

Is Small Beautiful?

A sustainability study of development
interventions co-financed by the Wild Geese
Foundation

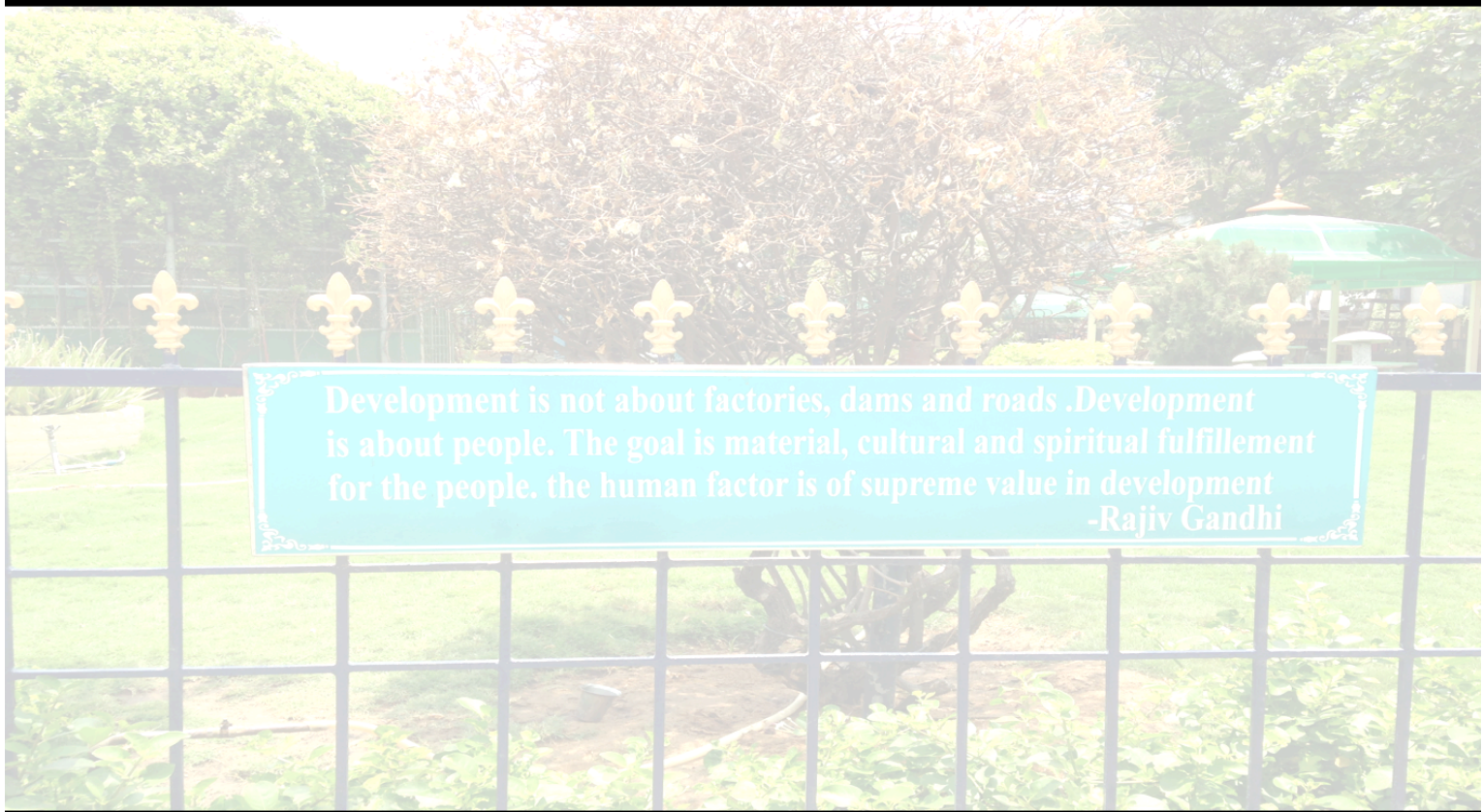
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Radboud University





Development is not about factories, dams and roads .Development is about people. The goal is material, cultural and spiritual fulfillment for the people. the human factor is of supreme value in development
-Rajiv Gandhi

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1. Background and Introduction

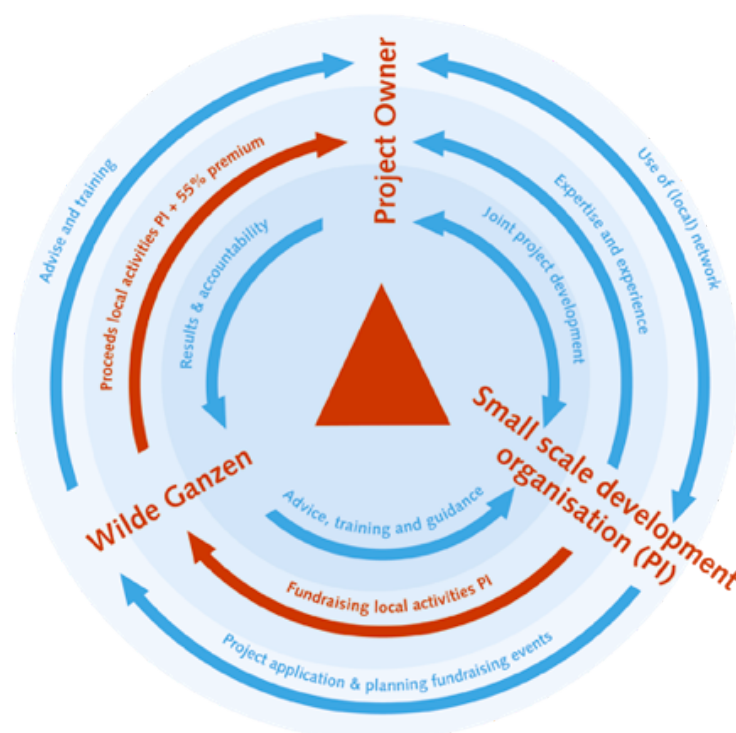
Since its foundation in 1957 the Dutch Wild Geese Foundation *supports people in their efforts to achieve a better future for their community in developing countries.*¹ In order to live up to its vision; *a world in which people living in poverty are capable to improve their own situation and their future;* the organisation supports tangible, small-scale development projects.² Today, the Wild Geese Foundation organises this support in a unique way: they support small scale, mostly voluntary Dutch (development) organisations (NGOs, foundations, social clubs, and the like) that raise funds for development projects to be implemented in a development country (Annual Report of the Wild Geese Foundation, 2013). The Wild Geese Foundation refers to these organisations as ‘private initiatives’ (PIs) and will be referred to as such in this report. In the project countries these PIs cooperate with local grassroots organisations or local institutions, referred to by the Wild Geese Foundation and in this report as ‘project owners’ (POs). The Wild Geese Foundation increases the results of the PI fundraising efforts by adding 55% to those results, after which the project can be financed and implemented.³ In order to add this percentage to the fundraising efforts of PIs, the Wild Geese Foundation raises funds from (among other places) the Dutch general public, private foundations and companies. In addition to financial support, the Wild Geese Foundation provides the PIs and POs with knowledge and expertise.

¹ Source: <http://wildgeesefoundation.org/>

² Ibid.

³ From January 2015 onwards the Wild Geese Foundation will add 50% to the fundraising results of PIs (<http://wildgeesefoundation.org/>).

Figure 1.1 Working method of the Wild Geese Foundation



To date, the Wild Geese Foundation has supported more than 11,000 small-scale tangible development projects with an average budget of 35,000 Euros in over 150 different countries (Annual Report of the Wild Geese Foundation, 2013).

In 2013 the Wild Geese Foundation commissioned the Centre for International Development Issues Nijmegen (CIDIN), a scientific research institute at the Radboud University, to conduct a study of the sustainability of development projects co-financed by the Wild Geese Foundation in the past. By doing so the organisation wanted to provide insight into the long-term results of its work and determine whether and how its working method should be adapted in order to achieve its mission to target poverty worldwide. This study takes place in an era where development cooperation in general, and the work of PIs in particular, is under critical scrutiny. The question of how projects are doing is therefore today more relevant than ever. The report at hand presents the results of an ex-post sustainability study of 93 projects of 42 local organisations co-financed by the Wild Geese Foundation in the period of 1990-2008. The study took place in Kenya, India, South Africa and Ghana.

In the second chapter of this report the research aim and question are presented. The third part contains a description of the research methodology, the sample, the sampling procedure and data collection. The fourth and fifth chapter of the report present the main findings of the study, followed by conclusion (Chapter 6) and recommendations (Chapter 7). The report ends with an afterword in Dutch by the Wild Geese Foundation.

2. Research aim and question

In 1995 a secondary school in a small rural village burned down. With the support of the Wild Geese Foundation, a Dutch foundation and a local counterpart the school and hostel were rebuilt.

After having lived in a big city for several years, a man was convinced that the living conditions in his home village could improve. Having a background in fisheries, in 2005 he designed a plan to create fishponds. He asked for support from a long time Dutch friend. With the support of the Wild Geese Foundation, constructed 15 fishponds.

Many years ago, a Dutch lady, together with some local friends, started a house for youngsters and adults with disabilities. In 2003 the Wild Geese Foundation supported these initiators in constructing a new house to take care of these people, who are often left to their fate.

These are three examples of projects co-financed by the Wild Geese Foundation. Today, the question is: Is the school still running? Are the fishponds providing the extra nutrition and income? And how is the centre doing today?

Evaluation studies of projects initiated by local organisations and supported by private initiatives (PIs) have so far mainly had an ex-ante or mid-term character: not all interventions were completed at the time the study took place. These studies were thus mainly able to formulate results that considered the *potential* sustainability of PI interventions. They did so by looking at the extent to which PIs and their partners complied with several preconditions for sustainability. As a result, our understanding of the actual sustainability of PI interventions is so far incomplete. In this study for the first time a large number of finalised PI interventions are analysed and it is therefore considered to be the first ex-post PI study of its kind. A two-dimensional approach to sustainability is applied. We study first of all the extent to which project results and goals are achieved in the long run, referred to as (1) the longevity. Secondly, the sustainability is determined by the focus of the project; more precisely (2) the extent to which a project contributes to structural change.

The central research question reads:

To what extent do interventions of private initiatives contribute to sustainable development?

Longevity is assessed through two sub-questions:

To what extent do the interventions of PIs produce intended results in the long term, at the level of output?

To what extent do the interventions of PIs produce intended results in the long term, at the level of outcome?

The second dimension of sustainability is determined by asking:

To what extent do the interventions of PIs contribute to structural change?

For example: In 1998 a day care centre was built to provide shelter and education for 75 street children between 4-18 years old. To assess the first sustainability dimension, the longevity, we verify whether planned *direct results* of the project are still in place (output) and whether the *planned objectives* of the project are still reached (outcome). In this example, the questions are:

Output: is the centre still in place and in such a condition that it can be used for its intended purpose?

Outcome: is the centre being used to provide shelter and education for, more or less, the target group as planned?

The second dimension questions whether the project is aimed at targeting the root causes of a problem. The question reads:

is the centre only focussed on taking care of those already in need or is the centre in addition running activities to prevent children from living in the streets?



3. Data and Methodology

In this part, we first present the sampling procedure. Subsequently we discuss the applied methodology and analysis.

3.1 Sampling procedure

Four countries were selected in which the research was to take place: Kenya, India, South Africa and Ghana. These countries are chosen based on the relative large number of projects the Wild Geese Foundation supported there in the past, today and, expectedly, in the future. The selection is based on the project database of the Wild Geese Foundation ('Ganzen'), which has been in place since 1998. The database demonstrates that over time most of the financial support has been, and still is, transferred to projects in African countries, followed by those in Asia and Latin America (see Annex I for an overview of the top-ten project countries of the Wild Geese foundation over time). It was therefore decided to select three African countries and one Asian country. Kenya was included also because of several other programmes that the Wild Geese Foundation is developing and implementing there. Ghana and South Africa were also selected. India was chosen since it is the Asian country with the most the Wild Geese Foundation co-financed projects.

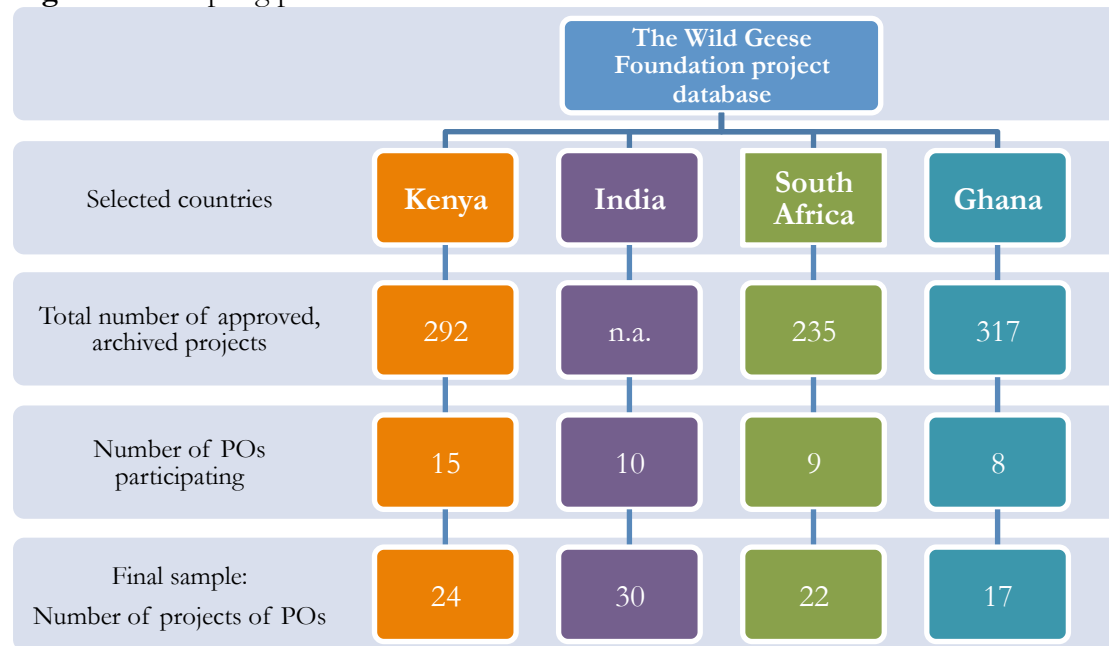
Projects

In 2007, the Wild Geese Foundation carried out research in India, in Tamil Nadu (Kinsbergen, 2007). The same partners and projects included in that study were also invited to participate in the current research. For Kenya, Ghana and South Africa, the selection started with an overview of all approved projects: Kenya (292 projects) South Africa (235), Ghana (317).

The sampling procedure consisted of two phases (see Figure 3.1). In the first phase we applied a stratified sampling procedure, based on the age of the projects. By doing so, the sample comprised projects with a different life span. This allowed us to see if and how the age of a project is affecting its functioning. Three broad age groups were defined: projects with a lifespan of about five years, ten years and fifteen years were selected to participate. In addition a small number of older projects was included. Considering the time between project application, approval and implementing we started calculating the lifespan of a project two years after the application year. For example: a project submitted for funding in 2007, has a lifespan of six years in 2014.⁴ From each of these age groups projects were selected randomly (for example, every third project). This resulted in a gross-selection of 30 projects in Kenya, 34 in South Africa and 41 in Ghana.

⁴ Since the field research took place in 2014, this year is used as the reference year when calculating the lifespan of a project.

Figure 3.1 Sampling procedure



In the second phase of the selection procedure out of the gross sample we selected ten projects to be included in the study. We took into account the thematic focus of the projects (e.g. education, health care) the type of projects (e.g. orphanage, school building, hospital renovation), the budget (small versus large budget) and the type of partner (local NGO, school...). By doing so, we ended with a heterogeneous sample reflecting the variety of projects and POs supported by the Wild Geese Foundation. This sample allowed us as well to analyse characteristics or factors affecting the sustainability of the intervention.

Project owners

The sample consisted of a number of projects, implemented by forty-two different project owners. We then invited the project owners (POs) of the selected projects, either directly or when contact details were not available through Dutch individuals or organisations that were or still are involved in the work of the local organisation.

After agreement of the PO to participate in the study we verified whether the partner completed more projects in cooperation with the Wild Geese Foundation. We included in the study the ones that fitted the sample criteria (minimal life span of five years) and that were suitable to be studied for logistical considerations (e.g. distance to central project). That left us with a sample of 93 projects.⁵ The oldest project was implemented in 1989, the youngest in 2008. The average age of the selected projects was ten years.

⁵ Both in Kenya and in India one PO and its projects were not visited during the field research because of unforeseen circumstances.

The studied projects comprise a total budget of about 3,6 million Euros, the average project budget is about 39,500 Euros.⁶ The age of the local organisations or institutions in charge of the projects varied from six to 52 years, with an average age of 22 years. Table 3.1 presents the final sample for the four countries.

Table 3.1 Sample

	Total number of local partners	Total number of projects	Number of studied projects	Budget of total number of projects (€)	Budget of studied projects (€)
Kenya	15	37	24	1,445,782	1,080,083
India	10	63	30	2,017,962	1,033,132
South Africa	9	31	22	1,382,582	1,099,370
Ghana	8	20	17	535,344	434,587
Total	42	170	93	5,381,670	3,647,172

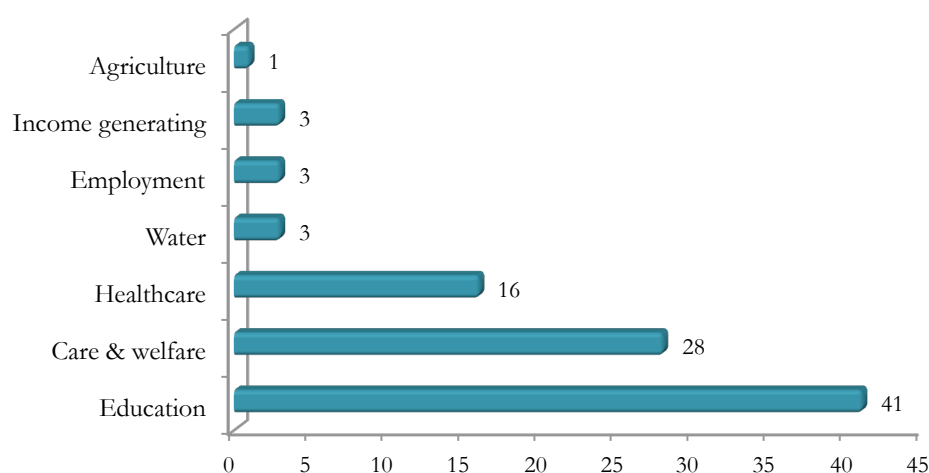
All but three of the selected partner organisations still exist. Only six of the local organisations are currently in cooperation with the Wild Geese Foundation. 19 of the local partners were one-off partners of the Wild Geese Foundation. On average, the 42 partners cooperated on four occasions with the Wild Geese Foundation with outliers that received financial support 20 and 23 times. The selected partners thus form a mixture of standing partners of the Wild Geese Foundation and one-off partners.

Of the 42 PIs connected to the sampled 42 POs, 29 still exist today. Of these, 22 still work together with the same PO. In the other seven cases the PI switched to another PO. Besides, only 13 of the 29 still existing PIs at present have a working relationship with the Wild Geese Foundation.

Figure 3.2 presents the thematic focus of the studied projects. Forty-one of the projects (43%) were aimed at improvements in the field of education (e.g. building classrooms or school buildings, furnishing a library). ‘Care and welfare’ type projects (30%) form the second largest group (e.g. renovating a play garden for a day-care centre, constructing a home for people with a disability) followed by 16 healthcare projects (6%; e.g. constructing a clinic). There is a smaller number of projects in the area of water, employment and agriculture. Three are income-generating projects aiming to cover the running costs of an organisation or its projects. The share of the different themes within the sample is in accordance with the results of earlier PI-studies and can therefore be considered representative (Kinsbergen & Schulpen, 2010).

⁶The total budget is the sum of the different project budgets as indicated in Ganzen or in the project evaluation forms. Part of this budget is from the Wild Geese Foundation. It is hard to calculate the exact proportion of the Wild Geese Foundation in this budget since the ratio between own contribution and the contribution of the Wild Geese Foundation changed over time.

Figure 3.2 Thematic focus



3.2 Data collection & analysis

The qualitative data collection consisted of two phases. The research started with a desk study of available paper records, the digital documentation of ‘Ganzen’ and websites of PIs and local partners when available.⁷ During this phase for each of the projects and the organisations the background/origins of the project and the stakeholders involved, the planned output and outcome and characteristics of the PI and local partners involved were mapped. The planned output and outcome results as agreed upon were retrieved from ‘Ganzen’, the ‘project decision’ as formulated by the project officer in charge, a project application or a final report. Based on this, the current functioning of the project as found during the field visit was analysed.⁸

During the second phase - the field research - the local partners formed the key source of information. On one to two day project visits semi-structured interviews, based on an interview guide, were held with project founders, project managers, school heads, teachers, nurses, and as much as possible with actual and former beneficiaries of the projects.

The two-dimensional sustainability analysis allows ranking the projects based on the findings. The ranking system is derived from the data and will be discussed in the results chapter. Subsequently the ranking allows looking for determinants of the sustainability: which factors determine sustainability of the projects? Based on Kinsbergen (2014) we will look at two sets of characteristics: characteristics of the projects and characteristics of the local organisation. We will look first at characteristics of the projects: do age, budget, theme or type of project correlate with sustainability?

⁷ The Wild Geese Foundation preserves archives paper records (project files) for seven years. For some part of the selected projects no written project documentation was available.

⁸ Since several years, the Wild Geese Foundation is using a calculation method to define the expected lifespan and the expected number of beneficiaries of a project. It was not possible to apply this method on a systematical manner in study at hand since the expected lifespan is not developed for all the different type of projects involved in this study.

Secondly we assess whether features of the local partner organisation affect sustainability. Here we look at whether the experience of the organisation (measured by age) or the type of organisation (e.g. local institution such as a school, religious institution such as a congregation of sisters) influences sustainability.

Anonymous processing of the data was guaranteed to all respondents, therefore no names or specific information on the projects are mentioned in this report. The research framework (analytical framework, methodology and sampling) was designed by the main researcher. The execution of the field research was performed with the support of two researchers and one student assistant. Field research took place between February and May 2014. For each country, the field research took two weeks, with extra time spent by the student assistant in Kenya.



4. Output and Outcome results

4.1 Output results: 'Is the school still there?'

The analysis of the projects began with studying the current state of the once-intended output results: the direct results of a project. For each of the 93 projects studied, it was observed and discussed during the project visit whether or not the planned output was still in place. Based on the findings, the projects are divided into four groups: (1) output results are no longer reached, (2) output results are below expectations, (3) output results are reached as intended, (4) output results exceed expectations. Figure 4.1 presents the output results combined for the four countries.

Figure 4.1 Output results 2014

- output results are no longer reached
- output results are below expectations
- output results are reached as intended
- output results exceed expectations

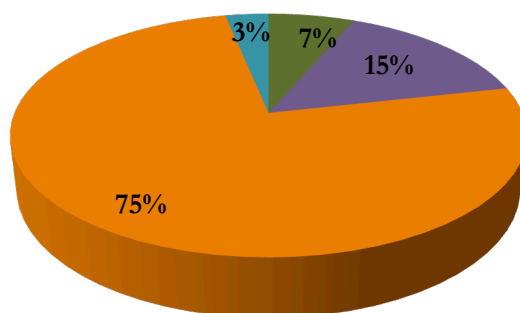


Figure 4.1 presents the total findings of the output analysis in percentages. We find that in 75% of all the projects, the planned output results were achieved and are still in place. In some cases these are infrastructural projects with a lifespan of more than ten or 15 years. The boarding school, mentioned in Chapter two was reconstructed in 1990. Today, the school is up and running, the buildings are well maintained and 17 teachers are providing secondary education for more than 250 children. In a small number of cases ($n=3$) output results even surpassed the expectations. This is, for example, the case with a secondary school. In 2004, the Wild Geese Foundation supported the school with the construction of a school hostel. The school aimed to provide education for 300 children. In 2014 the school has a regional function and is still up and running, with more than 600 children attending classes, without overcrowding taking place. In 22% of cases the output results are no longer there or deviate significantly from the planned results. For example: whereas one project planned to have six soup kitchens distributing soup to those in need, today only two are still in place. Table 4.1 presents the output results at country level, both in absolute numbers and in percentages.

Table 4.1 Output results in 2014

Output				
	No longer reached	Below expectations	As intended	Exceed expectations
Kenya	4 17%	6 25%	14 58%	0 0%
India	1 3%	0 0%	28 93.5%	1 3.5%
South Africa	1 4.5%	2 9%	19 86.5%	0 0%
Ghana	0 0%	6 35%	9 53%	2 12%

Kenya has the largest share of projects that no longer function (17%) or whose output results significantly deviate (in a negative sense) from the intended results (25%). India, followed by South Africa, has the highest success rate according to output level; respectively 97% and 86.5% of planned output results are still met or even exceed expectations. In Ghana the current output results are below initial expectations in 35% of the cases. 65% of the studied Ghanaian projects still live up to the original plan or exceeds expectations.

⇒ Three things in life that ones gone never come back:
 Time, words, opportunity
 ⇒ Three things in life that may never be lost:
 Peace, hope and honest
 ⇒ Three things most valuable store, self confidence, friends
 ⇒ Three things in life that are never change:
 Dreams, success, future
 ⇒ Three things that destroy a man and woman:
 Balcabal, pride, anger.
 ⇒ Three things in life that once last hard to build:
 respect, trust, friendship
 Compiled by:
 Kingfisher

Who is a student?
 S - studious in higher work
 T - talented with a lot of potential
 U - understanding when sorting out issues
 D - disciplined and self driven all times
 E - endowed with intelligence
 N - nationalist on issues concerning country
 T - thoughtful in deeds and guided by reasoning.
SUCCESS
 Success is seeing challenges as opportunity.
 Success is when failure is around.
 Success is knowing who you are.
 Success is flying an eagle high above the shy.
 Success is dreaming big dreams.
 Success is attaining your desires.
 Success is loving your teacher, school, subject.
 Success is what you achieve and contentment within self.

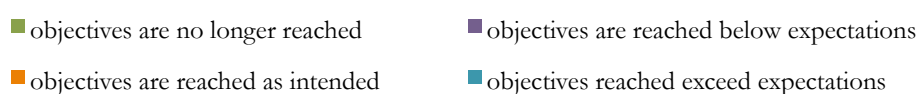
Motivation is the fuel necessary to keep the human engine running.
 Show me your friend and I will tell who you are.
 Before you speak - listen
 Before you spend - earn
 Before you decide - investigate
 Before you criticize - wait
 Before you pray - repent
 Before you judge - try
 Before you relieve - save
 Before you die - repent
 ⇒ The difference of success and failure is Attitude.
 P.D.B
 O.M.
 W.E.
 H.R.

① Let me see your notebook
 I will take from the library to the library

4.2 Outcome: 'Is education taking place?'

The results of the previous section indicate that in a large majority of the cases, planned hardware investments are still in place. In this section we focus on the usage of the hardware: there is a school building, but is schooling taking place? In addition to the output, we therefore assess the extent to which intended outcome results are achieved in the long run for the 93 studied projects. In a similar manner as for the output results, planned outcome results are compared to the current outcome. We distinguish four similar groups as for the output results: (1) objectives are no longer reached, (2) objectives are reached below expectations, (3) objectives are reached as intended, (4) objectives reached exceed expectations. Figure 4.2 presents the total results.

Figure 4.2 Outcome results 2014



In nearly 80% of the cases planned output results are still met or even go beyond expectations (see paragraph 4.1); for the outcome results this accounts for 69% of the studied projects. Nearly 20% of the projects no longer reach the once intended project goals. One of these projects is an internet café, constructed and equipped in 2007. The infrastructure is still there but since 2012 it is no longer being used. Table 4.2 presents the country specific results of the outcome analysis, both in absolute numbers and percentages.

Table 4.2 Outcome results in 2014

	Outcome			
	No longer reached	Below expectations	As intended	Above expectations
Kenya	7 29%	5 21%	11 46%	1 4%
India	3 10%	0 0%	27 90%	0 0%
South Africa	3 14%	6 27%	12 55%	1 4%
Ghana	5 29%	3 18%	6 35%	3 18%

Ghana has the highest share of projects that does not meet the objectives as planned (47%). A bit over half of the projects in Ghana still realises the goals as planned or even exceed expectations. As accounts for the output results, India (90%), followed by South Africa (59%), has the highest number of projects that is still functioning as originally intended.

When adding up the output and outcome results we first of all find that in nearly 65% of the cases (N=60) both the planned output and outcome results as once planned are still achieved today. The aggregated output and outcome results show as well that in 13 cases (8%) output results are still there as intended but project goals are no longer reached or below expectations. This means that the once constructed hardware (e.g. clinic) is still in place, however it is not being used or used in a way that significantly deviates from the original plan. South Africa has the largest number of projects with output results being in place however not being used (as intended). There are 19 projects (20%) implemented by 14 different POs where both output and outcome results are no longer achieved or below expectations. Ten of these projects are located in Kenya, six in Ghana, two in South Africa and one in India.

4.3 Explaining the output and outcome results

The results presented above raise the question of what explains the difference in longevity of output and outcome results. Do those projects that no longer reach or never have reached intended output and outcome results share common characteristics? Is there a common thread running through the history of these projects that explains why one project does achieve intended results while another project does not? In order to determine this we tested correlations between the output and outcome results, and several background characteristics of the projects and of the local organisations.

Before proceeding with the explanations for the found output and outcome results, two remarks have to be made. First of all, in three of the 19 cases were both output and outcome are not achieved (as intended), the POs of these projects are still investing in

these projects. In due time, therefore, output and outcome results could still meet the initial expectations. Therefore, in due time, output and outcome results could still meet the initial expectations, be it with significant delays of several years. There is for example a health centre constructed several years ago. So far the management did not succeed in getting access to the electricity network. Because of this, the centre is not functioning up till now. The management is doing their utmost to realize this final step and to start receiving and treating patients in due time.

Secondly, for two of these 19 projects it is the general aging of the infrastructure due to wear and tear that affects the current output and outcome results. It could be considered remarkable that these two projects are still achieving their output and outcome results, albeit partly. For example, an investment of 2,300 Euros made nearly ten years ago in a raw crop-processing machine still enables eight women to earn an independent income today. Even more, after this initial investment no other foreign support has been given to this project, run by a local, small-scale cooperative. Another example dates back to 1990, when one local organisation installed 20 water tanks in 20 different primary and nursery schools. Seven of these schools have been visited. In all seven of them, the tanks have been functioning for (over) 15 years, one is still functional today after a single repair financed by the parents of the school children.

We first of all analysed whether characteristics of the projects affected the output and outcome results. We successively tested the influence of the age, budget, theme and type of project on the longevity of the project. We did not find a significant aging effect with output and outcome results deteriorating over time. The sample consists of fairly young projects whose output results are no longer there and/or that no longer reach the intended project goals. In a similar manner we find projects with a life span of over 15 years showing successful results on both output and outcome level. We subsequently assessed whether the budget of the projects affects the longevity of the project results. The sample consists of projects with a budget of over 100,000 Euros that no longer reach outcome results and projects of no more than 5,000 Euros that still reach intended output and outcome results and in one case even exceed expectations. Thus we did not find the budget of the project to affect the longevity of output and outcome results. The same accounts for the theme of the project (e.g. education, health care) or the type of project (e.g. school, clinic): the projects not achieving output and outcome results in the long run are highly diverse regarding theme and type.

A second set of characteristics concerns features of the local partner organisation. Neither the experience of the organisation (measured by age) nor the type of organisation (e.g. local institution such as a school, religious institution such as a congregation of sisters) turned out to affect the output and outcome results.

The question thus is: what does matter? Comparing the different projects does not bring to the fore one or more specific feature explaining the persistence or the ending of output and outcome results. Each project has its own story explaining why the intended output and outcome results are no longer achieved. We found two groups of explanations. We first of all found aspects related to the internal organisation of the local partner:

- PO changed its policy as a result of new leadership or new vision. Projects realised in the past no longer fits the new policy. Therefore certain hardware is no longer used, or not as intended, or goals have been changed.

- Ending of donor relationship with key (Dutch) donor due to conflict or because the donor ends its activities. The PO therefore had to cease its project.
- Capacity of the PO (manpower, knowledge) turns out to be insufficient to run the project as intended. The output is therefore (no longer) used, or intended objectives are not reached or are below expectations.

A second group of explanations is related to the context in which the organisation operates and runs its projects.

- Government does not live up to its promises to support the organisation in developing and running the project. Output cannot therefore be realised as needed and/or objectives cannot be realised as intended.
- Rules and regulations of the government changed. Planned output and objectives are therefore no longer compatible with these new rules and regulations.
- Developments took place in the project area. The realised output or intended objectives are therefore no longer adequate to respond to the changed needs of the population.
- Grant schemes of the government changed. It therefore became impossible to continue a project formerly subsidised by the government.

Although it would make reality more comprehensive and controllable, we did not find a blueprint explaining the discontinuity of certain projects. The above sets of explanations illustrate that whereas in some cases the discontinuity of output and outcome results could have been prevented (by, for example, investing in a more diversified donor portfolio or in local capacities), other cases illustrate the uncontrollable reality in which most local organisations operate. They demonstrate that not everything is foreseeable and that success is not just a matter of good staff, organisation and planning. The explanations also illustrate that discontinuity of output and outcome results can be an indication of change within the organisation or the broader context in which it operates. An organisation changing its strategy from sheltering those in need to lobbying the government to take care of those in need has changed objectives and needs a building once built as refuge as an office from where it can practice its new role as lobbyist.



5. Output and outcome results from a sustainability perspective

Results at an output and outcome level can be considered fairly successful; this is perhaps even more the case when considering the organisational features of local partners in charge of the projects and the Dutch counterparts supporting them. Most can be considered small-scale organisations (considering budget and number of staff). This demonstrates that the local project owners have brought about great dedication throughout the years to keep the projects going, growing and/or evolving. From a sustainability perspective, however, three important reservations have to be made with the output and outcome results.

5.1 Local ownership: Who ‘owns’ the output and outcome?

The first dimension of the sustainability approach considers the longevity of output and outcome results, discussed in Sections 4.1 and 4.2. A second look at the projects and their actual functioning puts these results in a different light. The question is not only whether output and outcome results are achieved in the long run, but also whether or not they are locally owned; we consider here successively both the managerial and financial ownership of local organisations and projects.

In nine of the forty-two local organisations there is a foreigner (semi) permanently present in the organisation, in most cases this is a representative of the (Dutch) PI. In six of these cases, it is these persons actually in charge of the management of the organisation and its projects. Local staff members support them in their work. When asked what he would do if the Dutch director left the project, one local manager answered:

“ I would find a Dutch successor as soon as possible” (Interview with manager of a local organisation).

Three POs are co-managed by foreigners together with local staff members. In three other cases Dutch PIs are running the organisation from a distance. Although there are no representatives of the PI permanently physically present, they do exert a strong influence from the Netherlands. The local staff is mainly the implementer of the plans designed in the Netherlands. A majority of 29 of the 42 local organisations could be considered the actual managers of the projects.

However, when considering not only the managerial ownership but also the financial ownership, results look different. Four groups can be distinguished: (1) project is completely dependent on one Dutch PI, with or without own contributions, (2) project is dependent on several foreign donors with or without own contributions, (3) project is dependent on both national and foreign donors, with or without own contributions (4) project is completely self-sufficient. Table 5.1 presents the financial situation of the projects studied (in absolute numbers).

Currently, 31 (33%) of the 93 projects are totally dependent on one Dutch PI for their financial survival. Nine projects (10%) are managed with funds from several foreign donors, with or without own contributions (e.g. from income generating projects). 41 (44%) have been able to diversify their donor portfolio further, and also receive donations from several local donors.

12 projects (13%) could be considered self-sustaining; with most of them generating adequate income from the paid services they deliver.

Table 5.1 Financial situation of the projects

	The project is			
	Dependent on one PI	Dependent on several foreign donors	Dependent on both national and foreign donors	Self-sufficient
Kenya	15	1	4	4
India	3	1	24	2
South Africa	1	7	9	5
Ghana	12	0	4	1
Total	31	9	41	12

In all nine cases above where foreigners are physically present, the influx of donations is strongly dependent on their efforts: people continue to donate thanks to their physical presence in the projects and the trust that this engenders with the donors. One of these Dutch managers explained:

“Some of our main donors said they would cease to donate when I leave the organisation”. (Interview with Dutch manager of a local organisation)

It are often these foreigners who are in contact with the donors (writing proposals, newsletters, answering e-mails) and who form the trustworthy face of the organisation convincing the donors to entrust their money to the organisation. Their role not only entails a risk in the longer run, but also limits local staff members in developing certain (fundraising, communication) skills and donors in building trust in the local organisation.

Nearly 40% achieving output and outcome results as intended or beyond expectations are financially completely dependent on one Dutch PI or several foreign donors. In addition, in one out of five of these projects the management of the organisation in charge is not locally owned but in hands of a foreigner either physically present or an organisation at a distance. These results indicate that some of the successful results at an output and outcome level are there (partly) by the grace of the financial or managerial support of foreigners. More precisely: although the data does not allow us to say that these projects would no longer have been there without the presence of these foreign managers or the support of these donors, there are strong indications that survival in the current state would have been challenging. The above could suggest that local ownership is no precondition for the longevity of development projects. The overall analysis of the 93 projects however shows a significant positive correlation between local ownership (i.e. managerial and financial ownership) and the extent to which output and outcome results are achieved in the long run.

5.2 Structural change

A second important finding that affects the evaluation of the output and outcome results considers the second dimension of sustainability. We question the extent to which projects are contribution to structural change and therefore study the type of interventions local partners undertake and the longer-term effects of these interventions. The great majority of the projects are responding to direct, concrete needs or problems.

These projects are designed to directly provide for the observed needs. They are aimed at strengthening, and empowering individuals by offering education, shelter or health care. There is only a small number of projects that goes beyond direct poverty reduction and that are intentionally aimed at changing structures, institutions and the mechanisms in place that cause the problems they are trying to solve.

As a result of the above it might be expected that most projects mainly change individual or family lives, however, as part of POs claims to make a change that exceeds the life of one individual, they expect to bring about broader, structural change. Many thus incorporate these broader results in their project goals. For example, by starting a school in a secluded area they expect to improve the life of the community:

education => increased job opportunity => increased income =>
increased living standard => increased school attendance of next
generations => increased educated middle class => decreased
corruption => ...

Although this sounds plausible, the interventions these project owners undertake are mostly limited to the first step of this cycle of change: addressing immediate needs by initiating service delivery projects. For most of the local partners the underlying assumption seems to be that this initial boost will initiate an upward spiral that follows a natural pathway changing individual lives but also structures and systems at meso (communities, regions) and even at macro level (national).

A large majority of the project owners are well aware of the broader context within which they operate and many are well able to explain the mechanism in place that is resulting in poverty and exclusion. When asked to describe the situation in the area or developments taking place, it becomes clear that many of them have a lot of contextual knowledge. They often live for many years in the project area, they know the needs of the people and they know what the government or other organisations are (not) doing. However, their projects do not result from a strategy that explicitly includes and responds to the causes of poverty and exclusion. When asked how their project addresses the described needs, in many cases it turns out that there is a (wide) gap between the problem analysis described and the projects they are running. In other words: almost all are able to formulate what could be referred to as a Theory of Change (ToC); a clear long-term vision defining the change they are pursuing and an elaboration of the strategy on how to realise this vision, but in the daily practice of running the projects, these visionary ToCs are reduced to project-focused ToCs: ideas and plans about how to keep their project running. This is illustrated clearly by one of the projects studied, the home for youngsters and adults with a disability mentioned in Chapter 2, of whom we summarise their 'ToC' as follows:

there are disabled children in need for care => we are taking care
of them by building a home and arranging education => our main
task is taking good care of the children by, among other things,
looking for funds to provide for shelter, food, clothing and
education

Built in 2003, the centre is still 'up and running' today. When talking to the local project manager it becomes clear that stigmas towards people with a disability are strong in the area and form one of the main reasons why some of the children are not able to live at

home. However, addressing this issue is not part of the project, either by undertaking activities in this field themselves or by cooperating with others that do so. When these local organisations cooperate, for example, with the local government, it is mainly to convince the government to (financially) support their project.

Only two of the 42 local organisations, one Indian and one Ghanaian, developed a project or programme based on a ToC that logically connects to, and actively addresses, the root causes of problems highlighted in their problem analysis. They are involved in (local) lobby and advocacy activities, however, a lack of funding for just those activities that would allow them to tackle some of these causes hinders them from bringing this ToC into practice. The ideas are there, there is a willingness to take up this challenge and capable people are in place, however there is no, or not enough, money. According to the project owners this is mainly because (foreign) donors are not willing to invest in this type of activity and have a (strong) preference to invest in service delivery type of activities. This is illustrated by the manager of an orphanage who explained how they started an outreach programme in order to decrease the number of children growing up in an orphanage and to mobilise the local community to take care of destitute children, but that after several months they had to stop the programme because their private donors were keener to financially support the orphanage compared to the outreach programme.

We found a number of organisations in a (pre)transition phase: being aware that more is needed to bring about structural change rather than direct poverty reduction through service delivery, they were transforming their working method at the time of the study. In other words: they were (re)formulating their ToC. For some of these project owners, it was not only money that was an issue in bringing their new vision into practice, but also adequate knowledge of how to start a new type of activities.

5.3 Evaluations

We thus find that many of the projects are aimed at direct poverty reduction and that many project owners expect those interventions to have an effect that exceeds individual lives. Although we commented critically about these expectations, the question remains: what are the long(er)-term effects of the studied projects? This brings us to a third and final critical remark shedding a different light on the output and outcome results. In this study project owners formed the most important source of information for gaining insight into the longer-term results. During conversations with, among others, managers, staff members, and school directors it became clear that most had several stories of former beneficiaries continuing to high school after having finished primary school, or having found a job in town after having finished polytechnic education. Others refer to the success of the project as how they, as project managers, are warmly welcomed by the local community when visiting one of the villages. Table 5.2 presents the evaluation activities of the 42 studied local organisations. Three groups could be distinguished: (1) the organisation does not evaluate and keeps no records on the results of the project, (2) the organisation keeps (basic) records of the project results and (3) the organisation systematically evaluates the project results.

Only two of the 42 project owners involved in the study had carried out an (external) evaluation of their work or were in the process of doing so. Some of the project owners were well aware of the importance of evaluating their work. Two organisations are in the process of designing a monitoring and evaluation system.

Three organisations had a real intention to conduct an evaluation, however funds and/or adequate know-how were still lacking. Ten organisations keep good records of their beneficiaries, however so far they do not use these records in an evaluative, learning way.

Obtaining insights into the longer-term effects of the projects was thus challenging. In many cases, project owners were not able to inform us of basic results such as the number of beneficiaries throughout the years, number of boys/men and girls/women. Collecting more in depth information on the effects was even more challenging. Almost none of the POs was able to go beyond ‘hearsay’ stories to explain what happened to the beneficiaries who still participate in the project (e.g. increase in income) or to those that have left a project (e.g. job prospects). As a result, it is difficult to indicate the actual longer-term effects of the studied projects. Although we find that many of the projects are still in place (output) and are still functioning (outcome), it is hard to make statements about the actual (broader) change to which they contribute.

The overall limited attention given by POs to evaluations is also related to the strong project focus they generally have. As most are guided by a ‘project-ToC’, their time and money is mainly invested in keeping the project going, and evaluating the broader project results is therefore not a priority for most of them, and difficult to realise for those who aspire to do so. In most cases, having a project-ToC results in a ‘project-approach’ towards evaluation: they determine the success of the project by the number of beneficiaries reached or the perception of local community towards the project and in most cases the insights of project owners about the (broader) results of their efforts remain limited to ‘hearsay’ stories.

Table 5.2 Evaluation activities of the local organisations

	The organisation		
	Does not evaluate or administer results	Keeps basic records	Systematically evaluates
Kenya	11	2	2
India	8	2	0
South Africa	7	2	0
Ghana	6	2	0
Total	30	10	2

The lack of evaluations not only hampers getting insight into the results of the projects, it also obstructs the learning opportunities for local organisations; to keep track on how former beneficiaries are doing and to adapt their projects based on insights gained during the evaluation.

During the project visits, we tried to talk to (former) beneficiaries whenever possible. In some cases group conversations took place, in other cases individual discussions gave insight into the current living conditions of the respondents and their perspective on whether and how the project changed their life. It became clear that a number of projects do contribute to the improvement of individual living conditions. There were a number of former beneficiaries of education-oriented projects especially who explained they were able to find a job thanks to, for example, the computer classes they attended. There were even several of the local organisations studied that had hired former beneficiaries to work as teachers or in administration.

There were also former beneficiaries who expressed their disappointment in the after care or monitoring of the local organisation, however. Because we were strongly dependent on the local organisation for the selection of the former beneficiaries, a selection-bias was therefore inevitable. Some of the POs were aware of and talked about former beneficiaries whose after-project life was not precisely promising. The selection bias was mostly caused by the fact that most of them are mainly in touch with those former beneficiaries who were doing well.

It is thus very difficult to determine the extent to which the projects have a broader impact, one that transcends the lives of individual beneficiaries, based on insights gained through the local organisations or the former beneficiaries.

As described above, however, the type of projects undertaken by the great majority of local organisations are mainly aimed at changing individual lives. One of the studied projects clearly indicated that it is not a matter of course that by changing individual lives, broader, structural change will take place. In 2003 the Wild Geese Foundation supported the reintegration of child labourers into formal education through a 'cow project'. Parents participating in the project received a cow for each child they would send to school. Now, more than ten years later, the then children are at the beginning of their twenties, starting or already running their own family. Most of the women we talked to were young mothers involved in low paid home industries, others had left to move to a larger town to work under poor conditions in the textile industry. They hoped to find a job as a nurse, but proper education (facilities) was lacking. By their account, their lives were comparable to those of their own mothers. We talked to them during an informal community meeting, in the presence of many young children. When asked if child labour was still taking place, and more precisely if some of the present children were working, many raised their hands before being forced by the adults to put them down. The planned life span of the project had been over for quite some time, but it became clear that the context in which the project began in 2003 had barely changed for the better more than ten years later.

5.4 India, the best pupil of the class?

Why does India have the highest percentage of projects with output and outcome results as planned or beyond expectations? How does it differ from Kenya, which has a (significantly) higher share of projects that are no longer running? It is difficult, and virtually impossible, to make hard, categorical statements about the differences found between countries based on the data collected, however, we do want to highlight and discuss some of the differences found between the four countries.

Although differences between the four countries seem great, we first of all analysed the extent to which the intra-country results were significant.⁹ The analysis demonstrates that the output and outcome results of Kenya differ significantly from the results of India and South Africa. In Kenya a significantly higher percentage of projects no longer reaches the intended results and objectives.

⁹ Significant differences: only significant differences are discussed. A significance level of 5% was used. This means that with a probability of 95% percent the found differences are not based on chance.

In addition, we find that projects in Kenya and Ghana are to a significant extent less locally owned, with regard to foreign financial and management involvement, compared to projects in India and South Africa.

In India a local consultant has carried out pre-funding visits since 2001. The consultant has visited only two of the 30 studied Indian projects in the process of approval. Although this extra quality check could influence the results of projects co-financed by the Wild Geese Foundation in India, this does thus not explain the relative low number of projects in India that no longer reaches intended output and outcome found in this study.

Are India and South Africa the 'best pupils' in this class of four? When considering output and outcome results and local ownership we can indeed conclude that the results in these countries are significantly better than those in Ghana and Kenya. However, when taking into account a very important aspect of sustainability, the extent to which projects are contributing to structural change, intra-country differences disappear. In all four countries, all partners are (with the exception of two) mainly aimed at direct poverty reduction. Intra-country differences also disappear when taking into account the extent to which local organisations systematically evaluate their work, and thus reflect on the results of their work and (possibly) alter their work based on these results. The only two partners that do evaluate their work are based in Kenya.

Thus, significant intra-country differences are there at output and outcome level, however explaining them requires a different type of study that exceeds the objectives of the study at hand.



6. Conclusions

Since its foundation in 1957 this is the first study that has systematically shed a light on the long-term results of the support the Wild Geese Foundation has given in the past to a diverse range of local organisations and their projects. In this sustainability study, both the output and outcome results have been studied, as well as the extent to which the projects contribute to structural change. The field study took place in between February and May 2014, among 93 projects in Kenya, India, South Africa and Ghana. The projects have been implemented by 42 local organisations between 1990 and 2008 with the support of a similar number of Dutch private initiatives.

Although it is difficult to put the results at output and outcome level into perspective due to a lack of comparative data, the results can be considered positive. With an average life span of ten years, 78% (N=73) and 69% (N=63) of the projects achieved their intended (respectively) output and outcome results as planned or even beyond expectations. This means that in general the projects benefited, and still benefit, the improved living conditions of a large number of individuals, in some cases maybe even a larger number over a larger period of time than expected. In other words: small as they are, the projects can make an important difference in the lives of many.

This study consequently sheds a critical light on the positive output and outcome results by making three important remarks. First of all, there is the strong dependence on foreign donations and/or, to a lesser extent, management. The viability of 40% of the projects currently depends on the financial support of one or more foreign donors. Output and outcome results are still achieved, but partly by the grace of strong Western involvement. Thus results exist but are not (always) locally owned. This not only puts the results in a different light from an ownership perspective, but also brings to the fore the fragility of the positive results. One donor or foreign manager who withdraws can be enough to cause a project or even an entire local organisation to collapse.

Secondly, the majority of the projects have a unilateral focus on direct poverty reduction. Output and outcome results are still achieved, but considering the focus of projects mainly bring direct relief to individual lives, it is not evident that they will indeed contribute to structural change tackling the root causes of poverty and inequality. Expectations are that investing in individuals will trickle down to the broader community or even the society at large. However, and this brings us to the third and final restriction, lack of evaluation makes it hard to get insight in this presumed effect.

The most important reason hampering the projects in contributing to sustainable development, as in structural change, turns out to be the strong project focus. From the moment local organisations, with or without the involvement of the PI, have decided on the contours of the project, they rarely change the project focus. Most of their time is invested in the day-to-day management of the project to their best ability. Finding adequate funding and the staff to do so, writing newsletters, the actual execution of the project, dealing with local government regulations and day-to-day troubleshooting, are some of the tasks that take up most of the time of local managers and staff. Because of this focus, little time but also imperative is there to invest in, for example, monitoring and evaluating the project and translating actual, contextual developments into an up-to-date-vision, policy or project. What this study brings to the fore, however, is a great deal of potential. Used in the right way, it can tackle the identified challenges. In the next

Chapter, five recommendations are formulated that are aimed at utilising the potential of POs, PIs and the Wild Geese Foundation to its full extent.



7. Recommendations and Final thoughts

Based on the findings of this study five main recommendations have been formulated. These recommendations do not pretend to be guarantees for success. The work in which the Wild Geese Foundation, PIs and their local counterparts are involved is susceptible to numerous (external) factors affecting its sustainability. Investments made in this type of work should, to a certain extent, always be considered as risk investments. These recommendations do aim to respond to challenges determined in this study by focussing on the potential of POs, PIs and the Wild Geese Foundation as uncovered by this study.

From direct relief to structural change

Firstly, most of the projects are not directly aimed at contributing to structural change but many POs are well aware of the (cultural, economical, social) systems in place that lie at the heart of the problems they are trying to solve. They often have a wide knowledge of other players (local development organisations, religious institutions, cooperatives) in the area that have similar objectives or that have expertise that could be of use. When translating these insights to the projects they are running or planning to start, the chances increase that these projects contribute to sustainable development; locally owned development projects that contribute to structural change. Instead of, for example, mainly taking care of people with a disability, POs could start or join an interest group of organisations active in the same field. They could share knowledge and experience and, for example, jointly address the community to discuss stigmas related to people living with disability.

Form a sustainability perspective it would therefore be of great value to invest in increased capacity of POs and PIs for formulating a Theory of Change (ToC) and in translating a ToC in the design, implementation and running of a project in such a way that it addresses the root causes of poverty and inequality. This is not only about offering skills training and it is certainly not about instructing people to work and think in rigid logical frameworks. This is merely about a different way of looking at reality and formulating solutions based on a context analysis. It is about challenging the identified project-focus that hampers many local organisations and their PIs in thinking beyond their fixed project frameworks.

The Wild Geese Foundation could stimulate this in the application process by triggering POs and PIs to frame their project as part of a broader vision or strategy. In addition, the call for going one step beyond direct poverty reduction connects well to the Change the Game programme designed by the Wild Geese Foundation. The programme began at the end of 2013 and *strengthening their (POs) "claim-making" capacity: their ability and willingness to confront local authorities about their responsibility to offer suitable services to the poor* is one of the two aims of the programme.¹⁰ By doing so, the programme capacitates local organisations to contribute to structural change.

¹⁰ Source: <http://wildgeesefoundation.org/>

From foreign-owned to local ownership

Secondly, most of the local organisations do not have a strong financial basis and part of them are not locally run, but their managers and staff have proven to be capable of running one or more projects successfully, with all the different tasks that go with it, for several years. This demonstrates that most POs dispose of valuable knowledge and expertise, a certain network and a certain degree of flexibility and creativity to deal with uncertainties and unexpected twists and turns.

This shows a lot of potential to, among others, realise the second aim of the Change the Game programme; *effectively fundraise in their (POs) own country*.¹¹ Realising this aim by employing the skills, expertise and network of the POs could greatly contribute to increasing the local ownership and by doing so, the longevity of output and outcome results.

From hearsay to systematic evaluations

Thirdly, most of the local organisations do not evaluate their work systematically, but a number of them do have a basic database containing information on the results of their project (e.g. number of beneficiaries), and even more of them are aware of stories of how the individual lives of former beneficiaries have changed due to their participation in a project. In addition, some of the local organisations are from time to time in contact with former beneficiaries because they need certain official papers (for example birth certificates or diplomas). These stories, the basic databases and moments of contact with former beneficiaries could form, if collected, deposited and used more systematically, a valuable source of information to be used to evaluate a project.

The study clearly indicates that there is a sense of relevance among a number of local organisations, and a willingness to invest in evaluating their work. It would be of great value if the Wild Geese Foundation was able to support some of the local organisations with whom they have cooperated for many years in setting up an (larger scale) evaluation. These evaluations will not only serve the local organisations themselves, but can also be of benefit to the Wild Geese Foundation by offering insight in project results and mechanisms and processes affecting these results.

In addition to stimulating and facilitating local organisations to evaluate their work, it would be of great value if the Wild Geese Foundation could begin a 'continuous research'. This could first of all be done by randomly selecting a number of projects to take part in a long(er) term evaluation each year. Selected projects would be involved in a base-line study, in a first evaluation after finishing the project implementation and in a follow-up study taking place several years after this evaluation. These follow up studies could become part of the regular field trips conducted by the project officers. Secondly, the daily work of the Wild Geese Foundation related to the project cycle (e.g. project proposals, evaluations, field visits) contains a wealth of information on, among others, project results and lessons learned. By more systematically collecting and recording this information, the Wild Geese Foundation is provided continuously with information on the results and the longer-term effects of projects it co-financed allowing the Wild Geese Foundation to adapt its working manner to the latest insights and developments.

¹¹ Source: <http://wildgeesefoundation.org/>

In both the evaluations of local organisations and the continuous research, it would be of great value to focus particularly on the effects of projects on the lives of individuals, communities or societies, since that is where the largest knowledge gap lies.

Donor education

Conversations with the local organisations clearly show that the influence of private donors on their 'room to manoeuvre' is very strong because of the conditionality of their donations. A number of local organisations is restricted in the type of work they can undertake by their private donors. Involving the private donors of the Wild Geese Foundation and, indirectly, of the PIs in the complex reality of development cooperation could be of great value to the work of local organisations and the Dutch PIs supporting them. By explaining back donors that, for example, more is needed than 'building schools' to provide children with a better future, the support base among private donors to finance different type of support (e.g. training, meetings or evaluations) could increase. The Wild Geese Foundation could do this by having POs explain (for example, on the website, in the magazine of the Wild Geese Foundation) what is needed to contribute to sustainable development. 'Reframing the message', designed and implemented by the Wild Geese Foundation, is a valuable programme in this matter. The communication toolkit could provide PIs with ideas and tools on how to go about changing the mind-set, preferences and donor behaviour of their back donors.

Ambassadorship

In addition, to the challenges mentioned above, within the sample of 42 local organisation counterexamples can be found. Organisations that do not deviate from the others considering their scale and structure, but that do make deviant choices: they do evaluate, they do invest in lobby and advocacy type of activities and/or they are able to set up a solid financial base.

The portfolio of POs and PIs of the Wild Geese Foundation thus offers ample opportunities to challenge people to do certain things differently by showing them concrete, inspiring examples. The Wild Geese Foundation could present, for example, a PI and PO that have experience in evaluating a project as 'the ambassadors of evaluating' on their website or have them share their knowledge and experience in a training. This peer-to-peer type of exchanging and learning is an approachable, non-patronizing way to provide PIs and POs with alternative ways of working.

All these are indications of great potential. And in all this, the Wild Geese Foundation is challenged to stimulate, broach, facilitate and enlarge this local potential. In other words: the Wild Geese Foundation is challenged to expand its role as leverage.

Raison d'être

The results of this report and the conclusions and recommendations formulated require a fundamental discussion on the 'raison d'être' of the Wild Geese Foundation. What kind of change does the Wild Geese Foundation wants to bring about in the countries in which it is working? Answering this question will allow the Wild Geese Foundation to value the results of the study at hand ('are we satisfied with the results?') and the recommendations resulting from it.

One could be of the opinion that the main focus of the Wild Geese Foundation is to bring about change in individual lives by providing basic needs. The results at output and outcome level presented in this study could than be found satisfactory, making the

recommendation ‘from direct relief to structural change’, for example, not applicable to the Wild Geese Foundation. In case the Wild Geese Foundation commits itself to contribute to structural change that is locally owned, as it says to aim for in several communication outings, the question is: what role does the Wild Geese Foundation want to play in achieving this change?

The possibilities for local organisations to invest money received from the Wild Geese Foundation in ‘software’ (e.g. training) have increased in the past years, and as said, the Change the Game programme is aimed at capacitating local civil society as game-changers. But, so far, the project support of the Wild Geese Foundation is aimed at small-scale, tangible projects. This forms a dilemma that is illustrated by a former partner of the Wild Geese Foundation. Started as a service delivery organisation for street children, the organisation transformed into an (small-scale) organisation lobbying and advocating for the rights of street children. As accounts for the Wild Geese Foundation, structural change is what the organisation aims for. After going through the transformation from service delivery to lobby and advocacy, however, no longer the organisation can (successfully) apply for funding from the Wild Geese Foundation. Is the Wild Geese Foundation able and willing to (financially) support projects different from the ones supported so far, projects that enable POs in their challenge to change local structures and institutions causing and/or maintaining poverty and exclusion?

This report does not make a call for professionalisation, institutionalisation or bureaucratisation of local organisations. It does not make a call for all POs to end their service delivery type of support and to all transform into lobby organisations. It does call for the Wild Geese Foundation, private donors, POs and PIs to have the courage to go about things differently than they have been doing so far. It calls for full usage of the potential of local organisation as uncovered by this study and by doing so to increase the sustainability of the efforts made by the Wild Geese Foundation, its private donors, PIs and local organisations.

8. Nawoord (Afterword in Dutch)

Door Wilde Ganzen

Het CIDIN-onderzoek gaat over projecten die Wilde Ganzen gemiddeld tien jaar geleden gesteund heeft. In het licht hiervan is de successcore van 70-80% een positief resultaat. Maar het onderzoek laat ook zien dat er nog uitdagingen zijn. Gelukkig kunnen we terugkijkend zeggen dat er bij de behandeling en besluitvorming over projecten al veel veranderd is in de lijn van de aanbevelingen van de studie. Dankzij de CIDIN-studie weten wij dat wij op de goede weg zijn. Maar we zien in de uitkomsten ook kansen en daarmee de verplichting om ons werk nog verder te verbeteren. Dat gaan we als volgt doen:

Versterken lokaal eigenaarschap

Voor Wilde Ganzen is lokaal eigenaarschap altijd een voorwaarde geweest voor samenwerking. Wij ondersteunen alleen projecten waarbij het, na overleg met de aanvragers, voldoende duidelijk is dat het project een *prioriteit* is van de lokale projecteigenaar (PE) en dat het Particulier Initiatief (PI) zich faciliterend opstelt. Het onderzoek bevestigt ons hierin én stimuleert ons om dit aspect in onze relatie met de PI nog meer centraal te stellen.

PI zullen daarom nog meer dan voorheen bij Wilde Ganzen terecht kunnen voor advies bij het ontwikkelen van het projectplan. Dat is ook onze meerwaarde. Wij hebben expertise op het gebied van specifieke landen, de rol van de overheid, het lokaal fondsenwerven etc. Wij gaan hierover, en over de andere uitkomsten van het onderzoek, met PI in gesprek en zullen daartoe een aantal bijeenkomsten organiseren. Om resultaten en succesfactoren al vooraf helder in kaart te brengen ontwikkelen we een tool die we PI online zullen aanbieden. Via een vernieuwde website zullen PI toegang krijgen tot relevante informatie, beleids- en kennisdocumenten, en er zal plaats zijn om eigen ervaringen te plaatsen en te delen.

Afhankelijkheid verkleinen

Een ander belangrijk punt uit het onderzoek is dat 40% van de onderzochte projecten alleen konden voortbestaan dankzij voortdurende steun uit het buitenland. Dat percentage moet flink omlaag, vinden wij.

We zullen daarom bij de ontwikkeling van projectplannen aan PI vragen na te denken over een zogenaamde exit-strategie. Hoe wordt er bijgedragen aan de verzelfstandiging van het project? Welke lokale besluitstructuren zijn er? Is de lokale partner in gesprek is met de overheid in eigen land? Hoe zorgen we ervoor de projecteigenaar straks zelfstandig, zonder voortdurende financiële steun uit het buitenland, voort kan? Want pas dan is er zicht op werkelijke duurzaamheid.

Met het programma Change the Game ondersteunen we PI en PE daarbij. We weten namelijk dat 75 % van mensen die in armoede leven niet leven in lage inkomenslanden, maar in middeninkomenslanden. Wilde Ganzen investeert daarom in Brazilië, India, Kenia en Zuid-Afrika al bijna 10 jaar in de capaciteit van lokale organisaties om zelf fondsen te werven. Inmiddels zijn er meer dan 1.000 organisaties getraind. Het Change the Game programma richt zich op het versterken van organisatieontwikkeling, lokale fondsenwerving (inclusief communicatie en PR), en claim making (lobby & advocacy). Wilde Ganzen zal dit programma in de periode 2015-2020 uitbreiden naar ongeveer 10 andere lage en middeninkomenslanden. Hiermee verwachten we grote stappen te kunnen zetten in de structurele aanpak van armoedebestrijding.

Oorzaken aanpakken

Tenslotte bevestigt het onderzoek dat zowel PI als PE veelal projectmatig werken. Misschien is dat ook wel heel menselijk. Toch wil Wilde Ganzen zowel PI als PE aanmoedigen nog meer te kijken naar het grotere plaatje. Om bijvoorbeeld altijd contact te leggen met lokale overheden en waar mogelijk die aan te spreken op zijn verplichtingen. De context goed in kaart te brengen. Te kijken naar onderliggende oorzaken van problemen. Om, op basis daarvan, samen een *veranderingsstrategie* te ontwikkelen. Hierin kunnen en moeten we nog meer stappen maken voor de toekomst. Waarbij we verwachten dat veel van onze concrete projecten (zoals het bouwen van een schoolgebouw) op zich al bijdragen aan structurele verandering. Met goed onderwijs stijgt de kans op een baan, meer inkomen, verbeterde levensomstandigheden en uiteindelijk een betere toekomst. De uitdaging om deze verwachtingen waar te maken gaan we graag aan.

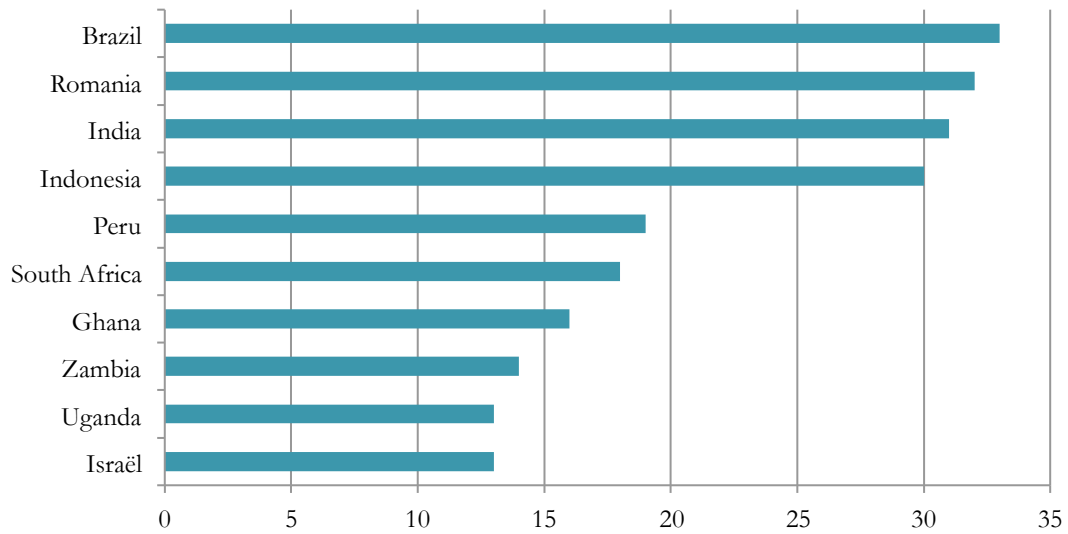
Nog meer het verschil maken

De bovengenoemde zaken maken deel uit van het DNA van Wilde Ganzen, nu en in de toekomst. Dit onderzoek geeft helderheid over ons werk en laat zien dat de kleinschalige manier van projecten steunen grote verschillen maakt. Dat is waar we het voor doen. De uitdagingen daarbij nemen we zeer serieus. We zullen met passie en overtuiging blijven werken aan het verbeteren van onze methode om nog meer en duurzaam verschil te maken in de levens van mensen die in armoede leven.

Wilde Ganzen

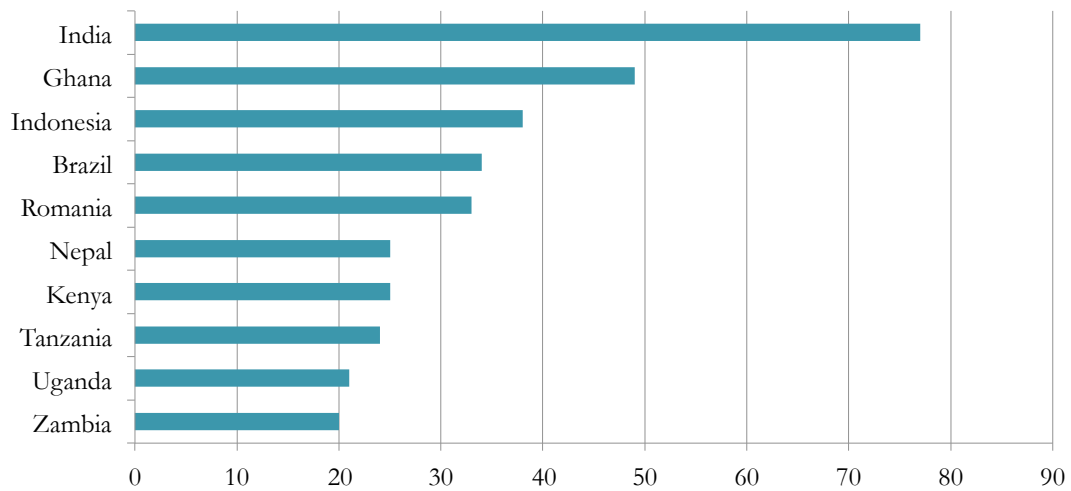
Annex I: Top-ten project countries over time

1995-1996 percentage of the approved project applications (N=1184)



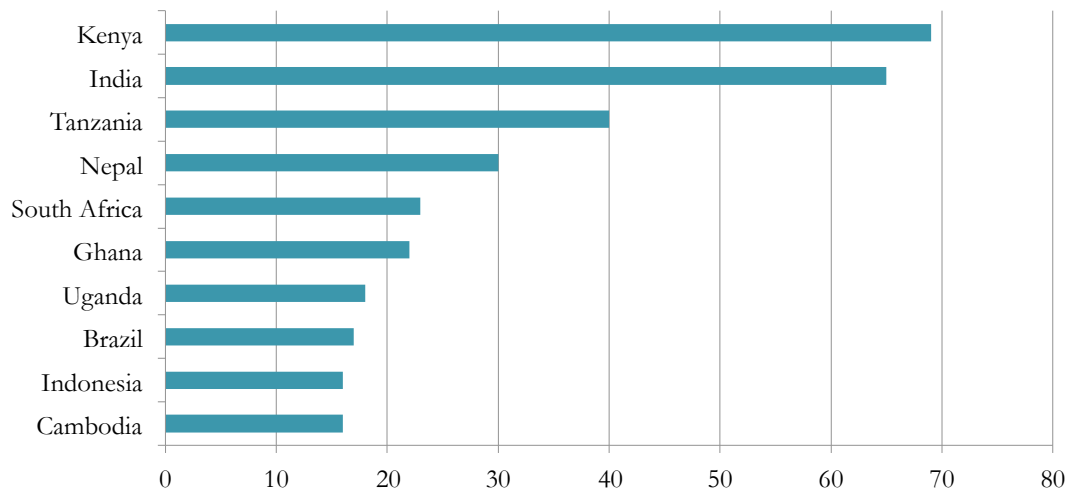
Source: Project database Wild Geese Foundation

2002-2003 percentage of the approved project applications (N=1471)



Source: Project database Wild Geese Foundation

2011-2012 percentage of the approved project applications (N=803)



Source: Project database Wild Geese Foundation

Sources

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