the problems between American Private Voluntary Organizations (PVOs) and African NGOs also gave suggestions as to how to solve these problems. She stressed in her research that these solutions were context specific. Therefore, a possible further study would be to try to see, in the context of Uganda, what possible solutions there are to improving the current co-financing partnerships that exist between Dutch NGOs and Ugandan NGOs. Before this, maybe it would also be interesting to see whether partnerships between Ugandan NGOs and NGOs from other countries share similar dynamics; to see whether the problem lies with the Ugandan NGOs, the Dutch NGOs or both.

6. Conclusion

The aim of this research was to explore the co-financing partnership between Dutch and Ugandan NGOs, to look at the roles the partners play in the partnership, and more specifically still, the perceptions the partners have of the roles they play or ought to play in the partnership.

First, this research opened up a whole new side of development for me. There is what we learn in lectures, and what happens in practice; this difference we are made aware of in our lectures. However, now I can even say that within the *practice* there is a divide between what happens at the grassroots level and what is assumed to happen by those at the 'higher' level. This can be attributed to a difference in perceptions.

There are ongoing debates concerning the necessity of foreign aid, the practicality or future of development etc. They all seem to be indicating towards the need for change in the way we do development. The question is where to start from? There is not just one way to improve the way development is done. However, as this paper has hopefully shown, one relevant place to start with improving the development industry is to improve the various relationships within it. There are many relationships and authors have written about them, especially the ones between beneficiary and NGO. This paper has explored a different, less written about relationship, which is between International and Indigenous NGOs. One of the major components of this relationship is the financial component, or the foreign aid. The NGOs form co-financing partnerships to ensure efficient and effective use of foreign aid that goes from the *North* to the *South*. The efficiency and effectiveness is being challenged by scholars such as William Easterly to average tax payers in developed countries, who all point to the obtrusive fact that billions of dollars worth of aid has been given with little to show for it.

Using the example of Ugandan and Dutch NGOs, this paper has taken a sociological approach and looked at the perceptions that NGOs have of each other and the roles they play in the partnerships. From the findings, some conclusions can be drawn as to what similarities and differences in perceptions the NGOs have and how this affects development.

The overall conclusion was that indeed there are differences in perceptions of the roles that NGOs do and ought to play in the co-financing partnership. However, before we proceed with this, it is also important to note that the NGOs are not oblivious to this fact. From the e-mail interviews it was clear that the development professionals were aware of the differences in perceptions, they knew what challenges their partnerships faced because of these differences, and admitted that the partnerships were therefore not ideal.

The main differences outlined were that the Dutch NGOs took on the perceptions layed out by the policies made by the donors in the Netherlands. Thus, they viewed the parternships as one between two equitable partners, a partnership that is open, honest and built on trust and mutual respect. The assumption is that the Ugandan NGO feels confortable enough to express its opinion and therefore fully contribute to all stages of a project or programme starting from the design up until the implementation stage.

The Ugandan NGOs, on the other hand, perceive the relationship as a more hierarchical one. They place more emphasis on the relationship as being one between a dominant and more powerful giver and a dependent receiver. The Ugandan NGOs know they are one in many recipients of the funding and so consider the getting of funds as a competition in which the winner is the one that makes the donor the happiest. To do this they feel they need to adapt to the different decisions made by the donor NGOs, and do so with as little resistance as possible. This completely changes the dynamics of the realtionship and also the type of development that occurs.

As was mentioned before, both partners are aware of the difference in perceptions, and even more still, they are aware of the affects this has on the development work that they do. The perception the Ugandan NGOs have is arguably also the perception shared at an individual level by development professionals, whereas that of the Dutch NGOs reflects what the policymakers in the Netherlands believe the situation to be. This is an example of many where the theory does not match up with the practice.

The development work done is negatively affected in several ways. Due to the hierarchical perception of the partnership, there is a fear of disappointing the Dutch NGOs. Disappointing the NGOs would include things such as not completing projects on time, not using the budget as planned, failure of a project etc. These problems are sometimes unavoidable, but still reports are written without any mention of these problems and therefore, portray a different reality. The consequences of this are that there is no room for change or improvement. Progress in development is only possible when mistakes and weaknesses are identified and adjustments made in for example the design or method of implementation of projects or programmes.

In addition to the above, the ambiguity of the roles that the partners perform also means that often responsibilities are not taken up. These responsibilities include things such as doing regular accountability or properly representing the needs of the target population. If roles are not clearly defined and agreed upon then also the responsibilities are unclear and can be neglected.

The purpose of this paper was not to suggest any solutions. Instead it was intended as a means of pointing out possible places to start from to improve the quality of development. Each country and its partnerships are of course different. However, as was shown by the literature by Mosse, Lewis and Ashman, there are some underlying similarities that can be found in the negative affects incoherent perceptions of roles in a partnership can have on development.

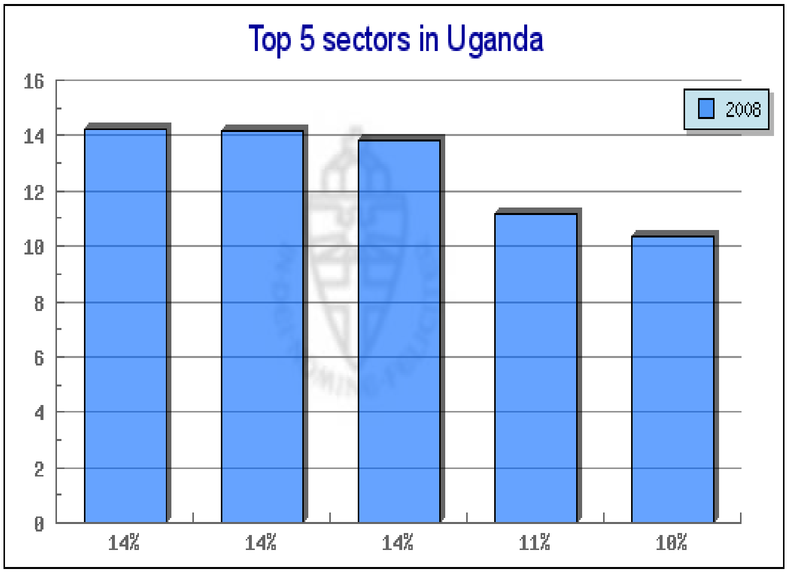
7. Appendices

Appendix A. Complete list of Dutch NGOs working in Uganda

	Dutch NGOs	Website	Expenditures
1.	Cordaid	www.cordaid.nl	€ 4.327.494
2.	Oxfam NOVIB	www.oxfamnovib.nl	€ 2.485.324
3.	Vluchteling, Stichting	www.vluchteling.org	€ 2.248.428
4.	ICCO	www.icco.nl	€ 2.042.519
5.	Hivos	www.hivos.nl	€ 1.962.399
6.	War Child	www.warchild.nl	€ 1.844.266
7.	Terre des Hommes	www.terredeshommes.nl	€ 1.085.464
8.	SOS-Kinderdorpen	www.soskinderdorpen.nl	€ 1.060.418
9.	Plan Nederland	www.plannederland.nl	€ 937.824
10.	Stichting Simavi	www.simavi.org	€ 679.615
11.	Agriterra	www.agriterra.org	€ 559.179
12.	Liliane Fonds	www.lilianefonds.nl	€ 489.159
13.	Mensen met een Missie	www.mensenmeteenmissie.nl	€ 429.930
14.	Aqua for All	www.aquaforall.nl	€ 415.689
15.	World Population Foundation	www.wpf.org	€ 362.641
16.	International Child Support	www.icsfonds.nl	€ 282.684
17.	AMREF	www.amref.nl	€ 270.288
18.	Woord en Daad	www.woordendaad.nl	€ 267.088
19.	IUCN	www.iucn.nl	€ 187.996
20.	Dorcas Aid International	www.dorcas.net	€ 112.288
21.	MIVA/OneMen	www.onemen.org	€ 104.103
22.	Mama Cash	www.mamacash.nl	€ 75.342
23.	KNCV Tuberculosefonds	www.tuberculose.nl	€ 66.952
24.	Albert Schweitzer Fonds, St. Nederlands	www.nasf.nl	€ 52.000
25.	Melania	www.melania.nl	€ 34.265
26.	Salvatoriaanse Hulpactie, St.	www.salvatorhulp.org	€ 14.398

Source: (OxfamNovib, Cordaid et al. 2008)

Appendix B. Top 5 sectors Dutch NGOs invest in



Top 5

Humanitarian Aid	14%
Agriculture	14%
Government and civil society	14%
Other social infrastructure and services	11%
Health	10%

Source: (OxfamNovib, Cordaid et al. 2008)

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