ENCOUNTERS IN A ZAMBIAN CHILDREN’S HOME

Ethnographic Study on Volunteer Tourism

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Selection of the topic

My first experience of an African children’s home\(^1\) was three years ago, in 2009 when I was working as a volunteer in Tanzania. What was most striking to me was the way things were handled when it came to the different child rearing methods people from different countries had and especially the kind of impact the foreign volunteers had on the whole organization. I also saw some conflicts between the local workers - especially at the higher level of the organization - and certain volunteers. This experience motivated me to research the theme of volunteers in an African children’s home.

Tourism as a frame of reference came up as a natural consequence on the one hand from the previous experience of being a volunteer tourist in Tanzania and on the other hand from the knowledge I gained while working on my Bachelor thesis (Timonen, 2008) which dealt with nature tourism in Kenya and from my other hobbyism like being a member of board in the Society for Fare Travel (Reilun matkailun yhdistys).

1.2 Volunteer tourism

While the many destructive effects of mass tourism, such as environmental, social and cultural decline (see for example Mowforth & Munt, 2003), have been widely acknowledged, in the past decades many alternative forms of tourism have emerged. These include eco-tourism, pro-poor tourism and environmental tourism, among others. In my master’s thesis my focus is on one of these alternative forms, namely on volunteer tourism.

The most commonly cited definition of volunteer tourism comes from Wearing’s (2001, p.1) study: "Volunteer tourists are those tourists who, for various reasons, volunteer in an organized way to undertake holidays that might involve aiding or alleviating the

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\(^1\) The term ‘orphanage’ is more commonly used in the language of organizations advertising volunteer experiences with children in Third World countries than ‘children’s home’. However, many of my informants in the field who were involved with unprivileged children preferred the term ‘vulnerable children’ to ‘orphan’. This is why in this study I use the term ‘children’s home’ instead of ‘orphanage’ and ‘vulnerable children’ instead of ‘orphans’. There are also studies (Unicef, 1999 cited in UN 2011) which have not found useful purpose for separating orphans from other vulnerable children and according to this study there are actually significant risks in doing so, especially when it comes to practical interventions. This is because children with parents are often little better off in material terms than those whose parents have died, and are considered equally deserving of aid. (UN, 2011.)
material poverty of some groups in society, the restoration of certain environments or research into aspects of society”. It is characterized by travel experiences, relative shortness of time\(^2\) and often commercial actors. The parties involved are typically the volunteer tourist, the supplier organization and the local receiving organization. Volunteer tourism has been growing rapidly in response to increased demand for volunteer experiences from people of all ages. The biggest potential for volunteer tourism is among young students spending their gap year and among retired people who have time to travel (Wearing, 2001). Therefore volunteer tourism is both a current and important research subject in the sphere of volunteerism in the development cooperation.

At its best, volunteering abroad can be used to support intercultural learning and solidarity. But despite these and other often well-meaning intentions of volunteer tourism, critics claim that it can have devastating effects that often outrun the benefits. The possible problems can be, among others, arising frustrations and conflicts, presenting of the receiving community as helpless, exaggeration of abilities of a volunteer worker and giving an unjustified position of an expert to a volunteer. (Lager, Laihiala and Kontinen, 2009, p. 14; Palacios, 2010; Sin, 2009.)

1.3 Purpose of the study and research problem

Volunteer tourism is a timely topic in the research concerning volunteerism in development cooperation. It is relatively well studied how this sort of volunteerism affects the values and world views of the volunteering individuals, and what kind of motivations volunteers have when engaging in tourism as well as the market and scope of volunteerism (see for example, Anderson and Shaw, 1999; Dekker and Halman, 2003; Guttentag, 2009; Ooie and Laing, 2010; Sin, 2010; Wearing, 2001).

However, how this constant stream of volunteers is seen from the viewpoint of the receiving institutions is a lot less known subject. This study tries to shed new light on this aspect and focuses on the observations made from the interaction situations between regular local staff and the foreign volunteers in a Zambian Children’s home.

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\(^2\) In this study I have used the common definition of volunteer tourism where a time limit of one year is added. Volunteers performing longer than one year, such as US Peace Corps for example, are outside of this definition. (See for example Guttentag, 2009, p. 538; Tomazos and Butler, 2009, p. 197.)
The intention of this study is to find out particularly how volunteering is perceived by different stakeholders and what kind of relevant interface encounters with what kind of dynamics take place in the encounters between a foreign volunteer worker and a local worker or a child.

1. How is volunteering in the children’s home perceived by
   a. foreign volunteers
   b. local staff?
2. What kinds of interface encounters are taking place in the children’s home?
   a. what emerges as relevant in these encounters?
   b. what are the inner dynamics of these encounters?

Answers to these questions are searched through *ethnographically inspired participant observation* with the help of Norman Longs’ *interface encounter* analysis.

The case country for the study is Zambia: a potential destination in Sub-Saharan Africa for volunteer tourism because of its relative peacefulness, conceivable tourist attractions and position as target for foreign aid. The fieldwork was conducted in the capital Lusaka for eight weeks between March and May 2011.

The study acknowledges the multilevel quality of Development studies. On the one hand, the study is based on the data collected from the local micro level and, on the other hand, the tourism research theories take it to the macro level. The multidisciplinary aspect of Development studies is present in the research as well. For example, the theoretical basis and methods used involve at least anthropology, social work and social psychology in addition to Development studies.

The study of the encounter of volunteer tourism and a Zambian children’s home is a contribution to the civil society and development research as well as to the study on tourism and development done in Development studies.

**1.4 Structure of the thesis**

The thesis is structured in the following way. In chapter two, I will introduce some relevant issues of the civil society discussion in Development studies and traditional voluntarism in development NGOs. I will also discuss the concept of volunteer tourism
and some previous research concerning the topic. In chapter three I will present the case and the two types of organizations that were connected to the case more closely. Chapter four concerns the methodology of the research as well as some ethical issues relevant to it. In chapter five I will present the results of the study. Finally chapter six will conclude the thesis and I will offer some recommendations for future research.

2. Voluntary Tourism and Volunteering in the Context of Development NGOs

Voluntarism has been strongly attributed to civil society and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). Therefore, it is important to consider some relevant issues in the civil society and development discussion as a way to frame the core topic of this study, that of volunteer tourism. This way of framing illustrates the changes that have taken place in voluntarism and how volunteer tourism relates to these changes.

2.1 From Civil Society to Global Development NGOs

In this chapter, I will briefly go through the relevant topics in civil society discussion in the light of the aim of this study. Themes that will be discussed include the different meanings and roles given to the concepts, the rise of NGOs as well the possible decline and criticism related to it. However, my intention is not to go into this broad discussion of civil society and development as such.

Volunteering has been an important part of international development work throughout centuries (Lewis, 2006). This is illustrated in the way civil society-sector has also been called the voluntary sector or occasionally ‘value-driven’ organizations as opposed to state or private agencies (see for example Brett, 1993).

The concept of civil society

As an idea, civil society has long history, especially in political philosophy (Lewis and Kanji 2009, p. 139) but as an organizational form civil society organizations (CSOs) are relatively recent formations (Bebbington, Hickey and Mitlin, 2008, p.6). The idea of civil society became linked to development NGOs in the 1980s, at the time when its roots in political philosophy were also reinvigorated (Lewis and Kanji, p.139, 2009).
There is on-going debate about the concept and meaning of civil society and NGOs. Indeed, civil society is not an unambiguous concept and it has always had changing contents. What comes to the definition and meaning of CSOs, there are multiple ideas and point of views (See for example, Hilhorst, 2003, p.3, 4; Igoe, 2005, p.116; Kaldor, 2007, p.136, 137; Opoku-Mensah, 2007, p.11).

NGOs often dominate the conversation about civil society, especially in development circles and as a concept it is actually often confused with civil society (Lewis and Kanji, 2009, p.7; Pearce, 2000, p.10; Van Rooy, 1998, p.15). However, as Atkinson and Scurrah (2009, p.2) clarify, NGOs are usually formally organized and constituted while CSOs are a more general concept. In fact, the different terminologies used often reflect more the culture and history where the term has been used than any analytical distinction (Lewis and Kanji, 2009, p.7).

Hereby Van Rooy (1998) suggests that the concept of civil society has become nothing but ‘an analytical hat stand’ on which very different arguments can be placed. However, I will not go to this debate about the concept further but introduce instead some other concepts, theories and ideas that have specific relevancy for this case study.

Most scholars and actors in the civil society sector can probably agree that civil society organizations and NGOs today are considered as an alternative to state and market and their distribution is non-profit (Opoku-Mensah, Lewis and Tvedt, 2007, p.39). In addition to this, development NGOs also have a common tendency to be involved in processes of transferring resources from well-off societies to those who have less, mainly from North to South (Pearce, 2000, p.12).

**Service providing NGOs**

NGOs main roles in the current practice of development cooperation are service delivery, catalysis and partnership (Lewis and Kanji, 2009, p.91). The providing of social services has been the traditional way to do development cooperation in the South, so called ‘first generation development cooperation’. (Korten, 1990 cited in Lewis and Kanji, 2009, p.14). These first period -NGOs were often linked to other organizations providing them with an institutional base and funding and to wider religious or

Indeed, one way to understand development NGOs is to consider development as ‘charity’ which is common to religious actors across main faiths. However, the view has been criticized for diminishing the recipient with the idea of ‘helpless poor’ and that this approach to development has roots in Victorian morality. (Lewis and Kanji 2009, p.205.) Another tendency that charity NGOs easily fall into is depolitization, as described in Igoe (2005, p. 117). The aid receiving people and their problems are not defined as a consequence of structural inequities or politics, but as somehow inherent to the targets themselves. This tendency is particularly seen in service providing NGOs, but observed also in broader development circles. (Ibid.)

The rise of NGOs in the 1990s

After the Second World War NGOs have played a central role in development assistance. In the late 1980s and 1990s there was a tremendous increase in international NGOs and soon they came to receive salient funding from governmental organizations (Kaldor, 2007, p.143). According to Van Rooy (1998, p.6), these developments occurred largely because of concerns with globalization, political change after Cold War period and frustration about the quality of society. At this time a new mind-set emerged, which for example Jackson (2005, p. 169) calls ‘non-governmentality’. The leading thought in non-governmentality was that welfare of the population and improvement is best to achieved by non-state actors.

The NGO-boom of the 1990s had an impact on the growth of international volunteering as well. It resulted in a growing amount of NGOs, many of which had long-term international volunteers and as a supplement to these, needed some shorter term support (Wearing, Lyons, and Leigh Snead, 2010, p.189). According to some writers, this was the beginning of volunteerism (ibid.).

3 A significant reason for the sudden rise of nongovernmental organizations in Zambia was also the economic and social collapse in the country during the 1990s, which led to Zambia becoming more dependent of the development aid (Gifford, 1998, p. 219).
The development aid directed through NGOs has been increasing partly because they are thought to be non-political and socially accountable (Lewis and Kanji, 2009). The growth of the sector also suited the political environment of the 1990s since it could be seen as a replacement of the state for producing social services (Hilhorst, 2003, p.9; Lewis and Kanji, 2009). Especially the governments in developing countries had been disappointing in the provision of social services and a strong civil society was seen as part of the answer (Hilhorst, 2003, pp.7, 9.) Also Brett (1993, p.291) notes how NGOs began as individually funded agencies but political failure in many developing countries has caused a situation where official donors prefer non-governmental sector to provide services instead of the local state. Indeed, the challenge that the growing NGO sector can cause is that it bypasses the fiscal structures of national economics when international NGOs allocate their funds (Bornstein, 2005, p.74). Especially the service-providing NGOs experienced a rapid growth due to these neoliberal development policies and for example in the case country of this study, Zambia, this ‘gap filling’ of government is major particularly in the health sector (Lewis and Kanji, 2009, p. 92).

Indeed, while the old grand theories of modernization and dependency had not much to say about the roles of NGOs, let alone alternative development thinking and institutionalism, neoliberalism have considered NGOs more fully (Lewis and Kanji, 2009, pp.60, 68) Indeed, according to many scholars, the rise of nongovernmentalism is best explained as part of the broad neoliberal project (see for example Bristow, 2008, p. 240; Kaldor 2007, p. 142; Lewis, 2007, p. 374; Pearce, 2000, p. 10). Actually, some critics even claim that NGOs are only extensions of depolitized neoliberal development discourse and work as advancing the neoliberal agenda (Hilhorst, 2003, p.7).

Hilhorst, on the other hand, takes a differing position and claims that the view of NGOs as extensions of neoliberal development discourse is too narrow. Instead, NGOs can have several alternative discourse frames (2003, p.9) Also Lewis and Kanji, (2009, p.21) remind that in addition to the growth of neoliberalism, the emergence of alternative development ideas and practices also affected the rise of NGOs.

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4 In Zambia, the NGO sector provides 40 per cent of the health services in rural areas (Lewis and Kanji, 2009, p. 92).
A considerable topic within the civil society and development discourse concerns the partnership between Northern and Southern NGOs, the notion of which stems from the 1970s and its ideological solidarity efforts (Fowler 1998, pp.137, 140). Partnership is a timely topic because many Northern based NGOs in the past decades have shifted from acting as only implementing bodies towards an approach which centers on a partnership in which they try to work together with Southern NGOs (Lewis, 1998, p.501). However, today the notion of partnership in international development is filled with confusion and truly equitable relations between northern and southern parts are difficult to achieve (Fowler, 1998, pp.137, 140). Because of this change, also the encounters between Southern and Northern partners have changed, supposedly increasing the need for negotiations. As a consequence, research concerning encounters in development interfaces becomes even more relevant.

**NGO criticism**

NGOs have received criticism in that they have not lived up to expectations (Lewis, 2007, p.374; Lewis and Kanji, 2009, p.21) which has resulted in the strongest interest in NGOs seeming to be declining. In addition to this unproven record especially in poverty reduction, NGOs are accused of undermining the centrality of the state in developing countries and lack of accountability (Brett 1993, p.291). Lack of accountability refers to the situation where NGOs do not have a direct relationship of performance-reward from the consumers of the services because they are expected to operate by providing services to the deprived (ibid.). Thus there are no direct payments from the consumers and hence they do not have a direct influence on the producers of the services (ibid.).

The discussion now among scholars is increasingly about the usefulness of non-government organization as such for seeking change in both the North as well as the South (Pearce, 2000, p.29). In addition, the usefulness of civil society as a concept in describing other than Western societies has been questioned by some, especially if civil

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5 Currently there is also an on-going discussion of the possibility of a global civil society (see for example Kaldor, 2007; Lewis, 2006; Lewis and Kanji, 2009). The phenomenon describes the situation of global interconnectedness and explosion of transnational movements, groups, networks and organizations (Kaldor 2007, p.134). Some scholars (see for example Lewis, 2006, p.15) discuss the idea of a global civil society as a ‘global market place’ of ideas and values. This is a scheme where international volunteering might have a role to play as well (ibid).
society is meant as equivalent to NGOs (see for example Lewis and Kanji, 2009, p.137). In Europe it is natural to have an office, computers, staff and other assets but if this is tried to fit to African context as such, there is a possibility of excluding much relevant activity Jackson (2005, pp.172-173). Also Van Rooy (1998) describes the differences that arise when in the African context one is often born into some organizations, and is not voluntarily involved in the same sense as in European NGOs.

Nevertheless, NGOs remain a dominant force in the contemporary world especially in relation to development, globalization, human rights and conflicts (Lewis, 2007, p.375). Also the concept of civil society continues to be relevant to development NGOs since it establishes a conceptual framework which makes it easier to think about the different roles of NGOs (Lewis and Kanji, 2009, p.140).

Above I discussed briefly the current debates in development studies about NGOs and civil society. I noted that they are mainly concentrated on issues of the concept and usage of civil society, NGOs and neo-liberalism, NGOs and the state and the relationships between Northern NGOs and their Southern counter parts (Pearce, 2000, p.19) Additionally, of special interest for this study are the service providing NGOs discussed briefly above and the issue of faith-based organizations and development, discussed in part 2.4 in this chapter.

2.2 Voluntarism in development NGOs

This part discusses some aspects of volunteering in NGOs, the research on values and motives driving for volunteering and finally the way volunteering intertwines with tourism. Indeed, whether defined as NGO or CSO, the central part of the idea in the “third sector” is volunteerism. Hustinx, et al. (2010, p.350) even describe it as the foundation on which civil society across the world relies on.

There has been an increasing reliance on voluntary labor in recent decades in many sectors of society, in both government and international NGOs (Lacey and Ilcan, 2006, p.36). This has been said to be because states no longer answer all of the society’s needs and individuals, organizations and communities are encouraged to take greater share on these issues (ibid.). According to Lacey and Ilcan (2006, p.40), neoliberalism, or advanced liberalism as the writers want to call it (ibid. p.36) in development policies
has especially affected the use of NGOs as providers of social services and this in turn has brought about more reliance on volunteer labor in this sector.

International NGOs are key players in increasing volunteer participation. Desforges (2004 cited in Lacey and Ilcan, 2006, p.45) states that international development NGOs are seen as enabling and directing global citizenship in individuals. According to Leskinen, NGOs doing development cooperation function from the basis of global citizenship affecting values in societies, making the altruistic value base of societies stronger (2003, p.19). This way the discussion of the possibility of global civil society becomes intertwined with volunteerism and particularly transnational volunteerism. In the next subchapter I will discuss the issue of values in a bit more detail.

**Values within volunteering in development NGOs**

Development is value-laden operation which makes Development studies a strongly value-based science (Goulet, 1995, p.5). The question that follows is, on which values development should be based and how they should affect implementation (Hovland, 2008, p.179).

NGOs as such can also be seen as a normative category. According to for example Hilhorst, classifying an organization as NGO has a moral attribute in it (2003, p.7.). It is commonly used to argue that the organization is ‘doing good for the development of others’ (Hilhorst, 2003, p. 7). This view has its problems especially if it is placed self-evidently as a label to all of the NGOs. Nevertheless, it can be claimed that in the center of much voluntary action in NGOs is a hope for positive and just change, either in one’s own society, or globally (Lacey and Ilcan 2006, p.47).

Values and motives for voluntary participation have been studied quite extensively. As already mentioned in the introduction, what motivates volunteers, their world view as well as their value base and its changes during and after volunteer period is relatively well studied (see for example Brown 2005; Sin, 2009; Mustonen, 2007; Nylund, 2008; Leskinen, 2008; Wearing, 2001; Wearing 2010). As an example, Leskinen (2003) studied Finnish values, attitudes and participation in voluntary development cooperation. His study concluded that the most important values in development cooperation were those of global humanism, global partnership and global religiosity. Research has also
shown some connection between volunteering and altruistic values (Grönlund et al., 2011). In contra, volunteering can also become a highly individualized accomplishment, where emphasis is placed on the agent rather than the subject (Lacey and Ilcan, 2006 p.38.)

To sum up this research on motives, it can be said that people engage themselves to volunteer work with various motives. Usually the motivations driving to volunteer are divided to altruistic and individualistic ones and they both have a place in individuals’ decisions to volunteer (Lacey and Ilcan 2006 p.38; Lager, Laihiala and Kontinen, 2009, p. 10).

**Volunteering intertwining with tourism**

While volunteering in general is a long known activity, the combination with tourism is a relatively new phenomenon (Tomazos and Butler, 2009, p.1). The differences between concepts of international volunteering and volunteer tourism are not clear-cut but often volunteer tourism concerns volunteering where there are commercial actors involved more so than in international, overseas or cross-national volunteering which is mainly operated by NGOs or other non-profits. (Wearing, 2010, p.199).

Voluntariness is changing its nature along with the changing societies and technology (Lager, Laihiala and Kontinen, 2009, p.8). Traditionally the forms for individuals to take part in international development NGOs in developing countries have been fundraising or personal financial contribution. Instead, in the 21st century volunteering overseas has witnessed a growing amount of commercial tourism operators replacing and supplementing the previously NGO operated sector (Tomazos and Butler, 2009, p.209; Wearing, Lyons, and Leigh Snead, 2010, p.189). Volunteer tourism brings a new dimension to traditional involvement, because it enables people to participate concretely in development efforts in developing countries.

International volunteering has its roots originally in the Christian mission work of the 19th century (Lewis, 2006, p.13) but the major boom of volunteer tourism began in the 1960s, when the US Peace Corps program started and through it the boom of young Americans volunteering overseas (Palacios, 2010, p. 863; Tomazos and Butler, 2009, p.
In these first volunteer tourism initiatives there was a strong foreign policy objective, which has also received some criticism (Lewis, 2006, p.19).

Other factors influencing the possibilities for volunteer tourism to rise as an option for people to spend their holiday, as well as the growth of tourism in general in Western societies were the economic boom, the rise of social security, and the reduction in working hours, giving people the opportunity to seek self-fulfilment and success in their spare time as well as at work (Mowforth and Munt, 2003, 82, 86; Tomazos and Butler, 2009, p.199; See also about postmodern consumerism and tourism in Mowforth and Munt, 2003, p.25). Marianne Nylund (2008, p.34) has studied the future challenges of volunteer work in addition to the values and motives behind it and one of her results was that future trends for volunteer work are shorter term volunteering, company volunteering, virtual volunteering and supranational volunteering. These results confirm that volunteer tourism will undoubtedly be an important topic in the future as well.

2.3 Volunteer tourism- what, who and for whom?

This chapter presents some issues around volunteering as a form of alternative tourism. The alleged benefits, as well as criticism are covered along with the controversy of volunteer tourism as helping and the possibility of it to act as a development strategy.

As mentioned above, several changes in societies have influenced the heavy growth of international volunteering. International travel is cheaper and available to more people than ever before and the Internet has made it possible for even the smaller and less-known actors to involve themselves and advertise their placements internationally (Lager, Laihiala and Kontinen, 2009, p.10). Growing interest on global issues and sustainability concerns in Western societies have also had their effect on the increasing interest focusing especially to developing world (Wearing, 2010, p.190).

Traditional tourism has been criticized for being based on only brief encounters between locals and foreigners. Nash (1981, cited in Spencer, 2010, pp.2-3) describes these encounters as “artificial, asymmetrical and unidirectional”.

Modern tourist has a desire to have more interactive and individualized experiences, so called ‘authentic’ contacts with the local culture. This change of tourist demand has not gone unnoticed in the tourism industry and as a consequence over the last decades there
has been an increase in the forms of tourism claiming to be ‘alternative’ and ‘responsible’. (Lyons and Wearing, 2008; Richter and Norman, 2010 p.222; Spencer, 2010, p.51.) Thus, as Spencer claims (2003, p. 54) transformation in consumer behavior provides a guiding force for new forms of tourism.

Volunteer tourism tries to answer to this demand when it calls for deeper immersion with local people when working side by side with them on conservation, humanitarian or community projects (Richter and Norman, 2010, p.223; Spencer, 2010, p. 4). Some even talk specifically about orphan tourism as a particular type of new tourism which is gaining ground alongside alternative tourism (see Richter and Norman, 2010, p.222). The organizations arranging volunteer tourism may range significantly in scope, size and location and in addition to development work they can also have a research or conservation focus (Wearing, 2010, p.192).

**Developing cultural understanding and other benefits**

The basic idea in volunteer tourism is that tourism should bring positive impacts to host destinations in the developing world through the means of volunteering. It is based on an assumption that tourists can make a direct and concrete improvement either to the communities or the natural environment in host destinations. Volunteer tourism is a branch of ‘responsible tourism’ according to which tourism should consider ethics, morals and responsibility, and that this is especially crucial from the aspect of the developed world. The origins of tourists, travel agencies and multinational corporations owning hotel chains, airlines and other tourist services, tend to be in the developed world, whereas those of the host destinations and locals in developing countries. (Sin, 2010, p.983- 984; Wearing, 2001; Wearing, 2010.)

Many existing researches have noted the possible positive impacts to local communities in host destinations. Wearing, for example, advocates volunteer tourism “as a development strategy leading to sustainable development and centering the convergence of natural resource qualities, locals and the visitors that all benefit from tourism activity” (Wearing, 2001, p.12). Among the assumed benefits are also the empowering of locals in host communities, developing cultural interaction and understanding between hosts and tourists and building a more intimate form of contact in the longer period (see for example Coghlan and Gooch 2011, p.714; Sin, 2010, p.983). The underlying
assumption is often that the volunteer projects themselves have direct and concrete beneficial outcomes.

In addition, among the benefits for the volunteering individual are valuable personal and career experience, as Wearing, Lyons and Leigh Snead, (2010, p.188) have noted. Indeed, volunteer holidays are targeted at young adults, who have time and possibility to give up work or study commitments. Other potential groups are the big retiring age groups. (Lager, Laihiala and Kontinen, 2009, p.35; Wearing, Lyons, and Leigh Snead, 2010, p.189).

Volunteer tourism also highlights an emerging trend for people to include a personal development focus in their travels (Spencer 2010, p.3). The kind of personal development being sought seems to depend on the generation the volunteers represent. Informants in this study represented mainly young girls, spending their gap year or some time off from their studies. For a middle aged volunteer spending their sabbatical in Africa or for a pensioner, different personal development focuses might be sought for.

**Criticism**

However, in the last decade there has been a growing public and academic hesitation about whether volunteering really is a more ethical alternative than mass tourism (See for example Guttentag, 2009; Mowforth and Munt, 2003; Palacios 2010; Sin, 2010).

Among the presumptions of contributors of volunteer tourism and promoters of its positive benefits is an assumption that locals and tourists both have the power to actively negotiate their identities and relations with each other (Sin, 2010, p.983). According to some scholars, this is a presumption that does not hold ground in many cases. Even if the relationships developed between hosts and visitors can at their best be compassionate according to Sin, (2010, p.984) they can hardly be described as equal. Volunteer tourism is argued to re-produce the existing structures and power hierarchies that keep the volunteer tourist in a privileged position while continuing to undermine the locals in host communities (ibid.).

There is quite an amount of academic discussion on volunteerism which centers on the issues of volunteer efficacy or inefficacy. Many claim that young Western volunteers in
the developing countries have little knowledge or experience and lack in skills, capacity, time to get involved with the locals or even altruistic intentions (Palacios 2010, p.863). What is also often promoted by volunteer tourism advocates is the value change and changed consciousness of the participants. However, these changes are almost always related to the visitors only, whereas the research on impacts to the locals is a lot less researched subject (Sin, 2010, p.983).

Tourism industry is a unique one, since in it the two worlds of developed and developing world are brought together. Sin (2010, p.984) describes how from the developed world’s perspective, the developing world is often seen as a ‘distant other’ that one ought to care or be responsible for. Through volunteer tourism this previously distant other is brought closer to become less distant but the effects of such connotations like caring are not only positive.

**Helping through volunteering?**

Helping in volunteer organizations can have many forms. Nylund and Yeung (2005, p.14-15) have separated peer group helping which takes place between equal actors and that of voluntary helping where the actors have different starting points. However, coming from different starting points does not mean that the relationship between helper and receiver is hierarchical. Instead in the encounters the different skills and experiences between people become the center for meeting (Nylund and Yeung, 2005, p.14-15).

Palacios (2010) and Sin (2010) however, take a more critical stand. According to Palacios, (2010, p.864) the use of helping -language can be problematic because the same language is underlying the whole development enterprise, and according to critical theorists, that is colonialist in its essence. Global inequality and post-colonialism relate to a history of Western domination and thus the effectiveness and even desirability of volunteer programs in developing countries can be questioned (Palacios, 2010, p.864). Sin (2010, p. 991) continues the critical view of Palacios and claims that the relationships between volunteer tourists and hosts are unequal to begin with. However, Sin sustains, it is still possible that caring relationships are welcomed and accepted by both volunteer tourists and hosts. At the same time however, according to Sin (2010), it is important to consider the possibility that volunteer tourism can be another form of
‘aid’ that continues to re-produce existing power differences and social hierarchies between the rich and the poor and the privileged and non-privileged (Sin 2010, p. 991).

**Volunteer tourism as a development strategy**

Contra to criticism presented above, volunteer tourism is seen as a real development strategy by some researchers. For example Wearing (cited in Sin, 2010, p.983) suggests that volunteer tourism has the potential to induce change, specifically value change in people participating in volunteer tourism projects.

Quarles van Ufford et al. (2003) as cited in Lewis (2006, p.15) suggests that the broad concept of development could be understood as ‘global responsibility’. In an era of millennium development goals and other measurable results, this perspective gives a wider description of development, in which moral questions have not been forgotten, as Lewis (2006, p.16) remarks. Development seen in this way entails a role for international volunteering as well.

When it comes to the question of development strategy at national level, in Zambia in 2000 tourism was put in the second place in the priority of the country’s development agenda, immediately after agriculture (Matenga, 2005, p.192). Zambia has a tourism development strategy where the emphasis is on low volume-high value tourism to the country’s natural and cultural heritage sites, as opposed to high-volume mass tourism, strategy that at least partly encourages volunteer tourism as well (Matenga, 2005, p.192). In order for tourism to contribute more to the actual poverty reduction in Zambia, some strategies like increased employment of the poor in tourism enterprises, community based enterprises and a specific tax or levy on tourism income with proceeds benefiting the poor should be employed (Matenga, 2005, p.190).

2.4 Religion in development NGOs

Let me now turn to a bit different matter: that of religion in development NGOs. This chapter will deal with inclusion and exclusion of religion in development policy and practice and a specific type of NGO where religion has a strong meaning. Indeed, one important aspect in the NGO and development discussion is the significance of religion and FBOs (Faith Based Organizations). This is not least because of the long history of mission work in developing world and significant numbers of FBOs in international
development still working today. The meaning of faith base became important for this particular case study as well, although not originally expected.

Civil society studies as well as Development studies as a discipline have traditionally neglected the role of religion and faith in international development (Clarke and Jennings 2008; Clarke, 2006). The reasons for this separation of religion and development in development research and -policy can be sought from the traditional separation between the State and the Church in North America and Western Europe. It has influenced the international development policy and practice and its secular emphasis so that academics and policymakers have been perceiving poverty as a matter of material deprivation and its elimination as a technical understanding. (Clarke and Jennings 2008, p.1; Clarke, 2008 p.17).

However, as noted earlier development is itself a normative ideal and moral cause and as Clarke (2006, p.845) reminds, it actually has much in common with the faith discourses from which it has traditionally remained aside. Tønnessen (2007, pp.339-340) adds that religion seems to have played a much larger role than what has often been recognized in international aid circles in choosing to engage the organization in some countries and regions and but not in others.

**Faith-Based Organization (FBO)**

Despite the secular emphasis in development practice and research, FBOs are far from insignificant actors in development cooperation. Especially in the past two decades FBOs have persistently gained growing salience in international development and today, different religious non-governmental organizations play a prominent role as providers and channels of international aid (Clarke, 2008, p.17-18; Tønnessen, 2007, pp.323-324). It tells something of the importance of FBOs in Africa that two World Health Organization studies estimated that FBOs provide at least 40% of health services overall in Sub-Saharan Africa (WHO, 2007 cited in Deneulin and Rakodi, 2010 p.48). Also World Bank has started to pay more attention to the role of religion in development through its unit of Development Dialogue on Values and Ethic (Tønnessen, 2007, pp.323-324).
Clarke and Jennings (2008, p.6) define an FBO as “any organization that derives inspiration and guidance for its activities from the teachings and principles of the faith or from a particular interpretation or school of thought within the faith”. The provision of welfare to the poor has been one of the most important roles FBOs have had in historical and modern times (Olowu, 2011, p.61). FBOs are often highly networked nationally as well as internationally and according to Clarke and Jennings (2008, p.272) they are often less dependent on donor funding than other NGOs.

Clarke (2008, p.19-20) identifies several reasons for the change towards inclusion of religion. First of them is the rise of the Christian right in United States in 1980s, especially centered on Evangelical and Pentecostal congregations. Then there was the rise of economic neo-liberal politics - also in the US - which affected the expansion of FBOs. The expansion of FBOs can be traced even further as Hearn (2002) does. According to Hearn, there was a post 1945-explosion of US evangelical missionaries to the South which can be traced to the geopolitics of the Cold War (2002 p.35). The great increase of American evangelical missionaries in the Cold War era was concentrated in Latin America and Southern Africa. Latin America is also where the Organization originally started its work, as will be described in the next section.

The role of FBOs has been seen as both an obstacle to development and impetus to it. At its clearest, extreme conservatism has been viewed as obstacle (Olowu, 2011, p. 63), while the reputed benefits of FBOs are said to be long-term commitment to local communities, focus and deeply involved and altruistic staff members. In addition, they are seen as having spiritual strength in the face of difficult conditions (Flanigan, 2010). Flanigan adds to the downsides the risks of evangelical coercion which is heightened by the power dynamics inherent in aid providing and receiving (2010, p. 6). Some critics also argue that altruism is not wholly the reason why religious institutions create non-profit organizations. They might also have instrumental purposes of having new adherents (Flanigan, 2010, p. 8).

The way the organization is classified is not irrelevant or a question of semantics only (Lewis and Kanji, 2009, p.8). As I will later elaborate this issue in the analysis and results part of the thesis, the way an organization is categorized may have significant implications in terms of who can participate in the activities and who can be the beneficiaries thereof. So far we have discussed volunteering in the context of
development NGOs and its intertwining with tourism as well as the issue of religion in development circles. The next chapter will illustrate the specific case study more closely.

3. DESCRIPTION OF THE CASE

This chapter intends to place the reader into the context where the events discussed in chapter five took place. Before going to describe the two organizations relevant to the study, I will briefly describe Zambia as a destination for volunteer tourism.

3.1 Setting the scene: Zambia

Zambia is a potential destination in Africa in terms of volunteer tourism as it is a relatively peaceful, aid-receiving country with conceivable tourist attractions. The image of Zambia fits in many ways to the image of a traditional Southern African country, with wide-ranging poverty and underdevelopment. In the year 2000, almost three quarters of Zambians lived on or below the poverty line (Carlsson, Chibbamullilo, Orjuela and Saasa, 2000, p.67). UNICEF (2009) estimated that in 2009 there were 1.3 million children under 17 years of age with one or both parents dead in Zambia. Foreign aid is a major resource available to government and according to Carlsson et al., (2000, p.67) the aid dependency has been growing at least in the final years of the 20th century. Zambia is a predominantly Christian nation. In fact, President Chiluba proclaimed it as a Christian nation in 1991 (Gifford, 1998, p. 244). Thus, Christianity is a crucial element both in the public and private life of Zambians and as mentioned earlier it became a significant topic in my data as well.

It seems that tourism has gained ground as an important contributor to the country’s own development efforts with specific emphasis on low volume tourism (See p. 18 in this study). Best known single tourism attraction in the country is Victoria Falls, a world heritage site located in Livingston, while wildlife viewing and other wilderness experiences as well as both nature and culture heritage sites are the other popular tourist attractions in Zambia (Matenga, 2005 pp. 191- 192).

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6 About 75% are Christians, 1% Muslims and 24% traditional believers. Catholic Church is the most dominant denomination in the country (Gifford, 1998, p. 183).
The fieldwork for this study was conducted in Lusaka, the capital city of Zambia. As a supplier organization I used a US-based volunteer organization (which I will call the Sending organization from now on) that arranged accommodation in a local family. I stayed with this family for six weeks and paid the organization for the accommodation and meals. For the remaining two weeks I arranged my accommodation on my own while still conducting my interviews.

The Sending organization is a non-profit US based organization. It offers volunteer travel placements in 20 low income countries. It has destinations in South and Central America, Africa and Asia. It operates in many fields such as orphanage work, day care, community development and teaching, among others. The organization had a local contact person in Zambia whose home was also the place where I and three other volunteers - who were there through the Sending organization - stayed.

The Sending organization was founded by an American couple. The couple writes in the web page of the organization that they had a trip to Chile, South America “where they saw the overwhelming need of the children and incredible difference volunteers made in helping a local orphanage.” This supplier organization is a non-profit organization which is based in Pennsylvania. It offers volunteer travel placements in 20 low income countries. It has four destinations in South America, four in Central America, seven in Africa and five in Asia. The organization operates in a range of fields such as orphanage work, day care, community development and teaching, among others. South America has also several destinations for environmental programs like sea turtle conservation and environment and animal rescue centers.

It becomes clear through reading the web pages of the Sending organization that volunteer work is presented as a valuable contribution where one volunteer can make a difference in the placements and communities they will be working, as seen from the citation below. “With a love for humankind, and a motivated spirit to help others, [the

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7 The web sites of the Sending organization.
Sending organization was created on the belief that one person can make a difference in the lives of others."

In Zambia particularly, the Sending organization has volunteer programs for dental professionals or –students at a dental clinic, Youth Advocacy Program and health care/HIV program in addition to orphanage support. Requirements for the health care program and orphan work are the age of 17 years or older and in addition an “open mind to new adventures” for the health care program applicants. Medical volunteers have a bit more requirements than the others, like submitting credentials or a nursing certificate. According to my knowledge all of the volunteers applying to Zambia through the Sending organization are accommodated in this particular local house of the Zambian coordinator. During my fieldwork and staying in Zambia, there were only volunteers who worked in the different children’s homes of the Organization staying in this house.

The program I and the other volunteers applied to is called Orphanage/Childcare assistance in the web pages of the Sending organization. This type of program was one of the most popular ones, having placements in 16 countries. Particularly said about the orphan work in Lusaka: “In this project you will find yourself organizing games, helping with homework, drawing, singing, kitchen and laundry help as well as basic upkeep such as sweeping, painting, and assisting in the community outreach projects.” And more: “Prior experience not necessary, volunteers should have a lot of patience, an open mind and a sense of compassion.” These quotations reveal how the potential volunteer was prepared for the coming experience and what was expected of him or her.

**3.3 The Organization**

The children’s home where I was working belongs to a Christian non-profit organization. From now on I will be calling it The Organization. In this chapter, I will describe and classify the Organization, present its’ funding base and discuss shortly of the vulnerable children in Zambia as beneficiaries of the Organization.

The second relevant Organization to this study is also United States based. It was formed in 1969, originally in North, South and Central America. The Zambian

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8 Name changed for anonymity.
partnership of the Organization was established in 1997 and Zambia has since been the organization’s field of service. The Organization receives volunteers, missionaries and different kinds of groups of possible or actual donors on a regular basis. The Organization runs three children’s homes in Zambia. As a volunteer worker I was mainly working in the main building of the organization, where there are orphaned or abandoned children from premature- and newly born babies to two year-olds. The main building can take up to 35 children at a time and during my fieldwork the house had constantly over 30 children. The other homes and programs include two other rescue homes for older children, school programs in partnership with local churches and a feeding program in nearby compounds. Volunteers could take part in all of these programs.

During the fieldwork, there were three regular volunteers who stayed in the main building. They came to volunteer straight to the Organization without any intermediary organizations as opposed to me and the three other volunteers who came through the Sending organization. The volunteers who came through the Sending organization were important informants in the study as I had the possibility to observe them the most - also during free time and evenings as we stayed in the same house and slept in the same room.

One of the interviewed volunteers who had been in the placement when two American women who were involved in starting the Organization were present, told me that these ladies revealed that the starting of the Zambian program was initially inspired by the fact that Zambia was a Christian country and it had more orphans per capita than any other African country. Actually in the whole of Zambia, the NGO sector is mainly church-based (Lewis and Kanji, 2009, p.92). This information was interesting albeit through second hand, since as noted earlier religion has had a big role in choosing to

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9 The name used for low-income areas in Lusaka.

10 One could ask, if my volunteer informants in this study were volunteer tourists or volunteer workers. Since their time spent in Zambia was rather long (from three to eight months), it can be argued that maybe they were not tourists at all, but instead volunteer workers. However, my intention is not to define them to either category as such but to search instead, how they define themselves. From the observations and analysis that follow it can be seen that they did define themselves as tourists as well as volunteer workers, depending on the circumstance.

11 Interview with a volunteer March 13, 2011.
engage the organization in some areas and not others, although this is not something that is always officially recognized.

The Organization is a faith-based charitable non-governmental organization according to the classification of Clarke (2008, p.25; 2006, p.845) where FBOs are divided into faith-based representative organizations or apex bodies, faith-based socio-political organizations, faith-based missionary organizations and finally faith-based radical, illegal or terrorist organizations. Thus the Organization is a ‘traditional’ service delivery organization, also called first period –NGO, as described in the previous chapter. The Organization self-defines itself as non-political, non-dogmatic, non-denominational and non-partisan. It aims to “bring together people from different nations, denominations, communities and cultures to work as partners to source for funds and material resources for [the Organization.]”

The Organization is a member of the Evangelical Council for Financial Accountability (ECFA). It leans on strong Christian values, which can be clearly seen on the web pages of the organization where the organization’s mission is stated as “To demonstrate the Love of Jesus Christ by bringing orphans and abandoned children into secure families, schools and communities”. The Organization’s goal is to provide for the physical, social, and spiritual needs of children who are orphaned, abandoned or otherwise in crisis. The focus is in the areas of infant and child survival, family preservation, foster care or adoption, and education. The Organization is operated by a Zambian board of directors. It employs about 75 men and women as social workers, nurses, care givers, drivers, guards, cooks, laundry workers, officers, secretaries, coordinators and teachers (see descriptions below).

**Funding of the Organization**

On the basis of my observation, interviews, informal discussions and the web pages of the Organization, the Organization runs entirely by private funds. The donations come mainly from America, from different Presbyterian and Reformist churches. Other funders are different foundations and some businesses as well as private donors.

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12 Material collected from the Children’s home 1, which is meant for presentation of the Organization for visitors. Name changed for securing anonymity.

The Organization partners together with some local Zambian churches for example to provide classrooms in some Christian schools. There is a particular type of sponsorship offered to individual donors who can help provide school supplies and a small teacher stipend. The Organization seeks private sponsors all the time for the individual students in these schools. Private donors can also sponsor an individual child who is placed in one of the three Children’s homes.14

Essential in the definition of volunteer tourism is that the volunteers will not get paid. In fact they often end up paying relatively more than the regular tourist in the same destination (Wearing 2001). These extra costs however, in an ideal situation go to the project the volunteer works for. There was some controversy and different claims in this particular case as to whether the Children’s homes or other projects of the Organization got any money from volunteers. At least in the case of volunteers who came through Sending organization, it seems that there was not any money going to the placement from the sum the volunteers paid beforehand. Of course they were individually able to pay extra or do fundraising back home. Neither was I able to find out from the Sending organization whether the local family volunteers stayed with earned something from taking volunteers to live with them or not. According to the local family, they earn nothing from taking volunteers; they only get compensation from the immediate expenses of the volunteers. However, most likely they also benefit monetarily from it at least in small amounts, for example when volunteers are not eating there every day.

Volunteers who were accommodated in the Children’s home paid either 50 dollars of the accommodation and meals per day if they wanted to have a separate cook and 19 dollars if they ate what the staff ate (or ended up buying their own food). Presumably all of this did not go to their expenses as the food was bought in bulks from the markets and was cheaper compared to Western prices. The second group of volunteers, who came through the Sending organization paid 820 dollars per one month in Zambia (a bit over 29 dollar per day), 1615 dollars for 7-8 weeks and for longer periods than 8 weeks, an additional cost of 150 dollars per week was required. None of these were included in either type of volunteers: airfare, insurance, visa, or vaccinations.

The beneficiaries: Vulnerable children

According to the presentation paper of the Organization, most children come through the University teaching hospital where mothers have died in childbirth. Some of them are abandoned in the maternity ward by young mothers and some of them are replaced after relatives have tried to take care of the child but found it impossible because of multiple reasons. Abandoned children are brought into the Organization through the Department of Social Welfare of Zambia, through the police or “Good Samaritans”\(^{15}\). According to the director, all the children go through the official procedures of Social Welfare of Zambia. This results in that all children in the Organization belong to the state of Zambia.

The traditional extended family system is going through changes in Zambia due to economic difficulties, HIV/AIDS deaths, rapid urbanization and breakdown of the rural family among others (Burdette, 1988, Kepa 2011; UN Africa Recovery 2001; Ministry of Sport, Youth and Child Development, 2004). In practice this means that there is an increasing need for the institutional care for children.

A related issue that was raised in also by some of my informants is that there is a new occurrence of lack of will to take care of other children than one’s biological ones.\(^{16}\) This happens particularly in big cities like Lusaka which is said to be because of increasing individualism and financial hardships. In the article of Kepa, (2011) some interviewed Zambians think that the non-governmental organization should take care of abandoned children, because they get lot of money from donors. This discussion on the role of the changing traditions and the roles that are attributed to the NGOs deserves a comment in the light of this case study. It can also be linked to the discussion on local and global civil society and their purpose. Indeed, when NGOs use their own resources to deliver services that the local government is failing to deliver, it is likely to reduce the expectations of the population towards the local government (Collier, 1996, p.120).

\(^{15}\) Citation from the Material of the Children’s home 1.
\(^{16}\) Research diary, conversation with the accommodating family.
4. METHODOLOGY

4.1 Encounters in aid interfaces

A pioneer in academic tradition of analyzing aid encounters is Norman Long (e.g. 1989) and I will use the concept *interface encounter* which he and the colleagues have developed, as an overall strategy for my analyses. The interface approach seemed to be a suitable method for my study purposes because of its emphasis on understanding the processes and negotiations inherent in such events where actors from different cultures meet. As a background and inspiration I have also utilized Olivier de Sardans’ (2005) view on development where he integrates development and anthropology. This interpretation of development is in line with the concept of interface encounter in a sense that the everyday interactions in the world of development become essential in both of these approaches.

The central theoretical concepts of Longs analysis are *social interface*, *encounter* and *actor-orientation*. Social interface is defined by Long: (2001, p.1) “A social interface is a critical point of intersection between different life worlds, social fields or levels of social organization, where social discontinuities based upon discrepancies in values, interests, knowledge and power, are most likely to be located”. According to Long, the concept helps illustrate these disruptions which are characteristic to social life in general but even more so in situations where actors have different worldviews or cultural paradigms (Long, 1989, p.221; Long, 2001, p.243).

In this study, these discontinuities are the situations observed in the field, in the encounters of foreign volunteers and the local workers as well as the children. The focus is on the interactions, negotiations and social struggles that take place between these different social actors in this particular children’s home in Zambia. Long’s concept of interface encounters is especially useful in analyzing development cooperation on a micro-level. This is because development cooperation entails special meeting points where different social and cognitive worlds of actors confront (Long, 2001, p.243) and what comes out from these encounters can be processes of struggle, bridging, or accommodation. Even though the encounters in this case study were not ‘aid’ in a sense that is usually meant in development cooperation, they turned out to have some similar dynamics.
Both common interests as well as differences go under the concept of interface encounters. Indeed, I had a presumption when going to the field that the actors involved had some common interests, for example wanting what is best for the child. However, since the concept of interface encounters has a tendency to focus attention on differences in world views or cultural interpretations between the parties or individuals (Long, 2001, p.69) I was also suspecting some opposing concerns. Indeed, unequal power relations which are often inherent to these situations of interaction (ibid.) have a tendency to create conflict as I had also witnessed in my previous experiences in a Tanzanian children’s home.

Interface analysis has been used especially in rural development (Long, 1989; see also Temudo, 2005; Hilhorst, 2003 and Seppälä, 2000), participatory rural appraisal (PRA), communication studies and stakeholder analyses (Olivier de Sardaan, 2005, p.13). As an example, Seppälä (2000) has used the concept to describe social interfaces of aid in rural Tanzania. He separates aid encounters to four different approaches; aid interface as a social encounter, as power politics, discursive events and as institutionalized practices (Seppälä, 2000, p.22). I discuss encounters mainly in the light of the first of these approaches, aid interface as a social, face-to-face encounter.

**Actor orientation**

In keeping with Long, we should try to understand society ‘from below’ which in turn needs documenting everyday ‘micro situations’ (1989, p. 228). Long’s proposition is based on an assumption that social actors have an agency and a capacity to act in a world (Long, 1989; 2001 and Long and Long, 1992). This actor-oriented perspective helps in realizing how small-scale interactions intertwine with larger frameworks (Long, 1989, p. 226).

An actor orientation acknowledges that people operate within the limitation of structural constraints, but lays emphasis on that constraints also operate through people. People are social actors, whose agency is shaped by their life worlds, experience and social networks, among others (Hilhorst, 2003 p.5).

Long’s encounter theory has been criticized from the structuralist perspective of its problems when proceeding from the micro-situation into wider setting (see Seppälä
According to these critics, structures need more direct attention. (Ibid.) However, for my purposes in this study encounter theory is useful precisely because of its merits in looking at the micro-level.

4.2 Ethnography

The methodology chosen for this study is *ethnographically inspired participant observation*. Ethnography suited my research purpose because it is the best way to study face-to-face encounters. Through ethnographic participant observation I had the possibility to observe, experience and document these daily ‘micro situations’ essential in interface encounters discussed above.

**Ethnography as art and science**

In essence, ethnography is qualitative research in a real environment, based on interaction between the researcher and the subjects (Blommaert and Jie, 2010, p.17.) Angrosino (2007, p.14) describes ethnography as “the art and science of describing a human group”. Indeed, because of the interpretative and subjective aspects of ethnography, I also felt occasionally that I was making art. In the following subchapters I describe the premises and proceeding of this ‘work of art’.

Ethnography intends to describe the cultural systems of a certain community, without trying to influence or control it. (Blommaert and Jie, 2010, p.17; Bray, 2008, p.300) In this research I discuss the cultural systems mainly in the light of encounters. It is widely held that the reactions of a certain community to an outside subject or intervention describe the dynamism of its own structures particularly well (see for example Olivier de Sardan, 2005, p.30; Long, 1999, p.2) My presupposition before entering the field was that the children’s home receiving volunteers on a regular basis offers a fruitful environment to research these cultural structures and even more so the encounters because child rearing has powerful cultural norms and customs related to.

Essentially, an ethnographer aims to find out the meanings people give to certain actions (Bray, 2008, p.302) by involving personally, observing the everyday practices as well as through open-ended interviewing (Blommaert and Jie, 2010, p.17.) This subjective nature of ethnography influences so that ethnography does not produce facts
as such (Blommaert and Jie, 2010, p.17.) but instead, it aims at demonstrating complexity in social life.

The roots of ethnography are in anthropology, but it is being used in many disciplines. The advantages of ethnography in development research especially are that through ethnography, development ‘in the field’ can be interpreted and described, something that no economic model of development can do (Olivier de Sardan, 2005, p.28). Development entails groups and individuals, who position themselves in relation to other groups in particular contexts (Crewe and Harrison, 1998, p. 181). This positioning is done especially in relation to the dominant group, but essential in terms of ethnography is that certain group can be dominant in some context but not in others (ibid. p. 181). The strength of ethnography comes from describing these contextual situations and the meanings in them.

**Positioning and process**

The position of the researcher has always an effect on the end results in ethnography. I took this into consideration already in the data collection phase and reflected the ways that my own position as a volunteer worker was possibly affecting the research objects and the environment I was observing. However, the influence is not unidirectional, as Hymes (1980 cited in Blommaert and Jie, 2010, p.12) notes. According to Hymes, ethnography is a “mutual relation of interaction and adaptation” between the researcher and the informants, “a relation that will change both” (Ibid). Certainly, the people I worked with had an influence on me especially since I was also becoming close friends with some of them.

In the field, I had multiple roles. By involving myself personally means in this ethnographic research that I was working as a volunteer worker in the same way as the other foreign volunteers, while also having role as a researcher. This dual role was interesting, since I had to balance constantly between participation with observation and closeness with distance, which is common challenge to academics doing ethnographic research (see for example De Laine 2000, p. 94). In practice this was seen in the situations where I needed to decide whether I was going to stay somewhere alone and write my observations or to participate in an on-going activity. These dilemmas of
multiple roles took place even more often after I became close friends with some of the informants.

Rastas (2005, p. 90) reminds that although for instance gender and race are permanent features, their meanings are still context-specific social constructs. Certainly, in addition to being a volunteer, my position in the field was essentially influenced by me being a young white, Western female. I soon realized after entering the field that also my belonging technically to Finnish Evangelical-Lutheran church had a meaning for this study. This position allowed me to be involved actively for example in the morning devotions but also to keep a certain distance to religion.

My position was also interesting in a sense that I was the only one in the placement whose mother tongue was not English and apparently the first North-European volunteer in the placement. I considered it mostly as an advantage, since it made it more difficult to put me into some category on which the informants had previous experience, like for example “the British volunteers” or the “American visitors”.

Prior to fieldwork period, I had an ambitious plan to include the children also as active informants in this study. I was hoping to be able to observe, analyze and even interview the children and the encounters between them and the volunteers more than I eventually did. Since, according to for example Alasuutari (2005, p. 145) and James (2001, p. 246), children should have a right to be recognized as real subjects in the academic research. Especially ethnography allows children to be viewed as active social actors and thus competent interpreters of the social world.

However, I made a decision not to accentuate the observation of the behavior of the children too much in this study, because obviously I lacked the specific education what comes to interviewing and observing children as well as the professional abilities to analyze the results. It also became clear after settling to the field, that the children who I was spending most time with were simply too young to be interviewed.

Because my interest was especially in encounter situations, which have a tendency to produce conflicts and struggles, I sometimes suspected during the process of analysis that these aspects might get too much foothold in the results as well. Also Seppälä notes that the methodology of aid encounters can be used to locate problems in aid interfaces
(Seppälä 2000, p.27) which was not my intention nonetheless. However, as in line with the idea of development that Olivier de Sardan (2005) has, my intention was more to understand the complex social practices prevailing in these situations, not to condemn them, let alone to change them.

The advantage of doing observations in qualitative research is that the observer can see something that the participants are unwilling to talk about in interview (Blommaert and Jie, 2010, p.3; Patton, 1990, p.204). This is why observation is so important. In the next chapter I will first describe observation as a method in this study and after that I proceed to describe the interviews.

4.3 Description of the research material

Observation and research diary

Indeed, in the light of my research questions, the most important method of data collection proved to be participant observation where I used both direct and indirect observation. Participant observation is a field strategy that combines data from personal, eyewitness observation with information gained from natural interviews and informants’ descriptions (Patton 1990, p.207). The observations from the field were written to my research diary as part of my everyday work. My main research material consists of my research diaries, my personal diary and the interview transcriptions. The research diary was written on a daily basis, mostly in the evenings at the house where I and three other volunteers stayed. My observations yielded a research diary written on computer which is 31 pages long with 11 pt and line spacing 1.15. In addition, I wrote handwritten research notes and observations resulting in 93 pages in A5 sized notebooks.

Photographs were also taken of the field locations and some activities. In addition to photos I took personally, I also have the photos taken by other volunteers with their own cameras during their time in Zambia. Furthermore, I have some material taken from the location, from example a presenting paper for visitors of the Children’s home 1. Data obtained from these different sources was then cross-checked, that is triangulated, to enhance the credibility of analysis (see for example Patton, 1990, p.467; Silverman, 2000, p.177).
**Interviews**

In addition to observation, I conducted interviews with local workers and the other volunteers. The interviews were *semi-structured*, which means the order of the questions was not relevant and the answers were open-ended (Patton, 1990 p. 24). The strength of open-ended responses is that they allow one to understand the world as seen by the respondents (ibid.).

My original purpose was to interview all the interviewees twice but because of the circumstances in the field this soon proved impossible. I managed to get two volunteers to have a second interview session and one volunteer answered my questions through e-mail after returning home. With the other volunteers and with the caregivers and the rest of the staff the frequency of the contact varied. Sometimes I saw them at work for many hours and days in a row but then suddenly their shift changed or they had a two weeks’ vacation so I couldn’t see them anymore.

In line with principles of *informed consent*, I informed all the interviewees about my intention to study volunteerism in the children’s home. Before doing any interviews, I asked permission for interviews and observation from the local director of the children’s home.

All the interviews of the caregivers and the staff took place in the Children’s home 1 or 2 at the time that was easiest to the participants, usually in between some daily chores when children were relatively quiet (however, this did not always succeed, see below on Ethics). The volunteers were interviewed usually in the evenings in their room or in the conference room of the Children’s home. Very rarely interviews could be conducted so that there were no other people present at any time of the interview. However, that did not seem to greatly affect the sincerity of the interviewees compared to the one-on-one discussions outside the interview situations.

I recorded all the interviews with a recorder, except for one where the interviewee did not feel comfortable with the recorder. Six volunteers from Canada, USA, the UK and New Zealand together with 13 local workers were interviewed. One interviewee was an ex-volunteer who had come to the placement mainly because of social relations and was classified as ‘other’ in Table 1 (see p.35). Out of 20 interviewees two were men and all
the others were women. All in all there were 23 interviews where three of the volunteers were interviewed twice and one of them also through e-mail after returning to her home country. I also had e-mail contact with the Zambian head nurse of the Children’s home and with the American vice-president of the Organization after the field period, resulting in three e-mails from them to me and four from me to them. All of the interviews were conducted in English.

The aim was to interview Zambian employees from different hierarchy levels of the organization and this succeeded quite well. I started my interviews from the top of the organization with interviews of the director and the head of social welfare, following with interviews with the head nurse and after that started the interviews with the caregivers. Most Zambian interviewees had worked in the organization for several years; the scale went from few months up to 13 years of employment. In addition to the interviews, informal conversations were also meaningful, particularly with the volunteers.

All the interviews, except two of them - which I listened to but did not find any information of considerable relevancy - were then transcribed in their entirety. The transcription of the interviews resulted in 216 pages with 12 pt and line spacing 1.5.
Table 1. Main workplace of the interviewed volunteers and Zambian staff

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Main workplace</th>
<th>Volunteers</th>
<th>Zambian staff</th>
<th>Other</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Children’s home 1</td>
<td>2 + (1)*</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>14 + (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children’s home 2</td>
<td>2 + (1)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3 + (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children’s home 3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>6</strong></td>
<td><strong>13</strong></td>
<td><strong>1</strong></td>
<td><strong>20</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*The number in parenthesis describes one volunteer who was alternating quite equally between Children’s home 1 and 2.

**Coding and analysis**

After the transcription I analysed all the transcript interviews with a qualitative content analysis.

First I categorized the raw data of the interviews to codes which reflected the interview questions quite closely (Barbour, 2008, p.198). These were my provisional analytic schemes as Silverman defines them (Silverman, 2000, p.180). My early categories included, for example: children attaching to volunteers, children meeting a white person, communication problems, things volunteers should learn, volunteers enjoying the experience, and volunteers’ reasons for choosing the place. In this phase I kept the answers of volunteers and staff members separate in order to ease my identification and following interpretation. My intention after that was to compare the cases I had found and reorganize and relate the categories to each other. In this phase I searched larger categories from the codes and identified some core categories. Throughout the
procedure I identified deviant cases from the data, also called ‘negative categories’ (Barbour, 2008, p.198; Silverman, 2000, p.180).

The final selection was based on the patterns I found from the data and was done much later in the research process. I ended up with such themes as: ‘volunteers’ background and motivation’, ‘children and volunteers’, ‘hierarchy and power’, ‘culture and religion’, ‘what is volunteer work’, ‘The Organization and the Children’s home,’ ‘learning’, ‘staff and volunteers’ and ‘Zambia/Africa’.

An ethnographic analysis attempts to mirror the described events and processes, which means that the possible complexity of processes should be seen in the analysis as well (Blommaert and Jie, 2010, p.85). The complexity of the field and the events taking place there also affected the challenges I faced when coding and analysing my data. One of these was that many of the subcategories could be interpreted as belonging to several larger themes, for example my sub-category ‘diaper change’ belonged to the themes of ‘children and volunteers’ as well as to the ‘hierarchy and power theme’.

According to Angrosino, (2007, p.75) data analysis has two main phases; that of searching for patterns which I have described above and that of searching for meaning in the patterns. In chapter five I will try to demonstrate the second one that is the meanings in these patterns.

4.4 Limitations and ethics

Ethics

Ethical and moral dilemmas are an unavoidable consequence of fieldwork (De Laine, 2000, p.2, 15, 16). The researcher cannot plan for them but they must be addressed which, according to De Laine, can be done by drawing on the ethical codes, moral and professional standards of the researcher as well as on values, intuition and emotions of the researcher (2000, p.16) I informed all the interviewees about my status and my objectives according to the principles of informed consent. I also asked permission for recording every time before starting an interview and guaranteed anonymity to the informants.
Before and during the fieldwork, I needed to take into consideration the potentially harmful influence my research might have on the subjects and on the organizations involved. One ethical question was the legitimacy of my research from the viewpoint of the children’s home and the organizations involved. What kind of effects my results and the conducted interviews had from their standpoint?

Ethical considerations are especially relevant because there were small children involved. I decided to include a small section of children’s attachment in this study because it became important on the basis of my analysis. I consider that part of this study as a contribution to the psychological aspect for Development studies, which according to for example Alkire (2002, p.183) has unfortunately received little attention. I also found it ethically important inside the volunteer tourism research, especially considering the growing market of volunteer tourism to developing countries and the popularity of it especially in orphanages and children’s homes (see for example, Richter and Norman, 2010). However, the ethical concern that still remains is that the consent for the observation of the children could not be guaranteed from themselves, since the children who I ended up spending most time with, were so young. Normally in these situations the source of confirmation can also be the parents of the young children (Alasuutari, 2005, p.147) but in this situation also the parents’ confirmation was impossible.

Another ethical question concerning the children was that whether my interviews would disrupt their care. Even though the interviews were arranged so that most of the possible activities could be done at the same time as the interviewing was conducted, there was at least one occasion, which can also be heard in the recording of the interview, where the children started to cry a lot, possibly more than if I had not been taking away the attention of the caregiver and myself with my questions. However, in the occasions when I observed this happening I immediately stopped the interviews. Mostly, however the interviewing did not seem to influence the daily work much. Usually the children were sleeping or playing at the time of the interview, and since I tried to keep it as informal as possible, we could quite easily continue some chore, like holding a baby simultaneously with the interview.


Limitations

Although my observations were based on the naturally occurring encounters and not only on the semi-structured interviews, I needed to consider how my own position as a foreign volunteer worker would affect the interviews and the responses I would get from local workers.

Before the fieldwork period, I was concerned about whether I would be able to have also the critical side of volunteer tourism from my observations and interviews in addition to positive ones, because of my own volunteer status. In the end, this proved to be a somewhat unnecessary concern. Instead, sometimes I felt that some points for discomfort were not expressed in my presence, because of knowing my status as a student of Development studies doing observations. One of the volunteers after having been interviewed said that she could not help to think about me being a development student - as she is one also in her home country - , and she had just done a course of methodology in her University. The context in this interview was that I had only been in the field couple of days and I did not know the people there as intimately as in later stages of the research process. Indeed, in the second interview with this volunteer, she seemed a lot more relaxed to express her thoughts and feelings.

Getting to know the people at personal level and the closeness of the researcher to people and situations is important for qualitative studies, especially participant research (Patton 1990, p.46) I managed to build close relationships with the informants even at the relatively short period staying in the field, due to the intensiveness and living side by side with the volunteers in the placement. To the locals, especially to caregivers, there was always more distance compared to the relationships with the volunteers.

As Barbieri, Santos and Katsube (2012, p.512) claim, participant observation carries some limitations that are mainly associated with lack of objectivity and reliability. Certainly, the objectivity of the findings can be questioned on the basis of the researcher being both the instrument of data collection and data interpretation. Despite the efforts to involve especially locals’ opinions, my analysis is still affected by my own cultural framework, especially of me being a young white volunteer from a Western country.
However, as Patton (1990, p. 55) states, absolute objectivity and science totally free from values are impossible to achieve in practice and also questionable in their desirability. The solution offered by Patton (1990) is to stay out of arguments about subjectivity versus objectivity but to require neutrality for credible research instead. Neutral position of the investigator requires committing to understanding the world as it is, to be true to complexities and multiple perspectives and cover both confirming and disconfirming evidence (ibid. p.55).

What comes to the more practical limitations of this research, I believe I should have benefited from being able to observe volunteers coming and adapting from the beginning of their experience until the end. In practice the schedules were not possible to arrange so and I only managed to see one volunteer entering the placement but I did not have a chance to see any leaving encounters except my own.

5. RESULTS: ENCOUNTERS IN THE CHILDREN'S HOME

This chapter presents the ways that the methods described in the previous chapter were applied to the data and how the analysis proceeded in the light of the research questions. As an outcome, I ended up with five large categories of results which are the location and the environment, the freedom of doing volunteer work, the hierarchy and questions of power, the meaning of religion in the encounters and finally volunteers and their interaction with children.

5.1 Location and the environment

Zambia has a reputation as being one of the most stable countries in Africa (Burdette 1988, p.1). Because of significant mining industry, Zambia is also among the most urbanized countries in Africa (Gifford, 1998, p.181). Indeed, when I arrived to Lusaka airport for the first time on a sunny afternoon in March 2011 and talked with the local coordinator who came to pick me up from the airport, he said to me:

People often have a wrong impression about Africa, that we kill each other and so on... But we here in Zambia are peaceful.

According to him there are no wars nor violence the same way as somewhere else in Africa because people in Zambia are open and do not keep things to themselves. Indeed,
since independence Zambia has had regular elections, a civilian government and no successful coups to date (Burdette 1988, p.1).

Locating the Children’s home is not irrelevant. In fact, Anthony Bebbington (2004) for example, addresses development intervention in a way that includes geography in the analysis. According to him, NGO presence and absence must be historicized and contextualized in order to model the uneven ways in which NGOs become involved in producing places and livelihoods (Bebbington, 2004, p. 725-726, 727).

Considering that the approach of this dissertation is from the branch of tourism, the place and the setting comes even more relevant. It is no coincidence that the Organization was working in Lusaka, the capital of Zambia. Also Bebbington (2004, p. 728) notes how NGOs have a tendency to stay in urban areas instead of rural ones or at least close to larger cities in order to facilitate its functions. This was characteristic to the present case as well. In fact, volunteer tourism in rural Africa is rare, if not impossible because of the commercial aspects involved and the necessary infrastructure.

Furthermore, it is no coincidence that the volunteers arrived to this particular place. Indeed, as one of the volunteers described, her criteria for choosing Zambia was that people speak English there and that according to the information she obtained, it was described as relatively safe Sub-Saharan African country.

The Organization and the Sending organization both also have extensive web sites and at least for one volunteer ‘googling’ was a way to find out about the placement. Especially the Sending organization advertises itself and its location in Zambia in various forums on the Internet. Albeit I am not convinced that the regular staff knew about these links of the Sending organization, it is clear that the presence of the this supplier organization connected also the Organization and the people in it to global networks. According to Bebbington, (2004, p.732) these global networks bring with them also new resources, forms of exercising power and notions of modernity, the topics which I will discuss more in subsequent sections.
**Children’s homes 1-3**

The children’s home is located in the outskirts of Lusaka, the capital of Zambia. There is a big major road beside the main gate of the main house, which leads to the center of Lusaka or, in the opposite direction, to the Lusaka International airport.

Children’s home 1 is the main building from the three homes. The office personnel and the director are working in a building right next to the main building in the same courtyard. International visitors and teams are also accommodated in the main building.

The other children’s house (from now on Children’s home 2) is about 20 minutes by foot from the Children’s home 1. The children are moved there when their capacities are considered developed enough for a pre-school like environment. The house there is much smaller than the Children’s home 1. The gate is also colorfully painted with the name of the home. The facility consists of a house, a yard where children can play and swing and a small garden on the other side of the house. Inside the Children’s home 2 there is a kitchen, a big living room and rooms for boys and girls. The children here are from two to four years old.17

Children’s home 3 is where the oldest children stay. They are from four up to about fourteen years old. To this home it takes more than 40 minutes by foot from the Children’s home 1 and usually people go there from the Children’s home 1 by car or by bicycle. It is a big facility with three big buildings and a school yard. Children live and go to school there.

The Children home 1 has also two drivers and a guard. It has two cars and a bus which brings the workers to their shifts if they live in town. The House has quite high standards of equipment - running water, showers, water toilets and electricity – compared to the basic living standard of a Zambian.

All the three homes are meant to be transit homes, which means that children are supposed to stay there only until there is another option for them like adoption, relocation to parents or extended family, foster care or adoption.

17 Interview with the Zambian director, March 14, 2011.
I was mainly working in the Children’s home 1 and my following discussion and description is from this house, if not mentioned otherwise.

**Description of the Children’s home 1**

The main building of the Children’s home 1 is a white two-story stone building. The main gate is colorfully painted, and the name of the house shows clearly to the road. There is almost always a guard on duty opening the gate for visitors if it is closed and welcomes them.

Sometimes the children are brought outside to the yard to get some fresh air. Then they sit on the green grass on some blankets which are brought from inside and the caregivers and possible volunteers sit with them.

Right opposite from the main entrance there are stairs which lead to the second floor infant room. Infant room is the place for the youngest and smallest babies. There are about 17 cots upstairs and during my time there, there were about 15 babies. Some babies are brought there straight from hospital for example when their mother has died during labor. These babies here are in a very vulnerable state, since many of them are premature infants with poor health conditions. When the child is developed enough and can for example sit on her own, they are removed to the room downstairs.

On the left side from the main entrance is a conference room where for example all the morning devotions are held. On the left side of the conference room there is one big dinner table and on the other, two sofas and a couple of armchairs. Right beside the doorway of the conference room there is a tank of bottle water which is meant mainly for foreign visitors who are unable to drink the tap water. Volunteers used it regularly. From the conference room you can reach the visitor bedrooms, which have their own entrance as well. The conference room has big windows which give out right to the yard and to the entrance gate. In the walls of the conference room there is a world map and pointed places where visitors who have stayed in the placement are from and some photos of important visitors.

On the right side of the main entrance of the Children’s home 1 there is also a small room called Receiving room. This is where the new babies are brought for the first
couple of days. Between the receiving room and children’s room there are also two modern bathrooms with showers. Then there is a corridor for the office of the sister in charge and “boys room” where the male visitors usually stay. From there there’s the way to the kitchen. It is in the kitchen where I observed and experienced the most of the informal discussions and joke-making between the staff (other than the office workers) and the volunteers. The kitchen is equipped with a microwave oven and a coffee machine which are rare luxuries in a normal household in Zambia (see for example Gifford 1998, p. 187). Walking through the kitchen one reaches the laundry room and in the back of the house the third entrance and opposite it the “girls room” where the female visitors usually stay. This is the room where all the volunteers who stayed in the Children’s home 1 lodged. All in all the house can accommodate up to 12 persons in the team dormitories at the Children’s home 1, and according to my knowledge these are regularly used for teams who come from different countries with a fundraising objective, for example.

The children up till two years old stay in the downstairs nursery. This room is the place where most of the everyday care of the children like bathing, feeding, playing and sleeping happens. The room is encircled with the children’s cots, which were about 15 in number. In the center of the room lies a big carpet. There is a small table in the left corner, where babies are sometimes changed and dressed, and in the same corner a closet full of toys. The children have two big closets full of tidy folded clothes, different ones for boys and for girls. Beside the door there is a small room where some bedclothes are kept and where the staff often changes their clothes and prepares for leaving. On the opposite there is a shower and a bathroom with a bathtub where the babies are washed. Both upstairs and downstairs nurseries have some baby posters on the walls and a timetable for the age group in question.

The hygiene level of the orphanage is high. The floors and the big carpet of children’s room are swept after every meal, usually by the caregivers; sometimes also some volunteers can do this. The laundry is washed in a laundry room which has two washing machines and one dryer. Also the kitchen is cleaned several times a day by the kitchen staff. The quality of food in the orphanage was good. For lunch the children normally had big portions of the local staple food called nshima (a cornmeal made from ground maize flour) with some relish made of beans, meat, fish or some vegetable like rapeseed
or pumpkin leaves. The children eat on the floor with their hands and the ones who
can’t eat by themselves are fed by the caregivers or volunteers by hands or with a small
spoon. There is a plastic cover which is used on top of the normal carpet on meal times.

The children’s home was known in the region and it had also got international
recognition for Best Practice Model by UNICEF.\textsuperscript{18}

\textbf{The staff}

The staff in the Children’s home 1 and 2 can be put into following five categories:

\textbf{Caregivers} The staff at the Children’s home 1 consist of caregivers who are the ones
responsible of the everyday care of the children. This includes bathing, feeding,
dressing, putting to bed, cleaning, preparing the milk and porridge and both folding and
dressing the diapers. The caregivers worked under \textbf{Sister in Charge}.

\textbf{Nurses} During the daytime there was one nurse on duty who was in charge of the
healthcare of the babies. Some babies, who were brought in the Children’s home 1,
were premature, malnourished or otherwise sick. The nurses’ job is to monitor the
babies’ growth, assess their health conditions, medicate them and refer difficult cases to
hospital. Nurses also asses the nutrition of the babies and provide them with what is
needed in terms of nutrition.

\textbf{Social welfare and other office workers} Social welfare department worked in the
other building of the complex at the Children’s home 1. They were not involved with
the practical every day work with the children. Instead, their role was to ensure the
protection of the children and their possible relocation. Since the homes which
Organization operates are all meant to be transit homes, all children are supposed to be
relocated. The situations where they were involved with the volunteers were morning
devotions and some particular days, for example food distribution days as well as
school visits and some events. Some longer staying volunteers got also specific
assignments from the office workers, for example to take care of the water tank in the
living room, its sufficiency and reordering. There were about 10 people working in the
office. These include the director and his secretary, the head of social welfare of the

\textsuperscript{18} Material from the Children’s home 1.
Organization and her secretary, administrative officer, finance officer, an education coordinator, education standards officer, Public Relations Officer and a Programs Coordinator.

**Guard and driver** The facilities were guarded 24/7 by a guard whose physical position was mainly by the entrance gate in a booth. The Organization had a driver who was irreplaceable especially during food distributions to the compounds of Lusaka, school visits and while running multiple errands for the Organization. He was also used to pick up the visitors from the airport and to take them to different places during their visit.

**Cleaning, kitchen and laundry** From the early morning until late afternoon someone had to be in the kitchen to prepare food either to children or to the staff. Because of the cloth diapers that needed washing every day and the amount of clothes becoming dirty during the day, there was also a laundry lady there daily who did the washing, ironing and hanging to dry clothes and bedding.

From the observations done in the field, one gets the impression that basically all of the Zambian staff were getting along pretty well. Jokes, laughing and loud discussion were a common describing attribute of the atmosphere that was being conveyed to an outsider most of the time. Of course this can sometimes be misinterpretation since the dominating language during these interactions between Zambians was always Nyanja or some other local language like Bemba.  

**Teachers** There were two teachers working in the Children’s home 2, where children were a bit older and could be involved in teaching-like activities. Both of the teachers were women and their tasks were mainly to teach some drawing, singing, playing and teaching English to children aged 2 to 5 years. Two to three volunteers went mainly to Children’ home 2 and they were involved with the teachers more than the others who worked more in the Children’s home 1. One of the volunteers had worked her first months in the Children’s home 3 before the other volunteers came. There she was

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19 There are over 70 spoken languages in Zambia. The most spoken one nationwide is Bemba while Nyanja is the most popular language in the urban areas, especially Lusaka. The national language, since Zambia’s independence in 1964 is English. English is often the chosen language in intertribal communication. (Bourdette, 1988, p. 38, CIA, 2012).
involved with teachers for the older children, which were rarely seen in the other homes or any other occasions.

**Daily routines in the Children’s home 1**

The caregivers’ morning shift starts at 8 o’clock in the morning. Normally they check that the children have been fed around 5 o’clock and the nappies have been changed and washed by the night shift staff. The morning shift will start by bathing the children and feeding them porridge. At 12 o’clock is time for lunch which is usually nshima. After lunch it is usually the time to change the nappies. At 3 pm the children are fed porridge in the bottle.

The night shift starts at 4.30 pm. They start by cooking nshima. The children eat around 6 pm and after eating they bath for the second time during the day. Bathing is followed by dressing night rompers for the children and after dressing they are put to bed. Children wake up around 5 am waiting for the milk to be fed. In addition to above mentioned daily activities, caregivers weigh the children on a weekly basis.

Volunteers, who live in the home accommodation, come usually to the Children’s home at 8 am if they attend devotions and around 9 am if they do not. The exception is a Japanese lady who comes at 8 o ‘clock, does not attend devotion and goes straight to nursery. Although depending greatly of the day and particular habits and preferences of the volunteer, usually the volunteers tend to work in their main workplace (See Table 1. in 4.3) during morning hours and then return to the Children’s home 1 for lunch at noon. After that, volunteers usually prepare a lunch for themselves, followed by some internet time, playing cards or other free-time activities. After that they usually return to the children, and some of them move to the upstairs nursery in Children’s home 1 if they had been in the downstairs nursery or if they had been in Children’s home 2, they tend to stay in Children’s home 1 and help around there or just do their own things. Sometimes they take a certain child out from the nursery and sit with them while doing other things like playing cards or talking with other volunteers. The volunteers who stay in the local coordinators’ house will return to there before it gets dark, around six. It takes 20 minutes to half an hour to walk to their place of accommodation from the Children’s home 1. This is a crude schedule which changes a lot depending of the

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20 Interview with a caregiver, March 29, 2011.
particular interests of the volunteers, as well as some special days like food distribution
days or school visit where volunteers were often involved.

Giving close attention to the practices of everyday social life is of the essence in Long’s
interface encounters (Long, 2001). Also other scholars stress the importance of studying
everyday practices. For example, Seckinelgin (2007, p. 330) claims that the actor
acquires common values and meanings within a certain nexus through everyday
practices. Hilhorst describes everyday practices as “key to understanding development
NGOs” (see Hilhorst, 2007).

What is noteworthy in the practices of the Organization is that when volunteers arrived
to the placement, they did not have established orientation to the practicalities of the
Children’s home. In Norman Long’s actor perspective, an essential point is when
agency is claimed to someone. In these instances, it is relevant to look for who agency
is claimed for, by whom and for what purpose (Seckinelgin, 2007, p. 328). The
responsibility of orienting a new volunteer was mainly in the hands of the other
volunteers and their willingness to teach what they themselves had learned. And what
the volunteers knew was somewhat interpretative also, since some of the practicalities
of the placement were changing depending on who was in charge and whether the
American management was present or not. Some of the reasons leading to the theme of
the next chapter, that of the freedom of doing volunteer work, lie most likely in this lack
of formal orientation.

5.2 The freedom of doing volunteer work

When I first arrived to the placement, I was presuming to see and experience an
enormous amount of face-to-face encounters between the local staff and the volunteers
in childcare situations. What I soon discovered was that it was not as easy after all to
find oneself in the same situation with the caregivers and the volunteers, at least not for
very long periods of time.

In previously published research on volunteer tourism (see for example Barbieri et al.,
2012; Tomazos and Butler, 2011), volunteer tourism has been described as having both
the qualities of work and leisure. Furthermore, often the leisure time involves activities
that can be described as tourism. This might seem obvious from the point of view of the
volunteering individual, but my data revealed that this was not so self-evident for my Zambian interviewees. From some of their answers one can hear a disappointment to the volunteers’ contribution. One Zambian respondent, a nurse in the Organization answered like this when I asked if there are some benefits to the children’s home of taking volunteers there:

\[R: \text{Yes. Though some they don’t... They don’t seem to be taking their role as volunteers.}\]

\[I: \text{Yes? How come?}\]

\[R: \text{Well we don’t know why, but their supposed to be with the children most of the time. That’s why they came. But they are not there most of the time, they got their own ideas but that’s what they are supposed to. They should be with the children. You know, if you want to ask what interests... Maybe in this orphanage maybe somebody doesn’t want small babies. There’s another generation which is bigger look at \{}. If they are not there, there’s [Children’s home 2]\textsuperscript{22}, there’s [Children’s home 3]. You find yourself where you fit well. But you find that most of the time some they are not with these children.}\]

The data suggests that irregular days and freedom to choose their schedule as well as their level of engagement to work were defining contributes of the volunteer experience. In the above excerpt, the head nurse also offers different possibilities for volunteers to involve themselves, if they would prefer some placements inside the Organization, instead of some others. Often the freedom to choose their level of engagement induced that some tasks considered ‘dirtier’ or more difficult were often not done by volunteers. The analysis shows that this indicates the hierarchy in the organization and the volunteers’ place in it.

Despite the volunteers’ freedom and sometimes small contribution, they were still considered as an important element in the organization and as the Zambian director of the organization claimed, it was also a question of money that the volunteers were welcome. When asked about the benefits to the organization of having volunteers, the director said that he could have added one or two more people and having had to pay them, but now he can find that that job is being done by a volunteer. He emphasizes that the volunteers play a very big role in that because the saved money can be used to buy food for the children. Thus, in the eyes of the director, volunteers do actually have a

\[\textsuperscript{21} R \text{ refers to the respondent and I to the interviewer.}\]

\[\textsuperscript{22} \text{Writer’s modification for securing anonymity.}\]
very important part in the Organization since, according to him, they replace paid employees. However, their importance did not come across to volunteers.

The local members of staff often do not know the whereabouts of the volunteers, since volunteers do not have a structured schedule or specific tasks. This raises the question of the responsibilities of foreign volunteer workers. From the locals’ viewpoint they cannot be thought of as having any responsibility. This in a way causes the situation that volunteers do not feel like they are needed. Lepp (2009, p. 254, 257) notices that sometimes obligation is a desired component in leisure experiences. In the case of volunteer tourism, some sort of obligation helps volunteers to differentiate themselves from traditional tourists, which is an idea almost all of the interviewed volunteers expressed. Although, it should be added that the pleasure in volunteerism from the volunteers’ viewpoint is also associated with flexibility, non-coercive tasks and feeling of free from evaluation (Lepp, 2009, p. 258).

**Changing the nappies**

Three of the interviewed local workers raised the issue of changing the nappies in that many volunteers do not do it and four noted that the volunteer who does it is exceptional. This theme seemed important, acknowledging the amount of local interviewees who said something about it.

As Patton states (1990, p. 54), the researcher is both the instrument of data collection and data interpretation. To this I would add that sometimes - as in this case - the researcher himself is also the object of research. An excerpt below highlights the process where I, as the researcher, was also a part of the phenomenon and interacted and affected the objects of research.

To what I have seen, for example you. You are different from the others that have come. If they see that the baby is wet, they can't change that baby. They will tell you, "Oh this baby is wet. Can you please change this baby?" But for you, you are different from them. [laughter] (laughter) You just get that baby; you go and change the baby. But these other volunteers who come they are like: “This baby is wet.”

In the above excerpt I asked if there was something that the caregivers would hope more from volunteers and as an answer to this the caregiver started talking about changing
nappies. Therefore, it can be assumed that changing nappies by volunteers would be a desirable action from the caregivers’ viewpoint.

Many volunteers were not sure of the specific techniques of folding a cloth diaper i.e. nappy and did not bother to learn how it should be folded. Also, the arrangements concerning the changing of the nappies sometimes changed, so the volunteers were unsure whether they should wait until all the babies are changed at the same time or just change the one who is wet. At times, the changing of an individual child was denied by a staff member because there were inadequate amount of cloths for all of the children or because the bathing time was soon or for some other reason. This also illustrates the miscommunication that volunteers and the locals sometimes experienced. The volunteers were not present at certain times, so they did not always learn the timetables and the change of practices, depending on who was in charge. Sometimes the understanding of the routines did not have time to develop even in weeks, due to both different the working schedules and different the working places of the volunteers.

Here, the same person as in the previous excerpt in a way draws together the previous conversation, and again as a last comment in the interview, raises the issue of changing nappies, which once more points to the significance of it to caregivers:

R: ...Some they are not, they are not good to the babies.
I: Some are not good to the babies?
R: I'm not saying they are bad but i'm just saying that they are not... Maybe I can say they don't know.
I: Aa...
R: But they can play with babies, they don't know how to change the nappies, you can't force them to change the napkins.

According to her, volunteers can play with the babies and that is what they are good at but they do not always know how to change the napkins, or will not bother to find out. In the eyes of the local workers it would have been important that the volunteers would have got their ‘hands dirty’ and this way also taken part for the more unpleasant tasks.

In the below quotation a nurse explains how the staff is unable to question the volunteer’s motivation for working:
Well we don't know why, I cannot ask why because they are volunteers. That’s volunteering to do that job. If she doesn't want we cannot say why you don’t do this. We don’t know.

The interviewee here and in the previous quotation raises a dilemma in volunteer work. Because they are volunteers, one cannot force them to do anything. It is also impossible to force volunteers to learn, as the previous interviewee said. Essentially, the diaper change situations tell about hierarchy and power. The volunteers had the power to choose specific tasks and not others and a possibility to not to turn out for the workplace someday if they had better things to do.

However, it was clearly seen in the placement how the volunteers themselves affect the situation and reshape it according to their own interests. Some volunteers were active from the beginning in learning - both the ways to fold the cloth diaper and even a new language - while others preferred to mainly hold the babies and play with them.

Since the role of the volunteer was unclear in the everyday actions of the Children’s home, not changing the nappies was sometimes interpreted from the locals’ part as it was something to do with prejudice. Here is something one caregiver said to me while I asked for clarification as to why she thinks some volunteers do not want to change the nappies and that way be in contact with ‘poopoo’.

Some they feel maybe that we are not the same. But we are the same people. Our colour, they feel not good.

However, instead of prejudice my data observations suggest that the question was more about the volunteers not knowing how to change the napkin or should it be done by volunteers at all. The volunteers interpreted the silence of caregivers and not giving instructions as if though they were not needed. In conclusion, the act of changing of the nappies by volunteers was not irrelevant subject to the local staff in the Children’s home and meant to them much more than the volunteers seemed to think.

**Do the volunteers “make a difference”?**

When I am discussing the role of the volunteers in the Organization in this subchapter, I will concentrate on two relevant issues; the responsibilities of a volunteer as well as the role ambiguity and arising frustration from it.
According to Palacios (2010, p. 863–864) providing development aid and humanitarian relief is the main goal of many international volunteering programs. Essentially, there is also another important goal, that of building international understanding. Indeed, one volunteer, who was also one of my main informants, said in an interview that as a volunteer, she considers culture and cultural awareness as her main responsibility, instead of specific tasks. This was also backed up by another volunteer when she was wondering if the local community and the Children’s home were benefiting from having her around. She ended up to the conclusion that they benefit from her because they learn from another culture and because she can bring new ideas.

Apparently some issues related to volunteers - especially the ones staying in the premises of the Children’s home - and their unclear roles in the placement had bothered Zambians for some time. However, only when the American managers of the Organization came, could something be done to that.

I got an impression in the field that all the management, especially the American part was not totally aware of the volunteers coming through the Sending organization. Once, in the last days of my fieldtrip, two American managers who had arrived some days ago, gathered all the volunteers together in the living room because they wanted to know who we were, when did we arrive and how long we were going to stay in the placement.

My focus in this research was not particularly the administration of the Organization. But I did observe that there was some controversy between the local administration and the American one. The local administration seemed to emphasize the benefits of volunteers. Instead, at least what comes to the encounters I experienced and observed between the Americans and volunteers, a much more critical and perhaps a more authoritative role towards the volunteers was prevalent.

While contacting the management of the Organization almost a year after I had been in the placement, I found out that they are not receiving single volunteers anymore. When I searched the situation in a bit more detail, I found out that this apparently applies only to the volunteers who are accommodated in the facilities of the Organization, not the ones who came through the Sending organization and not the specific teams from
churches and other mainly Western communities or association who had some cooperation with the Organization.

*Role ambiguity* has been present in other research of volunteer tourism as well. For example Palacios discusses in his work the confusion and frustration that the volunteers felt when not knowing their role in the Organization (Palacios 2010, p. 870). Especially in short-term volunteer experiences, the feeling of frustration is quite common from the volunteers part (Ibid. p.867). All of my informant volunteers had or were about to have a comparatively long term volunteer experience. Although my main research goal was not to study volunteer attitudes, it became apparent that also in this environment, frustration and feelings of unusefulness were prevailing. This is exemplified in the excerpt of my research diary.

When the last volunteer arrived to the placement just a few weeks before I was going to leave the site, she was excited about the opportunities waiting for her during her stay. Her attitude was very different compared to the volunteers who had stayed there longer time. There was a discussion in the accommodation house in the evening of the new volunteers first day in the children’s home. She described how excited she was about the work that the Organization does and told that she did not even know to expect possibilities like that and she claimed that:

I really feel that I can make a difference.

This comment raised some critical thoughts among the other two volunteers present in the situation. One of them said that this is also what she thought in the beginning, but now after more than two months her thoughts are very different. When I entered the discussion and asked for clarification, she added that she cannot say which direction her thoughts have changed in but that they have definitely changed.

Above I have described some relevant issues in the field which all had something to do with the freedom of volunteers. A related issue is the hierarchy and power relations in the Organization, which is the topic of the next chapter.
5.3 A question of hierarchy?

The question of hierarchy was relevant in the placement in addition to the formal hierarchy in the Organization, as in the communicating with certain people and not others, the power inherent in helping and finally in the knowledge that was ascribed to volunteers.

**Formal hierarchy**

Volunteers had an interesting position in the Organization, since they were ’somewhere in between’ when it comes to status in the workplace. They primarily worked in the lower-level jobs, taking care of children but then again they had the freedom to choose a position which places them higher in the hierarchy and also the tasks they did and did not do.

The formal hierarchy in the Organization becomes obvious from the quotation below, when I asked from a caregiver on duty about how they feel when a new volunteer comes in and if they make any arrangements or preparation for them.

> About volunteers, those social workers who are there, they are the ones who know much about volunteers. They are the ones who tell or helps them what to do. Because here we are just caregivers. We get instructions from the office. So you cannot do something on your own because you might be caught to the office and answer some consequences. So we are not allowed. Even when we go outside, we don’t disclose anything to people.

The quotation also tells something about the caregivers’ unawareness concerning volunteers’ comings and goings. This happens in spite of the fact that the caregivers were the ones whose work the volunteers’ presence or non-presence was influencing the most.

In the excerpt, the caregiver seems to put the responsibility of orienting the volunteers on the social workers. However, from the viewpoint of the volunteers, the orientation was rather non-existent or left to the other volunteers.

Another thing the quotation reveals is that the caregivers apparently had professional secrecy, which is a common practice for example in social work also in Western countries. However, the volunteers never had a formal orientation or something
equivalent where they would have been informed about the importance of confidentiality about the issues in the Children’s homes. The only rule concerning volunteers and the practices in the Children’s home was that photos of the children were forbidden, especially downloading them on the Internet for social media. However, there were differing ideas about this rule too, and some volunteers said that an American manager, who was present when they arrived, was accepting their photo taking, even encouraging it according to these volunteers.

The person who did remind volunteers about taking photos was an office worker. In general, the locals who made critical statements of the volunteers were mainly the staff members who had a higher rank in the hierarchy in the organization. This illustrates the situation where everyone does not have access to the same discourses and certain discourses can only be generated under certain circumstances (See for example Blommaert and Jie, 2010, p.58).

The morning devotions, which were held every day in the conference room, seemed to represent the hierarchy in the organization. It was the only occasion in the daily routine of the home where there were at least as many men as women, and occasionally even more men than women. The caregivers, who were all women, did not normally take part in the morning devotions, because they had to do routine work such as feeding, dressing and washing the children. What was interesting and in a way represented the place of the volunteers in the hierarchy of the organization was that the volunteers were expected to actively take part in the daily devotions. They were also expected to take part in the circulating shifts of reading verses and presenting pray requests when asked.

**Closeness versus distance**

**Distance and language barrier**

One volunteer described her relationships with the staff and told me that she felt closer to the office staff although she meets them less than the caregivers.

> It's maybe like...This sounds really bad but maybe it's the mentality of the caregivers that I don't know if it affects them more that we're white. Because they are from a different status group here... I don't know if that makes sense but like I feel like people in the office are more used to interacting with the like the white people to some degree. So they are more outgoing towards us.
Whereas the caregivers maybe they don’t know if we would like to talk to them and so they don’t make the first effort.

It seems that some caregivers wanted to maintain distance to volunteers. Nonetheless, from some of the interviews I got the impression that local staff would want the volunteer to take an active role in trying to get to know the caregivers. Some volunteers found it hard, not least because of language problems. However, these were also personality issues, since some volunteers, one particularly, appeared to take an active role already since the beginning of trying to get to know the caregivers and learn at least the greetings on local languages.

Interacting with the hosts is often seen as an important aspect of volunteer tourism. Indeed, attaining deeper understanding of local culture through the local people is what motivates volunteer tourism to begin with (see for example Sin, 2010 p. 987). Also some of my volunteer informants described that one reason why they chose Zambia was because they found out that people speak English there. Indeed, for having meaningful interaction with locals, a common language is essential. For some reason, even the local workers who could speak English often chose to speak one of local languages instead.

Blommaert (1995, cited in Isotalus, 2005, p.152) also states that the choosing of language is already a question of power. The encounters between volunteers and the caregivers were characterized by Zambians speaking Nyanja or Bemba together and volunteers speaking English with each other. The difference was that all Zambians could also speak English, albeit at varying levels, but the volunteers could not understand almost anything of the local languages. This implies that many of the Zambians were in a position to choose to speak a language that everyone could understand but for some reason did not find it important.

The choice of language is in no way an insignificant act, especially in development circles where different culture- and language areas come across. Indeed, every act of language use is an act that is assessed and measured socially and because of this, it has also important implications when studying interfaces in development (Blommaert and Dong, 2010, pp.7-8; Hilhorst 2003, p.100).
Evolving friendships

I also observed close bonds and friendships evolving. When volunteers packed themselves to a car together with some staff members to do school visits or food distributions, the talking was vivid and there was lot of banter from both sides. On these occasions there were no separate discussions between locals and foreigners, everyone was together. Also especially in kitchen, where the volunteers and Zambians met, there was often a lot of interaction and making jokes as opposed to the situations in the nurseries where the discussions were often rather short, concerning only some practical issues or they were mainly between the volunteers in English or between locals in Nyanja.

In the middle of my fieldwork, five volunteers did a long weekend trip to Livingston and to the Victoria falls and when returning to the placement, according to one of them, they were received and welcomed with lots of cheerful greetings and hugs from the part of the staff, many of them told how much they had missed the volunteers when they were gone.

In addition, many people from the local staff from different levels told how much they will miss the volunteers when they are gone. In the occasions of leaving, there were a lot of emotional moments and changing addresses from both sides.

The most interesting example of the possible depth of social relations between volunteers and locals is a young Canadian man who came to the placement during my stay there. He is in many ways an exception in relation to other volunteers. He first came to the Organization through volunteering couple of years back and since then has been there many times. He speaks local languages and has a local girlfriend who works in the Organization, also later in the course of 2011 they got married. He did not work in the nurseries and in that sense he was not involved with the children and the caregivers the same way as other volunteers (see table 1, p.36). While other volunteers where sometimes unaware of different procedures, he was referred to someone who even the locals went to ask how something is done or for help at something.

All in all, the micro-scenarios when building cross-cultural friendships in informal situations are not insignificant (Palacios (2010, p.872). Instead, the relationships born
out of them have a value that according to Palacios can even produce strong economic, social and learning outcomes for both hosts and visitors (2010, p.872).

**Having the power to help?**

I asked from one volunteer after she had been in the placement for one week what is it that she hopes from the experience in the end of the day, what she wishes she would have learned or achieved. She answered to me:

My family’s quite well off and I went to a private school. I sort of feel like I have had my whole life handed to me and I wanted to sort of experience what most people go through, really. And help. And try to make a difference or spread awareness or...Just like, yeah make a difference, help people. Because you hear so much about the world, like people suffering, people are dying... And there's so much that can be done that isn't done.

Recall also the quotations from the web pages of the Sending organization, where the potential volunteers were suggested how they can really make important difference in the lives of the people in their chosen placement. It is no wonder then, that volunteers have such presumptions as in the above citation of the volunteer. These sort of feelings of own privilege that the volunteer describes and its meanings in taking part in volunteering are quite well documented in previous research (see for example Nylund and Young, 2005.)

However, Sin (2010, p.985) for example describes the problems related to these notions of ‘helping’, ‘making a difference’ and ‘having responsibility’. These notions implicate that the developed world ought to be responsible for the developing one, who is incapable of eradicating its own problems like poverty and the lack of sustained development. Most of all ‘being responsible’ implies the lack of equal relationships since the carer naturally assumes the position of privilege and power.

This power relationship is always present between the helper and the one to be helped. The conclusion of many critical development theorists is that the Western intention of helping underlying the whole development aid endeavour, is humanitarian as much as it is colonialist (Palacios 2010, p.864). To avoid this neo-colonialist label, Palacios suggests that volunteer tourism should distance itself from development aid discourse (2010, p.861). Indeed, today ‘the language of helping’ is used more in humanitarian
work and catastrophe aid (Lager, Laihiala, Kontinen, 2009, p.13), while the actors in development prefer such terms as ‘cooperation’ which have more equal connotations.

**Changing the power structures**

Traditionally in tourism, the population in the host-country is employed in the service sector and find themselves often in the role of servants. Cleaning, transportation and catering are the common employment possibilities for local people inside the tourist sector.

Here however, I see the potentiality of volunteer tourism in changing these power structures, since the local people can be the ones ‘taking care’ of the volunteers (see also Sin, 2010, p. 987). The hosts have a possibility of taking the position of caring for volunteers, especially in the first weeks of volunteering since they are more accustomed to the local contexts and thus can help volunteers in many ways. However, this reversed caring was not very much present in the site.

Following Amartya Sen (1999), who claims that the quality of live should be measured not by our wealth but our freedom, it can be stated that the differences in freedom seen in the placement do reflect the differences between ‘us’ in the developed world and ‘them’ in the developing world. Not only did volunteers have the freedom to decide mainly their activities every day, they also had had the chance to come off their ordinary life, go to a distant country and different culture for a period of some months and work without getting paid.

Indeed, seen from the broader viewpoint the global movement of people symbolizes the inequality in freedom greatly. All kinds of global movements seem to be increasing, but in the movements from developing world to the developed a big portion happens because of lack of other options, while compared to the free and relatively wealthy western tourist’s movement to the developing world. Furthermore, the movement from South to North seems to be increasingly thwarted with border control and international law.
**Knowledge encounters: “Sitting in the round table”**

The interesting point in the encounters present in the Children’s home compared to other development encounters, is that in these situations the volunteers were non-experts, unlike in many other situations where Western development experts and local people with varying levels of education and expertise meet and negotiate. Three of the volunteers had just finished high-school and had turned 18 in the same year. Young age of volunteers is common in volunteer tourism since many have the time and the possibility for volunteering while being a student or spending their gap year before entering higher education. Despite this, volunteers are often thought of being in position to be able to ‘teach’ their hosts as also noted by Sin (2010, pp. 985,987.)

One volunteer, as an answer to a question of how she thinks the Organization benefits from having volunteers, she answered that she struggles with the issue but she does think that she brings new ideas, especially with education. This volunteer had been in the placement for six months already at the time of the interview and in the beginning before other volunteers arrived she was always working in the Children’s home 3 where the older kids were. There she got very different kind of assignments compared to the ones in Children’s home 1 and 2, such as teaching. She describes her experiences there like this:

The guy who is in charge of education he loves me [Laughter] and he always wants me to talk and I’m like the only one who does not have a degree in anything! So I cannot talk. But I have very different opinions from a lot of the teachers; I bring a different light to certain issues.

Certain woman who was in a higher position in the Organisation said when we were talking about the issue of possible challenges with foreign volunteers that:

They can advise us and we can change gradually to fit it [their suggestions] our program. You can’t impose; we want to sit in a round table. We are not an island. Many people come and we want to learn what is happening in other countries through sharing.

The informant was trying to stress that volunteers and locals could share their knowledge of what comes to different issues in the Organization. The phrase “sitting in the round table” can be interpreted as meaning that volunteers and locals are being in some sense in a same position of what comes to knowledge. In the above mentioned
occasions, volunteers were affiliated as individuals to an image of advanced Western knowledge and education as also happened in the case study of Palacios (2010, p. 867, 869) even though they did not have professional education for child care or teaching.

However, on basis of my observations I found out that there is also a positive side to the fact that the volunteers do not have much knowledge about child rearing beforehand. It increases the possibility for a sort of humbleness and openness to learning. In fact, in volunteer tourism there is great potential for two-way learning because of this. Also some previous tourism researches have noted the meaning of exchanging knowledge in making new tourism more sustainable compared to mass tourism. When focus is on exchanging knowledge - instead of helping for example - the effects on the host country can have very positive implications as Spencer (2010, p.194) notes.

According to Palacios, to be labelled ‘volunteer’, is important in terms of social relations (Palacios 2010, p. 867). It has a special meaning to identity and as such it also influences how the other people perceive the volunteer (Ibid.). In other words, volunteering framework can potentially make cross-cultural connections easier and also deeper at emotional levels.

This preceding analysis shows that the issue of hierarchy and power were present in several situations in the Children’s home 1 and in the Organization. It was not only apparent in the formal hierarchy but also in the communication with some but not others, the helper identity of the volunteers, as well as in the knowledge they were thought to obtain. Power was also present in the previous chapter describing the freedom of the volunteers. Next chapter will focus on a bit different issue, that of religion.

5.4 Emergence of religion in the encounters

Religion was a factor that came as a surprise when I entered the field. Indeed, although the faith-base of the Organization was obvious while on the site, it was not informed to anyone coming through the Sending organization. This was because all the pre-trip communication happened with US-based personnel of the Sending organization. This chapter presents some relevant ways which religion came to be significant in the encounters.
Religion intertwines with the culture, history and values of a certain group of people. Indeed, according to Isotalus (2005, p.142) the values and norms of a certain culture are based on certain ultimate preconceptions. These preconceptions have been modified along history according to the strategies which the community has needed in order to survive in certain geographical conditions and also which kind of strategies it needs in the current society (Ibid.) A major factor is also in which direction religion has led the group in question (Isotalus, 2005, p.142).

The importance of including religion to a greater extent to development studies has been claimed by many (see for example Clarke and Jennings 2008; Clarke, 2006; Hovland, 2008). Hovland for example, stresses (2008, p.184) that we need to include religion to a greater extent to development studies not least because it is so often an essential part of life of the expected beneficiaries, as well as that of the staff in development-related organizations. This claim seemed to hold true in the light of my observations. The faith-base of the Organization becomes apparent when visiting the Children’s homes and when visiting the web sites of the Organization. On the whole religion - in this case Christianity - was both a uniting and divisional factor in the Children’s home.

Ecumenism in the Children’s home

Even though the Christianity of the Organization was obvious, the denomination as to where the Children’s home and the whole Organization belongs to, was not as apparent. It seems that the Organization wants to be considered as quite flexible in terms of its denomination and thus suitable option for different kind of donors. As mentioned in the web pages of the Organization: “For more than four decades, [The Organization\textsuperscript{23}] has been working cross-denominationally within Church networks to care for orphans, outcast children and children in crisis.”\textsuperscript{24}

However, a general and quite apparent feature in Zambian Christianity in general is its ecumenism (Gifford, 1998, p. 188; Burdette 1988, p. 59). The various branches of Christianity have a habit of working together in the country; Catholics, mainline Protestants as well as Pentecostals all have a close cooperation. (Gifford, 1998, p.244).

\textsuperscript{23} Writer’s modification for securing anonymity.
\textsuperscript{24} From the web sites of the Organization, [Accessed January 21, 2012].
In practice this was seen in the Children’s home, where staff might belong to different churches but it did not prevent them from taking part in the morning devotions and from praying and singing together. Belonging to different churches within Christianity was never an issue in the children’s home.

Also Isoaho, (2010, pp.57-61) discusses in her thesis the role of religion in the orphanage she was studying in Uganda. She shows how European secularization and personality of religion and the wish from Ugandan workers to get a stronger role for religion in the Ugandan orphanage collided. In my data the issue of religion did not occur similar way as in Isoaho’s. Strong Christian values could not go unnoticed while visiting the Children’s home and were strongly supported also by the Western management.

**Case Abdullah**

However, belonging to a completely different religion, was somewhat an issue. I described an interesting encounter in my research diary, where I was with two other volunteers in the conference room; all of us had babies in our laps.\(^25\)

There was an interesting moment today when I was in the conference room with Abdullah\(^26\) in my lap. Amy (an American manager) and Grace (a Zambian nurse) came to the conference room and Grace asked: “How’s this baby boy doing here”. I answered: “Abdullah is doing fine, just a bit stinky right now”. She replied and said that “His name is Joseph.” On which I replied, thinking that she probably confused the boy for a Joseph who actually is another boy in the downstairs room, that: “No this one is Abdullah.” On which she replied: “He is Joseph. Abdullah is a Muslim name and this house is a Christian house.” Then Amy exclaimed: “Yeah, Biblical names!” and then together with the Zambian staff member they high-fived each other’s.\(^27\)

This was quite a provoking situation to volunteers and awoke discussion among them later in the evening. According to one of them, especially the way the word *Muslim* was emphasized by the Zambian worker was indiscreet. Some of them were also thinking to go to speak to the American manager about this, since it did not show the Children’s home in good light, especially in the eyes of non-Christian volunteers and

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\(^25\) Sometimes volunteers went outside from the nurseries with one baby in their arms; this was especially encouraged if the baby was crying.

\(^26\) All the names in the extract are changed for securing anonymity. Amy refers to an American manager present in the Children’s home at that time and Grace to the Zambian nurse.

\(^27\) Research Journal 19\(^{th}\) of April, 2012.
visitors. One volunteer in particular had claimed earlier that she is not a religious person at all. However, when another volunteer suggested that they could ask the manager how they think that sounds in the ears of this non-Christian volunteer, this volunteer exclaimed that she does not want her non-Christianity to be emphasized at all. Though, according to my knowledge, in the end they never went to talk about this event to American manager or any other people.

Hovland (2008, p.184) states, that we as human beings seem all to be afraid of other people’s religion, both outside and inside faith-based organizations. The above mentioned episode illustrates this fear in a face-to face-encounter. How it could be dealt with is an important question to which the answer is not easy to find. These situations described above deal with sensitive issues and according to my analysis are an example of critical points of confrontation of what Norman Long describes in his interface encounter analysis (see Long, 2001 and Long, 1989).

**Christianity as a motivation to volunteer?**

Every morning Children’s home 1 started its day with devotion, to which in theory everyone was welcomed, but usually only the office workers and volunteers had the possibility to participate. The morning devotions were the clearest expression of Christianity in the placement. During my time there, there were six regular volunteers with me, five of whom happened to be Christian and accustomed to going to church in their home countries as well. There was also one volunteer who didn’t consider herself a religious person and then me, who belong to the Evangelical Lutheran church in Finland like but, like in the case of many Finns, it is generally the only expression of my Christianity.

Volunteers were expected to actively take part in the morning devotions, at least if they had been present there before. They were also expected to take part in the circulating shifts of reading verses and presenting pray requests when asked.

Some local staff members assumed that the motivation for volunteers to come to Africa to do volunteer work is a religious motivation. One staff member described it as “God’s work” when asked about possible reasons for people to volunteer. Another one described it like this:
It's like you know they go by what the Bible says. It's because there is like a call from God and I say call from God from their own angle. It really helps as so much in raising these children… God just speaks to those people and says go in Africa. I say in Africa because these problems are mainly based in Africa.

It is no wonder that the local staff thought the volunteers religious beliefs motivate them to come. For example, Flanigan (2010, p.3-4) has observed that religious identity is often a motivation for charity and altruism in faith-based organizations and this applies both to volunteers and the employees.

Certainly, in many occasions it seemed that Christianity was related to being a ‘good person’ as a whole, which explains why the volunteer motivation was thought to arise from their religious background. This became apparent when talking with a Zambian social worker about photographing the children.

Yeas because when you take photos, we don’t know the purpose or objective of why you want to use photos. Of course, we are not the same. I can say volunteers can come here even the purpose of not everybody saying ‘Lord Lord went to the Kingdom of Heaven’. Not everybody knows God. And not everybody goes and uses the picture and the information for the good of the child. Someone go and use it for their own benefit.

However, from the observations in the field, it can be claimed that there was a contradiction between the assumed reasons and motivations for the volunteers to come to Zambia from the locals’ viewpoint and from that of the volunteers. Most volunteers said their reasons for coming to volunteer in a children’s home were not affected by their religiousness or the religiousness of the placement. In fact, only two out of six volunteers knew that the place was Christian before they came there. Analysis of the findings shows that the motivating factors that volunteers described had more to do with figuring out what do in life, wanting to gain experience in the Third World because of their studies and career, and wanting to travel but also staying for a longer time.

One of the volunteers described her motivation like this:

I guess I came here for sort of personal reasons too, just to kind of get a break. But then coming here I knew that I wanted to do something in an orphanage or children's home.
Another volunteer expressed interest in experiencing local culture as a motivation to volunteer. This volunteer also expressed a common claim from modern traveler “not wanting to feel like a tourist”:

I'm interested especially in culture and experiencing culture and I like to travel and I don't want to feel like a tourist. I like to actually be involved with the people that I'm meeting and the atmosphere...So to live like a few months in one location is the best way to do that I think.

Here, as in some other situations there was also contradiction and different procedures, depending on the person in charge at the time. For example, one of the volunteers had to state her religious background when she applied to the placement but the other volunteers did not.

Religion is closely related to culture and sometimes adapting to new culture can also mean adapting to new ways of expressing religion. One volunteer described her challenges while she was still settling in to the place of when I asked about her best and worst experiences while in Zambia. She said her worst experiences were in the beginning, when she did not have other foreign volunteers to talk to.

If I was upset about something or if I just wanted to talk about something and I wanted someone Western to understand me, there wasn't really anyone there. And I have my own problems with Christianity and...Because it's just so massively Christian place, I couldn't go on a little ramp of something that someone said has upset me. Because it would be offensive and I obviously don't want to be offensive.

One local nurse described the cultural differences and the meaning of believing in the same thing when asked about possible differences of child rearing.

Culture difference is inevitable. But when you are a Christian it will be easier to adapt to Christian ways, we are just going to fit like this [shows with hands and fingers together]. We only clash if we don’t believe in the same thing.

One of the benefits of volunteer tourism is claimed to be the development of mutual understanding between hosts and guests (see for example Coghlan and Gooch, 2011; Wearing 2001). In order for this to be gained, it might be advisable to mention the religious grounds and practices of the placement to volunteers coming through the different supplier organizations in order for the cultural awareness to develop even before the travel itself.
5.5 Volunteers and the children

I was not only interested in the encounters of the volunteers and the staff but also the
dynamics in the encounters of volunteers and children. This theme drew my attention
especially while I was working in a children’s home in Tanzania in 2009 and soon after
arrival to placement in Lusaka appeared to be relevant in the context of Zambian
Children’s home, too.

Attachment - “Who’s your baby?”

Theory of attachment

One interesting theoretical point of view to the case of children and volunteers comes
from development psychology, the theory of attachment. Since I was aware of this
theory, I became interested of the possibility to apply it in the context of these children
in the Children’s home 1.

Attachment theory is the most visible and empirically grounded theory in the field of
development psychology. The theory today is largely the same as it was over 30 years
ago, when the pioneers John Bowlby and Mary Ainsworth established it (Cassidy and
biased to develop attachments to their caretakers and have according responses such as
crying, clinging and following. What is important in this theory in the light of this study
is that children can form attachments to several individuals and their choice of
attachment object depends on the quality of the interaction, not the total time spent with
him or her (Schaffer, 1996, p.137, 153).

The most definite criterion to check if a child has formed an attachment to a particular
person is to see what happens when the child is separated from that person. (Schaffer,
1996, p.130). Indeed, Mary Ainsworth dedicated her lifetime work to researching
especially the security of the initial attachment relationship and devised an experimental
procedure called Strange Situation28. Children’s reactions to this procedure when they
are left alone or with a stranger can be classified into three basic attachment patterns;
avoidant, secure and resistant or ambivalently attached (Schaffer, 1996, p. 139-140).

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28 More about Strange Situation, see for example Schaffer (1996) or (Cassidy and Shaver 2008).
The possible challenge of using this theory as a background for this paper arises from the different cultural settings that this theory has been applied in and to what was present in a Zambian children’s home. For example according to Nsamangen and L. Lo-oh (2010, p.399) an African child is exposed to more attachment figures than European and American children on whom attachment theory has been developed. Scientific psychology is also Eurocentric, in what comes to the tools and theories it uses (Ibid.)

However, there are also strong claims for the cross cultural validity of attachment theory. Kenya and Uganda contributed fundamental cross-cultural data for Ainsworths’ attachment theory in the 1960s and 1970s (Nsamenang and L. Lo-oh, 2010, p.390). Actually the Attachment theory has also been described as a universal theory, since core elements of the theory have also been observed in non-human primates (Van IJzendoorn and Sagi-Schwartz, 2008 p.881). The three attachment patterns can be found in every culture in which the attachment studies have been conducted thus far, including eight African cultures in the countries of Uganda, Kenya, Nigeria, Mali, Botswana, Zambia and South Africa (Van IJzendoorn and Sagi-Schwartz, 2008, p. 897, 900.)

“Who’s your baby?”

Volunteers were interacting with the children more than the locals, talking to them and cuddling with them. This is probably partly because the volunteers did not have any obligations for other kind of tasks so they had the time for that but also because they were doing what they found most rewarding.

Volunteers were encouraged to have a “favorite child” and very often the local staff used expressions and questions like: “Who’s your baby?” The local staff also had a favorite child and this was not limited to the caregivers. Sometimes there was an office worker who came to the nursing room and called for his or her special child.

Some children seemed to be able to quickly form a close bond with a volunteer worker. The encouragement for having a “favourite child” seemed to increase this tendency in volunteers to favour some child over another.

It appeared that this bonding had positive effects on one side, as some volunteers described how their “favourite child” had started talking while the volunteers were there
(as opposed to some other children who actually regressed on their capability of talking while in the Children’s home) and show other kinds of development more than other children with the same age.

On the other side, Forssén et.al (1985, p.20) claim in their work which compared children’s personality development in Tanzania and Finland that:

The child’s development is damaged if the symbiotic relationships has not been created at all, or has been disturbed. [--] It is also traumatic for the child if the symbiotic stage ends abruptly, if for example there is a sudden unavoidable and prolonged separation between the mother and the child or if the environment in which the child is cared for is suddenly and without preparation, for whatever reason, changed.

From the quotation of Forssén et al it could be assumed that since these children who were already vulnerable from previous separation of their mother, formed close bonds with the volunteers and then experienced another disturbance when the volunteers were leaving, it might cause problems for child’s development or at worst case cause a trauma.

Forssén and Korppoo also claim that the development of the child’s personality in studied traditional Tanzanian Zaramo culture differs radically from that of European children (1985, p.95). Also, the idea of the European nuclear-family model does not apply in Africa and the relationships outside closest kinship ties play a more significant role than in the typical European family (Forssén et.al 1985, p.99; Nsamenang and L. Lo-oh, 2010, p.390).

Newcomers and the volunteers

The attachment relationships developed between children in residential care and foreign volunteers has not been studied much. One of the few researches is that of Richter and Norman (2010). Richter and Norman (2010, p. 224-225) state that the phenomenon of indiscriminate friendliness and an excessive need for attention is consistently observed in children who are in institutional care whereas children of the same age growing in a family environment tend to be wary towards new people and show different levels of affection and trust to their intimate caregivers (Richter &Norman, 2010, p.224-225). As also noted by Richter and Norman (2010, p.224), children who enter residential care are
likely to have experienced very difficult circumstances. When they arrive, they are one among many, urging for attention and affection from the adults present in their new situation.

I also observed this when arriving to the Children’s home 1 and 2 for the first time, and also the other volunteers described this kind of action from the children already on their first day. Many of the children immediately came towards the new visitors with open arms and were looking for attention and wanted to be in the arms of the new person. There was one major exception though. There was one small boy in the upstairs nursery who came from a rural area, and apparently had not met white people before coming to the Children’s home 1. This boy cried every time he saw me or any other European.

Quite soon after I had arrived to the placement and started to be around daily, there were two new children brought to the place. They were twins, a boy and a girl, whose mother had died in childbirth and their old grandmother tried to take care of them. However, after the children had reached the age of two, the grandmother was no longer able to look after them and they were brought to the Children’s home 1. The children had suffered from malnutrition and especially the boy was underdeveloped when it came to his motoric skills. For example, he did not know how to walk and was still crawling at the age of two.

The siblings showed differing kinds of coping methods when it came to their new surroundings. From the beginning, the girl seemed very reluctant towards all kinds of affection from the staff and volunteers and constantly pushed them away. The boy instead was crying a lot and was responding more to affection showed from adults.

I started to walk the boy holding both his hands to teach him to walk and for this reason I also started to interact with him in other ways. And since he was very responsive to affection, he became “my baby” in the sense I spent more time with him than with anyone else. But it did not last long since I noticed that our “relationship” was not only beneficial to the child. The boy started searching me with his look when I was playing with the other children and cried when I left the room. He stopped crying immediately when I came back to the playroom. I realized that this was not to the benefit of the child so I started to give more attention to other children, while also continuing the walking
exercises with him, which I considered to be giving less personal attention. We also arranged so with a new volunteer that she started to play more with this particular boy.

This situation demonstrates the kind of interaction volunteers and children had and also the very serious situations the children and often non-experienced and nonprofessional volunteers can face. As a researcher, this situation also awoke perhaps the most difficult feelings as to my role in the field. Was I actually doing harm to these children as a consequence of my presence there while giving them affection and attention that they would probably otherwise lacked? I was also thinking a lot of the boy’s sister, since she consistently pushed away all the efforts of volunteers getting close to her, which resulted in the volunteers starting to cuddle and play with other children. Whether this was in the interest of the girl, I doubt it. These are questions on which I have no definite answers still up today.

However, when my time of departure approached, this boy was no longer crying when I left the room and did not seem to follow me anymore than other volunteers or staff members. When I closed the room of the nursery for the last time, he was happily waving to me together with the other children.

**“These people really know how to entertain the babies” and other differences**

There were some observed differences, other than those mentioned above, between the volunteers’ interaction with the children compared to that of the caregivers. One Zambian interviewee described it in a following way:

> You can find that, these people really know how to entertain the babies. How to make the babies happy.

And another respondent described it like this when I was with her in the upstairs nursery:

> 29 R: They [children] like them [volunteers] very much. Especially children who are downstairs. When they see a white person, they all want to go to that person.

> I: More than for the local people?

> R: Local people not that much.

29 I refers to interviewer and R to respondent.
I: Why do you think it is so?

R: I think it is because of the attention they show to the babies.

In the following excerpt the interviewed caregiver is telling about the differences between foreign volunteers and local workers in treating the children.

But sometimes when these Western people come, they find the baby crying and the other one too. It looks to them that we are just avoiding that baby and not taking care of that baby [I: Aa yeah but you are but you just] Ym-hy yeah we have just two hands, you can’t do everything.

According to her, the “Western people” treat children differently. The caregiver has a perception that sometimes volunteers and visitors arriving to the room where babies are crying are wondering why the caregivers are not comforting the babies when they cry. She has an understanding that sometimes the Westerners are thinking that the babies are not properly cared for. She believes that we - the Westerners - somehow would survive from such a situation better and that is why we are in a position of judging. Her next comment after above discussion seems to tell about this: “I don’t know how you do it”. While actually the caregivers were taking care of the babies with their own best ability with the resources they had in such a situation.

However, same kind of behaviour on the part of staff has also been observed in Western child care institutions in the 1950s as a response to low staff-to-child ratios and as an effect of trying to reduce infection. In these institutions, babies were handled as little as possible, kept long times in cots and fed and changed rapidly without any more interaction between the baby and the caregiver than necessary (Bowlby, 1951 and Spitz 1945 cited in Dozier and Rutter, 2008, p.700) Dozier and Rutter stress how institutional care in general discourages caregivers from committing them to children (Dozier and Rutter p.700, 2008). This seems to imply that more than a difference between Western and African ways to raise a child, these differences in interaction with the children might stem from the culture of these child care institutions and the effects when there are lot of children to take care of per caretaker.

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30 The interviewer had not used this description of volunteers before in the course of the interview; it was formed by the interviewed person herself. What is noteworthy is that there also was a Japanese woman working in the placement voluntarily on week days and which did not literally fit to the category of ‘Westerners’.
Who gets to decide what is right for the child?

Position in the cot

One nurse answered in a following way when I asked her what volunteers should learn or know before they come to the placement:

What they should know...They can bring gears which they have and we can also share the ideas, which we have. But you find that sometimes, when they come, they now want to tell you what they do. Maybe from where they are coming from. But not listen to what we do. Let’s say, maybe something that you are supposed to do this. After when that’s not the way we do it. We can always share.

Later in the course of the interview I asked from her whether there was something they had learned from the volunteers and she told me about the issue of the position of the baby in the cot.

Maybe the position of the baby in the cod...Because our babies usually lie on their tummy to prevent if they lie on their back they will inhale especially when they are vomiting, they can choke. That’s why we prefer to put them on their tummies. And maybe facing the other site so that if the baby vomits, it does come out. So the baby won’t choke. They would ask us, “Why are you putting the baby...In our country we put the baby on their back. The babies should sleep on their back.” But we say here, because the babies can choke. If the baby is vomiting, he can even choke. So they would maybe get surprised and ask why we do that. And they ask why. Then we tell them why we do it.

In the occasions where locals had been instructed by western visitors about how to put the baby to sleep, there are different power structures at play. The comprehension of Westerners of the ways to take care of babies is strongly affected by the current research results and recommendation of child health clinics, other professionals and authorities in the developed world. This illustrates the amount of discursive power the Western visitors had in the Children’s home (See also Isoaho, 2010, p.57). In the eyes of the locals it seemed that this preference is changing all the time – at one time the baby is supposed to prostrate and on another occasion the bias is on sleeping on the back. Responding to every new claim that a visitor or a volunteer brings with them and changing the practices of the Children’s home accordingly is understandably not possible or even wanted in this organization.
Another similar issue was raised by the head nurse. According to her there had been volunteers who had reported to authorities that local staff is giving milk that is too hot to the children. She emphasized that the staff is instructed to give hot milk because they have experience of children having abdominal pains when given cold milk and that it is their custom.

Despite there having been volunteers who had instructed the local workers in the way mentioned above, it is also noteworthy that there was a clear decision - supposedly on the part of the Zambian management - to maintain these practices where the children are put to prostrate in the cod. The locals refused to obey every other volunteer who came to the placement and who had new information from the babies’ best position in the cod like in the first example or whose experiences and teachings preferred colder milk for the babies.

These negotiations about the preferred practices in the Children’s home are an example of the interaction of different ‘worlds of knowledge’, as Long (1989, p.221) describes them. These situations raise the questions as to who are the experts on Zambian children. Are they the local caregivers, many of which are also mothers, Western visitors who are also mothers, young foreign volunteers or educated local nurses?

The encounters between the children and the volunteers reflect the everyday situations in the children’s home where different actors have their own interests and sometimes those interests collide, creating inconsistencies.

The data reveals that the encounters with volunteers and children are something that needs further investigation, especially research from the field of psychology and social work. It is widely known (see for example Bowlby, 1988; Ainsworth, 1989; Cassidy and Shaver, 2008) that children at the age of 0 to 3 are especially vulnerable to emotional long-term problems and behaviour difficulties if they do not develop stable relationships to certain guardians. Since the foreign volunteers and local caregivers form special bonds with the children, it could be assumed to have an effect on the children’s psychological development if these figures change often.
6. CONCLUSION

In this thesis I have discussed interface encounters on a very concrete level. Volunteer tourism includes contacts between people who come from different cultures and have very different starting points in their lives. They differ also in the amounts of freedom they have in making choices about their lives. Above I have described these different actors’ interactions and non-interaction in this specific place, mainly the Children’s home 1 in Lusaka, which provided the setting for these encounters to happen.

The aim was first to find out how volunteering is perceived by different stakeholders, the foreign volunteers and the local staff in a Zambian children’s home. My second aim was to detect what kind of encounters were taking place in this particular setting. With these goals in mind, the study proceeded by first framing volunteer tourism in to the context of development NGOs, where some relevant discussions inside the NGO literature were reviewed. Following that, voluntariness and volunteer tourism precisely were conferred to. The method of the study was discussed, along with Long’s encounter analysis and other relevant theories and concepts. The final chapter presented the way the chosen methods were applied to the data, that is, the results of the study.

**Face to face encounters in volunteer tourism**

My findings from the volunteer motivations coincided with most of the research from the area. Also the claims of several researchers about the young Western volunteers’ lack of specified experience and knowledge of the work field were similar to my observations.

The volunteers were given at some situations more power than they actually earned in what comes to professional expertise -a phenomenon described in a lot of volunteer tourism research. They also had more power in terms of freedom to choose their schedules than any other workers in the placement. Although it must be remembered that a sense of flexibility and perhaps freedom are essential in volunteerism and part of what the volunteers had paid for.

This is an interesting finding in the light of encounters in development aid in general, since usually these encounters take place between development professionals and locals with differing levels of formal education and expertise. This finding suggests that
volunteers were associated as part of advanced Western knowledge and rationalization even without a proper education.

Some sort of transformation in the world views was present in the volunteers in this study as well. Recall such example where a new volunteer had just arrived to the placement and was excited of the opportunities waiting for her (see 5.x). The other volunteers were commenting that they had also such thoughts in the beginning but later on were replaced with more realistic assumptions. Volunteers often think in the beginning that they can have an impact, more so than what they actually end up achieving. This finding completes other research on volunteer tourism where similar observations have been made. For some, the volunteering experience seemed to produce additional benefits as well. One of the volunteers wanted to gain experience of teaching since that was her longtime dream for a future career; another one was expecting to benefit from living in a developing country environment as her major in University was International development. And of course my personal motivation was to do this research. In general, in an increasingly multicultural global environment, intercultural skills and experience are strongly favored and definitely the volunteer work experience in a developing country is not looked down upon in future job applications as also claimed by (Palacios, 2010, p.873).

As discussed in connection with methodology, actors’ different lifeworlds produce ruptures in social life (Long, 2001, p.240). Ruptures were present in the Children’s home in several situations described above. These were for example the occasions when the volunteers did not change the nappies for the babies and when they were amazed of the actions and choice of words of the two people from the top of the Organization passing by in the “Case Abdullah” (see section 5.4).

However, as seen in the “Case Abdullah” where the second person passing by was an American, different lifeworlds are not only about oppositions between different nationalities or cultural paradigms, they are not even about oppositions between different religions. Also other differences can create these inconsistencies in social life, such as different world views or different thoughts about faith.
As a contribution to volunteer tourism research, this study revealed how issues of faith affected the interactions between the volunteers and the locals. As discussed previously, religious Christian framework has a strong weight in the Organization. From this point of view, this study supports the importance of relating religion to analyses of international development. Religion is also important when thinking about the meaning of values and the strong normative basis of the whole development endeavor. On a more specific level, since values and motives have a strong meaning in volunteering and although also religion might play a role as a motivator for some volunteers, the analysis from this specific case shows that issues of faith included also a potential for confrontation.

In addition, as a less researched subject on volunteer tourism, this study established the views at the receiving end of volunteer tourism to developing countries, although acknowledging the limitations inherent in the researcher’s position. As a result of this, differences in childcare practices and the views of volunteer roles were discussed. An important observation was also that volunteers not doing some assignment thought for them can be interpreted from locals’ site as prejudice, which is against the whole idea in volunteerism and certainly not intended either by individual volunteers or the supplier organization.

*Encounters in the organizational frame*

From my observations, I noted that the Organization was not strongly centred in influencing the wider systems that create and reinforce poverty. Instead, it had stronger emphasis on improving local, small scale situations of the vulnerable children. This finding is contra to the idea of NGOs as meaningful alternative to states and the market.

As discussed earlier, the depolitization effect in NGOs is something that according to critics especially religious based NGOs have a tendency to fall into. Indeed, when development is seen as “charity” as is common to many FBOs and was the case in the Organization too, structural inequities or political struggles are rarely discussed. The vulnerable children, who are the object of the Organization, are especially predisposed to such actions and can even act as “depolitization agents”.
A much discussed issue in development studies about NGOs are the power relationships in the cooperation between Northern and Southern partners. The issue of power did not remain aside in this study either. In fact, power was a cross-cutting issue in many of the themes that came up from the analysis, whether it was about volunteers’ daily activities, language use, building friendships with locals or how and when they were with the children. Often the power issues were leaning toward volunteers having more power than the locals, especially the caregivers, let alone the fact that many of the activities of the Organization were controlled from America by the American managers who occasionally also visited the placement on site.

However, as Long’s interface encounter approach proposes, having power does not mean that others are without it. This was seen in the episodes when locals had been advised by foreign visitors of the correct temperature of the milk and the right position of the baby in the cot. Zambians decided to stay in their own practice, which suggests that they are not solely powerless actors under the powerful ones. Furthermore, as a consequence of these past confrontations there was a recommendation written to the visitors in the introduction paper of the Children’s home 1, which said: “Don’t advice the local staff”. Clearly, the advisements given by some foreign visitors and volunteers were not wanted in the Organization, albeit most likely given with good intentions.

Notwithstanding, I also saw the possibility for change in the power implications inherent in “helping”. Since the volunteers were young and inexperienced and experiencing a new, strange environment, the locals had the possibility for caring for the volunteers. In this way the power structures could be put upside down compared to usual configuration where specialized experts from developing world have the power. This is a composition that is rarely possible in traditional development interventions, where foreign experts confront the locals. Through this idea, I agree with Lewis (2006, p. 21) that international volunteering has potential in providing a more humanizing force in the increasingly technical world of global development.

31 However, did the impetus for this come from the part of Zambian staff or the American management, remained unclear.
The confrontation of different kinds of social logics inherent in development constitutes a complex social situation (Olivier de Sardan, 1995, p. 28). Indeed, what makes aid interfaces so complex are the multiplicity of voices surrounding them. This was seen in the context of this particular Children’s home.

There were diverging interests between different stakeholders in the Organization, and varying motives. While individual volunteer often seemed to weight the meaning of cultural experience and future advantages of the volunteering experience, the local staff was mainly interested of volunteers’ actual contribution to the daily life of the children’s home. As for the Zambian management, the biggest interest in terms of volunteers seemed to be the possible financial benefits of the volunteers, in the form of not having to employ extra workforce and receiving the payment volunteers paid from staying in the facilities. Then there is the American management, who wants to get things organized and allocates their efforts on hosting possible significant future donors, for example teams from congregations. The local coordinator of the Sending organization most likely hoped to get some extra income from accommodating the foreign volunteers who came through the Sending organization. The children from their part seemed to be desperate for personal attention and quite quickly absorbed that white people appeared to be more willing to cuddle and play with them.

Traditionally the local community in development projects is viewed more or less a homogenous population. However, even inside the communities there are different interest groups which have differing levels of power as seen in this case study as well. What is more, the caregivers who were in charge of the everyday care of the children did not seem to have much influence on the volunteers’ presence or non-presence in the placement, nor knowledge of their whereabouts, even though they were the ones who were supposedly going to spend the most time with them.

As shortcomings of the study in hand it is possible to perceive that I did not have the possibility to interview all the informants for the second time as well as that I could not get the interviews of the American managers who came to the site in the end of my field period. The results of the study would also have been different if I had observed and experienced more interaction and thus negotiation situations between volunteers and
caregivers. This, however, did not happen because of volunteers spending so much time elsewhere than in the actual workplace. Because of this lack of schedules and involvement, the freedom of volunteers became one major result.

**Practical suggestions**

Raising awareness of the weaknesses and potential negative impacts of volunteer tourism is not intended to underrate it, as also Guttentag (2009, p.538) claims, but to make it easier for host communities as well as volunteers to benefit from it. Under this study, there are some suggestions for future actors and implementers I would recommend:

My field observations and the analysis suggest that there is some room for improvement, so that the benefits especially to host communities could be made more tangible. One of these is a more structured work plan with specific tasks to volunteers, which is also something that Barbieri, Santos and Katsube (2012, p.516) suggest. From the field data and especially from the interviews with local staff, one can identify a form of frustration concerning the volunteers’ daily contribution. This is in spite of the volunteers themselves often expressing disappointment or at least unmet expectations regarding their small importance in the organization. Yet the local management especially emphasized the meaning volunteers have as a workforce. In essence, I suggest that this should be a contract where the local receiving organization is the other side for signing, not only a contract between volunteer and the intermediary organization.

One of these is a more structured work plan with specific tasks, which is also something that Barbieri et al. (2012, p.516) suggest. From the field data and especially from the interviews with local staff, one can identify a form of frustration concerning the volunteers’ daily contribution. This is in spite of the volunteers themselves often expressing disappointment or at least unmet expectations regarding their small importance in the organization. Yet the local management especially emphasized the meaning volunteers have as a workforce. In essence, I suggest that this should be a contract where the local receiving organization is the other side for signing, not only a contract between volunteer and the intermediary organization.
If part of volunteer tourisms’ goals is to increase cultural awareness and build more equitable relationships between hosts and quests, then it would also be important for the volunteers’ tasks not to be separate from the tasks that the locals do, in this case particularly from the caregivers’ tasks. Volunteers should be encouraged to ask for help and take part in all the possible work with the children, including the “dirtier” tasks. Additionally, mutual understanding would be easier to gain if the faith base and other essential practices of the placement were mentioned to volunteers coming through the different supplier organizations. This would encourage cultural understanding and awareness to develop even before the travel itself. In general, openness and good communication between the receiving organization and intermediary organization are strongly recommended.

This study has intended for its part to illustrate the complex and ambiguous relationships that exist within the world of development aid. Indeed, volunteer tourism has many similarities when compared to development cooperation in a broader sense.\footnote{Per contra, as mentioned previously, Palacios (2010, p. 861, 862) claims that volunteer programs should distance themselves from development aid discourse, in order to make volunteer expectations more realistic and potential harmful consequences of volunteer tourism less probable.} They are both driven by partly egoistic, partly altruistic motivations and they are both strongly value-laden operations. Indeed, the encounters I witnessed in the field, although situated and context specific, can reveal something of the procedures in development in general. Development aid faces many parallel challenges as volunteer tourism. These are the challenges in negotiations between representatives of different cultural paradigms, the power inherent in the hands of the “helper”, the meaning of different knowledge frames, just to mention a few.

In line with Norman Long’s ideas, both the international volunteers and the local workers had common interests such as striving for the best of the children. In the interactions of these actors there were also different power structures at play, which became apparent for example in the discussions concerning diaper change, were the volunteers did not show interest in learning to change the nappies.

Essentially, the study has contributed in the way it has combined voluntarism and tourism research with elements of the typical encounters in aid. As a result of this, it has produced a sort of synthesis that can be called ‘volunteer tourism encounters’. With its
own limited scope, this study is an important contribution to the civil society research done in development studies as well as to the subject of development and tourism. It sheds light to the issue of volunteerism and its new forms, and intends to illustrate a neglected subject in the sphere of volunteer tourism, that of how it is perceived from the point of view of the receiving people in developing countries.

In the light of the expanding sector of alternative tourism, ‘volunteer tourism encounters’ is a topic that needs further research. As already mentioned, important would be to research how the constantly changing faces of volunteers affect the children and their psychological development in child-related placements. Additionally important would be to see what volunteer tourism encounters offer for research of the other contexts in developing countries and what kind of relevant encounters take place in them.
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APPENDIX

First interviews

Questions for the staff:

- Name? Job title? How long have you been working in the children’s home?
- From your viewpoint, why do the volunteers come here to do volunteer work?
- Could you describe what happens when a new volunteer comes to the orphanage? How do you prepare for it? How do you feel about it? How about when he/she leaves?
- What is your interest in receiving foreign volunteers?
- Are there some benefits to the Children’s home from the volunteers? What kind of?
- Have there ever been any challenges between the volunteers and the local workers? If so, what kind of?
- Does it matter how long the volunteers stay in the orphanage? Are the shorter or longer periods better?
- What do the children think of the volunteers? Why?
- Is there some kind of differences how the volunteers treat children and how locals treat them?
- What is the main thing volunteers should learn before coming here?
- Is there something you have learned from volunteers?

Extra questions for the staff (asked in the final stages of the field period):

- What kind of person is a good volunteer?
- Would you like to know beforehand what the volunteers are doing and where?
- Is there something where you would hope more help from volunteers?
- Are there any differences of how the children react to caregivers and to the foreign volunteers?

Questions for the volunteers:

- Name? Age? When did you arrive? When are you leaving? Is this your first time in Africa/Zambia?
- Can you tell me, how did you become a volunteer in the first place?
- Why did you wanted/decided to volunteer in Zambia and not for example in your own neighborhood?
- Why did you wanted to volunteer in an orphanage?
- Have you enjoyed the experience so far? What has been the best thing? What has been the worst thing?
- What has been the most surprising experience so far?
- Have you encountered any difficulties? What kind of?
- Could you describe your relationships with the local staff?
- Could you describe your relationships with the children?
- How do you think the orphanage or the community benefits from having volunteers?
- What have you learned from the experience so far?
- Do you consider volunteering again someday?

Second Interviews

Questions for the volunteers:

- Can you tell me about your regular day (when and where at what time)?
- What kind of expectation did you have in the beginning and do you think they have been met? What has been the most surprising?
- When you chose this place, how important was it for you that this is a Christian orphanage?
- What do you consider as the responsibilities of volunteers?
- Would you describe this as a holiday or as a work experience?
- How would you describe your relationships with the local staff? Have you got some who are closer to you than others? Who?
- How do you think the orphanage or the community benefits from volunteers?
- What do you think that happens when you leave?
- What have you learned from this experience so far?