From idealism to realism

African Studies Centre

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A social history of the Dutch in Zambia 1965-2013

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Cover photo: 'President Kaunda and Mr. P. van Raalte, the chargé d'affaires of the Netherlands in Lusaka, sign an agreement at State House on December 17th 1966 for volunteers from the Netherlands to work in development fields in Zambia'

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Map: Nel de Vink (DeVink Mapdesign)

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Preface

Zambia was one of the countries I visited in 2005 for a two-year research project on the forty-year history of Dutch development organization SNV. I found Zambia to be a country with an easy-going rural character, friendly people and an astonishing natural beauty. I was intrigued by the stories of the Zambian and Dutch former development workers that I met. I discovered a lively Dutch community: former volunteers who were inspired by Zambian culture and possibilities and had decided to stay. They had transformed from religiously or anti-colonial inspired idealists into real businessmen who had set up or were running farms in cattle, coffee or tobacco. When I returned in 2012 the capital Lusaka seemed to have taken the same route from idealism to realism: it had evolved from a sleepy and economically rundown backwater into a metropolis with nightclubs and high-end restaurants. In the past decade Zambia had transformed from a state-led to a fully liberalized economy. What had happened in such a short time frame? And why were the Dutch, amidst these bustling economic times, breaking off their development relationship and closing their embassy? How do Zambians and the Dutch community who stay behind look back on this involvement of almost fifty years? Did our presence mean anything substantial from the perspectives of those involved, or was any of it substantially 'Dutch'? And what does this legacy hold for future connections?

These are some of the questions that formed the occasion of this research, conducted in 2012 under the auspices of the African Studies Centre in Leiden. I would like to express my great appreciation for the way Dr. Marja Hinfelaar, Director of Research and Programs at the Southern African Institute for Policy and Research (SAIPAR) in Zambia, assisted me in writing this publication. I would also like to thank the former Dutch ambassador Harry Molenaar and his staff at the Dutch embassy of Lusaka for their hospitality and the cooperation I received in conducting my research, as well as the many interviewees in Zambia and the Netherlands who took the time to answer my questions and tell me their stories. I would like to stress that any omissions or errors are my own: this publication is my interpretation of their stories. Last but not least, I would like to thank Dr. Jan-Bart Gewald of the African Studies Centre in Leiden for his guidance and confidence.

Map of Zambia

Introduction

Zambia is one of the fastest-growing nations in what *The Economist* referred to in 2011 as “the hopeful continent”. With an average growth of seven per cent per year the World Bank ranked the country two years ago as a “lower middle-income country” - remarkable accomplishment considering the country became independent only in 1964. Zambia transformed from first president Kaunda’s socialist experiment into an emerging market in less than fifty years. Yet, in the middle of this economic boom and just as business opportunities multiplied for foreign investors, the government of the Netherlands decided to break off fifty years of development relationship with Zambia and close the Dutch embassy in Lusaka. The decision brought to an end the cooperation initiated in 1965 by the request of Kaunda for Dutch volunteers to help built up the new country of Zambia.

This finalization must be viewed in the light of Dutch national policy. Set in motion by the former government and further developed with the appointment of a Minister for Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation, Dutch development cooperation has moved towards a policy of ‘trade and aid’, while economic diplomacy has become the basis of foreign relationships. After more than five decades of traditional aid, the Netherlands has accepted the new global reality in which the role of the Western donor is losing its impact. In contrast to the past decades, in which development cooperation was primarily considered to be a moral responsibility, the focus has shifted towards a balance between giving aid where necessary and the benefits that development cooperation can hold for the Dutch economy. The character of the fifty years of cooperation between Zambia and the Netherlands has thus changed from that of a development relationship to a new, more business-like relationship.

This publication is not an evaluation of Dutch aid or diplomacy but seeks to portray a social history of the Dutch in Zambia in the period 1965-2013. Over

almost five decades, many Dutch men and women were involved in Zambia's development: from merchants and missionaries in the 1950s to the arrival of an embassy with its staff in Lusaka in 1965, to development workers and Dutch doctors throughout Zambia after independence. Development cooperation in the Netherlands was awakening at the end of their colonial involvement in Asia while at the same time international organizations were taking the lead in guiding Third World countries into modernity. The many Dutch development workers that were sent to Zambia during these very active decades were involved in a dynamic relationship with the country and its many peoples; this is particularly true of the Dutch presence in Western Province, which jokingly became known as 'the thirteenth province of the Netherlands'. Given the limited amount of historical research into Dutch involvement in the country, this publication attempts to contribute to the Dutch institutional memory and bring more understanding of the Dutch role in Zambia. At the same time, this role should not be overestimated: the Dutch contribution is considered modest, especially when compared with the contribution of international organizations or impressive infrastructure projects like those of the Chinese. Nevertheless, the efforts on a national level and the many personal connections made between the two countries in almost fifty years are worthy of a historical interpretation.

This publication provides an insight into this Dutch presence through an elaboration and examination of the different development concepts deployed during nearly fifty years of close cooperation and how they were rooted within Zambian dynamics. The policy behind these concepts was shaped by the interplay between the Dutch political arena and the influences stemming from development practices in the field. During the 1960s and 1970s young idealistic volunteers explored the country in their caravans, in line with the optimistic and revolutionary era of Kaunda. In the 1980s and 1990s, technical assistance was increased through professional projects by experienced experts whereby the Netherlands gave specific aid to selected projects focusing on sectors of their expertise, such as education, health and agriculture. Under Chiluba and later Mwanawasa in the new millennium, the era of projects faded and a shift was made towards budget support, with stronger emphasis on private sector development and closer cooperation between donors. Development had shifted from a typical Dutch matter of affairs into a more internationally determined donor approach. Finally, the Zambian-Dutch relationship moved towards the business-oriented approach of today. How did these models fit Zambian society and how did they respond to local dynamics and national, political developments? What were Dutch and Zambian reactions to these different models – and, finally, to the Dutch departure?

The Dutch shift from idealism to a more economic perspective is paralleled on a micro-level by Dutch development associates. They remained in Zambia after their development adventure and today make a living as entrepreneurs. They followed up on the tradition of Dutch merchants and missionaries already present in Zambia in the 1950s; but while the missionaries remained, most Dutch entrepreneurs and Copperbelt mineworkers left the country after independence owing to Kaunda's policy of nationalization of industry, 'Zambianization' of jobs and a general decline in the economy. Former volunteers who initially arrived to help Zambia develop now availed of opportunities and witnessed Zambia's evolution into today's society. After Chiluba took office and privatized the economy, a new wave of Dutch adventurers came to set up businesses. They differed in motivation and local experience but took on the same challenges as former development workers had done.

How did the Dutch community find their way in Zambian culture and society, and how do they look back on their long-term presence and the changes they have witnessed?

Zambia and its political and economic dynamics form the context in which Dutch presence is interpreted in this publication. The structure is chronological. It is principally based on personal interviews in Zambia and the Netherlands conducted in 2012 and 2013 and interviews in 2005 for the previously mentioned SNV research project. In addition, it is based on archival research at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Dutch embassy in Zambia, and the National Archive in The Hague, as well as IOB (Dutch Inspection for Development Policy) evaluation reports and papers on Dutch involvement in Zambia written by Dr. Marja Hinfelaar. The personal perspectives of former development workers, former and current embassy staff, and Zambian recipients and counterparts give meaning and colour to the history of the Dutch in Zambia beyond official reports and statistics. The aim here is to write a social history in which personal perspectives form a crucial factor in an interpretation that one hopes contributes to the institutional memory of, and debate on, the history of development cooperation through the eyes of those involved.

1

Idealism (1965-1972)

Optimism on both sides

> "It is considered that the sort of people we need are the type of young volunteers, such as yours, who have enthusiasm, initiative, ability to get on with the people, and willingness to work and to rough it."[1]

This was the formal request for Dutch volunteers made by the Zambian Permanent Secretary of National Development and Planning in 1966 that paved the way for the Dutch-Zambian relationship. It was no coincidence that Kenneth Kaunda, the first Zambian president, asked for the assistance of Dutch volunteers two years after independence. This was in line with his optimistic vision of the future of Zambia. Kaunda, the former freedom fighter and leader of the United National Independence Party (UNIP), was a strong believer in development support. Like the Dutch, he assumed that development would be a matter of transferring knowledge in order for Zambia to become a 'normal market economy' within a short period of time. It was clear from the start that Zambia took the lead: Kaunda signed an agreement with the Netherlands concerning the employment of Dutch volunteers "at the disposal of the Zambian government upon the request of the latter".[2]

The request was remarkable since Zambia was classified as a middle-income country. It had a good economic status with a growth rate of 12 per cent per year and a high copper price. It was actually the third-largest copper-producing country in the world. In the First National Development Plan, a plan that Kaunda set up for the development of Zambia, aid consisted of less than 0.8 per cent of the budget, of which only 0.4 per cent was actually received.[3] But although the economic outlook was bright, Kaunda faced a great number of challenges: the education and health sectors required huge investments to

serve the population, and he had to establish unity amongst the diverse ethnic groups and fight unemployment. After independence, there were only 109 Zambians with a university degree, less than 0.5 per cent of the population was estimated to have completed primary education, and there were only 5 secondary schools.[4] Although Zambian people were already exposed to the effects of urban migration, people outside the cities still lived widely scattered and in the bush. When White Father Hugo Hinfelaar arrived in the country in 1958, he recalls cycling through the bush and asking the bishop whether he was "to convert trees": there were that few people around.[5] The expectations of independence among Zambians were high, however, after almost seventy years of British colonialism. Zambia was not in need of financial aid, but as the request of the Zambian government shows, technical support such as personnel with management skills was required for the newly established cooperatives for farmers:

> "The weak spot in this phenomenal cooperative expansion [of 260 cooperatives] is competent management. Farm management can and will be taught; but it

Photo 1 'President Kaunda and Mr. P. van Raalte, the chargé d'affaires of the Netherlands in Lusaka, sign an agreement at State House on December 17th 1966 for volunteers from the Netherlands to work in development fields in Zambia'

> cannot be taught quickly, and in any case it has to be learnt as much on the job as in the institution (…)."[6]

The Zambian government believed these technical tasks could be carried out by international volunteers. The Peace Corps, the American volunteer programme, met the requirements, as well as the newly established Dutch Youth Volunteer Programme (Jongeren Vrijwilligers Programme or JVP).

Development aid in Western Europe was up until then a concept that was tightly intertwined with the work of missionaries and colonialism. Various Christian missionaries such as the White Fathers saw it as their duty to 'enlighten' the Dark Continent. They were the first pioneers in what we would later call 'development cooperation'. According to Hinfelaar, it was a case back then of "helping the needy".[7] The missionaries engaged in education and health and agricultural projects. Their influence in the field of development was widespread and considerable. The Netherlands was in fact one of the largest 'suppliers' of missionaries. In 1940 there were almost 6,300 Dutch missionaries worldwide, reaching a peak in the 1960s, when the numbers mounted to 8,860.[8] As White Father Hinfelaar states, the missionaries were "brokers of modernity":

> "Europe in those days had a very agreeable way of life. The Zambians wanted that for themselves as well. They saw us as a stepping-stone towards that modernity. And we were: we laid the first foundations for infrastructure with the building of roads, schools and hospitals."[9]

Needless to say, the relationship between Zambians and missionaries entailed inequality from the start: the missionaries formed the exclusive route to obtain modernity. White Father Toon van Kessel, who arrived in the country during the 1950s, remembered that ploughing the land with the use of oxen was an example of modernity that the Zambians adopted.[10] Modernity, however, also had its downsides: it often entailed the breaching of local taboos that had clear functions in Zambian society: such, for instance, was the belief in evil spirits in the forests, a belief which the missionaries disregarded, leading to the logging of forests on a large scale.[11]

Colonial powers had also engaged in development projects before the Second World War. Various strikes in the 1930s in the West Indies and Africa made the colonial powers aware of dissatisfaction in their colonies and the limited support for the colonial regimes. They therefore initiated large-scale projects aimed at the promotion of well-being and welfare among the local population. The British colonial government in Zambia, for example, engaged in several

Photo 2 White Father Hugo Hinfelaar teaches catechists in Mulilansolo (North Province) in 1969. At the left side there's the image of Pope Paul VI who was making a pastoral visit to Africa that year

farming projects in Central, Eastern and Southern provinces and set up legislation to promote girls' participation in education.[12] These late-colonial projects were not solely driven by political and economic motives; colonial powers had also acquired the moral sense of a 'duty' to enlighten their colonies, because economic exploitation of resources and people had come to have a negative image. The Netherlands, for example, began 'ethical politics' in the former Dutch East Indies at the beginning of the twentieth century out of a sense of moralism: it was their 'God-given duty' as ruling nation to 'enlighten' the native inhabitants of their colonies. In practice, this meant attempts to provide basic education and vaccination against infectious diseases for the local population. Unfortunately, the ethical politics were mainly in the form of words rather than deeds: of the 40 million guilders that were made available for the development of the Dutch East Indies in 1905, only 6.5 million had been spent after four years.[13]

Post-World War Two Dutch motivation for participating in development aid was closely tied to colonial heritage. From a diplomatic point of view, development was meant to improve Dutch-Indonesian relations and provide job opportunities for former colonials who returned from overseas. The Dutch initially focused primarily on their former colonies. Between 1951 and 1955, 90 per cent of their development budget went to Indonesia, Surinam and the Antilles. Between 1956 and 1962, this was 70 per cent. New Guinea formed the colonial context for their first development experiences since it became independent only in 1963. The Netherlands sent hundreds of colonial officers to New Guinea

to bring 'development'.[14] In Zambia during the 1950s, missionaries who were bringing development to what was then called North Rhodesia worked within the British colonial structures: Father Hinfelaar remembers the missionaries were to follow the British policy of encouraging the sending of Zambian girls to school.[15] Future nationalists like Kaunda also experienced development activities within the context of colonial structures at that time. Kaunda was in those years a chairperson of Chinsali Youngmen's Farming Association, part of a group that was engaged in emerging discussions about development.[16] Colonialism and development, therefore, were contemporaries for quite some time.

After the Second World War, the concept of development cooperation came to be used by the West in a new institutional context, namely that of the United Nations. The first formal form of Dutch development aid was therefore financial support for the multilateral aid programme of the United Nations in the late 1940s. Dutch experts were sent out to provide technical assistance – the transmission of knowledge and skills – in United Nations organizations. In the 1960s there was a shift towards a bilateral approach in the form of programme aid: general financial support for development policy. Because of the rapid growth of welfare in the Netherlands, society became more aware and interested in development aid. The budget for aid increased from 4.5 million Dutch guilders to 328 million in 1972. A new ministerial post was set up within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs: the Minister without Portfolio, in Charge of Aid to Developing Countries. He was supported in his tasks by a group of civil servants, named DGIS.[17]

Aside from the colonial context, the principal motivation behind development work was economic: development aid could benefit Dutch trade and industry and Dutch export possibilities. Above all, it could boost the Dutch international profile.[18] As Dutch Prime Minister Drees argued in 1953, technical assistance "was of importance to the whole world, but above all to the Netherlands".[19] The political context of the Cold War also played a role. According to an internally discussed memo of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 1954 and later in a memo of 1956, the fight against Communism formed an important motive for development aid.[20] Theoretical thinking about what this development should entail, however, was very limited. Policy plans and strategies were lacking, and long-term planning was regarded as unnecessary because it was thought optimistically that developing countries would soon catch up with the rest of the world.[21]

Diplomatic relations

The Zambian request for Dutch volunteers did not arise accidentally: Zambian–Dutch relations had already been established outside the development context as a result of Dutch presence in Zambia before independence. According to the first Dutch ambassador in Zambia, Junker Matthias Beelaerts van Blokland, "there was no other country aside from the United Kingdom and South Africa that had so many citizens in Zambia".[22] Immediately after independence, there were approximately 1,200 Dutch residents in Zambia, the majority of whom were mineworkers or specialists working in the Copperbelt in the 1950s. There were also farmers and Dutch businessmen working for food and liquor companies such as Bols and Honig. Some had a colonial background and knowledge of coffee or tobacco; others came from northern Holland (Friesland) to work with cattle.[23]

Photo 3 'Volunteer Jos Westerbeek at work on the land' 1967

Because of the presence of numerous Dutch citizens working in Zambia, the decision was taken to establish a Dutch consulate in 1961 in Ndola, the capital of what was then called the Western Province. The vice-consul was Dutch war veteran Willem Van der Elst, who was working for Rhodesian Industries Company, a Rhodesian company. The consulate was set up not just for administrative convenience but rather for reasons of safety with regards to the upcoming independence of Northern Rhodesia (Zambia), as demonstrated in a letter of the Dutch Consul General in Salisbury (former Harare) to the Minister of Foreign Affairs:

> "Indeed, the transition of the colonial rule to a black government will be a fact in a small number of years in Nyasaland, while this development will be postponed for as long as possible in Southern Rhodesia. Northern Rhodesia takes a middle position; there are 70,000 whites against 2.5 million blacks. The white community is therefore too large to just give up the fight for hegemony, but is not large enough to offer resistance to the rise of African nationalism for long (…). The transition to self regulation in Northern Rhodesia will be accompanied by heavy shocks. Those who speak of a second Congo may be pessimistic, but problems of that scale are certainly among the possibilities. If these eventualities occur, Dutch nationals should be able to rely on active support from the official Dutch side, which from Salisbury could be provided only occasionally."[24]

The transition to an independent state in 1964, however, went rather smoothly. Zambia did not turn into another Congo; and unlike neighbouring Zimbabwe decades later, violent land re-distributions never occurred. Nevertheless, the Dutch community was not particularly pleased with the new government. Kaunda supported the liberation struggles in the surrounding countries, including resistance to the regime of Ian Smith – who had made a Unilateral Declaration of Independence in 1965 – in Rhodesia, an important Dutch business partner. The Dutch could no longer send their children to school in Rhodesia, a development they deplored. They did not favour mixed schooling, as was customary in Zambia.[25] When Prince Bernhard, former Prince consort of The Netherlands, visited the country in 1969 for a three-week hunting safari, it was even up for discussion whether he should make an official visit or not. At the Ministry of Foreign Affairs it was argued that an official visit to "the militant Zambia" by a member of the royal family "could make a painful impression on the Dutch living in neighbouring Rhodesia".[26] At the same time, the nationalization process that Kaunda set in motion during the late 1960s as part of his humanistic views was causing trouble to Dutch businesses. They therefore did not see much future in Zambia despite the agreeable lifestyles whites had in the country. A number of enterprises went into liquidation because of these devel-

opments, such as Karina Carpets, a Dutch curtain fabric seller. Honig and Bols also closed their businesses. However, there was still demand for Dutch products as a result of the growing restriction on products from South Africa in the following decades. Dutch suppliers had a leading position in the distribution of dairy products, insecticides, radio and TV equipment, flavourings, fragrances, and cooling appliances for stores.[27]

After Zambian independence there were plans to move the consulate from Ndola to Lusaka, because the Zambian government demanded that diplomats be based in the capital. The Dutch Consul General of Salisbury, however, who was accredited with Zambia, pleaded for an embassy instead of a consulate, because the Dutch community strongly resisted authority coming from Rhodesia:

> "Under the present circumstances, it would be highly objectionable and indefensible if the consulate in Lusaka did not have their own powers at their disposal and would therefore have to rely on the Consulate-General of Salisbury. Anyone who is familiar with the intensity of reaction in Zambia to the companies that operate from Salisbury and with how much favour there is for establishment in Zambia cannot but plead for the swift exclusion of the countries of Zambia and Malawi from the operational area of the Consul General of Salisbury."[28]

The Royal Netherlands Embassy was therefore opened in Lusaka in 1965. From 1966 the Dutch ambassador was also co-accredited for Malawi. Kaunda received the verification of credentials of the first Dutch ambassador during an official ceremony in 1967. Beelaerts van Blokland, a Master in Law who used to work for the former Dutch East Indies mining company Billiton Maatschappij – which later formed part of Royal Dutch Shell – reported to the Dutch Minister of Foreign Affairs about the ceremony:

> "The president responded to my speech with kind words and stated that there were no problems with the 1,200 Dutchmen – I omitted to mention that there is a Dutchman in prison in Ndola – and he spoke with great admiration about the volunteers."[29]

NOTICE

TO NETHERLANDS CITIZENS OF ZAMBIA

I hereby bring to the notice of all Netherlands citizens residing in the Republic of Zambia, that as from November 20th, 1965 an Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in the Republic of Zambia, has been established in Lusaka. For the time being the Chancellary of the Embassy is accommodated at the Ridgeway Hotel in Lusaka. Correspondence should be sent to:

The Royal Netherlands Embassy
P.O. Box 1905
LUSAKA

Cable Address:
HOLLANDIA
Lusaka

F. VAN RAALTE
Netherlands Charge D'Affaires
in the Republic of Zambia

32452/d-

It was a joyful event, apart from some dress-code confusion on the Dutch side:

> "I assumed I was expected to wear a tail-coat in accordance with a first official meeting with the Head of State. But I decided to follow the protocol that prescribed the wearing of a 'lounge suit or national dress' and therefore wore a dark costume. In the protocol it was explained that 'national dress' meant clothing that would be considered suitable in one's own country. I thought I should not break away from the informal sphere that is considered desirable in this country by wearing a costume instead of a tail-coat. However, the president was walking around in a bush-shirt." [30]

Photo 4 'President Kaunda arrives in Solwezi (North-Western Province) for a visit' 1967

The volunteer programme

Technical assistance in the form of young volunteers formed the initial face of Dutch development aid in Zambia. The first team of nine Dutch volunteers of the Youth Volunteer Programme (JVP) arrived in 1966. The organization behind the JVP, SNV (Stichting Nederlandse Vrijwilligers), focused its policy on 'integrated rural development', supplying agricultural, health, and educational services to specific areas. Dutch development assistance was clearly aimed at the level of poor subsistence farmers, following its ideal of reducing regional welfare inequalities. As a result, its program focused its attention mainly on Western Province, North-Western Province, and Luapula, which were the poorest regions of Zambia.[31] By contrast, organizations like the EU and World Bank supported the provinces with greater potential, such as Southern and Eastern Provinces.[32]

Volunteers received a three-month course of very basic training from the Royal Tropical Institute in Amsterdam. In general, the focus of the volunteer programme was based on the idea that the recipient country 'had to be changed'. Local culture, therefore, was seen as a hindrance. In the publicity films, shown to volunteers during their training, it was suggested that local methods of milking, ploughing and preparing food were all 'wrong'.[33] It was clear from the start, therefore, that Western perspectives on what development entailed prevailed in the aid relationship. In line with this perspective, the Dutch ambassador saw development as the important task of transferring knowledge with the goal of making oneself superfluous:

> "It is without doubt that every development plan sets foot on unexplored ground. On the one hand, that is appealing; but on the other hand, one must be aware that one should restrict oneself as a foreign nation and not build up a sort of neo-colonial system of lower functionaries without educating the nation's children at the same time, who can take over the development task when the time has come."[34]

The volunteers of the Youth Volunteer Programme who were sent to Zambia were agricultural advisors, as was the specific request of the Zambian government:

> "We do not need highly qualified people or university graduates to assist. What these cooperatives need is assistance in such matters as when to use fertilisers, when and how to plough, plant and weed, how to use insecticides and how to run and maintain their vehicles and tractors."[35]

The Dutch government adjusted itself to the Zambian politics of that time and the 'back to the land policy' of Kaunda that aimed at halting the urbanization process. Unemployment and a lack of unity among Zambians posed potential threats to Kaunda's rule. One of the solutions was to send unemployed youth to the land to be trained as farmers, as a way to employ and control them.[36] The Dutch therefore placed most of their volunteers in the cooperatives of the Zambian Youth Service throughout the country, particularly in the recently established youth centres in Katete, Solwezi, Kabwe, and Kitwe.[37]

Photo 5 'Volunteer H. Mol and mister Bieze in converation with members of the cooperative in Chisenahi (NW Province). At the background volunteers R. Bulthuis and L. Boiten' 1970

Photo 6 'Young volunteer' 1968

The nature of the work of the first SNV teams can best be described as experimental: volunteers themselves had to look for ways in which they could contribute to development.[38] Nine young men with a background in agriculture were sent to an agricultural project usually attached to the Zambian Youth Service. For example, two volunteers received a land cruiser with a camper and were told to find a youth camp, without further instructions. They soon discovered that the Zambian Youth Service had little interest in development, because these youths had fought for independence and were promised jobs:

> "They told us to follow that road a thousand kilometres heading east and find the Youth Camp in the place Katete. What were we supposed to do there? We had to set up an agricultural school, they told us (...) But these youths had been there already for two years, brought after independence, doing nothing. Imagine two white-noses arriving and saying: 'Guys, we came to set up an agricultural school with you.' Of course, these youths had no interest."[39]

In the case of former volunteer Willem Lublinkhof, there was no project at all, so he ended up doing other work than that which he came for, namely, working with poultry. Luckily the embassy stepped in and provided him with a hundred chickens to start a project. He was also in contact with the Zambian Youth Service, to see in what way he could assist them with training.[40] But the Zambian Youth Service soon turned out to be a rather politically oriented organization:

> "The youth of the Youth Service were actually campaigners for UNIP. They went into the villages to pressure people to vote for Kaunda."[41]

Later, the Zambian Youth Service became militant when they were armed by accomplices of Kaunda, who had sharpened their stance against Rhodesia following the Unilateral Declaration of Independence by the Rhodesian nationalistic leader Ian Smith in 1965. The SNV wanted to remain politically neutral and therefore withdrew the Dutch volunteers from the Youth Service.[42]

Six months after the request for agricultural assistance, the Zambian government requested volunteer support in the health sector. The SNV already had nurses in Luapula Province and began an integrated project in Monze, Southern Province, where they cooperated with the missionary hospital, working on health, agriculture and education.[43] The Zambian government requested assistance for the training of Zambian midwifes and asked for five volunteers. Former volunteer Nina Atkins worked day and night together with the nuns in Monze Mission Hospital when she arrived in 1970. She also had to perform work she was not trained for:

> "Apart from being a midwife I was also the anaesthetist. They just gave me some small instruction paper how to do it and you just did it. There was one gynaecologist, who also served as a surgeon. He just browsed through the books to be able to perform surgery."[44]

The Dutch embassy also contributed to education in the form of donations to schools and the education of Zambian students at the agricultural school in Deventer in the Netherlands. The ambassador visited several schools, such as

Kafue Secondary School, one of the five secondary schools that existed before independence. He was welcomed with the song *Au Clair de Lune*, he stated in his letter to the Minister, and remarked on his surprise that French and Latin were taught. He also noted that different tribes were mixed at the school, which contributed to the eradication of tribal differences. He concluded his letter thus: "the 100,000 guilders contributed by your Excellency are very well spent."[45] He underlined the problem of the lack of teachers and stated that the Zambian government was building secondary schools at a great pace, which raised the problem of teachers that had to be brought in from elsewhere.[46] The idea behind the SNV organization was that educated technical staff in Zambia would eventually take over the work of the volunteers. Unfortunately, there was a lack of such educated local counterparts; nevertheless, SNV obliged volunteers to work with Zambian counterparts, educated or not. Cooperation was therefore not always what it might have been. The ambassador reported on this problem from his field trips:

> "The population still lives entirely in tribal circumstances. The role of the headman and the village head is not yet adjusted to economic development and modern agricultural methods. This is a problem for the Zambian government. I state this, however, to illustrate that there are no counterparts yet available on the middle level."[47]

The lack of educated technical counterparts was acknowledged, although the number of volunteers was growing: from 12 in 1965 to 95 in 1969.[48] Because of the growing number of volunteers, Beelaerts van Blokland felt that general representation of SNV was required in order to guarantee the continuous quality of the volunteer work. The ambassador, who did not want to interfere in SNV business "as a matter of principle", did write a letter to the head of SNV in The Hague to stress his concern about the quality of the Dutch development work and the need for representation in order to uphold the Dutch international profile:

> "As a representative of the Dutch government, I find either a good plan or no plan the only acceptable choice. The question is whether what we offer is of enough quality. Coordination of volunteer work by experts, therefore, seems to me an inevitable requirement. Nothing is easier than to harm the Dutch reputation; and according to my views, that should be the decisive factor in taking a decision."[49]

Although Zambia was the first SNV country with different teams led by team leaders, SNV was in obvious agreement with the ambassador, because the first

field director was shortly thereafter installed in 1968 to take on the task of representing SNV to the Zambian government and forming an overarching contact point for the different team leaders.[50] Willem Zevenbergen was an ex-colonial officer, who returned to the Netherlands after the independence of the former Dutch colony of New Guinea. As was the case of many former colonial officers in those days, his experience in the tropics made him a good candidate for a career in development work.[51] He was a truly devoted and experienced development pioneer and saw development at that time, as he described it in the former SNV magazine *Vice Versa,* as "a process of slowly teaching the sense of foreseeing and taking precautions". The Dutch approach of transferring knowledge was in his view not sufficient, because the root of the problem was the "traditional mentality of the population and the lack of planning capacity".[52] Effective aid in his view could therefore be achieved only by active involvement. Zevenbergen, who had already gained experience in Zambia as team leader of one of the first teams, frequented the embassy and made joint field trips with Beelaerts van Blokland. The two not only shared a common colonial background; they also had the same enthusiasm about the work the volunteers were carrying out and were doubtful at the same time about the outcomes of Kaunda's cooperatives. These state-led associations were imposed upon the farmers, and because of that they did not automatically lead to trust and cooperation among them. According to Zevenbergen, cooperatives were often hardly cooperatives as the name suggests and were therefore not the right instrument in achieving development goals. The volunteers, nevertheless, were persistent in their efforts, much to the contentment of the ambassador:

> "The perseverance and enthusiasm of the Dutch volunteers is very commendable. If there is ever anything to be expected from the cooperatives, it will be thanks to these youths, for whom no obstacle seems to be insurmountable (…) It is a pleasure to see how well the Dutch name is being upheld."[53]

According to Zevenbergen, the Netherlands had no choice in the matter: even though they had little faith in the setting up of cooperatives, they were to follow Zambian policy and did so professionally. Kaunda invited Zevenbergen on a monthly basis to discuss the involvement of volunteers within the cooperatives and also the progress made within the Zambian Youth Service. These discussions with the first president at the Zambian State House were, according to Zevenbergen, fruitful and beneficial to the development work; however, on the subject of counterparts, Kaunda had no satisfactory answers for the field director. He understood the problem, but since there were no trained counterparts

Photo 7 'Frans de Koster at work at the Zambian Youth Service, a Teaching centre for farmers. He teaches how to cut citrus' NW Province'

Photo 8 'Solwezi. H. van Rinsum discusses the ordering of a certain part of a tractor with an agricultural officer'1968

Photo 9 'Henk Mol is busy researching rice at the farmers' cooperative Chizenski'

in Zambia to take over the work, Kaunda could do no more than to ask Zevenbergen to keep up the good work for the time being.[54]

In 1968 SNV reviewed its first years of involvement in the development of Zambia. In the evaluation report, it was stated:

> "The development task of SNV was no easy task, considering the scattered population, enormous distances and the lack of technical staff (…) Considering this background, it is not surprising that SNV was forced to make a start in development, because there was no basis yet in the areas for which our assistance was requested."

It was also pointed out that "Zambia had some ideas, but no concrete plans and goals because of the great lack of infrastructure, which is crucial for development."[55] The biggest problem, however, was the mentioned lack of sufficient counterparts to take over the projects and the fact that they were "not to be expected in the coming years". According to these findings, the projects would "face a dark future without the disposition of these counterparts".[56]

Despite their initially optimistic expectations of what development in practice entailed, the Dutch found themselves powerless to push for the disposition of counterparts. In order to maintain their position, SNV had to follow Zambian politics and could do nothing else but set up projects and put in volunteers wherever requested. They were not very optimistic about the support they were getting from the Zambian government in their development activities. In an SNV report, it was stated:

> "Although they are verbally very much interested in development, the will to really put their weight behind it is rather poor. The little thrust that comes from the Ministry sometimes causes confusion on the provincial level and leads to activities that fit badly within the policy, which adds to the confusion."[57]

It was clear that development entailed dilemmas from the start. The request for volunteers was identified by Zambia, and the tasks of the volunteers were to be embedded in local authority structures. In most of the ten countries they were active in, however, SNV was experiencing that the identification of problems within these structures – such as the lack of counterparts or requesting a government to stick to agreements – could be seen by the recipient country as an effort to "infringe on its recently acquired sovereignty".[58] There had been an optimistic start, but Zambia and the Dutch seemed to lack a common vision of what development should bring about. Nevertheless, in spite of these gloomy first conclusions, the Dutch were there to stay.

Personal experiences and Zambian reactions

On a personal level volunteers in general appreciated and enjoyed their work in Zambia. Still, the dilemmas as described above also caused feelings of doubt or disappointment among the young, single and higher-educated Dutch who were made enthusiastic for performing voluntary work in a development country. Most of these volunteers came to Zambia out of idealism, sometimes rooted in religion, an agricultural background, or simply a desire to escape military service:

> "I wanted to become a farmer since I was a child. I also wanted to see another country. But most of all, I was inspired by my teacher, Master Snel, who was an assistant preacher. He preached about missionary work, about Livingstone and Africa. My mother was also very religious; she told me it was important to also think about other people."[59]

The volunteers obviously differed in background and character from their coordinators, who had more development experience. Most of them had never been outside of Europe. In general, they were enthusiastic, optimistic, hard-working, and not very well prepared back home for what to expect of a development country:

> "I expected everything to be just like in the Netherlands, very well arranged, and that we would take over a huge poultry concern. That was the way it was presented to us. So that was disappointing."[60]

They moved around on bicycles or motorcycles and lived in caravans in the field. Dutch politician and scholar Bas de Gaay Fortman, who worked in Zambia in the 1970s, admired the idealism of the volunteers he met during his field trips. He especially appreciated the fact that they were working at a grassroots level and that their aim was not that of pursuing a great career but to make themselves available for a couple of years for the benefit of people in the South.[61] Apart from being young and idealistic, in most cases they lacked experience or equipment for the work they were faced with. This sometimes led to feelings of incapability, as the example of a midwife at a mission hospital illustrates:

> "I was assisting a woman in labour by myself who had already given birth to seven children. This one got stuck, however, and I couldn't save it. I felt so terrible that I packed my bags and wanted to leave. The nuns were surprised. 'Why

Photo 10 'Maize pounding in a village of the co-operative Chafakuma. The man with the head is the president of the cooperative. In the middle Maarten van de Werff and Jos Westerbeek at the right' 1968

Photo 11 'Rudi Schippers, horticulturalist, is teaching weeding weed in groundnut planting' 1968

Photo 12 'Volunteer in conversation with two men' 1968

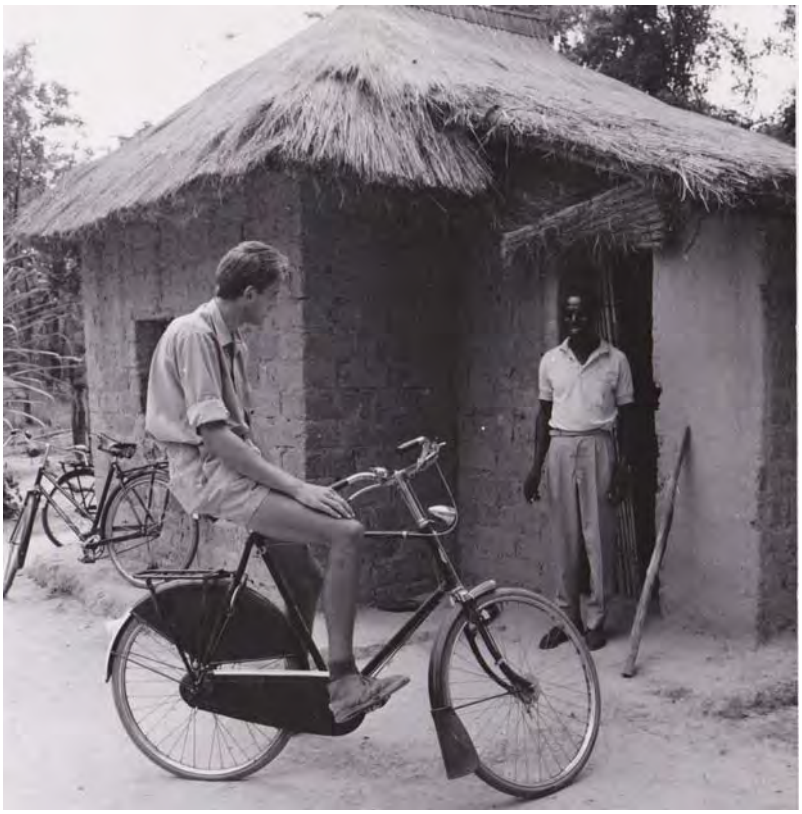

Photo 13 'Gerard Wesselink (Community Planning, Kasempa) with a farmer asking for advice' 1968

> are you leaving?' 'I failed,' I said. 'How did you fail? The mother is still alive, right? If it wasn't for you, she wouldn't have made it either!'"[62]

Some of the volunteers were stationed at mission hospitals or schools. Since religion was still important for the first teams, as it was in Dutch society in the 1960s, this did not lead to conflicts as occurred later on during the 1970s. Zevenbergen, for instance, once spoke to parents on the phone, who asked him whether their son "would have a church to attend" in Zambia. Quite a number of volunteers, like Zevenbergen and his wife, attended the local church. At Christmas they came to Lusaka on vacation and to attend a church service, Protestant or Catholic. On one occasion, they sang Christmas carols together with Zevenbergen, who played the organ in a Protestant church.[63]

The volunteers had good relationships with their counterparts, but because of the differences in educational level, their friendships remained rather shallow.[64] There were obviously also cultural differences that stood in the way. Some volunteers found it difficult to cope with these differences:

> "As a Dutchman, you were direct, you had a job to do, and you went straight for it. In the Zambian culture you need diplomacy. You can't go into a village and say: 'Hey, where are the fields?' You have to shake hands with a lot of people first. My counterpart's in-laws lived in a village we wanted to visit. He therefore wasn't allowed to just walk into the village; he had to go around through the bush, which took ages. I was just waiting there, getting very annoyed! It's the same with funerals. Zambians attend funerals of people they hardly know. So they have a funeral almost every week. Whole projects came to a standstill because of this."[65]

But despite these cultural differences, there were volunteers that became involved with locals on an intimate level, something that alarmed the management of SNV. The field director Zevenbergen, who was of a different generation than the volunteers, sent two volunteers back to Holland because they had relationships with local women, which according to him affected the relationship with the Zambian Youth Service in a negative way. SNV warned volunteers against relations with the locals, because of the many cultural differences that could lead to problems.[66] According to a volunteer who witnessed this situation, not only Zevenbergen but SNV as an organization did not understand well how to cope with the issue of the relationships of volunteers at that time.[67]

The atmosphere among the Dutch was good, with Zevenbergen and his wife acting as a binding factor for the volunteers. Their home was a 'sweet raid' for everyone to have tea or a beer or to recover from an illness. Because it got too crowded at their home, Zevenbergen set up the 'Dutch Farm' near Lusaka,

an office, meeting centre and recreational get-together.[68]According to Father Hinfelaar, the same good atmosphere was felt at the embassy, where he was always welcome to share ideas and attend parties. He felt it was "an optimistic time, very creative also".[69] Ambassador Beelaerts van Blokland was said to be a very engaging and pleasant person, who performed as 'Sinterklaas' – a variant of Santa Claus in a Dutch national festival – for Dutch families and made many field trips to visit the missionaries and the volunteers in remote parts of the country:[70]

> "The ambassador used to bring Bols (Dutch alcohol) when he visited us at the mission. He said that we were the best volunteers because we had been there the longest! One time he went to Chipata with his trunk loaded with Bols. He bumped into a herd of goats and the car broke down. When the police came, everything smelled of alcohol!"[71]

His reports to The Dutch Minister of Foreign Affairs indicate that drinks were apparently a common part of a visit. In 1972 the ambassador visited Eastern Province, where he was offered several toasts with the district governor and the Minister of State, who happened to be there. "The motive of the occasion was apparently to get free drinks". When it was the ambassador's turn to make a toast to President Kaunda, "the district governor took the opportunity to strengthen the toast by adding a firm shot of Scotch into his half-empty glass of beer". During his field trips, he was often escorted under police surveillance, to his great annoyance. He visited freedom fighters from neighbouring countries in a mission hospital, and he met with missionaries and Dutch families, such as Mr. Boesekool and his family in Chadiza, who worked as a teacher of 750 pupils. Twenty miles before another small town, called Lundazi, was the family tobacco farming project of the Dutchman Gludovacsz, financed by the World Bank. The ambassador reported being deeply impressed by the way these Dutch men and women took on their tasks in remote areas, far away from any luxuries.[72]

During the annually celebrated Queen's Day at the embassy, which was the main social event of the year, he would invite Dutch volunteers, diplomats, entrepreneurs, and missionaries in Zambia to join for a party:

> "The volunteers tried to get hold of as much *haring* (Dutch salted fish), cheese and cigars from the ambassador as possible. Sometimes that got out of hand!"[73]

However jovial this may seem, there was in those days a standard of politeness in place towards an ambassador (in this case an aristocrat), which led to a certain social distance. This was obviously the case for volunteers in their behaviour towards the ambassador. But even field director Zevenbergen and am-

bassador Beelaerts van Blokland maintained the form of addressing each other as "Sir" during their joint field trips, sometimes of three weeks' duration spent in a car together.[74]

Zambians welcomed the volunteers. They had good relations together, and the volunteers' efforts were well appreciated, as a sister of the Catholic missionary in Mongu, Western Province remembers:

> "The Dutch integrated very well with the Zambians. There was no discrimination; they were morally good people. The Zambians were very happy with their arrival. They were doing things here with chickens and trees and agriculture. A Dutch couple – Max and Tineke – taught people how to produce rice. Before their arrival there was no rice here; the project was very successful. Tineke made uniforms for children in the area, and she taught women how to make them. The Dutch can cope with a lot and have endurance. Volunteers didn't get anything from home and had to make do with a minimum. They received a motorbike. I even still correspond with some of them."[75]

According to volunteers, however, most Zambians did not see much difference between them and the former colonizers. Volunteers in numerous cases replaced colonial teachers and nurses, who had lost their jobs at independence, and had the same lifestyles.[76] A former volunteer observed:

> "For Zambians there wasn't much difference between us and the former colonials. If you arrive there as a young bloke, drive a Land Rover, and you can buy whatever you want, do whatever you want, and somebody was cooking and cleaning for you, it didn't matter to the local population who you were. You were just another white one."[77]

This large gap between two different worlds is also found in the feelings of the volunteers when they look back on their experiences. Many Dutch feel their time as volunteers was, though very exciting and valuable, mainly beneficial to themselves and not so much to the people. As we have mentioned before, this had to do with cultural differences but also with wrongly managed expectations back home of what development work in practice entailed. Volunteers arrived unprepared to understand Zambian culture. The nurses in Monze, for instance, found it difficult to work with unqualified counterparts who had, in their view, "no sense of responsibility". They were sceptical about their accomplishments and "doubted whether the population was prepared to accept nutrition advice". They were convinced that "the change in behaviour that we are so in favour of will take a considerable amount of time".[78] When a former agricultural advisor

Photo 14 'Treating an eye-wound by a Dutch volunteer' 1967

visited his former project of Kanongo Hill in Kasempa – at that time 'the epicentre of development' – and there was nothing left of it, he was very disappointed.[79] In the case of the urbanization process that took place and that they were supposed to stop, volunteers felt they were "powerless to do so".[80] Some of the volunteers went home disappointed, but others stayed and started their own farm or business, as will be discussed later. Those who stayed, however, are very thankful for the exposure they had as volunteers working with the local people. This exposure made them more successful in what they are doing today, as the example of former volunteer and present coffee grower Willem Lublinkhof shows:

> "I felt the work as a volunteer was interesting because the people were stimulating to work with. It wasn't just about chickens – but learning what people thought, what their character was, how they went hunting, what kinds of bows and arrows they had. Also their ceremonies and musical instruments. That is what I found interesting. I learnt a lot about that and, later, when I started this farm I benefited from that."[81]

Photo 15 'Having a break during a vacation trip: female volunteers after a year's hard work' 1969

2

Zambianization (1973-1990)

Kaunda and Pronk: radical alignment

> "The Zambia of 1966 and present-day Zambia are worlds apart – first of all, because of the evolution in President Kaunda's political thinking. Perhaps 'evolution' is not the right word and we should speak of the true intentions of the president that are slowly becoming clear."[1]

These true intentions, according to the first Dutch ambassador in his letter to his Minister of Foreign Affairs in 1975, were that "the president initially wanted to achieve his policy of Zambianization through humanism, but he now considers this as an ideal, only to be reached through socialism and later communism".[2] Zambia implemented a one-party state in 1973: the ruling party UNIP took full control of the economy and politics, and socialism constituted the official state ideology. One of the consequences of this policy was the nationalization of the copper mines. At the same time, Zambia's economy fell into decline as a result of the worldwide oil crisis, declining copper prices, and Zambia's support to regional liberation wars.[3] Under these circumstances, the optimistic outlook of the embassy on the development of Zambia and Kenneth Kaunda's policy slowly turned into critical suspicion of the shift towards radicalization. The first ambassador's successor reported to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, from a festivity in honour of the president of Nicaragua in 1980, that Kaunda had little appreciation for the West and capitalism. However, according to the ambassador, the number of fraud scandals in which Kaunda's political employees were implicated meant that the president's conscience was not clear either:[4]

Photo 16 Dutch prime-minister Den Uyl arrives at Lusaka airport for a visit in 1976

> "Typical of the hypocrisy (I cannot think of another word for it) of the president, who is so full of his own moral integrity, is that he criticizes and blames the West whenever convenient, while he ignores the abuses in his own country or covers them with the cloak of humanistic love (...). The president railed for an hour against the *Times of Zambia*, which had the effrontery to suggest the system was not working and that too many faults by people in top positions were being overlooked. In a total rage he branded everybody who criticized him as enemies of the people. The conference was a proof that the president cannot take any criticism and begins to show more and more dictatorial ways."[5]

Nevertheless, while Dutch ambassadors in Zambia were obviously suspicious of Kaunda's socialist outlook, the country was receiving large amounts of foreign donor aid from the 1970s onwards. Its position as a front-line state surrounded by liberation struggles in the surrounding countries was one of the reasons Zambia became a 'donor darling': the West needed Zambia to be friendly with them. Southern Africa had become the arena of Cold War politics after Angolan independence in 1976. The Cubans launched a large-scale military intervention by sending 25,000 troops to back the Angolan liberation party MPLA

against rival party UNITA (which received support from South Africa and the United States) in a destructive civil war for control over the country. But Zambian development support also came from the East as well as from the West: Kaunda was pragmatic and cared little for Cold War politics. He was a member of the Non-Alignment Movement, an organization set up by former Yugoslavian President Tito to sidestep the Cold War. Kaunda was mainly concerned with domestic security with regards to the ongoing liberation struggles in the surrounding countries.[6]

Nevertheless, intensive lobbying in the Netherlands was required for Zambia to acquire the status of a major recipient country of Dutch development assistance, as it was supposed to be "too rich".[7] Ambassador Van Limburg Stirum did not seem too enthusiastic himself. He wrote to the Minister of Foreign Affairs that "Zambia's reception capacity for technical assistance is notoriously weak". But despite the "quite negative factors and unimpressive performance record", he indicated that "Zambia, according to most foreign experts, deserves hope for the future and our continuous support".[8] Decisive factors for continued Dutch support were the shortage of technical personnel, a dangerously narrow economic base, and a dualist economy with extensive rural poverty.[9] Another factor of importance for Zambia's 'donor darling' status in the Netherlands was the fact that Kaunda's radical changes paralleled the radical thinking of Dutch leftist organizations and political parties: it matched that of Dutch social democrat Minister of Development Jan Pronk, 'the radical minister', very well. The agricultural schemes – led by the example of Tanzania's president Nyere's *Ujamaa* (an African form of socialism) – which Dutch volunteers in agricultural government projects had to run were an inspirational development model to Pronk's social-democratic party PvdA (Labour Party).[10]

Aside from the social upheaval that Europe experienced during the 1960s and 1970s – with its increased democratization and secularization and its sexual revolution – Dutch thinking about development had changed under the influence of leftist thinkers and students. The West came to believe that poverty had to be regarded as an international and structural problem that was mainly caused by unfair trade relations and over-consumption in the West. The former colonizers felt they had a debt to meet in the undeveloped world.[11] Development expert, scholar and politician Bas de Gaay Fortman introduced the concept of 'The Netherlands as Guiding Country' in 1973, in which he stated that the Netherlands was to play an exemplary role in the relationship between East and West and between North and South. During Pronk's rule, cooperation was therefore sought with Scandinavian countries, which were considered 'like-minded' countries.[12] At the same time, the attention paid to development aid

Photo 17 'Prime minister Den Uyl visits the SNV centre near Lusaka' 1977

took on large proportions in the Netherlands. The number of volunteers had already increased from 279 to 526 in the period 1968–1971, and in 1974 the number of volunteers reached a growth rate of 60 per cent. Apart from government initiatives, all kinds of Dutch private organizations came into being that began to work in the field of development, organizations such as Novib, Memisa, ICCO, and Dienst over Grenzen. Pronk wanted to focus on 'the poorest of the poorest' and he installed criteria for development countries, such as human rights. Under his influence, the Netherlands became a frontrunner in terms of development aid. Since 1975, the Netherlands lived up to the 0.7 per cent minimum of GNP spent on aid as was formulated by the United Nations.[13] Aid increased to 1.5 per cent of the national income. Most volunteers in Zambia shared the same socialist outlook as Pronk and Kaunda at that time:

> "I have a company now. But at the time that I was a volunteer, 'commercialism' was a dirty word. We had a strong socialistic feeling. If you had told me 32 years ago that I would have a car and a company today, I would have, as a figure of speech, shot myself! I would never surrender to capitalism!"[14]

And in line with the radical thinking of the 1970s, Dutch volunteers were also taking radical action to express their feelings of injustice about the one-party state system, much to the dislike of the ambassador and Father Hinfelaar:

> "There were Dutch teachers who wrote political articles. They didn't stand a chance. So the ambassador sent them quickly to the airport. In a typically Dutch way, they would still be yelling out of the window that it was all injustice! 'Please go back home', we thought. These types of volunteers were much too unruly for a one-party state nation."[15]

The idea of making oneself superfluous by transferring knowledge therefore slowly changed into the notion that the Dutch had to actively participate in development to be able to make changes, as the example of a former volunteer in 1979 illustrates:

> "A new volunteer arrived, who had to stay with me for a while to see how the work was done. It was someone who had completed agricultural university. After a couple of days I told him: 'Come on man, just do this right now. Yesterday we agreed on it.' You know, I came from a farm, not from school; I had always worked. I had arranged all kinds of tractors and ploughs and machines, and of course I could manage them much better than all those Africans together. But well, I had to teach them that work had to be done! At a certain point I might say: 'Get right off that tractor; just let me do it and watch how I do it because it has to be done right!' After a week the new volunteer came up to me and said: 'But this is not right.' I said: 'Why not?' 'Because he has to learn it himself!' I told him: 'Then he just has to watch me and he will know how to do it. That is much better than standing on the side-line telling him I don't know either, while I do know and he doesn't know, but he knows that I know.' The volunteer said: 'On the one hand, I think it's great, what you are doing; but on the other hand, you are doing all the work yourself!' So I told him: 'Of course, man! That work needs to be done, right? There is only one planting season. You could start like: Let's talk about it, but then you're already too late!' The volunteer responded: 'But don't you think that the most important task you have is to make yourself superfluous?' I said: 'Listen, man, pack your bags and go home! Nobody here asked for you. You are completely superfluous, really. Go back to Lusaka; talk to SNV and tell them: I think I would be making myself completely superfluous by taking the plane and leaving!'"[16]

Together with the idea that donors had to be actively involved in development, the concept of 'development aid' itself changed into 'development cooperation': development workers and the 'poorest of the poor' had to work together to break through the existing impasse. As a consequence of this change, aid towards Zambia was intensified. The country became a 'favoured' country for Dutch development aid concentration in 1975. Apart from the reasons dis-

Photo 18 'Volunteer Paul Hulshof and field leader Harm Dijkstra at a maize machine at a cattle farm 15 kilometre west of Lusaka' 1977

cussed above, it was thought that although Zambia was a relatively rich country, it had very poor regions that deserved attention.[17] This bilateral relationship meant that the Netherlands became an aid donor on a national level, and development experts from DGIS (Netherlands Directorate-General for International Cooperation) from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in The Hague came to run projects from the embassy in Lusaka. At the same time, private organizations like Dienst over Grenzen and ICCO came to Zambia. The Dutch projects that were set up in accordance with the national development plan were mainly in the agricultural sector: dam and irrigation projects, the Rural Extension Development Project for the instruction of farm centres and farm training institutes, the Kasempa Settlement Scheme, the introduction of settlement advisors, and some dairy projects. Apart from these projects, the Dutch government sent medical doctors, teachers, co-financed health projects, facilitated small embassy projects, and fostered cooperation at university level.[18] In total, the Netherlands spent 183 million guilders (around 90 million euros) on development aid to Zambia in the period 1975–1981.[19] In the Foreign Affairs Year Report of 1978 it was stated that "after a less than promising start in the years before now, it seems that improvements have been made in development cooperation". The reasons for these improvements, according to the report, were that "Zambia has adjusted to the new donor rules and at the same time made a faster and more efficient use of Dutch development cooperation".[20] These comments pro-

vide an indication of what became more obvious during the 1980s: the Netherlands got itself into the driver's seat of development in Zambia.

Aid industry

In the late 1970s and 1980s the Zambian economy was further weakened by the extreme droughts that afflicted the country. At the same time, there was an international economic recession in progress that affected the whole world. Zambia in those years was not a very comfortable place for development workers:

> "It was not a good time to work in Zambia in the 1980s, actually. The Rhodesian army had blown up everything; it was a minefield in Southern Province. Zambia was socialist; we had a few state-owned shops where you could buy toothpaste. There was no toilet paper, no flour, and no bread. The borders with Zimbabwe were closed and South Africa was boycotted. It was an economically difficult time."[21]

Internationally, thinking about development cooperation became more based on the idea that development countries had to adjust themselves to the new economic reality.[22] Under the leadership of Pronk's successor Jan de Koning in 1977, Dutch policy on development cooperation moved towards pragmatism, towards the aim of economic independence of the recipient countries. Developing nations were to strive for economic growth through international trade and business.

Dutch development cooperation was therefore professionalized: it became a professional industry with large projects, highly educated staff, and a focus on management and development processes. Emphasis on policies and plans increased, while the funds allocated to the Dutch policy on development cooperation rose higher: aid increased from 1,050 million guilders in 1972 to 3,374 million in 1978, which led to strong pressure on expenditure.[23] The embassy staff therefore was expanded: in 1986 the embassy had around twenty staff members, of whom ten were development experts from the Netherlands.[24]

As a result of the professionalization of development work in the course of the 1980s, jargon came into increasing use, with buzzwords like 'management', 'gender' and 'sustainability'.[25] The development worker was no longer a volunteer full of adventurism and idealism, but in addition to this idealism he or she was a professional expert who wanted to see his or her expertise rewarded like any other employee. In the 1960s, the word 'volunteer' had a positive ring to it;

but in the course of the 1970s, volunteers were by then considered inexperienced amateurs.[26] From 1985 onwards, they were displaced by the development associate or expert, who had a higher education level and was specifically trained for development work and capable of executing large DGIS projects. Development associates were still involved at the grassroots level but shifted more towards district councils and worked closely with local government departments. Since Zambians had become more educated, they filled more positions. At the Dutch embassy, for instance, they filled ten supporting staff positions.[27]

To increase the effectiveness of technical support, the Netherlands decided in the 1980s to introduce a policy of regional concentration. Western Province became the centre of Dutch development aid because of its status as one of the poorest regions of Zambia. However, the Netherlands also continued projects in other marginalized areas, such as the Rural Water for Health Project in North-Western Province, which drilled a total of 108 boreholes in Kasempa and Solwezi district between 1985 and 1990. There was also the Provincial and District Planning Unit in Luapula Province, where the Dutch cooperated with councils to integrate development departments at district level. In the same province there were several fishery projects to assist fishermen raise their living standards, and in 1985 an agricultural credit scheme in Zambezi district was begun for financial and advisory support.[28] In their concentration area, Western Province, the Dutch supported schools, transport, healthcare, and veterinary services. Instead of the caravans volunteers used to live in, the experts moved to newly built houses. Some roads in Mongu, the administrative capital of the province, acquired Dutch names, such as 'Julianasingel', which indicates that the Dutch felt much at home. A former Zambian counterpart remembers:

> "There were many Dutch people living here at that time. They even started an international school. It was mainly for Dutch people. The feeling most local people had was that the Dutch government had a liking for Western Province. Some even felt that it was being treated as the thirteenth province of the Netherlands!"[29]

In an evaluation of this policy in 1981, it had already become clear that the regional approach within the new concept of development aid entailed a large dilemma: being actively involved as a donor within a region meant the donor could end up in the driver's seat of the development process:

> "There are pros and cons to this regional concentration. On the one hand, it offers possibilities to develop more structural forms of development cooperation, such as the 'Integrated Rural Development Programs'. But on the other hand, there is the danger that the donor begins dominating the development process.

> An artificial situation could arise in which projects are executed that are principally of appeal or importance to the donor."[30]

According to former aid workers and ambassadors, that was exactly what happened. The Netherlands had become a driver in the Zambian development process. In their view, projects were incidental, not part of a structured plan, and originated from the Dutch rather than the Zambians themselves.[31] Former ambassador Graaf Van Limburg Stirum, who took office in 1978, underlines that local practice did not lead in Dutch development policy because "the Dutch were determined to pursue their own plans about what they thought was important for Zambians".[32]

> "We knew better. That was a typically Dutch type of behaviour at that time. Officials from The Hague came yearly to Zambia to dictate the Dutch development policy. The Zambians just accepted it. A good example is the request of the Zambian government for the Dutch to assist them with setting up a transport system together with Dutch transport company DAF. The Dutch refused, because it didn't fit into their own development priorities."[33]

An example of a project that did fit within Dutch priorities was the digging of a canal in Western Province between 1982 and 1990. For the project a sand plunger, a few pontoons, a tugboat and two development experts were used. A former development expert explains:

> "The area on the other side of the Zambezi was very isolated. To develop this area, you needed a better route to get there. So we, as Dutch, thought: 'You guys have a canal and we know all about canals.' So we started dredging. Because it was a flood plain, you got floods and the ground started moving. But instead of admitting that it had become a huge failure, we shipped in boats from the Netherlands and pumped in millions of guilders. The Dutch tugboat *Brabant* still lies rusting on the shores of the canal. It was literally 'dragging water to the sea', as we say in the Netherlands – or to the canal in this case."[34]

It was not just Dutch ideas on development that drove these kinds of projects; they were also a consequence of the atmosphere of 'spending budgets and budget blowing' in the development sector, as former aid workers describe. Because of increased budgets, aid workers felt money was spent regardless of the outcome of projects.[35] This factor proved to be endemic in the development sector, and it continued well into the new millennium.[36] Former ambassador Van Heemstra underlines this sentiment from his own experiences from that time:

> "The spending pressure was too high. It was a bit of a Dutch disease: as long as you spent the amount of money that was in the budget, your conscience was clear – while I would rather have spent less money but spent it well."[37]

'Money well spent' in the eyes of those involved should at least mean setting up sustainable projects. But laying a sound economic foundation for a project in order for it to continue after the Dutch departure proved difficult: despite the professionalization of the development sector, a commercial approach was considered 'dirty' within the Ministry at least until the mid-1990s. Dutch development cooperation was aimed at states; investing in private sector development was 'not done', as a former development worker underlines:

> "In the development sector you weren't allowed to work with commercial farmers. They were considered 'dirty'. We had to work with small farmers. For a project on artificial insemination, we had camps where farmers could bring their cattle. The government took care of the insemination. So the government brought in low-quality bulls, which didn't work out at all. It would have been much better to buy one high-quality bull from a commercial farm. Instead of letting the farmers pay for quality, which produced much more, poor quality was given away for free. That was quite unsustainable. When I addressed this to DGIS and explained that I wanted a more commercial approach by letting the farmers pay for quality, I was told: 'Mr. Muijs, you are making a huge mistake; you are confusing commerce with development cooperation!'"[38]

Former ambassador Van Heemstra remembers how a Dutch parliamentary delegation even came to visit Zambia in the late 1980s to make it very clear that Dutch commercial interests were not on the development agenda.[39]

While the Zambians did not seem to have a clear say in Dutch development policy, it was therefore understandable that former volunteers complained about the passive attitude of the Zambian government. To them, it seemed Zambians were not actively involved in the activities at all, as a former volunteer and DGIS associate states:

> "Nobody held you accountable for what you were doing. We were attached to a government organization, but they let us decide how we did our work. It was all quite passive from the Zambian side; they just let it come over them."[40]

The Zambian government therefore remained rather indifferent towards the outcomes or difficulties of the development process the Dutch were pursuing in their country, a matter the Dutch in their turn proved reluctant to address. For instance, Zambians working on projects sometimes used project cars

for private purposes, or they just disappeared. There was abuse of the declaration of transport costs, and mutually made agreements were often not kept.[41] From the perspective of former aid workers, the reluctance on the Dutch side to address this matter to the Zambian government led to a situation in which the Dutch just "kept pouring water into the wine until there was only water left".[42] Sociologist and education specialist Wout van den Bor addressed the Dutch tendency to indulge any shortcomings on the African side, in an article in *Vice Versa* (the SNV magazine), where his book about development experiences in 1983, *The Art of Beginning,* was discussed. This subject was a sensitive issue, and the ideas of Van den Bor were not widely accepted at that time.

> "Why should you cover the shortcomings of the Africans? You don't have to shout undiplomatically that the other can't organize, has no heart for the matter, and is only looking for personal gains, but you could talk about it openly. You have to assume that we make a lot of mistakes but that they also have their shortcomings. Acknowledging that is a mature way of development cooperation. I find it quiet unjustified to indulge people you have to work with. It's about co-operation between people, with whom you have to be able to make agreements about responsibilities and management."[43]

As we have read, decision making in the late 1970s and 1980s hardly reflected an interaction of trends in Dutch politics and local developments as the new concept of 'development cooperation' had envisioned. Even though the practice of development was indeed a complex interplay of national, international, local, and personal factors, it was foremost a Dutch setup.[44] Commercialism was considered inappropriate, while the focus on the Zambian government proved difficult since they had become mere bystanders in a Dutch-driven process. Criticism or discussion of the outcome of these developments from within the sector, however, was almost absent. It could be argued that this was a by-result of the fact that aid had become an industry of its own. Aid workers had a vested interest in their services being continued. They had good jobs and very agreeable lifestyles:

> "We had a great life with a huge salary. Zambia was considered a 'hardship country', so we got enormous compensation while we were parking our four-wheel drives comfortably in the game parks. We travelled extensively; and when you had a child you got sent three cubic metres of airmail because 'it was so hard for the people there.'"[45]

Photo 19 'Anchoring of the pumps at a pumping station at Mununga' 1977

Frontline state

While the Dutch were intensifying their development efforts in Zambia, the fact that Zambia was a frontline state strengthened diplomatic ties. The Dutch were sympathetic to the fact that the country had established independence peacefully amidst the atrocities of the neighbouring liberation struggles. Besides, Zambia constituted a strategically attractive country to monitor the developments within the region. Zambia, for instance, played an important role in the establishment of the Lusaka Accords of 1984: a cease-fire between South Africa and Angola during the Angolan Civil War and the South African Border War. Up until the late 1980s, these liberation wars in neighbouring countries formed the background for the work which development associates were carrying out.[46] The struggles of liberation movements in former South-West Africa (Namibia) and former Rhodesia (Zimbabwe), as well as that of the South African ANC, spilled over into Zambia. President Kaunda supported the liberation movements, and many of them had refugee camps, headquarters, and guerrillas moving around in the country. Although there were numerous Dutch solidarity groups who undertook radical actions to support the liberation movements, Dutch official policy remained rather restrained owing to the relationship with South Africa. In the 1970s, however, after the dramatic events of a shooting by South African police in the township of Soweto, the Netherlands supported the imposition of an embargo by the United Nations on weapons, limited the export credit guarantees for trade and industry, and froze their cultural agreement with South Africa.[47] For Dutch solidarity movements, these actions were not sufficient: they wanted the Dutch government to cut off trade relationships with Rhodesia and South Africa altogether.

The embassy discussed the situation in southern Africa on a diplomatic level, as is shown by a letter of former ambassador Graaf Van Limburg Stirum in 1979 to the Dutch Minister of Foreign Affairs:

> "I brought the conversation to southern Africa. I asked the Minister how he judged that situation and if he thought it would be possible, at this late hour, to bring the nationalistic leaders of Rhodesia together. The Minister started a long tirade against the British, who were, in his view, to blame for all human losses and who had never done anything to come to a solution, and if it would come to it, they would send troops to Rhodesia to protect their own 'kith and kin' against the nationalists."[48]

As his successor Van Heemstra explains, it was rather easy for the Dutch to discuss such things with the Zambians, since it was Great Britain that was left out of the discussions because of their role as former colonizer: "Unlike the Brit-

ish High Commissioner, who was always blamed for everything, we Dutch could do no wrong."[49] While Dutch formal policy remained restrained towards the situation in southern Africa, most former volunteers had strong anti-colonial sentiments and sympathized therefore with African nationalism and the liberation struggles. Former volunteer and development expert René Lourens recalls:

> "We were all a bit hippy-like, with beards and long hair, and sympathetic to the liberation movements. You felt those people were being suppressed. I was even a member of KZA [Committee on Southern Africa, a Dutch anti-apartheid organization]."[50]

The activities of Dutch solidarity groups had already begun in Zambia in the 1960s. A press statement of the *Times of Zambia* in March 1968 stated: "'A Dutch Committee on Rhodesia' which has been set up in Lusaka is seeking names for a petition which will be sent to the Dutch Foreign Minister, calling on him to do all in his power to help and redress the wrong perpetrated in southern Africa today."[51] Reverend Pierre Joseph Dill, who was behind the petition, wanted the Dutch government to end its relations with the colonial regimes and put an end to Dutch emigration to southern Africa. The Netherlands, in his opinion, had a special responsibility towards southern Africa since the former were historically involved in the setting up of the colonial system. "Up to today Dutchmen are preparing to immigrate to southern Africa. It's sad to see that the majority of these thousands of Dutch support racism."[52] Because of the political situation in Zambia and the presence of liberation movements, collisions between Dutchmen and Zambian reality were inevitable, as Father Hinfelaar remembers:

> "There was a Dutch KLM pilot in the 1970s who was working in South Africa and came to Lusaka on a private flight. When he wanted to land, he saw a man on the runway. Around the runway were camps of liberation movements, so he signalled that he couldn't land. When he finally made it onto the ground, he was thrown into jail. He was accused of taking photos for South Africa! The ambassador couldn't get him out. The embassy asked us, the missionaries, to help. I had connections within the churches and we finally got him out. We put him on the first plane back home right away!"[53]

Sister Engelbergus of the Catholic missionary in Mongu underlines that volunteers had to be very careful not to be accused of being South African spies:

> "If a volunteer was speeding just a little bit, the police would stop them and make them stand there for hours. The Zambian police were making life very diffi-

> cult for the volunteers but also for the Zambians themselves. All the whites were suspected of spying for the South African army. There was a Dutch volunteer couple, and the husband, Peter, didn't stop for the one stop sign we had in Mongu. This was in 1975. He was arrested by the police and taken to prison. Nobody knew where he was, and his friends and family were very worried. In the end, much later, people found out he was taken to prison, and he had to be bailed out."[54]

Former volunteer and development expert Arie de Kwaaiesteniet barely escaped an angry mob on the way to Tanzania, when he and a friend attempted to travel from Zambia to Tanzania by train when South Africa had just blown up all the mayor roads and bridges. The Zambian police thought they were South African mercenaries and interrogated them during their entire trip. Somewhere about halfway along the journey they were actually threatened by a large group of angry people, and they barely made it safely back home. According to De Kwaaiesteniet, they were completely unaware of the risks they were taking. René Lourens underlines that they were poorly prepared by the SNV for the dangerous situation they could end up in:

> "In 1979 I went with a friend to Botswana to buy a car, because it wasn't okay to buy a South African car. So we were waiting in Kazangula to get onto the pontoon, and then all of a sudden the whole pontoon got blown up by the Rhodesians! Big chunks of bricks were falling alongside us. Four people that were already on the pontoon were killed. We ran like madmen back to the border and flew to Lusaka. My friend went back to the Netherlands; he was too shaken up by the incident. We weren't prepared for this back home. They probably told us Zambia was a frontline state, but that we could get into very dangerous situations was not something we were told."[55]

The recreational get-together for volunteers, the 'Dutch Farm', even turned out to be located in a high-risk spot:

> "Behind the Dutch Farm there was a Zimbabwean refugee camp, but those camps were actually training camps for liberation movements. One day I was at the farm and all of a sudden there were fighter jets that bombed the camp! We heard the explosions and later the sirens. It was really very close by; we couldn't believe what was happening!"[56]

In 1980 former aid workers who had been sent out to Zambia set up the 'Zambia Werkgroep' in the Netherlands, a support group that collected funds for bridges destroyed by the Rhodesian army.

Personal experiences and Zambian responses

The carefree years of the 1960s were over. The 1980s were characterized by empty stores as a consequence of Zambia's economic crisis and by the presence of liberation movements in the country. On a personal level, many aid workers discovered in this period that the West could not 'fix things' in development countries and that cultural differences proved far more complicated than assumed beforehand. At the same time, they were confronted with changed perspectives at home, such as the declining influence of the church. This led to a more open attitude by policymakers in The Hague towards pre-marital relationships amongst aid workers and with local people. The motivation of development workers, however, was still rooted in idealism when they arrived in Zambia:

> "In the beginning I was full of idealism. I had the idea that we were going to 'fix things' here and we were going to make sure these farmers were taken to a higher level. You come here with your Dutch mentality and find out it doesn't work that way. It wasn't disappointing for me, but the expectations that you had – that these farmers would start using different agricultural methods and so on because we told them to do so – you realized after six months that it didn't work that way."[57]

According to Father Hinfelaar, however, their disappointments have to be placed within the right perspective, because he felt their presence did have an influence on Zambian life – perhaps not on the issues they specifically came for, but since they stayed in the country for just a few years they were not able to follow up on any changes their presence had indeed activated:

> "Young people wanted to show how quickly they could bring development here. We missionaries knew that it would take ages. They got discouraged. But when they left, we saw the results of their presence. When volunteers worked with women groups, we saw later on that those women began to articulate more, spoke up for themselves, and took on certain behaviour of the volunteers, like eating healthy foods."[58]

Cultural differences were a factor that contributed greatly to the obstruction of the development process and feelings of disappointment by aid workers, as we have seen in a previous section. Unfortunately, this factor was widely overlooked by Dutch policymakers in the first decades of development cooperation. Many Dutch men and women came unprepared to cope with local interactions and cultural differences, as a former Zambian counterpart explains:

> "In our culture, for instance, to show respect, you don't stand when you are talking to somebody; you sit down. Whereas in your culture it's the other way around. In our culture, sometimes looking into the face is being very rude! Especially if you go into the villages, you need to learn their way of life in order to be appreciated."[59]

Many volunteers came to realize that the way Zambian culture was set up made certain development processes the Dutch strove to realize difficult, as the example of former volunteer Aldert van der Vinne illustrates:

> "I realized when I was working in a development scheme that Zambians treat their elders very differently from us. Village elders and chiefs are in charge and are not replaced until they die. So that completely stopped the development of young people that we tried to train, because the elders were not interested in what the young people had learned from us.'[60]

From the Zambian perspective, the Dutch are in general easy people to get along with and they mix freely with Zambians, but they differ in culture especially by their directness and focus on efficiency – and also in their eating habits, which could lead to tension:

> "The different behaviour of the Zambians and the Dutch was difficult, like eating habits. Zambians had been brought up by the conservative British colonizers, while the Dutch had an easy way of going. But the eating habits of the Dutch and the British were the same in the sense that they ate during working hours. For Zambians this is abnormal; so in that way, Zambians felt disregarded by the Dutch."[61]

At the same time, some volunteers went a long way in trying to adapt to the local culture, which was in line with the revolutionary-like thoughts of the 1970s. This behaviour, however, was not always understood by Zambians and could add to the cultural confusion:

> "We lived in a house without electricity or running water. We didn't even have a lock on our door. We were completely dependent on the Zambians and learned a lot from them. But most of the Zambians didn't understand why we were living like that. What kind of an idiot is that? Someone who can afford everything and lives like this! At the same time they tried all kind of things, because they thought: he wants to live like a Zambian. So when I went on vacation they brought huge lists of all the things they wanted me to bring them, like shoes and

Photo 20 Former ambassador S. van Heemstra receives a small goat as a gift of a local headman in Kasempa, 1988

> so on. I refused. They said: 'Why not? I can pay you!' 'With what salary?', I would ask. 'Why? I have money from elsewhere!' 'Like what?' And then you would have enormous fights!"[62]

Some Dutch like Arie de Kwaaiesteniet tried to bridge the cultural gap by learning the local language. He succeeded in doing so, which greatly contributed to his contacts with the local population.[63]Another way of closing the cultural gap was marriage. Many volunteers and development workers got married to Zambians. The times that these relationships were a taboo, as in the 1960s, were gone. Volunteers now even received a box of condoms from the SNV. René Lourens, who got married to a Zambian, learnt that a Tonga wedding was quite different from back home:

> "First you have to be formally introduced to the family, by a Zambian friend of the family. He would do the negotiations on my behalf, a price was set, and then you had to pay! For the Tongas, when you have paid, you are married. That was quite different from what I was used to! My family and SNV warned me about the differences, but in my wife's family I was very welcome."[64]

Apart from cultural differences between the Zambians and the Dutch, there was tension between development workers and the mission schools and hospitals as a result of the secularization that had taken place back home. Most

volunteers and development associates in the 1970s and 1980s had no religious ties anymore and had difficulties dealing with religion-based institutions. Carla Schoemaker, for instance, who volunteered as a health instructor in Chikuni Southern Province, was confronted with a Catholic mission post where it was inappropriate to discuss family planning and contraception.[65] But even for development associates who did have strong religious ties it was sometimes difficult to cope with the ideas at mission schools and hospitals. For example, in cases of an emergency when the nuns at a mission hospital would first ask volunteering midwife Nina Atkins "whether the child had already been baptized".[66] For teacher Klaske Hiemstra it was difficult to discuss sex-related issues with pupils at a mission school:

> "I taught in a government school run by Sisters of the Holy Rosary in Mazabuka, beginning in 1984. Education was therefore based on Catholic principles. This meant in those days that I wasn't allowed to teach much about sexual relations, while it became more and more clear that HIV/AIDS was going to have a major effect on Zambia and its inhabitants. The nuns asked me to set up an anti-AIDS club for grades 10, 11, and 12, where I had to concentrate on abstinence. Just out of curiosity, I conducted a small baseline study among my pupils. I was astonished! The vast majority had been or were sexually active and had multiple boyfriends. In the meantime, the Sisters had no clue about what was going on. And I ended up with a problem, because I wasn't allowed to tell the students anything about condoms. Fortunately, the sisters allowed me to answer questions. So I put all the contraceptives I could gather on the table. Of course the girls started to ask questions, and I took the liberty of answering them as well as possible." [67]

By the 1980s, Dutch aid had become an industry, as was described earlier in this chapter. Father Hinfelaar noticed this change in his dealings with aid workers: it became in his view "more technical, more from a distance" than before. It was the era of large projects and huge budgets. These were mainly managed by experienced aid experts, a number of whom became demotivated by the work they were doing, for reasons described before. For some it was a motivation to leave the development sector altogether. But despite their criticism and frustration, former aid workers on the whole look back on these days as very rewarding. For most of them it was an intensive time in which they learned an enormous amount:

> "We had the feeling that we were working on something great. It was very exciting. You never knew beforehand what was going to happen. It's no coincidence that so many former development workers come back here for nostalgic roots' trips."[68]

There were rewards of feeling personal accomplishment, like when teacher Klaske Hiemstra ran into former female students: “Mrs Hiemstra, I am a doctor now!”, or “Yes, Mrs Hiemstra, I am heading this department! You gave me the passion to study economics!” Atkins, after a lifelong involvement in gender issues and HIV/AIDS, feels rewarded when she meets people that participated in her workshops, telling her that “they have a good family life now and gave up extra-marital relations”. Carla Schoemaker was involved in a women’s project that became very large, exporting traditionally made baskets to Europe and Australia, which directly contributed to the training of local women in health care.[69]

The close contacts among the Dutch in Zambia strengthened these feelings of excitement. The Dutch community still celebrated Queen’s Day traditionally together at the embassy, where “you met people that were far in the bush and you would only see once a year”. A dress code was in place, though, because most volunteers tended to dress ‘hippy-like’. Zambians would usually stay only for the official part, while the Dutch had difficulties leaving the party.[70] Dutch volunteers sent out *rondzendbrieven* (personal newsletters like the ‘Kasempabode’) on a regular basis to friends and family in Zambia and in the Netherlands, in which they provided updates on their experiences, and they would get together whenever possible at the ‘Dutch Farm’. The basis for contact between the volunteers and the embassy was immediately laid when a volunteer arrived in Zambia, as he first had to meet with the Dutch ambassador. An impressive event, as René Lourens remembers, because an ambassador in those days was a man of considerable social status:

> “We were introduced to Graaf Van Limburg Stirum, a count! An aristocrat of the old days. You felt very small when you came there and you had great respect.”[71]

The social distance between ambassadors and volunteers, however, narrowed with the arrival of youthful forty-five year old ambassador Van Heemstra and his wife Godeke in 1986, who was twelve years younger than her husband. They made an effort to visit all Dutch volunteers in the country:

> “The adventures that we were involved in to get to these people in remote areas! Through impenetrable bushland and swollen rivers. We slept at the volunteers’ houses, in blankets that you knew hadn’t been washed in three weeks! Off course, we realized we were the ambassador and his wife coming over, but when we arrived in our somewhat trashed Land Cruiser we were already happy when there was something cold to drink, like a beer. That broke the ice immediately!”[72]

Photo 21 President Kaunda and Prince Bernhard play golf together in 1977

Photo 22 Former ambassador S. van Heemstra and his wife Godeke at Sister Rosalie in Mansa during a visit to Luapula Province in 1988

As we have read before, Zambians in general responded positively towards Dutch involvement in their country. But despite the fact that they seem to have welcomed Dutch aid and got along well with them on a personal level, the observation of former development associate De Kwaaiesteniet indicates that Zambians were perhaps not always enthusiastic about foreign involvement:

> "I went to a village of someone I could get along with very well at work. But when I was in his village he said: 'You are welcome, but I don't want you to try to change my village. That's what we do on a project, but not where I live!' That made a huge impact on me."[73]

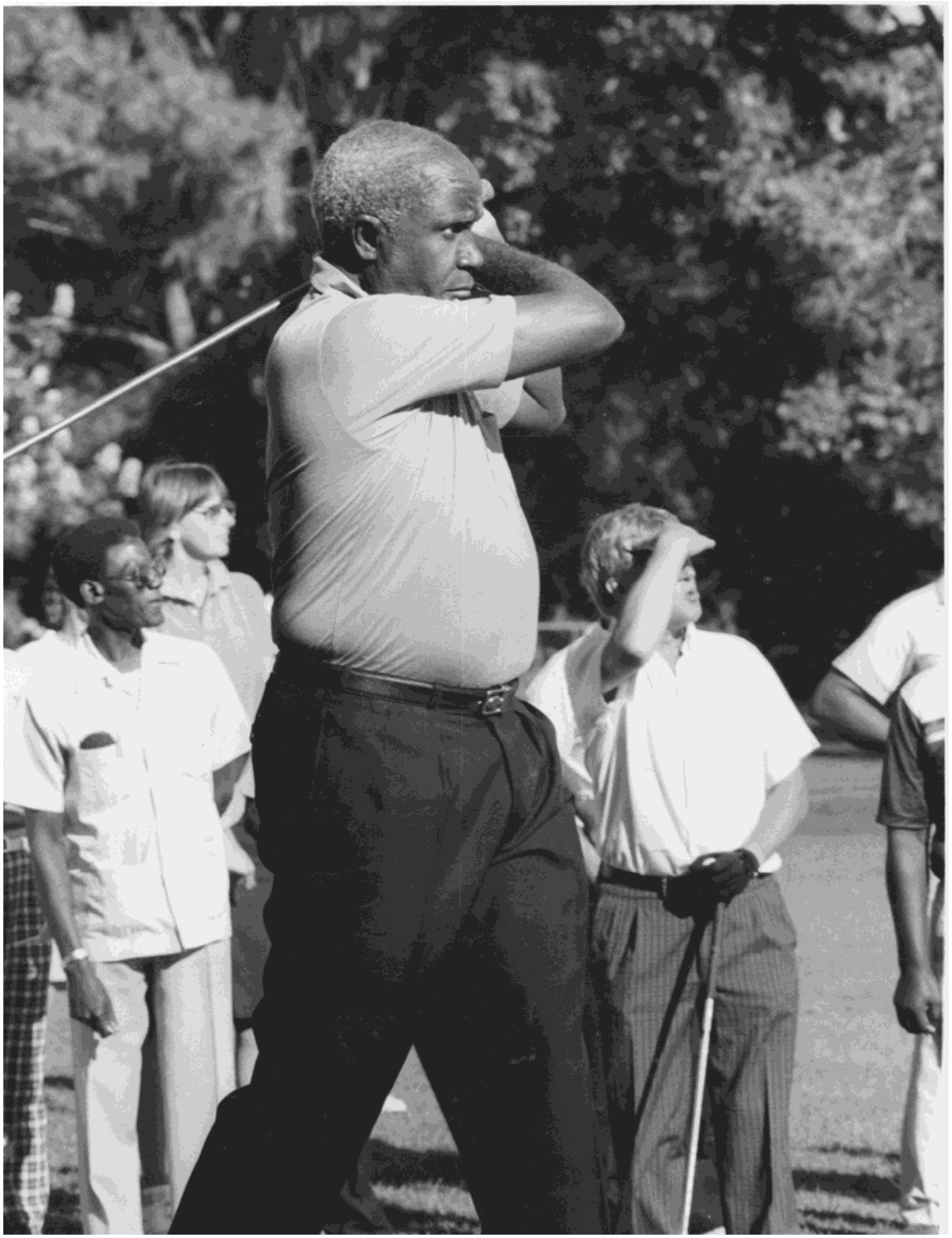

Photo 23 President Kaunda and Former ambassador S. van Heemstra enjoy playing golf

3

Liberalization (1991-2005)

Kaunda: end of an era

When UNIP rule came to an end in 1991, Zambia was left in a very poor economic state. It was no coincidence, therefore, that opposition against Kaunda had been mounting already in the late 1980s over increasing food shortages and UNIP's monopoly on power. After riots and an attempted coup in 1990 as part of the wave of democratic changes around the world following the fall of the Berlin Wall, Kaunda agreed to re-instate multiparty democracy. In the following elections in 1991 he lost his presidency to former trade unionist, Frederick Chiluba, leader of the Movement for Multiparty Democracy (MMD). The take-over of power was internationally praised as one the first peaceful examples in Africa. It was the end of an era. Despite criticism of Kaunda's reign, as we have read before, Dutch ambassadors emphasized the accomplishments Kaunda had made during his first ten years as a president:

> "In 1966 'One Zambia, One Nation' was just a slogan. Party politics were restrained by tribal confrontations: Tongas from the south and Bembas from the north were ruling the Lozis from the west and the Chewas from the east. One can say now that one feels Zambian first and belongs to a tribe second. That was the accomplishment of Kaunda."[1]

Former ambassador Van Heemstra has warm memories of the first Zambian president, with whom he had close contact:

> "We were personally invited to dinners at Kaunda's house. We even played golf together. It was my first post, so I thought it was normal! I later discovered how special it was. When Prince Bernhard came to visit the country on three occa-

sions to visit World Wildlife Foundation projects in the Okavango Delta, Kaunda, my wife and I joined. The president would sing African songs, always with his white handkerchief. My good personal relationship with him was useful on some diplomatic occasions, like when one of his imprisoned political opponents had escaped prison and fled into the Dutch embassy. We made a deal with Kaunda that we would hand the man over and he would be released after 24 hours. Kaunda obviously kept his word: he was an honest and decent man."[2]

Although many felt his defeat in 1991 was inevitable, Bas de Gaay Fortman, a personal friend of Kaunda who stayed at his house after the elections, states that the former president did not see it coming:

"After 27 years his defeat was understandable. It also had to do with his weak spot: his choice of people. He had to manoeuvre between the political powers and capable people and kept losing good advisors. I knew he was going to lose because in the Institute of Social Studies where I was teaching we had 17 Zambian students that year. None of them intended to vote for him. Everyone knew he was going to lose, except for Kaunda himself."[3]

Photo 24 Former ambassador S. van Heemstra hands over his credentials to President Kaunda in October 1986

When Chiluba got into power he put an end to Kaunda's socialist experiment and embarked on a policy of economic liberalization and privatization. In fact, he had little choice in the matter, because the debt burden had forced Zambia's policies into the hand of international donors like the World Bank and the IMF, who put pressure on Chiluba to cut back on expenditures. In practice this meant that the civil service was drastically downsized, and education and health services, provided for free under Kaunda, now required the payment of fees. As the Zambian government withdrew from numerous welfare activities, national and international NGOs tried to fill the gap. The number of registered NGOs grew from 390 in 1993 to 1,500 in 1996.[4]

At the same time, in the 1990s, thinking in the Netherlands about development had changed under international influence and became related to issues on a wider global scale, issues such as international security, global environmental problems, and worldwide migration. A major change in the Dutch aid sector was that many issues, previously dealt with by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, now became the direct responsibility of the embassies. The cooperation between NGOs and local Dutch embassies gained importance as a result. The aim of this new approach was to arrive at a coherent Dutch policy in the areas of defence, foreign affairs, and development.[5]

The installation of the new Minister of Development Cooperation, Eveline Herfkens, in 1998 shook the sector up: she was the first minister who openly doubted the value of expatriate technical assistance and felt that this form of development aid was expensive and ineffective and had to be reduced. She based her ideas on the findings of IOB (Inspection for Development Cooperation and Policy Evaluation) studies conducted by the Ministry but also on reports of the World Bank, which indicated that project aid was indeed unsustainable.[6] Herfkens even attacked the sector by questioning the genuine objectives of many development organizations, suggesting that they were merely pursuing their own interests. She wanted all development efforts to focus on poverty alleviation and to narrow their attention to a number of related themes. Her aim was to push for reforms by a managerial approach to development, based on transparency, the measurement of results, and a focus on the role of trade and investments. The development sector had to justify its existence. To enforce her policy, she drastically downsized the number of bilateral aid countries from 78 to 19. Good governance became the crucial criterion for the allocation of aid.[7] It was this criterion, with its focus on issues such as corruption, that formed an important discussion topic between the Zambian and the Dutch governments, since corruption had become endemic. Zambia, as was the case with many other African nations, seemed to suffer from the effect that French agricultural scientist René Dumont had called "the second false start of Africa" in

1966, namely the new local elite, the political class after independence, who like their colonial predecessors had little interest in the fate of their poorer countrymen.[8] Zambia, however, was still viewed by donors as a stable country that played a regional role of importance with regards to political conflict areas such as Congo and, later, Zimbabwe. The Lusaka Accord of 1999, for example, called for a cease-fire of the six countries involved in the Great Lakes' conflict: Angola, Namibia, Rwanda, Uganda, Congo, and Zimbabwe.

From projects to programmes

Herfkens' ideas fitted within the international line of thinking about development, in which it was recognized among donors that the project approach lacked efficiency and effectiveness and that development countries should preside over their own development. In the case of the Dutch in Zambia, especially in Western Province, the epicentre of Dutch development aid, the results hoped for had not materialized. The Netherlands spent 84 million euro and 485 working years over thirty years on rural development support in the province. The greater part was spent on agriculture: the improvement of cattle through the Animal Disease Control Project and the Livestock Development Programme. According to former development workers, "there is nothing left of the projects".[9] A Zambian SNV driver observed:

> "The Sesheke Livestock Development project was there for ten years. There is nothing left of it. There are some buildings, computers and cars that they left behind. The people are not happy."[10]

A report from a former Dutch ambassador who visited the province years later underlines this conclusion:

> "The long involvement in Western Province of the Dutch working in development projects and programmes has definitely not been forgotten. What is left behind of our efforts is more difficult to assess. The desolate condition of the once amply functioning dairy farm and the Dutch boats that are left behind in the harbour of Mongu present a rather depressing image."[11]

According to IOB analysis, the main reasons for the failure of agricultural development in Western Province were a badly thought-out management structure, wrongly chosen development strategies, a Dutch policy that was not in line with Zambian policies and also a limited capacity of the Zambian Ministry of

Photo 25 Embassy staff November 1999

Agriculture.[12] More in general the report indicated that fragmentation among donors, who rarely worked together, and the lack of 'ownership' on the Zambian side.[13] This term, which came into vogue in the second half of the 1990s, referred to the active involvement of aid recipients in their own development process.[14] It seems that the local population did not feel responsible for projects once the Dutch had left. The Rural Water for Health Project, for example, a large-scale project in North-Western Province that provided more than a hundred wells in the region between 1987 and 2000, showed that even with a focus on training the local population, wells were hardly being used any more after the Dutch departure. After drilling boreholes, the emphasis had been placed on the 'sustainability' of the project: to keep it running in the long term.[15] According to the former project manager, 95 per cent of the wells were still in use in 1995 when the project was evaluated, and it was therefore considered successful. But after the Dutch left in 2000, most wells ran dry in the following years:

> "DGIS and SNV had to deliver results, which isn't difficult when you bring in a Dutch team to perform a project. It only proves to be difficult afterwards. When the project was finished, the money was finished as well and that was the big problem, obviously. The discussion about participation only started in the mid-1990s in the Netherlands: whether people should physically help dig the wells or form part of the decision-making process to create ownership."[16]

When visiting the wells in 2005, the local population who were to benefit from the wells underlined that they indeed did not feel responsible for broken wells, because they did not consider themselves the owners.

As indicated by the IOB report, a lack of coordination among donors was another counter-productive factor for the development process. Numerous international NGOs and donors were operating quite independently on development issues in different areas of Zambia. Former ambassador Karel de Beer recalls that it could be "overcrowded in certain sectors" because of the great number of donors.[17] Local organizations knew what these donors liked to hear and were quick to adopt the development jargon. A Zambian SNV advisor observed that people in a village usually knew exactly what they had to say to get a project funded, based on the latest fashion in the development world. [18]

The competition among the different donors and NGOs for governmental and financial support was fierce. A way to fight this competition, for instance, was to provide workshop allowances. NGOs needed to provide food and allowances in order to get people to attend a workshop, as an SNV driver stated:

Photo 26 Former ambassador K. de Beer and chargé d'affaires Lidi Remmelswaal visit North Zambia for a big project in the field of HIV/Aids education

> "When there is a meeting somewhere very far away, people expect SNV to bring food and facilities, because there's competition. There are many other NGOs, like Oxfam; and if they provide more food, then they are more popular and people want to be involved with those organizations. The competition among NGOs is very tough."[19]

Apart from ownership issues and donors that were in fierce competition among themselves, the premises that underlay the foundations of many projects were often unrealistic, as we have seen before. While considerable Dutch investments were made, the narrow time frames in which projects were supposed to become self-sustainable – owing to expenditure pressure – and the fact that a commercial approach was considered inappropriate often frustrated successful outcomes of projects beforehand. On a rare occasion like the case of the Choma Museum in Southern Province, which was set up by the Dutch in 1995 and was finalized in 1997, the Dutch project manager Bert Witkamp decided to finish what he had started:

> "The Dutch had a watch that indicated: 'Okay guys, it's over now!' Whether the project was running or not, they would stick to their time frames. They went on to the next project, where they would follow exactly the same procedure, although it would have been much wiser to stick to one project until it could run sustainably. Because I decided to stay, the project became a success ten years later. The museum got self-supportive through a model of industry performed by around 400 Zambian ladies, who make baskets that are sold quite successfully. But back then it wasn't even possible to discuss a commercial approach as such."[20]

Witkamp made another important point, about a feeling that one often encounters within Dutch development cooperation, NGOs, and the embassy itself: the short-term presence of development staff in a country can lead to a lack of accountability:

> "People are never confronted with the consequences of their behaviour: the salary arrives at the bank anyway; plane tickets are taken care of; if you become sick you get repatriated; your children get education – and after two or three years, you get out. Then you get a replacement who says: 'What kind of a strange thing did Jan do here?' But Jan is already gone, posted to Bolivia, doing something with coffee. As a result, a development worker never really belongs to Zambian society. He or she remains an exotic person, who drives a car, is seated in front of a computer and writes reports."[21]

Despite the seemingly meagre results, the project era did create developmental spin-offs, principally on a personal level. These unintended consequences of development work have not always been recognized or measured. The establishment of infrastructure, such as roads, and the training of local doctors and staff that could pursue a good career after their time working on Dutch projects have had a considerable effect on people's lives:

> "After SNV I worked for a UNDP-funded project housed by the Ministry of Finance and Planning, and after that I started working for Pact Zambia, a local NGO. My experiences at SNV helped me as a springboard for my career."[22]

> "For me it was fortunately very easy to find a new job because of the experience I had gained working for the Dutch embassy and SNV. I learned much in terms of personal improvement. I worked at the NGO Concern and after that I moved to USAID."[23]

In line with the vision of the World Bank and the IMF, Herfkens wanted to break with the project era and envisioned governments becoming less donor-led and taking more responsibility for their own development. She felt free trade should play an important role. As a consequence of this new policy, foundations were laid for the phasing out of project support and the development of programme support, which meant financial support on a national level (budget support).[24] At the same time, the Zambian government and cooperating partners began to work more closely together with the introduction of sector-wide approaches to further enhance aid effectiveness. This led to the process of 'harmonization' and 'alignment', which will be discussed later. According to former ambassador De Beer, the relationship with the Zambian government during these years took place within an atmosphere of trust and confidence, in which both parties tried to come to a better and more efficient approach to development cooperation. The Netherlands, for instance, supported and helped strengthen the Court of Audit to enforce the battle of the Zambian government against corruption.[25] At the same time, the first local policy staff were welcomed at the Dutch embassy from the mid-1990s. In 1997, almost half of the total thirty staff members at the embassy were Zambian.

Dutch departure

Although the vision behind moving from projects towards programmes was evident – placing development countries in the driver's seat of their own development – the phasing out of the projects by the start of the new millennium came

as an unpleasant change for local recipients. The phasing out of projects within a specific time frame was nothing new, as we have seen before. But the SNV, which had executed large DGIS projects during the 1980s and 1990s, moved from a visible project organization with experts working in the field into an office-based organization with advisory consultants. To local recipients it felt as if the Dutch had left, as a former SNV driver and a former member of the board of the Choma Museum explain:

> "The people were very disappointed. Some people came up to me asking why the Dutch had left. I understood and agreed with the decision, but I found it very difficult for the people. Even up to today, they don't understand."[26]
> "I know that one of the reasons for their decision to leave was that Zambians were to take over the running of this institution themselves. But you know, for us, when Zambians take over, you are actually abandoning them!"[27]

Because of the policy changes, numerous Dutch as well as local staff were laid off. Especially for the latter, this created feelings of great uncertainty:

Photo 27 Doctor Jack Menke with a Zambian colleague at work at the Sichili Mission Hospital in 1999

> "It was a very uncertain time. We were not aware of these major drastic changes coming. We were not informed about the tragedy it would become in the end, the ending of the projects. You didn't know whether you would be there the next month, which was a bad feeling."[28]

The phasing out of project support also meant the departure of Dutch doctors who had been sent out by the Dutch government for decades. There had been around twenty to forty Dutch doctors on a constant basis in the most remote parts of Zambia for over thirty years. They were sent out by the Dutch former development organization Memisa. The withdrawal of these doctors was in line with the policy of putting the Zambians in the driver's seat of their own development and followed a sustained investment in the health sector, but it was executed in a rather radical manner.[29] Although most former Dutch development workers agreed with the decision to phase out project support, most of them were uncomfortable with the departure of Dutch doctors. They saw it as a form of development aid that had a visible result, namely saving the lives of people. Former ambassador De Beer underlines that the presence of Dutch doctors had a clear impact on the country:

> "I had mixed feelings about the ending of the health projects. One could argue that projects couldn't last forever. But Dutch influence was quite large and had set up a real policy dialogue with the Zambian government, for instance with the setting up and supporting of the medicine distribution systems of the health sector and the training and motivation of Zambian doctors. Dutch NGOs contributed greatly to the fact that there are numerous local doctors active in the country today."[30]

From an individual perspective, doctors found the decision difficult to accept:

> "We created an expectation in the seventies. You start something and you can't just say: 'We quit.' You have to live up to your obligations. Medical care is a basic human right. But as a doctor it is difficult to say these things, because you are preaching for your own practice."[31]

Some development workers decided to stay on at a local salary after the projects were phased out. According to them it was irresponsible to leave the people to themselves. Doctor Joop Jansen, who has been working as a doctor in Zambia since 1993, found the consequences of the Dutch departure considerable:

"In practice, the departure of the Dutch doctors meant that many people were deprived of medical care. If a young girl was to give birth and needed a caesarean section, there was no one to perform it. It is difficult to find doctors who are willing to work in the remote areas, so the shortage is great. To work here for me is like a vocation; I feel privileged to be able to do my work here as a doctor in Zambia. That's why I stayed."[32]

Photo 28 Former ambassador K. de Beer visits one of the Dutch doctors in May 2000

'Harmonization'

During these radical shifts in Dutch development policy, the realization set in in Zambia that the liberalization policies of the MMD, supported by donor organizations, did not bring about the expected economic growth and poverty reduction that was hoped for. The economy remained undiversified and continued to exhibit heavy dependence on mineral resources, particularly on the export of copper. The GDP growth fell from an average of 1.5 per cent in the 1970s to 0.3 per cent in the 1990s, and inflation increased in the same period from 10 per cent to 70 per cent. Poverty and unemployment were actually on the increase.

In the education sector, government expenditure per capita had dropped by 40 per cent between 1980 and 1995. And in the health sector, Zambia faced a dilapidated infrastructure, chronic shortage of drugs and medical supplies, and epidemics of cholera, tuberculosis, HIV/AIDS, and malaria.[33] The MMD government, tainted by corruption scandals, lost its popular mandate and, not surprisingly, Chiluba's bid for an unconstitutional third term in office led to a rise in civic unrest, which forced him to step down. In 2001, MMD entered the elections under the leadership of Levy Mwanawasa and won by a narrow margin against the United Party for National Development. The new president instigated his 'New Deal': the promotion of transparency, accountability, and anti-corruption. His rule coincided with the HIPC (heavily indebted poor countries) debt relief program and the rise of worldwide copper prices. Under Mwanawasa, Zambia began to attract foreign investments and inflation was lowered. The Chinese began to buy Zambian copper and the GDP rate went from 3.6 per cent in 2000 to 5.7 per cent in 2003.[34] The amount of aid to the country, however, was still considerable. In 2003 Zambia ranked 89 out of 94 on the United Nations Development Programme's Human Poverty Index.[35] Analysis by the World Bank in 2003 stated that policy development in the Zambian education department was still fully determined by a small group of local and foreign donors, who were still in the driver's seat of Zambia's development.[36] To stimulate the development process, the Zambian government had already formulated a long-term development policy, while the donors agreed they would increase their coordination. (Since donors insisted on 'good governance' by the Zambian government, it was rather ironic that the donors themselves had failed to coordinate their own efforts effectively.) The process resulted in the Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRS) in 2002, a framework for Zambia's development, focussing on economic growth and investment in human capital.

During the Paris Declaration of 2005, a high-level donor forum, international donors therefore formulated a closer cooperation of their development policies. This process of 'harmonization' and 'alignment' was set in motion to avoid fragmentation among donors, bring more efficiency to their activities, and reduce costs and time for the Zambian government. The Zambian Ministry of Education, for instance, could from now on discuss issues with one lead donor who represented the policy of more donors instead of having bilateral discussions with each donor separately. Donors would speak with one voice and therefore had to work together intensively, unlike before when donors would run their own projects and programs quite independently.[37] In every sector, one or two donors would take the lead. As a result of this process, the Netherlands became the lead donor in education and private sector development. In the education sector, this meant in practice that instead of focussing mainly on basic

education as before, the new plan covered the whole education sector and contributed an increase in donor funding and improved coordination. The same initiative was taken in the health sector.[38]

Considerable emphasis in the strategy was placed on private sector development (PSD). More than half of the budget for development activities was directly PSD-oriented or indirectly important for PSD development. It was supposed to lead in the development of sectors like agriculture, tourism, and small-scale mining. Although commercialism had been controversial within the development sector, the Dutch embassy had already begun to focus more on PSD from the late 1990s, by means of the restructuring of Dutch foreign policy by the Minister of Foreign Affairs Van Mierlo in 1995. The aim of his new policy was to ensure that Dutch foreign policy was cohesive across all ministries dealing with international affairs. As a consequence, the barrier between development cooperation and trade was broken down.[39] The personal outlook of an ambassador, however, was still decisive in this focus on commerce. According to Judith Kumwenda, former Trade Assistant at the Dutch embassy, former ambassador Karel de Beer was one of the first ambassadors with a genuine commercial interest:

> "De Beer developed a focus on the promotion of trade and investment between the two countries. We set up trade shows, to which we would invite Dutch businesses to come and showcase what they had – for instance, the flower industry. In that way, everybody got to know the Dutch and their business. That initiative really put Dutch entrepreneurs on the Zambian map."[40]

De Beer's role as an ambassador and his outlook on the development process was therefore important for the commercial activities of Dutch entrepreneurs in the country. When he paid visits to Zambian officials, he always took the opportunity 'to do business as well', such as discussing political, developmental, or commercial issues that were important to the Netherlands.[41] Karel de Beer states that he acted out of personal conviction that if Africa was to be part of the world trading system, emphasis should be placed on trade, export, and knowledge of markets. In his view, he took on "the instruments that were there" within Dutch policy, such as the CBI (Centre for the Promotion of Imports), to promote a different mentality towards the concept of 'trade and aid'. CBI was strongly stimulated during that period, according to De Beer – for example, when the Netherlands sought to facilitate the relocation of several farmers of European descent from Zimbabwe to Zambia who had been expelled after Mugabe's land expropriations. De Beer's focus on trade was greatly welcomed by the Dutch community:

> "We imported a lot of one-day chicks from the Netherlands to break through the monopolies of the hatcheries here. Two of them had price agreements and their chicks were much too expensive. When I was expecting a load of chicks from the Netherlands, the hatcheries went to the government to make sure we didn't get import permits. Just an hour before the plane was due to land, there were still no permits. Karel de Beer called the Ministry of Agriculture and said: 'No trade, no aid.' When the plane landed, we got the permits. De Beer was one of the first ambassadors that placed aid in a different perspective and used his political contacts to stimulate trade and industry."[42]

From the start of the new millennium, the focus on commerce deepened within development cooperation. The Netherlands were the second-largest European investor in Zambia after the United Kingdom in 2005. They invested foremost in agriculture, tourism, and renewable energy. Among Zambia's export products such as tobacco and coffee, 95 per cent of their cut-flower exports went to the Netherlands. To facilitate bilateral economic contacts and protect the growing levels of Dutch investments, the Netherlands and Zambia had

Photo 29 Former ambassador K. de Beer shows the Tanzanian president Mkapa around at the yearly agricultural show in Lusaka in 1999

signed a bilateral Investment Protection and Promotion Agreement in April 2003.[43]

The relationship between Zambia and the Netherlands in the field of development cooperation underwent considerable changes, as we have discussed so far. The Dutch moved from providing technical assistance by young idealistic volunteers in the 1960s and 1970s, to high-level technical assistance within large projects in the 1980s and 1990s, to an international donor, sector-wide programme approach at the start of the new millennium, which paved the way for the next level in development cooperation: general budget support. This will be discussed in the next chapter.

Photo 30 The Dutch pavilion at the yearly agricultural show in Lusaka

From idealism to realism: personal experiences

The changes within Dutch development cooperation from an idealistic to a more realistic approach were quite similar to the changes former development workers experienced on a personal level. Their presence is probably one of the most considerable development spin-offs from the years of Dutch involvement in Zambia. Most of them started successful businesses in agriculture after their time as development associates, with the conviction that they could contribute more to the country by a commercial approach. Through their activities they stimulate the local economy and provide jobs for local staff. Despite their successes, many of them have experienced financial hardships, troublesome cultural differences, and disappointments. Nevertheless, most of them have no intention of returning to the Netherlands, since "life is easy here, the sun always shines" and, unlike in Holland, "you have the opportunity here to do the things you want to do."[44]

One of Zambia's success stories is Willem Lublinkhof, a volunteer from the very beginning of Dutch aid involvement in Zambia, who became Zambia's largest coffee grower. More than 2,000 local employees work at his Mubuyu farm, where he grows Munali Coffee. The majority live on the farm, and education and health care is provided for them and their families. His personal story is quite impressive. During his time as a volunteer in the 1960s, Lublinkhof got into a conflict with former SNV field director Zevenbergen over a personal matter, which, according to the latter, affected the position of the SNV. Zevenbergen, in accordance with instructions from the Dutch ambassador, therefore sent him back home. Lublinkhof, however, had no intention of staying in the Netherlands:

> "I was in the Netherlands for just one week. I told my parents: 'I am going back to work commercially in Zambia.' I wanted to start for myself. I gave up my Dutch social security registration number and got 3,000 guilders for it. So I had money to buy a plane ticket. I flew via Cairo, which was the cheapest route. But just then the Six-Day War broke out! I got stuck but was able to get to Nairobi. From there I bought a ticket for Malawi, took the bus from the airport to Chipata, and just walked over the border into Zambia."[45]

Lublinkhof first worked for two years illegally as a farm manager. After that he rented a farm in 1971. He built up his farm with eighty oxen and three tractors. Over the years, Mubuyu farm expanded to 1,600 hectares.[46] Most of the former development workers who became successful businessmen, however, retained their ideals like Lublinkhof himself:

> "I still see myself as a development worker. That sense of idealism is still there. I like working with people. The big difference between my work now and my work then is the economic approach. What used to be done with an idealistic criterion is now done on the basis of economics. But my time as a volunteer was beneficial. I work commercially, but I am still involved in the development of people."[47]

Former volunteer Aldert van der Vinne, who became managing director and shareholder of one of Zambia's largest tobacco companies, found it somewhat difficult to match his ideals with his new lifestyle:

> "Although I have always had a great deal of realism, I want to keep my ideals. I just use them in a more practical way, but I want to keep my affection for the people. I have to admit that my contribution to the country now is greater than when I was a volunteer. But I do find that conclusion difficult. Because it still feels as if I haven't changed that much over the years. The dream to start a farm has been there since I was a young boy, but I didn't have a plan when I came here. When my brother visited me here, he was so pleased to hear that people thought of me as a real businessman. To me that still sounds a bit like 'milking the people'. My brother said: 'Boy, you are still living in the Seventies! That has completely changed in Holland.' 'But profit is dirty, right?' I said. 'Please, stop it', my brother responded. Another thing is that I have a car now (Van der Vinne used to live in the local manner without electricity and running water). In those days you heard about the rich, who were building swimming pools while the people who lived behind those pools didn't even have water. Years later my boss asked me: 'Why don't you have a swimming pool?' I told him the story. 'Get over it', he said. 'They have their lives and you have yours.' So for me it wasn't a clear turning point from idealism to realism. I still think that you shouldn't make money only for yourself. I still have that idealism. That's why, for instance, I educate talented girls at my factory."[48]

The motivations for the group of around twenty former development workers who set up commercial activities to stay in Zambia are various. Some of them had an agricultural background and had always dreamt of a farm in the tropics; others simply wanted to live and work in Zambia – for instance, because they married a Zambian. For former development worker Dirk Muijs, it was clear he wanted to farm in the tropics more than anything else:

> "I am a farmer's son. A hundred years ago, I would have been a planter in the former Dutch East Indies!"[49]

Muijs went back to the Netherlands after his contract at DGIS ended in 1990 and returned two years later "more realistically" via the European Union. After his experiences within the development sector, it became clear to him that "you first have to earn money before you can spend it". The European Union was ready for commerce and guaranteed Muijs a salary for two years to set up cooperation to supply Zambian farmers with animal feed additives, animal medicines, and small quantities of specialist feeds. After those first two years, his Livestock Services company produced enough to be sustainable. Today the company is a key player in the feed industry.

Despite their criticism of development aid, most of these businessmen see their time as development workers as beneficial to what they are doing today. They learned to be flexible and deal with the unexpected. Former volunteers Carla and Jacob Schoemaker met on the SNV introduction day and arrived in Zambia in 1980 with 250 guilders (about 115 euros). After their time at SNV, they put the Netherlands on the Zambian map in horticulture with their company Jakana Estates. According to them, the most important thing they learned as volunteers was in the field of labour management:

> "Volunteers that stayed here have all become successful. I think it was a good spring-board for us. For new Dutchmen who arrive here, labour management is the hardest issue. If you've worked as a volunteer, you have an idea of how local people think."[50]

Teacher Klaske Hiemstra set up Baobab College, a private primary and secondary school. She began the school out of a personal need – the schooling of her own children – and she was able to make it successful because of her previous experiences in the Zambian education sector:

> "We started almost twenty years ago with primary education, initially with 22 children. Today we have 620 pupils, ranging from 2 to 18 years old. It wouldn't surprise me if we educate future presidents! The only reason I was able to set up this school was because of my experience as a development worker in Zambia for five years and knowing what to expect."[51]

Arie de Kwaaiesteniet started a meat processing company and a cattle farm after his time as a development worker, using his development knowledge:

> "A lot of what I learned in that period I use today. That experience helped me a lot. Your way of working is therefore completely different. Back then we would give young bulls away for free, while people weren't asking for bulls. They just

> accepted them. Today people have to work for it; we're not giving anything away for free. People only buy a young bull now because they need one and are therefore willing to pay for it."[52]

During the 1990s, a new group of Dutch entrepreneurs came to Zambia. Drawn mostly by adventurism and challenge instead of idealism, they decided to take advantage of the liberalization process that was going on in the county and took their chances:

> "We wanted to see what else there was for us to do in the world. We had a farm with agricultural vegetables in the Netherlands. We were looking for a new challenge."[53]

Watze and Angelique Elsinga came to Zambia to run a horticulture farm in 1995 and later set up a farm in agricultural products for the local market. They have found opportunities in Zambia that they lacked back home:

> "Zambia is a great country with many possibilities. You can put a lot of energy and passion into it. You can build things here. In the Netherlands everything is already cultivated and controlled by strict rules. If you want to set up a greenhouse or a school here, you just go ahead. In the Netherlands that is impossible."[54]

Others, like Mark Terken, came to Zambia in 1991 as an intern from the agricultural school in Deventer and later set up an export business in peppers. Today he is a business developer for international agri-businesses in Sub-Saharan Africa and advises international investors such as the Dutch Rabobank. Gerda and Laurijs Smulders started a business in solar energy in 1994, and Edjan van der Heide has been running a safari lodge and a travel agency since 2002. Aside from their motivations in coming to Zambia, the differences between the 'old guard' and the newcomers are the level of integration in Zambian society and experiences within the local context. It seems that the old guard, mainly because of intercultural marriages, are more integrated in local culture, while many newcomers see themselves more as international expats within Zambian society:

> "In terms of where I feel more at home, I don't see it as a choice between Africa or the Netherlands. It doesn't matter where I am based. I have never let go of the Netherlands; I visit about four times a year. Unlike former development workers, I have never been in the field and therefore never really got inside Zambian culture. I came here for myself, for a commercial career; that's quite a

> different outlook. Some of my friends say: 'You're just being a bloody Dutchman in your isolated house, away from African society!' And that's true in a way."[55]

Another difference – aside from the Smulders, who gained local experience as teachers in Zimbabwe and now run a successful solar energy company in Zambia – is that Africa was unexplored territory for most of these newcomers. The lack of local experience could lead to disappointments. According to Edjan van der Heide, inexperienced Dutch men and women have to be realistic about what to expect and not take it personally when things go wrong, because "many people who come here are quite naïve and become disappointed when things don't go the way they expected them to".[56]

Most newcomers found it difficult or frustrating to deal with issues like corruption. Mark Terken states that being young and confronted with such issues, some years of experience in the development sector could have been beneficial:

> "We equipped and trained local farmers to produce peppers for export to Europe. In one particular project, someone else bought up the crops when they were ready. It was a powerful person, who blackmailed the farmers. I found it very difficult to deal with that situation; and looking backwards, I didn't handle it very well. I lacked local experience at that time."[57]

Dealing with corruption makes doing business in Zambia challenging. The bureaucratic infrastructure also turned out to be rather difficult to deal with:

> "Doing business in Zambia can be very slow. You can get anything on paper, but nothing happens afterwards. Paperwork gets lost and you need to pay in order to get them back. It's very hard to do a simple thing like open a bank account or to find reliable business partners. Zambia is great, but you have to know what to expect."[58]

In addition, many of the Dutch entrepreneurs, both newcomers and the old guard, have experienced hardships, setbacks, and financial crises. They had to deal with robberies and saw their businesses get into trouble. But despite these challenges, they pulled through the hardships because most of them found the idea of going back to the Netherlands quite unappealing:

> "Of course, you fight till the end! If this bank doesn't cooperate, you go to the next. What's your alternative? We're not going back to sit in a cramped apartment in the rainy Netherlands!"[59]

According to most Dutch entrepreneurs, there are certain qualities they maintained, albeit Dutch qualities, in order to be able to deal with these difficulties. They kept their own principles and remained Dutch in their straightforwardness and refusal to let themselves be drawn into corruption:

> "The Dutch are unique in their stubbornness and persistence in trying to make something out of it. We just go for it; and if your boss says it has to be done differently, as Dutch we don't listen at all!"[60]
> "For a lot of people, we're too straightforward. We refuse to get involved in corruption and any kind of underhand deals. We're also very direct when it comes to dealing with clients if things go wrong. We just tell it to them as it is: ABC. Some people appreciate that; others don't. So we lose work but also gain work at the same time."[61]

One of the greatest challenges for the Dutch entrepreneurs is the recruitment of well-trained staff in order to be able to expand their companies and stimulate productivity and economic growth. In the agricultural sector, with its high potential, higher education is almost absent and not to be expected in the near future:

> "Expansion is my biggest challenge. It is very hard to find good middle management. I have a good manager, but I always have to monitor from the sidelines to ensure everything is done properly."[62]

Most of the entrepreneurs had to work on training the staff themselves – like Van der Vinne, who supports the education of talented girls at his factory, or Elsinga, who trains local staff on his farm. Assistance of The Dutch embassy was therefore greatly welcomed:

> "I was on the board of the Zambian Export Growth Association, and we noticed that there was a need for the training and education of local staff. I asked the embassy for help and De Beer said: 'I don't know how we're going to do it, but we're going to do it.' The embassy put a lot of funding into a project to train local staff and therefore helped the sector a great deal."[63]

Dutch entrepreneurs feel they have made an impact on Zambian society. They provide jobs for local staff and training, education, and healthcare to their employees and their families. According to De Kwaaiesteniet, who employs 140 local employees, a job at his company is a permanent job, while "a job in the development sector lasts as long as the project."[64] In addition, they stimulate the economy and set an example. Their contribution differs from that of devel-

opment work, as they put it, in terms of sustainability. They came to do business and their social programs are supportive of that goal. As Watze Elsinga, who runs one of the best schools in the region at his farm and provides medical care for his staff, puts it:

> "The money has to be earned first. If there's little coming in on one side, then there's little left to spend on the other side. For development cooperation, it's very difficult to lay an economic foundation like that."[65]

The most telling shift in moving from idealism to realism, as seen from the personal perspective of former development workers, is that 'changing Zambian society' – the starting point when they arrived in the country – is no longer the objective:

> "The West maintains its objective and viewpoint that their way of living is the best, but that is questionable. Zambians are adopting more Western types of things, but I hope they will pick just the good things and keep the good things of their own culture. Over the years, I've accepted that that's the way it is, and I don't want to change that. That's why I run my business in my own way, but fitting into Zambian society at the same time. I am part of Zambian society, but I don't have the conviction that I'm going to change things here. That's not a disappointment; it's just the way things are. We work within the limits of Zambian society and see what we can do ourselves within these limits."[66]

Photo 31 Former volunteer and coffee grower Willem Lublinkhof visiting a school for employee's children at his Mubuyu estate at Mazabuka in 2005

4

Realism (2006-2013)

Zambia beyond aid

> "If you dropped some people who lived in Zambia twenty years ago into Lusaka today, the chances are slim that they would find their way. The city has changed enormously. I would say it's booming here. In the late Seventies, I was standing in line for soap; today I can drink my cappuccino in a comfortable cafe."[1]

Fancy restaurants, shopping malls, cafes, and an upcoming middle class in Lusaka indicate Zambia's economy is on the rise. As we have seen in the previous chapter, the copper mines, which were privatized in 2000, benefitted from the record-high copper prices of the last five years. Zambia began to attract foreign investments and also qualified for international debt relief. As a result of these developments, the economy has shown a yearly average growth of 6 to 7 per cent since 2005. Its status as a Least Developed Country was therefore changed to a Lower-Middle Income Country by the World Bank in 2012: a landmark in Zambia's decade of economic growth. According to the same bank, Zambia is today a "fast-growing economy". Despite the economic growth, development challenges are still prominent. Approximately 60 per cent of the population continues to live below the poverty line. The United Nations Human Development Index ranked 185 UN member states in 2012 according to their development level; Zambia held position 163, lower than Angola, Madagascar, Uganda, and Lesotho. In fact, Zambia had climbed only three places since 1980.[2]

> "The living conditions outside of Lusaka haven't changed much. If you go to the compounds, you still see a lot of poverty in terms of education and health."[3]

Furthermore, 80 per cent of the new middle class work in the informal sector: Zambia does not count more than 500,000 registered jobs.[4] The number of youth without jobs is growing considerably: the youth unemployment rate in general is around 80 per cent. Every year, approximately 300,000 new young people arrive onto the labour market. Development has also brought new problems. Differences between rich and poor are increasing, and Lusaka is growing larger because of the growth of the Zambian middle class. Ironically, former development workers are unhappy with this development:

> "The rise of the middle class means that the city is moving towards our farm at Makeni. Many former development workers live in Makeni. We have all worked for development. But now that it means there'll be a road through our front yard and we are stuck in traffic, we are not so pleased with it!"[5]

Zambian development ambitions seem unstoppable, however. The country intends to become a 'Prosperous Middle-Income Nation' by 2030: Zambia beyond aid. Michael Sata, the new president of the social-democratic Patriotic Front party, which won the elections in 2011, underlines this development prospect. The instrument for development, however, has shifted from traditional aid towards trade and investments. Instead of a donor dependency of around 40 per cent, donors today contribute only 4.7 per cent to the national budget.[6] At the same time, donors such as China and India are taking over. Zambia, as an emerging market, is no longer looking for Western aid to develop but for business partners to invest in the country. During the Korea–Africa Forum in October 2012, President Sata had meetings with South-Korean business executives and government officials. Officially opening the forum, Sata told Prime Minister Kim that Zambia could give land to Korean investors to invest in in Zambia: "What we need is development."[7] For donors, there is the challenge of supporting this ambition of Zambia beyond aid, while their methods of support and their influence at the negotiating table is declining rapidly. Development on the entire African continent has proceeded so rapidly in the last decade that the whole Western outlook on African development has had to be adjusted. The image of a 'needy' continent, however, still prevails in the Netherlands. Economist and journalist Marcia Luyten states in Dutch newsmagazine *Vrij Nederland:*

> "On the continent that used to be called 'lost', which now has 6 of the 10 fastest-growing economies worldwide and has been called 'the hopeful continent' by *The Economist*, the role of the white man has been played out. He is still there, the aid worker and diplomat, but he has lost his role of importance. What does it matter what he says? Who still needs him? In the 1970s, aid formed 70 per cent of all money transfers from North to South; today that is only 13 per cent.'[8]

Ton Dietz, director of the African Studies Centre in Leiden, underlines in the magazine *The New Africa* – a publication aimed especially to raise awareness among the Dutch population about the rapid changes on the African continent – that the tables are turning: Africa is no longer a continent of darkness but one that offers business opportunities to Europe:

> "Where Europe and North America are struggling with huge economic problems, Africa offers a prospect of hope, energy and changes. Everybody who deals with Africa professionally is aware of these positive developments."[9]

The donor community attempted to keep pace with developments by changing its approach from project support to program support on a national level, as we have seen earlier. In 2006 the Zambian government launched its Fifth National Development Plan, with its theme of "broad-based wealth and job creation through citizenry participation and technological advancement", which made a more clear commitment to good governance than its predecessor. Through its support of the national development strategy and sector strategies, the donor community entered into the mature phase of development

Photo 32 The Royal Dutch Embassy in Lusaka (photo taken in 1999)

cooperation in 2006: Zambia in the driver's seat, presiding over its own development with the support by donors of its general budget. This latest phase of development will be discussed later in this chapter.

Shifting realities in the Netherlands

Despite this marked Zambian economic progress, the Netherlands decided in 2010 to break off the Zambian–Dutch development relationship and, in addition, close its embassy in Lusaka in 2013. The cause of this decision, however, was not rooted in the output of the almost fifty years of cooperation between the two countries but lay in shifting realities in the Netherlands itself. While Zambia's economy was on the rise, the Dutch economy stagnated as part of the international economic crisis that hit Europe in 2008. Owing to this crisis and the newly installed centre-right government in the Netherlands, development cooperation had to adjust to a new reality in line with overall cutbacks. Public debate, which had been more or less in favour of development cooperation throughout most of the second half of the twentieth century, shifted slowly towards criticism of the sector. The tone of the national debate had already changed negatively in the last decade of the twentieth century and was determined by the issues of too much overhead expenditure by development organizations and the '0.7 per cent standard' (how much of the national budget should be spent on development cooperation). The negative shift in this debate was also fired by publications such as Dambisa Moyo's *Dead Aid: Why aid is not working and how there is a better way* in 2009. The Zambian economist made an important point in the debate, namely that aid enabled African leaders to neglect the needs of their citizens. Citizens should be able to hold their governments accountable for the absence of education or healthcare. International donors, according to Moyo, were actually polluting this democratization process and promoting corruption with their system of free aid.

Under the same influence, a movement has begun within Zambia away from donor dependency. Throughout the last five years, the emphasis has shifted from traditional aid, such as that provided by the Dutch, Germans, and Scandinavians, towards foreign direct investment. Much attention has been paid to investors such as India and China, but the United States and Canada are also involved in large investment projects within Zambia.[10] As a result of this, coupled with a period of unprecedented economic growth and macro-economic stability in Zambia from 2009 onwards, Dutch development cooperation changed character. Zambia's decreasing dependence on traditional aid therefore has had a direct impact on its relationship with donors. In line with developments on the whole African continent, traditional development cooperation

is gradually losing its importance, while Zambia is marketing itself more and more as a place for business and investment.[11] At the same time, other donors have stepped in, enabling the Dutch to make a responsible exit:

> "The difference we could make as a donor had become very small. At the same time, new partners have stepped in like China and India. Our exit has been conducted responsibly because there are enough other donors to fill in the gap."[12]

Because of these shifting realities, Dutch development cooperation underwent a reformation with the release of the 'Focus Letter on Development Cooperation' in March 2011 by the former Dutch Secretary of State of Foreign Affairs Dr. Ben Knapen. The most important change was the shift from social to economic factors: more emphasis was placed on the self-reliance of countries, and more possibilities were created for private initiatives. Aside from the focus on specific issues such as safety, food security, and water, the number of 33 partner countries was reduced to 15 countries.[13] A 'quick scan' was made using certain criteria to see where the opportunities for Dutch economic concerns were and where the Netherlands could offer support to self-reliance. It turned out that Zambia did not meet the criteria to proceed with aid. One of the selection criteria was the income status of the country and the potential to raise its own revenue. Zambia's attainment of low middle-income country status therefore had a direct influence on the decision to end development cooperation. Other factors, as described above, were also at play. Former embassy staff underlined that they did not leave Zambia because of a disappointing output from the development program:

> "We didn't leave because we concluded the systems are underperforming, or out of a lack of trust. That was not the case. It was a matter of rating countries, and it turned out that this country had better perspectives in terms of self-reliance than others."[14]

This focus on economy and self-reliance within the development sector was even further amplified with the appointment of the Minister of Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation Lilianne Ploumen in 2012, with her 'trade and aid' policy. This policy strives for a balance between development cooperation on the one hand and commercial activities on the other, whereby the role of Dutch trade and industry is stimulated.

The same realities have also shifted within Dutch diplomacy. More emphasis is now placed on economic diplomacy and cost-efficiency, owing to a process of modernization of Dutch diplomacy that is currently ongoing within the Dutch Department of Foreign Affairs. Globalization has brought a new reality, in which

the role of the traditional diplomat is under review: international posts are reduced in number, and the roles of ambassadors and their staff have to form part of a regional approach aligned with international networks, both physical and virtual. In its report published in May 2013, the advisory committee 'Groep van Wijzen' ('Group of the Wise') to the Dutch Minister of Foreign Affairs envisions a better balance between The Hague and the network of international posts, in which the latter forms the centre of gravity in terms of policy.[15] It is interesting, however, that although 15 embassies are closing down worldwide – of which five are in Africa – a clear cost and benefits evaluation, to understand whether Dutch trade and industry is missing out on opportunities and how much that loss might be, has not been made. It is assumed that posts outside of Europe have a greater added value in this respect than those within the European Union, but figures to substantiate this assumption have not yet been provided.[16] It seems, therefore, that the new vision of 'economic diplomacy' has not been thoroughly thought through, as the report also indicates.[17] It could be argued that closing down embassies in Africa is not in line with the assumptions of this economic diplomacy:

> "The governments of Turkey, China and other upcoming economies are opening embassies and consulates in Africa. But the Dutch decide to break off relations in the most resourceful areas in the world. This indicates that regardless of the Dutch focus on 'economic diplomacy', we fail to see the actual value of Africa."[18]

It was concluded by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, however, that the trade and business relationships between Zambia and the Netherlands were not considerable enough to keep the embassy open.[19] Still, the former ambassador deplored the absence of lobbies from the Dutch trade and industry sector against closure:

> "In Tanzania, for instance, the development relation was broken off as well, but the embassy remained because of a large lobby from trade and industry. In Zambia that was not the case."[20]

The relationship between Zambia and the Netherlands is therefore changing and will focus more on investments and trade relations and less on development. To support business initiatives, an Honorary Consulate is being set up in Zambia, with instruments such as the PSI (Private Sector Investment) and PUM (senior experts) programs to support private initiatives and stimulate local entrepreneurship. The Nuffic Fellowship Program, a study program that promotes capacity building within organizations in 62 countries by providing training and education through fellowships for professionals, will also continue. Ac-

cording to former ambassador Harry Molenaar, these are instruments that fit within the development of the country. The Honorary Consulate will be equipped with one full- and one part-time local employee, which is different from most other honorary consulates. The FMO (Dutch entrepreneurial development bank) remains active in Zambia; there are also investments in the banking sector through Rabo Development, which in 2007 bought a 49 per cent stake in one of Zambia's largest banks (Zanaco). Zanaco is Zambia's leading bank at the moment, with a wide network of offices throughout the country. KLM established a direct airline route between Lusaka and Amsterdam in 2012 because of the strong economic growth in Zambia and to directly connect the upcoming flower industry in Zambia with the Netherlands and stimulate tourism. In addition, the Dutch business community mainly active in the agricultural sector continues to contribute to Dutch economic activity in Zambia. Aside from this, civil society initiatives are still being supported by Dutch development organizations SNV and Hivos.

Zambian reactions to the phasing out of the development relationship were mixed. According to former ambassador Molenaar, the Zambian Ministry of Finance reacted with both understanding and resignation. They agreed that Zambia was moving forward within development and stated that "the time may have come for the Dutch to leave."[21] On the other hand, the Dutch departure was met with concern by local embassy staff such as drivers, and also by organizations like Faweza (a Zambian NGO active in education and gender issues), for whom the Netherlands has been the largest contributor to their program for the last seven years:

> "The Dutch were very supportive ever since we established this chapter 16 years ago. They provided us with technical and financial support. They will leave a gap, and that gap will be felt. How are we going to support that girl-child out there, the orphans and vulnerable children who need our support?"[22]

From a donor perspective, Mike Hammond, Head of the British Department for International Development (DFID) in Zambia, suggests the Dutch will be missed:

> "I find their departure very sad. They have always been a strong partner in the development debate and were a key partner on bigger issues. We had the same goals and share a common philosophy. We'll especially miss them because of their style of engagement, accountability and directness. They know what they want and are very clear on that. Especially in the good governance dialogue, their views were nuanced and critical. They didn't hide out and they made a dif-

> ference from a premier league position. The Dutch turned out to be solid friends and their balanced views will be missed. Zambia will lose a friend."[23]

The majority of the Dutch community in Zambia do not seem too concerned by the finalization of the development relationship, since most of them are quite critical of development cooperation, as we have seen earlier. Their criticism is aimed at development cooperation in general, also aid carried out by big international NGOs. The Smulders, for instance, were not amused when international NGOs donated free solar panels in rural Zambia, pricing local initiatives such as their own out of the market.[24] In the eyes of most Dutch men and women in Zambia, development cooperation proved counterproductive to the actual development of the country:

> "Development cooperation ruined a lot of self-initiative here. Now that commercialism is taking over, things are improving considerably."[25]

The news of the departure of the embassy, however, was received with regret. Most resident Dutch men and women do not understand the withdrawal from a business perspective:

> "First you invested a huge amount of money in the country. Now it's time to earn it back and you leave! It's a pity."[26]

Besides the potential revenues the Dutch are missing out on, they will also lose their close political relationship with the Zambians, a fact Bas de Gaay Fortman deplores:

> "Without an embassy, you miss out on chances and lose your political 'antennae'. As such, I find it very unwise to close the embassy."[27]

The previously mentioned report of the advisory committee to the Dutch Minister of Foreign Affairs underlines the personal qualities and abilities of individual diplomats to open opportunities. The personal impact of an ambassador in that perspective should not be underestimated. According to many Dutch in Zambia, the last ambassador had that individual quality, which further adds to their disappointment about the closure of the embassy:

> "Ambassador Harry Molenaar's relationship with the Dutch community was very positive, and also on a personal level. He had a genuine interest in the country and trade and industry. He used his political power to stimulate that. Ambassadors like him have an impact on Zambian politicians because he also speaks with

them in private. The silent power of an ambassador is quite underestimated. They can perform the way they do solely because they are Dutch ambassadors. When the embassy is closed, you lose your ability to undertake corrective action and also to pave the way for Dutch trade and industry."[28]

Photo 33 Former ambassador Harry Molenaar, First Secretary Peter de Haan and Dambisa Moyo, author of 'Dead Aid', on the launch of her book in Zambia at the Netherlands residence in 2009

Zambia 'in the driver's seat'

Before we look back on personal perspectives on the Dutch role and presence in Zambia, we will highlight the last phase of Dutch aid in Zambia. As noted at the beginning of this chapter, in 2006 the Netherlands reached the stage of the 'mature form' of development cooperation: general budget support within a sector-wide approach, a programmatic approach that was broadened from specific organizations at the micro-level to the macro-perspective of an entire sector like education or health. The Netherlands was at that time a considerable donor to Zambia, with an amount of almost 40 million euro in 2006. It was considered

by the Centre for Global Development to be "the rich nation that does the most to improve the lives in developing countries".[29] Aside from budget support, the Dutch government co-financed Dutch NGOs like SNV, Hivos, Novib, and Cordaid whose activities were complementary to those of the embassy. They received a total of 11 per cent of the national development cooperation budget.[30]

In a paper Dr. Marja Hinfelaar wrote for the embassy in 2006, intended to arrive at a better understanding of the drastic changes Dutch development policy was undergoing at the time, she raised two important questions with respect to the future outcomes of budget support that proved to be of predictive value. Firstly: since donors agreed upon direct budget support as the most 'harmonized' and 'aligned' form of support, this inevitably meant that donors were to follow Zambia's policies and that there would no longer be any need for national programs. But what would be the future task then of the Dutch embassy? And secondly: direct support might lead to a greater deprivation of marginalized areas such as Western Province. Could it be expected that all provinces and districts would receive their equal share?[31]

As we have seen earlier, the Dutch had lead donor positions in the sectors of education and private sector development; and aside from these, the Dutch focused on the 'cross-cutting' issues of gender, HIV/AIDS, environment, and good governance. Since these issues affected every sector, they acted as cross-cutting themes in all programmes. For example, when discussing human rights with the Zambian government, the Dutch always pushed the HIV/AIDS agenda. Former ambassador Karel de Beer even went as far as visiting the remote villages himself to hold discussions with local elders about the causes and the stigmatizing of the disease that cost the lives of around 120,000 Zambians at its peak in the year 2001. According to former embassy staff member Judith Kumwenda, gender within the government, the participation of women in decision making and in elections, association groups of women in mining and so on were all on the Dutch gender programme: "in all our activities the gender agenda was always pushed". Dutch focus on gender was historically strong but had become even stronger from 2005 when more budget was allocated to this area.[32] With regard to good governance, which ranked high on the Dutch agenda of importance, the goal was set to come to a more accountable and transparent democratic institution at the national level, a goal that included a more effective fight against corruption by 2008.

The embassy, in the context of 'harmonization' and 'alignment', focused on policy dialogue, direct budget support, and assistance to the programs of the ministries of health and education. The last projects of the project era were phased out in 2008. Just as the Dutch had performed as a 'guiding country' in development cooperation in the 1970s, they were frontrunners in the process

towards harmonization. In line with the Paris Declaration, they took the first steps towards the Joint Assistance Strategy Zambia (JASZ), a framework for international donor cooperation:

> "The harmonization process amongst donors was driven by us. We took the first steps for the JASZ. We were also the first, together with a few other donors, to start with the move towards alignment with the Zambian government structures. There was insecurity amongst donors about transferring responsibility to the Zambian government, but we put our trust in it."[33]

The Dutch supported sectors such as education through pooled funding with other donors and also provided general budget support. They thereby gave support to the Zambian government to assist in controlling public expenditures and financial accountability. Analysis by the Dutch embassy shows that Zambia was actually making progress in the field of public finance transformations.[34] Especially in their lead sectors of education and private sector development, the Dutch felt they made a positive impact. In the embassy's Multi Annual Strategic Plan 2008–2011 it was stated that "our Zambian partners and cooperating partners greatly appreciated the embassy's role in these two sectors".[35] According to Lillian Kapulu, National Chairperson of Faweza, who worked with the Dutch in the Ministry of Education during her time as Permanent Secretary from 2005 to 2010, the Dutch lead role in education indicated their confidence in the Zambian government:

> "The fact that the Dutch were the lead donor in education showed in itself how much confidence they had in the government system. We worked extremely well together. They were very supportive in whatever area we needed support, such as implementing policies. They wanted to ensure that we as a government succeeded. They were supporting us, but we were in the forefront position."[36]

In the field of primary education, the total enrolment grew from 2.8 million in 2005 to 3.4 million in 2009.[37] Education has become free, and the Zambian government put a lot of effort into the building of schools, school facilities such as toilets, and the building of secondary schools.[38] Improvements in healthcare were also considerable. Analyses show that the government and cooperating partners improved service delivery and reduced the prevalence of diseases such as tuberculosis and malaria. Positive impacts on child mortality, maternal death, malaria, and diarrhoea were also identified.[39] Dutch doctors observed these developments:

> "Lusaka has many good private hospitals today. But the quality in government hospitals has improved as well. Doctors have developed capacity. Ten years ago locals had to go to a mission hospital for medical care; today it's possible to go to a government hospital. This development has been very swift in recent years. Doctors make more money, and society has raised its standards. Zambian doctors sometimes know more about HIV/AIDS than me now."[40]

But although improvements were made, the full potential of budget support, as was analysed by the IOB, was not realised. Access to many facilities remained difficult for the poorest groups, especially in the remote areas. On the one hand, governance issues and financial system deficiencies in the Zambian departments were complicating factors. For instance, within the education sector, school grants did not reach their destinations because of a lack of proper financial systems. The practice of budget support turned out to be more challenging than expected:

> "In Luapula I was confronted with the reality: if money doesn't come through from Lusaka because of problems with the bank, you might, as a provincial government, use the money in the education budget for a new road because that's more urgent than school benches. So you discover that money needs to be transferred to the bank account of the school directly in order to reach the purpose it was meant for."[41]

The Dutch were able to have a constructive debate with the Ministry of Education, which led to improvements in the financial systems.[42] On the other hand, IOB analysis showed that despite efforts on the process of harmonization, donors did not always agree among themselves on the hierarchy of budget support objectives. Thus, cooperating partners were often unable to offer joint and consistent priorities to the Zambian government, which obstructed the development process.[43] However, deficiencies within the financial systems and a lack of harmonization were not the only reasons the full potential of budget support was not realised: the Zambian government seemed to place emphasis on quantity instead of quality. In the case of education, school access was improved, but the quality of education remained poor. Higher education in the field of agriculture is almost absent, which leads to the lack of trained staff, a problem the Dutch community also suffers from, as we have seen earlier. In discussions with the Zambian government, however, it became clear that their emphasis was on process rather than on content, much to the dislike of the Dutch.[44] It was a clear sign of the diminishing influence of the Dutch as donor:

> "We thought we had bought a place at the negotiation table with national budget support, but we hadn't. Education is a good example: a debate about content wasn't possible, because the Zambian government wasn't interested in having that debate with us."[45]

The Dutch were more and more sidelined, to the benefit of donors like the Chinese, who were welcomed with open arms: they were less interested in discussions about content, gender, and good governance or the issue of homosexuality, a sensitive topic in Zambia. This latter topic led to consternation in the Dutch parliament in 2009 when Dutch politicians asked the Minister of Foreign Affairs to address the anti-homosexual sentiments expressed by the Zambian government.[46] Even recently, questions were raised in the Dutch parliament about the detention of a homosexual-rights activist in Zambia in relation to the closure of the Dutch embassy in Lusaka, which had supported organizations promoting gay rights.[47] The embassy had had to constantly balance between local practice and the national debate in the Netherlands, while the Chinese do not get involved in these kinds of discussions at all: they just build roads, dams, bridges, and irrigation canals without asking any further questions.

Since human rights and good governance issues such as corruption remained high on the Dutch agenda, however, as indicated in a review by the Dutch embassy in 2009, it was felt that the fight against corruption as well as the quality of policy dialogues needed a fresh impulse. At the same time, the Dutch felt more and more left out as a donor partner.[48] Dutch concern came to a head with the unfortunate fraud case in which the Zambian Anti-Corruption Committee brought to light misuse of donor money within the Ministry of Health in 2009: 3 million euro were embezzled by ministry staff.[49] The Netherlands reacted firmly by suspending their support to the Ministry of Health until criteria they stipulated to prevent these events from happening again were met. According to embassy staff, the two countries thereupon really worked together to improve the government systems.[50] In a results' review of their efforts in 2009/2010, it is stated that these improvements led to better quality and efficiency of the governance systems and that government expenditure had been made more transparent. Owing to Dutch and Norwegian support, the Court of Audit developed into the most important surveillance institution in Zambia, which "fulfils a crucial role in public surveillance by providing free and independent information about weak spots in government expenditure, pointing out financial mismanagement, and providing the Zambian population as well as the parliamentary budget commission with information."[51]

Under the influence of the national agenda, Dutch financial policy became very strict in the last decade. The Dutch took up a position of high standards and

a strict, critical approach. According to the embassy staff, the sharpening of Dutch policy and letting go of the opposite 'mister nice guy' position of the former decades were positive changes. Nevertheless, sharpened procedures often seemed to have more to do with national debate within the Netherlands than with the reality of the development process conducted in Zambia. Some Dutch embassy staff members felt the sharpened procedures had tripped over too far to the other extreme. Head of Mission Ardi Stoios-Braken, who closed down the embassy in July 2013, asked herself one year previously:

> "It seems there hasn't been a discussion on what acceptable risks are. You can't, within reason, expect Zambia to have its systems functioning like ours. What are we here for otherwise?"[52]

These strict regulations were often even too specifically Dutch and strict for partner donors, as a former local policy officer at the embassy stated when she was still working at the embassy in 2012:

> "Yes, there are problems with the Zambian system, but what we expect within our time frames is not always realistic. It's the same with the cooperation with other donors. We were frontrunners in the harmonization process, but our requirements are often very specific to the Netherlands and therefore hard to understand for our partners."[53]

As the above indicates, interference from national headquarters, which responded more to domestic political situations than to Zambia's needs, could hinder the development attempts being made in Lusaka.[54]

As we have read, there have been criticisms and disappointments concerning the latest model of development cooperation. In its review, the embassy itself states that in spite of the accomplishments mentioned earlier – for instance, their efforts to reform the public finance systems and the way they were managed – "many activities seem to have had severe delays and many goals have only partially been met". The causes of these disappointing outcomes were sought in "too highly set ambitions" and "a bad management set-up and a lack of responsibility for the programme of the Zambian government".[55] Especially since the Netherlands was a frontrunner in the harmonization process, the fact that the full potential of budget support was not realized led to disappointment on both sides. Sadly, however, it seems that one of the root causes of that disappointment is the fact that both sides had set themselves up by putting too much faith in a new development model without checking what the mutual expectations of this form of development cooperation were. Frustration

on the Dutch part seems therefore to be principally the outcome of wrongly managed expectations:

> "The Paris Agenda was made into a sort of ideology, a bible. This was the answer we donors believed in. The Netherlands stepped in too quickly, without checking the systems first. The idea behind budget support was good, but the premises on which to implement it should have been agreed upon first. It turned out that the expectation that the Zambian and Dutch governments had about this form of financing didn't seem to match, which is disappointing to both of us."[56]

The remark I encountered quite often expressed by embassy staff and which is also evident from the above mentioned review – that the Zambian systems "weren't ready for budget support" – forms a rather peculiar contrast to the historically strong Dutch emphasis on and leading role in good governance issues. Given their presence in Zambia for almost fifty years, it is difficult to understand that for decades they failed to notice the underperforming systems or the fact that corruption was not just a weakness but seemed to form an integral part of the system as a whole. Furthermore, in their 'lessons learned', the embassy states that "donors have clearly been too optimistic about the expected pace of the transformations" and that "from comparisons with similar projects in other countries, it seems accomplishments in these areas take many years and a continued support".[57] The question arises: why were these kinds of projects not compared beforehand to temper optimism about a swift transformation process? In particular, looking at the past development models that were used, it is shown clearly that Zambian ideas on development differ from those in the Netherlands. It could therefore be argued that thorough and long-term research on Zambian history, culture and society – the local practice - was insufficiently looked at at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Former embassy staff underlined that the parameters they had to operate within did not necessarily fit local practice:

> "It all turned out much more complicated and cost-consuming than when we started it. Our own parameters and procedures for how we manage things have gotten in our way. What The Hague measures us by is not appropriate in these sorts of countries. The possibilities to respond adequately to the local practice are therefore limiting." [58]

However, Peter de Haan, former First Secretary of the Dutch embassy in Lusaka, emphasizes that the focus on the Zambian government, for instance, instead of on civil society and the private sector was not only due to policy coming from The Hague:

> "Our notions of what development cooperation should entail are not always in accordance with the possibilities within a country, and that limits our possibilities to act upon the local reality. We could however have decided, for instance, to invest more in the private sector, but we didn't. That's because we (at the embassy) put the Dutch policy and the Minister first, without looking closely at the dynamics of the country we operate in. Because we failed to take up the many opportunities that were there, we missed the boat."[59]

But, as a former local embassy staff member rightly emphasizes, Zambians were positive about budget support. The Dutch, rather than setting up their own ideas on development in the form of unsustainable projects, were now "building structures and systems that can grow according to the wishes and desires of the Zambian people themselves".[60] As Lillian Kapulu stated before, the Dutch had made a genuine attempt to contribute to the important goal of Zambian-driven development.

Zambia beyond The Netherlands: personal experiences

Looking back and forward: what does the future hold for the Zambian–Dutch relationship? Zambia evolved within half a century from a society that lived principally along the lines of traditional tribalism into an emerging economy with a modern middle class. While the country in 2003 was still ranked as one of the world's poorest countries by the United Nations Development Programme, ten years later it is a Lower-Middle Income country. For Father Hinfelaar, who has observed this rapid shift from 1958, it is unimaginable how the scattered traditional society he found upon his arrival has changed so considerably within such a short time frame:

> "They basically just drove on tractors out of the bush, while we in Europe had a centuries' long phase of the horse in our development process in between."[61]

Within this period of almost fifty years, the Dutch have elaborated on several different models for development in Zambian society. As we have seen, they moved from the local level to the national level, from technical assistance to financial support of the national budget, to the new business approach of today. Shifting perspectives internationally and also within the Netherlands, together with the rise of African economies, led to the fading away of the traditional role of development cooperation and of the leading role of the Western donor. The parameters have changed from an idealistic and socialistic approach to a more commercial and realistic outlook. 'Missionary of the makeable socie-

ty' Willem Zevenbergen, first team director of the Volunteer Programme in Zambia in the 1960s, spent his entire career working in the development sector. The course of his life from an ex-colonial officer to an SNV field director and later the position of Chef Africa at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is exemplary for the character of traditional Dutch development cooperation. He stated in an interview in the Dutch newspaper *NRC Handelsblad* in 2012 that he started off his career with an almost religious vocation of "helping the poor" but that he acknowledges that the role of classic development cooperation has been played out by now:

> "The world has changed tremendously. I am history. I have acted in the spirit of my time and I still stand behind that. But since times and circumstances have changed, I can see as well that it has to be done completely differently now."[62]

Unfortunately, historical literature on Dutch aid in Zambia throughout almost fifty years is limited, as are analyses of the diplomatic Zambian–Dutch relationship. What we can say in general is that the Dutch embassy attempted to find the right balance between policy coming from The Hague, worldwide

Photo 34 Former aid worker and agricultural entrepreneur Dirk Muijs with his son Arjan

developments, and the political and developmental local reality they had to operate in. Some development models were more appreciated than others, and some ambassadors were more confident in adjusting the boundaries they had to operate in than others, which reflected on their relationship with Zambia as well as with the Dutch community. Looking back, we can say most donor partners and Zambians appreciated the Dutch presence, as former staff member of the Dutch embassy Judith Kumwenda states:

> "We were a key partner in Zambia for a long time. The Netherlands was not a hardliner here; they were moderate and looking for partnerships. We were not forcing anything; therefore, our role was appreciated. There was no top-down approach."[63]

As we have seen, the Dutch themselves are in general critical of their achievements in the field of development cooperation. The majority of them feel that what they have left behind in terms of development is negligible. On the one hand, they were disappointed in cases of corruption and reluctance on the Zambian side and on the other hand in Dutch and international politics. It should be emphasized that the Dutch embassy staff had the difficult task of ensuring continuity, thereby having to pick out the beneficial policy parts despite instructions coming from The Hague.

From the Zambian perspective, the Dutch performed in the best possible way in doing so. Their presence is generally looked upon positively by Zambians, especially in the field of democratization and impact on corruption, as Judith Kumwenda and governance and development specialist Elijah Rubvuta illustrate:

> "Look at the electoral process, for instance. Because the Dutch spoke out it has improved considerably. Because of talking over the years, we have come to the level of the last elections, which were won by the Patriotic Front Party of Michael Sata. They were free and fair, and it was clear to everybody that you can make a major change in government without violence. Because of the involvement and partnership in developing the political and democratic agenda, we are at the level where we are today. Without the donors, we would have had issues with processes not being free and fair and transparent. It's the same with being critical. The Dutch have given a voice to the voiceless by speaking out for them on all sorts of issues, like education, gender, and a free press. You can see on TV and read in the newspapers that people have become more outspoken and ask questions. The Dutch have contributed to that."[64]

> "I feel that the Dutch role in the debate about corruption and transparency has been very beneficial. The public debate has changed considerably and they influenced that. Because of their support for multiparty democracy, an interparty dialogue took place in 2006 that led to the new national constitution. That impact is maybe not physical, but it has definitely been felt." [65]

Development impact is not only felt on a national level; impact has also been made on a personal level. Rubvuta, for example, an alumnus of the Netherlands Fellowship Programme of Nuffic who participated in the program from 2000 to 2001, feels the Netherlands should pride itself on its efforts for the individual empowerment of people:

> "I still meet people in high-level positions that benefitted from that programme. The Netherlands is the greatest contributor to these kinds of programmes. The personal development that I got was very beneficial to the development of my career. I got a lot of exposure in terms of advocacy and policy making. It helped me later to set up a campaign for my organization Foundation for Democratic Process. We were therefore able to move government into making adjustments in the electoral programme. Later on I got a job at the National Democratic Institute of South Sudan. My experiences helped me to get to that level, and I set up a network for democratic elections in Sudan."[66]

According to former volunteer Aldert van der Vinne, too much criticism therefore tends towards cynicism, which in his view is damaging to the broader picture many Dutch refuse to see – namely, that Dutch presence as part of an international donor framework supported Zambia on the road to where the country stands today:

> "You have to look at the Dutch role from a world perspective and how that was organized. There have been different systems. Has one of these systems been particularly good? No, I can't say so. The biggest issue of all these systems was that the people that we wanted to reach, the target group, was lost sight of, and all kinds of things that mattered to us and not to them came onto the agenda. To be able to say whether our involvement was effective, we have to look at the underlying criteria of assessment. If you look at it in terms of input, we put so much money into it and so many people worked on it that we can say we failed. But if you look at the fact that these people used to live in the bush before and didn't have access to schools and hospitals, and look at what they are doing one generation later, we can say that they were given opportunities and they took them. I have seen the self-reliance of Zambians improve greatly over the past 32 years. I can't say that Dutch policy has been particularly important to that devel-

> opment of Zambia. What I can say is that if all countries, including the Netherlands, hadn't have been around, these developments might not have taken place. We were part of a bigger whole to help develop the country. Development cooperation can exist only in the context of exchanging ideas, and the embassy has been an important partner in that. We have contributed to the flourishing economy of Zambia. People who refuse to see that suffer from too much cynicism."[67]

Kumwenda underlines Van der Vinne's conviction that achievements in terms of development are very subjective and dependent on the criteria of measurement that are imposed. In this way, she makes an important point: in the way the Dutch evaluate their influence, they fail to involve Zambian perspectives or include them in these criteria:

> "When you say, 'All projects have failed', what do you mean? You have given skills, knowledge and education to people. Has that all gone? No, it has gone elsewhere, maybe not in the place where you have left it or the form you left it in, but it's in the minds of the people. For the Dutch that is very difficult; they come to a place and say: 'This is where I left the project and look at it now; there's nothing left.' But knowledge doesn't leave us. Let Africa develop at its own pace, not at your pace. We might even be better off developing slowly; in that way we won't inherit the difficult issues that you see in your own societies, issues which we might not be able to handle. You came and you sowed – and some of your seeds have been harvested, some will be harvested much later, and some will never be harvested. But look at where we are today!"[68]

When we look to the future, the Zambian–Dutch relationship will be more about business than about development. Zambia has become an emerging market that holds business opportunities for the ailing Dutch economy. The presence of a Dutch Honorary Consulate with business instruments, the work of the FMO development bank, Dutch investments in Zanaco, and a direct airline route between Lusaka and Amsterdam support these opportunities. The opening of this airline route can also provide a strong impetus to the flourishing tourism industry:

> "The potential for the Zambian tourism industry is great. We have a huge amount of wildlife and much fewer tourists than Kenya. The Zambian middle class is growing fast, so more and more customers are Zambian. At the same time, hospitals and schools are improving, there's more competition, and service is improving."[69]

Development cooperation can in this way be used as a basis for economic growth. For example, within the agricultural sector, which holds potential for Dutch agricultural entrepreneurs and farmers, development models are supportive of private sector development. According to Mark Terken, this commercial model holds great business opportunities for agriculture in Zambia:

> "Africa and agriculture are hot today: there have been many investments made in the last five years. The issue of food security is one of the key topics within development. Opportunities are great in terms of agricultural land and water; and the level of governance in Africa has gone up, so investment risks have diminished. The role of development cooperation, in my opinion, should be to support private sector development. A good example is my previous business in the export of peppers. We took NGOs like Hivos into our new model. They weren't running projects themselves, but they selected sustainable agri-businesses like ours and supported them in their development impact with their model to improve the lives of small farmers. Farmers got more credits and their productivity went up. We as an enterprise invested in that development. Those are good models for development based on commercial activity. At the moment, I am selecting agricultural enterprises with a lot of development impact for a big investor. He believes in the idea of creative entrepreneurship: people will start developing themselves if you give them the opportunity to do business. That's a good example of a realistic approach to development."[70]

Because of the improving investment climate in Zambia, more Dutch entrepreneurs are expected to set up business models in the African country. At the same time, the Embassy of the Republic of Zambia in Brussels has taken the initiative to contact the Zambia Working Group, which has recently been transformed into a platform (Platform Zambia) for connections between small, non-governmental Dutch organizations that have developmental relations with Zambia. Platform Zambia covers 24 NGOs that run local projects. An example of such a project is Zambridge Senanga, an organization that runs several projects in education and health in Senanga District in Zambia, set up by former aid workers who worked in Senanga. Platform Zambia is also transforming into a new form of connectivity between Zambia and the Netherlands, since the board of the Platform was invited by the Zambian embassy in June 2013 to talk about the importance of facilitating contacts between the two countries. It was agreed to connect the websites of Platform Zambia and the Zambian embassy and to provide each other with information to improve business and other relations between the two countries. In addition, Platform Zambia can inform the Zambian embassy of the experiences of Dutch local organizations in rural Zambia. The Zambian ambassador has indicated his willingness to attend the yearly Zambia

Day organized by the Platform, which fits well into the focus of the Platform on including Zambians living in the Netherlands in their activities. In this way the Platform acts as a kind of 'embassy 2.0', a meeting point between Zambia and the Netherlands.[71]

The current Dutch community of around 400 might not be as large as when the Dutch embassy opened in Zambia in 1965, but the link between the Netherlands and Zambia will take it further into the next generation. Arie de Kwaaiesteniet, Aldert van der Vinne, and Willem Lublinkhof all have children working in their companies, and others like René Lourens and Dirk Muijs also hope their children will see a future in Zambia. Most of them study in higher education in the Netherlands and stimulate Dutch friends or relatives to take up opportunities in Zambia. An international community of young expats is therefore being created, and valuable contacts have been established. Arjan Muijs, son of Dirk Muijs and Klaske Hiemstra:

> "I studied tropical agriculture and trade in Deventer and Wageningen. I lived in the Netherlands for four years. I found it cold, rainy and the future is quite unclear today in terms of job opportunities. There are no real challenges there; everything is arranged perfectly. Here you can find an adventurous job with lots of responsibility. You can get promotion very easily. For me the challenge is to build a company here out of nothing; that's what I hope to do here in the future."[72]

Roles have also been reversed over time. Marja Hinfelaar, the niece of Father Hugo Hinfelaar, is a historian and also a long-term resident of Zambia. She now works for a Lusaka-based research and policy institute that has been set up by a Zambian law professor at Cornell University in the United States. With her extensive research into Zambian history and political and economic developments, her work forms an important link between Zambia and the Netherlands.

End of an era

> "Thinking about development cooperation has always been permeated with the idea of a 'makeable society' – an idea that we actually let go of a long time ago within our own society."[73]

The aim of this publication, as outlined in the Introduction, was to arrive at an interpretation of the history of the Dutch in Zambia, not through an inventory of technical reports, statistics, and formal bureaucratic changes, but through the

Photo 35 Celebrating Queensday together for the last time at the Dutch residency in April 2013: former chargé d'affaires Ardi Stoios-Braken and former volunteer and manager René Lourens

Photo 36 Celebrating the Dutch festival Sinterklaas in 2012

Photo 37 Queensday 2013: Former volunteer and managing director Aldert van der Vinne and his daughter Jenny

Photo 38 Queensday 2013: former volunteer/development worker and farmer Arie de Kwaaisteniet and Geke de Jong

eyes of those involved: former aid workers, former embassy staff, and former Zambian recipients and counterparts. Such a social history is not necessarily of practical use to the development sector. As Inge Brinkman and I concluded in our publication *Bricks, mortar and capacity building: 40 years of socio-cultural history of development organization SNV* (2010), this type of research does not come up with – nor does it have the intention to do so – the answer to the question whether 'development works'. Since it not only deals with the perspectives of those involved but inevitably also with implemented Dutch development policies that might not have served the purposes they were intended for, this type of research is received with caution by policy makers. However, I would like to underline the importance of such personal perspectives. Since development as a concept has always been directed towards the future, whereby the past functions more as a negative mirror when change has set in, thorough historical research of former models that were used and the way they interacted with Zambian society involving the perspectives of those involved seem almost absent. To instigate a proper discussion about development cooperation, historical interpretations are of great, though undervalued importance.

What is principally clear when we look back on this modest attempt to cover nearly fifty years of Dutch involvement in Zambia is that the development relation with Zambia changed significantly throughout the years, under the influence of political and economic changes within Zambia and the Netherlands. Although changes within Zambian society led the way, Dutch national politics exerted increasing pressure on policy makers in The Hague, who came up with procedures to interact with local practice as well as to foster international cooperation with other donor countries. Dutch development policy in Zambia must therefore be seen as an intertwining of different national and international influences. Development became more internationally determined and lost its initial 'Dutchness'. Initially, Zambians were usually aware who worked on a certain project, whereas later on Dutch efforts were more difficult to detect because they have been made within an international donor framework.

Perspectives on development cooperation conducted in Zambia therefore also changed under these influences. The Dutch community, former aid workers and entrepreneurs and adventurers who arrived in the country from the 1960s, form a micro-history that parallels the route Dutch development cooperation took from idealism towards realism. Their personal perspectives reflect the development models as described and add colour to the way these models were rooted in the local practice. The factors of 'coincidence' and personal motivation played an important role in the course of history. Just as it was a coincidental factor for an ambassador to be placed in a certain country, combined with his personal outlook of moving beyond procedures coming from The

Hague, it was a combination of the 'coincidence' of coming to Zambia, together with personal drive, that made Dutch former aid workers succeed in the country. The necessity of their move from idealism to a business approach long before development cooperation did, is viewed by most of them as self-evident: 'free aid' was unsustainable and they had let go of the idea of 'fixing things', while some still kept their ideals. Despite their criticism of development work, they all underline that the experience they gained in this sector enabled them to perform the work they are doing today in Zambia.

In some respects, one can say the Zambian–Dutch relationship has come full circle in almost fifty years. Copper prices are up and the Zambian economy is on the rise, just as they were when the Dutch arrived in the 1960s. Missionaries, commercial farmers, and businessmen were the first Dutch men and women in Zambia and they are the ones who stayed behind. The consular affairs of the Royal Netherlands Embassy are transferred back to Harare, where they were taken care of before 1965. The new relationship between Zambia and the Netherlands, however, will be very different from the previous fifty years. It will be more realistic and based on mutual business interests: 'trade, not aid.' It will be an equal relationship in which the role of the Netherlands will be more modest and not based on the thought of a 'makeable society'. As former local Trade Assistant of the Dutch embassy Judith Kumwenda puts it: "Let Africa develop at its own pace, not at your pace", and perhaps Africa can also avoid inheriting "the difficult issues that you see in your own societies, issues which we might not be able to handle". While it is hoped that Zambia looks back on the relationship with the Dutch as one that was supportive of the developments that evolved into their society of today, the Netherlands has to come to terms with the image of the 'new Zambia' and realize that a more complex understanding of Zambian culture and society is required, one based on more thorough research – including also Zambian perspectives – than has been conducted so far.

The role of Dutch men and women in Zambian society today and their former involvement in development cooperation form a singular mark in the history of the Dutch in Zambia. Today, through their ongoing participation, they actively stimulate the economy, create local jobs, and provide training for local staff. They connect Zambia and the Netherlands through a shared past and hold the potential for the establishment of a more connected future. Their presence is not just a visual token of Zambian–Dutch business relations; it also reminds us of the solidarity most Dutch men and women started out with when they arrived in the country. As former field director Zevenbergen rightly noted, commercialism is not by definition more 'realistic' than the somewhat idealistic ideas the volunteers started out with. The majority of development workers in the early days were very 'realistic' in their motivation to help build up the new

country Zambia. The fact that their ideas have been overhauled by new perspectives does not mean their solidarity with the Zambian people was not genuine. According to missionary Toon van Kessel, economic progress is all well and good, but only a partial answer to the challenges development poses. He continues to assist people with questions about life and taking care of the ones that are usually left out of the development discussions, such as the HIV/AIDS-infected orphans that wander the streets of the compounds or the disease-stricken prisoners in cramped cells in Lusaka. It was this personal solidarity in the first place, a love for the country, interest in the people, and a genuine motivation to exchange ideas that defined development for most aid workers in the early days:

> "If you fall in love with Zambia, you have to stay here first for four years to know what attracts you to this country. For me it is the human nature and the kindness of the people – the way you can talk with them. They are very philosophical. As children, they already have a very mature explanation for things that happen in life. I do believe I've become 'Africanized'. For me that means that I find things that embody content very important. Doing simple things that are beautiful: that gives me a great feeling. Working with people and stimulating them in their development by exchanging ideas: that is what development should be about."*

Photo 39 Sunset at Edjan van der Heide's Mukambi Safari Lodge on the Kafue River

* Willem Lublinkhof, former aid worker in the 1960s and today's largest coffee grower in Zambia.

Overview of Dutch ambassadors in Lusaka

2012-2013	TZ Ardi C.M. Stoios – Braken
2008-2012	Harry Molenaar
2005-2008	Eduard Johannes Maria Middeldorp
2001-2005	Peter Schönherr
1997-2000	Karel Petrus Maria de Beer
1994-1997	Jan Peter Dijkstra
1991-1994	Eldred Gabriël Maduro
1986-1990	Schelto baron van Heemstra
1983-1986	TZ Robert Jan van Houtum
1978-1982	Graaf Roland Hugo van Limburg Stirum
1975-1978	Gerard van Vloten
1966-1975	Jhr. Matthias Adriaan Beelaerts van Blokland (TZ 1966)
1965-1966	TZ Felix van Raalte

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35. Nzie, Charlton – (former) SNV driver, Mongu, Zambia, 25 July 2005.
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