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## **Bricks, Mortar and Capacity Building: A Socio-Cultural History of SNV Netherlands Development Organisation**

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### **Citation**

Brinkman, I. (2010). *Bricks, Mortar and Capacity Building: A Socio-Cultural History of SNV Netherlands Development Organisation*. Leiden [etc.]: Brill. Retrieved from <https://hdl.handle.net/1887/18539>

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Bricks, mortar and capacity building

# Afrika-Studiecentrum Series

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# Bricks, mortar and capacity building

A socio-cultural history of SNV  
Netherlands Development Organisation

Inge Brinkman  
in cooperation with Anne-Lot Hoek

Brill



Cover photo:

ISSN  
ISBN

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We have made every effort to contact all the photographers listed above and copyright agreements have been signed with most of them. However, we have unfortunately been unable to trace a few of them.

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## Foreword

This book offers an introduction to the history of SNV Netherlands Development Organisation, which has now been in existence for over forty years. Though commissioned by SNV, the African Studies Centre had a free hand in outlining and implementing the research and many people helped to make this endeavour a success. Not everyone can be mentioned here by name but we would like to assure you all that your participation was much appreciated and that the ASC is extremely grateful to you.

It is not customary for historians to thank their sources but as this study is partly based on oral material, the first acknowledgment goes to all the people who talked to the research team about their experiences with SNV. All interviewees are thanked for contributing to this project!

The research team visited several countries in order to gain a detailed picture of SNV's activities. We acknowledge the hospitality and assistance of SNV Guinea-Bissau, SNV Mali, SNV Cameroon, SNV Tanzania, SNV Zambia, SNV Bolivia, SNV Nepal, and SNV The Hague. We would especially like to thank the local support staff in the countries the team visited for their friendly welcome and all the assistance they so generously provided.

Research into SNV's past in these countries was undertaken by Raúl Fernandes, Younoussa Touré, Saibou Issa, Yusufu Lawi, Marja Hinfelaar, Clara López and Kathinka Sinha-Kerkhoff. Their contributions to this project are highly appreciated and we want to thank them for the positive and fruitful exchanges we enjoyed with them.

At the African Studies Centre, Inge Brinkman and Anne-Lot Hoek carried out the research very conscientiously. Jan-Bart Gewald, who initiated the project, and Mirjam de Bruijn, the head of the (then) Agency in Africa theme group, also gave useful feedback and support, as did Jan Ubels of SNV. We are grateful to Ann Reeves for her editorial work and to Mieke Zwart for doing the layout.

The ASC also wants to acknowledge the assistance of staff at the archives of the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, IISG (International Institute of Social History), KIT (Royal Tropical Institute), PSO Capacity Building in Developing Countries and KDC (Catholic Documentation Centre).

Though many people have supported the project, the ASC carries full responsibility for this publication and the authors alone are to blame for any mistakes.

*Leo de Haan*  
*Director African Studies Centre*  
*October 2009*



*Photo 1.1* SNV logo, Lusaka, Zambia, 1968.  
*Source:* SNV photo archives, Blue, Zambia, SNVers.  
*Photographer:* Unknown.

## Introduction

### Stating the case

Within Third World Studies in general, and African Studies in particular, cultural encounters have always been pivotal in research. Over the years we have learnt a great deal about the interaction between colonisers and missionaries on the one hand, and those colonised and (possibly) converted on the other. In African Studies, there are debates on colonial stereotypes about 'Africa' and 'Africans', colonial violence and African resistance to colonialism. The history of missionary societies has likewise received ample attention. The missionaries' relationship with the colonial state, their influence in areas of religion, medicine and education, their reaction to local beliefs and practices, and local interaction with the missions have been the subject of many historical and anthropological interpretations.<sup>1</sup>

The situation is very different in Development Studies. The history of the 'Development Era', as it has been called, dates back to the 1940s, with some development organisations having been in existence for over fifty years. Yet few studies to date have been devoted to the history of development. The advantages and disadvantages of 'development' have been intensively debated but little is known about the history of development practices and the changing ways in which development institutions have operated over time. If there is any mention of the past at all, it is usually limited to statistics and comments about its bureaucratic, formal history. Interpretations that view the history of development in terms of a cultural encounter are few and far between.

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<sup>1</sup> For an overview, see Frederick Cooper, 'Conflict and connection: Rethinking colonial African history', *American Historical Review* 99, (15): 1516-1545; Henry Bredekamp & Robert Ross, eds, *Mission and Christianity in South African History* (Johannesburg, 1995).

SNV Netherlands Development Organisation, a Dutch development organisation that started its activities in the 1960s, is no exception to this general rule but this study hopes to offer an interpretation of its history. The aim is to present SNV's history through the eyes of those involved in the organisation and the people in the communities in which SNV has been active.

## SNV

The Stichting Nederlandse Vrijwilligers (SNV) was formally founded on 16 July 1965. The first groups of volunteers had left two years earlier for Cameroon and Brazil under the name JVP and in 1965 the state-led JVP and the JVC, an initiative organised by various private Dutch organisations, formally joined forces to form SNV. Since its inception, SNV has been striving to reach its main aim of contributing meaningfully to the economic and social development of societies in the developing world.

Initially SNV sought to do this by dispatching young, single volunteers to work on practical projects. Later, the focus changed to sending out technical experts and professionals, and in recent years SNV has been transformed into a professional advisory organisation. Since the 1990s, the number of staff from the developing countries themselves that are working for the organisation has increased rapidly and relations between SNV and its partners in the Third World have changed considerably. Initially, the idea was to integrate local people into projects that had been designed in The Netherlands but, at a later stage, the wishes and ideals of local partners became ever more important. Within the Netherlands, major changes have taken place in relations between SNV and the state and, having initially been set up as part of the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, SNV is now an independent NGO.

These changes are related to both external and internal factors. The development concept itself has been radically revised since the 1960s. International relations, world politics and ideas about what development work should entail are now so different from what they were forty years ago that all development organisations have, in one way or another, felt the impact of these changes. Furthermore, the course of Dutch development policies has altered in many ways over the years. As SNV started as an organisation within the Dutch state, these changes have certainly influenced the organisation's policies. Dutch public opinion, the national press and changes in Dutch society can also be identified as factors of change. However, internal redefinitions of its policies and frequent reorganisations have taken place, and are changes from within SNV itself. These internal changes were constituted by an interplay between political dynamics within the organisation, ideas formed by the organisation's leadership and influences stemming from development practices in the field.

This latter aspect – development as done – will receive significant attention in this study; not in the sense of detailing the technicalities of development activities but by focusing on the views and expectations of development practitioners and local participants. In a socio-cultural study, changes are presented as they are evaluated and interpreted ‘from below’. Both critics and advocates of development work often neglect the perspectives of those who are meant to benefit from development work. It is our conviction that changes in development do not only stem from factors situated purely in the donor context: the practice of development work is shaped by complex negotiations and interaction between donors and recipients.

We should not exaggerate the importance of this study. SNV, on average, has only been allowed to spend about 1% of the annual Dutch development budget and this, in turn, has been less than 1% of the national budget. It is estimated that in 1990 only 5% of the Dutch population was familiar with SNV and that most journals and newspapers that mentioned the organisation translated its name incorrectly.<sup>2</sup>

All the same, SNV had many links with Dutch society and Dutch politics. Over the years, thousands of young Dutch people have been sent to work on projects in more than forty-five countries on four continents. SNV is well known in many parts of the world and countless people there at local, national and international level are familiar with its work. For the past forty years, development cooperation has been an integral part of Dutch foreign and domestic policy, and SNV can be seen as an exponent of that policy. Although it has never been a very large organisation, SNV’s influence in development policy-making in The Netherlands has been considerable due to its close ties with the Ministry.

In addition to its international and national fame, SNV has entered Dutch living rooms in a variety of ways. Before the sharp increase in intercontinental tourism in the 1990s, SNV sometimes formed the most direct link between the average Dutch citizen and the developing world. Many neighbourhoods and villages across the country had their own volunteer – later called an SNV development worker – who was stationed in some faraway country. Particularly in the 1970s, when SNV conducted active conscience-raising programmes in which returned SNVers travelled throughout The Netherlands and many twin-town bonds were forged by SNV people, popular support for development work was widespread. Socutera’s short film documentaries often featured SNVers on television and, in the 1970s, SNV was mentioned in the Dutch press when

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<sup>2</sup> Archives, SNV, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania: Box: Teamleidersoverleg 1990, etc; File: ‘Aanbevelingen CV ‘89’, etc: ‘Overige RV-aanbevelingen (1990), bijlage bij agendapunt. Aanbevelingen RV’s tav: Voorlichting en imago’ p. 1.



negative examples of its functioning were used to attack the policies of the Minister of Development Affairs.<sup>3</sup>

Although only a few people spent their entire careers with SNV, a considerable number of former SNVers continued to work within development circles or in foreign affairs. A quick look through the personnel lists of The Netherlands Ministries for Development Cooperation and Foreign Affairs is revealing in this respect.<sup>4</sup> In later years, SNV also became a breeding ground for professionals in the countries where the organisation had its activities: In Guinea Bissau, for example, a number of people who worked with SNV as counterparts or consultants later became prominent in politics, business, law and other areas.<sup>5</sup> As an example, we could mention Brenda Liswaniso, one of the first Zambians to work in SNV, who joined Zambian NGOs after having worked with SNV: 'My experiences at SNV helped me as a springboard for my career'.<sup>6</sup> For the above-mentioned reasons, SNV's past merits more attention than it has hitherto been accorded. A study that attempts to interpret the changes in SNV can contribute to the history of development thinking and practice in a more general sense, as well as to an understanding of Dutch development policies in particular.

### Limited literature

To date, very few publications have dealt with SNV's history. There are numerous reports and documents about SNV but they do not approach the organisation from a primarily historical perspective. There are publications that deal with part of the history of SNV; such as SNV in Botswana, Niger and Mali,<sup>7</sup> and there are also a number of celebratory and commemorative publications but these are not based on an extensive range of sources and are limited in scope. If they deal with the past at all, these studies focus on the official data of administrative change.<sup>8</sup> This situation is not particular to SNV and in the limited number of studies dealing with Dutch development history, formal policies and

<sup>3</sup> Jan-Bart Gewald, '40 Years SNV. Proposal for a Research Project' (Unpublished proposal, Leiden, 2005).

<sup>4</sup> See also Aernout Zevenbergen, *De deskundige: leerling en leermeester. Een halve eeuw uitzending van ontwikkelingswerkers* (The Hague, 2002) p. 48.

<sup>5</sup> Interview 14.

<sup>6</sup> Interview 122.

<sup>7</sup> For example, Janet Hermans, *SNV in Botswana. A 25-Year Saga* (Gaborone, 2001); SNV Botswana, *Down Memory Lane, SNV Botswana 20 Years in Pictures* (Gaborone, 1998); Jan Kees van de Werk, *Met één vinger kun je geen steen oprapen. Un doigt ne suffit pas pour ramasser une pierre* (Rijswijk, 2004).

<sup>8</sup> Exceptions: Ton Nijzink, *Dag vrijwilliger! Twintig jaar SNV* (The Hague, 1984); Dolly Verhoeven, *Aid – A changing necessity; SNV: From Volunteers to Advisors* (The Hague, 2002).

bureaucratic changes have been the central concerns. Also internationally, attention for the history of development is only now emerging.

It has, however, been pointed out that in the case of SNV there is a gap between formal policies and actual practice. As Ton Nijzink states in his book about SNV policy and practice, *Dag vrijwilliger! Twintig jaar SNV* ('Bye Volunteer! SNV 20 Years'): 'It seems justified to suppose that both have their own dynamics, that they sometimes mutually influence each other and at other times function completely independent of each other'.<sup>9</sup> From interviews, it is clear that in the field, policy is often perceived as a bubble of buzz words that has little to do with the actual practice of development work.<sup>10</sup> It thus comes as a surprise that relatively little attention in Nijzink's book is paid to 'the field'. The author provides keen insight into the history of SNV in The Hague, with all its political ins and outs, its relationship with the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, tensions between the private JVC factions and the state part of SNV, SNV's image in the Dutch press, and its major policy changes. However, remarks about what happened in practice remain cursory and, apart from a few quotes from returned volunteers, the Third World appears mostly in the form of pictures.<sup>11</sup> In the SNV archives housed at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the minutes of SNV board meetings refer extensively to the Dutch political situation, policy-making and the organisation's internal bureaucratic structure but only cursorily to the practice of development work.

There is, nevertheless, a body of literature in which development practice has a prominent place. Evaluation reports usually focus on the practice of development work and it is here that the effectiveness of development projects and programmes is assessed, sometimes very critically. This kind of literature is valid as such but its aim is obviously not to offer an interpretation of the history of development work. Moreover, in the evaluative literature, the formal policy of development organisations in the final analysis remains the guiding principle: the effectiveness of development practice is measured against it. Evaluation reports therefore form a body of literature that is informative as historical source material but does not offer arguments with which to engage.<sup>12</sup>

The conclusion is thus twofold. Firstly, historical studies on SNV as a development organisation are lacking and the literature dealing with the past focuses

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<sup>9</sup> Nijzink, *Dag vrijwilliger!*, pp. 77-78.

<sup>10</sup> For example, Interviews 2, 3, 50, 79, 81, 126, 165 and 168.

<sup>11</sup> See also the discussion in Lau Schulpen, ed., *Hulp in ontwikkeling. Bouwstenen voor de toekomst van internationale samenwerking* (Assen, 2001), pp. 2-4.

<sup>12</sup> In the case of SNV, the IOV/IOB reports notably form a rich body of literature on the organisation and Dutch development policy in a more general sense.

too narrowly on formal policies. Secondly, the literature on SNV's work in practice has rarely adopted an historical approach.

### Development and the past

As already mentioned, a lack of attention to the history of development organisations is not specific to SNV but a general feature of the development world. As a matter of fact, this project started after its initiator, Jan-Bart Gewalt from the African Studies Centre in Leiden, wrote in a leading Dutch daily newspaper that development organisations had failed to develop their own 'institutional memory' and were thus incapable of understanding their role in the societies in which they were active. As Gewalt explained: 'There is not only a lack of historical insight concerning Africa, but also as concerns Dutch development cooperation there'. To learn from the past, we must first study it, he argued.<sup>13</sup>

Such overall neglect of the past is not coincidental. As James Scott pointed out:

Any ideology with a large altar dedicated to progress is bound to privilege the future (...) The past is an impediment, a history that must be transcended; the present is the platform for launching plans for a better future.<sup>14</sup>

Development as a concept is not oriented towards the past; it presupposes not merely change but directional growth too. Before it was borrowed from biology and applied to social phenomena, the term referred to the gradual process by which an organism reaches its fully grown natural state of being. This final 'developed' state of being is known for each organism; the direction that growth takes cannot be chosen but is laid out in advance. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries when the word 'development' came to be used in the sense of 'social process', it was linked unequivocally to concepts like progress, natural law and evolution. It acquired clear positive overtones, often being contrasted with decline and stagnation. In this normative sense, development came within the orbit of the 'new-is-better' configuration that was customary in the intellectual history of the time.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Jan-Bart Gewalt, 'Ontwikkelingshulp faalt door onkunde', *NRC Handelsblad* (6 October 2004) p. 9.

<sup>14</sup> James C. Scott, *Seeing like a state. How certain schemes to improve the human condition have failed* (New Haven/London, 1998), p. 95.

<sup>15</sup> Peter Kloos, 'Gewapend met kennis. Ontwikkelingssamenwerking en kennisontwikkeling'. In: Kristoffel Lieten & Fons van der Velden, eds, *Grenzen aan de hulp. Beleid en effecten van ontwikkelingssamenwerking* (Amsterdam, 1997), pp. 315-333; Gustavo Esteva, 'Development'. In: Wolfgang Sachs, ed., *The development dictionary. A guide to knowledge as power* (London/New York, 1992), pp. 6-25.

Over the years, the influence of the evolutionism and determinism that went along with the development concept has declined. The fixed stages of growth in evolutionism and the cast-iron teleology of natural law philosophy obviously do not form the framework of reference in the formulation of policy documents for development organisations. These days, few of those working in the development world would accept the positivist ideas of the nineteenth century and subscribe to notions like the ‘survival of the fittest’, the theoretical dogmas of eugenics or an uncritical belief in the advantages of technology and industrialisation. But it is impossible to erase the word’s history. Development as a concept carries with it a past that needs to be taken into account rather than denied:

Development cannot delink itself from the words with which it was formed – growth, evolution, maturation. Just the same, those who now use the word cannot free themselves from a web of meanings that impart a specific blindness to their language, thought and action. No matter the context in which it is used, or the precise connotation that the person using it wants to give it, the expression becomes qualified and coloured by meanings perhaps unwanted.<sup>16</sup>

Apart from the ahistorical tendencies in the theoretical framework with which the development concept was connected in the nineteenth century, there are other aspects of the development sector that foster an ahistorical climate. The prospective, forward connotation of the term ‘development’ continues to remain important: development has remained aspirational. In this constellation of aspiration and improvement, development organisations themselves are expected to set the example and function as a model of development in the sense of ‘change for the better’. The rate of change in these organisations is high, something which should come as no surprise given the interplay of so many political and social factors that could possibly lead to change and the desire to avoid negative assessments. Within SNV, the personnel felt that at times the changes amounted to a chasing of the latest approach in development policy, without any reflection on the organisation’s legacy or building on what had been achieved. As such, change was considered necessary: an organisation that has come to a complete standstill cannot be expected to be effective. SNV was, however, said to be sometimes swinging too abruptly from one side to the other.<sup>17</sup>

This rate of change in the development world is not likely to contribute to a historical climate. As one SNV country director stated: ‘This history project, I don’t know (...) Would it not be better to let bygones be bygones? We are now a

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<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 10.

<sup>17</sup> For example, Interviews 44, 50, 81, 165, 168, 174, 175, 253, 265 and 260.

very different organisation.’<sup>18</sup> This attitude towards the past was also at times expressed to former SNVers. A former volunteer, who married a Cameroonian and lived in many countries before she returned to Cameroon, was told that ‘The SNVers are now completely different people. And that we had just been nothing, that we had only done some stupid preliminary work. It was Dutch SNVers who told me this.’<sup>19</sup> With each new approach, development institutes display a tendency to negate the past or portray it as negative. As Crush states, ‘There is, within the development sector, an “almost overwhelming need to reinvent or erase the past”’.<sup>20</sup> This negative evaluation of the past as being ‘obsolete’ is often coupled with a clear message about the current approach: new policies and approaches will overcome the shortcomings of the past and cannot but lead to success. In this sense, if the past receives any attention at all, it is merely used as a negative mirror image of the present.

In this respect too, SNV is no exception. Thus in the first phase of development cooperation, remarks on past interaction with the Third World were often confined to a simple condemnation of colonialism.<sup>21</sup> In the 1970s, the boldness of the 1960s was dismissed as arrogant and intrusive. Since the second half of the 1980s and in the 1990s, past SNV work was labelled as well-intentioned but disorganised and improvisatory: the new professional approach was expected to be more fruitful. SNV’s past is in many ways treated negatively and evaluated with benign patience at best, and in many cases even seen as harmful: ‘We no longer work with the idea: We’ll just fix it. It was such a colonial idea. It actually led to the taking over of state functions, which threatened to completely undermine the state.’<sup>22</sup> One former SNVer succinctly expressed this tendency: ‘SNV is a club that does not wish to believe in the “ideal” recipe for development, but constantly believes that *now* it is very close to reaching such a recipe.

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<sup>18</sup> Interview in 2006: Name withheld for reasons of privacy. Translations of quotes (from Dutch, French, Portuguese and Swahili into English) were made by the author.

<sup>19</sup> Interview 228. (‘Maar toen ik hier terugkwam in Kameroen, toen werd mij zeer nadrukkelijk op het hart gedrukt dat de SNV’ers nu een heel ander soort mensen zijn. Dat wij maar niets waren, dat wij maar wat stom voorwerk hadden gedaan. Dat waren Nederlandse SNV’ers die mij dat vertelden.’)

<sup>20</sup> Jonathan Crush, ed., *Power of development* (London, 1995), p. 9.

<sup>21</sup> See also Gewalt, ‘Ontwikkelingshulp faalt door onkunde’, p. 9.

<sup>22</sup> For example, SNV film: ‘Still far to go’ (1993) in DVD series: ‘Een geschiedenis in beeld: Van vrijwilligers naar adviseurs’ (The Hague: 2000); Marc Broere, ‘Het nieuwe SNV. Waarom zouden we ons moeten profileren?’, *Vice Versa* 37 (1), p. 4; Tjitske Lingsma, ‘Het breekbare bruggetje van succes’, *Vice Versa* 30 (4), pp. 12-13. Quote: Interview 261. (‘Maar niet meer vanuit het idee: We gaan het even oplossen. Dat was zo’n koloniaal idee. Bovendien neem je dan ook de functie van de staat over en zo dreigt die volledig uit te hollen.’)

There is a constant disparaging of practices from the past in order to defend whatever new approach happens to be invented.<sup>23</sup> In this light, it is remarkable that SNV has supported this research into its history and actively cooperated with the African Studies Centre in the writing of this book. What is presented here will hopefully contribute to a better understanding of the functioning of development organisations over time and inspire other development agents to investigate their own role, past and present, in society.

The constant dichotomy between a failing past and a successful present or future leads to a distorted institutional memory. At the same time, the rate of change is such that some people have accused organisations like SNV of suffering from structural amnesia. Fears were even expressed that this might be due to the narrow definition of the organisation's objectives and performance criteria. As these objectives and criteria are not even properly evaluated within the organisation, a balanced consideration of their historical role is entirely out of the question.<sup>24</sup>

Learning from the past may demand more than a simple condemnation of it. From the start, people working for SNV have attempted to do their best to further its aim. Many of them will admit that mistakes were made but this does not lessen their contribution to the organisation's history. To do justice to the past, it has to be treated with respect.

## Evaluations

In the course of its history, SNV has been under attack from many sides. From the left, the centre and the right, people have sharply criticised Dutch development policies, using SNV as an example. It has been claimed that development cooperation has not been effective at all and has merely led to 'cathedrals in the desert'.

In the 1970s, for example, the right-wing Dutch newspaper *De Telegraaf* launched a campaign to blacken SNV's image, stating that Dutch taxpayers' money was being wasted on useless projects. Although the journalist concerned later revised his opinion, such attacks occurred on a regular basis and SNV found itself increasingly in a defensive position.<sup>25</sup> Some critics even held that

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<sup>23</sup> Interview 290. ('SNV is een club die aan de ene kant niet wil geloven in het "ideale" recept voor ontwikkeling, maar constant denkt dat ze NU heel dicht in de buurt zijn van zo'n recept. Er is een constant afgeven op de praktijken uit verleden om te verdedigen wat er nu weer voor nieuws verzonnen is.')

<sup>24</sup> Interviews 3 and 9.

<sup>25</sup> Henk de Mari, 'Hulpstichting smijt al jaren met miljoenen', *De Telegraaf*, 3 May 1974; Henk de Mari, 'Pronk werpt zijn blaam op zijn voorgangers', *Ibid.* 14 May 1974; For a review, see J. van Tijn, 'Vrijwilligers. Tweede aanval op Claus mislukt.'

the effectiveness of Dutch development cooperation had never seriously been measured.<sup>26</sup> Such accusations cannot be sustained and, especially after the installation of the IOV (Policy and Operations Evaluation Department, later IOB) at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 1977, development cooperation became the Dutch government branch that was most extensively evaluated. In the course of its history, the IOB produced nearly 300 full-length evaluation reports on all areas of Dutch development cooperation. As van Beurden and Gewald pointed out, the problem was not so much the quantity and quality of the evaluative reports but more the interference of factors external to development cooperation, such as Dutch political rivalries and electoral gain. These external factors prevented those concerned from drawing any conclusions.<sup>27</sup>

Apart from outside critiques, SNVers themselves have also been critical of the organisation they were employed by. They often had high hopes and grand ideals before going overseas and were disappointed with the results of the projects they were involved in. Most SNV volunteers and professionals were people with a deep engagement in social and political affairs, and with initiative and strong opinions. After the first phases of SNV's history, they were usually well-educated and had considerable expertise in their field. It is small wonder then that many of them have been outspoken and critical of their own work and the functioning of SNV. On reading their interview reports, a striking number of the (former) SNVers we interviewed felt that their comments were too negative. Even when the report was a literal transcription of what they had said, several stated that they had intended to project a more positive image of SNV than the notes in fact presented. For all its faults and for all their criticism of it, they felt that, in general, SNV was a useful organisation that had employed many capable, interesting and positive people over the years. Showing commitment and frustration, irony and amusement, their reactions to their SNV experience cannot be reduced to a one-sided interpretation.

More cautious when voicing their opinions were those towards whom SNV's activities were directed. As will become clear in the following chapters, their evaluations were likewise not one-dimensional and offered a combination of praise, complaints, claims and hopes. Local participants/recipients often called for more development during the interviews but refrained from open critique as

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De vermakelijke geschiedenis van een Telegraaf-rel', *Vrij Nederland* 35 (18 May 1974); For a revised opinion, see Henk de Mari, 'Vrijwilligershulp steeds meer ten goede aan armsten', *De Telegraaf*, 9 April 1975.

<sup>26</sup> VVD MP Zsolt Szabo, Tweede-Kamerfractie, News announcement, 10 November 2004: [http://www.vvd.nl/nieuws/p\\_ni\\_li.asp?ItemID=40&ID=5923](http://www.vvd.nl/nieuws/p_ni_li.asp?ItemID=40&ID=5923).

<sup>27</sup> Jos van Beurden & Jan-Bart Gewald, *From output to outcome? 25 Years of IOB evaluations* (Amsterdam, 2004); Gewald, 'Ontwikkelingshulp faalt door onkunde', p. 9; Gewald, '40 Years SNV'.

they did not wish to antagonise the organisations that were supposed to support the process of development. While trying to unravel forty years of history, we spoke to many people who had worked with SNV in the past but were no longer in touch with the organisation. These people often praised SNV for its accomplishments but regretted that the relationship had ended and more had not been done to address their problems.

In the course of our research, we noticed that many people, in line with the genre conventions of writing about development, expected us to judge SNV's activities. However it was never our aim or intention to either condemn or praise SNV for its achievements. Our aim was to arrive at an interpretation of SNV's history and frame the ideals, hopes, expectations, frustrations and achievements of both local participants/recipients and SNV workers in their specific context. The purpose of this work is, therefore, to increase our understanding of what made so many Dutch people chose to go abroad and how both Dutch and national SNVers and the people they worked with viewed their relationship. All the same, SNV's history will not always appear in a positive light in this publication. One reason for this lies in the nature of historical interpretation. When interpreting history, there is an inherent tendency to focus on problematic issues and problems call for an explanation, far more so than projects that run smoothly. A second reason is related to the aim of this book. In studying the views of (former) SNVers and the people SNV worked with, we cannot but present their evaluations in full, relating their positive and their negative comments. As already stated, the strong character of many SNVers and the sometimes extreme conditions under which they had to work give their evaluations a more intense character than might have been the case in other organisations.

### Development as done

The lack of attention to the history of development cooperation to date is not restricted to SNV: few studies have dealt with past development work in general. While historical interpretations of development organisations are limited, much more discussion has been invested in the theoretical assumptions underlying the development concept. The emphasis here is on development discourse<sup>28</sup> and development in practice has been much less studied. Back in 1978, J.D.Y. Peel explained that the *Dependencia* critique of development in this sense had had a reverse effect. The centre dictated the course of events on

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<sup>28</sup> Cf. Monica van Beusekom & Dorothy L. Hodgson, 'Lessons learned? Development experiences in the late colonial period', *Journal of African History* 41 (2000), pp. 29-33.



the periphery, so studying the periphery seemed immaterial to an understanding of the power relations at stake.<sup>29</sup> This argument was reiterated in 2002: as the focus is on development ‘as a Western ideology, discourse, and set of institutions, the people who are to experience “development” disappear from view or become mere passive recipients of development-oriented technologies, knowledge, and institutional reforms’.<sup>30</sup>

The focus on discourse and the limited attention for development ‘as done’ has in turn strengthened the view of development as a hegemonic project designed in the West, and in this sense becoming a self-fulfilling prophecy. As we already saw, criticism of development policies from conservative, right-wing circles has generally focused on inefficiency and the perceived abuse of development money, without questioning the premises on which the development agenda was based. Critique from leftist milieus has, in its extreme form, held that development was colonialism by other means; a programme entirely designed by the West and imposed on developing countries and their people. Wolfgang Sachs, for example, summarised these power relations as follows: the age of development only ‘provided the cognitive base for both arrogant interventionism from the North and pathetic self-pity in the South’.<sup>31</sup>

These critical approaches to development have been essential in bringing to the fore the power relations and hierarchically framed discourses underlying the development paradigm.<sup>32</sup> Yet the interpretation of development as designed in the West has been shown to suffer from serious disadvantages. Frederick Cooper & Randall Packard hold that a first argument against this interpretation lies in the sphere of historical change. As the Chapter Two will show, there are many lines of continuity between the colonial period and the Development Era. However, as Cooper & Packard point out, there is little reason to conflate development and colonialism on these grounds as ‘development’, unlike ‘colonialism’, was a paradigm widely accepted not only in the West but also by nationalist elites and, eventually, by many ordinary people in developing countries. While the content of what development should entail has been viewed differently, ‘development’ was set as an ideal by both sides of the new developed/under-developed divide.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> J.D.Y. Peel, ‘Olaju: A Yoruba concept of development’, *Journal of Development Studies* 14 (1978), pp. 139-165.

<sup>30</sup> Monica van Beusekom, *Negotiating development. African farmers and colonial experts at the Office du Niger, 1920-1960* (Portsmouth, 2002), pp. 187-188.

<sup>31</sup> Sachs, ed., *The Development Dictionary*, p. 2.

<sup>32</sup> Van Beusekom, *Negotiating development*, pp. 187-188.

<sup>33</sup> Frederick Cooper & Randall Packard, ‘Introduction’. In: Frederick Cooper & Randall Packard, eds, *International development and the social sciences: Essays on the*

Frederick Cooper shows that calls for ‘development’ and ‘welfare’ policies followed after strikes in the West Indies and Africa in the 1930s and 1940s. Despite the spurious agenda behind the calls, which was largely meant to keep the world order stable, the conclusion must be that development policy and practice have, from the very start, been triggered by events in developing countries.<sup>34</sup> At present, international migrancy and security issues are being used as arguments in the debate about the effects of development.<sup>35</sup> A view that merely focuses on development as something imposed by the West reduces people in the South once again to being merely passive recipients who are unable to engage in any meaningful action.

If we look into development as it is being done instead of focusing on discourse and formal policy, the view of development as a purely hegemonic project designed by the West becomes untenable. Cooper & Packard’s book contains a contribution on Nepal in which it is aptly shown how development projects can be informed by local practices and ideas. These may come from villagers trying to put themselves on the development agenda as well as from political and intellectual elites for whom it is important to frame themselves in the global society. The projects thus become ‘a matter of simultaneous Nepalisation and globalisation’.<sup>36</sup>

In a similar vein, the editors of a special issue of the *Journal of African History* entitled ‘Lessons Learned. Development Experiences in the Late Colonial Period’ point out that development agendas cannot be viewed as hegemonic or unchanging: they have a history rooted in earlier experiences and practices, and are linked to both changes at the macro level and to ‘locally-specific configurations of power’.<sup>37</sup> In her contribution to the special edition as well as in her book *Negotiating Development*, Monica van Beusekom shows that there was a sharp discrepancy between policy and practice in the case of the colonial Office du Niger. While social evolutionary theory remained largely the same

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*history and politics of knowledge* (Berkeley/Los Angeles/London, 1997), pp. vii, viii.

<sup>34</sup> Frederick Cooper, ‘Modernizing bureaucrats, backward Africans, and the development concept’. In: Cooper & Packard, eds, *International Development and the Social Sciences*, pp. 66-67, 84.

<sup>35</sup> Mark Duffield, ‘Securing humans in a dangerous world: Exploring the links between development and internal war’, IDOGA Paper (Gent, 22 March 2005).

<sup>36</sup> Stacy Leigh Pigg, ‘Inventing social categories through place: Social representations and development in Nepal’, *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 34 (1992), p. 512; Stacy Leigh Pigg, “‘Found in most traditional societies’”: Traditional medical practitioners between culture and development’. In: Cooper & Packard, eds, *International development and the social sciences*, pp. 259-290.

<sup>37</sup> Van Beusekom & Hodgson, ‘Lessons learned?’, pp. 29-33.

over the years, changes took place in practice and a far more pragmatic approach was taken than the grandiose plans that the development officers proposed. This disjuncture between theory and practice was largely the consequence of local resistance and negotiation regarding development plans.<sup>38</sup>

It is clear then that the narrow focus on formal policies does not suffice for an understanding of the history of development organisations. The intentions and expectations of those concerned and the actual implementation of development work in the field not only form an integral part of SNV's history but may even be more constitutive of its past than formal policies.

### A socio-cultural history

This study hopes to provide a socio-cultural history of SNV and by using the term 'history' we want to make it clear that the focus is on the interpretation of change and continuity. Interpretations are never conclusive: they offer a proposal to allow one to view events in a specific relationship. Such a proposal is based on facts and data but the suggested relationship is not in the past: it is a construct of the historian. The aim cannot therefore be to write *the* history of the SNV, as if there was only one 'right' way of viewing SNV's past. We hope to contribute to the debate on the advantages and disadvantages of the proposals made to date in the realm of the history of development and to arrive at a better understanding of SNV's history in its socio-cultural context.

By using the term 'socio-cultural', we indicate that we are aiming at 'a history from below'. The emphasis will be on the changing perspectives of ordinary people rather than those of high-level politicians. Central to this study therefore are the perspectives of development workers as well as local participants in developing countries: their hopes, expectations, frustrations and evaluations. Focusing on perspectives, this research can be viewed as part of the tradition of the history of ideas or intellectual history, although probably less strongly oriented to the collective aspect of perspectives than is customary in these disciplines.

These perspectives often included aspects that fell outside the sphere of policy-making and formal decisions. With our informants, we share the conviction that such aspects had important consequences for SNV's past. In many cases, formal policies are not the most important factor determining development practice. 'Micro factors' such as personal character, relationships between people and problems in the private sphere frequently influence development

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<sup>38</sup> Monica van Beusekom, 'Disjunctures in theory and practice: Making sense of change in agricultural development at the Office of Niger, 1920-1960', *Journal of African History* 41 (2000), pp. 79-99; Van Beusekom, *Negotiating development*.

work significantly.<sup>39</sup> To a certain extent this holds true for all organisations and their structures and systems, which are after all designed by humans. Several factors can be noted, however, that contribute to a relatively high degree of influence of micro factors in development practice. Development practice brings together people of very different backgrounds in terms of nationality, education and social status. In this complex setting, different notions of development and poverty meet, and may conflict. Rather than viewing development as a Western instrument imposed on passive recipients, in this book Crehan and von Oppen's proposal to view development 'as a particular arena of interaction or struggle' is adopted.<sup>40</sup> On the ground, exchange and negotiation between agents with different interests, histories, cultures and views always change people's initial plans. This not only leads to the famous gap between policy and practice. Differences between expectation and outcome also exist for those for whom the development activities are meant. As long as poverty and deprivation continue, development may be seen by those for whom development activities are carried out as 'a promise that has not been fulfilled'.<sup>41</sup> The meeting point of people and concepts in development practice is not neutral ground: some people's views and actions carry more leverage than others. These power relations may stand in the way of the overall goal of development and this unease is an additional point affecting the importance of micro factors.

SNV as an organisation has attempted to mitigate the influence of personal, relational and local factors in the course of its history. Policies were designed to give coherence and structure to SNV activities, field offices functioned as a negotiating space between the field and head office, and the professionalisation process was to some extent meant to exclude the influence of 'micro' factors beyond SNV's control. Yet at the same time, the nature of SNV as an organisation enhanced the importance of such factors in some respects. Firstly there was the relatively decentralised character of SNV because for a long time SNV staff and volunteers could take many decisions and act as they deemed fit without consulting head office in The Hague. In addition, many SNV volunteers were employed within the framework of a local organisation as of the late 1960s and saw their allegiance as lying with this organisation rather than with SNV. SNV was viewed by some volunteers as an agency and an intermediary, and they

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<sup>39</sup> Fons van der Velden & Judith Zweers, 'Personele samenwerking. Beleid, resultaten en perspectieven'. In: Lieten & van der Velden, eds, *Grenzen aan de hulp*, p. 256.

<sup>40</sup> Kate Crehan & Achim von Oppen, eds, *Planners and history: Negotiating 'development' in rural Zambia* (Lusaka, 1994), p. 6.

<sup>41</sup> Pigg, "Found in most traditional societies". In: Cooper & Packard, eds, *International development and the social sciences*, p. 266.

identified more with the local organisation which they interacted with on a daily basis.

### Methodological consequences

Obviously, these remarks pose pertinent methodological problems. Apart from the difficulties in tracing such micro factors, their very nature makes them different for each individual. They can range from personal interest to local political factors, from family ties to housing circumstances, and from divorce to a problematic relationship with a direct superior. In this sense, representation becomes impossible: we lose sight of SNV as a starting point and the individual becomes central. Any socio-cultural history is then likely to have to balance anecdotal and historical narrative, and description and historical representation.

A focus on perspectives leads us away from formal policy: people's perspectives related to development in practice rather than to development as designed. This tendency is reinforced by the research direction that the term 'socio-cultural history' implies: a focus on social and cultural aspects of SNV's history is unlikely to produce a factual chronicle of the bureaucratic developments of SNV. While the daily bureaucracy at head office may hardly be part of the development world as experienced by practitioners and participants, the overall decisions, organisational structure and general changes become, whether people like it or not, part of their world. Sometimes without people knowing it, experiences in the field can inform decision-making in the policy sphere. A socio-cultural history should, therefore, attempt an interpretation that combines policy changes and practical experiences, developments in the field, the world of high-level politics and general trends.

This is no easy task, as combining factors in the realms of policy-making and organisational change with factors in the personal and local sphere is, to some extent, a contradictory enterprise. An institutional history of SNV presupposes interpreting those aspects that connect SNV's history in a certain epoch. By stressing these centripetal aspects, however, the general aspects of SNV's history are over-emphasised at the cost of the particular and the specific. In the search for historical lines that interlink SNV's past, the local practice of development inevitably loses out. A socio-cultural history should start from the local context: participants and development workers view the organisation from there. SNV had, in the past, offices in over forty-five countries but as it became a relatively decentralised organisation, each of these offices developed its own specific history and culture that was related to the country in which it was based. The influence of local conditions and changes cannot be underestimated. The histories carried out by commissioned researchers made this very clear. Marja Hinfelaar, for example, wrote:

This study is based on the assumption that international lending institutions and NGOs did not shape the history of Zambia, despite their strong influence on Zambia. Reasoning from within this premise, the history of SNV in Zambia ought to follow the socio-economic and political developments of Zambia.<sup>42</sup>

Here SNV is viewed from a country perspective and such a view can be further crystallised into regional, local and individual perspectives. It is at times difficult to combine interpreting the past 'from below' with historical explanation. Policy-makers have to make choices and do so after consideration, deliberation, exchange and debate. For people in the field, the arguments underlying the choices may be less evident. The views presented in this study therefore do not always explain the background of SNV policies but instead focus on how changes and decisions were received by the people who had to implement or deal with them.

### Questions and concepts

It is impossible to cover every aspect of SNV's history. As explained above, the aim here is to write a socio-cultural history and the term 'perspective' has been crucial in defining our research questions. This focus excludes many other possible research alleys. For example, relatively little will be said about relations between SNV and state politics, about financial aspects, and about SNV's bureaucratic history.

We also had to make a choice in geographical terms: it would not have been efficient or useful to try and study all the countries in which SNV has been active. Seven countries were chosen as case studies, although material from interviews and archival documents on other countries is included too. General criteria for selection were a considerable length of SNV activities and, for logistical reasons, a current SNV presence in the focus country. SNV has always been most active in African countries (see Appendix 3 and 4). Given the preponderance of African-based activities and the expertise within the African Studies Centre in Leiden, five countries in Africa were selected. In an effort to achieve geographical and linguistic diversity, the choice was finally made as follows: Guinea Bissau, Mali, Cameroon, Tanzania and Zambia. In Latin America and Asia, Bolivia and Nepal were selected. A commissioned local researcher conducted interviews in these countries, studied the archival material available and wrote an essay on SNV's history in the country concerned on the

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<sup>42</sup> Marja Hinfelaar, 'A history of SNV from a Zambian perspective, 1965-2005', (Unpublished manuscript, commissioned research report within the project framework 2006).

basis of what they had heard and read. These contributions furthered our research analysis.

Our central concern lies with changing perspectives. However to understand the perspectives of both (former) SNVers and local participants we need to study the central activities and concerns of SNV Netherlands Development Organisation and the ways in which these have changed over time. Mapping these changes through the eyes of those involved was important and the following research questions were identified:

- What were SNV employees' intentions and expectations, and how do they look back on their activities?
- What were the expectations of the communities in which SNV was active and how are SNV activities now evaluated by people from these communities?

This book is not an evaluation report and there is no list of recommendations in the conclusion. However the people concerned both within and outside SNV naturally expressed their opinions about development cooperation in general and SNV activities in particular. And so, in this sense, the results of SNV's activities are assessed and discussed.

Different words have, over the years, been used to describe the countries in which development cooperation has taken place. Starting off as 'less-developed territories' soon after World War II, they then came to be known as the 'Third World'. A clear disadvantage of this term is that it is closely related to the epoch of the Cold War when the First and the Second Worlds were at odds. It also suggests that part of the world's population do not inhabit 'our' world, but live in another world that is separate and unconnected. Another set of words is related to the word 'development' itself: developing countries, under-developed countries, under-developed world, etc. Here again, there are serious theoretical problems. As already mentioned, the concept of 'development' was borrowed from biology and refers to unilateral change in a specific direction; a series of stages with one fixed final stage. The idea that some countries are 'developing' suggests that other countries have already reached this final stage and need to experience no further development. Similarly, the word 'under-developed', that gained currency within the Dependence Theory, carries meanings in the realm of immaturity and backwardness. It is not for nothing that some scholars have decided that the term 'development' is analytically useless.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> Peter Kloos, 'Gewapend met kennis. Ontwikkelingssamenwerking en kennisontwikkeling'. In: Lieten & van der Velden, eds, *Grenzen aan de hulp*, pp. 319-325.

More recently ‘the South’ has gained ground as a term indicating the parts of the world to which development money and expertise are sent. This geographical division is, however, not correct. There are countries in the southern hemisphere that are donors rather than recipients and in the North some countries are still very poor, such as Albania, for example, where SNV is currently active. A solution is perhaps to simply speak of ‘poor countries’. After all, poverty is what development cooperation is all about but this suggests that everyone in these countries is equally poor and, while poverty may be more broadly defined, the notion of a poor country is unequivocally linked to economic issues. The conclusion has to be that all the terms used so far have their drawbacks. As the world is already plagued by clumsy neologisms, we will, for lack of a better term, use these concepts interchangeably, bearing all the critique in mind. The same holds for donor countries. These have largely been indicated by geographical notions – the West, the North and the North Atlantic – and these terms are also used in this volume despite their obvious shortcomings.

The history of the terms used for the people for whom development activities are meant is revealing in itself. Starting as ‘recipients’ or ‘beneficiaries of aid’ in the early phases of the Development Era, ‘target groups’ came to be used in the 1970s to indicate that it was not countries themselves but specific groups within countries that were the focus of activities. ‘Local people’ was also popular in development circles at the time but with an increase in the number of local personnel working for development organisations later on, the term lost its meaning. With its ongoing professionalisation, SNV has of late shifted from ‘partners’ to ‘end-user clients’. In this book the word ‘participant’ is used to indicate people’s involvement and agency in development activities.

## Sources

Given the limited amount of published literature dealing with the history of SNV, this book relies on archival sources and interviews for most of its arguments. Information was gathered by Anne-Lot Hoek and Inge Brinkman between February 2005 and September 2006. Much of the archival material was to be found in The Netherlands but before the project kicked off, it was decided that research would extend beyond just the Dutch context and include interviews and archival documentation in the focus countries.

A part of the SNV archives is housed at the SNV building itself but the majority is at the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Some other archives – such as KIT (Koninklijk Instituut voor de Tropen, Royal Tropical Institute), KDC (Katholiek Documentatie Centrum, Catholic Documentation Centre), PSO (Personele Samenwerking met Ontwikkelingslanden, Personnel Cooperation with Developing Countries, now PSO Capacity Building in Developing Coun-



tries) and IISG (Internationaal Instituut voor Sociale Geschiedenis, International Institute of Social History) – also have information about SNV’s past activities.

Archival material was found on visits the researchers made to Guinea Bissau, Mali, Cameroon, Tanzania, Zambia and Bolivia. A planned visit to Nepal had to be cancelled at the last minute due to the country’s internal political situation but archival material was fortunately received through the commissioned research in Nepal carried out by Kathinka Sinha-Kerkhoff in cooperation with Masoom Reza. It was striking what little care had been taken of the archival material in most countries and although some of the offices regularly send archival material to The Hague, it was obvious that much had been lost through neglect, moving offices, vermin, war and other negative conditions. As was made clear in a letter written from Nepal:

The conclusion is that the part that is stored in archival boxes is possibly infected with mould (the documents in the boxes are clammy to the touch). The part stored in files is filthy, dank and eaten away by rodents, probably mice.<sup>44</sup>

Marja Hinfelaar indicated a similar situation in Zambia:

(...) in some instances the SNV projects had long-standing effects that could only be noticed over a long period of time. It is therefore all the more astonishing to note that SNV does not keep a record of its long-term participation in Zambia. All documents quoted in this paper came from the Netherlands Embassy archives in Lusaka.

She attributes the neglect to the high turnover in personnel, the short contracts, a lack of accountability and the wish to present SNV as an organisation with a completely new approach and no links to the past.<sup>45</sup>

Access to the existing materials in most countries was readily provided and we and the commissioned researchers were assisted in retrieving the documents available. Only on occasion did problems arise; as in the case of Nepal: ‘(...) this material was made available only after Masoom’s display of stamina and through cooperation with the Nepalgunj office rather than that of the headquarters in Nepal’s capital Kathmandu’.<sup>46</sup>

The archival sources provide a wealth of data on SNV’s formal policies, bureaucratic changes and their political connections and offer insight into the views of ordinary SNVers and their daily lives. In letters sent from the field,

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<sup>44</sup> Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (hereafter ‘Foreign Affairs’), file 2013/00449, memo, Stef Buitendijk to SNV archive, 21 January 2003.

<sup>45</sup> Marja Hinfelaar, ‘A history of SNV from a Zambian perspective, 1965-2005’ (Unpublished manuscript, commissioned research report within the project framework 2006).

<sup>46</sup> Kathinka Sinha-Kerkhoff, ‘Development in the “Isolated Universe”, SNV in Nepal (1980-2005)’ (Unpublished manuscript, commissioned research report within the project framework 2006).

interim reports, advice on successors and other documents, personal views are expressed about working conditions, relations with local participants and SNV as an organisation. In this respect it is noteworthy that the archival material concerning the 1960s and 1970s is richer in detail than later material. The archival sources are less informative about local participants' perspectives. While reports and letters sometimes present the opinions of the people for whom development activities were meant, on the whole there is little information about local perspectives on SNV activities.

Through the interviews, we hoped to address this issue. We spoke with over a hundred people who had worked for SNV at one stage or another in their lives and some two hundred people who had been in touch with SNV as local participants or consultants (see section on interviews). Some forty interviews were held in The Netherlands but the majority of them were conducted on visits to the focus countries. These visits were facilitated by the SNV offices in the individual countries and they arranged transport, access to archives and contacts. These short but intensive visits did not allow for in-depth study of the country context or the building up of relationships of trust with interviewees. Often we were regarded as SNVers and people's evaluations were made in the light of this perception. It did not always prove easy to talk to people who had been participants on SNV projects in the past. People currently working in SNV offices in the focus countries frequently did not know many of the former participants: changes in policy had altered many relationships and because of the high staff turnover, many contacts had been lost. Some of the interviewees had been in contact with SNV in the 1980s and 1990s but tracing more of the participants from earlier periods would only have been possible if we had had more time. In its initial stages, SNV cooperated with very poor people in remote villages, and to establish contacts we depended not only on transport facilities but also on the village context. In this sense our endeavour may not have differed much from the experiences of many development planners. Local elites were often keen to be interviewed, seeking to strengthen their position as development brokers but, as always, the 'poorest of the poor' were hard to reach.<sup>47</sup>

On our visits to the focus countries, contacts were also established with the project's commissioned researchers. Their interaction with local participants was different from ours: they were in general not seen as SNV people and were familiar with the country's language, history and culture. In terms of establishing contacts though, they faced similar problems to those Anne-Lot and I did

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<sup>47</sup> Thomas Bierschenk, Jean-Pierre Chauveau & Jean-Pierre Olivier de Sardan, eds, *Courtiers en développement. Les villages africains en quête de projets* (Mainz/Paris, 2000).

and the emphasis of their interviews likewise tended to be on the later periods of SNV's history.

Despite this setback, we managed to gather a wealth of perspectives on SNV from local participants from very different backgrounds who had cooperated with SNV in all the different stages of its history, and from (former) SNVers who had worked for the organisation, often for a considerable period of time. The findings from the archives are combined in this publication with the interview material and the contributions from local researchers.

### The structure of this book

The chapters in this book offer a chronological interpretation of SNV's history and highlight several specific processes. The first was a move towards secularisation. In its initial phase, SNV's history was marked by tense but intensive relations between state and private initiatives (Chapter 3). The 1970s, however, saw a secularisation of development in a narrower sense: formal cooperation between private and state initiatives ended and in 1978 private organisations went their own ways. In the field too, SNV's connections with missionary and church development work ended in many regions; although these changes were more gradual (Chapter 4).

The second change was the professionalisation process. The young men and women who went overseas in the 1960s and 1970s were all volunteers but in the 1980s it was decided to start recruiting salaried personnel instead. The average age of SNVers rose and most now had a university education (Chapter 5). These changes in social profile had huge consequences for SNV's interaction with local people.


The third process has been the organisation's struggle for independence. In the past, SNV had a peculiar relationship with the state. It started off as a state organisation, later became a quango (quasi NGO) (Chapter 5) and since 2002 has formally been an independent organisation (Chapter 6). Its changing relationship with the state, showing a tendency towards increased independence, continues to this day.

The fourth process can be identified as 'internationalisation'. SNV started as a Dutch initiative and originally all its staff and volunteers were Dutch and its projects and policies were designed in The Netherlands. Slowly, however, more attention was given to the wishes and needs of local participants and a process of decentralisation reduced the importance of the head office in The Hague. In the 1990s, an increasing percentage of SNV's in-country personnel were nationals and English was adopted as the organisation's official language of communication (Chapter 6). These internationalising factors were noticed by everyone involved with SNV.

Woven through these processes of change, shifting approaches to development can also be discerned. Projects in the 1960s focused on practical community development, while the emphasis shifted in the 1970s to appropriate technologies, a basic needs approach and an awareness-raising programme in The Netherlands. The second half of the 1980s saw a move towards the management of larger programmes; a process that continued throughout the 1990s. The process approach was adopted in the early 1990s, while at the same time women's issues (later 'gender') and the environment became important development themes. SNV has since abandoned its project approach and stopped meting out financial support. Instead, it now concentrates on giving advice to meso-level organisations.

Some of these changes were closely related to development in practice. It would be limiting to see them only in terms of consequences as the changes were, at least in many cases, partly initiated as a result of SNV's experiences in practice. The relationship between development theory, policy and practice are therefore better denoted by the term 'interaction' than by being interpreted in purely causal terms. SNVers and local participants not only 'do' development within the limits set and the possibilities offered by SNV as an organisation; they also in part create future limits and possibilities.

All these changes are spelt out in detail in the following chapters. First however, we need to look into the historical connections between SNV and the periods prior to its foundation. The next chapter discusses how the novelty of the so-called Development Era should not be overstated and considers the links between development and colonial and missionary work.

KONINKLIJK INSTITUUT VOOR DE TROPEN, AMSTERDAM		Code
Land:	TANZANIA.	2
Omschrijving:	Dar-es-Salaam. Medewerker in een messenfabriek, mne maakt hier van oud ijzer weer nieuwe messen.	
	Neg. 6x6	
	DPA. 15.	
	Diap.	
	Afk.	S. N. V.
	Datum opn. 1976	Datum ontv. 1977
Bijzonderheden		

*Photo 1.2* Making new knives from old iron, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, 1976.  
*Source:* SNV photo archives, White, Tanzania, Technische instructie.  
*Photographer:* Unknown.

## Merchants and ministers: Understanding SNV's background

An understanding of the context in which SNV came into existence takes us back into the past. Usually 'development' is associated with the period after World War II but a number of studies point to the importance of historicising development practices on a scale of *longue durée*. In all the colonies, state and missionary projects were implemented, even in the nineteenth century, to improve the 'state of being of the natives' and protect the environment. These colonial betterment schemes, development programmes and missionary activities in the fields of health, education and technological innovation may have been very different in nature from the projects envisaged in the Development Era. Yet their planning and implementation means that the post-war Development Era cannot be viewed as a new phenomenon without historical antecedents, a kind of *deus ex machina*. As Monica van Beusekom & Dorothy Hodgson pointed out:

(...) development had been a central feature of encounters between the West and Africa since at least the early twentieth century, so that by the 1950s, all parties involved in the encounter had substantial experience of its policies and practices.<sup>1</sup>

It is from within such reasoning that this chapter will not only tell the story of Dutch post-war involvement in the development enterprise but starts with colonial and missionary development experiences from earlier times. This will frame SNV in a historical context of colonial and post-colonial, national and international development experiences. Developmental activities were not in-

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<sup>1</sup> Van Beusekom & Hodgson, 'Lessons learned?', *Journal of African History* 41 (2000), p. 29.

vented after World War II but are part of a long-standing past of missionary activities in social welfare and betterment policies by the colonial state. It was with these two crucial traditions that SNV started out.

### ‘Christianity, civilisation and commerce’

‘Christianity, civilisation and commerce’ formed the motto of Livingstone’s travels.<sup>2</sup> Christian missionaries travelling in Africa, Asia and Latin America in the nineteenth century were not only evangelists and tradesmen but saw it as their task to lead the people out of darkness and bring them ‘civilisation’. This emphasis on enlightenment was, from the start, related to technological innovation, educational facilities and medical services. In many cases, the missionaries had no choice but to enter into these fields. As Peel explains for the Yoruba:

The early missionaries could only operate as the clients of powerful kings and chiefs, with whom they sought to ingratiate themselves by offering a range of technical, medical and clerical services.<sup>3</sup>

For missionaries, these services were a means of reaching their ultimate goal of creating a Christian community where there had not been one before. The missionary K.G. Cameron, for example, stated: ‘Medicine [is] (...) a handmaid to the Gospel’.<sup>4</sup> Evangelisation remained the most important objective and the teaching of new skills, such as writing, carpentry and sewing, as well as supplying services in the field of health were the tools the missionaries operated with to achieve their religious mission.

Yet precisely because the missionaries linked ‘civilisation’ with their particular view of modernity, Christianity came to be seen as being related to missionary schools, hospitals and workshops. Through these various activities, the missions might grow into famous centres with a widespread reputation over large areas. Becoming a Christian was not merely a matter of baptism; it entailed adopting a new and modern way of life that involved new ideas and practices in hygiene, clothing, architecture, agriculture, trade, labour and education. It is no coincidence that *olaju*, the Yoruba word for ‘improvement and progress’, links Christian ‘enlightenment’ and missionaries ‘bringing light into the darkness’ to the ‘modernity’ of development.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Thomas Pakenham, *The scramble for Africa 1876-1912* (London, 1991), pp. 1, 254.

<sup>3</sup> Peel, ‘Olaju’, *Journal of Development Studies* 14 (1978), p. 147.

<sup>4</sup> Quoted. In: Jean & John L. Comaroff, *Of revelation and revolution. Volume II: The dialectics of modernity on a South-African frontier* (Chicago/London, 1997), p. 333.

<sup>5</sup> J.D.Y. Peel, *Religious encounter and the making of the Yoruba* (Bloomington, 2000), pp. 169, 243, 317.

The emphasis gradually shifted from evangelisation to social work. Missionaries like Albert Schweitzer, who arrived in Africa well after the first large-scale establishment of mission stations, were Christian-inspired but their primary goal was no longer the conversion of heathens but, in his case, the provision of health care.<sup>6</sup>

The Netherlands was no exception to this general outline. Dutch Protestant as well as Roman Catholic churches sent large numbers of missionaries abroad and there were several centres in The Netherlands where Catholic priests and Protestant missionaries were trained to work in overseas territories. Throughout the twentieth century, the traditional stress on conversion remained important but the missionaries' role in poverty relief, education, health, transport, handicraft training and other matters went hand in hand with their religious mission. Initially the emphasis of the Dutch missions was on Indonesia and most of the various denominations' work in the archipelago was in education, health and other social areas and predated any state activity in these spheres.

### The white man's burden

Colonialism started with the economic interests of the European motherlands in mind; the aim being to open up new areas, find and create new markets, explore natural riches and gain access to labour reserves. Even so, arguments were sought to justify this as being beneficial for those being colonised. The General Act of the infamous Conference of Berlin, which partitioned Africa among Europe's imperial powers, argued that colonial rule and 'promotion of the native races' should go hand in hand:

All the Powers exercising sovereign rights or influence in the aforesaid territories bind themselves to watch over the preservation of the native tribes, and to care for the improvement of the conditions of their moral and material well-being, and to help in suppressing slavery, and especially the Slave Trade. They shall, without distinction of creed or nation, protect and favour all religious, scientific, or charitable institutions, and undertakings created and organized for the above ends, or which aim at instructing the natives and bringing home to them the blessings of civilization.<sup>7</sup>

The 'White Man's Burden', originally coined to refer to the costs of American colonisation of the Philippines, came to be seen as the ultimate defence of colonialism: The colonial powers were to ensure improved living conditions in

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<sup>6</sup> John Iliffe, *The African poor: A history* (Cambridge, 1987), p. 195.

<sup>7</sup> General Act, Conference of Berlin 1885, quoted in: Barbara Harlow & Mia Carter, eds, *Archives of Empire. Vol II. The scramble for Africa* (Durham, 2003), p. 31. Cf. Pakenham, *The scramble for Africa*, pp. 254-255.



the colonies. Such justification for empire not only came to be used in connection with British colonial rule; the French with their *mission civilisatrice* (civilising mission) and the Portuguese with their *assimilado* status used similar arguments for their colonial enterprises too. At the beginning of the colonial era, ‘development’ was mostly used to denote the process of opening up regions to the world market and rendering them economically profitable,<sup>8</sup> while state projects designed to improve the living conditions of the colonised tended to be caught up in terms like ‘welfare’, ‘betterment’, ‘progress’ or other similar concepts. At a later stage, the meaning of the notion ‘development’ shifted closer to these latter concepts. In any case, the justification for the colonial system rested to a large extent on ‘development’ arguments.

From 1900 onwards, an ethical policy (*ethische politiek*) was introduced in the Dutch colony of Indonesia aimed at the emancipation of the colonised population. As Weber, Kreisel & Faust pointed out:

The ethical policy was conceived as *development aid* for the native population, while the *Gidslandgedachte*, the concept of a guidance nation, was linked to a Dutch desire to lead the way in terms of a European ethical policy.<sup>9</sup>

Following criticism of the brutalities of the colonial system, notably after the publication of an article entitled ‘*Een eereschuld*’ (A Debt of Honour) in 1899, the Dutch ethical policy was introduced to increase the welfare of the ‘native’ population through irrigation, emigration and education. In the programme’s irrigation component, many of the projects in the field of agriculture, water and credit facilities were realised, while the emigration part was intended to reduce over-population on Java and create a labour pool in other areas. In the educational sphere, village schools as well as higher educational facilities were started. The introduction of the ethical policy went hand in hand with a new health programme and an increased (but still limited) influence of Indonesians within the Dutch colonial government. Despite these aims, the living standards of Indonesians did not increase between 1900 and 1940. The colonial state failed to bridge the gap between the growing inequalities between profitable companies and the impoverished ‘natives’.<sup>10</sup> Within the framework of this book,

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<sup>8</sup> Cf. Michael Havinden & David Meredith, *Colonialism and development: Britain and its tropical colonies, 1850-1960* (London, 1993).

<sup>9</sup> Robert Weber, Werner Kreisel & Heiko Faust, ‘Colonial Interventions on the Cultural Landscape of Central Sulawesi by “Ethical Policy”’: The Impact of the Dutch Rule in Palu and Kulawi Valley, 1905-1942’, *Asian Journal of Social Science* 31 (3), p. 409, referring to Steven Wedema, ‘*Ethiek*’ und Macht; die niederländisch-indische Kolonialverwaltung und Indonesiens Emanzipationsbestrebungen, 1901-1927 (Stuttgart, 1998), p. 18.

<sup>10</sup> Humphrey de la Croix *et al.*, ‘*Indië herinnerd en beschouwd.*’ *Sociale geschiedenis van een kolonie (1930-1957)* (Nijmegen, 1997), pp. 43-46.

it is impossible for us to offer an interpretation of the complex causes of the failure of the colonial betterment schemes before World War II. It is important, however, to realise that, both in the colonies and in their (former) motherland, people were familiar with state projects aimed at development, progress, welfare, betterment or similar concepts. Claims to development were important throughout the colonial era. Prior experiences and failures at this time informed the initiatives, decisions, activities and reactions in the field of development of people from the developed world and those in developing nations after World War II.

Official development discourse later upheld strong divisions between colonialism and development but many local people saw development interventions in the light of earlier experiences in the colonial era. An example given by Donald Moore is the Zimbabwean post-colonial state policy for resettlement in the Kaerezi Resettlement Scheme that was implemented in the early 1990s. The programme was based directly on colonial plans for removal and resettlement that had been designed in the 1930s. The resistance of the area's population was seen by state officials as 'antagonistic to development activities' but the people concerned interpreted it differently:

The administrator used the English term *villages* to describe the linear grids (...) Most Kaerezians called these empty spaces simply *the lines*, the same term used for colonial land use plans that had forced Africans into linear settlement grids separated from fields and pastures.

Kaerezi people evaluated the development policies of the post-colonial government in the light of their experiences during the colonial era.<sup>11</sup> This illustrates the influence of the historical context of development on post-colonial policies and practices.

### The development era: Change and continuity

In many interpretations of development, Harry Truman's 1949 inaugural address, in which he unfolded plans for a new programme, is taken as the starting-point:

We must embark on a bold new program for making the benefits of our scientific advances and industrial progress available for the improvement and growth of under-developed areas. (...) The old imperialism – exploitation for foreign profit –

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<sup>11</sup> Donald S. Moore, 'The crucible of cultural politics: Reworking "Development" in Zimbabwe's eastern highlands', *American Ethnologist* 26 (3), pp. 654-689 (quotes pp. 666, 654).

has no place in our plans. What we envisage is a program of development based on the concepts of democratic fair-dealing.<sup>12</sup>

This Point Four Program, as it was later called, was presented as a break with the past as Truman referred to a dichotomy between the ‘old imperialism’ and his own ‘bold new program’. This was also implied in a new set of words that came into being. Henceforth the world would no longer be divided into ‘civilised’ and ‘primitive’ areas, into ‘heathen’ and ‘Christian’ people or into ‘colonies’ and ‘motherlands’. The new terms of discussion were to be ‘developed’ and ‘under-developed’. Many authors view the post-war period as the start of a new paradigm and Truman’s speech is seen as marking the beginning of the new Development Era.

The post-war Development Era differed from the development and welfare activities that had been in vogue before it in a number of respects. Apart from the geo-political shift from motherlands/colonies to a developed/under-developed world, the growth of a huge development industry – with its institutions, bureaucracies, particular linguistic categories and flows of people, goods and money – is a major feature of post-war history. Cooper & Packard argued that, unlike the word colonialism, development as a concept garnered much support in the colonies. Not only in the West but also among nationalist elites and the population of newly independent states, development evoked the promise of a better life.<sup>13</sup>

Despite these differences, the current image of development superseding colonialism is false for a number of reasons. Long before Truman ever gave his speech there was, as already explained, a history of colonial and missionary projects aimed at development and welfare. In addition, many countries continued to be colonised for decades after World War II. And finally, motives in the former motherland for joining the new development programme were often related to the colonial experience. In other words, the Development Era showed both changes and continuities in relation to the earlier development activities of the colonial state and the missions.

Truman’s speech reflected other processes that were already taking place in the international sphere and his ideas did not come out of the blue as such. Steps were taken at the United Nations to organise development institutes aimed at multilateral cooperation and, after the Bretton Woods Accords of 1944, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund were set up to regulate international trade and financial exchange.

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<sup>12</sup> Quoted in: Gilbert Rist, *The history of development from Western origins to global faith* (London/New York, 2002), pp. 259-260.

<sup>13</sup> Cooper & Packard, eds, *International development and the social sciences*, p. 1.

## Late colonialism and development

Colonialism and the new Development Era were contemporaries for a considerable time, especially in Africa. Many countries only became independent in the early 1960s, more than ten years after Truman's speech, and it was not until the 1970s that independence was finally obtained in the Portuguese colonies.

In the period in which colonialism and the Development Era overlapped, the colonial states were very active in the field of development. It should be noted that the impetus for increased engagement in development projects came from events within the colonies. Before World War II, activities in the development sphere had been largely left to missionaries but a wave of strikes in the 1930s in the West Indies and Africa led to an increased awareness of dissatisfaction in the colonies and the limited support for colonial governments. The British Colonial Secretary stated:

(...) if we are not now going to do something fairly good for the Colonial Empire, and something which helps them to get proper social services, we shall deserve to lose the colonies and it will only be a matter of time before we get what we deserve.<sup>14</sup>

It was the Colonial Development and Welfare Act of 1940, perhaps more so than Truman's speech, that led to a number of large-scale projects aimed at promoting well-being and welfare in the British territories. In the French colonies, the creation of FIDES (*Fonds d'Investissement pour le Développement Économique et Social*) in 1946 and FERDES (*Fonds d'Équipement et de Recherche pour le Développement Économique et Social*) in 1949, opened up new possibilities for the French colonial government to start development activities.<sup>15</sup> The Portuguese were to join the modern development approach much later and focused on settlement schemes in the context of nationalist warfare.

The late-colonial projects seemed purely technical but the underlying aims were politically expedient – justifying imperial rule and increasing colonial control – as well economic. It was hoped that development would benefit both the colonial and the motherland economies. The direct reactions to the strikes of the 1930s focused on redressing the behaviour of juvenile delinquents in the colonial towns through social welfare programmes. By the end of the 1940s however, the emphasis came to lie in Community Development, a model from which the entire population was to benefit and not only specific groups within society. The aim was to stimulate the economic development of the rural ma-

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<sup>14</sup> Quoted in: Frederick Cooper, 'Modernizing bureaucrats, backward Africans, and the development concept'. In: Cooper & Packard, eds, *International development and the social sciences*, pp. 66-67.

<sup>15</sup> Van Beusekom, *Negotiating development*, p. xxvi.

jority, although the approach did not intend to protect the poorest or most vulnerable in society but raise levels of wealth, health and education in a community. Mass education, instead of the earlier clerical education aimed at only a few, was regarded as one of the means to achieve this, while at the same time the active participation of the community was sought. Community Development was described as:

A movement designed to promote better living for the whole community with the active participation, and, if possible, on the initiative of the community, but if this initiative is not forthcoming spontaneously, by the use of techniques for arousing and stimulating it in order to secure its active and enthusiastic response to the movement.<sup>16</sup>

In the course of the 1950s, support for colonial rule and development waned: the costs were considered too high and, with so many projects failing, attempts at development were leading to more criticism of colonial rule than to a sense of justification.<sup>17</sup>

This critique, however, only came with hindsight. At the time, many colonial officers were convinced that the new development and welfare approach would bring prosperity and well-being to the colonised populations. And many future nationalists then saw the future within the structures of colonialism *and* development, rather than opposing the terms. Numerous cases testify to this. An example is the first president of Zambia, Kenneth Kaunda, who was deeply involved in development and progress activities within the colonial structures in the 1950s.<sup>18</sup> While Cooper & Packard's argument about general support for the concept of development still holds water, the concept did not, as they suggested, initially stand against colonialism.

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<sup>16</sup> Iliffe, *The African poor*, pp. 201-207; F. van Dam, 'Mode in ontwikkelingsvraagstuk', *Economisch-Statistische Berichten* 17 (5), pp. 496-500. David Brokensha & Peter Hodge, *Community development: An interpretation* (San Francisco, 1969), pp. 25-45 (Quote: p. 34, referring to Colonial Office, *Social development in the British colonial territories* (London, 1954), Appendix D, p. 49).

<sup>17</sup> Dorothy L. Hodgson, 'Taking stock: State control, ethnic identity and pastoralist development in Tanganyika, 1948-1958', *Journal of African History* 41 (2000), pp. 75-77.

<sup>18</sup> Marja Hinfelaar, 'A history of SNV from a Zambian perspective, 1965-2005' (Unpublished manuscript, commissioned research report within the project framework 2006), referring to Henrietta L. Moore & Megan Vaughan, *Cutting down trees. Gender, nutrition, and agricultural change in the Northern Province of Zambia, 1890-1990* (Portsmouth/London/Lusaka, 1994), p. 113.

### The Dutch case

In the Dutch case, the overlap between colonialism and the Development Era was limited as its historically important colony of Indonesia became independent in 1949. The New Guinea affair, however, came to play a significant role in Dutch involvement in the new development programme. New Guinea had been part of the Dutch East Indies but, unlike Indonesia, remained under Dutch rule. As the Indonesian government felt it should become part of Indonesia, the 1950s were characterised by increasing tensions between Indonesia and The Netherlands. In 1962, the situation nearly escalated into a fully fledged war when Dutch military activity was at its height and Indonesia threatened to invade New Guinea. Amid strong international pressure, The Netherlands gave up Dutch control over the colony in 1962 and New Guinea became part of Indonesia under the name of Irian Jaya in 1963.

While most attention in the literature is given to the military and diplomatic aspects of the affair, post-war Dutch experiences in New Guinea involved many activities in the field of development. Jos van Gennip, who started his career in development in the 1960s, was on the SNV Board in the 1970s and has always been regarded as one of the most influential people in Dutch development policy,<sup>19</sup> explained it as follows:

(W)e can of course only understand Dutch development aid – and we are speaking here of the period 1963-1967 – in the light of our colonial history. In 1959-1960 we were in the midst of the New Guinea conflict. ‘We’ll roll up our sleeves and develop the country enormously.’ So we sent colonial officers by the tens, by the hundreds to New Guinea. They would all develop the people there. (...)

The father of the current Minister of Foreign Affairs was State Secretary for New Guinea. Theo Bot saw the country develop and develop. But our foreign policy failed and we had to let go of New Guinea – it was an act of free choice. And in the midst of this difficult process, Father Bot says: ‘You dear colonial officer, you receive my guarantee that you will have a job when you get back to The Netherlands’. So all of a sudden these officials formed the heart of the Ministry for Development Affairs at Foreign Affairs!

It was nicely contiguous: We started with development aid, while our role in New Guinea was reduced. But with it, I also had a big problem, almost up until today. Because these people had a certain idea about development: It was top-down: one would develop from the capital, from the government, from the state.<sup>20</sup>

<sup>19</sup> Frans Bieckmann & Roeland Muskens, ‘De top tien. Macht en invloed op het ontwikkelingsbeleid’, *Vice Versa* 38 (4), pp. 10-13.

<sup>20</sup> Interview 242. (‘... wij kunnen Nederlandse ontwikkelingshulp natuurlijk alleen maar begrijpen – we spreken dan van de periode ‘63/’67 – in het licht van onze koloniale geschiedenis. Wij zaten in 1959, 1960 midden in het Nieuw-Guinea conflict. ‘Wij gaan de mouwen eens opstropen en we gaan het land geweldig ontwikkelen.’

Most of the initial Dutch experiences in the new development programme thus came from within the colonial context of New Guinea. And these mirrored the tide of the time: Late-colonial paternalism and a top-down development approach went hand in hand.

Experiences with development activities in the late-colonial period not only had a bearing on motherland policies. For many people in the former colonies, the new brand of whites that came seemed hardly any different from their predecessors. When SNV volunteers arrived in Zambia, they replaced the colonial teachers and nurses who had lost their jobs at independence. The volunteers soon realised that their presence was unlikely to be interpreted differently from that of the white colonial settlers, many of whom were still there. As Meindert Witvliet, who worked as an SNV volunteer in Zambia in the late 1960s, explained:

For the Zambians there was no difference between us SNVers and the former colonials. When you arrive as a young bloke, driving a large Land Rover and being able to buy anything you want (...) You could do anything and have somebody cook and wash for you, then it does not matter for the local population who you are. They would look at us like: ‘Oh, there’s that white guy’. You shouldn’t have the illusion that they regarded us any differently than the white farmers, not really.<sup>21</sup>

In many newly independent states there was an interest in forging new links or extending old networks with the Western world. Attempts were made to overcome the immediate association between white people and colonialism. For

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Dus toen hebben we tientallen, honderden bestuursambtenaren naar Nieuw-Guinea gestuurd, die gingen daar allemaal het volk ontwikkelen (...) De vader van de huidige minister van Buitenlandse Zaken was staatssecretaris van Nieuw-Guinea. Theo Bot, die ziet dat land ontwikkelen en ontwikkelen. Maar onze buitenlandse politiek loopt mis en wij moesten Nieuw-Guinea afstaan – *act of free choice*. En dan zegt hij in dat moeilijke proces, pa Bot: ‘U, beste ambtenaar in Nieuw-Guinea, u krijgt van mij de garantie dat u hier in Nederland in dienst wordt genomen.’ Dus die ambtenaren hadden opeens de kern van het ministerie voor de diensten van ontwikkelings-samenwerking op BZ. Dat sloot dus lekker aan: we begonnen met ontwikkelings-hulp en we bouwden Nieuw-Guinea af. Daarmee zat ik ook met een geweldig probleem, tot op de dag van vandaag bijna, dat die mensen een bepaalde blik hadden op ontwikkeling, dat was top down. Ontwikkelen deed je vanuit de hoofdstad, dat deed je vanuit de overheid, vanuit de staat.’)

<sup>21</sup> Interview 13. (‘Voor de Zambianen was er geen verschil tussen ons als SNV’ers en de oud-kolonialen. Als je daar als jong broekje komt en je rijdt in een dikke land-rover en kan alles kopen wat je wilt (...) Je kon alles doen en je hebt iemand die je eten en je was doet, maakt het voor die bevolking niets uit wie je bent. Die keken naar ons van: ‘Oh daar heb je die blanke’. Je moet niet de illusie hebben dat ze anders tegen ons aankeken dan tegen die blanke boeren, echt niet.’)

example, in Guinea Bissau, the Dutch volunteers were to become a counterpoise to the old image of the Portuguese colonialists.<sup>22</sup>

### Colonial motives

Truman's speech suggested a clear break between colonialism and the Development Era, but the links between colonialism and development were multifarious and complex. The initial phase of Dutch development aid has also been described as: 'The twilight zone between colonial policy and the formulation of a new policy'.<sup>23</sup> At the time, these links were often not regarded as shameful or negative, as a document prepared for the JVC confirms.

It would lead us too far to give an extensive analysis of the manifold activities undertaken over the years that were aimed at the development of the population of non-Western territories.

We may think of the influence that colonial administrations had on education, health services, agricultural development, and village as well as regional organisation; the initially parallel running work of the Protestant and Catholic missions, in recent years ever more developed and adapted also to the material needs of the local population; the influence of the – not always purely altruistically motivated – bilateral technical aid and investments, and aid programmes in the industrial sector, often accompanied by local possibilities for training, and, finally, the international, multi-lateral aid, as meted out by the UN and its special organisations.<sup>24</sup>

Post-war Dutch motives for participating in development aid were closely related to the country's colonial history and there was initially little interest in development aid within Dutch political circles: most of the initiatives that there were originated in ex-colonial circles. These people were eager to re-enter the Indonesian context through the new development programme, although their attempts fell short in Indonesia's new political order. The job opportunities within the new sector of development aid were an important reason for them to push for the new programme, while at the same time their experiences in the Overseas Territories had created a sharp awareness of poverty and a concern for 'progress' and 'welfare' among many of them. Hence their motives, mirroring the Dutch 'Merchant and Minister' principle (*koopman en dominee*), were a

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<sup>22</sup> Raul Mendes Fernandes, 'Les 40 ans de SNV en Guinée-Bissau' (Unpublished manuscript, commissioned research report within the project framework 2006).

<sup>23</sup> Paul Hoebink, *Geven is nemen: De Nederlandse ontwikkelingshulp aan Tanzania en Sri Lanka* (Nijmegen, 1988), p. 47.

<sup>24</sup> P. Kruithof, 'Samenvatting en conclusies, naar aanleiding van het onderzoek – in opdracht van de NJG – naar activiteiten en mogelijkheden op het gebied van internationaal hulpbetoon vanuit Nederland t.o.v. de ontwikkelingsgebieden' (Amsterdam, 1962), p. 3, in: Private archival documents, Prof. Frans A.M. Alting von Geusau. With kind acknowledgements to Prof. Alting von Geusau.



mixture of self-interest and engagement. They criticised the UN's technocratic approach, holding that this purely economic and result-oriented paradigm did not take the specific nature of developing countries into account.<sup>25</sup>

At the diplomatic level, the new development approach was largely regarded in instrumental terms: Dutch money for development was meant to improve Dutch-Indonesian relations and job opportunities presented a motive for supporting development initiatives. After Indonesia gained independence, many Dutch people living there returned to The Netherlands, as did colonial officers, young men attending the Colonial Institute and people who had been working in the sugar, coffee, tea and tobacco sectors when Dutch control over New Guinea ended in 1962. In total, some 250,000 people returned to The Netherlands between 1945 and 1962. Among them were many tropical experts whose knowledge, it was felt, could be used in the new Dutch development programme.<sup>26</sup> However, with many of its colonies gone, job opportunities for young Dutch people in the tropics were limited.

Dutch motives for joining the development programme were largely similar to those of France and the UK in the sense that the prime consideration of The Netherlands was its international profile. For these other two countries, relations between development and colonialism were stronger as most of the French and British territories only became independent in the 1960s. In the UK, the role of domestic charity organisations was greater than in the Netherlands, while in France political motives concerning French prestige and the counterbalancing of growing US hegemony were important. American motives centred on diplomatic ties and geo-political strategies in the context of the Cold War. Anti-communist feelings only played a limited role in Dutch motives for engaging in development aid and these were far less important than the wish to preserve its colonial legacy.

### Post-war missions

The missions and Christian organisations were affected by the post-war trends in international development and these proved to be a major influence on developments. Christianity was a principal dynamic in politics in any case and the Church was a power to be reckoned with. This was certainly the case in The Netherlands. Dutch society in the 1950s was divided into pillars: Protestants,

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<sup>25</sup> J.J.P. de Jong, 'Onder ethisch insigne. De origine van de Nederlandse ontwikkelingssamenwerking'. In: J.A. Nekkers & P.A.M. Malcontent, eds, *De geschiedenis van vijftig jaar Nederlandse ontwikkelingssamenwerking, 1949-1999* (The Hague, 1999), pp. 61-81.

<sup>26</sup> F.H. Peters, 'Van de nood een deugd. Technische hulp na de dekolonisatie'. In: Nekkers & Malcontent, eds, *De geschiedenis*, pp. 91-92.

Catholics, socialists and liberals, each with its own social, cultural and political institutions and organisations. Christian denominations (Roman Catholics and the different Protestant churches) thus formed an important basis of political constituency, and church influence on Dutch politics was significant.

The emphasis on social work in missionary circles grew after World War II. In the UK in particular, locally active charity organisations, mostly with a Christian background, developed into international organisations and later were important in the new NGO sector that emerged.<sup>27</sup>

In the Dutch context, the various missions also started interpreting their activities in the light of 'development'. While Philip Quarles von Ufford and Hans Tennekes saw a change towards 'secularisation' in the Christian message in the 1970s, social development, rather than conversion, was already being emphasised. In feedback to their home audience, Dutch missionaries increasingly focused on their role in health care, education, poverty relief and vocational training. While earlier missionary propaganda had stressed the importance of faith, post-war missionary messages from developing countries concentrated more on progress and development.<sup>28</sup>

Initially the focus of Dutch missionary activities had been on the Dutch colonies but after World War II, both the Protestant and Roman Catholic missions began to diversify and missionaries started to be stationed in countries in Africa, Latin America and Asia that had never been part of the Dutch empire.

Dutch church communities at home took a keen interest in missionary activities: Weekly collections for the mission were organised and the circulars sent from abroad were read by church members. In fact, many of the first SNV volunteers initially learnt about development work through church channels.<sup>29</sup>

## Merchants and ministers

The historical legacy of a nation of merchants and ministers (*Koopman en Dominee*) or, to put in other words, of capitalists and Calvinists, came to play a role in Dutch development aid. In the early days of development aid, self-interest was expressed shamelessly: Prime Minister Drees argued in 1953 that technical assistance 'was of importance to the whole world, but above all to The

<sup>27</sup> Ondine Barrow & Michael Jennings, eds, *The charitable impulse: NGOs and development in East and North-East Africa* (Oxford/Bloomfield, 2001), pp. 8-19.

<sup>28</sup> Philip Quarles van Ufford, 'Cycles of concern. Dutch reformed mission in central Java, 1896-1970'. In: Philip Quarles van Ufford & Matthew Schoffeleers, eds, *Religion and development. Towards an integrated approach* (Amsterdam, 1988), pp. 73-94; Hans Tennekes, 'Religion and power: Modernization processes in Dutch protestantism', in: *Ibid.*, pp. 31-52.

<sup>29</sup> Interviews 18, 63, 120 and 113.

Netherlands'.<sup>30</sup> Economic gain and diplomatic relations certainly played an important role in the new endeavour. The government was keen to increase its representation abroad and development aid was expected to have a positive impact on the international image of Dutch science, technical know-how and trade, which would in turn positively influence export figures. In addition, Dutch international prestige was felt to have received a major blow after Indonesia became independent and development aid was seen as a way of partially compensating for this. At home, many Dutch people felt that with Indonesian independence, the era of The Netherlands as an important maritime country with large overseas territories had come to a close. The country's development programme was, therefore, one way of showing that it could still play an important role internationally. While the fear of Communism and the Cold War informed the development policies of many countries, this only became a factor in The Netherlands at a later stage and then only to a limited degree.<sup>31</sup> Dutch motives for participation in the new development programme clearly reflected political and economic interests. And despite all Truman's statements, there seemed to be little inhibition at the time about expressing the self-centred interests behind Dutch aid.

The deep sense of moralism in Dutch history proved, however, to be a strong inducement to Dutch development aid. Humanitarian reasons, which were often Christian-inspired, were a crucial factor. Just as it was one's moral duty to help a person in need, so aid should be given to poor countries, the reasoning went. The economic success of the Marshall Plan in The Netherlands seemed ample proof that aid could rebuild an economy in a relatively short period of time.<sup>32</sup> The Netherlands was one of the first countries to jump on the new development bandwagon and although it started off with a limited Dfl. 1.5m, by 1956 it ranked second in terms of the number of experts it was sending abroad. Despite this initially low budget, the percentage of GNP the Dutch spend on development cooperation has always been amongst the highest in the world.<sup>33</sup>

In a peculiar Dutch form of internationalisation, The Netherlands attempted to put itself across as a global 'guide' (*Nederland gidsland*). The idea was that, although small in size, the country could adopt a pioneering role in many areas. In subsequent years, this notion of being a leading force and a role model was connected with Dutch policies concerning human rights, conflict management

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<sup>30</sup> Quoted in: J.A. Nekkers & P.A.M. Malcontent, 'Inleiding. *Doe wel en zie niet om*'. In: Nekkers & Malcontent, eds, *De geschiedenis*, p. 13.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 12-14.

<sup>32</sup> Website: Esther Helena Arens, 'Entwicklungshilfe und Entwicklungspolitik in den Niederlanden seit 1945', <http://www.uni-muenster.de/HausDerNiederlande/Zentrum/Projekte/NiederlandeNet/Dossiers/60-00/index.html>

<sup>33</sup> Hoebink, *Geven is nemen*, pp. 48, 232-233.

and diplomatic negotiations, and was also reflected in the area of development aid. Some argue that the Netherlands was in fact not a guiding force at all. They claim that in many respects the Dutch did not play a vanguard role and, in terms of effectiveness, the way Dutch aid money was spent was certainly not exemplary.<sup>34</sup>

### The initial phase of Dutch development aid

Dutch economist Jan Tinbergen, who was awarded the Nobel Prize for Economics in 1969, argued way back in 1945 that one of the world's greatest problems was the increasing gap between rich and poor nations. Although this view was exceptional at the time, The Netherlands became involved in the new development programme soon after Truman's 1949 speech and Withall (Werkcommissie Inzake Technische Hulp aan Laag Ontwikkelde Landen) was founded in the same year. At first it was unclear which ministry would assume responsibility for the new programme. The Ministry of Economic Affairs, that of Overseas Territories and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs all had a stake in the matter and only after much discussion was the programme entrusted to The Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs.<sup>35</sup>

Withall advised the government on policy vis-à-vis the United Nations and was presided over by the head of the Directorate International Organisations (DIO, Directie Internationale Organisaties); the official body within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs that was responsible for all matters concerning the United Nations and the coordination of technical assistance to developing nations. A bureau for International Technical Assistance (Bureau voor Internationale Technische Hulp, ITH) was set up to execute Withall's programme. Aid took the form of technical cooperation, which at the time consisted of offering advice, expertise and technical knowledge that would contribute to development. The activities had two forms: Grants were offered to students from countries with low levels of development and tropical experts were sent to these countries to work. Initially these were highly qualified experts, many of whom had lived in Indonesia before it became independent. However during the 1950s, the ITH was confronted with a shortage of experts. The UN requested 400 experts in 1951 but only 275 posts could be filled, and in 1960 it made 800 similar requests and the ITH was only able to provide 145 candidates. It had, therefore, to

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<sup>34</sup> M. Kuitenbrouwer, 'Nederland gidsland? De ontwikkelingssamenwerking van Nederland en gelijkgezinde landen, 1973-1985'. In: Nekkers & Malcontent, eds, *De geschiedenis*, pp. 183-200; Hoebink, *Geven is nemen*, p. 232.

<sup>35</sup> De Jong, 'Onder ethisch insigne'. In: Nekkers & Malcontent, eds, *De geschiedenis*, pp. 69-72.

engage younger agricultural engineers who were dispatched as junior ‘assistant experts’. Dutch (academic) interests were clearly central to the programme and the benefits for the receiving countries were only mentioned in passing. The Dutch experts worked primarily in the fields of tropical agriculture and health. Agricultural experts were sent through the FAO to projects in Libya, Ethiopia and Iran, and in the 1960s doctors were sent to work at the Medical Centre in Nairobi, where the Dutch spread know-how on tropical diseases, research projects were carried out and Kenyan medical students were trained.<sup>36</sup>

In the first years of Dutch development aid, there was little theoretical thinking about what development should entail. Policy plans and strategies were lacking and long-term planning was regarded as unnecessary as it was thought that developing countries would soon catch up with the rest of the world. The entire programme very much depended on the man on the spot.<sup>37</sup> Jan Meijer, for example, a civil servant at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, rose to prominence and single-handedly directed much of the Dutch development sector in the late 1950s and early 1960s. From 1956 onwards he headed DIO and later became Director General of International Cooperation.<sup>38</sup>

The Netherlands was one of the first countries to offer financial support for the multilateral aid programme of the United Nations. In practice, most of the Dutch aid donated in the first ten years went to Indonesia, Surinam and the Netherlands Antilles. J.J.P. de Jong calculated that between 1951 and 1955 90% of the total Dutch annual budget for aid to developing countries went to its former colonies. And between 1956 and 1962, aid to former colonies still accounted for 70% of this budget.<sup>39</sup> All the same, the multilateral approach was defended in political circles. It was felt that, for a small country like The Netherlands, bilateral aid would lead to too much fragmentation and a multilateral approach would strengthen the position of the United Nations, something that was seen as desirable.<sup>40</sup>

### Increasing public interest

As in most European countries, Dutch public interest in development aid started to increase in the 1950s. At an international level, some organisations were

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<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 67-69; Peters, ‘Van de nood een deugd’, In: Nekkers & Malcontent, eds, *De geschiedenis*, pp. 83-113 (quote 97).

<sup>37</sup> De Jong, ‘Onder ethisch insigne’. In: *Ibid.*, pp. 61-81.

<sup>38</sup> F. van Dam, ‘Een ambtenaar in de politiek. Jan Meijer’. In: *Ibid.*, pp. 115-125.

<sup>39</sup> De Jong, ‘Onder ethisch insigne’. In: *Ibid.*, p. 80.

<sup>40</sup> Peters, ‘Van de nood een deugd’. In: *Ibid.*, pp. 101-103; van Beurden & Gewalt, *From output to outcome?*, p. 16; Arens, ‘Entwicklungshilfe und Entwicklungspolitik in den Niederlanden seit 1945’.

founded by private initiatives to provide development assistance but there were also many international NGOs that had started even before the end of World War II and that grew in size and impact in the context of international development in a growing number of independent states where the stress was now on social work within missionary activities. In the Dutch context too, the new focus on commitment on a more global scale became ever more important in the 1950s and 1960s. Specific to the Dutch context, however, was the flood disaster of 1953 that hit the southwestern parts of The Netherlands and changed the country into an aid recipient itself. The foreign aid provided following this disaster made a lasting impression on the Dutch and afterwards many people felt that the Dutch government should greatly increase its assistance to countries in need.

Fortnightly speeches in The Hague's *Plein* (Square) in 1954 by Father Jelsma about world poverty and the need to set aside tax money for development aid attracted much attention. This *Pleingroep* (Square Group), as it became known, together with a Protestant group led by the pacifist minister J.B.Th. Hugenholtz, set up NOVIB (Nederlandse Organisatie voor Internationale Bijstand) in 1956.<sup>41</sup> Queen Juliana's call for an increase in development aid in her Queen's Speech in 1954 also made a deep impression on the Dutch public.<sup>42</sup> And in a speech for the NJG (Nederlandse Jeugdgemeenschap, Dutch Youth Community) and the Nederlandse Studentenraad (Dutch Student Council) in 1955, the Queen repeated her concerns about the growing gap between rich and poor nations, combining the concept of *ereschuld* (debt of honour), which was related here to criticisms of colonial excesses, with Christian duty:

We, who call ourselves Christians, all too often presented ourselves to the rest of humanity as barbarians, who were only concerned about material welfare, our own in the first place, to be sure! Only in the last century did this change. Even now the largest share of wealth is in our hands. Our debt of honour consists of working to the best of our abilities to ensure that also our other fellow world citizens can participate in our welfare.<sup>43</sup>

Numerous other initiatives were taken throughout the 1950s and early 1960s, mainly by church and youth organisations. A lot of the early development organisations in The Netherlands were built on the missionary tradition and had their roots in Dutch churches, and although many were small-scale and short-

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<sup>41</sup> Nekkers & Malcontent, 'Inleiding' In: Nekkers & Malcontent, eds, *De geschiedenis*, p. 21.

<sup>42</sup> Peters, 'Van de nood en deugd'. In: Nekkers & Malcontent, eds, *De geschiedenis*, p. 102.

<sup>43</sup> Kees Hommerson, 'Novib en het ontwikkelingsbeleid van de Nederlandse regering in de periode 1953-1966' (Unpublished MA Thesis, Utrecht University, 1987).

lived, others formed the basis for the larger organisations of the Third World Movement in the 1970s and 1980s. The churches offered the most important platform on which the debates and activities related to development in Dutch public society took place.

## Conclusion

The post-war Development Era can be seen in relation to two important historical processes. The first was the gradual increase in development activities in colonial states, especially in the inter-war period. These early development programmes greatly influenced post-war policies. The second important current was the missionaries' presence abroad with their role in poverty relief, education, health care and vocational training which far exceeded their original strictly religious approach.

After the war, the concept of development came to be used with new vigour and in a new institutional context. Newly independent states embarked on development schemes, international organisations ranging from the United Nations to the World Bank and NGOs created new networks of communication and exchange, development money led to new terms of negotiation and economic relations, and new research centres focusing on technical innovation were set up. These institutions and the new relations that were forged did not erase the colonial and missionary experiences in development. In many areas, colonialism had not yet come to an end and the colonial regimes joined the new development trend, combining the aim of economic growth in the colonies with the need to justify imperial rule. For former motherlands, development provided a new way of relating to their old colonies.

In the missionary sphere, the relationship with development was one of mutual influence. Social welfare and charity had been a feature of the missionary enterprise since its inception but after World War II, missions and churches became very active in the development sector and still remain a major force in development work today.

The change from evangelisation to charity to development on the one hand and from colonisation to welfare programmes to development on the other has been a gradual process. The Dutch context, with its mixture of humanitarian motives and self-interest, has proved no exception to this general process of change.







*Photo 3.1* Queen Juliana bids the first JVP team farewell, 1963.

*Source:* SNV photo archives, Blue, hoge gasten.

*Photographer:* ANEFO, Amsterdam, 1963.

## SNV's start: Bricks, mortar and the transfer of knowledge (1963-1972)

Two Dutch voluntary organisations started their activities in 1963: a state organisation (JVP) and a private, mainly confessional, initiative (JVC). From the outset, the two stood in fierce competition and their merger into one organisation (SNV) in 1965 was only a marriage of convenience. This affiliation between state and Church marked SNV's history in the 1960s and early 1970s. While development is often conceived of as a secular, technical discourse, this chapter shows that during the initial phase of SNV's history, religious factors played an important role too. In SNV's first decades, the missionary and church tradition in developmental activities at times conflicted head on with state initiatives in the realm of development. While these may initially be seen as personal bickering, behind the controversies lay a structural conflict revolving around divergences in method and manner, the jealous guarding of each group's independence and the incompatibility of two, vastly different traditions.

This chapter first traces the origins of SNV in the light of these conflicting missionary and state traditions. So as to understand the new development programme of the Dutch state, it is not only necessary to outline the evolving context of development aid in Dutch politics but also to note the colonial legacy in this new realm of activities. The long history of missionary and church initiatives was felt especially in the private organisations for development aid. Subsequently in this chapter, an attempt is made to describe the practice and underlying ideas of SNV's activities in this initial phase.

### Institutionalising Dutch development

1963 was a remarkable year for Dutch development policies because for the first time in history, a State Secretary for Foreign Affairs ‘charged with the aid for less developed territories’ (‘belast met de hulp aan minder-ontwikkelde landen’), was appointed. The Christian Democrat I.N.Th. Diepenhorst was chosen for this position. Working in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the State Secretary was to ensure that development aid was put on the Dutch government’s agenda. His task proved hard, however. The new State Secretary felt that both the Ministries of Finance and that of Foreign Affairs saw development as ‘wasted money’ and were generally opposed to it.<sup>1</sup> Officials at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs were far more powerful in development affairs than the Minister. Minister Joseph Luns was kept uninformed about matters and decisions were taken without his knowledge. The officials had little interest in drawing the new State Secretary into their circle and conscious attempts were made to keep him in the same position as the Minister of Foreign Affairs, a tactic that would clearly lead to conflict and misunderstandings.<sup>2</sup> The appointment of a special State Secretary for Development showed, however, that the increasing attention for development aid was slowly being institutionalised in The Netherlands.

Various factors were playing an influential role in the Dutch developmental arena. The entire period under discussion showed a gradual increase in the number of private organisations engaged in development work. In the confessional sphere, a twofold development took place: new organisations – such as Vastenactie (1961), Sjaloom (1963), ICCO (1964) and Cebemo (1969) – were founded, while others were transformed into development organisations like the much older medical organisation Memisa. A documentation centre was set up by Catholic students that later formed the basis of the COSsen (Centra voor Ontwikkelingssamenwerking), centres providing information on development. In the non-confessional realm new action groups and organisations were also founded. Some of these became permanent faces in the Dutch development landscape, like HIVOS (1968) and Wereldwinkels (1969) that initially cooperated with the Catholic fair-trade organisation S.O.S. (Steun Onderontwikkelde Streken, 1959). Links with the political sphere slowly evolved, notably with organisations like the Angola Comité (1961), anti-apartheid groups and groups

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<sup>1</sup> Van Beurden & Gewald, *From output to outcome?*, p. 17.

<sup>2</sup> D.A. Hellema, ‘Beschamende situaties. De eerste staatssecretaris en de oprichting van DGIS’. In: Nekkers & Malcontent, eds, *De geschiedenis*, p. 135. Interview 288.

organising demonstrations in The Netherlands against the US war in Vietnam, which had started in 1965.<sup>3</sup>

### Voluntary service

In Europe and the US, the beginning of the 1960s saw an increase in organisations sending youngsters abroad to work in tropical areas. These initiatives were related to the start of the American Peace Corps in 1960 but other links were also important and even back in the 1920s, large youth movements, such as the Boy Scouts, had inspired Roman Catholics to found Christian youth organisations. A Dutch example was De Graal that initially aimed at 'world conversion' by having Christian female university students organise factory girls. After World War II, the movement was transformed into an international Christian women's organisation that sent young female volunteers overseas too.<sup>4</sup> A similar group was the Belgium/Dutch Kajotter movement (KAJ, Catholic Workers' Youth) of Father Jozef Cardijn, which started in 1924 and also sent youngsters abroad on a voluntary basis. As they established an international branch in 1957 and were by then active all around the world, they may well have inspired later volunteer organisations. Some SNVers suggested a direct link between the origins of SNV and the KAJ.<sup>5</sup> And VSO (Voluntary Service Overseas), a Christian-inspired British movement that started its activities in 1958 was also perhaps of influence.

The Peace Corps was founded in the US in 1960 after President John F. Kennedy challenged students at the University of Michigan to serve their country in the cause of peace by living and working in developing countries. An important motive was to counter the image of the 'Ugly American' and to fight the 'Communist threat'.<sup>6</sup> A further impetus for organising voluntary services was the American-organised conference in Puerto Rico in 1962 on the need for 'middle-level manpower', which shifted the attention from highly qualified experts to young people of middle-level education with little professional ex-

<sup>3</sup> Hans Beerends & Marc Broere, *De bewogen beweging, een halve eeuw mondiale solidariteit* (Amsterdam, 2004), pp. 37, 44-53.

<sup>4</sup> 'De Graal. Van jeugdbeweging voor meisjes tot internationale beweging van vrouwen', *Erasmusplein* 6, 2 (1995), website: <http://www.kdc.kun.nl/erasmusplein/2-1995/graal.html>.

<sup>5</sup> Interviews 90 and 101. Foreign Affairs, file 24, speech, 'Toespraak op de jaarsamenkomst van de Algemene Raad van de Stichting Jongeren Vrijwilligers Corps, 28 febr. 1969, gehouden door Ds. N. Steenbeek', 28 February 1969, p. 2.

<sup>6</sup> Julius A. Amin, 'United States Peace Corps Volunteers in Guinea: A Case Study of US-African relations during the Cold War', *Journal of Contemporary African Studies* 16, 2 (1998): 197-225.

perience.<sup>7</sup> Within the Dutch context, the experience with sending out junior ‘assistant experts’, which had started in the 1950s, also contributed to acceptance of the idea of dispatching young people in the framework of development.

A direct follow-up to Kennedy’s Peace Corps idea was the foundation of the EWG (Europese Werkgroep, European Working Group) in 1962, that included, amongst others, Princess Beatrix, Laurens Jan Brinkhorst, Frans A.M. Alting von Geusau, and Bas de Gaay Fortman who were then all students or alumni of Leiden University or Amsterdam’s Free University. It aimed to create a platform for international voluntary service at a European level. As each European country started its own voluntary service, however, and especially because the Dutch government opted for a state initiative at the national level rather than seeking European integration as the EWG proposed, the initiative was blocked. After six years of voluntary service at an international non-governmental level, the EWG was dissolved in 1968.<sup>8</sup>

### Foundation of the JVC

Inspired by Queen Juliana and the foundation of the Peace Corps, members of the NJG and their leader, the Protestant Reverend Steenbeek, developed plans for a new youth voluntary service in The Netherlands. This was initiated by the large sum of money that had been collected by the NJG during a campaign in 1961: ‘After this enormous effort the question arose whether it was not high time to participate in development work not only with money, but also with more personal commitment.’<sup>9</sup>

The idea was to bring together all the present activities and provide a platform for overseas youth voluntary services in The Netherlands. The organisers were well aware of earlier activities in this sphere within the Dutch organisational arena and cautious negotiations were started with the various players in

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<sup>7</sup> Foreign Affairs, file 1, memo, H.W. te Winkel to Warmenhoven through Van der Goot: ‘Middle level manpower en Jongeren Vrijwilligers Hulp’, 7 November 1962. (The conference, entitled ‘Human Skills in the Decade of Development: The Middle Level Manpower Approach’ was organised and sponsored by the US government and Peace Corps, and hosted representatives from more than forty countries (John F. Kennedy, ‘Statement by the President Announcing an International Conference on “Human Skills in the Decade of Development” September 3rd, 1962’, John Woolley & Gerhard Peters, *The American Presidency Project* website: <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=8845&st=&st1>)

<sup>8</sup> Peter Bak, *Bewogen en bevlogen. Het Europees elan van prinses Beatrix* (Amsterdam 2005). Interviews 203 and 288.

<sup>9</sup> Foreign Affairs, file 24, speech, ‘Toespraak op de jaarsamenkomst van de Algemene Raad van de Stichting Jongeren Vrijwilligers Corps, 28 febr. 1969, gehouden door Ds. N. Steenbeek’, 28 February 1969, p. 1.

the field. In March 1961 the first steps were taken to organise a 'Dutch Peace Corps': letters went to and fro, meetings were held and proposals were debated with all possible partners. In contrast to state initiatives, such as the American Peace Corps and later the JVP that were set up very quickly, it was some time before the Dutch private organisations' initiative took off. It was only in September 1961 that bylaws for the new foundation were prepared and, even then, it still took over a year before the formal foundation of the JVC (Jongeren Vrijwilligers Corps: Youth Volunteers' Corps) in November 1962.<sup>10</sup>

Some sixty organisations participated in the JVC initiative, the NOVIB being amongst the most influential. Many of the participant groups were suspicious of the JVC initiative as they feared losing their own identity. They were, however, anxious to participate in case any benefits were meted out and did not want other organisations to profit at their expense. There was no formal clarification of the relationship between the JVC Board and the various organisations, and the division of tasks and responsibilities were not spelled out. The KAJ – with its long-standing experience in the field – had little faith in the organisational qualities of Rev. Steenbeek and by October 1963 the KAJ was no longer in league with the JVC and was requesting direct cooperation with the state.<sup>11</sup> The Reformed churches too indicated a preference for working directly with the state instead of having the JVC act as an intermediary.<sup>12</sup>

The atmosphere in which the foundation was set up remained within the realm of Christian charity. While the focus in development policies at large was on economic growth, JVC ideology explicitly extended beyond economic factors and included, for example, loving one's neighbour, care and humility. 'May we meet with thee?' was the motto.<sup>13</sup> As nearly all the organisations in the JVC had a confessional background and the NJG was led by a Protestant minister, both discourse and practice closely resembled the Dutch missionary tradition. Later critique of the government initiative also referred to this ideology: The JVP was felt to be too businesslike and detached, and 'not imbued with the notion that it concerns aid for OTHERS.'<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.* file 7, addendum, 'Jongeren Vrijwillige Hulp, een initiatief van de Nederlandse Jeugdgemeenschap', 15 August 1962, pp. 1-4.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.* file 7, memo, Van Dam to Dio: 'Gesprek met KAJ over samenwerking met JVP en andere organisaties', 6 May 1963; *Ibid.* file 492, letter, A.P. Umans, KAJ to Luns, 14 June 1963; *Ibid.* file 492, memo, DIO to R: 'Samenwerking met het JVC', 10 March 1964.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.* file 7, memo, Mej. Verhoeff to NJVP, 19 April 1963.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.* file 13, meeting minutes, NJG and Foreign Affairs, 13 March 1961. ('Mogen wij U eens ontmoeten').

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.* file 294, journal article, 'Konkreet', August 1963, p. 4 (capitals in original).

In the few references to the foundation of JVC and JVP, it is suggested that news about the private initiative only reached the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 1963.<sup>15</sup> In fact, the process was more gradual: In the course of 1961, officials at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs learned about the NJG initiative and a meeting was held with NJG representatives on 13 March 1961. As soon as the JVC delegates left the room, government officials started discussing their own role in this endeavour and one of them was charged with studying the possibilities of sending ‘middle-level manpower’ overseas through state channels rather than through a private organisation.<sup>16</sup>

### Foundation of the JVP

Shortly before the foundation was formally announced in February 1963, the JVC applied to the Dutch government for financial assistance. Immediate action was taken at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. This, it was felt, ought to be a state affair: not something that should be left to private initiative. A hand-written memo in the archives of Foreign Affairs stated that: ‘We have to operate very carefully now, as we have to literally bowl everything over.’<sup>17</sup>

Although, as we saw, officials at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs had heard about the JVC plans prior to 1963, it was felt that this private initiative had created circumstances that were pressurising the government to act. There was as such no political will to start with a voluntary service organised by the Dutch state: The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Minister declared, had no interest in development aid.<sup>18</sup> Faced with the JVC plans though, the officials felt they could not but take matters into their own hands and counter the developments in the Dutch private organisations. Hasty steps were taken to outdo the JVC initiative and just before it was officially launched, a state organisation was founded. In the following quote, Prince Claus’s biographer, who was chairman of the SNV from 1974 to 1980, explained how chaotic the foundation of JVP came about:

From the start already the two were in conflict: When the highest development official Jan Meijer heard that the private organisations were about to found the JVC, he,

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<sup>15</sup> Frans Bieckmann, *De wereld volgens Prins Claus* (Amsterdam, 2004), pp. 131-132.

<sup>16</sup> Foreign Affairs, file 13, meeting minutes, NJG and Foreign Affairs, 13 March 1961, pp. 7-8; also *Ibid.* file 6, memo, DIO to M: ‘Vrijwilligerscorps ten behoeve van minder-ontwikkelde gebieden’, 28 October 1962.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.* file 8, memo, illegible (probably Van den Bergh) to Van Dam, s.d. (‘Er moet nu zeer voorzichtig geopereerd worden, want we moeten letterlijk alles omkegelen.’)

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.* file 5, memo, Dio to S, 14 January 1963. Interview 288.

on the very same day, rented a building, had a placard 'JVP' hammered on it, staffed it with an official and had Luns announce it all festively in a press conference.<sup>19</sup>

JVP was to be a foundation, with its own board and staff, but would report to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. All staff members were formally state employees and major decisions on the selection of projects, recruitment and training were to be taken by the Minister.

Nothing had been prepared: there were no plans, no projects, no policies and no personnel. But within a short space of time, a number of staff had been appointed who were either young and enthusiastic in the perception of those in favour of the endeavour or young and inexperienced in the eyes of the more senior officials of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs who hoped that it would all come to nothing. The barracks where the new board was to start working were completely empty: not even a pencil could be found.<sup>20</sup> Joseph Luns stated at the inauguration of the new JVP staff: 'You start out with a 1,000 questions in front of you, without any answer. Your task is to end with 1,000 responses and not one question left unanswered.'<sup>21</sup> The most important issue was to have a project as soon as possible and to start sending out volunteers. During his press conference, Luns had stated that in 1963 fifty volunteers would leave the country, so in order not to lose face, this had to be organised within the year of JVP's foundation. At the same time, it was imperative that these projects be well prepared since failure could harm the image of The Netherlands internationally.<sup>22</sup>

The first problem was that this new initiative by the Dutch state was not known anywhere; so while volunteers would only formally be sent out at the explicit request of the government of one of the underdeveloped nations, in practice, JVP staff had to press governments, through their embassies in The Netherlands, into placing such a request. On top of this, in matters such as recruitment and the selection of projects and volunteers, JVP staff depended on the permission of the Minister and, after the installation of Diepenhorst, on the State Secretary. These decisions were, however, often delayed as officials at Foreign Affairs did not inform their superiors but instead tried to monopolise information. This was especially problematic because of Joseph Luns's promise about the fifty volunteers that would go abroad in the first year. With officials at

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<sup>19</sup> Bieckmann, *De wereld volgens Prins Claus*, pp. 131-132.

<sup>20</sup> Interview 288.

<sup>21</sup> Foreign Affairs, file 1, speech, 'Toespraak van Minister Luns bij de installatie van de staf van het Jongeren Vrijwilligers Programma', 25 April 1963, pp. 4-5.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.* file 1, press conference, 'Minister Luns over Nederlands Jongeren Vrijwilligers Programma tijdens persconferentie Ministerie van Buitenlandse Zaken op 12 februari 1963', 12 February 1963, pp. 1-5; *Ibid.* file 1, memo, Luns to Prime Minister, 'Nota inzake een Nederlands Vrijwilligers Programma', 1 February 1963, p. 2. Interview 288.



Foreign Affairs stalling on matters, precious time was lost. For example, the JVP staff needed permission and financial support for the first preparatory course at the Royal Tropical Institute in Amsterdam but in the first instance attempts by the staff to get matters organised fell short due to obstructions by officials at the Ministry. Finally, the same officials tried to hold the new foundation in a tight grip: a few of the JVP staff were former Foreign Affairs staff and had orders to report back on proceedings to their former superiors. Relations with Foreign Affairs officials were thus by no means easy and many conflicts over major and minor issues erupted.<sup>23</sup>

By May 1963 however, seven projects were being studied and some seventy youngsters had shown interest in the organisation.<sup>24</sup> It was decided that the Peace Corps model would be followed in many respects. The volunteers were to be organised into teams but, in contrast to the Peace Corps, it was thought more valuable to dispatch youngsters with a technical background instead of university students and to have an experienced field staff member accompany them. The field staff idea was closely related to the expert programme at Foreign Affairs and created the opportunity to engage professionals with experience overseas.<sup>25</sup>

In June the very first JVP team would leave for West Cameroon. There was no particular reason for choosing this region, it was just that several events coincided to make this project the first. In 1962 a horticultural research team from the Free University in Amsterdam that was visiting West Cameroon had looked into the possibility of sending volunteers there through NOVIB. The Cameroonian government had reacted to these plans with due enthusiasm but the Dutch then had second thoughts as they did not consider Cameroon a suitable partner. NOVIB had withdrawn in silence, thus endangering relations between Cameroon and The Netherlands. The situation had led officials at Foreign Affairs to suggest JVP take over the project. Although Cameroon's central government was somewhat suspicious of any activity related to Anglophone West Cameroon, the cordial relations between the Dutch royal family and Cameroon's President Ahidjo may have been a factor in the project getting off the ground. And so it was that in November 1963 a JVP team set out for West Cameroon.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> Interview 288; Hellema, 'Beschamende situaties'. In: Nekkers & Malcontent, eds, *De geschiedenis*, pp. 127-144.

<sup>24</sup> Foreign Affairs, file 293, memo, Van Walsum to staff JVP, 21 May 1963.

<sup>25</sup> Nijzink, *Dag vrijwilliger!*, p. 10; Mr F.A.M. Alting von Geusau, letter to the author, 26 February 2007.

<sup>26</sup> Foreign Affairs, file 1772, report, T.W. Bieze, 'Jongeren Vrijwilligers Programma, Kameroen, Chronologische weergave van relevante feiten en gebeurtenissen, benevens een evaluatie,' s.d. (1965), pp. 2-3, 7; *Ibid.* file 1767, memo, vice-DVE (Direc-



*Photo 3.2* Team II setting off for Colombia, 1964.  
*Source:* SNV photo archives, Blue, Colombia, SNVers.  
*Photographer:* De Telegraaf, 1964.

### The first teams

The first JVP team left on 19 November 1963. To add a sense of grandeur to the occasion, the volunteers had been invited for a reception at the royal palace some days before their departure and Minister Luns had personally seen them off on the train to Paris. They were a group of eleven men and ten women, aged between 21 and 30, who would start working in the English-speaking western region of Cameroon. Upon arrival, it was clear that the promised housing facilities were not available. In order to resolve this, some villagers and junior state officials were forcibly removed from their homes so that the volunteers would have housing in Bambui.<sup>27</sup> It emerged that the school buildings where they had

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toraat Verdragen) to A. van der Goot: 'Overeenkomst met Kameroen inzake Nederlandse vrijwilligers', 31 January 1964; Saïbou Issa, 'La SNV au Cameroun: 1963-2005' (Unpublished manuscript, commissioned research report within the project framework 2006).

<sup>27</sup> Interview 12. 'Eerst Nederland, dan nog Nederland en dan andere landen', *Vice Versa* 19, 3 (1985), p. 28; Foreign Affairs, file 8, letter, R.S Uit den Boogaard NOVIB, September 1963; *Ibid.* file 1772, report, T.W. Bieze, 'Jongeren Vrijwilligers Pro-

been supposed to work no longer existed. The volunteers then took the initiative to start agricultural instruction in the nearby villages.<sup>28</sup> The project had not been well defined beforehand so the volunteers had to look for ways in which they could contribute to development themselves. As Harry Sesink-Clee, one of the field staff members in Cameroon, put it: ‘In those days it was all rather informal. If somebody said: “Yeah, this is what I would like to do”, then they just set out to do it.’<sup>29</sup> With extremely limited transport facilities and no money for building, the volunteers and staff members could not do a lot: they were all ‘seriously discontent’. On top of this, the field staff declared the team ‘incapable’ and initially the volunteers did not have permission to enter the villages: They were to learn Pidgin English and receive a theoretical background first. This, in turn, led to disgruntlement amongst the volunteers, who wanted to start with ‘their project’. The volunteers were barely aware of the fact that they were supposed to work within the framework of the Cameroonian government development programme and the regional authorities, in turn, had no wish to dispose of their personnel to function as counterparts for the young volunteers. A Dutch evaluator suspected that, if anyone was appointed as counterpart at all, the government tried in many cases to send people they saw as ‘misfits’ (*kneusjes*). Within a year, the regional Cameroonian authorities were even less enthusiastic and refused to cooperate on some matters. A leading official of the Agricultural Department declared at a meeting with the JVP field staff that: ‘he was fed up with the volunteers’.<sup>30</sup> A visit by the JVP director did not help to improve matters and his behaviour towards the Cameroonian officials from the Agricultural Department exacerbated the problems as he devoted more attention to the women than to the work of the volunteers.<sup>31</sup> A JVP staff report on Cameroon indicated that expectations regarding the project had been too high, promises had not been kept and language problems had been difficult to overcome. The mission could hardly be said to have been a great success and in 1967 an external evaluation classified it as a failure.<sup>32</sup> It is therefore all the more surprising

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gramma, Kameroen, Chronologische weergave van relevante feiten en gebeurtenissen, benevens een evaluatie,’ s.d. (1965), p. 10.

<sup>28</sup> Nijzink, *Dag vrijwilliger!*, pp. 12-13.

<sup>29</sup> Interview 7. (‘In die tijd was het allemaal vrijblijvend. Als iemand zei: ‘Nou, dit vind ik leuk om te doen,’ dan gingen ze dat doen.’)

<sup>30</sup> P.L. Schram, ‘Op bezoek bij het Kameroen-team’, *Visum* 5 (February/March 1965) p. 2; *Ibid.* file 1772, report, T.W. Bieze, ‘Jongeren Vrijwilligers Programma, Kameroen, Chronologische weergave van relevante feiten en gebeurtenissen, benevens een evaluatie,’ s.d. (1965), pp. 16, 17, 21, 26, 42.

<sup>31</sup> Archive Alting von Geusau, note, addressed to Alting von Geusau, 9 June 1965, p. 3. Interview 11.

<sup>32</sup> Foreign Affairs, file 13, internal notes, ‘Enkele kanttekeningen bij Deelrapport I “Opzet en beleid” van het Nederlandse Jongeren Vrijwilligers Programma, onder-

that satisfaction was expressed over the 'viability of the Dutch programme' in a 1969 evaluation and that the present volunteers 'were (then) still building on the foundations laid by the first team'. From the Cameroonian side too, appreciation grew. Several volunteers were invited to return and at least one was awarded a Cameroonian knighthood.<sup>33</sup>

A second team was sent to Brazil some months later and one of its members was the daughter of the new State Secretary. In his speech on the quay, Diepenhorst stated: 'It would probably surprise you, after all the changes that you have already experienced, if there wasn't a change at the last moment.'<sup>34</sup> The departure had been delayed several times and now the volunteers were told that they would have to spend several weeks in the capital before they could start working. The envisaged project had finished just before the volunteers were dispatched. As in Cameroon, the team found that they had to create their own work: Very little had been organised and in most cases the volunteers ended up working in sectors they had never been trained for. Unhindered by a pre-designed focus, the volunteers became active in, amongst other things, health, education, road construction, hygiene, housing, electricity and agriculture. JVP teams sent to Palestinian refugee camps and Indian health centres were even less lucky and these deployments were abandoned.<sup>35</sup> In most cases the volunteers, and occasionally their team leaders as well, blamed The Hague for the improvisation and chaos that characterised the beginning of the volunteers' service. 'Much grousing, lack of understanding', was how a 1964 letter assessed the view of those in the field about 'The Hague'.<sup>36</sup> The confusion and lack of planning and preparation did not escape outsiders and continued to plague the organisation during this entire period. Even after SNV had been in operation for several years, complaints about the unclear nature of its aims continued. In 1968 Ir. S.S. Mutal, the coordinator of the Latin American teams, wondered: 'Principles and objectives: Does SNV have any?'<sup>37</sup>

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zoek verricht door Drs. F.J.A. Bouman', 26 January 1967, p. 5; *Ibid.* file 13, meeting minutes, SNV Board, 28 September 1965, pp. 9-10.

<sup>33</sup> Nijzink, *Dag vrijwilliger!*, p. 13 (referring to: Werkgroep Evaluatie Ontwikkelingshulp, 'Rapport Evaluatie van de Nederlandse Ontwikkelingshulp' (Tilburg 1969), bijlage 7, app, p. 8); Verhoeven, *Aid – A Changing Necessity*, p. 12.

<sup>34</sup> H. Klumper, 'Het vertrek van de Brazilïë-vrijwilligers', *Visum* 4 (January 1964), p. 11 ('Het zou U waarschijnlijk verbazen, na al de veranderingen die U reeds hebt meegemaakt, als er op het laatste ogenblik ook niet nog een verandering was opgetreden').

<sup>35</sup> Nijzink, *Dag vrijwilliger!*, p. 13.

<sup>36</sup> Foreign Affairs, file 2, letter, Corrie to JVP staff, 16 March 1964 ('Veel gekanker, onbegrip').

<sup>37</sup> Quoted in *Ibid.*, file report by L.P.J. Mazairac, The Hague, November 1968, p. 3.

Despite the setbacks, the number of volunteers, countries and projects in which the JVP was active grew rapidly in the course of the 1960s. Given the haste with which the first teams were sent off, Ton Nijzink argued that: 'In hindsight it is astonishing that no greater blunders were made.'<sup>38</sup>

### Troubled relations

The JVP's foundation caused consternation among private organisations and the JVC. It was regarded as an outright coup by the state, especially as private organisations in The Netherlands had a rich tradition in the field of voluntary services, while the government had no experience of it whatsoever. The matter was aggravated by the fact that in the press conference announcing the JVP's foundation, Luns had only referred to the new American Peace Corps as a source of inspiration and had not even mentioned the private Dutch organisations and their historical role in development.<sup>39</sup>

KAJ's reactions were sharp; their activities had been negated, state intervention would only be associated with (neo-)colonialism and the state volunteers were a waste of money. KAJ was sending out its volunteers on a much lower total budget.<sup>40</sup> Such opinions were widely shared and nearly all those working overseas regarded the foundation of the JVP with scepticism and reserve. Father Janssen wrote from Chad that he suspected half of the Dfl. 800,000 budgeted for JVP 'would be used for setting up a screening organisation: Expensive psychologists and expensive gadgets', after which he expressed his need for a jeep.<sup>41</sup>

JVC organisers were, unsurprisingly, also not amused. They saw their attempts to organise a voluntary service on a nationwide scale thwarted and feared a state monopoly. While officials at Foreign Affairs had been informed about JVC plans, there had been no attempt at cooperation and no one had bothered to inform the JVC about the state initiative. Rev. Steenbeek held that the entire matter had been 'in conflict with good custom'. According to him, the

<sup>38</sup> Nijzink, *Dag vrijwilliger!*, p. 12 ('Achteraf bezien is het verbazingwekkend dat er geen grotere brokken zijn gemaakt').

<sup>39</sup> Interview 242. Foreign Affairs, file 1, press conference, 'Minister Luns over de Nederlandse JVP tijdens persconferentie Ministerie van Buitenlandse Zaken op 12 februari 1963', 12 February 1963, p. 3.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.* file 1: 'Kritiek KAJ op hulpkorps', *Volkskrant* (19 February 1963); *Ibid.* file 7, Dio to M: 'Kritiek uit particuliere sector inzake regerings-initiatief Jongeren Vrijwilligers Programma', 14 February 1963; *Ibid.* file 293, letter, Adr. Schrama (Thailand) to Luns, 8 March 1963; *Ibid.* file 294, journal article, 'Konkreet', August 1963, pp. 4-5.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.* file 1, letter, Father Janssen to JVP, 6 March 1963; also *Ibid.* file 14, meeting minutes, SNV Board, 28 September 1965, pp. 16-17.

JVC had even been asked to stop its activities before the JVP's foundation was announced. The JVP had subsequently incorporated all 'good staff' and the JVC was left 'just lurching behind'.<sup>42</sup>

In government circles, on the other hand, there were serious doubts about the capabilities of the private organisations to ensure Dutch interests were being adequately defended by JVC volunteers:

As is known to you, by now private organisations, especially from the circles of the umbrella group of youth organisations, are taking an interest in starting to send volunteers abroad. For this reason, on 13 November 1962 a 'Foundation Youth Volunteers' Corps' was born. It is, as yet, not very clear what activities this foundation envisages undertaking, yet they do, all the same, expect facilities and financial support from the Government. It has furthermore become clear, from contact with this group, that the problems and risks related to the dispatching of youngsters are being underestimated. The Government, of course, carries responsibility for the representation of The Netherlands abroad.<sup>43</sup>

Rev. Steenbeek was characterised by 'third people' as a 'naïve, talkative man who kindles enthusiasm for his plans, but who suffers from a realisation deficiency,' and as somebody who 'does not keep his appointments'. In addition, he was classified as one 'who does not know what he is talking about. He thinks in terms of youth hostel work.'<sup>44</sup>

The conflict between private and state activities in the Dutch voluntary sector was never completely mended and attempts to come to an understanding failed initially despite public statements as to their willingness to cooperate. In the course of 1962-1965, several meetings were held but the private organisations continued to be disgruntled about state attempts to control matters. One of the JVC representatives flatly held that: 'We can hardly speak of cooperation. As private organisations we have the feeling that something has been created by the government, and we are merely allowed to say something once in a while.'<sup>45</sup>

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.* file 8, memo, Alting von Geusau to staff JVP: 'Gesprek Ds. Steenbeek, Voorzitter JVC', 28 August 1963; also *Ibid.* file 23, meeting minutes, SNV Board, 14 November 1968, pp. 6-11.

<sup>43</sup> M.L.J. Dierikx *et al.*, eds, *Nederlandse ontwikkelingssamenwerking. Bronnen-uitgave, deel 1: 1945-1963* (The Hague, 2002), p. 852; same document: Foreign Affairs, file 1, note, Luns to Prime Minister, 'Nota inzake een Nederlands Vrijwilligers Programma', 1 February 1963, p. 3.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.* file 7, memo, Dio to M, 'Audiëntie bestuur Jongeren Vrijwilligers (JVC)', 13 March 1963, pp. 1, 3-4. ('... dat derden omtrent de voorzitter, Ds Steenbeek, mededelen dat hij een naïeve, praatgrage man is die anderen enthousiasmeert voor zijn plannen doch die mank gaat aan een realisatiedefect').

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.* file 2, meeting minutes, 'Verslag van de bespreking in verband met de afsluiting van de experimentele fase van het Jongeren Vrijwilligers Programma, gehouden op maandag 16 december 1963', 10 March 1964, p. 9. ('Wij kunnen moei-

Despite the overtures made by first JVP head (*chef*), F.A.M. Alting von Geusau, in practice nothing came of it and by the end of 1963 the two groups were in open conflict once again.<sup>46</sup>

The JVC went into a deep crisis and, at a certain stage, the JVP management proposed directly cooperating with the private organisations as many of them had in any case disassociated themselves from the JVC.<sup>47</sup> The private organisations recognised that they could not but take the existence of the JVP into account. During a press conference, JVC representatives angrily stated that ‘voluntary service is now a sort of fashion. People think that the first volunteers were Peace Corps volunteers. But Catholic and Protestant missionaries started much earlier with this form of assistance.’ It was added, however, that the needs were too urgent to allow for problems to stand in the way and Rev. Steenbeek openly acknowledged that the JVC was willing to cooperate with the state: ‘The state is always stronger and disposes of more money’.<sup>48</sup> Both parties were ambivalent: the state JVP could make good use of the experience within the private organisations but continued to aim at a state monopoly in the voluntary sector, while the private organisations were keen to receive state subsidies but feared losing their independence.

In 1964 the JVC overcame its internal crisis and negotiations between the JVC and the JVP started again. Yet, in this new context too, relations were marked by tensions and argument: The government representatives held that there was hardly any point in cooperating with ‘an organisation that had as yet no clear character’, to which JVC representatives wryly responded that the character of the ‘new JVC’ partly depended on the present negotiations.<sup>49</sup> Head of DIO Jan Meijer compared the JVC proposals with ‘drawings, that one continuously sees being made in institutes for the mentally disturbed, by patients who as such are not aggressive, but for whom hope of reintegration into society no longer exists’.<sup>50</sup> The problems notwithstanding, both parties realised that it was imperative to come to an agreement.

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lijk van samenwerking spreken. Als particuliere organisaties hebben wij het gevoel dat door de overheid iets gecreëerd is, waarbij wij af en toe iets mogen zeggen.’)

<sup>46</sup> Nijzink, *Dag vrijwilliger!*, p. 11; F.A.M. Alting von Geusau, ‘Tien jaar geleden: Een tumultueus begin’, *Vice Versa* 5, 22 (1973), pp. 3-4.

<sup>47</sup> Foreign Affairs, file 8, memo, Alting von Geusau to chef DIO, ‘Begrotingsbehandeling punt 53d’, 6 November 1963.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.* file 8, meeting minutes, ‘Verslag van de persbespreking gehouden op 31 oktober 1963, 16.30 uur in de Nieuwspoort te Den Haag’, p. 2.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.* file 9, meeting minutes, ‘Kort verslag van de 3e bespreking over de samenwerking tussen Overheid en JVC op 16 Maart 1964 op het Bureau voor Internationale Technische Hulp’, p. 3.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.* file 492, memo, J. Meijer DIO to State Secretary Diepenhorst: ‘Besprekingen omtrent samenwerking met JVC’, 5 March 1964, p. 3 (‘tekeningen, die men in in-

### SNV's foundation in 1965

Negotiations in 1964 resulted in a draft cooperation agreement that was signed by JVC and JVP representatives, and in July 1965 a new foundation, the Stichting Nederlandse Vrijwilligers (Dutch Volunteers Foundation), SNV was formed. Considerable pressure was exerted on the JVC to accept the construction but there were reasons to unite for both parties. The only Dutch links in many countries were historical ties established by the private organisations and as the state had no connections in these areas, the Ministry was forced to rely on these contacts. The private organisations in the Dutch political landscape were too powerful a force to be discarded. In addition, it was felt that rivalry between state and private voluntary services in The Netherlands would not be good for the country's image abroad. JVC had not had an easy start and the hope was that the organisation would have greater access to finance and facilities through cooperation with the state. The JVC built on a longstanding tradition of missionary work in the social sphere and its aim was to function as an umbrella organisation for private NGOs in the Dutch development sector. Yet in terms of finance and administration, it functioned independently of the missionary organisations and NGOs, and so came to depend on the state for financial support. The hope for state subsidy was all too clear for the officials at Foreign Affairs: 'They are mainly interested as to how in legal (or nearly legal) ways money can flow from the state's treasury to their organisation.'<sup>51</sup> The ties during this period between the Dutch state and private organisations became closer and in 1965 the Co-Financing Programme (MFP) was started whereby the state supported a limited number of private organisations (MFOs), such as NOVIB and ICCO, by providing them with a fixed subsidy.

JVP and JVC continued to recruit volunteers through their own channels. However, in areas such as social security and financial compensation, JVC volunteers did not have the same status as those recruited through the state channels, which led private organisations to fear they would be less appealing to prospective volunteers. The JVC wished to maintain its independent position though, at least to a certain extent. Relations between the JVC and the state part

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richtingen voor psychisch gestoorden ononderbroken ziet vervaardigen door patiënten die op zichzelf niet agressief zijn, doch voor wie geen hoop op maatschappelijke inpassing meer bestaat').

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.* file 492, memo, J. Meijer DIO to State Secretary Diepenhorst: 'Besprekingen omtrent samenwerking met JVC', 5 March 1964, pp. 3-4 ('Hun interesseert vooral de vraag op welke toelaatbare of nog net toelaatbare wijze geld uit 's Rijks kas naar hun arbeid kan vloeien'); *Ibid.* file 492, hand-written note to Dio, 14 February 1964; Mr F.A.M. Alting von Geusau, letter to the author, 26 February 2007; Nijzink, *Dag vrijwilliger!*, p. 17.



of SNV continued to be characterised by mutual distrust, uncertainty over the division of responsibilities and, especially among private organisations, fears of losing control over their organisation. Basically, the JVC organisations had never wanted to accept government interference in project selection and volunteer recruitment. The requirement to have the volunteers' preparatory course at the former Colonial Museum, by then already re-named KIT (Royal Tropical Institute), was much resented; with one of the delegates declaring openly that a preparatory course ought not to be organised in 'this fortress of ex-colonials'. It was felt that the SNV structure left too little room for the JVC to organise its own projects, its own preparatory course and its own recruitment procedure. The SNV continued to be seen as a government institute, dominated by state officials and administrative regulations. Relations between JVC representatives on the Board and the officials forming the executive staff were never smooth.<sup>52</sup> The Ministry's aim was clear: The new foundation was to have no policy – or decision-making powers and the role of the Board could only be an advisory one. The Minister and his officials would remain in control but this led to tensions between the Ministry and the SNV Board in general.<sup>53</sup>

The SNV became a foundation governed by a board that would propose internally approved projects to the Minister. Its activities were carried out by a group of civil servants within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (at first called JVP staff, later AJV and as of 1976 ANV). At first this 'Hague staff' (*Haagse staf*) resorted under the head of DIO but as of 1966 it formed a separate group of officials within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The head of this executive staff was at the same time secretary/treasurer of the foundation's board. The organisational board came to exist of representatives from both JVC and JVP, and later a number of ex-volunteers were also included on it. The final say over the selection of projects and the recruitment of volunteers/staff rested with the Minister of Development Cooperation, who formally determined the allocation of funds and the appointment of the institute that would organise the preparatory course. Field staff members were all put on the Ministry's payroll.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.* pp. 17-18; Foreign Affairs, file 492: JVC document: 'Het JVC in zijn relatie tot SNV in haar opzet en werkwijze', 20 January 1970, pp. 1, 3; *Ibid.* file 492, memo, J. Meijer DIO to State Secretary Diepenhorst: 'Besprekingen omtrent samenwerking met JVC', 5 March 1964, p. 3.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.* file 492, memo, DIO to S, 'Inschakeling particuliere sector bij Jongeren Vrijwilligers Programma,' 2 January 1964.

<sup>54</sup> Nijzink, *Dag vrijwilliger!*, pp. 18, 19, 53.

This construct, called a 'monstrosity' (*monstrum*)<sup>55</sup> by a later analyst, gave extensive powers to the head of the JVP staff who was torn between many different interests so that his room for manoeuvre was in practice quite limited. He had to take into account the wishes of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and those of the Minister of Development Affairs, the Hague staff attached to the Ministry, the SNV Board with its various representatives, field staff and volunteers, and Dutch public opinion. On top of this, frequent staff changes plagued the organisation at the start. Given the problems that JVP and SNV faced, it should come as no surprise that ex-volunteers in hindsight characterised this initial phase as 'the period of ill-considered experiments and numerous *chefs* (directors)'.<sup>56</sup> By 1966, the organisation already had its fifth director. These setbacks did, however, not prevent the organisation taking off. In the following ten years, 1,417 volunteers were dispatched to, in total, eighteen countries in over eighty projects. In 1966 the number of volunteers sent overseas doubled and by 1971 there were over 500 volunteers in the field. These numbers show the dramatic growth in the organisation that would only slow down after 1974. As SNV had an ever higher budget at its disposal, there were opportunities to start new projects, take on more people and organise publicity campaigns. SNV's name spread rapidly, thanks to the new mass medium of television.<sup>57</sup> SNV's foundation in 1965 did not change much for those already in the field: The JVP and JVC volunteers continued their work as before but now under the new flag of SNV.<sup>58</sup>

### Changes in Dutch development policy

Some major changes in policy regarding Dutch development aid had occurred in the meantime. Before 1965, The Netherlands had considered itself too small to engage in bilateral aid and it had focused on multilateral aid. Under increasing pressure from the business lobby, bilateral aid rose sharply as of

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<sup>55</sup> Archives, SNV, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania: Box: Teamleidersoverleg 1990, etc; File: 'Aanbevelingen CV '89', etc: Report G.H. Scholten, 'Sterker na verandering. Onderzoek naar de bestuursvorm van de Stichting Nederlandse vrijwilligers', (1989), p. 10.

<sup>56</sup> Foreign Affairs, file 83: Memo, SNV Secretary to SNV Board, 'Analyse van de vertrouwelijke notitie en toelichting Mans/van Dort, febr. '74 aan Minister Pronk, m.b.t de gang van zaken binnen de SNV gedurende de periode 1963-1973', 5 June 1974, p. 1. ('De periode van de ondoordachte experimenten en de vele chefs.')

<sup>57</sup> Verhoeven, *Aid – A changing necessity*, pp. 8, 11; Nijzink, *Dag vrijwilliger!*, pp. 19, 30, 34.

<sup>58</sup> Foreign Affairs, file 1, letter, Van Kouwenhoven to Van Rinsum, 20 July 1965.

1965 at the cost of multilateral aid. This change can be seen as a major caesura in the history of Dutch development policy.<sup>59</sup>

1965 was also the year when the position of the State Secretary was changed into a ministerial post without portfolio. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs housed both the Minister of Foreign Affairs and the 'Minister without Portfolio, in Charge of Aid to Developing Countries'. Van Beurden and Gewalt described the precarious position of the new minister: 'The new minister remained without a department and without a budget, he lacked the authority to appoint civil servants and was wholly dependent upon the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.'<sup>60</sup> In addition, the first minister was the KVP'er Th. H. Bot, a former colonial official who had been severely criticized on a number of issues in the Cabinet before. His appointment was a political stop-gap measure and openly opposed by the Minister of Foreign Affairs Joseph Luns. One of the MPs commented that it was the strangest appointment since Caligula had turned his horse into a consul.<sup>61</sup>

The new minister had a group of civil servants – DGIS (Directoraat Generaal Internationale Samenwerking, Directorate-General for Development Cooperation) – to support him in carrying out his tasks and an advisory body led by Jan Tinbergen (NAR: Nationale Raad van Advies inzake de Hulpverlening aan Minder Ontwikkelde Landen, National Advisory Board concerning Assistance to Less-Developed Countries).

The creation of this new ministerial post can be seen as indicative of the growing interest in development aid. A further indication of this was the budget for development aid that, in the course of the 1960s, rose from Dfl. 137.5 m in 1963 to Dfl. 281.2 m in 1966 to Dfl. 738.2 m in 1970, an increase from 0.31% to 0.61% of Dutch GNP. Although SNV's budget rose sharply in absolute amounts, in terms of percentage of the overall Dutch development budget it sunk from 4.8% in 1965 to 3.9% in 1970 and in subsequent years did not even reach 1%.<sup>62</sup> Decision-making concerning the budget for development affairs took place in the Ministry of Economic Affairs, with the new Minister having no say in this matter. Giving more importance to development affairs (as demonstrated by the higher budget) and growing political interest were trends not only in the Dutch context but internationally too.

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<sup>59</sup> Hoebink, *Geven is nemen*, pp. 51-52.

<sup>60</sup> Van Beurden & Gewalt, *From output to outcome?*, p. 17.

<sup>61</sup> Nekkers & Malcontent, 'Inleiding', In: Nekkers & Malcontent, eds, *De geschiedenis*, p. 28.

<sup>62</sup> Hoebink, *Geven is nemen*, pp. 51, 56; Nijzink, *Dag vrijwilliger!*, p. 34; Nekkers & Malcontent, eds, *De geschiedenis*, Table 5, p. 400.

Theo Bot attempted to formulate a development policy but as the cabinet fell in 1967, he did not have much opportunity to convert his plans into practice.<sup>63</sup> After the 1967 elections, the economist B.J. Udink learnt on the radio that he was to become the next 'minister without portfolio in charge of aid to developing countries'. Under his charge, the Dutch economic lobby came to have a greater say in development affairs. Udink basically regarded development cooperation as a means for job creation and income generation for The Netherlands. It came as no surprise that he stated, without the slightest sense of remorse, that 100% of the development aid for Indonesia and for 'countries like India, Pakistan, Kenya, Colombia, Peru, Tunisia' was in fact spent in The Netherlands.<sup>64</sup> He successfully lobbied for an increase in the budget for development aid, while also trying to focus using the aid in a limited amount of countries, which led to much discussion within the various ministries.<sup>65</sup>

Before the cabinet fell, Theo Bot had asked Professor Janssen at the University of Tilburg to create a task force to evaluate Dutch development aid. The 'Report Janssen', as it came to be called, created considerable political controversy. The task force was very critical in its conclusions, especially concerning SNV's volunteer programme. Reactions to the report naturally varied. The SNV directorate denied the conclusions, stating these were 'superseded' and did not correspond to reality. The fact that requests for volunteers continued to be made showed a clear need for the programme. The JVC Board demanded to be allowed to see the report and pressed for disclosure of the findings to the general public. Minister Udink attempted to keep quiet about the report, while the opposition tried to use it to denounce the minister and the government in general. This first serious attempt to evaluate Dutch development aid not only led to debate but also to some amendments to improve matters and ensure a more efficient approach.<sup>66</sup>

Udink was succeeded by the ARP jurist C. Boertien, who was in office until 1973. By then the title of the 'minister without portfolio' had been changed to

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<sup>63</sup> Nekkers & Malcontent, 'Inleiding'. In: Nekkers & Malcontent, eds, *De geschiedenis*, p. 30.

<sup>64</sup> Quoted in Hoebink, *Geven is nemen*, p. 55, referring to interview with Ubink (*Accent*, 4 January 1969).

<sup>65</sup> Nekkers & Malcontent, 'Inleiding'. In: Nekkers & Malcontent, eds, *De geschiedenis*, p. 20; website: Arens, 'Entwicklungshilfe und Entwicklungspolitik in den Niederlanden seit 1945'.

<sup>66</sup> Werkgroep Evaluatie Ontwikkelingshulp, 'Rapport Evaluatie van de Nederlandse Ontwikkelingshulp' (Tilburg, 1969); Foreign Affairs, file 373: telegram 28 February 1969, Board JVC to Luns; *Ibid.* 'commentaar SNV op evaluatierapport'; file 702, part II, June 1969, 'Udink oneens met rapport ontw. Hulp'; *Ibid.* 18 June 1969, 'Jan Pronk in economische statistische berichten'.

‘in charge of development cooperation.’ Boertien’s policy was a mixture of conservatism and progressiveness. Among these more progressive tendencies was Boertien’s insistence on the ‘one-per-cent norm’, which had been proposed by the United Nations as the percentage of GNP that each donor country should spend on development cooperation.<sup>67</sup> Boertien’s strategy towards the NCO (Nationale Commissie voor Ontwikkelingsstrategie, National Commission for Development Strategy) was proof of the more conservative tendencies of his policy. The NCO had been founded in 1970 to encourage organisations in the fields of research, information and awareness-building on development affairs. With Prince Claus as its president, the NCO had encountered several diplomatic incidents. In 1971 Boertien refused to give permission for a subsidy that the NCO had offered to the Dutch Angola Comité aimed at a boycott of Angolan coffee, and in 1973 he even proposed dissolving the NCO, which was only prevented by a change of Cabinet in the same year.<sup>68</sup>

### Dutch colonial links

The previous chapter discussed the many political and institutional links between colonialism and development. As Uma Kothari indicates, these links may be best studied through the personal narratives of the people who experienced both colonialism and development work.<sup>69</sup> In the case of SNV, these personal experiences are of particular importance as not only did the legacy of Dutch colonialism play an important part in the foundation of the Dutch volunteer service but the input of ideas and policies relating to colonial times also largely came from personal experience.

By the time the JVP was founded in 1963, some of the direct links to the colonial era had waned. All the same, the fact that the Dutch had lost control over New Guinea to Indonesia in 1962 contributed directly to the foundation of the JVP, which was financed by money that had been reserved for the development of New Guinea.<sup>70</sup> On top of this, many of those working or studying in

<sup>67</sup> G. Ringnalda, ‘Verwachtingen en teleurstellingen. De Nederlandse rol in het VN-ontwikkelingsbeleid, 1960-1980’. In: Nekkers & Malcontent, eds, *De geschiedenis*, p. 208.

<sup>68</sup> J. Bos & G.H.A. Prince, ‘Partners in ontwikkeling. De beginperiode van het (kerkelijke) particuliere ontwikkelingswerk’, in: Nekkers & Malcontent, eds, *De geschiedenis*, p. 176.

<sup>69</sup> Uma Kothari, ‘From colonial administration to development studies: A post-colonial critique of the history of development studies’. In: Uma Kothari, ed., *A radical history of development studies. Individuals, institutions and ideologies* (Cape Town, London, New York, 2005), pp. 47-66.

<sup>70</sup> Foreign Affairs, file 295, speech, ‘Minister Luns voor de R.K. studentenvereniging, Sanctus Augustinus’, Leiden, 20 November 1963, p. 3.

New Guinea had returned to The Netherlands only to find that there were few prospects for continuing their international experience. Unsurprisingly, a considerable number of people active in the JVP had formerly worked in the colonies and its foundation was even partly meant to ensure these returnees found suitable and relevant work. The very first SNV director in 1965 was a former resident of New Guinea who had been engaged in development work. His application for the directorship was appraised with: 'Mister Kouwenhoven has implemented an exceptionally interesting series of projects for the development of the valleys in New Guinea and for the development of the population. He also received his PhD on the basis of that.' Léon Mazairac, the deputy director, who was to become SNV's director between 1969 and 1972, had been Kouwenhoven's assistant during these projects.<sup>71</sup> Many of the staff at the Royal Tropical Institute were former colonials and, for example, the preparatory course that the volunteers received before departure was given by an ex-colonial marine. Advice for the course came from the former director of the Technical School at the Office of Cultural Affairs of the Dutch New Guinea government. He felt that the volunteers had to learn a number of practical skills, for instance, 'working with the *patjol* and *parang*'.<sup>72</sup> Suzan Bolland, in the first JVP team, explained:

JVP actually started when New Guinea stopped. Many colonial officials and military ended up in the voluntary programme. Also the preparation still bore an Indonesian stamp. We had lessons in agriculture, health care and the like all grafted on the Indonesian situation. Hardly anything was known about Cameroon.<sup>73</sup>

Among the team leaders and field staff too, many men were former colonial officials. These people saw no contradiction whatsoever between their former positions and their new role in development. The previous chapter argued that, instead of viewing colonialism and development as being radically opposed, there were in fact many institutional and structural links. Also at the personal level, the policies of late colonialism and development were at the time viewed

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.* file 492, memo, DIO to R: 'Samenwerking JVP-JVC', 17 February 1964, p. 1.

<sup>72</sup> Zevenbergen, *De deskundige*, pp. 53-54; Foreign Affairs, file 544, meeting minutes, 'Korte samenvatting van het gesprek gehouden op II-8-'66 op het kantoor JVP te Den Haag', 2 August 1966 (*patjol* (patjoel): Malay for hoe, *parang*: Malay for machete).

<sup>73</sup> 'Eerst Nederland, dan nog Nederland en dan andere landen', *Vice Versa* 19, 3 (1985), p. 28 ('JVP begon eigenlijk toen Nieuw-Guinea ophield. Veel bestuurs-ambtenaren en militairen kwamen bij het vrijwilligersprogramma terecht. Ook de voorbereidingen droegen nog een Indonesisch stempel. We kregen landbouw, gezondheidszorg en dergelijke allemaal geënt op de Indonesische situatie. Over Kameeroen was bijna niets bekend.').

as a continuum rather than as being in opposition. The first field director in Zambia remembers:

For me, it was a logical choice. I came from New Guinea, I was a former civil servant. There were others with me who were all without jobs because New Guinea was handed over to Indonesia. That was in 1963 when JVP was founded. JVP was looking for staff and now many people with four or five years experience in the tropics were coming back from Indonesia. Fresh people, not those of the old colonial stamp so to say, but people with a more modern outlook.<sup>74</sup>

If any opposition was felt at all, it was between this colonialism of ‘the old stamp’ and the new ‘modern outlook’. The new generation of officials was built on the tradition of ethical concern but they were keen to avoid the mistakes of past colonial policies. When the opportunities to implement these new ideas in the Dutch colonies ended, they were more than willing to enrol in the new Dutch development programme to put their ideas into practice. Even some of the JVP volunteers had been in the colonies: Suzan Bolland, for example, who was in the first team to go to Cameroon, had previously worked as a teacher in New Guinea.<sup>75</sup> These people helped bridge and connect the two epochs of colonialism and development. Their views on development did not radically alter when they joined the JVP and their ideas about development that had been prevalent during their time in New Guinea continued in their new positions.

JVP did not start projects in any of the (former) Dutch colonies as none of the governments of these countries had filed a request for Dutch volunteers.<sup>76</sup> However colonial practice was also used as a source of information and a pool of knowledge for current projects. Thus before setting off for Cameroon, field staff sought advice from an agricultural engineer who had worked in Indonesia and New Guinea,<sup>77</sup> and pyrethrum in Kenya was related to sugar production in Java.<sup>78</sup> In the first half of the 1960s these colonial connections were still men-

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<sup>74</sup> Interview 5. (‘Wat mij betreft was het een logische keuze. Ik kwam uit Nieuw-Guinea, ik was ex-bestuursambtenaar. En met mij een aantal andere mensen, die allemaal zonder banen kwamen, want Nieuw-Guinea werd toen overgedragen aan Indonesië. Dat was in 1962/1963; de tijd dat het JVP werd opgericht. De JVP zocht stafmensen en nu kwamen er volop mensen met 4/5 jaar tropenervaring uit Indonesië terug. Verse mensen, niet van de oude koloniale stempel, zal ik maar zeggen, maar met moderne opvattingen.’)

<sup>75</sup> Verhoeven, *Aid – A changing necessity*, p. 12.

<sup>76</sup> Foreign Affairs, file 319, meeting minutes, ‘De eerste voorlichtingsbijeenkomst’, 11 January 1964, p. 1; *Ibid.* file 22, meeting minutes, SNV Board and Minister, 16 January 1968, p. 10.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.* file 1827, report, G.J. Van Rinsum: ‘Eerste verslag van G.J. Van Rinsum (assistent project coordinator). Periode 19 Oktober 1963 tot 31 december 1963’, 20 January 1964, p. 1.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.* file 21, meeting minutes, SNV Board, 18 May 1967, pp. 8-9.

tioned without inhibition, but after the Dutch left New Guinea, the tide quickly turned and the country's colonial legacy in development was no longer acknowledged in public opinion or in broader political circles.<sup>79</sup>

### Other colonial contexts

Apart from the colonial legacy that pervaded development organisations such as JVP and later SNV, the developing countries themselves were nearly all former colonies that had inherited a colonial state apparatus. Public administration, government structures and strategies in the field of development were in most cases directly related to the colonial past. Especially in Africa, many of the countries to which volunteers were sent had only recently become independent and nothing much had changed in government structures and policies. As a state organisation, JVP (and later SNV) cooperated directly with government officials and ministries. Some of those advising the new organisation were aware of these complexities and Prof. de Vries, for example, thus suggested that attention be paid to the 'complicated colonial administration of Cameroon' before a team was dispatched.<sup>80</sup> In some cases, the volunteers stepped straight into jobs formerly carried out by colonial officials as no local expertise was as yet available.<sup>81</sup>

The colonial legacy not only continued in government structures as a white minority of settlers stayed on in the former colonies. Some volunteers established personal links within these ex-colonial circles, especially in former colonies with relatively large numbers of European settlers. But even in countries like Cameroon, some of the volunteers built up contacts within former colonial circles. As Rob de Coole explained: 'A small number of volunteers felt attracted to the colonial sphere. They liked going to the club on a regular basis and drank themselves into a stupor.'<sup>82</sup>

While this was only true for a minority of the volunteers, contact with other white people was deemed important in the volunteers' social lives. The presence of Peace Corps volunteers, missionaries and white settlers was seen as reassuring for the young volunteers in faraway places. For the youngsters themselves, this argument may not have been all that important but as the possibilities for

<sup>79</sup> De Jong, 'Onder ethisch insigne'. In: Nekkers & Malcontent, eds, *De geschiedenis*, p. 81.

<sup>80</sup> Foreign Affairs, file 1756, meeting minutes, werkgroep opleiding Kameroen: 'Conclusies van de bespreking van 27 juni 1963,' 27 June 1963, p. 3.

<sup>81</sup> Interview 13.

<sup>82</sup> Interview 12. ('Er was een klein aantal vrijwilligers die voelde zich heerlijk tot het koloniale aangetrokken. Die gingen graag regelmatig naar de sociëteit en zopen zich zat.')



recreational activities were limited, any opportunity to go swimming, play tennis, go fishing or horse-riding was more than welcome. Such opportunities were more likely to occur in white circles than in African milieus. For the families of the field staff, interaction with other white people was seen as a way of alleviating boredom.<sup>83</sup>

Over the years, the Dutch public had received information about (former) Dutch colonies: foreign words and foodstuffs had entered the Dutch culture and news about the political and social situation in (former) colonial areas was provided through government and missionary channels. Information about other areas, however, was negligible in The Netherlands and in those days it was regarded as a major step to go to such faraway places. As Theo Huber put it: ‘It was still terra incognita after all. The Netherlands had always focused on its former colonies – New Guinea and Indonesia. But Africa? Cameroon? That was somewhere over there!’<sup>84</sup> Travelling abroad was exceptional in the 1960s and only a few people had experience of the tropics. Apart from state officials and some business people, only missionaries had gone that far.

### Relations with the churches

In the initial phase of SNV’s history, contacts with missionaries were often strong. JVC board members were usually closely associated with missionary tradition and many of the JVC project proposals were developed with missionaries from Roman Catholic as well as Protestant denominations. A number of the volunteers recruited through the private organisations of JVC were sent to work directly on church projects. Yet for the other volunteers too, church ties were often important even if they had not been recruited through the JVC. This was still the age of compartmentalisation or ‘pillarisation’ in The Netherlands: political parties, education, the media and social life were all divided along denominational and/or political lines. One field staff member remembered how worried parents had called him to ask whether their child would be able to go to a proper church during his stay abroad.<sup>85</sup> In one of the introductory courses, some Catholic youngsters had been to a Protestant wedding ceremony: ‘They

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<sup>83</sup> Foreign Affairs, file 1827, report, G.J. Van Rinsum: ‘Verslag betreffende het JVP team in Kameroen. Periode 24/4-15/8- ‘65’, 23 August 1965, p. 6; Interviews 13, 228 and 7.

<sup>84</sup> Interview 10. (‘Het was ook nog onbekend terrein hè. Nederland was altijd gericht geweest op de voormalige koloniën: Nieuw-Guinea, Indonesië. Maar Afrika? Kameroen? Dat ligt daar ergens!’)

<sup>85</sup> Interview 5.

were simply astonished to recognise each other as Christians.<sup>86</sup> In the teams, people from various backgrounds met and, for many, this was a unique experience in itself.

Volunteers could be posted through the government or other development organisations but in many cases they were involved in projects organised by missions. This was a logical choice: 'What we realised immediately was that the mission: Those fathers had been there for a hundred years.'<sup>87</sup> In many cases the missionaries were the only Dutch people familiar with the context in the countries where the JVP, and later SNV, started activities. As matters were difficult to organise from The Netherlands, the missionaries' support was much appreciated, while the missionaries in turn hoped to benefit from the volunteers' work. The state officials working in JVP realised that they could not do without the information, advice and logistical support of the missions. Especially during the first years of JVP/SNV activities, the selection of projects was often closely linked with Catholic and Protestant missionary networks in The Netherlands.<sup>88</sup>

In eastern Cameroon, for example, SNV volunteers worked on projects designed by the Roman Catholic diocese, although after independence, relations between the state and the Church in Cameroon changed considerably. The state regarded it as its task to expand its services in the field of education, transport and health at the cost of the missionary activities there. The churches wanted to maintain their position and came to see the state as a rival. Dutch Spiritan fathers in Bertoua were no exception: they hoped to continue their traditional role and, with the help of SNV volunteers, to reduce their workload.<sup>89</sup> The teams of young male and female volunteers were housed in missionary buildings, where they also joined the fathers for meals. The team leader's house and the SNV office were right next to the bishop's house. However cooperation was not easy and problems started soon after the first team arrived in 1968, as some of the volunteers had difficulties adapting to missionary morality.<sup>90</sup>

Often the volunteers received support from the missions in terms of logistics, practical tips and cultural information. At a later stage, this at times took on a more institutionalised form: Johan Wachters, who had lived in Mali and Ivory Coast since 1965, was asked in 1968 to provide incoming volunteers with

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<sup>86</sup> G.A. Kirchner, 'Visum vragen aan de opleidingsstaf', *Visum* 4 (January 1964), p. 5 ('Men was eenvoudig verbaasd elkaar als christen te herkennen'); also: Foreign Affairs, file 21, meeting minutes, SNV Board, 9 March 1967, pp. 8-12.

<sup>87</sup> Interview 10. ('Wat we ons gelijk gerealiseerd hebben, is de missie: die paters zaten daar al honderd jaar.')

<sup>88</sup> Foreign Affairs, file 1, meeting minutes, 'Evaluatievergadering', 16 August 1963, p. 3.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.* file 1784, letter, Van Heygen to SNV, 21 June 1966.

<sup>90</sup> Interview 83.

information about West African culture.<sup>91</sup> In this era, the ‘spiritual care’ of the volunteers was a theme that was frequently brought up by JVC representatives during discussions in The Hague. Sometimes Protestant ministers or Catholic fathers visited the teams to assess their religious needs and ensure the volunteers’ faith was not lapsing.<sup>92</sup>

### Bricks, mortar and transferring knowledge

The 1960s and early 1970s can be described as the SNV’s bricks-and-mortar stage. Development work largely consisted of practical aid: SNV volunteers were active in building, farming, and carrying out medical tasks. This roll-up-your-sleeves approach was prompted by the realisation that advice alone did not suffice. Reflecting on the earlier Dutch expert programme, many felt it was now time for action:

When technical assistance started after World War II, this first took the form of sending advisors and of allowing young people to go to follow courses in the developed countries (...) After some years the opinion started to gain ground that it is not sufficient to give advice about how to solve a problem or to fill a lacuna (...) Then people were sent out who subsequently converted the given advice into practice for the concerned government.<sup>93</sup>

Community Development was one of the spearheads of voluntary service. This largely entailed informing (male) farmers, either individuals or those organised in cooperatives, about ‘modern’ agriculture (for the male volunteers) and village women about nutrition and hygiene (for the female volunteers). Other volunteers were working as teachers, nurses and builders. In all cases, the ‘transfer of knowledge’ was a key concept: the knowledge that a volunteer had needed to be passed on to local people, so as to ensure continuity after the team had left. This transfer of knowledge implied that volunteers were not only to carry out practical tasks but were also required to teach the people around them how to carry out the tasks themselves. To do this successfully, the teams were

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<sup>91</sup> Interview 43.

<sup>92</sup> Foreign Affairs, file 9, memo, *chef* JVP to R through DGIS: ‘Gesprek met Ds P.L. Schram’, 13 July 1964.

<sup>93</sup> Van der Velden & Zweers, ‘Personele samenwerking’. In: Lieten & van der Velden, eds, *Grenzen aan de hulp*, p. 266, note 6, referring to Redactie Internationale Samenwerking 1972, p. 191 (‘Toen na de Tweede Wereldoorlog de technische hulp op gang kwam was dat in de eerste plaats in de vorm van het zenden van adviseurs en het laten overkomen van jonge mensen voor het volgen van cursussen in de ontwikkelde landen (...) Na enkele jaren begon de opvatting veld te winnen dat het niet voldoende is adviezen uit te brengen over hoe een probleem moet worden aangepakt of een lacune opgevuold (...) Men begon mensen (te sturen) die vervolgens voor de betrokkken regering de uitgebrachte raad in praktijk brachten.’)

to work with local counterparts, to whom they would pass on their knowledge. The field staff mainly had an advisory role, while the volunteers were closer to the 'people' and were engaged in more practical work.<sup>94</sup> To ensure a lasting impact, 'good (?) and diligent farmers' (goede (?) en werkwillige boeren) were identified who could set an example for the rest of the community.<sup>95</sup>

Board discussions in this initial period mainly concerned practical matters: Projects had to be identified and evaluated, prospective volunteers and staff had to be addressed and recruited, contacts with the countries had to be established, transport and housing organised, communication between the field and The Hague improved, and publicity campaigns launched. There was not much time to discuss the ideological background to the activities or the organisation's management framework. Some organisational structures came into existence without any prior planning. For example, in Zambia the function of field leader (coordinating the various teams at country level) grew 'historically' and was adopted later in other SNV countries. There was some discussion about dispatching volunteers in teams but for the time being this system was continued.<sup>96</sup> In general, there was little reflection on the concepts, objectives and principles underlying the organisation. Given the Dutch context of 'pillarisation', there was some debate about the volunteers' religious backgrounds and whether or not they should be divided up according to religious denomination.<sup>97</sup> It was not until 1967 that notions like 'volunteer', 'transfer of knowledge' and other issues were discussed. Some held that the concept of 'volunteer' was too closely associated not only with a 'mud-hut' idealist but also with 'war volunteers' who had fought during World War II against the Japanese in Indonesia.<sup>98</sup> The idea of 'transfer of knowledge' was also criticised: Some felt that the 'possible influencing of behavioural patterns' and 'improving relations between nations' more adequately described voluntary work or, as suggested in another document, 'knowledge confrontation'.<sup>99</sup>

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<sup>94</sup> Foreign Affairs, file 21, meeting minutes, SNV Board, 18 May 1967, p. 11.

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid.* file 1827, report, G.J. Van Rinsum: 'Verslag betreffende het JVP team in Kameroen. Periode 1/1-23/4 1965', 25 April 1965, p. 4.

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.* file 21, report, 'Nota terzake van de vrijwillige hulpverlening', s.d. (1967), p. 4; *Ibid.* file 22, minutes meeting, SNV Board, 29 November 1967, p. 10.

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.* file 21, meeting minutes, SNV Board, 24 February 1967, pp. 6-10; *Ibid.* file 21, meeting minutes, SNV Board, 9 March 1967, pp. 8-13.

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.* file 21, meeting minutes, SNV Board, 18 May 1967, p. 10-13; *Ibid.* file 21, report, 'Nota terzake van de vrijwillige hulpverlening', s.d. (1967), p. 1.

<sup>99</sup> *Ibid.* file 22, minutes meeting, SNV Board, 29 November 1967, pp. 1-6. (p. 2: 'een mogelijke beïnvloeding van een gedragspatroon door de aanwezigheid van de vrijwilliger' (...)) 'uitgangspunt voor in ieder geval deze vorm van hulpverlening moet zijn de goede verstandhouding tussen de volkeren te bevorderen en hopenlijk (sic) te

From the start, there was concern about equality in development relations: the request for volunteers had to be identified by the developing country, the government of that country had to define the volunteers' tasks, the volunteers were embedded in local authority structures, they had to cooperate closely with their counterpart and ensure that their technical know-how was passed on to them, and they had to respect the local people. From the start, these ideals also led to dilemmas. At an SNV board meeting in 1965, it was held that it would be difficult to demand a government stick to an agreements made with SNV, as this might be seen to 'infringe on its recently acquired sovereignty'.<sup>100</sup>

SNV ideals also conflicted with assumptions about development that were still closely related to evolutionism: Backward countries needed to be shown how developed nations had got to where they were standing now and follow the same path. The young volunteers were going to build, plant and explain new technologies with diligence and zeal. 'Do good and don't look back' (*doe wel en zie niet om*). This motto, an old Dutch expression, was being interpreted literally. Volunteers were expected to bring about major changes in the villages and although the local people would, of course, at first resist their attempts, soon even the elderly would see the benefits of the new techniques offered by the volunteers. It was a matter of know-how and show-how, as an SNV publicity film of 1969 put it.<sup>101</sup>

### Setting out

All were keen to start. The first Brazilian team on the boat to Recife could hardly wait to arrive and start working, and the Cameroon teams too were full of enthusiasm: 'The entire period for the volunteers was fantastic, it was all so exciting! We thought that we were working on something really great for the future. We had such high spirits, we worked so hard.'<sup>102</sup>

The preparation before going abroad was not exactly tailored to development work. The Royal Tropical Institute provided a three-month course and the volunteers stayed in the nearby youth hostel and mainly received language

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bereiken'); *Ibid.* file 11, report by L.P.J. Mazairac, The Hague, November 1968, p. 9.

<sup>100</sup> *Ibid.* file 13, minutes meeting, SNV Board, 28 September 1965, pp. 8-9 ('een aantasting van de zojuist verworven soevereiniteit').

<sup>101</sup> Film: 'Ontwikkelingssamenwerking: raakpunt van twee werelden' (1969) in DVD series: 'Een geschiedenis in beeld'.

<sup>102</sup> Mieke van der Heijden, 'Zeer geachte stafleden', *Visum* (January 1964), p. 8; Interview 228. ('De hele tijd als vrijwilliger was fantastisch, zo spannend was het! We dachten dat we aan iets ontzettend groots werkten voor de toekomst. We hadden zo'n goede spirit, we werkten zo hard.')

training in English or French. The rest of the course, partly separate for boys and girls,<sup>103</sup> consisted of 'a little bit of everything. They (the course organisers) were themselves not very sure as to what to do.' What was most important was that the team grew into a close unit during this introductory phase.<sup>104</sup> In later years, the recruits also received some practical training: How to make fire and cook in the open air, lessons in driving a 4x4, how to cross a river by making a rope bridge and other skills thought to be indispensable to life in the tropics. The scouting-type activities had the upper hand, with only limited attention being given to the culture and history of the country to which the volunteers were going. The limited preparation was not regarded as a problem: The people in the Third World had to change anyway, so there was little need to study the context in which they lived. Given the improvised nature of the programme, it was difficult to prepare oneself for the task: Ellen van de Craats had learnt some Senufo, the language spoken in the area of Ivory Coast where she was to go, but as the project was discontinued, she was sent instead to Cameroon, a country about which she had learnt nothing during her introductory course.<sup>105</sup>

The volunteers would naturally need cultural empathy to be able to cope with the problems they would inevitably encounter, but especially the first teams were dispatched in great haste, being considered more of a political publicity stunt than anything else.<sup>106</sup>

Lacking knowledge about their destination, many volunteers had little idea of what to expect. Wil van Steenberghe arrived in the heat of Cameroon in winter stockings,<sup>107</sup> and the Dutch army had provided the Bambui team with ample food parcels without knowing that there was a supermarket in nearby Bamenda.<sup>108</sup> For some of the volunteers, the idea of travelling and living in a foreign country was the most appealing factor and the main reason for joining SNV. For most, the goal of 'helping poor African people', as it was put in those days, was a decisive factor in becoming a volunteer.<sup>109</sup>

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<sup>103</sup> 'De opleiding van de vrijwilligers voor Ivoorkust', *Visum* (January/February 1965), p. 13.

<sup>104</sup> Interview 10, ('... een beetje van alles wat. Eigenlijk hadden ze zelf nog niet echt een idee wat ze moesten.')

<sup>105</sup> Interview 289.

<sup>106</sup> Interview 10.

<sup>107</sup> Film: 'Nuchter avontuur' (1968) in DVD series: 'Een geschiedenis in beeld'.

<sup>108</sup> Interview 10.

<sup>109</sup> Interview 7.



*Photo 3.3* JVP float at the annual celebration of independence, Korhogo, Ivory Coast, 1965.

*Source:* SNV photo archives, Blue, Ivoorkust, SNVers.

*Photographer:* Unknown.

### Light in the darkness

This was the age of African independence: many countries had recently been decolonised and there was great optimism about the possibilities of development in these new nations. The idea was that although some were at a different stage of development, they would soon catch up and achieve the same level of development as Western countries. This process would inevitably take place along the same lines as it had done in the West. Countries were viewed as a whole and development was largely seen in macro-economic terms, with GNP being an important indicator. It was, what Mark Duffield has called, ‘aspirational development’. These young nations would just follow the course that developed nations had taken and all would be well.<sup>110</sup> Armed with the new knowledge and skills brought by these development workers, developing countries would soon make good use of the aid meted out and acquire the same level of prosperity and progress as wealthier nations.<sup>111</sup> A miracle had occurred in

<sup>110</sup> Finnemore, ‘Redefining development at the World Bank’. In: Cooper & Packard, eds, *International development and the social sciences*, p. 203; Duffield, ‘Securing humans in a dangerous world’ (IDOGA Paper, Gent, 22 March 2005).

<sup>111</sup> Leendert W. van den Muyzenberg, ‘Welvaart nu!’, *Visum* (April 1964), pp. 8-10.

post-war Europe so why could such development not happen in Africa too? The aim was to bring underdeveloped people into the modern era. 'The educational task of the volunteer is no easy one, but very rewarding: to bring light in matters that are still complete darkness to the other.'<sup>112</sup> Although planning and policy can hardly be said to have informed the initial volunteers, there were clear assumptions about the nature of the task. 'The main idea is to get the men, who at present do practically nothing, to work and to give the overloaded women a more domestic task.'<sup>113</sup>

It was assumed that many obstacles would await the young volunteers: they would have to change age-old methods of farming and cooking, overcome the sceptical attitudes of conservative Africans, and teach responsibility and cooperation.<sup>114</sup> Furthermore, the villagers, especially the women, were said to have concentration problems and that they could not absorb any new information and would 'become restless' after just half an hour.<sup>115</sup> There was no question about the superiority of the knowledge and techniques being introduced by the development worker. S/he was there to 'teach' the local people and the assumption that s/he knew better was taken for granted. This attitude is explained by Alex Fonkula, who was a domestic worker for some of the volunteers:

We were very happy when the Dutch came; they taught us how we should live (...) I was a domestic worker. I lived with a Dutch man as a servant. I learned how to cook European dishes, like a salad for instance. Europeans were not used to African food, so we learned how to make European food. Otherwise they couldn't teach us how to prepare food.<sup>116</sup>

Local culture was in general seen as a hindrance to development. Although not explicitly stated, it was often implied that the reason for poverty largely lay with the poor people themselves. In SNV publicity films, it was suggested that 'their' methods of milking, ploughing and preparing food were all 'wrong'. It was because of 'religion' that children in India were so pale and thin,<sup>117</sup> people

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<sup>112</sup> Film: 'Ontwikkelingssamenwerking: raakpunt van twee werelden' (1969) in DVD series: 'Een geschiedenis in beeld'.

<sup>113</sup> Foreign Affairs, file 1772, report, T.W. Bieze, 'Jongeren Vrijwilligers Programma, Kameroen, Chronologische weergave van relevante feiten en gebeurtenissen, benevens een evaluatie,' s.d. (1965), p. 20 ('De hoofdgedachte is de mannen, die nu praktisch niets uitvoeren, aan het werk te zetten en de overbelaste vrouwen een meer huishoudelijke taak te geven').

<sup>114</sup> Film: 'Ontwikkelingssamenwerking: raakpunt van twee werelden' (1969) in DVD series: 'Een geschiedenis in beeld'.

<sup>115</sup> Foreign Affairs, file 16, letter, Lieke Koenraadt to Elizabeth, Mamfe, 9 October 1965.

<sup>116</sup> Interview 67.

<sup>117</sup> Film: 'Nuchter avontuur' (1968) in DVD series: 'Een geschiedenis in beeld'.



in Africa ‘want to take care of cattle, but do not always know how’, hygiene was sub-standard and the people lacked discipline and a sense of responsibility.<sup>118</sup> Yet, as the film commentator explained, the people themselves were hardly to blame, as they did not know any better: SNV’s struggle was also one against ignorance.<sup>119</sup> These ‘simple, primitive’ people would have to adopt the only right way of doing things, the way of ploughing, milking and planting taught by the volunteers. Yet, just like the missionaries before them, there were complaints that, after implementing the new methods taught by the volunteers for some time, the local people would return to their old, bad ways: ‘The road to hell is paved with good intentions,’ one of the publicity films concluded. The volunteers thus did not only have to teach practical matters; the people also had to learn about ‘responsibility’ and ‘discipline’. Soon the people would have to ‘stand on their own’, which was seen as a crucial element in development.<sup>120</sup>

It was assumed, that eventually the people would realise that with scepticism alone they would not succeed and that the work of the volunteers would help them to ‘break out of their isolation’. The trick was to start in the village and once agricultural methods had been improved and roads had been built, industry would follow and ‘the first steps on the road to a healthy society and a decent existence’ would have been taken.<sup>121</sup>

In the course of the 1960s these ideas about development, closely related to paternalism and charity, began to undergo major changes, yet they were part of the paradigm with which SNV started out. Such notions within SNV circles about the nature of development were not at all exceptional and in most Western countries similar ideas about development were informing the development discourse and policy. At first sight and according to ideas guiding the process, development was imposed by Western nations, such as The Netherlands, on developing nations and followed a design and layout related to Western notions of stages of growth. This method of Western imposition could not be sustained however, and as soon as the first volunteers were dispatched, the organisation’s activities became a matter not of imposition but interaction, albeit in an unequal relationship.

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<sup>118</sup> Film: ‘Ontwikkelingssamenwerking: Raakpunt van twee werelden’ (1969) in DVD series: ‘Een geschiedenis in beeld’.

<sup>119</sup> Film: ‘Nuchter avontuur’ (1968) in DVD series: ‘Een geschiedenis in beeld’.

<sup>120</sup> Film: ‘Ontwikkelingssamenwerking: Raakpunt van twee werelden’ (1969) in DVD series: ‘Een geschiedenis in beeld’.

<sup>121</sup> *Ibid.*

## Team work

The first volunteers arrived in teams of ten to twenty young, single men and women. They had usually met on the introductory course at KIT and after a sometimes long journey to the country where they were to be posted, the group would have become a close-knit unit. Within the country, the groups would sometimes live together, as was the case among volunteers in Cameroon and Ivory Coast, where they lived in separate villages or compounds and formed a small Dutch community. In other cases, like in Brazil, they were dispersed across the country but still managed to stay in touch with each other. These were young people trying to find their place in society and the ties that grew were often strong. Several marriages, duly announced in the JVP magazine *Visum*, and close friendships followed from the team experience. Today it is the members of these initial teams who have remained in regular contact and organise reunions.

Contact between the field staff and the volunteers was usually somewhat more formal. There was often an age gap of over ten years and some field staff were living overseas with their families. In addition, staff members were on the payroll of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, while the volunteers only received a daily allowance. And, being a field leader in the 1960s required some distance and formality vis-à-vis the volunteer team: 'Contacts were difficult. In those days there was also a larger difference. There was a distance, there was no democracy.'<sup>122</sup> Field staff and volunteers also differed in their cultural backgrounds. While many of the field staff were people with tropical experience in the former Dutch colonies, quite a number of the young volunteers had never been abroad before. That is not to say that the relationship between staff and volunteers was impersonal. Meindert Witvliet remembered how everybody went to church with the Zambian field leader Willem Zevenbergen: 'Even if you were not a church-goer, you would join them as afterwards everyone would go for coffee at his home.'<sup>123</sup> At a certain stage, Zevenbergen had 97 volunteers 'in the field'. Whenever one of them had to visit the capital, due to illness or for some other reason, s/he would stay at Zevenbergen's house: there was always a place to sleep and meals were shared. And when Zevenbergen insisted that this was becoming difficult to combine with his family life, 'The Farm' was built, a place where volunteers could stay during their time in the capital.<sup>124</sup>

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<sup>122</sup> Interview 11. ('Het contact was in eerste instantie niet al te makkelijk. Het begon met een soort afstandelijkheid. In die tijd had je ook een groter verschil. Het was een afstand, er was geen democratie.') Also: Interview 5.

<sup>123</sup> Interview 13. ('Ondanks dat je niet kerkelijk was, je ging toch mee want daarna gingen we met zijn allen koffie drinken bij hem thuis.')

<sup>124</sup> Interview 5.

Thrown into such group situations, many of the volunteers hardly had a private life of their own. With limited medical services, transport problems and few amenities, the volunteers and their staff were often dependent on each other's assistance. The circumstances were often extremely difficult and the teams could count on little assistance from The Netherlands. Relations within the teams could be extremely good but could also turn extremely sour if personalities clashed.

Especially at the beginning, contact with The Netherlands was limited: Mail was slow and irregular, and in most cases there was no other means of communication. Consequently, some volunteers took magazines, music and food stuffs with them from home.

### The other

The volunteers 'met' people in the host countries although many of them were embedded in national structures, such as the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Agriculture, etc. Direct interaction at this level was, however, usually non-existent or limited to sending out a request for volunteers and signing an agreement between the governments of The Netherlands and the respective country. At an intermediary level, the teams were supposed to work with local counterparts, to whom they were to pass on their technical skills and knowledge, and in many cases they cooperated with state officials from the ministries to which the teams were attached. These were people who had had an educational background and were expected to become the cadre in the newly independent countries. Often they were enthusiastic young officials, keen to acquire knowledge and to explore their new powers. The officials in charge were extremely conscious of the power relations involved and did not appreciate the, at times, blunt and open criticism expressed by inexperienced volunteers. Working in a sensitive political context, SNV field staff often had to carefully negotiate relations in political circles. The volunteers, most of them without any prior working experience, were not always aware of the complex relations involved and in their enthusiasm and naivety were sometimes surprised by the reactions their words and deeds generated. In one case, two volunteers filed in an evaluation in which they negatively assessed the work of their counterpart, the daughter of the regional Minister of Community Development and Cooperatives. This made it very difficult for the government official in charge and, while all the lower officials were silently enjoying the fact that somebody had had the courage to openly criticise her, it endangered JVP's position in the country. Field staff tried to make it clear that the volunteers had to follow hierarchical lines and express

their criticism to field staff, who would take the necessary steps to address the issue in official circles in Cameroon.<sup>125</sup>

At the local level, volunteers were expected to improve the lot of the people in the villages. They were to give them advice and to work together in order to pass on their knowledge. Not formally acknowledged but still important were the volunteers' contacts with local support staff, such as cooks, cleaners and guards. These people often became their most important source of knowledge about the country.

As already mentioned, many of the initial teams formed close internal bonds and it was perhaps because of these that contacts with local people were classified as good but superficial.<sup>126</sup> The wife of one of the team leaders remembered how they had once organised a potato festival where they prepared potatoes in all different possible ways: baked, cooked, mashed, etc, but that none of the local people they invited turned up at the festival. They all came up with an excuse.<sup>127</sup>

The volunteers had to adjust to their new context, not least to win over the confidence of the people. Adapting to local culture was seen as a sign of goodwill on the part of the volunteers:

We adapted by wearing *guanans*, the blankets that they wear. It must have been a funny sight, all those Europeans in blankets. Not only to us but also to them. But as a gesture it counted, I think.<sup>128</sup>

Elements of Dutch culture were also introduced into local society. After Dutch volunteers participated in a school party '*Ingele, ingele hopsa-sa*' resounded on the Colombian streets.<sup>129</sup> On the whole, such exchanges initially remained superficial and the volunteers and the people with whom they were working remained at a distance.

This could be different for some of the counterparts or state officials with whom the volunteers and their staff cooperated. Nicoline Suh described the emergence of new patterns of interaction among the local elite, to which the volunteers came to belong:

We had a very good social life because there were all sorts of volunteers: The Peace Corps, the English, the French, the missionaries and we had very close ties and that

<sup>125</sup> Foreign Affairs, file 1827, report, G.J. Van Rinsum: 'Verslag betreffende het JVP team in Kameroen. Periode 24/4-15/8-'65', 23 August 1965, pp. 6, 8-9.

<sup>126</sup> Interviews 10 and 11.

<sup>127</sup> Interview 11.

<sup>128</sup> Film: 'Nuchter avontuur' (1968) in DVD series: 'Een geschiedenis in beeld'; 'Vrijwilligers in het veld', *Visum* (November/December 1964), pictures following p. 6.

<sup>129</sup> Toos Rattink, 'Colombia', *Visum* (September/October 1964), p. 8. '*Ingele, ingele hopsa-sa*' is a Dutch children's song.

made life exciting. We also had great contact with the local authorities. It was one big family.<sup>130</sup>

### Worlds apart

During the Cold War era, the world was not one but was divided in two powerful blocks, with a third group of countries as a strategic playground. There was the age of the First, Second and Third Worlds.

This view can also be seen as emblematic of a wider one of distance and difference. In general, it was assumed that people in the Third World lived in another time, often called ‘traditional’ or seen as primitive. This gap, both in time and in space, showed in the title of a 1969 SNV film: ‘Ontwikkelings-samenwerking: Raakpunt van twee werelden’ (Development cooperation: Interface of two worlds). The SMV logo that was used in those days and symbolised a bridge between two worlds was also indicative of this difference.

The distance between the local culture and the world from which the SNV volunteers originated was considered huge but it was assumed that the local cultures would soon disappear to make way for a modern society along the lines of that found in Western nations. When the first volunteers left, the gap between the Western world and the Third World was thought to have been overcome by only a very few people in the Third World. The assumption was that with these ‘modern’ people, although in some instances they were accused of copying Western culture, one could establish contact. Thus, if a marriage took place between an educated person from a developing country and a volunteer, this was regarded by most field staff as acceptable. Although SNV as an organisation had no regulations concerning relationships with local people, and in many cases no objections were made, some of the field staff openly rallied against such forms of contact. A female volunteer in Zambia was asked to leave the organisation after she married a Zambian man.<sup>131</sup> In general it was felt that especially if a volunteer courted ‘a girl from a simple family, irrevocably problems would start’.<sup>132</sup>

Such cases would usually concern male volunteers and they were sometimes sent back to The Netherlands. The reason for repatriation would vary from fears

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<sup>130</sup> Interview 228. (‘We hadden een heel goed sociaal leven, want er zaten van allerlei vrijwilligers: Peace Corps, de Engelsen, de Fransen, de missionarissen en we hadden een hele goeie hechte band en dat maakte het leven bijzonder *exciting*. We hadden ook een geweldig goeie relatie met de lokale instanties. Het was één grote familie.’)

<sup>131</sup> SNV Zambia Jaarverslag 1970-1973, quoted in Marja Hinfelaar, ‘A History of SNV from a Zambian Perspective, 1965-2005’ (Unpublished manuscript, commissioned research report within the project framework 2006).

<sup>132</sup> Interview 7.

that a boy might be poisoned by a girl's family to the reputation and functioning of the organisation being at stake:

Two boys, or actually two young men of 21-22, spent too much time with the 'loose women' of Lusaka. They made a mess of it, those two. They were excellent professionals but their behaviour started to give me problems. If I made a remark during meetings with the Youth Service about the functioning of the staff or about the things they did, matters did not go too well, I was told immediately: 'You'd better look at your own people.' So it was limiting my chance of working in a professional way.<sup>133</sup>

Interference in the volunteers' private lives was nothing exceptional. It largely depended on the opinion, character and disposition of the field leader. A female volunteer who decided to live in a mud hut with an African family in the early 1970s was not very lucky in this respect. The nuns at the local hospital were shocked by her decision, other volunteers insisted she needed a refrigerator (which she refused), and the field leader accused her of insulting the local notables and of not setting a good example. Despite her arguments to the contrary (the local doctor and the judge did not have any objections when she went to ask their opinion and she held that she had in fact set a fine example by improving her hut with local, cheap materials that were within the reach of the majority of the villagers), she was ordered to accept a luxury villa opposite the *sous-préfet* in a residential quarter. When she refused, she was threatened with dismissal. In the meantime, a Dutch medical official had come to check whether she was living in hygienic circumstances. Only when a Dutch friend who had returned to The Netherlands called head office in The Hague and explained that SNV's attitude was so strange that a Dutch newspaper might jump on the story did the problems stop and she was left alone. A few hundred kilometres to the west, other volunteers were living in similar circumstances and nobody had raised any objections.<sup>134</sup>

For some, the commandment to 'love your neighbour as yourself' and the fear of coming into contact with people from other cultures posed considerable dilemmas. One team leader remembered that a girl who belonged to a strict Protestant denomination was told to remove all things African from her house in The Netherlands, after she had had a miscarriage: 'You must remove it all,

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<sup>133</sup> Interview 5. ('Twee jongens, of eigenlijk mannen – ze waren 21 of 22 – die gingen teveel tekeer met de losse dames uit Lusaka. Die maakten er een rotzooitje van, die twee. Uitstekende vakmensen, maar ik kreeg er last van. Want als ik opmerkingen maakte in de vergaderingen met de Youth Service over het doen laten van de staf daar en het feit dat dat toch allemaal niet goed van de grond kwam, dan kreeg ik onmiddellijk te horen: 'Ja kijk jij maar eens naar je eigen mensen.' Dus dat ging ten koste van mijn mogelijkheden op het vlak van professioneel werk.') Interview 7.

<sup>134</sup> Interview 289.

burn it!' And she did.<sup>135</sup> This may have been an exceptional case but, on the whole, local religion, political institutions, economic activities and cultural traditions were seen as difficult to combine with modern development.

### Some experiences

The first teams had been dispatched in great haste and policies and plans were then almost non-existent. These teams had to be very flexible and quickly adapt to new circumstances and requirements:

I had actually been sent to be a sports teacher at schools in Cameroon although I did not have any qualification for that. They assumed I would be able to do it. But in practice, that never happened at all. Almost all the female volunteers were involved in giving information to local women and girls about food and health.<sup>136</sup>

As there was hardly any knowledge about local needs and wishes, the volunteers often just did what they felt was right. Most volunteers left with great optimism about the possibilities for change, about the local circumstances and about their own abilities to contribute to development. However it was not long before some of them realised that 'the struggle against poverty, hunger and ignorance'<sup>137</sup> was not as simple as they had anticipated. In Cameroon, for example, the chickens that were introduced by the volunteers had a disease that proved fatal for local breeds.<sup>138</sup> And in the same area, the Agricultural Department proved unable to deliver planting materials, equipment and oil for the machines. This led to a problematic situation for all the parties involved:

The farmers count on us. We, together with the agricultural personnel in the villages, count on the Agricultural Service. This service is not able to comply with the requests. The persons responsible look foolish (...) In fact they are not to blame. After all, the JVPers were dropped into their world like a bolt from the blue.<sup>139</sup>

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<sup>135</sup> Interview 11.

<sup>136</sup> Interview 10. ('Ik was eigenlijk uitgezonden om sportles te geven op scholen in Kameroen. Daar had ik helemaal geen kwalificatie voor. Ze gingen ervan uit dat ik dat wel zou kunnen. Maar daar is helemaal nooit iets van terecht gekomen. Alle vrouwen hebben bijna allemaal voorlichting gegeven aan vrouwen en meisjes op allerlei terreinen die met gezondheid en voeding te maken hadden.')

<sup>137</sup> Film: 'Nuchter avontuur' (1968) in DVD series: 'Een geschiedenis in beeld.

<sup>138</sup> Foreign Affairs, file 1827, report, G.J. Van Rinsum: 'Verslag betreffende het JVP team in Kameroen. Periode 1/1-23/4 1965', 25 April 1965, p. 3.

<sup>139</sup> *Ibid.* file 1827, report, G.J. Van Rinsum: 'Derde verslag van G.J. Van Rinsum (assistent Projectleider), Periode: tweede kwartaal 1964, ' 12 July 1964, pp. 2-3. ('De boeren rekenen op ons. Wij, met het landbouwpersoneel in de dorpen, rekenen op de Dienst van Landbouw. Deze dienst is niet bij machte om aan de verzoeken te voldoen. De verantwoordelijke personen staan als het ware in hun hemd (...) In feite

Although JVP and later SNV tried to organise the housing facilities, transport and equipment necessary for carrying out projects, this often proved far more difficult than anticipated. In 1966, Ritse Keestra, who was to train young farmers in how to set up an agricultural cooperation in Zambia, travelled from Lusaka to Solwezi on a tractor that the Zambian government had donated to the project. Completely at the whim of the driver, this trip had taken the young volunteer eleven days to complete.<sup>140</sup>

For the field staff, a number of whom had brought their families, life was not always easy either. The wives of field staff (who in the initial phase they were nearly all men), who had not been assigned a formal task, were in danger of getting bored and were likely to be dissatisfied with housing conditions and facilities. An excerpt from a poem for a field staff member written for the Dutch Sinterklaas festival referred to the appalling housing conditions, the impact this had had on family life and the promises of improvement made by head office in The Hague:

*Want 't is een schande, zo ze je zitten laten  
In een huis met minder vloer dan gaten!  
Je kinderen kunnen er niet spelen.  
Je vrouw loopt zich te vervelen.  
Plezier in haar werk heeft ze niet  
Daaglijks groter wordt haar verdriet.  
Maar binnenkort is 't uit met 't "gedonder"  
Ook al lijkt het je nu nog een wonder. Sint.*

(In English: It is a shame they are letting you stay / In a house with less floor than holes! / Your children cannot play in it / Your wife is bored stiff / She has no pleasure in her work / Every day her sadness increases / But soon your troubles will be over / Even though that may seem a miracle to you now. Santa Claus)<sup>141</sup>

On 23 May 1964, the team leader in west Cameroon wrote that 'the leading principle of JVP projects, namely "transfer of knowledge at middle level" as such is not realistic. It involves so much more!'<sup>142</sup>

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treft hun geen schuld. Per slot van rekening zijn de J.V.P-ers als een donderslag bij heldere hemel in hun wereldje neergeploft.')

<sup>140</sup> Film: 'Nuchter avontuur' (1968) in DVD series: 'Een geschiedenis in beeld'.

<sup>141</sup> Foreign Affairs, file 1827, report, G.J. Van Rinsum: 'Eerste verslag van G.J. Van Rinsum (assistent project coordinator). Periode 24 Oktober 1963 tot 31 december 1963', 20 January 1964, included after p. 12.

<sup>142</sup> *Ibid.*, file 1827, letter, L.F. Kortenhorst to W.J.H. Kouwenhoven, Bambui, 23 May 1964, p. 2 ('Waarmee ik ook wil zeggen dat het uitgangspunt van J.V.P.-projecten, nl. "kennisoverdracht op middelbaar niveau" zonder meer, niet reëel is. Er komt meer bij kijken!')



### Different ideas

Soon it also became clear that the local people might not be prepared to adapt to Western notions of development and that the volunteers might be forced to change their plans. Volunteers often turned out to be wholly dependent on local people in terms of time, budget and organisation and the volunteers' work might be altered depending on local circumstances. Thus the female horticulturalist Miss van Helsdingen in Colombia was not given much opportunity to work in her specialisation: 'above all the women in the *veredas* (villages) asked for cooking and sewing lessons'.<sup>143</sup> In many countries, the goals with which the volunteers had come changed as soon as they arrived in their new working environment. In Cameroon, how to sew uniforms was deemed the most important thing that the volunteers could teach but from remarks made, it is obvious that the sewing course had much more to do with local status than with poverty reduction.<sup>144</sup> Original plans had to be continuously modified and revised.

The volunteers were in no position to push their plans in a forceful way. If any counterparts were available, although that was very often not the case, they insisted on new and egalitarian relations with Westerners. Complaining that two years was too short a time to come to any lasting results, B.A.C.M. van Gool reported from Ifunda Technical Secondary School: 'It was a real effort to get the various competent teachers to carry out this work. Now that we are all equal in Tanzania, no more orders can be given; the work must be debated, induced and motivated!'<sup>145</sup> In other words, there was no way that Western development organisations could work in a uni-directional manner; the projects depended as much on local circumstances as on prior planning at head office. Local politics were part of the projects before the volunteers had even reached their destinations. Thus in west Cameroon, the counterpart of some of the female volunteers was the daughter of the regional Minister of Community Development and Cooperatives and one of the pilot farms in the agricultural projects was owned by the wife of the regional Vice President.<sup>146</sup>

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<sup>143</sup> 'Vrijwilligers in het veld', *Visum* (November/December 1964), p. 6. ('Vóór alles vragen de vrouwen in de vereda's naar kook- en naailes, etc.')

<sup>144</sup> 'Nieuws over de projecten; Kameroen', *Visum* (July-August 1964), p. 6.

<sup>145</sup> Archives, Ifunda Technical Secondary School, Tanzania, File: rapportage, 3e kwartaal 1972. ('Het was een hele moeite om de verschillende competente leraren te bewegen dit werk te doen; nu we allen gelijk zijn in Tanzania kunnen er geen opdrachten meer verstrekt worden; het werk moet gediscussieerd, aangepaard en gemotiveerd worden!')

<sup>146</sup> Foreign Affairs, file 1827, report, G.J. Van Rinsum: 'Verslag betreffende het JVP team in Kameroen. Periode 24/4-15/8-'65', 23 August 1965, pp. 6, 8-9.

The villagers also benefited from the volunteers' presence in quite different ways than anticipated. An example is the description of the first JVP activities in the area of ploughing:

A disadvantage has turned out to be that ploughed land yields worse results than land that has been worked by women with hoes. In all probability, the reason is that less organic material is dug into the ground with ploughing. The cut elephant grass is being taken off the land. With the hoe treatment, the women lay the grass in lengths and cover these subsequently with the top soil of the strips in between. So beds are created on a layer of organic material that, after it has been covered with earth, is burnt (soil burning). Ploughing will hence only yield good results if a fair amount of stable dung is used. In the report period, a simple cart for the ox-team was constructed, originally to transport cow dung from the Fulani *rugas* to the farm. However because the transportation of heavy material constitutes a problem in the village, the villagers are enthusiastic, much more so than about the possibility of ploughing.<sup>147</sup>

While the volunteers saw their adaptation to local culture and even their mere arrival as a sign of their goodwill, local people may have interpreted it rather differently. As Coby Huber explained for Cameroon: 'People only came to our health meetings because they wanted medication. (..) But the hygiene, that was difficult. They listened to us because the volunteers were nice people but they didn't understand the use of it.'<sup>148</sup> Initially there was little interest in Zambia in the volunteers' mission: 'You can just imagine how we, as two pale faces, came across saying: "Guys, we have come to start up an agricultural school with you!" Those boys were of course not interested at all. The first few weeks we were just busy being accepted. In the final analysis though we did achieve something.'<sup>149</sup> These examples reveal that, from the start, practice informed the ideas and policies of development organisations like SNV.

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<sup>147</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 1.

<sup>148</sup> Interview 10. ('Ze kwamen naar die spreekuren toen omdat ze gewoon graag medicijnen wilden hebben. (...) Maar al die hygiëne, dat was moeilijk. Ze deden het dan wel omdat het aardige mensen waren (de vrijwilligers) maar de zin die zagen ze er absoluut niet van in.')

<sup>149</sup> Interview 13. ('Je moet je voorstellen dat wij daar als twee bleekneuzen komen en zeggen: jongens wij komen hier om een landbouwschool met jullie op te zetten. Die jongens hadden natuurlijk helemaal geen interesse. De eerste weken zijn we alleen maar bezig geweest om geaccepteerd te raken bij de jongens. We hebben uiteindelijk wel wat kunnen bereiken.')

See also Kees Hartog, *Thank You Bwana, graag gedaan Afrika* (Bussum, 1971).

### Assessing aid

While the volunteers and their staff regarded their presence as a sign of benevolence, local people stressed their goodwill in receiving the volunteers as guests and showing them their hospitality. The personal bonds with the volunteers were seen as crucial: The aid was not being regarded as institutional or framed within an organisation but as personified. Many interviews started by listing the names of the volunteers. Agnes Bijngsi expressed her personal appreciation of the volunteers as follows:

The Dutch came in 1963. I remember Trees Bolland, I worked with her in Mezam near Bafut in the field and I also remember Rob de Coole. Miss Dinie lived in my house. We were so happy that the Dutch came. They helped us with nutrition, hygiene and advice on how to bring groups together. They brought all kinds of stuff for us, like grain for maize, a sewing machine and a Suzuki motorcycle, which I still have in my garage.

Miss Dinie stayed at my house for two years. There was a problem with housing when the Dutch came as there were not enough houses. So some of the Dutch people came to live with us. Miss Dinie was wonderful. We were real friends. She wanted to do everything the way I did it, she wanted to cook like me, dress like me. She ate everything in the house! We are still in contact.<sup>150</sup>

Mrs. Bijngsi touches on factors in the material and the social realms, without seeing these as being in any sense contradictory or mutually exclusive. Cooperation with people from a different cultural background and building up social relations with the volunteers were mentioned by many informants as their most treasured memory of the volunteers. At the same time, the importance of tangible material benefits was equally stressed in evaluations of the cooperation. This combination of appreciation in the social and the material sphere shows very clearly in the account by Agnes' husband, Simon Bijngsi:

The Dutch were well received, they helped us a lot. You see, the training centre they set up was to train young farmers to become self-reliant. That would help solve poverty problems in the area. Young farmers were trained for nine months in the field of agriculture, growing crops, keeping animals etc. They did a very good job and most of the trainees have benefited from it. Loans were given to trainees to set up a centre for small businesses. When the businesses started, they had to pay back their loans. That's how it operated. Most of those people are still in their small holdings that were set up by the Dutch.

The Dutch were very sociable people. We were very impressed by their behaviour. Friendly, not arrogant like other Europeans like we knew. We lived through the colonial system with the British. Those were very reserved people. But the Dutch

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<sup>150</sup> Interviews 66 and 59.

were open to the population. They used to come over to the villages and mix with the people freely. We were very impressed indeed.<sup>151</sup>

Even if this was formally not their task, the volunteers had at their disposal transport and equipment which local people often had little or no access to. A nun working in Zambia stated: 'SNV's were always a useful pair of hands when the sisters needed something fixed. We had no tools!'<sup>152</sup> The arrival of a team of volunteers must have had drastic consequences for the local economy. In west Cameroon, women were hired to plant potatoes for an agricultural test station, while men were recruited to renovate houses for the teams.<sup>153</sup> As explained earlier, no housing was available for the volunteers when they arrived so local inhabitants were removed from their houses by the Cameroonian government to make space for the teams. This was expected to be a temporary arrangement but when it turned out that JVP The Hague did not plan to send any funds to cover the costs of renovation, the teams could not move to the new buildings and the forty workers hired to do the work were dismissed. One of those fired asked permission to speak at the meeting at which their dismissal was announced:

Sir, we worked well with you and this I dare to say on behalf of everybody present here. But you Dutch, what are you doing here? You Dutch do not have money. If only you were Americans, then we would be building together right now and then our people could return to their houses, the houses in which you are living. Now we are fired and tomorrow we are without jobs. (...) Do you know what that means for us?<sup>154</sup>

Former volunteers were not unanimous in their assessment of their activities. Even within one interview, the evaluation could be different. Maarten van der Hout went back to Issia in Ivory Coast, the place where he had worked 25 years ago: 'There was still a small office, 25 years after we had gone. That small office did about the same work as we'd done: Drawn some plans, constructed houses. That was very nice.' Ellen van de Craats, who had been a volunteer in

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<sup>151</sup> Interview 68.

<sup>152</sup> Interview 151.

<sup>153</sup> Foreign Affairs, file 1827, letter, L.F. Kortenhorst to A. van der Goot, Bambui, 14 April 1964, p. 2.

<sup>154</sup> Foreign Affairs, file 1827, report, H.M. Sesink-Clee, 'Overzicht: Onderbrenging van de Nederlandse Vrijwilligers te Bambui', 14 March 1964, p. 8 ('Mijnheer, we hebben prettig met jullie gewerkt en dat durf ik hier te zeggen namens iedereen, maar jullie Hollanders, wat doen jullie hier, jullie Hollanders hebben geen geld. Waren jullie maar Amerikanen, dan waren wij nu met ons allen daar aan het bouwen en onze mensen weer gauw in hun huizen, de huizen waar jullie nu in wonen. Nu zijn we ontslagen en morgen zijn wij werkeloos (...) weten jullie wat dat voor ons betekent?')

Cameroon, saw matters differently: ‘Transfer of knowledge? As a matter of fact, at the end I wrote a report saying: “Hey, they really do not need me, they can really do it themselves”. There was a very good midwife in Abong Mbang where I was. She in fact trained me!’<sup>155</sup>

Quite a number of the volunteers have revisited the places where they had worked for two years. In some cases it was a disheartening experience, as it was for Nicoline Suh:

It was highly emotional. Every step was full of memories. Yet at the same time it was terribly disappointing. Mamfe had completely collapsed. Nothing much remained of the town and most of the people I had known there had died.<sup>156</sup>

She was full of fond memories of her experience and on the walls of her present house were pictures of the babies that had been named after her. And Dik IJf regretted that SNV had simply left everything behind in Zambia, without ensuring any succession. The buildings in which all the volunteers and staff lived had all collapsed: ‘They (local people) did not want to live in houses where we had lived.’<sup>157</sup>

As ideas about what development work should entail changed so drastically afterwards, the approach of the 1960s, in retrospect, seemed absurd to some:

I think we never actually realised that the connection between baking a cake or knitting a bonnet and the value of development cooperation really lay elsewhere. With hindsight, it was ridiculous.<sup>158</sup>

Whatever their assessment may be in retrospect, their experiences ‘in the field’ made the volunteers more modest about their role in development.

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<sup>155</sup> Interview 289. (Maarten: ‘En daar was nog een bureautje, 25 jaar nadat we weg waren gegaan. Dat bureautje deed ongeveer hetzelfde werk dat wij deden, ook plannetjes tekenen, huizen uitzetten. Dat was heel leuk’; Ellen: ‘Kennisoverdracht? Ik heb eigenlijk aan het eind geschreven in het rapport: ‘Joh ze hebben mij helemaal niet nodig, ze kunnen dat gewoon zelf.’ Daar zat een hele goeie vroedvrouw in Abong Mbang waar ik zat. Die heeft mij eigenlijk een beetje opgeleid.’) Another example of a project undertaken by the very first volunteers and that is still in existence – a vegetable garden in West Cameroon – was given in Interview 10.

<sup>156</sup> Interview 228. (‘Het was geweldig emotioneel. Iedere stap was vol herinneringen. Maar het was tegelijkertijd enorm teleurstellend. Mamfe was helemaal in elkaar gezakt. Er was niet veel over van de stad en de meeste mensen die ik daar had gekend, waren dood.’)

<sup>157</sup> Interview 116.

<sup>158</sup> Interview 11. (‘We hebben denk ik nooit overzien dat het verband tussen cake bakken of een muts breien en het nut van ontwikkelingssamenwerking eigenlijk ergens anders was. Achteraf gezien was het belachelijk.’)

## Changing times

Some volunteers took great interest in local culture. One volunteer, who was sent out as a poultry-farm advisor and later started a farm in Zambia, tried to gather as much information as he could:

I felt the work as a volunteer was interesting because I found the people stimulating to work with, it wasn't just about chickens. To learn what people thought, what their character was. I collected a lot about that, how the people 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.<sup>159</sup>

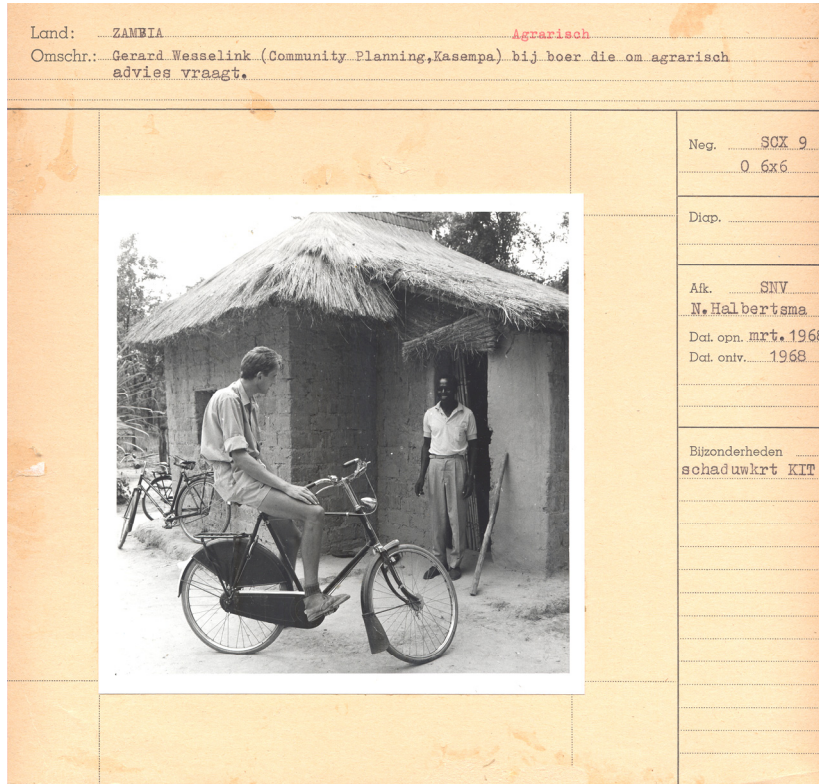
Over time, the contact between the volunteers and the people amongst whom they were living grew. Placed in a new context, the volunteers learned about local circumstances and aspects of culture. A 1960 picture of Agnes Bijngsi even showed Dutch volunteers in traditional African dress, while the African women sported the latest fashion in mini-skirts.<sup>160</sup> The direct contact with villagers, officials and counterparts taught them that development was more complex than it had seemed at first. Many of the volunteers came to see the people they worked with as more than an anonymous mass of 'poor African people'. Friendships were made, every now and then weddings were celebrated, and some volunteers decided to stay. Such contacts made any initial naivety disappear.

Sharp dilemmas also came into being in the political sphere. Volunteers working in Colombia wrote a pamphlet in which they claimed that unless projects were accepted under strict conditions and fitted a larger aid framework, the effect of voluntary service would not go beyond that 'of heavily subsidised scouts work'. The pamphlet stressed the importance of political factors and claimed that only political consciousness built up from the grassroots and the redistribution of wealth could meaningfully contribute to development. It held that SNV ought to make an in-depth study of a project and its consequences at

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<sup>159</sup> Interview 120. ('Ik vond het werk als vrijwilliger wel interessant, omdat ik de mensen interessanter vond dan om met die paar kuikens te werken. Om te leren hoe de mensen dachten, hoe ze in elkaar zaten. Daar heb ik veel van verzameld, hoe de mensen gingen jagen, wat voor een pijlen en bogen ze hadden. Ook hun ceremonies en hun muziekinstrumenten, dat vond ik interessant. Daar heb ik veel van opgedaan, wat mij later toen ik deze *farm* ben begonnen ten goede is gekomen.')

<sup>160</sup> Interview 66.



*Photo 3.4* Gerard Wesselink (Community Planning, Kasempa) with a farmer who asks for agrarian advice', Zambia, 1968.

*Source:* SNV photo archives, Blue, Zambia, SNVers.

*Photographer:* N. Halbertsma.

the outset.<sup>161</sup> These insights, based on the views and experience of the early volunteers, were to have a huge influence on the next generation of volunteers.

The changes not only came through experiences in 'the field'. The initial teams had been educated in the 1950s and by the late 1960s the volunteers had a different background. A rapid increase in the sale of televisions had brought the war in Vietnam and other news items into Dutch living rooms. Notions about mobility were changing as a result of mass car ownership and the large waves of Dutch emigration to the New World in the 1950s that had turned the US, Canada, South Africa and Australia into places one could travel to. Students

<sup>161</sup> SNV archives, Part 2, Box 1, 'Vrijwilligers in een ontwikkelingsland' (s.d. May 1968); Foreign Affairs, file 547, article, 'De frustraties van de jongeren-vrijwilligers', *Haagse Post* (9 November 1968).

became familiar with pop music, ideas of revolution, and flower power. Willem Zevenbergen had already noticed the difference between the initial and subsequent teams. For the first team Christianity had been important, while following groups were less tied to their faith.<sup>162</sup> In a novel on volunteers in a developing country by the well-known Dutch author An Rutgers-Van der Loeff, the changes from the 1960s to the 1970s are beautifully illustrated by the two main male characters. The naive, practical Dirk or 'Joris Goedbloed from Druten' ('Soft touch' from the village of Druten) is challenged on many occasions by the better-educated, insecure, conscious-ridden Lex, who explains the world's problems in a very erudite fashion but is far less practical in his approach to everyday life.<sup>163</sup>

Slowly, a discrepancy came to exist between the SNV's formal publicity and what was happening in the field. Much of the publicity material continued to exude the atmosphere of optimism and naivety with which the SNV had started out. Yet in the field, the volunteers had come to different conclusions. New volunteers no longer shared the welfare orientation of the organisation's beginnings and by the 1970s, SNV's head office could not avoid noticing this increasing discrepancy. The times, they were changing.

## Conclusion

This chapter has described the process that led to SNV's foundation. A first characteristic of this period was the institutionalisation of 'development', both in the formal political sphere as well as in private initiatives. Secondly, the period was marked by a tense, but also intense, relationship between the state and private – mainly church – initiatives in the voluntary sector. In the few publications that refer to SNV's origins, the setting up of the JVP is usually given as an instant reaction to the establishment of the JVC, which in turn is unequivocally related to the foundation of the US Peace Corps. Although these links certainly existed, this chapter proves that the process of foundation was more complex. Both the JVP and the JVC have their origins in a range of events and processes that occurred much earlier. The junior 'expert assistants', the conference on middle-level manpower, the EWG, VSO and the KAJ initiatives point to highly diverse impetuses rather than the single causation model that has been suggested.

Despite SNV's turbulent start, there was no lack of optimism. With the pathos that was characteristic of the time, it was announced that the new organi-

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<sup>162</sup> Interview 5.

<sup>163</sup> An Rutgers-Van der Loeff, *Gewoon in het ongewone. Een verhaal over jonge vrijwilligers in ontwikkelingswerk in Afrika* (Amsterdam, 1971), p. 12.



sation would mean ‘an enrichment, as the individual sacrifice of young people added a new dimension of the purest kind (...) An enrichment finally as it becomes ever more clear to what degree lesser developed countries need training of their officials at middle and lower level.’<sup>164</sup> After a time in which advice had been central, the idea was that action was now required and advice had to be turned into practice. This first phase of SNV’s history can therefore be characterised as the bricks-and-mortar era of the organisation. In the worldview of the time, the teams of volunteers were to teach local people not only about modern techniques in agriculture and household sciences but also about responsibility and cooperation.

Reality proved much more resilient, however, and soon after SNV started its activities, relations between ‘The Hague’ and ‘the field’ became charged with mutually unfulfilled expectations leading to increased tensions between the two. The tensions were often cast in practical terms, focusing on housing, financial matters, organisation, etc. An underlying problem was that, from the start, a major dilemma plagued development cooperation. While formally attention was paid to the needs and wishes of developing nations, agency was exclusively attributed to development organisations in the development discourse of the time. The people who their activities were meant to help were regarded as passive recipients of the transformations introduced by others. The young people who went overseas to work as volunteers soon discovered that the so-called recipients did much more than merely ‘receive’. Local participants had interests different from those set in The Hague and projects had to be altered as they did not fit local circumstances on the ground. Political structures and local hierarchies had a bearing on the implementation of development work and the reason for a village’s enthusiasm was often incongruent with a certain project’s aims. The volunteers felt that there were severe limitations on the changes they could bring about and many came home with views on development that were radically different from the ones they had set out with. The increasingly critical views on the part of the volunteers form the introduction to the next chapter.

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<sup>164</sup> Foreign Affairs, file 1, press conference, ‘Minister Luns over Nederlands Jongeren Vrijwilligers Programma tijdens persconferentie Ministerie van Buitenlandse Zaken op 12 februari 1963’, 12 February 1963, p. 7. (‘Een verrijking, omdat het individuele offer van jonge mensen een nieuwe dimensie toevoegt van de zuiverste soort (...) Een verrijking tenslotte omdat steeds duidelijker is geworden hoezeer minder ontwikkelde landen behoefte hebben aan scholing van hun kaders op lager en middelbaar niveau.’)





## The years of radical commitment: Democratisation and secularisation (1973-1984)

SNV expanded rapidly in the early 1970s and critics from within even spoke of a 'period of irresponsible growth'.<sup>1</sup> The number of volunteers had risen from 279 in 1968 to 526 in 1971 and between 1970 and 1974 the organisation saw a growth rate of 60%.<sup>2</sup> Within this larger organisation all parties wanted to have a say and the period under discussion here was marked by democratisation, radicalisation and political engagement. It was a time of conflicts: between the field and The Hague, between volunteers and field staff, between SNV and ex-volunteers, between private organisations and the state, between the Minister and the Board, and between the staff and the Minister. External critique of the development sector, which took SNV as an example, only led to an exacerbation of these internal tensions.

As in the preceding period, tensions stemmed from structural conflicts between various interest groups, especially relations between the private JVC wing in SNV and the state continued to influence the workings of the organisation. Circumstances were however changing: The churches' role in society was diminishing and SNV was going through a process of 'secularisation'. This was such a crucial change that in 1978 the JVC wing went its own way and left SNV. Relations within SNV also changed in the sense that volunteers and field

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<sup>1</sup> Foreign Affairs, file 83, memo, Secretary SNV to SNV Board: 'Analyse van de vertrouwelijke notitie en toelichting Mans/van Dort, februari '74 aan Minister Pronk,' 5 June 1974.

<sup>2</sup> Nijzink, *Dag vrijwilliger!*, p. 34.

staff started to demand a greater say in the organisation. This was the age of democratisation.

### The Third World movement

In March 1970 a group of volunteers organised a protest to demand more democracy within SNV, by occupying the International Centre, where they were housed during their preparatory course in the Royal Tropical Museum.<sup>3</sup> This event could be seen as symbolic of some of the major changes in SNV's history, and changes that were related to wider international developments. In the second half of the 1960s, a wave of democratisation swept across the US, Japan and many European countries. 1968 became 'the year of the barricades' as strikes and student protests were organised, often resulting in a violent police response. Young people in the Swinging Sixties held 'Revolution' to be the key word and they called not only for radical political change but also envisaged a sexual revolution. As in many other countries, students in The Netherlands protested against the establishment and for more democracy. From 1965 onwards, 'provos', a movement of youngsters that aimed to provoke the authorities, organised events and demonstrations in Amsterdam, with the most institutionalised action being the white bicycles for communal use. In 1969 students occupied the Maagdenhuis where the university offices and administration were located. In the same year a feminist action group, the Dolle Minas (Wild Minas) started its campaign for women to become 'the bosses of their own bodies'.

This new revolutionary zeal was slow to reach the Dutch development sector, and most development organisations and initiatives were barely influenced by the democratic movement and their actions. This also held for SNV: the organisation was not involved as such in the actions and only a few of its members were directly engaged in the new movements. In this sense, SNV did not play a pioneering role in Dutch society but within development circles it did have a progressive image as an innovative force in terms of democratisation and political engagement.<sup>4</sup> It shared this image with many NGOs both at home and in the international arena.<sup>5</sup> Attitudes within the organisation were closer to the NGO sector than to the Dutch state, of which SNV formed part. The fact that SNV combined private and state initiatives for such a long time contributed to its ambiguous character.

<sup>3</sup> 'Internationaal Centrum bezet', *Vice Versa* 4, 13 (1970), p. 31.

<sup>4</sup> Nijzink, *Dag vrijwilliger!*, p. 38.

<sup>5</sup> For example, Michael Jennings, 'Development is Very Political in Tanzania': Oxfam & the Chunya Integrated Development Programme, 1972-76', in: Barrow & Jennings, eds, *The Charitable Impulse*, p. 122.

Public interest in development aid had increased slowly during the 1960s but in the 1970s and early 1980s a massive expansion occurred, both in volume and intensity, and this became the golden age of the Third World Movement. Initiatives that had been taken in the 1960s now developed into strong organisations enjoying wide public support. Development cooperation and information about global poverty became a national issue that attracted large and often keen audiences. Some of these organisations had early roots; for example the X min Y Movement can be traced back to Father Jelsma's calls in the 1950s to send taxpayers' money to developing nations instead of to the Dutch state treasury, and the tax issue had become an integral part of NOVIB's activities by the end of the 1950s. As of 1968 the concept X min Y (X minus Y) was being coined by the World Council of Churches: the X standing for the percentage that a country had to spend on aid according to the UN and the Y for the percentage actually being spent. Citizens were to make up the difference between X and Y. In 1973 the X min Y organisation parted with NOVIB to become an independent foundation.

NOVIB itself also experienced a boom: its *Gast aan Tafel* (Guest at the Table) initiative had 32,000 participants in 1975, 90,000 in 1977 and 180,000 by 1986.<sup>6</sup> The Centres for Development Cooperation (COS) expanded rapidly as well, as did the chain of *Wereldwinkels* (World Shops) that opened all over The Netherlands offering products from the Third World on a fair-trade basis.

In line with developments in the growing Peace Movement, political engagement and radical commitment became important characteristics of the Third World Movement. As with the demands for increased democracy, it was especially young people who radicalised, holding that Western countries were responsible for world poverty and that structurally different global relations were a prerequisite for development. Development came to be regarded as a political issue and action committees that supported the struggles in Chile, Nicaragua and El Salvador drew widespread attention. The long-standing Dutch rapport with South Africa led to support for the strong anti-apartheid movement: the Comité Zuid-Afrika (later Komitee Zuidelijk Afrika, Committee Southern Africa), which had started its activities in 1957, the Christian-inspired working group Kairos (1970) and the Anti-Apartheids Beweging Nederland (AABN, 1971) and action groups such as Boycot Outspan (South African oranges) sought to assist and encourage South Africans fighting apartheid in different ways. There was a similarly strong engagement with the Palestinian issue and the Dutch Palestina Komitee (Palestine Committee) gained much support. Demonstrations against the war in Vietnam and the right-wing regime

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<sup>6</sup> Novib website: <http://www.novib.nl/id3690.html>; Hans Beerends, *De derde wereld-beweging. Geschiedenis en toekomst* (Utrecht, 1993), p. 152.

in Portugal drew large numbers of people. When the regime in Portugal was ousted and Mozambique, Angola and Guinea Bissau became independent in 1974/75 this was seen by many as proof that armed struggle was not only inevitable but also an effective way of achieving political goals. Although not all people by any means shared this tendency towards revolutionary methods and radical democratic ideals, these views had an impact even in the most conservative circles. Development aid came to be called development cooperation and the belief that it was difficult to separate politics and development became widespread.<sup>7</sup>

This growing awareness and the new views that spread amongst people engaged in development cooperation, together with the democratisation movement at the end of the 1960s, proved important to the course that SNV would take in the years to come.

### Pronk and Prince Claus

In 1973 the social democrat Jan Pronk, who was then only 33 years old, became Minister of Development Cooperation. A year later, Prince Claus, the husband of the Dutch Princess Beatrix who would become Queen in 1980, became chairman of the SNV. It seemed an unlikely combination: one of the most radical social democrats and a member of the royal house and, due to his German background, a much disputed one at that. Yet the two were not as different as might appear at first sight. Jan Pronk has often been called 'the minister of national conscience,' and for all his radical statements, he was very much a man of Dutch Protestant-inspired moralist traditions. Prince Claus, who had grown up in Tanzania, had been President of the NCO before he became SNV's chairman. NCO subsidies to the Dutch Angola Committee, and pro-Palestinian and anti-apartheid groups had been much disputed and Prince Claus was moved to the less controversial SNV. In the years to come, the two of them played a crucial role in SNV.

Pronk made an enormous impact on Dutch development thinking and even on its practice. Although some maintained that the influence of Pronk's policy was more limited than was generally assumed, a number of crucial decisions were taken under his leadership and Dutch development policy was explicitly formulated for the first time.<sup>8</sup> The activist development policy, for which The Netherlands and Scandinavian countries came to be so widely known, was largely his doing. He managed to increase the percentage of GNP given for

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<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*; Beerends & Broere, *De bewogen beweging*, pp. 48-63.

<sup>8</sup> Nekkers & Malcontent, 'Inleiding', in: Nekkers & Malcontent, eds, *De geschiedenis*, p. 39; Rob Visser, 'Armoedebestrijding als hoofddoelstelling', in: Schulpen, ed., *Hulp in ontwikkeling*, p. 12; Hoebink, *Geven is nemen*, p. 58.

development cooperation to 1,5%, making The Netherlands one of the few countries that exceeded the 1% norm stipulated by the UN. His policy was characterised by key words such as the redistribution of wealth, poverty alleviation and self-reliance. He envisaged a development policy that would not benefit 'states' but the people in them: the poorest of the poor.<sup>9</sup> With this approach, The Netherlands was not being pioneering but was fitting into the international context and following the model adopted by the World Bank some years earlier.<sup>10</sup> As in the period before, the choice of focus countries (*concentratie-landen*) led to continuous debate between progressive and conservative wings in Parliament. To select the focus countries, Pronk used not only criteria in the field of poverty and need but also assessed countries' human-rights policies as a prerequisite to them receiving aid. This led to much political squabbling to the point that: 'if you mention Cuba, then I will mention Indonesia, ha ha! and if you mention Indonesia, then I will mention Cuba, ha ha!'<sup>11</sup> In the final analysis, Pronk was unable to enforce his criteria stringently and countries like Indonesia, Kenya and Colombia remained on the list. Pronk's outspoken character was not appreciated by all and the clashes between him and Minister of Foreign Affairs van der Stoep were especially fierce. It was the latter who made it public that, even though they were from the same party, he would not join a future cabinet if Jan Pronk were also included in it: 'He leaves or I leave'.<sup>12</sup> His plea was heard and the pragmatic Jan de Koning became the new Minister for Development Cooperation in the Cabinet sworn in in 1977.

SNV was reorganised during Pronk's time as minister. It remained part of DGIS in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs but as of 1977 the responsibility for the final selection of projects and personnel came to lie with the SNV Board and no longer with the Minister. In 1979, a start was made with SNV funding projects itself, especially in countries without any Dutch diplomatic representation.<sup>13</sup> These developments altered the relationship between the Ministry and SNV considerably. Given its dual nature, and being based in private initiative and yet tied to the Ministry at the same time, SNV had always had an ambivalent

<sup>9</sup> Nekkers & Malcontent, 'Inleiding', in: Nekkers & Malcontent, eds, *De geschiedenis*, pp. 33-40; Hoebink, *Geven is nemen*, pp. 57-62.

<sup>10</sup> Finnemore, 'Redefining Development', in: Cooper & Packard, eds, *International development and the social sciences*, pp. 203-227.

<sup>11</sup> Quoted in: P.A.M. Malcontent, 'De schaduwminister van Buitenlandse Zaken. Ontwikkelingshulp als politiek instrument', in: Nekkers & Malcontent, eds, *De geschiedenis*, p. 225. ('als jij Cuba noemt, dan noem ik lekker Indonesië en als jij Indonesië noemt, dan noem ik lekker Cuba.')

<sup>12</sup> Quoted in: Nekkers & Malcontent, 'Inleiding', in: Nekkers & Malcontent, eds, *De geschiedenis*, p. 38. ('Hij eruit of ik eruit.')

<sup>13</sup> Verhoeven, *Aid – A changing necessity*, p. 17.



character. During the first period of its existence, the Ministry had dominated the SNV Board and the private organisations felt their influence was limited. Although the influence of JVC as such barely increased in the 1970s, the SNV Board as a whole wanted a more independent position vis-à-vis the Ministry. At the same time however, SNV started to cooperate more closely with DGIS. Initially, this took the form of SNV volunteers working in the framework of large DGIS projects but from the 1980s onwards, SNV increasingly became responsible for the management of DGIS projects. The next chapter shows how these changes formed the basis of a different relationship between the Ministry and SNV, one that was formalised in the subsequent period.

### Democratisation within SNV

The combined developments in The Netherlands in the fields of politics, protest and engagement were important in the democratisation movement within SNV. Yet much was also related to pressure from the field as many field staff held that those actually carrying out the development projects were best positioned to decide about the course that should be taken. Especially in SNV field offices in Latin America, concerns about democratic procedures were very strong. SNV The Hague was criticised for continuing its programmes in countries with right-wing regimes, such as Peru, Brazil and Chile. National field leaders and other SNV field staff urged head office to stop sending SNV activities to these countries.

After 1966, team leaders from all the countries where SNV was operating started to meet annually at the Veldvertegenwoordigersbijeenkomst (Field Representatives' Gathering) to discuss the future. Later – with the discontinuation of volunteer teams – the meeting consisted of all the national field leaders from the countries in which the SNV was active. At the 1970 gathering, field staff representatives called for a larger say for 'the field' in the policies designed in The Hague and this led to the setting up of the Field Council (*Veldraad*) that was to be a representative body for all serving volunteers. The call for these changes came from the staff rather than the volunteers: field staff often complained about the volunteers' lack of interest in the Field Council and in policy matters generally. In Kenya, the field leader even had to set up the Field Council himself.<sup>14</sup> Harry Sesink-Clee wrote from Abidjan that only a few volunteers had responded to a call to review SNV policy and, due to a combi-

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<sup>14</sup> Then called SNV Raad (SNV Council), later SVO (SNV-Veld Overleg Orgaan, SNV Field Consultative Body) and, as of 1976, Field Council: Nijzink, *Dag vrijwilliger!*, pp. 38-39, 44.

nation of lack of interest and the attitude both of Head Office and the field staff, no Field Council was functioning there.<sup>15</sup>

The positions from which field staff and volunteers related to SNV were very different and this, at least partly, explains why volunteers and field staff were engaged in the democratisation process in the organisation in such different ways. The volunteers had a two-year contract with SNV but they were formally not 'in' the organisation. Their role in the organisation and structure of SNV was limited. Among the increasing numbers of male volunteers, quite a few had become a volunteer as an alternative to doing military service. Many of the volunteers had strong ideas about equality, development and the world's economic structures but did not see their future as lying in SNV. In the 1970s most of them returned to The Netherlands after their contract with SNV was finished. For the field staff this was different: in many cases they had a stake in the organisation of SNV and, although only a few stayed with SNV, most field staff had prior experience in development work and continued to work in the sector after they left SNV. In the preceding period, the field staff had been supervising teams of volunteers who often all worked in one place and acted more or less as a group. Over time, this idea was abandoned and volunteers were placed individually where they were needed and the field staff were stationed in the larger towns or in SNV's country office in the capital, travelling to visit the volunteers when necessary. The volunteers tried to keep in touch with each other but daily contact was only possible if they happened to be working in the same place. As a result of these changes, the ties between the field staff and the volunteers became less intense, while field staff had much more contact with 'The Hague' than the volunteers.

Many field staff held that a change of mentality was required to make the volunteers aware of the wider context of their work and they hoped that the call for participation in decision-making would 'edify them above the bickering over accommodation, transport and payment issues'.<sup>16</sup> This paternalising attitude at times led to conflict between field staff and volunteers, and those volunteers who did want to invest time and energy in the democratic decision-making

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<sup>15</sup> Foreign Affairs, file 29, letter, Sesink-Clee to SNV The Hague, 'Democratisering binnen de SNV', Abidjan, 11 October 1974; *Ibid.* file 29, letter, Grignion Gaajetaan to Sesink-Clee, 'Commentaar op "discussiestuk democratisering binnen SNV"', Agboville (Ivory Coast) 10 September 1974; *Ibid.* File 29, letter, Ch.H.M. Schut to Sesink-Clee, 'Democratisering binnen de SNV', Man (Ivory Coast), 19 September 1974.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.* file 700, van Dort to *chef* AJV, 19 January 1972; *Ibid.* file 29, B. Hansen, team leader west Cameroon to field leader Yaoundé, Buea, 24 September 1974. ('... zodat zij zich weten uit te heffen boven het gekibbel over huisvesting, vervoer en salariëring.')

process felt that, while they knew best what was happening on the ground, their advice was frequently still ignored.<sup>17</sup> The country offices did not have an easy position as they had to follow directives from The Hague but at the same time represent the interests of the volunteers at head office. Pronk reportedly interpreted this position in positive terms and regarded the field offices as a ‘laboratory for democratisation’ that might form a model not just for SNV as an organisation but also for Dutch politics as a whole. Others felt that the ‘endless gassing about democracy and structures’ led to ‘10% working and 90% talking’, a proportion they could not accept.<sup>18</sup>

The V’73 (Veldvertegenwoordigersbijeenkomst of 1973) was especially crucial for SNV’s democratisation process. V’73 was the first occasion on which the group formally announced its plans for the future and the principles of the organisation. A long list of recommendations was drawn up, making it impossible for SNV not to change its mind and hindering the practical implementation of the numerous suggestions made. One of the gathering’s important conclusions was that SNV needed to be profoundly restructured in many respects and that the Field Council ought to have more than just an advisory role. It needed to become part of the decision-making process. The head of AJV was strongly opposed to this idea, but, true to the tide of the times, the field representatives did not agree with his objections and in 1974 once again concluded that the volunteers ought to have a say in SNV policies. In the end, it was decided that the Field Council would have a voice in the decision-making process but that the final responsibility would rest with the field leader.<sup>19</sup>

Decisions about democracy continued to be made by the Board in The Hague and the volunteers’ influence on SNV policy remained limited.<sup>20</sup> From the start, there had always been complaints about the lack of communication between The Hague and the field and within the democratisation context of the 1970s and early 1980s the calls for representation from ‘the field’ in decisions taken at Head Office only increased. At first, the complaints of field staff and volunteers alike had focused on material support but now the lack of democratic procedures was of central concern, especially for the field staff. SNV Philippines felt in 1973 that decentralisation had thus been decided upon in 1969 but

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<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.* file 29, meeting minutes, SVO-Westelijk Kameroen meeting, Bamenda, 21 September 1974.

<sup>18</sup> Interview 244. (‘Eindeloos over democratie en structuren uitweiden.’) Also Interview 5.

<sup>19</sup> Nijzink, *Dag vrijwilliger!*, pp. 38-43; Foreign Affairs, file 82, Reint Rosenstok to SNV Board, 22 May 1974.

<sup>20</sup> Bieckman, *De wereld volgens Prins Claus*, p. 132.

had never been put into practice.<sup>21</sup> In Cameroon's 1981 annual report, complaints were voiced about the fact that advice from the field had not been followed up on, leading not only to heated debates but also to a dysfunctional field staff.<sup>22</sup> The gap between the field and Head Office was sharply felt throughout this period.

They (the volunteers) felt that they had a say through the Field Council. But of course they had no say at all. The decisions continued to be taken over their heads. There used to be correspondence about it and that correspondence was open. That, as such, was good, that it was at least clear how matters were taking their course, but most of the Board did not bother at all about the Field Council.<sup>23</sup>

And the neglect and disregard of volunteers' views was one of the reasons for the lack of interest on their part.

Apart from the general discontent about relations between the field and Head Office, there were many specific cases in which volunteers complained that democratic procedures were not being followed. In Zambia, for example, volunteers felt that SNV had left the Dutch Farm to the Zambian Council for Development merely because it was inconvenient for the field staff to drive ten kilometres from the Lusaka neighbourhood where they lived. The volunteers thought that SNV was supposed to be an open and democratic organisation but manipulation could not be excluded:

So then a Field Council was called and it would be decided democratically that it would be done away with. They played a little trick that partners could also vote, and the partners of the staff felt that it was a good deal. One can safely say that 99.9% of the volunteers were completely against it. And now all of a sudden it stopped. Now there was this weird office in town. The people of those days, they all regretted it very much. We just gave it away! The social function, the meeting point was all of a sudden gone and that was a great pity.

The participatory culture that had emerged in SNV meant that it was all done as democratically as possible. We were allowed to have a say in matters. Also if they wanted to start new projects that would be discussed in the Field Council and our opinion was asked. I do think that we had any influence on the practical implementation side of things. Not on the policy in The Hague, but within the framework of

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<sup>21</sup> SNV Archives, Part 1, Box 21: Joop Liethoff, 'SNV Filippijnen 1973: verdeling der taken en bevoegdheden tussen het hoofdkantoor in Nederland, de landelijke SNV-vertegenwoordigers en de ontwikkelingswerkers zelf', 21 April 1973, p. 2.

<sup>22</sup> SNV Archives, Yaoundé, Cameroon: SNV Cameroon, 'Jaarverslag 1981', p. 14.

<sup>23</sup> Interview 3. ('Ze dachten dan dat ze iets te vertellen hadden via de veldraad. Maar ze hadden natuurlijk helemaal niks te vertellen. De beslissingen werden toch altijd over hun hoofden genomen. Daar werd dan wel over gecorrespondeerd en die correspondentie was open. Dat was op zich wel goed, dat het in elk geval duidelijk was hoe het verliep, maar op zich trokken de meeste directies zich niets aan van de veldraad.') Also Interview 111; Zevenbergen, *De deskundige*, p. 94.

the general policy I think that we, as volunteers in that Field Council, were able to exert some influence. That was really important then; nothing would be done without letting us know. But there was some manipulation here and there and matters were put through if the staff wanted it. Like with the Dutch Farm.<sup>24</sup>

The volunteers' interpretation of events is probably different from the field staff's position on the matter but it does reveal the volunteers' concern about being taken into account in the decision-making process and their inability to convince the field staff of their arguments. Many volunteers were less concerned about The Hague and its policies than the field staff were, as they were more directly confronted with decisions made in The Hague and policy changes. Field Councils were held in many SNV countries on a regular basis but for a lot of the volunteers, the social and recreational side of these gatherings was at least as important as any possible influence they might have on SNV's policies and its future:

Hetty: Once every three months we had a meeting. Then we would sit for twenty-four hours on the train to get there. Often when you arrived, the meeting was already over because of delays. But you would go because it was an outing. Most of the volunteers from Tanzania, eighty-four in total, would gather in Dar es Salaam. It was a big party to be there four times a year. It was called the Field Council. And there were also the regional meetings. With Tabora, where there were four SNV's, we would go to Mwanza, 500 km away. That was also a party, you would meet everybody, and there were a lot of exchanges about projects and you discussed problems: 'How do you solve this?' and 'What problems do you encounter?' You would learn a lot from that. We didn't talk much about SNV as an organisation. If you did talk about it, it would be to complain about things or criticise it (...)

Bert: The Hague was so far away, it was not your concern.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Interview 112. ('Ze hebben toen in een veldraad, dat zou dan democratisch beslist worden, besloten dat het dus weg ging. Ze hadden een trucje uitgehaald dat de partners ook mee mochten stemmen en de partners van de staf vonden dat dus een goeie deal. Je kan wel zeggen dat 99,9% van de vrijwilligers daar volledig op tegen waren. Nou ging dat opeens weg. Nu hadden ze zo'n raar kantoor in de stad. De mensen in die tijd vonden dat allemaal heel jammer. We hebben het gewoon weg gegeven! Die sociale functie, die samenkomstplaats was ineens weg en dat was erg jammer (...). De 'inspraakcultuur' die zijn intrede deed bij SNV hield in dat men probeerde het allemaal zo democratisch mogelijk te doen. Wij mochten over dingen mee praten, ook als ze nieuwe projecten wilden beginnen, dan werd dat in de veldraad besproken en werd om onze mening gevraagd. Ik denk wel dat wij enige invloed hadden op de praktische uitvoering, niet op het beleid van SNV in Den Haag, maar binnen het kader van het beleid denk ik wel dat we als vrijwilligers binnen die veldraad wel wat invloed konden uitoefenen. Dat was toen wel heel belangrijk, niets werd gedaan zonder ons daarin te kennen. Maar goed, er werd wel eens wat gemanipuleerd hier en daar en dingen doorgevoerd die de staf zo wilde. Bijvoorbeeld die Dutch farm.')

<sup>25</sup> Interview 8. ('We hadden één keer in de drie maanden een vergadering. Dan zat je 24 uur in de trein om daarheen te gaan. Vaak als je aankwam was de vergadering al

On occasions, the meetings and discussions stalled rather than facilitated decision-making. Too many items on the agenda, personal problems, practical issues such as transport, legal matters concerning social security, policy matters as broad as ‘the future’ of SNV and ‘development’ in general were all issues discussed. In addition, there were often too many people involved: not only the volunteers themselves were entitled to vote at the Field Councils; their partners could also participate in the debate too. Insistence on democratic procedures waned over the years and disappointing results and ineffectiveness certainly played a role here.<sup>26</sup>

### Our fault: New ideas on development

The annual gathering of field staff representatives during this period not only emphasised democratic procedures but also led to changing views on development. In the 1960s, as we have seen, poverty was viewed as a problem that not only concerned the Third World but also originated there. If only people in developing countries acted like those in the West, all would be well and they would become as prosperous and successful as their fellow human beings in rich countries. In the 1970s these ideas underwent radical changes. The *Dependencia* Theory that was first proposed by Latin American thinkers had gained ground among students in The Netherlands. Strongly influenced by Marxism, these new ideas about development included the idea 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 West had underdeveloped the rest of the world, and only radical action against such exploitation could end the poverty trap in which so many people found themselves.<sup>27</sup>

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afgelopen want dan had je vertraging. Maar je ging wel altijd, want dat was echt een uitje. De meeste vrijwilligers uit Tanzania, het waren er 84 in totaal, kwamen dan samen in Dar es Salaam, dat was een groot feest om daar vier keer per jaar te zijn. De veldraad heette dat. Dan had je ook nog een regionale vergadering en met Tabora, we zaten daar met vier SNV'ers, gingen we dan naar Mwanza, dat was vijfhonderd kilometer. Dat was ook echt een feest, je kwam iedereen tegen, er werd heel veel uitgewisseld qua projecten en je besprak knelpunten, ‘Hoe los jij dit op?’ en ‘Waar loop jij tegenaan?’ Daar leerde je ook heel veel van, vond ik. Over SNV als organisatie daar had je het niet zo over. Als je het erover had dan was het een beetje zeuren of afzetten. (...) Bert: Den Haag was zover weg, daar was je niet mee bezig.’)

<sup>26</sup> Nijzink, *Dag vrijwilliger!*, p. 40.

<sup>27</sup> For more details, see Rist, *The history of development from western origins to global faith*, pp. 109-122.

After the optimism that characterised the 1960s, it was realised African countries were failing to develop along the lines that many had expected they would. Poverty, conflict and corruption were not on the decrease in developing countries, on the contrary. Within SNV, volunteers were the first to recognise that, even if their work had produced undeniable results, it would not alter social structures in the country or improve international trade relations. Reint Rosenstok left for the Philippines in 1968, more to avoid military service than for any high ideals. The KIT course had not prepared him very well for the experience and although he enjoyed his time in the Philippines, he was hit by the extreme gap between the rich and the poor there. When he returned to The Netherlands two years later, he claimed ‘it had been a little bit too much’ and he was ‘deeply touched, hurt and shocked’ by what he had seen. He became one of the ‘Angry Young Men’ in SNV: ‘What is happening here? Such misery there, and such hypocrisy here! We are all so sanctimonious about aid! What are the true interests behind it all?’<sup>28</sup>

Many came to the conclusion that the history of colonialism and now the constraints of neo-colonialism were preventing development in the Third World. Within developing countries, there was a *comprador bourgeoisie* among the elite that maintained existing structures and oppressed their own people. Following this line of reasoning, countries themselves were no longer the focus of development concerns: within countries there were vast differences and development work had to be aimed at the ‘poorest of the poor’. In this sense there was a good degree of overlap between Pronk’s policy and the ideas of many volunteers.

Within the SNV, as in other development organisations, it had become clear from experience that dictating development would never work. Development aid thus came to be replaced with the concept of development cooperation: development workers and the ‘poorest of the poor’ had to work together to break through the existing impasse.

Within this concept, the blame for underdevelopment was no longer placed on the Third World but was seen to lie with the history of imperialism and Western colonialism. Just as Pronk’s policy was informed by a sense of guilt and penance,<sup>29</sup> many volunteers were also left with such feelings of remorse about their own historical and cultural roots. One volunteer explained his motives for becoming a volunteer as follows: ‘The reason that we have such a good life here is based partly on our colonialism vis-à-vis the Third World in

<sup>28</sup> Interview 204. (‘Wat gebeurt hier? Wat een ellende daar en een hypocrisie hier! Wat zitten we hier allemaal mooi te doen over hulp. Wat speelt er eigenlijk aan belangen?’)

<sup>29</sup> Nekkers & Malcontent, ‘Inleiding’, in: Nekkers & Malcontent, *De geschiedenis*, pp. 36-37.

the past. I believe the West has a large debt here and in my own way I am trying to repay this debt.<sup>30</sup> Even JVC board members knew that ‘vocation’ as a reason for volunteering had become passé, ‘international solidarity’ and ‘technical assistance’ became the new key terms.<sup>31</sup>

### Country selection

Being a state organisation, SNV’s activities were based on an inter-state contract, and the request for volunteers had to come from the government of a developing country. The volunteers were embedded in national programmes for development or worked on projects approved by the national authorities. With the increasing importance attached to criteria such as human rights and levels of poverty, the choice of countries to cooperate with formed an evermore complex dilemma. Minister Pronk had tried to limit the number of focus countries but at the same time introduced a separate category of ‘Special Programme Countries’ to which aid would be given but only under stringent criteria, and not via the national government but through non-governmental organisations. SNV’s policy for choosing countries for projects was largely congruent with Pronk’s selection criteria, although there was less stress on the ‘poorest of the poor’, as Pronk felt that this was a criterion difficult to maintain in the case of a voluntary service: the local working context and circumstances (*ontvangst-structuur*) were relatively important in the case of volunteers.<sup>32</sup> Within SNV, fierce debates were held about the projects in the Special Programme Countries group. Some felt that SNV ought to stop its activities in some countries as continuing them would be paramount to supporting right-wing regimes. Others argued that projects should continue as the populations in these countries could not help living under such regimes and needed assistance in any case.<sup>33</sup> JVC representatives were forced to accept the focus countries strategy but did not agree with it, wishing to continue to work in countries with which they had historical ties regardless of the current political situation there. They felt an ‘instinctive dis-

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<sup>30</sup> ‘Jubileumfilm – 10 jaar ontwikkelingswerk’ (1976) in DVD series: ‘Een geschiedenis in beeld’. (‘Dat wij hier zo’n goed leven hebben komt ook door het kolonialisme van ons ten opzichte van de Derde Wereld in vroeger tijden en ik geloof dat de Westerse wereld hier een grote schuld heeft en die probeer ik op mijn manier in te lossen.’)

<sup>31</sup> Foreign Affairs, file 22, meeting minutes, SNV Board, 29 November 1967, p. 3.

<sup>32</sup> Nijzink, *Dag vrijwilliger!*, pp. 47-49.

<sup>33</sup> Interview 5; SNV Bolivia & SNV Peru, ‘Beginselen van democratische besluitvorming niet gerespecteerd’, *Vice Versa* 11, 4 (1977), pp. 24-25.



like' against 'having the developing nations sit the SNV exam'.<sup>34</sup> The JVC's proposal to include the percentage of Christians in a given country as a criterion was unacceptable to other board members.<sup>35</sup>

Those pressing for radical political action wanted SNV to withdraw from all countries with a dubious human-rights record or an authoritarian system of government. Debates focused on a number of Latin American countries. From Brazil came the advice to stop the SNV programme, as matters 'had little to do with fighting social inequality'.<sup>36</sup> A volunteer from Chile wrote that his boss had stamped him as a communist and that he had been robbed by the military and beaten up by the police when he wanted to lodge a complaint about this. According to him, there was no point in sending out new volunteers, as they would merely replace people who had been 'kicked out for political reasons'.<sup>37</sup> Peru was another case in point. Former volunteers accused SNV of following a top-down approach and disregarding the voices of ordinary Peruvians. Farmers gathering at a congress in Lima reportedly called on voluntary organisations to leave as: 'In many places in the country, members of such organisations are developing activities of political, pro-imperialist penetration. They are masking their political activities of a deep paternalistic character with presumed activities of cooperation and international aid.' But SNV did not pay heed to such warnings and sent a new group of volunteers anyway.<sup>38</sup>

For the JVC representatives, such statements were exaggerated and they felt that the politicisation in SNV was completely out of proportion and was leading only to ridiculous situations:

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<sup>34</sup> Foreign Affairs, file snv/ara/00313, meeting minutes, JVC Board, 4 October 1977, p. 5, ('... de gevoelsmatige weerstand aan particuliere zijde tegen het laten afleggen van het SNV-examen door de ontwikkelingslanden.')

<sup>35</sup> Foreign Affairs, file 375, memo, Chef AJV to DGIS, 'Gesprekskring tussen overheid en partikulieren', 25 January 1972; *Ibid.*, file 375, meeting minutes, 'Gesprekskring tussen overheid en partikulieren', 28 January 1972.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.* file 81, letter, ASJV/hr. Franssen to AJV/PR: 'SNV Brazilië', 9 November 1973, p. 4. ('De SNV-activiteiten in Brazilië hebben weinig of niets te maken met het bestrijden van sociale ongelijkheid.')

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.* file 80, letter, J.P. Leyser, Chili volunteer, 4 February 1974 ('mensen die er om politieke redenen uitgeschopt zijn').

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.* file 497, report, Rosenstok to Pronk, 'Visie van de Kontaktgroep Nederlandse Vrijwilligers op de toekomst van de Stichting Nederlandse Vrijwilligers en tevens het KNV-standpunt in de huidige discussie over de structuur van SNV', 19 November 1974, pp. 1-2 ('Op veel plaatsen in het land ontwikkelen leden van deze organisaties activiteiten van politieke, pro-imperialistische penetratie. Ze maskeren hun politieke werkzaamheden met veronderstelde activiteiten van samenwerking en internationale hulp, van een diep paternalisties karakter.')

In SNV there was a tendency to divide the entire world into good and bad. There were good governments and bad governments. All governments were in one category or the other (...) There was a whole list with boxes to tick. There were people on the Board who were highly sceptical about this.

As the average lifespan of many governments in Third World countries was not long in any case, they felt that the whole debate about classifying countries according to their political outlook was irrelevant and unnecessary.<sup>39</sup>

Apart from the criteria of human rights and political outlook, projects in relatively rich countries also evoked debate. Some volunteers in Ivory Coast were even ashamed of what they were involved in: 'The visitor can hear some people say that they do not actually dare to return to The Netherlands because a mother is waiting there – or a girl – who expects to be looked in the eyes.' It was felt that by continuing activities in Ivory Coast, the V73 was simply not being implemented by SNV Head Office.<sup>40</sup> In Nigeria too, the volunteers found themselves discussing whether their work was pointless or not at every meeting.<sup>41</sup> In the end, the relative wealth of both presented a reason for SNV to stop sending volunteers to the two countries. In the case of Ivory Coast, the *Telegraaf* row (*Telegraaf-rel*, see below) – a defamation campaign by a large Dutch newspaper – was also a factor in leaving the country.

The volunteers did not always consider the grounds on which SNV decided to include a country as being solid. From Bangladesh came complaints that the country had been included on the basis of merely one report and later SNV withdrew also only because of one report.<sup>42</sup> While field staff thought that SNV had 'stepped into it with their eyes closed' and it had not been wise to send 'such immature-like volunteers' (*van die opgeschoten-achtige vrijwilligers*) to a

<sup>39</sup> Interview 203. ('SNV had de neiging om de hele wereld in te delen in goed en slecht. Je had goede en slechte besturen. Alle besturen van de wereld zaten in een categorie (...) Er was een hele lijst met kruisjes. Er waren mensen in dat bestuur die daar heel sceptisch over waren.') Interview 244.

<sup>40</sup> SNV archives Yaoundé (Cameroon), Reports and documents: M. de Vries, 'SNV in West.Afrika. Verslag van een dienstreis naar Kameroen, Ivoorkust, Boven-Volta en Nigeria in de periode van 6 november t/m 4 december 1973' (Den Haag, 1973), p. 26 ('De bezoeker kan sommige mensen horen zeggen dat ze eigenlijk niet meer naar Nederland terug durven gaan, omdat daar een moeder wacht of een meisje, die verwacht in de ogen gezien te zullen worden'); Kees Hartog, 'Vrijwilligers in Ivoorkust stelden zichzelf vele vragen', *Vice Versa* 8, 28 (1974), pp. 10-14; Foreign Affairs, file 81, meeting minutes, SNV Board, 28 March 1974, pp. 3-6.

<sup>41</sup> Arie Kuiper, 'Het Kano irrigatie-project: profijt voor de kleine boertjes?' *Vice Versa* 9, 30 (1975), p. 19.

<sup>42</sup> Foreign Affairs, file 26, letter, Annette Mensink to SNV Board, Dacca, 9 October 1974, p. 1.

sophisticated culture like Bangladesh,<sup>43</sup> at least a number of the volunteers felt that both the volunteers and the Bengali wanted SNV to continue. Local people had reportedly said: ‘That is what always happens with internationals: they start with something but never finish it, even though we need them very badly.’<sup>44</sup>

Volunteers in Zambia were unsure as to whether Zambia fell within the selection norms as it was a relatively rich country, even though some regions were very poor.<sup>45</sup> Although SNV activities were focused on one of the poorer areas (Western Province) the reasons for choosing this area were not idealistic. Just as before, each missionary congregation had its own sphere of influence in many African countries and the donor countries also partitioned Zambia along these lines, with the Dutch ‘receiving’ Western Province as their working area. Over the years many Dutch people from SNV, DGIS and other Dutch development agencies came to live in Western Province and one of the streets in the district capital of Mongu received the nickname of Beatrix Road. The director of the local development centre commented that: ‘The feeling most people had was that the Dutch government had a liking for Western Province. Some even felt that it was being treated as a province of The Netherlands!’<sup>46</sup>

In countries with a socialist political orientation, such as Tanzania and Guinea Bissau, SNV worked through the national government. Tanzania in particular became the ‘donor’s darling’ and the country was flooded with projects, loans, programmes and development workers.

### Political action and drawn-out discussions

Solidarity and political action were crucial concepts during this period. Protests were organised against KLM, which was still flying to South Africa, Outspan oranges were boycotted and SNV volunteers teaching in the freedom fighters’ schools in ANC camps in Tanzania were addressed as ‘Comrade’.<sup>47</sup> In many Latin American countries and in the frontline states along the South African border, the political situation was often tense. Travel could be hazardous and in some countries the military and the police hassled local people as well as

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<sup>43</sup> Kees Hartog, ‘Problemen van Bangladesh zijn onvoorstelbaar groot’, *Vice Versa* 8, 28 (1974), pp. 18-21 (‘we zijn er te lompweg ingestapt’).

<sup>44</sup> Foreign Affairs, file 26, letter, Annette Mensink to SNV Board, Dacca, 9 October 1974, pp. 1-2. (‘Dat, gebeurt nu altijd met internationalen, ze beginnen ergens aan maar ze maken het nooit af, terwijl wij ze erg hard nodig hebben.’)

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.* file 29, meeting minutes, 19<sup>e</sup> regio-vergadering Luapula Province, Kawambwa. 30 March 1974.

<sup>46</sup> Interviews 149 (quoted), 150 and 168. Other examples of such donor partition include Tanzania and Guinea-Bissau.

<sup>47</sup> Interview 102.

foreigners. There were even cases of SNVers being thrown into prison on suspicion of being a South African spy. Arie de Kwaasteniet saw a camp of Zimbabwean guerrillas and refugees being bombed near Lusaka and when he and a companion attempted to travel from Zambia to Tanzania, they were interrogated several times by the Zambian police who took them to be South African mercenaries. They were attacked by an angry mob, barely escaping.<sup>48</sup> Even pamphlets sent from The Netherlands to SNV volunteers in Brazil could be interpreted as 'subversion' and led to problems for the volunteers and the people connected with them.<sup>49</sup> In Bolivia a similar case occurred when volunteers were suspected of subversive activities after pamphlets supporting the opposition movement were distributed.<sup>50</sup>

Political action was usually preceded and accompanied by much discussion. And in addition to political action, this was a time of debate about SNV's aims and ideals. In reaction to the vertical decision-making procedures of the period before, the 1970s ideal in SNV was that all people have a voice in matters. Some held that this even became endemic in the organisation: 'All according to SNV culture this led to drawn-out discussions and interminable meetings.'<sup>51</sup> Such participatory methods within the organisations were not always efficient and this was also true of the volunteers' Field Councils too. At one point SNV's director even tried to lead the organisation through the principle of 'creative chaos'.<sup>52</sup>

The stress on individuality in the 1970s and the new ideas about development considerably altered views on the nature of voluntarism. When SNV first began, the 'transfer of knowledge' was seen as characteristic of the role of the volunteer. Soon, however, the aims became more modest, as we have already seen, with some suggesting 'knowledge confrontation' as a more appropriate term.<sup>53</sup> Since the end of the 1960s, the idea of the volunteer as the know-all amongst ignorant locals had disappeared: the SNVer came to be seen as an apprentice and the experience in SNV as a learning process for the volunteer. From the beginning, the notion of SNV as a pedagogical institute had been important and youngsters were to learn through contact with people from other cultures. Now, ex-volunteers mentioned the learning process of the volunteer

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<sup>48</sup> Interviews 118, 8, 111, 112, 139 and 151.

<sup>49</sup> Foreign Affairs, file 497, letter, n.n. to Rosenstok, 4 July 1974.

<sup>50</sup> Interview 267.

<sup>51</sup> Zevenbergen, *De deskundige*, p. 92. ('Geheel naar SNV-cultuur leidde dat tot uitgesponnen discussies en urenlange vergaderingen.')

<sup>52</sup> Nijzink, *Dag vrijwilliger!*, p. 43.

<sup>53</sup> Foreign Affairs, file 11, report by L.P.J. Mazairac, The Hague, November 1968, p. 9.

rather than that of their counterpart or any other local participant, as an explicit aim of the organisation.<sup>54</sup>

Some people came to see SNV as a road to self-realisation; a means of expanding one's mind and developing one's personality. This philosophy grew in importance in SNV's Human Resources Department, leading to fierce conflict with the more pragmatic Board and the young radical graduates who wanted action. Former volunteers within and outside the organisation had an awkward relationship with SNV, while problematic relations between the state and private initiatives were still unresolved. Combined with a 'democratisation discussion gone off the rails' and pressure from the Minister to transform the organisation, SNV became plagued by internal divisions and tensions.<sup>55</sup>

Although in a very different manner to those before them, SNV volunteers in the 1970s still believed that they could change the world. With their radical stance and their principled approach, they often clashed with the pragmatism of the generation before them, or even with peers of a more practical nature, both in The Hague and in the field. Aldert van der Vinne, who was in Zambia from 1979 onwards, was ten years older than most of the other volunteers, had already had work experience, had a family to care for and was of a practical nature. He explained how his opinion about the role of SNV contrasted with that of a new incoming volunteer:

When a new volunteer arrived, he first had to stay with somebody who had already been there for a while. I was allocated one for two and a half weeks. It was someone who had completed agricultural university so he had had a better education than me and I looked up to him a little for that reason. The first day he asked me: 'Do you speak all these languages?' and I told him that it was nothing special. But he was very impressed and told me that according to the Zambians I spoke their languages very well. I told him that Zambians always say so until they want something from me that they do not get, then I am the worst person in the world again!

After a couple of days I told him: 'Hey, 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 with 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 as well! 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!'

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<sup>54</sup> Foreign Affairs, file 497, letter, Rosenstok to Pronk, 'Visie van de Kontaktgroep Nederlandse Vrijwilligers op de toekomst van de Stichting Nederlandse Vrijwilligers en tevens het KNV-standpunt in de huidige discussie over de structuur van SNV', 19 November 1974, p. 5; On their SNV time as learning experience, see Interviews 10, 113, 116, 168, 266, 287 and 289.

<sup>55</sup> Interviews 5 and 204. W.A. Erath, 'De grenzen van het vrijwilliger zijn,' *Vice Versa* 8, 24 (1973), p.17; Nijzink, *Dag vrijwilliger!*, pp. 43, 53 ('doldraaiende democratiseringsdiscussie').

After a week or so 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. He will not be able to do it yet but then he will know that it is better that I teach him because he sees that I am able to do it. That is much better than standing on the sidelines telling him I don't know either, while I do know and he doesn't know, and he knows that I know.' After a week the volunteer said: 'On the one hand I think it is great the way you are working here but I do still have some criticism.' 'Oh yeah, like what?' I asked him. 'Well, you are doing all the work yourself!'

So I told him: 'Of course man! All the work needs to be done, right? There is only one planting season. At a certain moment you have to plant the maize, that is when you have to do it! You could start like, 'Well let's talk about this', but then you're already too late!' 'Not really,' the volunteer responded, 'you have to look at it differently. Don't you think that the most important task you have is to make yourself superfluous?' I told him: 'Now you tell me, what do you see as your most important task here?' 'Well, to make myself superfluous.' I said: 'Boy, pack your bags and go home. Nobody here asked for you, you are completely superfluous, really. Just stop it! Boy, I can only give you one piece of advice: Go back to Lusaka, talk to SNV and tell them: "I think I am making myself completely superfluous by taking a plane" and leave. Boy, that is just complete bullshit! We came here to work for a job!'

The new volunteer was later removed by the Zambian authorities for being lazy.<sup>56</sup>

Similarly in Guinea Bissau intense conflict arose over practice and ideology. Volunteers had initially been recruited through the Eduardo Mondlane Foundation, while DGIS people and SNV volunteers were hired through standard recruitment channels. In the small village of Buba they were put to work on a water-supply project. The differences between the various groups soon led to a dramatic situation. The field director Jan van Maanen felt that it was the intolerant and orthodox attitudes of some of the Mondlane adepts that made life impossible: 'If one of the SNV volunteers asked: "Shall we go fishing over the weekend?", the Mondlane people would exclaim: "What?! Fishing? Nothing of the sort! We must serve the people, so we will have a meeting."'<sup>57</sup> Others felt that it was congruent with the *élan* of the time: some of the Dutch people in Guinea Bissau had been engaged in the struggle for independence from Portuguese colonialism and among the volunteers as well as among the population, there was true enthusiasm for the socialist programme of the ruling political

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<sup>56</sup> Interview 113.

<sup>57</sup> Interview 18. ('Vroeg iemand van SNV: 'Zullen we lekker gaan vissen dit weekend?' Die Mondlaners zeiden dan: 'Wat vissen?! We gaan helemaal niet vissen! We moeten het volk dienen en dus vergaderen.')

party. Van Maanen was by some seen as a ‘Nosey Parker who interfered in matters they could handle themselves’.<sup>58</sup>

In retrospect (but only in retrospect), some former volunteers agreed that it was not always wise to draw each and every one into the decision-making process:

Jacob: Those days were really the days of democratisation. Everybody wanted to participate in the management.

Carla: Because didn’t we all knew how matters should go?! And didn’t we all have such good ideas?! We really didn’t get it that they did not understand that!

Jacob: We did not understand that The Hague sometimes had to take decisions without each and every idiot in the field airing his view first! And we were consulted; we also had this Field Council.

Carla: There was no email or fax then, so communication did not go very fast with letters. So we would learn that they had decided something and then we would ask ourselves why we had this so-called democratisation anyhow.<sup>59</sup>

After eleven years in SNV service, one of the first-generation volunteers, Elizabeth Badon-Ghijben, stated in an interview that volunteers ‘cannot bring about the revolution.’<sup>60</sup>

## The B Objective

New ideas about development led to the conclusion that matters not only depended on actions in the Third World but that changes in Western societies were equally necessary. Development was not merely a matter of ‘a helping hand to a developing land’, as the slogan in the 1960s went,<sup>61</sup> it needed awareness and the conscientisation of people in the West.

<sup>58</sup> Informal conversation with former Guinea Bissau volunteer; ‘SNV had meer eisen moeten stellen’, *Vice Versa* 20, 4 (1986), pp. 28-32 (‘een pottekijker die zich met zaken kwam bemoeien die zij zelf wel aankonden’).

<sup>59</sup> Interview 111. (‘Jacob: En die tijd was echt de tijd van de inspraak natuurlijk. Iedereen wilde mee regeren. Carla: Want we wisten toch allemaal hoe het moest? We hadden toch hele goeie ideeën? We snapten ook niet dat ze dat niet begrepen! Jacob: We snapten niet dat Den-Haag soms wel eens beslissingen moest nemen zonder dat iedere idioot uit het veld daar zijn mening over had! Er werd wel naar onze mening gevraagd, we hadden ook die veldraad. Carla: Er was ook geen e-mail en geen fax, dus per brief ging de communicatie niet erg snel. Dan werd verteld dat ze al zus of zo besloten hadden en dan vroegen wij ons af waarom er dan zogenaamd inspraak was.’)

<sup>60</sup> Marjanke Spanjer, ‘Elizabeth Badon Ghijber verlaat de SNV’, *Vice Versa* 8, 29 (1974), pp. 12-13 (‘dat onze vrijwilligers geen middel kunnen zijn om een revolutie tot stand te brengen’).

<sup>61</sup> Film: ‘Ontwikkelingssamenwerking: raakpunt van twee werelden’ (1969) in DVD series: ‘Een geschiedenis in beeld’.



Photo 4.2 SNV's B Objective: 'Bram Schutte in Burkina'.  
 Source: SNV photo archives, White, Tanzania, B-vorming.  
 Photographer: Jaap Pieper.

A Dutch proverb roughly meaning 'He who says A, has to say B as well' (*Wie A zegt, moet ook B zeggen*) was used as a slogan to introduce a new SNV objective that started in 1974. The B Objective, with the 'B' standing for the Dutch word for awareness (*bewustwording*), was to create awareness amongst the Dutch populace about the issue of development and SNV's role in it. In the eyes of the more radical (former) volunteers, the B Objective was to receive more attention than the A objective of 'aid':

It means that the A Objective, which it is now unthinkingly assumed to mean 'aid' and which KNV on the basis of experience, evaluation and consideration has to say that this is often not the case, has to be changed profoundly and be moved to the second plan (we can after all only be very modest about its significance) and that the B Objective, hitherto only be put into practice by former volunteers themselves, while, to put it mildly, not being encouraged by SNV, become the most important goal of the organisation.<sup>62</sup>

<sup>62</sup> Foreign Affairs, file 497, letter, Rosenstok to Pronk, 'Visie van de Kontaktgroep Nederlandse Vrijwilligers op de toekomst van de Stichting Nederlandse Vrijwilligers en tevens het KNV-standpunt in de huidige discussie over de structuur van SNV', 19 November 1974, p. 7. ('... dat doelstelling-A, waarvan nu maar klakkeloos wordt



In practice the B Objective meant that returning volunteers would tour the country providing information about development issues, educational work or voluntary service in the NGO sector.

That was really being drummed in. There was the A Objective (being sent overseas) and there was the B Objective when you got back. I did the B Objective when I returned. I was on the Tanzania Committee for a while and volunteered in a Fair Trade shop (*Wereldwinkel*). I set up a documentation centre and we went to youth centres and schools to present papers. We taught them songs, like *Kaka Joni* (Brother John in Swahili). I did that for years.<sup>63</sup>

*Vice Versa*, the SNV magazine that was first published in 1967, was considered an ideal tool for the new SNV task of enhancing awareness about development among the Dutch public. In the famous Socutera films, Dutch people were to learn about SNV's work on television through succinct ten- to twenty-minute films highlighting SNV projects. Although the films frequently mentioned problems and difficulties, the overall image was usually positive about the results of the volunteers' work. SNV's B Objective involved a greater presence in the media. The SNV volunteer Miss Dollekamp participated in the quiz: 'Wat doe je voor de kost?', which resulted in requests for more information, and two marriage proposals. Even an imaginary SNVer was invented: Bram Schutte in Burkina, a character who gave information about development work and the Third World, mainly in schools.<sup>64</sup> Over the years, the importance of the B Objective increased sharply. In 1977 it officially became part of SNV's policy and was institutionalised in 1981 in the name change: SNV (Stichting Nederlandse Vrijwilligers) became SNV Organisatie voor Ontwikkelingssamenwerking en Bewustwording (Organisation for Development Cooperation and Awareness).

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aangenomen dat zij "hulp" betekent en waarvan KNV op basis van ervaring, evaluatie en bezinning moet zeggen dat dit veelal niet het geval is, sterk gewijzigd wordt en naar het tweede plan verhuist (we kunnen immers niet anders dan zeer bescheiden zijn over de betekenis hiervan) en dat doelstelling-B, tot nu toe alleen door de ex-vrijwilligers zelf in de praktijk gebracht, daarbij op z'n zachtst gezegd niet gestimuleerd door SNV, het belangrijkste doel van de organisatie wordt.)

<sup>63</sup> Interview 8. (Hetty: 'Dat werd er echt ingepompt. Je had de A-doelstelling, het uitgezonden worden en de B-doelstelling was hier terug. Ik heb bij terugkomst de B-doelstelling gedaan. Ik heb toen een tijd in het Tanzania Comité gezeten en in de Wereldwinkel. Ik heb een documentatie centrum opgezet. We gingen naar jongeren-centra, scholen, daar gingen we lezingen geven en leerden we ze liedjes, zoals Kaka Joni. Dat heb ik jaren gedaan.')

<sup>64</sup> Nijzink, *Dag vrijwilliger!*, p. 59; 'Vrijwilligers op de buis', *Vice Versa*, 8, 26 (1974), p. 31; Marjanke Spanjer, 'Bram Schutte lééft op vele scholen!', *Vice Versa*, 8, 29 (1974), pp. 21-23.

Despite investments in the B Objective, the initiative did not enjoy resounding success. The criteria used for the selection of volunteers with technical expertise turned out not to be ideal when selecting the people to give information to lay audiences. Also some volunteers returned home disappointed and very critical of the organisation they had worked for, and others spoke negatively about their experiences. To overcome such problems, a special Information Pool was set up of motivated people with obvious didactic qualities. For a long time it was not clear what the B Objective entailed and even in 1987 some thought that special B SNVer's would be hired, but how this would be implemented nobody knew. During one of the meetings in Tanzania's Northern Region, the following question was asked: 'What is a B SNVer?' 'We can't say' was the answer. Others assumed that the publicity work would remain an extra task on top of the A work in the field.<sup>65</sup>

The most fundamental issue plaguing the implementation of the B Objective was the varied interpretation of its role. Several board members saw the B Objective primarily as an interesting way of promoting SNV as an organisation and wanted to relate awareness of development issues to SNV's publicity campaign. Radical former volunteers did not share this view, seeing it as one of the problems of Dutch development aid that, while SNV only accounted for 0.001% of GNP, the organisation was strongly mediated and over-determining in its image of Dutch development for the general public. For them, the B Objective was one way of unmasking this distortion of the truth.<sup>66</sup> However others felt that by overstressing conscientisation in The Netherlands, less attention was paid to people in the developing world. Too much 'navel gazing' did not do justice to SNV's main aim.<sup>67</sup>

A 1985 evaluation concluded that SNV had not used all the possibilities available to the full in efforts to implement the B Objective. Formally conscientisation remained an objective until the early 1990s but, by then, it was generally felt that other organisations were much better equipped to provide information about development to the Dutch public than SNV was.<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>65</sup> Archives SNV Tanzania, Dar es Salaam, Box: 'Physiotherapy – '85-'89, etc', File: 'B Objective': Minutes of the Regional Meeting Northern Region, 1 November 1986; *Ibid.* letter Rob Visser, Dar es Salaam, 22 September 1987.

<sup>66</sup> Interview 204.

<sup>67</sup> Interview 5.

<sup>68</sup> *Programma evaluatie SNV, SNV goed bekeken!* (Den Haag, 1985), pp. 6, 31-36; Van der Velden & Zweers, 'Personele samenwerking', in: Lieten & Van der Velden, eds, *Grenzen aan de hulp*, pp. 258-259. Also Interview 17.

### Returned volunteers and the KNV

The B Objective had an important side-effect in that after completing their contracts volunteers stayed in touch with the organisation and the development branch.<sup>69</sup> In many cases, returning home proved difficult, as one volunteer explained:

Upon coming back, people are full of interest and ask how it was and what you did. But that is all. They are not *really* interested in the problems that you have seen and the place you lived. Conversations always remain somewhat superficial.<sup>70</sup>

Some volunteers kept in contact with others after their return and a committee of ex-volunteers had been set up by the end of the 1960s. They had tried to garner political influence within SNV as an organisation but Minister of Development Udink at the time had blocked all participation. Although this initiative was discontinued, in 1970 the Kontaktgroep Nederlandse Vrijwilligers (Contact Group of Dutch Volunteers) was founded. At first, reunions of former volunteers were the group's most important activity, but soon more radical ex-volunteers became influential in KNV and they sought to alter SNV's structure. After Boertien had taken over the ministerial post, the ex-volunteers gained two seats on the SNV Board. Especially when Jan Pronk became minister, KNV representatives were allowed some room for political manoeuvre and the group's influence rose over the years. Their role in SNV's democratisation process, the B Objective and the selection of projects and countries cannot be overestimated. The presence of KNV'ers on the Board led to comical exchanges: the style of these young radical former volunteers – with their long hair and beards, velvet corduroy trousers and sandals – did not quite match with the aristocratic manners of Prince Claus, the administration-minded officials representing the Ministry and the inner circle of JVC representatives. One of the KNV'ers, to everyone's amusement, once said to Prince Claus at a board meeting: 'Mister President, that's complete bullshit!'<sup>71</sup>

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<sup>69</sup> Interview 1.

<sup>70</sup> Arie Kuiper, 'Teruggekeerde vrijwilligers', *Vice Versa* 8, 26 (1974), p. 25. ('Als je terugkomt (...) vragen de mensen vol belangstelling hoe het is geweest en wat je zo ongeveer hebt gedaan. Maar daar blijft het bij. Ze interesseren zich niet écht voor de problemen die je hebt gezien, voor de situatie waarin je hebt geleefd. De gesprekken blijven altijd een beetje oppervlakkig.') See also Rutgers-van der Loeff, *Gewoon in het ongewone*, p. 143; 'Terugkerende vrijwilligers krijgen een koude douche – wat kan daaraan gedaan worden?', *Vice Versa* 12, 1 (1978), pp. 31-33; and Maaïke Maria van Vliet, 'In Nederland voelde ik me als een weerloos schepsel', *Vice Versa* 12, 4 (1978), pp. 2-3.

<sup>71</sup> Interview 5. ('Meneer de voorzitter, dat is groot gelul!')

On the whole however, there was little reason for laughter at meetings as relations between the KNV's and the rest of the Board were uneasy from the start. In the KNV's view, the 'Old Guard' of state officials and JVC representatives were engaged in horse trading and mutually approving each others' projects without any real analysis.<sup>72</sup> The other board members felt that the KNV's brought unnecessary polarisation and politicisation, stalled decision-making with their endless discussion about structures and democratisation, and in general lacked any team spirit. They appeared to merely want to oppose anything other board members suggested. Jos van Gennip remembered: 'I used to cycle to the meeting every month in a bad mood. Those meetings always turned into a brawl.'<sup>73</sup>

While some asked whether KNV was in fact representative of all former volunteers,<sup>74</sup> it generally enjoyed a great deal of support from volunteers still in the field and from those who had completed their contracts. KNV meetings easily drew audiences of 250 to 300 and the group's ideas on change were highly influential. The first SNV policy document of 13 January 1977 was thus entitled 'Voluntary but not without Engagement' (*Vrijwillig niet vrijblijvend*), just like the KNV congress held in Odijk some years earlier.<sup>75</sup> This is not to say that there was no strife within KNV itself and while many had joined merely for the social aspect, the relatively radical KNV Board was challenged by Marxists and Leninists even further to the political left. And at the 'Vrijwillig niet vrijblijvend' gathering, they even nearly succeeded in ousting the KNV Board.<sup>76</sup>

### Critique from the right

Through the B Objective and KNV, the returned volunteer came to play an increasingly important role in the organisation. SNV's image in The Netherlands depended to a large extent on returnees, not an insignificant fact given that SNV had a relatively important role in promoting Dutch development cooperation. As already indicated, the accounts the returned volunteers gave of their experiences were not always positive. Their critique was usually inspired by

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<sup>72</sup> Interview 204.

<sup>73</sup> Interview 242. ('Ik fietste iedere maand met een ontzettend kwaai kop naar dat bestuur toe. Dat was een potje vechten, dat bestuur.') Also Interviews 5 and 203.

<sup>74</sup> Foreign Affairs, file 497, letter, Ten Hove (volunteer in Campina Grande) to Erath, 12 April 1974.

<sup>75</sup> Arie Kuiper, 'Vrijwilligerswerk in discussie', *Vice Versa* 8, 28 (1974), p. 3; Nijzink, *Dag vrijwilliger!*, p. 61; Interview 204, Foreign Affairs, file snv/ara/00313, KNV to Minister, KNV congress 'SNV-beleid in uitvoering?', 7 April 1978.

<sup>76</sup> Interview 204.

leftist thinking but the Dutch right-wing press eagerly attacked the organisation, sometimes quoting the stories of disappointed volunteers.

Such tales certainly had an impact. On 19 January 1974, under the headline *Treurige terugkeer van een vrijwilliger uit Afrika: De verloren jaren van Raoul Snelder* ('The sad return of a volunteer from Africa: the lost years of Raoul Snelder'), *De Telegraaf* featured the story of the thousandth volunteer who had signed his contract with SNV in the presence of Minister Boertien some years earlier amid much festivity. Raoul Snelder had been talked into giving an interview by a member of SNV's PR staff who argued that an interview with a quality newspaper would only amount to 'preaching to the converted' and that his account would be balanced by other, more positive accounts. These turned out to be false promises as the journalist, Henk de Mari, merely used Snelder's account to attack SNV and the Minister for Development Cooperation.<sup>77</sup> After its publication, Snelder wrote a letter to the Minister in which he expressed his regret at the 'one-sided lachrymose tone' of the article and the Minister held that the initiative for the article had not come from SNV itself.<sup>78</sup> The damage had, however, already been done and SNV withdrew all its staff and volunteers from Ivory Coast. This decision did not go down well in the field and was misunderstood by all concerned:

We followed it, yes, but my parents in The Netherlands knew much more about it than I did. Also communication was bad. There was no Internet then, just every now and then a newspaper was sent over. That was very different from now.<sup>79</sup>

*De Telegraaf* launched a full-scale crusade against SNV that culminated in May 1974 when news about a so-called secret report on the dismal functioning of the SNV caused huge commotion. Two returned volunteers had asked for an audience with Minister Pronk who had asked for a written report on their complaints to facilitate the discussion. As the Minister then had more urgent business to attend to, the report was left on a pile. Perhaps because of AJV dissatisfaction with the Minister or just out of naivety, the report was leaked to *De Telegraaf*. The newspaper accused SNV, and through it the minister responsi-

<sup>77</sup> Interview 169. Henk de Mari, 'Hulpstichting smijt al jaren met miljoenen', *De Telegraaf* (3 May 1974); 'Pronk werpt zijn blaam op zijn voorgangers', *De Telegraaf* (14 May 1974); 'Vrijwilligershulp steeds meer ten goede aan armsten', *De Telegraaf* (9 April 1975); Nekkers & Malcontent, section with pictures; Foreign Affairs, file 81, 'Mondelinge beantwoording door Pronk (Tweede Kamer)' 9 May 1974; *Ibidem*, file 881, questions and answers in Parliament, 1974; For earlier articles de Mari had offered beer and cigarettes to volunteers in the field and then took pictures: Bieckmann, *De wereld volgens Prins Claus*, pp. 150-152.

<sup>78</sup> Foreign Affairs, file 493, letter, Raoul Snelder to Erath: 'Telegraaf artikelen', 21 January 1974 ('al te eenzijdige en larmoyant e teneur').

<sup>79</sup> Interview 125.

ble, of wasting ‘millions of Dutch tax guilders’, bringing the royal house into discredit (Prince Claus being SNV’s chairman) and of ‘fraud’ for trying to withhold crucial information on the organisation from the Dutch people. The crusade was directed more towards Minister Pronk, whose resignation was demanded by some opposition MPs, than SNV. However SNV and its image were obviously damaged by such negative news reports.<sup>80</sup>

Examples abound of people closing ranks when under attack but in this case the rifts within the organisation only deepened and the various groupings within the SNV barely supported each other. There were tensions between the staff, between the Minister and the staff, between the Minister and the Board, between state and private organisations, between SNV and KNV, between KNVers and JVCers, between The Hague and the field staff, and between field staff and volunteers. The Board thought that the Minister had withheld crucial information about the organisation, their conclusion being that he apparently regarded the Board as a *quantité négligable*. And if this was the case, it was felt, he should dissolve the foundation.<sup>81</sup>

An attempt was made at KNV’s Odijk meeting to find a balance between calls for structural change and support for SNV against criticism from the right. *De Telegraaf* was regarded by many KNVers as the ‘enemy’ and, for all its critique of SNV, KNVers were unhappy about the fact that returnees’ stories had been used as fuel for the right-wing press. Warnings were issued not ‘to fall into *De Telegraaf*’s trap’.<sup>82</sup> All the same, at the meeting the KNVers concluded that JVC had to be denied seats on the Board as they were not involved in finding structural solutions for development problems and the conscientising the Dutch audience. Unsurprisingly, the JVC delegates were not amused when they learnt about this.<sup>83</sup> KNVers, in turn, protested when van Gennip and Prince Claus gave an interview to the press in which they defended the SNV as organisation and attacked KNV for organising activities without informing the Board.<sup>84</sup> JVC members had an article published in *De Telegraaf* stressing the

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<sup>80</sup> Nijzink, *Dag vrijwilliger!*, pp. 46-47; Foreign Affairs, file 83, memos, Secretary SNV to SNV Board: ‘Telegraafartikelen tegen de SNV – Mei ’74’, 5 and 6 June 1974.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.* file 26, meeting minutes, informal meeting SNV Board, 6 May 1974; *Ibid.* file 26, meeting minutes, SNV Board, p. 3; *Ibid.* file 29, meeting minutes, Staff and Minister, 18 and 19 December 1974; KDC archives, file 432/1922, note, ‘Enige notities over de problematiek van het SNV’, 7 April 1975.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.* file 497, call for KNV manifestation, ‘Trap niet in de val van de Telegraaf, ontmasker hem!’ 13 May 1974; Interview 204.

<sup>83</sup> Foreign Affairs, file 26, meeting minutes, SNV Board, 15 May 1974; *Ibid.* file 26, meeting minutes, SNV Board, 28 March 1973.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.* file 82, Reint Rosenstok and Dick Bol to SNV Board, 22 May 1974.

importance of Christian missionaries in development work, and the fact that they 'were not going on a mere two-year contract'.<sup>85</sup> The chairman of the SNV Board claimed that they were heading down 'a disastrous route' if each and every party involved followed its own political strategy without considering the organisation as a whole.<sup>86</sup>

### State and private branches

The unresolved tensions in the 1970s between the private and state branches within SNV came to a head. The merge had never worked satisfactorily and after ten years it was obvious that the disadvantages of the cooperation outweighed the advantages.

There were still differences in legal status between the JVC volunteers and those recruited directly through SNV. All agreed that this situation should change but there was disagreement over the conditions under which this would take place. While the JVC wanted to keep the selection of projects in its own hands, SNV staff insisted that if the volunteers working on JVC projects were to acquire the same legal status as the other volunteers, the procedures for selecting projects should also shift to the Ministry. Apart from these legal discussions, there was increasing dissatisfaction on the part of some of the young radicals about JVC procedures. Many of the more radical volunteers regarded the private sections of SNV, which were often closely linked to the churches, as being old-fashioned and conservative. One of the theses used in the debates at the KNV 'Vrijwillig niet vrijblijvend' congress stated:

Organisations that have a seat on the Board and are not engaged actively with conscientisation in The Netherlands and a structural approach towards development cooperation ought to put their seats at the disposal of organisations who are engaged in this.<sup>87</sup>

KNV demanded that JVC give up at least three, perhaps even all six of its seats on the SNV Board.<sup>88</sup> This idea came to be shared by ministerial officials

<sup>85</sup> KIT archives, Box 4046, Newspaper article 'Bij de missie zinkt de hele SNV in het niet', *De Telegraaf* (18 May 1974).

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.* file 26, meeting minutes, SNV Board, 15 May 1974 (quote p. 5: 'een heilloze weg'); also: *Ibid.* file 26, meeting minutes, SNV Board, 6 May 1974, pp. 8-10.

<sup>87</sup> Nijzink, *Dag vrijwilliger!*, p. 51. ('Organisaties, die een zetel in het bestuur hebben en zich in Nederland niet actief bezighouden met bewustmakingswerk en een structurele aanpak van de ontwikkelingssamenwerking, dienen hun zetels ter beschikking te stellen aan organisaties die dit wel doen.') See also *Ibid.*, pp. 55-56 and Interview 5.

<sup>88</sup> Foreign Affairs, file 497, letter, Rosenstok to Pronk, 'Visie van de Kontaktgroep Nederlandse Vrijwilligers op de toekomst van de Stichting Nederlandse Vrijwil-

and the minutes of a 1974 meeting between the Minister and the AJV staff stated: 'For eleven years cooperation with private organisations failed to work. The JVCers cannot be changed overnight. For Objective A as well as B, the JVCers are curtailing matters.'<sup>89</sup>

Numerous attempts to rescue the union were made because JVC projects formed a relatively large percentage of the total number of projects undertaken within SNV. For example, there were JVC projects in Cameroon, Brazil, Bolivia, the Philippines and Upper Volta in 1974.<sup>90</sup> In the same year, both Minister Pronk and the JVC delegates claimed that a schism would be 'historically unpalatable, politically difficult and externally unfeasible'.<sup>91</sup> With the coming of Jan de Koning as the new Minister for Development Cooperation in 1977, matters changed and when the JVC asked about changing the organisational structure, de Koning declared that by having ANV officials present, three possible models of cooperation existed.<sup>92</sup> The first was to leave the situation as it was. This was the option chosen by KNV, that held that an organisational structure ought not be changed if one of the partners refused to adopt a loyal stance. It repeated that JVC influence on the SNV Board should be reduced but thought that splitting the two groups would only mean a return to pillarisation.<sup>93</sup>

At the historic meeting at which the JVC General Council decided on the proposals, it was concluded that the JVC wished that the state had not restricted the options to three models, but in the end the JVC council voted against models 1 and 2. The first model – to continue with the existing structure – evoked a long list of past and present grievances on the part of the JVC about the current situation. SNV was regarded as a state organisation and the focus-countries discussion received too much attention. SNV's structure had a permanent conflict model as the Board had no say over its own staff and the staff remained in a difficult position sandwiched between the Minister and the Board. Its state character was incompatible with the nature of a voluntary organisation, SNV

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ligers en tevens het KNV-standpunt in de huidige discussie over de structuur van SNV', 19 November 1974, p. 9.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.* file 29, meeting minutes, Staff and Minister, 18 and 19 December 1974, p. 6. ('Elf jaar lang heeft de zaak niet gewerkt en de Partikulieren kunnen niet in één moment omgebogen worden. De Partikulieren werken zowel t.a.v. doelstelling A als B remmend.')

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.* file 84, meeting minutes, SNV and Minister, 27 June 1974, p. 7.

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.* file 26, meeting minutes, SNV Board, 19 August 1974, p. 6 ('historisch onverkwikkelijk, politiek moeilijk en naar buiten onhaalbaar').

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.* file snv/ara/00313, meeting minutes, JVC General Council, 27 April 1978.

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid.* file snv/ara/00313, meeting minutes, KNV to Minister, 'KNV congres 'SNV-beleid in uitvoering?', 7 April 1978; *Ibid.* file snv/ara/00313, meeting minutes, JVC General Council, 4 October 1977.



policies were not flexible enough to match the continuously changing situation in the Third World and its decisions were often based on the ideas of inexperienced volunteers instead of on those of the local people in charge. SNV only accepted JVC volunteers under conditions set by the state and it aimed at creating a uniform volunteer, thereby negating the plural character of the organisation and classifying JVC as a mere supplier of volunteers. And last but not least, SNV was much more expensive to run than it should be. The second model, which proposed the state jointly subsidising SNV and JVC, was historically desirable, but JVCers feared it would lead to ‘endless discussions about the structural change of SNV’. The meeting finally chose the third model in which there was a state subsidy for a separate JVC organisation.<sup>94</sup>

In 1978, the split became reality and the private organisations went their own ways under the JVC umbrella and separate from SNV. In future, the JVC would receive funds directly from the government but for some time they kept two representatives on the SNV Board. The JVC later formed the PSO, together with OPIT and DOG. It was therefore possible to have ‘more volunteers for less money than in SNV with all the overheads and its yacking structure (*ge-oh-structuur*)’, as one JVCer put it.<sup>95</sup>

### Secularisation

Although relations between the private organisations and the Dutch state in the voluntary sphere were problematic from the start, the churches were widely regarded as the most important contributor in the field of Dutch development aid in the 1960s. Few people initially contested the role of the churches and missions in the development sphere but this changed in the 1970s. Development then came to be seen as something modern and different from the missions or, in any case, the missions and development started to grow apart. While politics in the realm of development aid had often been inspired by a Christian background, mistrust grew in the 1970s between the state and the Church on this matter. Several times during his time as Minister, Jan Pronk came into conflict with the churches over subsidies for church-related development projects.<sup>96</sup> In general, this period saw an increasing secularisation and de-pillarisation of

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.* file snv/ara/00313, meeting minutes, General Council JVC, 4 October 1977. Also KDC archives, file 432/1924, letter, Edith de Boer-Sizoo to JVC board members, 18 November 1977.

<sup>95</sup> Bieckmann, *De wereld volgens Prins Claus*, p. 158; Interviews 242 and 244; and PSO website: <http://www.pso.nl/jubileum/index.asp?page+geschiedenis>.

<sup>96</sup> J. Bos & G.H.A. Prince, ‘Partners in ontwikkeling: de beginperiode van het (kerkelijke) particuliere ontwikkelingswerk’, in: Nekkers & Malcontent, eds, *De geschiedenis*, pp. 176-177.

Dutch society; a tendency that also influenced changes within SNV. The concerns within SNV about the JVC's position can be seen as a sign of this growing tendency. Volunteers' new ideas were discussed by the SNV Board and members realised 'that modern young people wanted it differently and regarded a technical project as technical work and wished to keep the religious aspects out of it.'<sup>97</sup>

Secularisation was apparent in the projects in the field that were gradually becoming more independent of church and mission influence. A *Vice Versa* issue in 1974 featured an interview with Father Franken, who facilitated an SNV training centre in Morogoro by letting out a building formerly used by the Catholic mission: 'It is like a symbolic changing of the guard: the missionaries – the development workers of the first hour – are being replaced by the voluntary crowd.'<sup>98</sup>

In other instances, the change went less smoothly. Reint Rosenstok, volunteering on a Roman Catholic project in the Philippines, was appalled when the Father leading the project told him that one of the project's aims was to fight communism.<sup>99</sup> At the Technical Institute in Cochabamba in Bolivia, there was a sharp increase in conflicts when radicalisation among the teachers took place in a politically precarious environment. The Augustinian Father Kurvers, who headed the school, had 'some problems with the 'hippies',<sup>100</sup> by which he meant the SNV volunteers who were working as teachers, although he also came into conflict with his fellow Fathers.<sup>101</sup> The SNV volunteers wanted the Bolivianisation of the school but at the same time some of them spoke Dutch during meetings and largely determined school policy themselves.<sup>102</sup> When the school management was finally Bolivianised, matters came to a head because the new Bolivian general director wanted to increase religious teaching at the school, while most of the SNV teachers and the Bolivian technical director felt that religion had no place in a technical school. The Fathers regarded the general director as 'a red', whereas the teachers saw him as a 'right winger'. The general

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<sup>97</sup> Foreign Affairs, file 22, meeting minutes, SNV Board, 11 April 1968, p. 7. ('Dat moderne jonge mensen anders willen en een technisch project als technisch werk zien en de levensbeschouwelijke aspecten daarbuiten willen laten.')

<sup>98</sup> Theo Ruyter, 'Trainingscentrum in Morogoro', *Vice Versa* 8, 26 (1974), p. 12. ('Het lijkt wel symbolisch voor een soort aflossing van de wacht: de missionarissen, ontwikkelingswerkers van het eerste uur, worden afgelost door het vrijwilligersvolkje dat op de een of andere manier ook een steentje wil bijdragen aan de ontwikkeling van de Derde Wereld.')

<sup>99</sup> Interview 204.

<sup>100</sup> Interview 266.

<sup>101</sup> Interviews 253 and 267.

<sup>102</sup> Interviews 253 and 269.

director feared political consequences with the teachers becoming more militant and the government more dictatorial.<sup>103</sup> In the end, the Fathers appointed a church representative as director and later, due to financial problems and the general political crisis, the Fathers sold the school to supporters of the 1980 coup for an unrealistically low price.<sup>104</sup>

The case of Bertoua in eastern Cameroon is also telling. Whereas in the preceding chapter we saw that the ties between the diocese and SNV were initially strong, problems arose after a while. Some of the volunteers were thought to be of 'low calibre' (*laag niveau*), as the former Bishop of East Cameroon put it. Most of the incoming SNV people were 'of good intention' but there were a few who overstepped the boundaries of what was deemed acceptable behaviour by the missionaries, especially in terms of their sexual behaviour. They left a mark on relations between the missionaries and SNV. Most of the volunteers tried to do their best and generally they did do a good job, but many did not know enough French to be able to cooperate with their counterparts and as a rule they had little knowledge about the country before their arrival.<sup>105</sup> SNV field leaders in Cameroon accused the missionaries of not sticking to agreements, doing charity under 'a cloak of development aid' (*een jasje van ontwikkelingshulp*), and regarding the local people as inherently less capable than the whites. 'Cameroonisation' was a 'lump of modelling clay.'<sup>106</sup>

Relations eventually turned sour and, after seven months, the SNV team leader felt that it would be better to function independently of the mission. Formally the cooperation continued until 1981 and SNV was even regarded as part of the mission by the Cameroonian authorities. But in 1981 a range of misunderstandings and mutual breaches of trust finally led to an emotionally charged end to the cooperation. By then, Bishop van Heygen knew that 'the Church had got into SNV's bad books'.<sup>107</sup>

The ideas of the missionaries and the new volunteers tended to clash in areas of sexuality and health. Carla Schoemaker, who was a volunteer stationed at a Catholic mission post in Zambia between 1980 and 1983, explained it as follows: 'As a health advisor, people were not waiting for your arrival. The nurses in Zambia had a completely different mentality. They prescribed all kinds of medicine for children who were just trying to avoid going to school. My prescription would be to send them back to school!' She was not allowed to

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<sup>103</sup> Interviews 267 and 272.

<sup>104</sup> Interview 253.

<sup>105</sup> Interview 83.

<sup>106</sup> Foreign Affairs, file 11, report by L.P.J. Mazairac, The Hague, November 1968, pp. 19-20; SNV Archives, Yaoundé (Cameroon), 'Jaarverslag 1981', pp. 23-25 ('een klont boetseerlei'); *Ibid.*, SNV Kameroen, 'Jaarverslag 1980', p. 32.

<sup>107</sup> Interview 83.

discuss birth control or STDs, and personally did not agree with the Catholic preaching on abstinence.<sup>108</sup>

Some volunteers lost their faith while abroad. Aldert van der Vinne, for example, went to Zambia in 1979 partly because of his religious convictions, but he soon became sceptical about his faith.

I came from a Protestant background and here I began to realise the fact that that, in the final analysis, one tends to fill in the gaps that one does not understand with a deity. In our society less and less deity was needed, because of science. Here we were thrown back onto it because we did not understand why we didn't receive any rain. So we had to pray for that (...) In the end, I grew away from it.<sup>109</sup>

The increased secularisation not only impacted on relations with the missions. In general, the volunteers were sceptical of religious influences. One of SNV's volunteers encouraged villagers to take matters in their own hands by saying: 'Allah does not take care of everything,' which provoked reactions of shock and laughter from the Malians present.<sup>110</sup> This is not to say that there was no interest in religious matters: while the mainstream religions were losing influence amongst the volunteers, local religions were regarded as interesting. As Kik van den Heuvel said: 'In the 1980s SNV-ers were definitely anti-Christian, moving more towards Marxism. But local religion was 'cool'.'<sup>111</sup>

### Dire circumstances

Apart from the growing disassociation with the missions, many SNV volunteers also no longer wished to be linked to colonialism. The first SNV teams were often led by people who had worked in the former Dutch colonies but by the 1970s, the new volunteers did not want anything to do with such ties. Willem Zevenbergen was once taken to task by a young radical volunteer, fresh from The Netherlands, who was deeply shocked when he heard that Zevenbergen had previously worked as a colonial official in New Guinea: 'Well Mr Zevenbergen, in that case you have a contaminated past!' Zevenbergen was told. Later the two men got on well.<sup>112</sup> Many educated people in developing countries, who worked

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<sup>108</sup> Interview 111.

<sup>109</sup> Interview 113. ('Je kwam er hier achter, ik kwam dan uit een gereformeerde achtergrond, dat je uiteindelijk de dingen die je niet weet, met een godheid invult. Bij ons was er door de wetenschap steeds minder godheid nodig. Hier werden we weer teruggegooid, want hier begrepen we niet waarom we geen regen kregen, dus daar moesten we voor bidden (...) Ik ben er behoorlijk van weg gegroeid.')

<sup>110</sup> Nico Kussendrager, 'SNV-ers in Mali organiseren preventieve gezondheidszorg', *Vice Versa* 13, 2 (1979), p. 10.

<sup>111</sup> Interview 86.

<sup>112</sup> Interview 5. ('Zo meneer Zevenbergen, dan heeft u een besmet verleden.')

with SNV as supervisors, associates or counterparts, felt that it was high time that local people had more say in development projects:

In the beginning, the project was without doubt paternalistic. Most of the Dutch came from farmers' families with a colonising mentality. They were not bad people and they had no bad intentions but when I arrived, the situation was clearly one of inequality.<sup>113</sup>

Most volunteers who were dispatched during this period were highly sensitive to such arguments. They did not wish to be associated with charity, paternalism or 'doing good' and wanted to break with old stereotypes about people in Africa, Asia and Latin America.

There was a certain ambivalence among the volunteers about employing cooks and guards as some feared this would be classified as neo-colonialism. The volunteers did not want to have privileges and wanted to live on an equal footing with the local population. They knew that they continued to be regarded as Western and rich, but did not want to be classified as such. In a number of cases, the volunteers still lived in separate compounds with other foreigners, a case in point being the 'Orange Quarter' in Morogoro. Unlike in the preceding period though, this was regarded as a problem as it ran against the SNV concept of 'working and living for, amongst and amidst the Tanzanians'.<sup>114</sup>

Soon after their arrival, many came to realise that they could not manage without some of the amenities they were used to and needed to hire personnel so as to have enough time to carry out the work they had come to do. Local expectations also forced the volunteers to employ personnel:

Of course I have a servant. If you do not have anybody who cooks for you, they regard you as a stingy bastard here. And if I do not ask the boy to get that tin of milk for me but did it myself, he'd think he was not doing his job right.<sup>115</sup>

During SNV's early years, volunteers arrived in teams but by the 1970s most worked with only a few fellow SNVers at their project location or, in some cases, were the sole SNV volunteer in a vast region. This meant that the volunteers were more dependent on local facilities and contacts, which was often challenging. In many cases, there was simply nothing available in the local shops and many volunteers took out as much as they could carry after leave in

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<sup>113</sup> Interview 264.

<sup>114</sup> Archives SNV Tanzania, Box: NOVIB/oud – '77/'86, etc', file: Morogoro Wells Construction: final report, Niek Hoorweg, 24 November 1981.

<sup>115</sup> Nijzink *Dag vrijwilliger!*, p. 60. ('Natuurlijk heb ik een bediende, Als je niemand hebt die voor je kookt dan zien ze je hier als een gierige rotzak. En als ik niet die jongen dat blikje melk had laten halen, maar dat zelf had gedaan, dan denkt hij dat hij zijn werk verkeerd doet.') Also Nico Kussendrager, 'Echte ontwikkeling is niet spectaculair', *Vice Versa* 12, 3 (1978), p. 7; Interview 139.

The Netherlands. In Tanzania, volunteers had to queue for hours for sugar and flour and were only allowed a daily ration of three buckets of water. ‘Let’s go suffer,’ they would say when heading for the queue.<sup>116</sup> Lieke Felten came out of this period with a life-long distaste for baking bread:

I lived through the bad times when nothing was available. With a lot of creativity we made ends meet. We even made sausages ourselves and the like. On the one hand, it was good together, we helped each other (...) We took along things from The Netherlands, there was no other way. Cheese and clothes for the children (...) It left me with an abhorrence of baking bread; I will never ever do that again. We first had to get grain somehow and then dry it in the sun to get the vermin out. Then go to the mill and then bake the bread. But first we would have no yeast and then there would be no more gas halfway through the baking process: the bread was inedible. We did have charcoal, but then again no matches. We did not have electricity. But we did have water.<sup>117</sup>

Medical services were non-existent in some project locations and Jan Schuthof, one of the first to work on SNV activities in Tanzania, made the coffins for several volunteers who died of malaria.<sup>118</sup> For some time, Jan van Maanen, who became field director of SNV Guinea Bissau in 1979, slept in one of the beds in his hotel room, while the other functioned as the SNV field office.<sup>119</sup> As the Cameroonian field leader wrote in 1978: ‘YOU DON’T HAVE TO BE CRAZY TO WORK HERE BUT IT SURE HELPS!’<sup>120</sup>

The dire circumstances could lead to awkward situations. As the volunteers were white foreigners, they sometimes received better treatment than others and would have access to products that were not available to the rest of the population:

At the time, I received some privileges because of my skin colour. They might say: ‘Pastor – because that is what I was called – Pastor, your sugar has arrived’. Purely

<sup>116</sup> Interview 8 (‘Kom, we moeten gaan *sufferen*’) and Interview 112.

<sup>117</sup> Interview 110. (‘Ik heb in de slechte tijd gezeten dat er niets te koop was. Met veel fantasie hebben we het gered. Zelf worsten gemaakt en noem maar op. Het was gewoon gezellig. We hielpen elkaar (...) We namen Nederlandse dingen mee, dat moest wel. Er was echt niets. Kaas en kleren voor de kinderen (...) Waar ik een tic van over heb gehouden is broodbakken. Dat doe ik nooit meer in mijn leven. We moesten eerst graan zien te krijgen en dat dan in de zon leggen, om de beestjes eruit te krijgen. Dan naar de molen en dan brood bakken. Dan hadden we weer geen gist en dan hadden we weer geen gas, had je het half in de oven. Was het brood niet te eten. *Charcoal* hadden we wel, maar dan hadden we weer geen lucifers. We hadden geen elektriciteit. Water hadden we wel.’)

<sup>118</sup> Interview 90.

<sup>119</sup> Interview 18.

<sup>120</sup> SNV Archives, Yaoundé (Cameroon), SNV Kameroen, ‘Jaarverslag 1978’, p. 34 (capitals in the original).

due to one's colour, one gets a position of some sort. I was reminded of that quote from Glyn Roberts in *Questioning Development*: 'Although our thoughts are with the masses, we move with the higher classes.'<sup>121</sup>

Yet at the same time, the volunteers increasingly attempted to integrate into local society. Young, often from the alternative society, quite a number of them during this period 'went native'. They learnt to speak the local language, wore local dress, ate local food, drank the local alcohol, played local music and the male volunteers often had local girlfriends.

### Going native

During this period SNV volunteers worked at the local level and could get to know the local circumstances fairly well. Earlier, interaction between local participants and the teams of volunteers had frequently been limited to the work situation but the 1970s brought a tendency towards greater integration of the volunteers into local society. This was not only due to the fact that some volunteers were dispatched to areas with few other foreigners but many volunteers also regarded integration into local society as an ideal. They wanted to adapt to local circumstances and, in conformity with notions of development at the time, relate to the local people. While educated people used to be regarded as the best possible contact persons, by the 1970s ties with the 'poorest of the poor' were seen as crucial for development practitioners.

Not only did volunteers often learn the local language, they also tried as far as possible to live like the local people did. Their housing was usually simple, transport was a *piki-piki* (motor cycle) or a bicycle and they ate the same food as the people amongst whom they lived. The volunteers occasionally received local names, not least because their Dutch names were not easy to pronounce for local people. Some volunteers also received names that referred to a physical or behavioural characteristic they had. One of the volunteer 'comrades' in a Tanzanian ANC camp was called *Bwana Nyoka* (Mister Snake) because he kept snakes and a very tall (2.07 m) volunteer in Bolivia was known as *Chato* (Spanish for 'flat, low (short)'), as his real name was too difficult to pronounce.<sup>122</sup> SNVers might study local medicine, take an interest in music and participate in village rituals and festivities. Some volunteers not only learned the local language but also continued using words from it after returning to The Netherlands. They came home with souvenirs, dresses and music from the

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<sup>121</sup> Interview 139.

<sup>122</sup> Interviews 102, 255, 36 and 187.

county to which they had been sent: ‘African music is now accepted in Europe; development workers have certainly contributed to that.’<sup>123</sup>

Many local people were impressed by the efforts that the volunteers made to adapt to local circumstances. ‘He spoke Swahili better than me!’ a driver who worked with volunteers in the early 1980s noted.<sup>124</sup> Quite a number of respondents made comments along the lines of: ‘The Dutch adapted quickly, they ate everything, they were easygoing. They loved to live in Africa. They really took root, it was not that they just did something.’<sup>125</sup> Of course, comical situations also arose: ‘The music goes to the right and all the Dutch go to the left! We laughed till we cried when they danced.’<sup>126</sup> Exchanging jokes and having a good time together was mentioned frequently by local people who had participated in SNV projects. Déni Balo, a women’s leader in Koula, Mali had never heard of the words SNV or OVN (Organisation des Volontaires Néerlandais, as SNV was called in French before 1985) and she did not know where the *toubabounou* (little white people) came from who visited their village but she did know that it was fun whenever they came:

Breneti (Bernadette) came, and gave me a box with tablets (to distribute). As for the vaccination, she would do that herself. She would eat here. She used to come with a lot of food: so that we could eat together: all the women’s leaders. And she would knock on my shoulder and ask: ‘Hey, do you like the food?!’ We laughed together. She was a jovial person. (...) One could notice that she was really trying. She would squat on her haunches like us, ate with her hands like us (...)<sup>127</sup>

The benefits of development work were interpreted in material as well as social terms by the local participants. Creating social ties; getting acquainted with a person and becoming friends was deemed very important by all the participants. The frequent shift in personnel was therefore difficult to accept for many of the local people:

A person comes for two years. Everybody gets used to this person. This person takes on a name. The people meet with him, they exchange jokes, they talk with each other, they pat each other on the back. Then after two years, this person leaves again to be replaced by another. The locals take some time to get used to the new person.<sup>128</sup>

Some volunteers did not leave but stayed on in the country where they worked as a SNV volunteer. Others left for another country to do development

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<sup>123</sup> Interviews 63 and 86.

<sup>124</sup> Interview 99.

<sup>125</sup> Interview 59.

<sup>126</sup> Statement made during Interviews 26 and 68.

<sup>127</sup> Interviews 194 and 192.

<sup>128</sup> Interview 36.



work there and became part of the growing group of ‘development nomads’. During most of the 1970s the volunteers still saw their stay abroad as a temporary adventure for a few years, befitting their age and leftist enthusiasm. But by the end of the 1970s this was changing due to the increasing importance and influence of the Third World movement in The Netherlands. A growing number of SNVers regarded development work as their future and invested in a career that would take them abroad on a more or less permanent basis, although not necessarily to the same place. Many of these were former students from Wageningen Agricultural School and although the first volunteers had received only a fairly basic level of education, by the 1970s and 1980s there was a marked increase in the number of well-qualified people with higher educational backgrounds.

### ‘Volunteers and love’<sup>129</sup>

If any serious relationships developed among the first SNVers, they were mostly within the teams in which they worked. This changed in the 1970s and marriages and relationships with local people also started to occur and a relatively high percentage of SNVers married locally. A conversation between three former SNVers in Botswana illustrates some of the consequences:

1<sup>st</sup> SNVer: ‘Indeed, people tend to come back, I wonder why?’

2<sup>nd</sup> SNVer: ‘To visit in-laws, that is for sure!’

1<sup>st</sup> SNVer: ‘Some people never leave. You both are here since 1983 and 1985!’

2<sup>nd</sup> SNVer: ‘But I did leave for some years in between, but somehow grew attached to the place.’

1<sup>st</sup> SNVer: ‘Attached to in-laws, you mean!’<sup>130</sup>

While intercultural marriages occurred relatively frequently in development circles, many people in those days still regarded them as exceptional. The field staff merely encouraged the volunteers to consider the cultural differences but would make no further objections:

I married a Zambian woman. In my time that was all OK with SNV. They just said: ‘Think twice, the cultural differences are big, it might all go wrong.’ (...) We did hear that in the years before us, people were sent home if they were seen with local women.<sup>131</sup>

SNV did not have a formal stance on intercultural relationships and reactions could differ sharply from one staff member to another. The experience of

<sup>129</sup> Dick van Reeuwijk, ‘Toch groeit de behoefte aan een vriendin vrij spoedig’, *Vice Versa* 10, 3 (1976), pp. 16-20 (‘Vrijwilligers en liefde’).

<sup>130</sup> Hermans, *SNV in Botswana*, p. 25.

<sup>131</sup> Interview 112.

Tineke Louh-Fokkens in Cameroon, for example, was very different from the one described above:

Tineke: Relations with SNV were good until I started living together with my Cameroonian boyfriend. Then the situation became a mess. While if one considered what the men all did! They had all sorts of local girlfriends. And mine was a serious relationship with a man (...) If we went out with the car, my husband had to sign a note in case of a fatal accident. That had to be done according to SNV rules, they insisted on it! When they learnt that we were having a relationship, they wanted to transfer me to another area. They did that more often when a relationship started. They would always have a dig at me. Like the fridge: they'd say: 'This Cameroonian is using the fridge!' (...)

Mr Louh: The field leader was strongly opposed to the relationship between me and Tineke. He came once and then Tineke got asked: 'Do you let a black man drink cold water from the SNV fridge?!' There was talk of shame about it. There were other ways they tried, they even got Bishop van Heygen to 'convert' us.<sup>132</sup>

Matters worked out well in many cases but such marriages were not always easy. One girl was ostracised by her Islamic family when she started dating a Dutch volunteer and one SNVer married a Bolivian girl who was in the resistance movement and had to go underground. In less spectacular cases, cultural differences, for example regarding bride price or time-keeping, might affect the relationship.<sup>133</sup>

'Volunteers and love' obviously did not concern marriage alone. Many SNVers – mostly single young men – engaged in sexual relations that were never meant to last a lifetime. In the matters of sexuality in general, cultural differences played a role:

For male volunteers there were two options: to marry or to visit a prostitute. You would notice that half of the male volunteers got married to a Filipino girl within six months and the rest would go to nightclubs every now and then. But any other

<sup>132</sup> Interview 240. (Tineke: 'De betrekkingen met SNV waren goed totdat ik ging samenwonen met mijn Kameroense vriend, toen werd het een puinhoop. Terwijl als je keek naar wat die mannen allemaal deden! Die hadden allerlei lokale vriendinnen. En als je dan een serieuze relatie begint met een man (...) Als we een ritje gingen rijden met de auto dan moest mijn man een briefje ondertekenen in het geval van een dodelijk ongeluk. Dat moest van SNV, daar stonden ze op! Toen ze merkten dat we een relatie hadden wilden ze me overplaatsen naar een ander gebied. Dat deden ze wel vaker als er relaties ontstonden. Ik kreeg altijd steken onder water. Bijvoorbeeld de koelkast: er werd gezegd dat 'die Kameroener' gebruik maakte van mijn SNV koelkast!' (...)) Mr. Louh: 'De veldleider van SNV was erg tegen de relatie tussen mij en Tineke. Hij kwam een keer langs en toen werd tegen Tineke gezegd: 'Laat jij een zwarte man koud water uit de SNV koelkast drinken?!' Daar werd schande van gesproken! En zo waren er veel meer dingen die ze geprobeerd hebben, ook de aartsbisschop Van Heijgen werd erbij betrokken om ons te 'bekeren'.)

<sup>133</sup> Interviews 112, 266, 287 and 8.

option was impossible. You could not have a girlfriend; a girlfriend would mean marriage. That was difficult. Society, you know the Fathers: they had problems with such activities. They would of course hear: 'The Dutch volunteers were in this or that night club!' That is of course a subject rarely discussed in history but also during the SNV's preparation. Like: What should we do about such matters? These days perhaps that has changed. But from what I know, in those days, and also in Africa, everybody had to look for his own solution. Things that in hindsight one might now say: actually that was not wise, but well, one had to find a solution.<sup>134</sup>

This was the period when up to a quarter of the volunteers came home with a sexually transmitted disease. In those days, knowledge about HIV/AIDS and safe sex were not yet widespread.<sup>135</sup> The older generation of SNV staff members and JVC representatives frowned upon such behaviour and called for more stringent measures to curb excesses: 'He who abuses the poverty of the autochthonous woman has understood little of development work.'<sup>136</sup>

Although it was clear that sexual relationships and love affairs had a huge bearing on the work, SNV as an organisation did not deal with the issues and simply left it to each volunteer's own sense of responsibility.<sup>137</sup>

### Partial integration

The volunteers' attempts to integrate into local society were much appreciated by the people with whom they worked, especially the fact that they accepted the local food, took the trouble to learn the local language and sometimes even married into the local community. These were regarded as signs of acceptance. Yet for many of the local people, the volunteers' wish to integrate into local society also posed dilemmas; the acceptance was never entirely unreserved.

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<sup>134</sup> Interview 204. ('Voor de mannelijke vrijwilligers waren er twee opties: trouwen of naar de hoeren gaan. Je zag zo de helft binnen een half jaar getrouwd met een Filipina en de rest ging zo af en toe naar de nachtclub. Maar iets anders kon niet; een vriendin kan je daar niet hebben: een vriendin is trouwen. Dat is lastig. En de samenleving: de paters hadden het toen ook al moeilijk met dergelijke activiteiten. Die hoorden dan weer: 'de *Dutch volunteers* waren in die en die *nightclub*! Dat is natuurlijk een vrijwel onbesproken onderwerp in de geschiedenis, maar ook in de voorbereiding van SNV's. Van hoe doe je dat? Vandaag zal dat misschien anders zijn. Maar wat ik weet, ook over Afrika, is dat iedereen zijn eigen oplossing moest vinden, dingen waarvan je achteraf misschien zegt: dat kan niet misschien, maar je moet wat.'))

<sup>135</sup> Dick van Reeuwijk, 'Houding tegenover seksualiteit is ieders eigen verantwoordelijkheid', *Vice Versa* 11, 1 (1977), pp. 14-16; Also Interviews 8 and 90.

<sup>136</sup> Foreign Affairs, file 12, memo, De Vocht/De Vries to BV: 'Gedrag SNV'ers te veld', 6 November 1972. ('Verder heeft hij die echt misbruik maakt van de armoede van de autochtone vrouw, weinig begrepen van ontwikkelingssamenwerking.')

<sup>137</sup> Van Reeuwijk, 'Houding', *Vice Versa* 11, 1 (1977), pp. 14-16.

Given the short stay of most of the volunteers, integration could only be partial. Most local people felt it was strange to see men with long hair and one SNVer who worked as a teacher at a technical school was called Jesus for this reason. Field staff member Jan Schuthof gave some of the volunteers a military haircut when they arrived.<sup>138</sup> The dire circumstances in some cases made volunteers wary of local products. Volunteers in Mali were sometimes at a loss as to whether to accept and drink the dirty water they were offered, water that they as health workers advised the locals against drinking, or to accept it out of politeness. Malians teased them with it by saying: '*Il faut boire! Il faut boire*' (You must drink!).<sup>139</sup>

Local domestic staff could be embarrassed by attempts at equality. A Dutch volunteer's former servant in Cameroon remembered: 'The man I was living with asked me when I served his food to sit with him at the table and share the meal. As a servant I didn't understand this. I was not used to this. He wanted me to eat with him, as if I was not his servant.'<sup>140</sup> Some people failed to understand why volunteers did not make use of the options available to them. With hindsight, former volunteers realised this:

One had a certain status as SNVer, but also as a white person, to be prepared to work in the bush that way. We lived in a house, really local, and not a house that was deemed suitable for whites. We of course felt that was great. There was no electricity and only rarely did we have running water. Some Zambians might say: 'He lives the way we live'. But the large majority said: 'What kind of a loser is that?' They pretended to be nice to me but they could not understand why I went to live there. They thought it was silly that someone who could afford comfort chose to go and live in such circumstances.<sup>141</sup>

The local people did not expect foreigners to completely adapt: they felt it was only logical that foreigners stuck to some of their own habits. They learnt about the strange Dutch predilection for sugarless black coffee, liquorice and treacle waffles.<sup>142</sup> Most local participants also stressed that Dutch people were very time-conscious:

Two minutes before the appointment, they would knock on the door. (...) They would always come on time, and the Tanzanian teachers came late. They would be

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<sup>138</sup> Interviews 95, 90, 96 and 140.

<sup>139</sup> Nico Kussendrager, 'SNV-ers in Mali organiseren preventieve gezondheidszorg', *Vice Versa* 13, 2 (1979), p. 9.

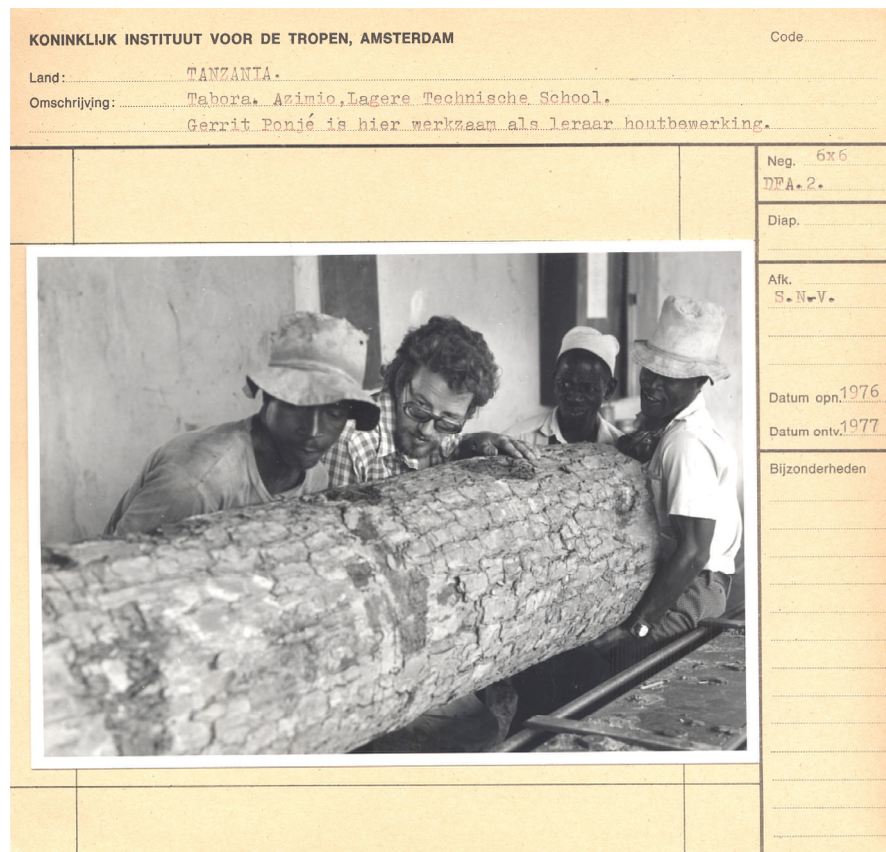
<sup>140</sup> Interview 67.

<sup>141</sup> Interview 113.

<sup>142</sup> Interviews 52, 59 and 62.

angry, they did not want to wait but to use every single minute. They would shout: ‘*Kwa sababu gani umechelewa?*’ (Why are you too late? in Swahili)<sup>143</sup>

Whereas most people praised the Dutch for their strictness with time and money, the way in which they pressed for this was not always appreciated. In some cases critique was expressed too overtly and was felt to hurt local notions of diplomacy.<sup>144</sup>



*Photo 4.3* ‘Gerrit Ponjé at work as a woodwork teacher’, Lower Technical School, Tabora, Tanzania 1976.

*Source:* SNV photo archives, White, Tanzania, Vakonderwijs-Houtbewerking.

*Photographer:* Unknown.

<sup>143</sup> Interview 140.

<sup>144</sup> Interviews 43 and 61.

## Development dilemmas

Increasingly, SNV's work was affected by dilemmas.<sup>145</sup> From the outset, SNV's policy of acting upon the explicit requests of developing nations conflicted with its ideals and norms about development. As was shown in the preceding chapter, there had always been discussions on the Board about how far SNV could make demands on its counterparts to respect agreements. In the field too, there had been dilemmas about how to avoid local politics interfering in SNV projects. As the wishes and needs of developing nations and their inhabitants became ever more central, this dilemma grew in intensity in the 1970s. The new generation of volunteers wanted to show respect for local customs and traditions, with local culture even being idealised by many volunteers. Development could no longer be imposed by the West but had to be based on local traditions. Whereas in the 1960s local culture was by and large seen as a hindrance to development, now *ujamaa* in Tanzania was praised as 'an age-old African idea', and an SNV project in Peru tried, as far as possible, to 'work in the Inca way' by using manual labour.<sup>146</sup> 'Participation' became a key word and 'target groups' had to be drawn into the decision-making process. At the same time, however, volunteers often had clear ideas about the direction that change should take. Congruent with the wave of democratisation sweeping through SNV as an organisation in The Netherlands were ideals about emancipation, equality, democratisation and human rights that were very dear in the minds of many of the volunteers. Their opinions about health, religion and education could be at variance with local values too. The volunteers often aspired to a different status than the one locally allocated to them.

This was no easy dilemma: volunteers frequently felt sandwiched between continuing to show respect for local culture and their personal democratic ideals of emancipation. What exacerbated this dilemma further was the fact that, while during the bricks-and-mortar era of the 1960s SNV volunteers had focused on constructing roads, wells, pumps, bridges, houses, etc., growing importance was being attached in the 1970s to education, primary healthcare and other areas in which 'participation' was even more likely to lead to direct political confrontation. The emphasis on democracy at times brought SNV volunteers into conflict with their superiors in the ministries or in the organisations in which they had been placed. Hierarchy and status played an important role in working relations in some of the societies in which SNV was active. Volunteers' ideas about

<sup>145</sup> Cf. Ton Dietz 'Particuliere ontwikkelingssamenwerking. De medefinancieringsorganisaties en steun aan NGO's', in: Lieten & Van der Velden, eds, *Grenzen aan de hulp*, p. 148.

<sup>146</sup> Film: 'Die streep móet weg' (1972) and film: 'Peru – wegenbouw' (1974) in DVD series: 'Een geschiedenis in beeld'.

democracy and participation did not always go down well in such contexts and often led to conflict with local superiors. One volunteer wrote: ‘Bigger idiots than Doufta of course do exist – our Dear Lord also created us – but they are few and far between.’<sup>147</sup> In several instances, SNV volunteers even had to leave the organisation in which they were working. And, as with nearly all issues during this period, this also influenced relations between SNV and JVC:

It was difficult at times for JVC volunteers. They would see that fifty km from where they were, there were SNV volunteers. These would cost I don’t know how much money. But they would quarrel with the governor and get kicked out. The JVCers would then say: ‘And we are here, we are continuing to work hard, and we get nothing for it.’<sup>148</sup>

Such dilemmas could divide volunteers and their local colleagues. At a Tanzanian school, for example, the volunteers cut the morning roll call, as it was then that corporal punishment was meted out. The Tanzanian teachers saw this as a lack of collegiality and tried to explain matters to the foreigners:

None of the foreign teachers wanted to see students being caned. They saw it as a humiliation of the students. But we know our students. Even the parents agreed. Some of them take marijuana. In such cases one has to be strict. Actually the student should be expelled. But what will that bring? S/he will sit at home doing nothing – and perhaps become a prostitute or a thief. That is why we said: ‘We will not expel them. He or she can stay in school and in the end become a good mother or father. But we need to punish them so that they will improve their ways.’<sup>149</sup>

Ideas about development and how it should be implemented could differ in many ways. SNV was then tending to work in the most remote and poorest areas of the countries with which a contract had been signed. However, not all the local people agreed with this policy:

I remember that as a child I heard about a project in the bush. They had brought palm-oil milling machines. But to make palm oil we would always stamp it with our feet. We thought: ‘Why are those white people going into the bush? They should start with the people near the road. Now the people in the bush are becoming more developed than us.’<sup>150</sup>

In some cases the volunteers got to know the people they worked with quite well and became ever more confronted with the discrepancies between ‘devel-

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<sup>147</sup> Archives SNV Cameroon, Yaoundé, SNV Kameroen, ‘Jaarverslag 1981’ p. 43. (‘Grotere droplullen dan Doufte bestaan natuurlijk wel – Onze Lieve Heer heeft immers ook óns geschapen – maar ze zijn schaars.’)

<sup>148</sup> Interview 244. Also: SNV Archives, Yaoundé (Cameroon), SNV Kameroen, Box: ‘West tot 1978/1980,’ file: Community Development: letter Willem Zevenbergen to Veldleider SNV in Yaoundé, 14 July 1976.

<sup>149</sup> Interviews 140 and 131.

<sup>150</sup> Interviews 51 and 61.

opment' as an ideal and 'development' as an industry. The division between the world of the project and the world beyond the project had become a living reality. As one volunteer remembered:

I liked visiting the villages of the employees I was working with on the project. Once I came to a village and ended up with someone I got along very well at work. But when I came to see him, he said: 'You are allowed to come. You are welcome but I don't want you to try to change my village. That's what we are doing on the project, but not where I live.'<sup>151</sup>

The 1960s had been a time of optimism about the possibilities for development. The economic crisis in the 1970s hit countries, especially in Africa, very hard and the early hopes for development were dashed. Although growing attention was paid within SNV to the wishes and needs of people in developing countries, disappointment was beginning to be felt in many field contexts and the enthusiasm and idealism of the early days of independence waned. In Zambia, the end of the 1970s was seen to be marked by government passivity:

One was not accountable to anyone. We were formally embedded in a government organisation. But the government left us very free in the way we interpreted our work. That is the way it was understood: just let them go ahead, we'll see how we benefit from it, whether we'll end up with a car.<sup>152</sup>

The economic crisis had a bearing on working relations but most SNVers considered it logical that state officials, who only rarely received a salary, would not be highly motivated and needed to invent creative ways to get by financially. Lack of motivation was not, however, attributed solely to the economic predicament: the 'African mentality' was also deemed to be a factor in people's casual attitudes towards work.<sup>153</sup>

<sup>151</sup> Interview 118. ('Ik ging graag naar de dorpen toe waar de werknemers van de projecten vandaan kwamen. Ik kwam daar een keer in zo'n dorp terecht bij iemand waarmee ik goed overweg kon op werk. Maar toen kwam ik bij hem en toen zei hij: 'Je mag wel komen, je bent van harte welkom, maar ik wil niet hebben dat je probeert mijn dorp te veranderen. Dat doen wij op een project, maar waar ik woon niet.')

<sup>152</sup> Interview 118. ('Je hoefde aan niemand verantwoordelijkheid af te leggen. We waren wel ingebed binnen een organisatie van de overheid. Maar die overheid liet je heel erg los in hoe je je werk invulde. Zo werd het ook begrepen: 'Laat ze maar hun gang gaan, we zien wel wat we aan hebben, of we er een auto aan overhouden.')

<sup>153</sup> Interview 2; Lilian van Amelsvoort, 'SNV in Tanzania: mogelijkheden en beperkingen van een niet-gouvernementele ontwikkelingsorganisatie' (Occasional paper, Nijmegen 1991) p. 129; Archives SNV Tanzania, Dar es Salaam, Box Novib/oud – '77-'86 etc, file: Morogoro Wells Construction: letter, Scheppingen to Frans (van de Laak) 18 February 1981; *Ibid.* final report, Niek Hoorweg, 24 November 1981; *Ibid.*, Box: 'Physiotherapy – '85-'89, etc', File: PHC group tot '87, Theo van de Ven (Zanzibar) 4 September 1988.



'Participation' hardly ever worked in the way SNV volunteers anticipated it would. For example, a project was initiated in Tanzania in which bamboo pipes and wooden tanks were used to supply and store water. Hailed as a project embedded in local structures and praised for its local participatory element, SNV project leaders soon realised that it would be next to impossible to resolve problems with the material's durability. Apart from problems with preservatives, ideals about African communal labour soon had to be modified too. The project has envisaged that villagers would contribute to the project by digging the ditches for the pipes but reality proved less romantic and, faced with high rates of absenteeism, fines had to be issued if villagers did not show up when it was their turn to help dig.<sup>154</sup>

The dilemmas centred around cultural differences, issues of adaptation, varying conceptions of development and tensions between the ideals of the volunteers and those of the locals with whom they worked.

### A changing profile

Over time, the profile of the SNV volunteer changed. SNV wanted to get rid of its 'boy scout' image and called for more specialised volunteers with higher educational levels and more experience. With the demand for higher qualifications, especially in technical areas, and an SNV contract providing an alternative for military service, the percentage of female volunteers decreased sharply from around 50% of all volunteers in 1965 to a mere 21% in 1980. This trend was to continue throughout the 1980s. While the first volunteers all had a reasonably good educational level, over the years more university graduates, especially from the Agricultural High School in Wageningen, joined SNV.<sup>155</sup> The average age of SNVers increased too and the number of volunteers who went abroad with their families rose steadily, especially during the period that is discussed in the next chapter. SNV work became ever more specialised technically and the earlier emphasis on community development disappeared. Most of the new volunteers joined to work in the areas of medicine and health care, education, engineering and agricultural techniques, but generally at a higher technical level than before. And in the 1980s SNV's involvement in forestry projects also grew rapidly.

The training the volunteers received before going overseas became more extensive and was rounded off with an in-country training course. Some of these local training centres were not well equipped for their tasks and were

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<sup>154</sup> Interview 86; Interview 94.

<sup>155</sup> Nijzink, *Dag vrijwilliger!*, p. 34.

heavily criticised by the volunteers.<sup>156</sup> The concept of voluntary service came under increasing attack and, while some continued to argue that people working for SNV ought not to receive a salary, others felt that it was only right that people earned a decent income and had a sound legal position.<sup>157</sup> Daily allowances increased until they reached the equivalent of a regular salary and by 1988 a formal system of remuneration had been introduced. SNV had gradually moved from being a voluntary service to a professional organisation employing highly qualified experts with working experience behind them before they joined SNV.

## Conclusion

Several developments marked the period under review here. There was a rapid increase in development activities and the Third World Movement grew quickly both in the Netherlands and around the world. At the same time, after the initial period in which hopes for rapid development were still very much alive, development policies came under increasing attack in the 1970s. SNV experienced this general trend too and the organisation was often presented as an example of mismanagement and failure. The critique firstly came from within: many volunteers returned to The Netherlands disappointed about the results of their work and held SNV and its field staff responsible for bad decisions regarding the choice of projects and countries, a lack of adequate preparation, etc. They also insisted that the voice of the volunteers was disregarded in the decision-making process and demanded more democratic procedures be installed. The organised call from returned volunteers for more democracy and a conscious political stance in the selection of countries and projects was an important development of the 1970s.

There was criticism from outside the organisation too. The Dutch right-wing press accused SNV of misusing tax payers' money and burdening developing nations with 'white elephants'. Such critique exacerbated existing tensions within SNV, not least those between the state section in SNV and JVC representatives. The legacy of missionaries' social work slowly came to be seen as something that should be overcome rather than built upon. Secularisation can be regarded as a third major feature of this period and changes in this direction finally led to the separation of the private (with many Christian organisations) and the state branch of SNV.

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<sup>156</sup> *Nedwerk* 2, 1 (February 1988), p. 7.

<sup>157</sup> Nijzink, *Dag vrijwilliger!*, p. 60.

The nature of SNV's work also changed and, with time, the concept of voluntary service came to be regarded as problematic. As we will see in the next chapter, professionalisation became the key word in the 1980s.





*Photo 5.1* 'SNVer Pierre de Kock is having a conversation with staff of the city hall in Gedaref', Sudan 1989.

*Source:* SNV photo archives, Red, SNV, Voorbereiding.

*Photographer:* Marina Danzmann, 1989.

## Expertise expected: The professionalisation of SNV (1985-1994)

SNV started out as a voluntary service and during its first decades there was considerable debate about the meaning and conceptualisation of ‘the volunteer’. While the term was positively associated with youth and enthusiasm in the 1960s and early 1970s, the notion ‘volunteer’ came, over time, to be negatively associated with amateurism. This had consequences within SNV: more people were calling for a professional approach that would be accompanied by an adequate salary and social-insurance package. In the course of the 1980s this process of professionalisation was implemented, both in terms of a salary for SNV workers and an increased emphasis on technical and managerial expertise. The formal start of salary payments in 1988 marked the end of a long road towards professionalisation and the start of a complex set of changes stemming from this process.

### Professionalisation

SNV formally changed from being a volunteer organisation into a professional one in the second half of the 1980s. Many small steps had been taken in this direction over the years and SNV’s original character as a voluntary service had changed considerably since its inception in the 1960s. The professionalisation process took place in various ways: in terms of the SNV’s average profile, in its financial and legal status, and in SNV as an organisation. Over the years, the profile of the average SNV volunteer had drastically changed from inexperienced school leavers in the 1960s to highly qualified university-educated experts by the 1980s. SNV was increasingly taking on qualified professionals

who had several years' work experience before joining SNV. The average age of SNVers thus increased and the new generation often had a family to take care of too. To remain an attractive employer, SNV had to improve the conditions it offered its personnel.

These conditions formed the basis of the second aspect of the organisation's professionalisation. The legal and financial side of the professionalisation process started with the revision of some of the secondary conditions – moving expenses, costs for schooling, and an improved insurance package. While no formal policy was developed for accompanying partners, they were expected to join the preparatory course. The volunteers' 'pocket money' had increased steadily over the years and in 1988, SNV decided to shift from having volunteers to salaried 'development associates'.

There were several reasons for SNV's more stringent recruitment demands. Firstly, governments in the host countries had experienced projects that had failed because the expatriate development workers had been too inexperienced. The number of lower and middle cadre in developing countries was also rapidly growing so there was less need to have expatriates at this level. In addition, projects formerly managed by DGIS were now under SNV supervision and these required more experienced personnel.<sup>1</sup> To be sure, the previous form of deployment of SNVers in host organisations giving technical advice or executing projects still continued but the percentage of project managers in the organisation grew sharply. The SNVer was no longer a volunteer full of adventurism and/or idealism trekking off to foreign parts but a professional who wanted to see his/her expertise rewarded like any other employee. Around 1960, when the Peace Corps and other large voluntary organisations were founded, the word 'volunteer' had a positive ring to it but in the course of the 1970s this changed and volunteers were considered inexperienced amateurs. The idealistic élan of the 1970s had waned and professional management and marketing were the new terms in vogue. The political activism with which many volunteers had set out in the 1970s became less important as many development associates regarded SNV as just another employer and framed their working experience as a step along their career path. Quite a number of SNVers were still 'caught up by the tropics' (*bevangen door de Tropen*) but only a few were now inspired by ideas of revolutionary change.<sup>2</sup>

With the professionalisation process, investments in time became greater. In the 1970s a large number of volunteers had returned to The Netherlands after

<sup>1</sup> Matthieu Peters, 'Doorgaande lijn', *Nedwerk*, 1, 1 (1987), p. 2; 'Vettere kluit voor ervaren SNVers?' *Nedwerk*, 1, 2 (1987), pp. 1-2; Elly van der Klauw, 'Carrière maken bij SNV?', *Vice Versa* 21, 2 (1987), pp. 7-8.

<sup>2</sup> Foreign Affairs, file snv/2011/00328, final report, 'Ontwikkelingswerk en carrière: eindrapport', October 1990, pp. 39, 46-47.

two years of SNV service but in the 1980s a growing number regarded their future as being in ‘development work’ in the tropics. Some experts and their families lived outside The Netherlands for over a decade, often moving from one country to another.

SNV as an organisation also developed in a more professional direction and ideas about management became more widespread in the 1980s. In the non-profit sector, to which SNV belonged, concepts like management, marketing, and efficiency had formerly been unequivocally associated with ‘dirty’ capitalism but in the 1980s they also came to be used in organisations of the Third World Movement. SNV’s Head Office worked towards achieving an organisational structure that functioned more smoothly with an emphasis on efficient budgeting and effective administrative management. This led to the setting up of a financial department, more training of SNV personnel and longer-term bureaucratic structures. Policy-making became ever more important and the SNV Board paid more attention to the principles and guidelines that formed the basis of the organisation.

### Views on SNV’s professionalisation process

In many respects the move towards a more professional approach was appreciated. Most SNVers regarded the payment of salaries as being long overdue and were relieved that they were finally being adequately compensated for their efforts.<sup>3</sup> Although this reaction predominated, the increasing professionalisation also evoked some critique. The former Chairman, Prince Claus, sent a letter to SNV’s Director in 1995, when the professionalisation process was already well established:

I wonder, however, how long an organisation like SNV will continue to exist and in what form: as a professional development organisation, of which there are so many, or as a volunteer organisation? Although I do understand very well why SNV has shifted its priorities over the last few years, I have always had sympathy and understanding for the original objective that aimed at having young Dutch people gain experience around the world in its many facets. That is, I admit, not primarily for the benefit of people in the Third World, but in my opinion it is a good thing that young academics and experts can develop their consciousness and character for a number of years through acquiring experience in other countries and cultures before starting their careers in The Netherlands. That particular characteristic of SNV has always appealed to me very strongly and it is also in this respect that SNV has differed from other development organisations and NGOs.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Interviews 136 and 176.

<sup>4</sup> Foreign Affairs, file: snv/ara/00931, letter, Prince Claus to Berteling, 29 September 1995. (‘Toch is het voor mij de vraag hoelang een organisatie als SNV nog zal blij-



Some SNVers also felt that professionalisation did not have positive consequences alone. One former SNV'er felt that, as the stakes became higher, SNV's old aim of volunteers making themselves superfluous had disappeared and the preservation of one's position had become a reflex reaction that negatively impacted on development relations.<sup>5</sup> Some also said that in the past SNV had been 'more fun' and that the organisation was becoming 'too serious'. This view was shared by some local people who complained that the new SNV development associates were more aloof and that people driving by in large 4x4s were no longer in close touch the locals who they purported to help. 'SNV has changed from a sociable to a professional organisation,' one former SNV administrative worker said and in Cameroonian culture this was certainly not a compliment.<sup>6</sup> With the changing profile of SNV and SNVers, relations did indeed become different: SNVers in more managerial positions were less likely to 'go native' in village life and development associates with a family were probably going to spend more time at home.

As with many changes that originated from Head Office however, repercussions in the field were gradual and happened later than the dates of decision-making in The Hague would suggest. When Zuhura Yegella joined SNV Tanzania as an administrator in 1992/1993 she still found an organisation 'based on personal relations'. She was shocked to discover that there was little control over expenditure and that decision-making and recruitment were very informal in character: 'There were hardly any interviews; it was more like, "I know this person".' She could see the advantages of the personal atmosphere and in the oil company where she had worked before, she would 'not have dreamt of knocking on the director's door', whereas in SNV she could just ask the director whether he could give her a lift as she had no driver's licence. 'It was everybody caring for everybody.' But as the organisation grew, she felt it

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ven bestaan en in welke vorm: Als een professionele ontwikkelingsorganisatie waarvan er zoveel zijn, of overeenkomstig de vrijwilligersorganisatie? Hoewel ik heel goed begrijp waarom SNV zijn prioriteiten in de laatste jaren heeft verlegd, heb ik ook altijd sympathie en begrip gehad voor de oorspronkelijke doelstelling die beoogde jonge Nederlanders over de wereld in zijn vele schakeringen ervaring te laten opdoen. Dat is dan, dat geef ik toe, weliswaar niet primair ten bate van mensen in de Derde Wereld maar ik vind het een goede zaak dat jonge academici en deskundigen hun bewustzijn en karakter gedurende enige jaren kunnen vormen door in andere landen en andere culturen ervaringen op te doen alvorens in Nederland hun carrière te beginnen. Dat bijzondere kenmerk van SNV heeft mij altijd bijzonder aangesproken en daarin onderscheidde SNV zich ook altijd van andere ontwikkelingsorganisaties en NGO's.)

<sup>5</sup> Interview 243; van Amelsfoort, 'SNV in Tanzania', pp. 129-132.

<sup>6</sup> Interview 56. Also Antoinette Gosses & Jan Goedhart, 'Kleine consultants: geen bliksembezoeken', *Vice Versa* 21, 4 (1987), p. 47.

was necessary to adopt a more professional approach, to build in controls to prevent abuse and to have a better decision-making process and formal procedures to recruit and assess personnel.<sup>7</sup> These references reveal the ambivalence of SNV's 'informality'. It could indeed reduce hierarchical relations and contribute to a more personal and friendly atmosphere. The references also refer, however, to possible favouritism and local hierarchies slipping back in through the backdoor. Such tendencies were one of the reasons for SNV management to call for more formal procedures and stricter norms in terms of management.

Despite the process of professionalisation, a lot of the flexibility that had characterized SNV in the past continued. SNV development workers still took their bicycles to every corner of the world and they retained a relatively large degree of freedom in determining the nature and content of their work. As quite a small development organisation, the informal and open atmosphere in SNV offices, where directors were usually accessible and did not stress hierarchy or formalities, continued to be appreciated by both the local people and expatriates.<sup>8</sup>

### The new pragmatism

Turning SNV into a professionalized organisation did not happen in isolation. In the Third World Movement, which traditionally had strong political overtones, activism had become less prominent. The Third World Movement had been very influential in the 1970s and early 1980s emphasising protest and action but it was starting to lose momentum. Many support movements collapsed and a much smaller sector emerged in their place, one that was more pragmatic in approach and less directed towards political solidarity. Words that had been 'wrong' in the past, such 'commercialisation', 'marketing' and 'efficiency', now also gained currency in an organisation like the *Wereldwinkels*. This trend coincided with an increase in large-scale charity actions that were very different in character from earlier activism and more geared towards a mass audience. Events and groups such as 'One for Africa' (*Eén voor Afrika*) could count on popular support, and large sums of money for charities such as Foster Parents Plan were collected. In other words, the overt political implications of development cooperation became generally less fashionable during this

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<sup>7</sup> Interview 147.

<sup>8</sup> Interviews 86 and 59. Marc Broere, 'Verhuizen naar Derde Wereld is hele heisa', *Vice Versa* 25, 1 (1991), p. 8.

era, while at the same time large-scale activities organised through the mass media grew in importance.<sup>9</sup>

The new pragmatism was informed by diminishing optimism about the possibilities for revolutionary change and the chance of rapid development in the Third World.<sup>10</sup> The 1960s had been characterised by optimism and while there had been critique on the methods used in development in the 1970s, many people still placed their hopes on revolutionary change. During the first two phases of SNV's history, critique of development had mostly come from conservative circles that saw development aid as a waste of money and no use to the Dutch economy. In the course of the 1970s, and especially during the 1980s however, critique from leftist, progressive circles increased. People who had worked in the development sector and a number of scholars expressed their doubts about whether it was possible to alleviate poverty through development aid. Critiques that had been firmly located in the right-wing press also now appeared in progressive newspapers, and in academic circles development aid was being negatively evaluated. In the 1960s relations between academia and development practitioners had been close but, by 1985, development as practice and development as studied had grown apart and the relationship had come to be one of mutual mistrust. It was pointed out that development money had often been wasted on projects of grandeur proposed by African rulers and in some cases did more harm than good for people in the Third World.<sup>11</sup>

The authors of this critique were as such not very influential in the sector. Yet their voices were symptomatic of a wider trend of scepticism regarding development. In the 1970s it had seemed possible to divide the world's countries into 'good' and 'bad' regimes and development aid was to be meted out only to regimes that were striving to achieve socio-economic equality through structural change and had a positive human-rights record. In practice, most of the focus countries for development aid had a socialist outlook and many socialist regimes paid lip service only to the aims of equality and human rights as stipulated under Pronk's ministry. Initially, support movements, development

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<sup>9</sup> Nekkers & Malcontent, 'Inleiding', in: Nekkers & Malcontent, eds, *De geschiedenis*, pp. 53-54; Beerends & Broere, *De bewogen beweging*, pp. 126-127, 130-132, 145-148.

<sup>10</sup> Nekkers & Malcontent, 'Inleiding', in: Nekkers & Malcontent, eds, *De geschiedenis*, p. 53.

<sup>11</sup> Cf. Kothari, ed., *A radical history of development studies*; Nico Kussendrager & Reint Rosenstok, 'Stop(t) de hulp?', *Vice Versa* 23, 2 (1989), pp. 1-6; Hoebink, *Geven is nemen*; Kristoffel Lieten & Fons van der Velden, 'Inleiding: over de grenzen van de hulp' in: Lieten & Van der Velden, eds, *Grenzen aan de hulp*, p. 4; Nekkers & Malcontent, 'Inleiding', in: Nekkers & Malcontent, eds, *De geschiedenis*, p. 52.

organisations and The Netherlands Ministry for Development Cooperation had turned a blind eye to abuses of human rights in such countries but as the intense oppression and authoritarianism in some of the focus countries became more widely recorded, this position became untenable.<sup>12</sup> The simple opposition of good and bad regimes disappeared, leading to a far more critical assessment of socialist regimes than had been the case in the 1970s. In some cases this led to defeatism and a feeling of powerlessness but others felt that these reservations had led to a more realistic and pragmatic approach.

Pragmatism also came to play a more central role in Dutch economic policies. The 1980s were years of economic crisis and it was often not easy for returning volunteers to find work after their contracts with SNV had ended. In some sectors, their experience in the tropics was regarded as an asset but it could also be a disadvantage: ‘Oh, five years of development aid, a woolly-headed type, what can we do with such a red?’<sup>13</sup> The crisis also meant that there was less money for matters considered secondary to the Dutch economy, and although the amount spent on development aid as such did not decrease, the definition of what fell under the development budget came to be interpreted more widely.

### Dutch development policies and the economic recession

The ten years between 1985 and 1995 were ones of cutbacks. With the economic recession, the prime political aim of the government at this time was to create a healthy Dutch economy. This demanded a sober, pragmatic approach, also with regards to Dutch development policy. The economic recession reinforced a tendency that had started after the end of Pronk’s mandate. Jan De Koning, who was Minister for Development Cooperation between 1977 and 1981, had already introduced more pragmatism, changing the focus on human rights to the aim of economic independence. Developing nations were to strive for economic growth through international trade and business. Pronk’s legacy was continued to a certain extent as poverty reduction remained a point of attention in De Koning’s approach too. With the stress on economic independence, however, De Koning shifted towards a two-track policy and put less emphasis on the human-rights policy of the receiving states. Cuba was dropped as a focus country, while Indonesia, its reputation in human rights policies not-

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<sup>12</sup> Cf. Michael Jennings, ‘Almost an Oxfam in itself: Oxfam, *Ujamaa* and development in Tanzania’, *African Affairs* 101 (2002), pp. 509-530.

<sup>13</sup> Foreign Affairs, file snv/2011/00328, report: Huub Mudde, ‘Ontwikkeling en carrière Persoonlijke verhalen’, (October 1990). (‘Oei, vijf jaar ontwikkelingshulp, geitewollensokken, wat moeten we met zo’n rooie rakker.’)

withstanding, received more development aid. De Koning's policy was characterised by a new pragmatism: 'If it can't be done as it should be, than it should be done in any way that it can,' he once stated. Although the percentage of Dutch GNP for development cooperation remained relatively high, this was due to some extent to the fact that the minister allowed a large degree of 'contamination' of the budget and many of the expenditures had little to do with development cooperation. These included matters as diverse as export transactions by Dutch firms and the cost of receiving Vietnamese refugees.<sup>14</sup>

After the 1981 elections, reducing this 'contamination' was formulated as a political aim. During Christian-Democrat Van Dijk's brief period as Minister, however, little was realised to this effect because he ran into difficulties due to his past statements on South Africa's apartheid regime and his conflict-ridden relationship with the Minister of Economic Affairs.<sup>15</sup>

The government fell in 1982, after which the liberal Eegje Schoo became Minister, a surprise appointment as she had no prior knowledge of development affairs. A former member of the Emancipation Council, she stressed the importance of the 'position of women' in development policies that was in line with a wider international trend in Dutch development policies. This and ecological concerns were mentioned for the first time in the Memorandum Reassessment (*Nota Herijking*) in 1984. The Memorandum was much criticised for its stress on the private sector and its neglect of structural problems such as the international debt crisis. With an economic recession in The Netherlands, Schoo had re-introduced the idea of development aid as a means of promoting Dutch exports and business interests, although it is questionable whether she succeeded in realising this aim. The Minister wanted to reduce the number of programme countries (formerly *concentratie-landen*) and the importance of human rights as the criterion for aid was considered even less important than under De Koning. Her support for the Indonesian government became legendary and she was even given the nickname: 'Minister in Suharto's Cabinet in extraordinary service' (*buitengewone dienst*).<sup>16</sup>

The next minister, Piet Bukman, who was in office between 1986 and 1989, largely continued the policies of his predecessor. The new pragmatism that had started with De Koning and had been strengthened by Minister Schoo remained

<sup>14</sup> Nijzink, *Dag vrijwilliger!*, p. 67; Nekkers & Malcontent, 'Inleiding', in: Nekkers & Malcontent, eds, *De geschiedenis*, pp. 41-45; Hoebink, *Geven is nemen*, pp. 62-65.

<sup>15</sup> Nekkers & Malcontent, 'Inleiding'. In: Nekkers & Malcontent, eds, *De geschiedenis*, pp. 46-50; Hoebink, *Geven is nemen*, pp. 65-70. ('Als het niet kan zoals het moet, dan moet het maar zoals het kan.')

<sup>16</sup> Quoted. In: Paul Hoebink, 'Ontwikkelingssamenwerking van staat tot staat: motieven, geschiedenis, resultaten'. In: Lieten & Van der Velden, eds, *Grenzen aan de hulp*, p. 75.

in vogue during his mandate too. And, like Schoo, Bukman strongly supported the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) of the IMF and the World Bank. In these programmes the International Monetary Fund granted loans only to countries that followed the economic policies stipulated by the Fund. The SAP approach was widely criticised for allegedly imposing a free-market principle on countries from which, in the end, only Western economies would benefit.<sup>17</sup>

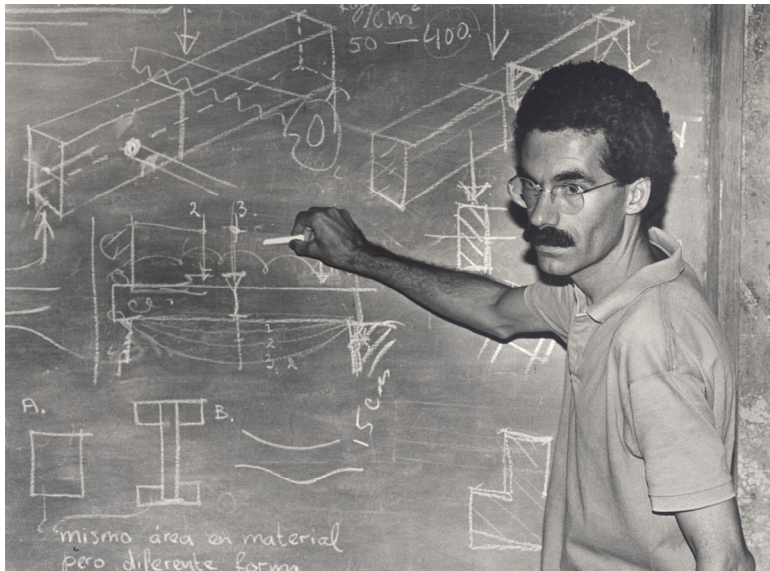


Photo 5.2 'SNVer René Stam teaches concrete technology to builders', Bluefields, Nicaragua, 1987.

Source: SNV photo archives, Red, SNV, Nicaragua, Onderwijs.

Photographer: Rob Brouwer, 1987.

### The secret world of development

Pragmatism, realism and professionalisation were thus increasing in Dutch development policies at large, the NGO sector internationally and in The Netherlands, and in SNV as an organisation. This move was related to the increasing complexities of the development sector. The notion of merely 'doing good and not looking back' had long passed and by the 1980s development had become a specialized branch; 'a secret world' complete with 'its own codes, jargon and

<sup>17</sup> Nekkers & Malcontent, 'Inleiding'. In: Nekkers & Malcontent, eds, *De geschiedenis*, pp. 51-53.

fashions', as Paul Hoebink put it.<sup>18</sup> The importance of 'development fashions' had been noted much earlier; in fact by one of the officials who was concerned with JVP's foundation and who became Professor of International Economic Relations at Groningen University in 1965.<sup>19</sup> New approaches appeared ever more rapidly as a result of the sharp critiques that the sector had received. From the start, 'new is better' had been part of the development ideology. This, however, exacerbated the tendency to stress that, while in the past there had been mistakes, the latest approach would adequately address these mistakes and have positive results. It is no coincidence that the SNV films from this period stated time and time again that the organisation had changed from an arrogant 'know-all' strategy to a focus on the wishes and needs of the developing countries. 'It would be sad if we stopped right now, just as it has at least become clear how not to do it.'<sup>20</sup>

The larger degree of specialisation in the development sector meant that it became increasingly difficult for outsiders to keep up with the various trends, debates and policies. The world of development became one of abbreviations, neologisms and specialised terms. One woman in Mali, the secretary to a women's group, had a notebook literally full of abbreviations of approaches, organisations and methods, with an explanation in French neatly written beside them. She had taken these notes at seminars and workshops she had been invited to but as she knew no French, she had no clue as to the meaning of most of what she had written down.<sup>21</sup> In protest at all the 'DDSP', 'SPD', 'durable', 'sustainable', 'development' and 'programme' jargon, Jaap Kok in Cameroon chose to call a wood project 'Vandikhout', based on the Dutch proverb (*Van dik hout zaagt men planken*) referring to the strength of will.<sup>22</sup>

Several people who had worked for SNV held that the organisation was no exception in this respect. Within SNV, a 'bubble' of concepts and notions existed, the meaning of which often even escaped SNV workers themselves. Some of the old guard suspected that nothing much new was meant as they recognised debates and discussions they had heard before in SNV: it was all

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<sup>18</sup> Hoebink, *Geven is nemen*, p. 11.

<sup>19</sup> Van Dam, 'Mode in ontwikkelingsvraagstuk', *Economisch-Statistische Berichten* 17, 5 (1978), pp. 496-500. The idea of fashions in development was first suggested by him in an interview: Foreign Affairs, file 299, report of a radio programme, 'Samenwerking met ontwikkelingslanden' with Prof. F. van Dam, 18 January 1965.

<sup>20</sup> Films: Hèrè Be (1984). ('Het zou dan ook treurig zijn als we er juist nu mee ophielden nu het tenminste duidelijk wordt hoe het niet moet.') Burkina Faso: houtovens (1988); 'Still far to go', (1993). in DVD series: 'Een geschiedenis in beeld'.

<sup>21</sup> Interview with a woman in Mali, name withheld for reasons of privacy.

<sup>22</sup> Interview 57.

‘old wine in new bottles’.<sup>23</sup> According to some, there were people in developing nations who cleverly used the sensitivities in the sector to their own benefit, while for poor people without any education it became increasingly difficult to access funds or attract the attention of donor organisations. One former SNVer quoted an ironic article on development cooperation related to these mechanisms:

An Argentine, Gino lo Fredo, wrote a brilliant satirical article on development aid: ‘You don’t have your own NGO as yet? So you just have to talk the language of the good fairies. This time you have to know that it is all about gender, the next time it is rural development and yet another time you have to say sustainable development. If you use the language in the right way, you will get your own nice little development institute. And then when the evaluation people come, you make sure that they arrive along very bumpy roads, so that they know that you are working very much in the middle of nowhere and you show them all sorts of things. Then you conjure up a grateful farmer out of your top hat and the whole thing will conclude with a fraternizing party, with guitar and singing, and the most beautiful girls in the institute will dance with the evaluator and he will feel so extraordinarily fraternised and will return home with a fantastic image of the institute!’<sup>24</sup>

The shift from optimism to irony and relativism can also be noted in the SNV films of the time that openly refer to the problems that SNVers encountered, and question the arrogance with which earlier development approaches operated.<sup>25</sup> In SNV management, reference was also made to the limits of development cooperation. In 1990, for example, the SNV edition *Een druppel op de goede plaats* (A drop in the right spot) referred both to the positive effects of SNV’s work and the limited influence a small organisation like SNV could have. Similarly, it was argued at a symposium on target groups that ‘SNVers could do nothing to alleviate poverty’.<sup>26</sup> To some extent the developments were contradictory: on the one hand SNV and its personnel were becoming more modest about the possible achievements of development work, while on the other and congruent with the professionalisation process were expectations about the impact and scale of SNV’s work being higher.

This was a time of inner reflection about policies, about the organisation and about its aims. This could lead to what an evaluative report called a ‘roving

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<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>24</sup> Interviews 172 and 2.

<sup>25</sup> ‘Niet alleen Han de Wit gaat in ontwikkelingswerking’, produced in 1974, was the earliest example of this influential genre that became more widespread in the 1980s and 1990s: Films: *Niet alleen Han de Wit gaat in ontwikkelingswerking* (1974); *Hère Be* (1984); *Burkina Faso: veeteelt* (1988); ‘Still far to go’ (1993), in DVD series: ‘Een geschiedenis in beeld’.

<sup>26</sup> SNV Archives, Part II, Box 5, report, ‘Twintig jaar verder, doelgroepen dichterbij?’ (SNV Symposium, The Hague 1985), p. 9.



policy' (*het beleid gaat snel zwalken*) but it also meant, for example, that field staff in the final analysis exerted considerable influence on the organisation's policies.<sup>27</sup> Although the emphasis on activism was less prominent in the 1980s, SNV retained its progressive image. It remained bound by bureaucratic and administrative procedures of a state organisation but in sphere and outlook was much closer to the Third World Movement and the more progressive wing of the Dutch NGO sector. This dual character made SNV a 'monster' in terms of management, but a fascinating organisation at the same time. As an external evaluator reportedly stated: 'His impressions hitherto were those of astonishment at the way in which SNV managed – within an impossible construction – through a series of barely straightforward compromise solutions, to still remain an organisation that is not functioning too badly.'<sup>28</sup>

### A new name

In 1985 SNV changed its name. As SNV had already gained widespread recognition, it was preserved but the acronym was no longer spelt out and instead was followed by the description: 'Organisatie voor Ontwikkelingssamenwerking en Bewustwording' (Organisation for Development Cooperation and Awareness). The name referred to the institutionalisation of the B Objective that had slowly gained importance throughout the 1970s. As the word 'volunteer' was no longer used in the new name, SNV's professionalisation was also emphasised through the name change.

Before 1985, 'SNV' had been translated into the language of the country involved: in the French-speaking world, SNV was known as AVN (Association des Volontaires Néerlandais) for example in Mali and Ivory Coast, or OVN (Organisation des Volontaires Néerlandais) for example in Cameroon, and in English the abbreviation ONV (Organisation of Netherlands Volunteers) was used. After 1985, this changed and SNV was used everywhere. In some countries people found it hard to get used to the new abbreviation, as hardly anyone knew what the letters SNV stood for.<sup>29</sup> In the countries where it had a field presence, SNV had a very diverse image. In Zambia and Cameroon, for example, the abbreviations ONV and OVN respectively had gathered some renown

<sup>27</sup> Archives, SNV Tanzania, Box: 'Teamleidersoverleg 1990, etc.', file: 'Aanbevelingen CV '89', report Scholten, 'Sterker na verandering' (1989), pp. 7-8, 30.

<sup>28</sup> Foreign Affairs, file 222, meeting minutes, SNV Board, 6 October 1989, p. 3. ('Zijn indrukken tot nog toe zijn die van verbazing over de wijze waarop SNV erin is geslaagd – binnen een onmogelijke constructie – via een reeks van weinig rechtlijnige compromisoplossingen toch een niet slecht functionerende organisatie te worden.')

<sup>29</sup> Interview 80.

and a lot of people were aware of the organisation's existence.<sup>30</sup> In Tanzania, on the other hand, not many people had heard of ONV or SNV. In Tanzania the volunteers had, as a rule, initially been placed in government projects and local people just saw a white person get out of a government car without knowing that it was an SNVer. Often they did not even know what country these foreigners came from. At a later stage, SNV's activities usually adopted the project's name. Project names such as Faida and TIP were widely known but nobody, not even the participants on the projects, knew that there was any relationship with SNV as an organisation.<sup>31</sup>

In The Netherlands too the name change led to some confusion. Five years after the change, the abbreviation SNV was still explained as 'Stichting Nederlandse Vrijwilligers' by most of the Dutch media. A research report on SNV concluded that SNV as an organisation was not widely known in The Netherlands and many of those who had heard about it still thought it sent young volunteers overseas.<sup>32</sup>

In 1993 SNV changed its name again: SNV Organisation for Development Cooperation and Awareness became SNV Netherlands Development Organisation. Perhaps this was related to the little impact that SNV's B Objective had made over the years.

### From awareness to networking

The attempts to realise SNV's B Objective to a greater extent were not particularly successful. The aim had always been to arrive at a better integration of the A and B Objectives and have the B Objective implemented during the period of the contract itself. However some SNVers saw little connection between the 'practical work' in the Third World and the 'theorising' about awareness in The

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<sup>30</sup> Interviews 56, 59, 62 and 114.

<sup>31</sup> Interviews 84, 108 and 146. Faida (Swahili for 'success') was an SNV project in Tanzania focusing on small business, TIP (Traditional Irrigation Programme) aimed at improving village water supplies.

<sup>32</sup> Archives, SNV, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania: Box: Teamleidersoverleg 1990, etc; File: 'Aanbevelingen CV '89', etc: 'Overige RV-aanbevelingen (1990), bijlage bij agendapunt. Aanbevelingen RV's tav: Voorlichting en imago' p. 1; Report G.H. Scholten, 'Sterker na verandering. Onderzoek naar de bestuursvorm van de Stichting Nederlandse vrijwilligers', (1989) p. 7 (referring to final report, '(Maatschappelijk draagvlak van) Ontwikkelingssamenwerking' (The Hague, December 1988).

Netherlands.<sup>33</sup> In 1990 it was concluded that two-thirds of SNVer's never undertook any activities in the B sphere during the contract.<sup>34</sup>

It also proved hard to mobilise returned SNVer's to invest time and energy in the B Objective. There was no way in which SNV could demand returned volunteers actively give information about development work. The B Objective continued to depend on the goodwill of individuals and lacked a structured form and organisation.

A first step towards improvement was to specialise. In the past, any of the former volunteers could give a presentation about their experiences but then an Information Pool was introduced that took into account the ex-SNVer's skills and the nature of the request for information. In *Vice Versa's* words, the pool functioned like a 'kind of call-girl system' and when a request for information came in, the Information Pool would search for a match in its database to fulfil the specific request.<sup>35</sup> A 1987 report indicated, however, that there were too few ex-SNVer's with too little expertise willing to implement the B Objective and that making arrangements to fill a request was not always easy.<sup>36</sup> In addition, the B Objective was seen as precarious (*hachelijk*) as SNV depended on the Dutch government but the B Objective demanded a critical stance towards Dutch development policies. It was held that other Dutch organisations were better equipped to organise activities in the realm of awareness and information on development.<sup>37</sup>

During this phase, the B Objective became less politicised and came largely to consist of constructing links between two places in the world. The most frequent forms this took were twin-town arrangements and project linkages initiated by returned development workers. Many towns in The Netherlands adopted a sister town in the South and letters, pictures and occasional visits were exchanged between Dutch towns and places in the Third World. Project linkage could, for example, mean a school in The Netherlands following the activities in a project carried out by SNV in the Third World.<sup>38</sup> Often the twin-town bonds involved educated people from the South as literacy was a prerequi-

<sup>33</sup> SNV Archives, Part II, box 11, report, Gera Schäperdaus & Joke van Aken, 'To B(e) or not to B(e)' ... Een onderzoek naar de bewustwordingsactiviteiten van teruggekeerde vrijwillig(st)ers (Leiden, August 1985), p. 113.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.* box 12, 'Samenvatting Bewustwordingsbeleidsplan' (February 1990), p. 22.

<sup>35</sup> Frank Höppener, 'Ex-SNVer's willen ei kwijt', *Vice Versa* 19, 3 (1985), p. 39 ('een soort call-girl-systeem').

<sup>36</sup> SNV Archives, Part II, box 11, report, 'Notitie Voorlichtingspool', (February 1987).

<sup>37</sup> Archives, SNV Tanzania, Box: 'Teamleidersoverleg 1990, etc.', file: 'Aanbevelingen CV '89', report Scholten, 'Sterker na verandering' (1989), pp. 6-7.

<sup>38</sup> Wichard Maassen, 'Hebben mensen jouw boodschap nodig?', *Vice Versa* 21, 2 (1987), pp. 42-44.

site for maintaining contact between the two places. In the twin-town bond between Hazerswoude and Dioïla in Mali, for example, which had been set up by former SNVers, it was a teacher/journalist who acted as intermediary between the two towns. He would send information about Dioïla so that information evenings could be organised in Hazerswoude:

Every year there were meetings, in African style. They would eat African food, they would invite African people living in The Netherlands, show costumes, do a video to show how Africans lived and what their problems were, and all the people who came to the meeting would buy a support card.

With the money, the local African market place was improved but as stallholders were expected to contribute to realising the improvements, the project did not last. The teacher in Dioïla, however, kept in contact and still occasionally writes to the former secretary of the committee in Hazerswoude.<sup>39</sup>

The B Objective ended in the early 1990s when it was replaced by a new task force called ID: International Dimension. While the B Objective had been meant to increase awareness among the Dutch population, the ID's aim was to facilitate target groups' international networking. The International Dimension group would help groups in terms of contacts, information and finance by putting them into touch with Dutch organisations and action groups working in the field of development.<sup>40</sup> Even though much of the politicisation and the idealism of the 1970s had disappeared at the organisational level, many people still participated out of personal conviction in the 1980s and 1990s. Jeanette de Regt, who was intrigued by Africa as a child, for some time put her plans to work abroad on hold as she regarded it her duty to work in The Netherlands:

I started my studies in Social Geography with the intention of going to Africa. But during my studies I understood that if one wanted to change the world, and that is what I wanted to do, one had to start with the West. Because that is where the problems are. It is the West that blocks the development of Africa. There are enough whites (*witneuzen*) in Africa, so if I really want to change the world I will have to stay in The Netherlands. That was rather a shock because I really wanted to go to Africa.

She worked for the Dutch union for countrywomen for four years but then learnt that SNV had started a pilot programme in International Dimension to study how the international dimension could be designed from the field: 'When I saw that, I thought: "That is my job. I can remain faithful to my mission to change the world starting from the West but I will still live in Africa for three years."' <sup>41</sup> But even the International Dimension group only functioned for a few

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<sup>39</sup> Interview 36.

<sup>40</sup> Verhoeven, *Aid – A changing necessity*, p. 29.

<sup>41</sup> Interview 42.

years and in 1997 it too was discontinued. A new group came in its place: the Bureau Services and Mediation (Bureau Dienstverlening en Bemiddeling) was established to develop activities in the areas of responsible tourism and fair trade. SNV also began to put a greater emphasis on knowledge exchange, both within and outside its organisation.<sup>42</sup>



Figure 5.1 'So you are the representative of the target group'.  
Source: Jaarverslag SNV Nepal 1984, p. 22.

### From project to process

In this period, SNV management formulated policies and thematic concerns of development in a much more direct way than had ever been the case before. This tendency towards a clearer definition of policies and themes could be related to the increasing complexity of development work and the calls for more efficiency and management. A crucial step was a more process-oriented approach instead of the earlier project approach. Participation had already become a key term in SNV's approach in the preceding decade and 'identification of needs', 'participatory reappraisal', 'action methods' and other terms became ever more important over the years. Many local participants interpreted the participatory approach as an attempt to extract labour and money from them for activities that they felt ought to be carried out by the state. In some cases it also merely reinforced social inequality. One traditional leader in Mali made an

<sup>42</sup> Verhoeven, *Aid – A changing necessity*, p. 32.

explicit reference to local hierarchies: ‘The SNV adopted a participatory approach. I was the one who had to make that inventory; I had to ensure that a consensus was reached as to what the wishes and needs of the community were.’<sup>43</sup> This dilemma was widely acknowledged by SNVers in the field:

To avoid relying on political leaders and elites, the emphasis shifted to empowerment and the process approach, in which poor people not only had to decide but also had to take the initiative in and actively contribute to their own development. The focus was on the opportunities and ambitions of the poor and oppressed themselves and the development worker would merely coordinate and facilitate matters until the people could continue without his/her assistance. Development was no longer a project being carried out by ex-pat technicians but a holistic process that ought to originate and be realised by the people themselves. Attempts to introduce the process approach on a wide scale failed, however, as the differences between countries were too vast to permit such a ‘blue print’ methodology.<sup>44</sup> The approach was widely criticised for reducing the role of the development worker to that of a passive onlooker and one that was far too limited in view of the costs involved. In Bolivia, the process approach was never really implemented: ‘We found it nonsense here. You can’t just sit and wait in a village until something happens, can you? We really put it aside.’<sup>45</sup> In addition, the process approach did not reduce the dilemmas of people working for the SNV, on the contrary. Just as with the participation concept, the process approach could lead to difficulties if local people’s ideas of development clashed with SNV policies. With increasing emphasis on local wishes and requirements, this dilemma only became a more intense source of conflict.<sup>46</sup> On top of this, two contradictory processes were at work. On the one hand, the increasing focus on professionalism and efficiency implied that planning and monitoring were necessary to ensure a result-oriented approach. The growing attention to the wishes and needs of poor people themselves, however, meant that activities could hardly be planned beforehand. With the earlier practical project approach, the number of wells, injections or plough-oxen could be counted but a development process was much harder to assess. SNV Head

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<sup>43</sup> Interview 37.

<sup>44</sup> SNV, ‘On the Right Track: SNV’s Policies in the Nineties’ (The Hague, 1994); IOB, *SNV-Nepal*, p. 46.

<sup>45</sup> Interview 261. (‘Dat vonden we hier onzin. Je gaat toch niet in een dorp zitten wachten tot er iets gebeurt? Dat hebben we echt naast ons neer gelegd.’) Also Interview 57.

<sup>46</sup> Nico Kussendrager, ‘SNV zoekt het conflict’, *Vice Versa* 25, 3 (1991), pp. 2-5.

Office tried to address this problem by developing new monitoring and evaluation methods.<sup>47</sup>

Instead of the execution of projects, the development worker was now to give guidance to the development process in the new policies. In general, management skills became more important for SNV personnel. In the 1980s technical expertise had been essential to the work of the SNVer but in the course of the 1990s more emphasis came to be placed on management and coordination. In some cases this concerned the management of large DGIS or embassy projects or SNV projects that were usually smaller in size but growing in number. At the same time, management issues also became more important in the more traditional SNV activities in host projects. The coordinating and facilitating tasks in the new development approaches made management an important skill. Given SNV's long-standing tradition at the village level, the emphasis remained on rural development. The new approach of 'integrated rural development' involved closer cooperation with both national and local government bodies than before, and so reinforced the need for managerial skills in diplomacy and negotiating. The budgets SNVers were dealing with rose sharply, thus increasing the need for sound management and the chance of potential dilemmas concerning political power and spurious motives becoming issues. These political aspects of development work made SNV opt for a stronger emphasis on local governance.

SNV experts were becoming engaged in larger-scale activities than ever before. There was a shift from individual micro projects to larger programmes and ones involving more people and higher budgets and covering larger areas. This was a deliberate choice. With the emphasis on result-oriented development work and the higher educational levels, costs and expectations of the SNV personnel, SNV was aiming at achieving a more structural effect and carrying out more sustainable development work. The assumption was that this could be achieved if SNV activities were not restricted to small projects at the village level but were programmes that included diverse groups of people and covered larger areas. The era of young volunteers living and working in a village had come to a close and contacts with the target groups in many cases took on the form of field visits of various lengths instead of a permanent stay for the entire contract period. As Vera Gianotten of SNV Peru explained in an interview with *Vice Versa*:

In the past you were satisfied if a husbandry expert after three years left some cows that gave 5 litres of milk a day instead of 2. Or if an irrigation expert left three

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<sup>47</sup> Interview 6; Foreign Affairs, file map snv/2009/00173, meeting minutes, half-yearly meeting of delegation SNV Board and Minister, 20 July 1995, p. 2.

channels. But SNVers can leave so much more in a developing country if only they get the opportunity.<sup>48</sup>

## The environment

Apart from introducing approaches that proposed new methods in development practice, there were also some new thematic concerns. In the 1990s the environment became an important aspect of development work and the issue had been raised much earlier in some countries: ‘SNV/N (SNV Nepal) was about 10 years ahead of SNV/The Hague in the field of environment and produced its first Ecology Input Policy Plan in 1986’.<sup>49</sup> Over the years, concern about the environment also grew in the Dutch development sector and an issue of *Vice Versa* in 1990 was devoted to environmental issues.<sup>50</sup> It indicated what a long way there was still to go. People were suspicious in many areas of ‘protecting nature’, as they associated this with state rules and regulations and, even worse, with harsh fines imposed by foresters. A first step was to arrive at a more positive attitude towards environmental issues but even this was not enough. As one of the first Tanzanians employed by SNV pointed out: ‘A development worker who says: “Plant trees because that is good for the environment” will not move any farmer to action.’<sup>51</sup> Explanations about the environment could help in this respect and SNVers readily provided these. Mr Salif Traoré from Zambalagoubou (Mali) had heard the following from a white man who accompanied a group of foresters:

They explained to us that the Sahel was coming to Mali and that rain always comes from trees. So we needed to stop the Sahel from coming and to encourage the rains by creating a village forest. The project helped us a lot. We chose an unoccupied piece of land for the village forest.

Cooperation went well because the foresters were local people and eventually Mr Traoré, who was asked to become the head of the committee for the village forest, became friends with them. At the same time, women were introduced to the use and construction of improved stoves that reduced the amount

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<sup>48</sup> Frank van Ooyen, ‘Peru heeft professionals nodig’, *Vice Versa* 22, 3 (1988), p. 11. (‘Vroeger was je tevreden als een veeteeltdeskundige na drie jaar een aantal koeien op een project achterliet die in plaats van twee, vijf liter per koe per dag gaven. Of als een irrigatiedeskundige drie kanalen naliet. Maar SNV’ers kunnen veel méér achterlaten in een ontwikkelingsland, als ze daarvoor maar de gelegenheid krijgen.’)

<sup>49</sup> IOB, *SNV-Nepal*, p. 189.

<sup>50</sup> Han Beijersbergen, ‘SNV en het milieu’, *Vice Versa* 24, 2 (1990), pp. 13-15.

<sup>51</sup> Harm Botje, ‘Hellingen veranderen in groene terrassen’, *Vice Versa* 26, 1 (1992), p. 11.



of firewood needed. The village now sells wood to people from outside the village.<sup>52</sup>

In the village of Nangola in the same region in Mali, SNV's intervention was also regarded as a success. The village farmers were already in contact with the large state cotton society CMDT (Compagnie Malienne pour le Développement des Textiles) when they started to notice the negative effects of erosion. An anti-erosion project was started that mainly consisted of building dams and planting trees. The men in the village were involved and carried out the work, while CMDT and SNV jointly took care of the funding and the technical advice. There was no payment for the work but after it was all finished, Nangola received the prize for being the best project village and a huge party was organised. One of the men closely involved in the village's development affairs evaluated the project positively:

Later they stopped the project. But that was not a problem because by then everybody knew what to do. When they had an erosion problem, they started what they had learnt. There is simply no need for more instruction. (...)

We want to thank SNV. They really had the know-how. We were losing land but through them we learnt a method of keeping the land; that increased our space for agriculture. So in the end this gave us a higher income.<sup>53</sup>

The initial focus on environmental issues was later modified and a more integrated approach emerged that aimed at community development and protecting the environment at the same time. As this integrated approach to environmental issues only gained currency after 1995, it is discussed in the next chapter.

### The position of women

Another theme that was important in Dutch development policies in the years between 1985 and 1995 was 'women and development'. Within SNV too, many discussions and activities revolved around the 'position of women'. Throughout its existence, SNV had implemented projects that involved women and the very first team in Cameroon had even carried out a project with rural women. During the 1970s, with feminism's 'second wave' in The Netherlands, SNVers had been concerned about relations between the sexes. But it was only from 1983 onwards that women and development formally became a theme in SNV policy and not until 1986 that a first policy plan was formulated. This was relatively late. The worldwide Decade for Women had started in 1975 and it was considered that development projects often had detrimental consequences for women.

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<sup>52</sup> Interviews 196 and 137.

<sup>53</sup> Interview 184.

*Vice Versa*, that had in the meantime become independent of SNV as an organisation, rebuked SNV for reacting to the issue ‘as about one of the last donors on earth’. In Dutch development policies there had been attention for the position of women – albeit piecemeal – before SNV ever started focusing on the subject.<sup>54</sup>

SNV’s first steps into this new arena were not radical. The people in the organisation had learnt from experience that pushing for far-reaching change without support in the local community to back the transformation would lead to nothing:

Of course, in relationships between men and women there is still much that one would like to see changed. I very carefully indicate how I would like things to be by asking, every now and then, how their wives are. Would he not like her to learn how to read and write? I am not going to shout that all veils and headscarfs must go. It makes no sense and I do not feel the need.<sup>55</sup>

The aim of SNV’s new policy on women was to improve their living conditions and their social status. Policy and practice did not coincide, as was so often the case. An evaluation of SNV’s Tanzanian activities in 1991 showed that some activities even increased women’s workloads as men were absent working on the project. It is also interesting to note that the explanations for the position of women revolved around socio-cultural factors and traditional customs. In other words, the 1960’s approach that presented other cultures as static and inherently different reappeared concerning women and development in the 1980s.<sup>56</sup>

For most SNVers, the theme of ‘women and development’ fitted well into the notions and ideals about their work. It was a burning issue for most SNVers: circulars sent by volunteers in Zambia nearly all refer to ‘the role of women’ or ‘the position of women’. Thus in the July 1985 circular sent by SNVers in Zambia entitled *Kasempabode. Avonturen van een ontwikkelingswerker* (Kasempa-Post. Adventures of a Development Worker), all kinds of tedious female tasks in the household were detailed in the section ‘the role of the woman’ before concluding:

A daily routine from early morning to late in the evening. Bearing many children is of course also included. If one compares these duties to women’s rights, something

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<sup>54</sup> Nijzink, *Dag vrijwilliger!*, p. 68; Antoinette Gosses, ‘Met vrouwen heeft SNV kansen gemist’, *Vice Versa* 21, 2 (1987), pp. 1-3 (quote p. 1: ‘ongeveer als laatste donator ter wereld’). Els Postel-Coster, ‘Van participatie naar mainstreaming’, in Nekkers & Malcontent, eds, *De geschiedenis*, pp. 323-338.

<sup>55</sup> Female volunteer in North Yemen (1986), quoted in Verhoeven, *Aid – A changing necessity*, p. 20.

<sup>56</sup> Van Amelsfoort, ‘SNV in Tanzania’, p. 133.

isn't right. No voice in decision-making. Forced into a submissive role towards men. Ignored in development projects that assume the man to be the breadwinner. Passed over by men who take on a girlfriend, mistress, second, third or fourth wife. Possibilities for protest: virtually nil.

To be a woman in Zambia: a lousy job (*een hondebaan*).<sup>57</sup>

In many developing countries, attention for women as a theme in development was differently received. In most contexts women's groups had existed for a considerable time but local NGOs that focused on women's rights and anti-discrimination activities were a new occurrence and eyed with suspicion. Elite men in Mali also criticised the new trend as a Western phenomenon. One women's group leader remembered:

Often the elite presents us with many problems (...) The men will tell me: 'You, you talk like an intellectual. The rural woman wants water. You talk about equality, rights. It is not our culture.'<sup>58</sup>

The women leading such NGOs rebutted such arguments in strong terms. Martha Noya, the Director of the Centro Juana Azurduy in Sucre, Bolivia argued that there was no problem with local initiatives being embedded in international trends:

Here (in Bolivia) there is much influence from the US and Europe. The development agenda is to some extent set by those countries. But I would not see it as imposition. In the US and Europe there are indeed issues that are being addressed in a very profound manner. Why should we not try to learn from these examples? As long as such experiences are adapted to the local context here, I do not see a problem.<sup>59</sup>

These local initiatives proved useful for SNV, and a number of the organisations hosted SNV development workers. It was often a long process to achieve anything. The first SNV worker to work with the Centro Juana Azurduy was successful in creating micro-enterprises run by women's groups. After she left though the small enterprises closed down one after the other. The women involved continued to regard themselves as beneficiaries rather than as the owners of the enterprise and in each group conflict and rivalry started to develop between the women. According to the Director, such enterprises simply did not fit the Bolivian context:

What we noticed is that the whole idea of group enterprise in Bolivia simply does not work. Our idea then was to have a group work on a commercial basis. That was fashionable in development at the time. All the NGOs were trying to have small

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<sup>57</sup> Foreign Affairs, file 232, circular Zambia, 'Kasempabode' no. 2, July 1985, pp. 9-10 (quote); *Ibid.* circular Zambia, Hillie, Pieter and Martin Bijl, 10 July 1985, pp. 3-4; *Ibid.* Circular Zambia, August 1985, Jelle, Piety, Yfke, Froukje, 16 September 1985.

<sup>58</sup> Interview 34.

<sup>59</sup> Interviews 254, 202 and 34.

micro-enterprises run by groups. But they all noticed that it did not work. In Bolivia it either has to be a private, individual business or a family-run business.<sup>60</sup>

The attention paid to the themes of the environment and women changed some programmes profoundly. A project in Guinea-Bissau that started in 1986 and focused on improving living conditions in poor quarters of the capital in its first phases revolved around construction and housing. At a later stage, it also introduced job creation, women and the environment as aspects of development activities.<sup>61</sup> These coincided with the main points that were introduced at a national level in development policies in The Netherlands, notably by the returning Minister of Development Cooperation, Jan Pronk.

### Pronk again

The Berlin Wall fell in 1989 and many people felt that a new era had started. For many it meant not only the end of the Cold War but also the so-called 'end of ideologies'. Public opinion widely regarded it as capitalism's final victory over the communist system. Communism had failed, not only in economic terms but also in the areas of human rights and democratic participation. In the Third World, many countries started experimenting with multi-party democracy. The World Bank and the IMF introduced the link between development and democracy and, after 1990, new concepts such as accountability and good governance found their way into the development jargon.

In 1989 Jan Pronk became Minister of Development Cooperation again. While Eegje Schoo in particular had stressed linkages between Dutch business interests and development, Pronk returned to a strong emphasis on human rights. Within a year of his appointment, Pronk presented the report *Een wereld van verschil* (A World of Difference), the 'Development Bible' as the then Minister of Foreign Affairs called it with some condescension. In the report, Pronk stressed the need to ensure equal opportunities for all people in the global village that the world had become. A number of themes received ample attention: sustainability, freedom, ecology, cultural aspects and women's autonomy. Reactions to the report were varied: some criticised it for being overambitious, others felt it did not go far enough and yet others admired Pronk's refreshing and challenging style. Pronk's outspoken concern regarding freedom and human rights soon led him into difficulties, with his reaction to political events in Indonesia causing a major diplomatic crisis in relations between The Nether-

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<sup>60</sup> Interview 254.

<sup>61</sup> Z.D. Rodrigues, 'Wijkverbetering en werkgelegenheid in Bissau. De kleinschalige productie van goederen en diensten in Reino-Gambeafada' (Occasional Paper 38, Nijmegen 1993).

lands and Indonesia. After these incidents, it was made clear to Pronk that he should not make any further statements on Indonesian politics. Practice proved more resilient in terms of finance and Pronk could not prevent the increasing ‘contamination’ of the development budget. Nekkers and Malcontent<sup>62</sup> cite ‘aid for the former Soviet countries, (the) reception of asylum seekers, Dutch participation in peace missions, language courses for immigrants and a transport helicopter for the Dutch defence forces’ as being contributing factors. Not all of these made equal demands on the budget (‘aid for the former Soviet countries’ was, for example, of limited importance), but general ‘budget contamination’ was a problem during this period. In addition, the entire budget for debt relief was booked as development cooperation and amounted to a considerable part of the total expenditure on development.

Put in a global perspective, developments were sobering. Hopes for greater democratic rule and good governance were dashed at the start in 1991 by the violent war in Yugoslavia. On the African continent wars in Angola, Somalia, Mali, Sierra Leone, Burundi, Liberia and notably the Rwandan genocide in 1994 made it difficult to maintain the optimistic spirit that had been so widespread right after the fall of the Berlin Wall. The Gulf War, the crisis in Haiti and wars in Georgia and Tajikistan were other examples that were interpreted as signs of a bleak future. These crises certainly had repercussions on Dutch development policies and in 1993 the Minister presented a report entitled *Een wereld in geschil* (A World in Dispute), referring to political instability. The end of the Cold War had changed the world order but not in the direction that Jan Pronk had hoped.<sup>63</sup>

### SNV and the Ministry

The relationship between the Minister, officials at the Ministry, DGIS and SNV continued to be fraught with tension in many respects. At a personal level, relations could of course be good, especially in the field where DGIS and SNV personnel often cooperated closely. Circumstances could bring people with varying idealistic views together. In Tanzania, for example, SNVers working as teachers at the ANC Solomon Mahlangu College were not allowed to go out in the evenings, ‘but naturally those guys were craving some contact and a beer. So they would sneak out at night to our bar. “Don’t tell anybody we were here!” they’d say’ after their illegal fraternising with DGIS people stationed nearby.<sup>64</sup> In a number of countries, the SNV country office also functioned as the Dutch

<sup>62</sup> Nekkers & Malcontent, ‘Inleiding’, in: Nekkers & Malcontent, eds, *De geschiedenis*, pp. 54-56 (‘Ontwikkelingsbijbel’, p. 54).

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 56.

<sup>64</sup> Interview 167.

consulate and/or DGIS meeting place which often led to considerable confusion among the local population.<sup>65</sup>

Relations tended to depend on the personal attitudes of those involved. In some cases, contact between SNV and DGIS and the local Dutch embassy was fine, in others relations turned extremely sour. In Burkina Faso, the Embassy at a certain stage withheld all financial support, leaving SNVers technically without a job, just because the SNV country director had dared to question the relationship between SNV and DGIS.<sup>66</sup> Playing football together was no guarantee of an easy relationship: 'On Queen's Day, the Embassy and SNV played football. Now those were two classes. DGIS was considered "dirty"; it was a big conflict. The Tanzanians thought it was a big joke, they could not see the difference (between DGIS and SNV).'<sup>67</sup>

Contacts at a personal level did not prevent more structural problems from emerging time and time again. Despite the more professional approach, SNV's image within DGIS remained one of amateurism for a long time. This was the case in the field as well as in The Netherlands. There were complaints by SNVers who resented being regarded 'as greenhorns without experience and as real idealists' by personnel directly employed by the Ministry.<sup>68</sup> In the past, SNV had seemed no more than a handy leg up to DGIS and every year SNV staff left to accept better-paid jobs at the Ministry. Although SNV attempted to achieve a more professional outlook, its image proved difficult to alter and SNVers continued being associated with an open-sandal woolly-sock type of idealism. In 1991, five years after it had changed, a circular was sent round in DGIS to highlight the fact that SNV had changed from being a volunteer to a professional organisation.<sup>69</sup>

In organisational terms too there was tension in the relationship between SNV and the Ministry. The 1989 Annual Report openly expressed unhappiness about the organisation's cooperation with DGIS. The SNV Board felt that it did not have enough space to manoeuvre and develop a sound personnel policy, while complex procedures was hindering effective project management. 'The SNV Board, not entirely satisfied about the effectiveness of its own operations, carried out research in the second half of 1989 to assess possibilities for improvement. The researcher, Dr G. Scholten (Organisational Studies) made it

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<sup>65</sup> P.e. IOB, *SNV-Nepal*, p. 80.

<sup>66</sup> Interview 3.

<sup>67</sup> Interview 86.

<sup>68</sup> Archives SNV Tanzania, Dar es Salaam, Box: 'Project visits, '79-'84, etc,' file: RIDEP, Mwanza: report Mwanza, 30-9-1981. Also Interview 3.

<sup>69</sup> Foreign Affairs, file snv/2009/00173, circular, Minister to DGIS, 'Uitvoering projecten door SNV', January 1991.

clear that the current complex statutory form was the cause of organisational shortcomings and recommended changes in this respect.<sup>70</sup> Since the foundation of JVP in 1963 and SNV in 1965, the relationship between SNV and the Ministry had not been easy and a formula that worked satisfactorily for both had never been found. The state control over SNV had never been accepted without critique and, in turn, people in the Ministry had not always been happy with its relationship with SNV. There had even been plans back in the 1970s to turn SNV into an independent organisation.<sup>71</sup>

In the course of the 1980s, SNV's call for a more autonomous position became ever stronger. The process of professionalisation certainly played a role in this and as SNV's administrative and financial structures expanded, there was greater emphasis on policies and plans. Being dependent on DGIS was increasingly resented. The stakes were also higher now: between 1985 and 1995 SNV's expenditure doubled from Dfl. 42.1 million to nearly Dfl. 86 million. In addition, the growing number of DGIS projects carried out under SNV responsibility involved ever-larger sums of money: from Dfl. 12.7 million in 1985 to Dfl. 38.2 million in 1995.<sup>72</sup> The SNV Board wanted to have these greater financial responsibilities translated into a larger say in the programme.

To resolve this situation, SNV was given more independence from the Ministry and became a quango (a quasi NGO) that was not fully independent but not as closely linked to the Ministry as before either. This reorganisation, which took place between 1991 and 1994, gave SNV a more autonomous status. In 1986, a Memorandum of Understanding had been signed that gave SNV responsibility for the execution and financial administration of projects and the formal status of quango reinforced these agreements. No more civil servants would be appointed to the SNV Board. SNV's status thus came to resemble that of the Dutch MFOs (*Medefinancieringsorganisaties*), NGOs subsidised by the government. However, SNV's Chairman was still appointed by the Minister and a meeting was held once a year to discuss financial and organisational issues.<sup>73</sup>

The greater degree of independence from the Ministry showed in the fact that SNV was given the chance to manage the finances of some of its small-scale projects by itself. The steps towards SNV financing its own projects were taken hesitantly and fears were expressed that the new practice could lead to

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<sup>70</sup> SNV Annual Report 1989. ('Het SNV-bestuur, niet geheel tevreden over de effectiviteit van het eigen opereren, liet in de tweede helft van '89 een onderzoek instellen naar mogelijkheden tot verbetering. De onderzoeker, dr. G. Scholten (bestuurskundige), heeft duidelijk gemaakt dat de huidige complexe statutaire vorm oorzaak is van de bestuurlijke beperkingen en beveelt wijzigingen daarin aan.')

<sup>71</sup> Nijzink, *Dag vrijwilliger!*, pp. 52, 56.

<sup>72</sup> See Appendix 6; IOB, *SNV-Nepal*, p. 229.

<sup>73</sup> IOB, *SNV-Nepal*, pp. 45-47, 49.

conflicts of interest.<sup>74</sup> The control and supervision of such self-managed programmes were a source of continuous debate. Some of these projects operated quite independently, even of the country office. In one case in Nepal, the country director was not allowed to visit one of the self-managed programmes as he was not welcome!<sup>75</sup> The former situation in which SNV volunteers worked under supervision on a DGIS project slowly came to an end. Increasing numbers of projects received financial support from DGIS but were managed and executed exclusively by SNV personnel. Projects were in many cases contracted out to SNV from Dutch embassies too.

In the past, SNV had had a unique position but as SNV's professionalisation process proceeded, the differences between DGIS and SNV became blurred and finally changed the nature of the tensions between the two organisations. These had previously revolved around differences in presumed ideology and professional attitude but now they were more of a competitive nature.

Where in the past tension had existed between the idealistically motivated volunteer and the DGIS professional, now the tensions overlap and operate in the same area. The difference is (too) small and so a relationship of rivalry has come into being.<sup>76</sup>

The unclear nature of SNV's position – as both a state and a non-state organisation – irritated DGIS personnel, especially at a time when many officials felt SNV was being favoured by the Minister.<sup>77</sup> In addition, the financial aspect of the new arrangement with SNV managing DGIS projects was eyed with suspicion:

The sting in the discussion between SNV and the consultants has always been that SNV has an improper competitive advantage because part of its costs are paid by DGIS, enabling SNV to execute assignments more cheaply (...). That dilemma has not been solved by the cosmetic construction of taking a part of a project that is funded by DGIS out of the budget, transferring it indirectly to a central budget line assigned to SNV, and then having it returned to the project as SNV's 'own contribution'. Apart from the bureaucratic bother for the DGIS administration, (...) this set-up is too transparent to circumvent the problems mentioned above.<sup>78</sup>

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<sup>74</sup> 'Met de billen bloot', *Nedwerk* 1, 3 (August 1987), pp. 1, 3.

<sup>75</sup> IOB, *SNV-Nepal*, p. 72.

<sup>76</sup> Foreign Affairs, file snv/2009/00173, memo, 'Relatie DGIS-SNV', 14 March 1995, p. 1. ('Waar vroeger spanning bestond tussen de idealistisch gemotiveerde vrijwilliger en de DGIS-professional bestaat nu de spanning van overlap en op elkaars terrein werkzaam zijn. Het verschil is (te) klein en er ontstaat dus een concurrentieverhouding.')

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 4-5.

<sup>78</sup> Foreign Affairs, file memo, snv/2012/00233, Embassy Nairobi/hoofd to plv DGIS II through CDP Nairobi: 'Samenwerking posten SNV', 8 July 1998. ('De angel in de discussie tussen SNV en consultants is altijd geweest dat SNV een oneigenlijk con-



Despite the mutual stereotypes, SNV's influence on DGIS was considerable. Many SNVers joined DGIS after their contract with SNV finished, bringing with them ideas and experience from their SNV period.<sup>79</sup> There was a growing dilemma, with SNV wanting more independence from the Dutch state due, in part, to the tensions between it and the Ministry, DGIS and a number of the Dutch embassies. Yet as SNV development associates received more responsibilities in larger projects financed by DGIS and the embassies, the relationship with them became closer. The fact that SNV depended on the decisions taken at the embassies or by DGIS was however increasingly resented.<sup>80</sup>

### Town and country

The period of young volunteers working in one village had come to an end. Rural development remained the core of SNV's expertise but many positions were moved to regional towns and contact with the target groups in many cases now took the form of field visits of varying duration. As there had been a considerable number of car and motorbike accidents in the past and also in view of the increased radius of many SNV projects, more SNV field offices were provided with 4x4s, and drivers were added to the support personnel to increase safety levels.

More SNVers were stationed in a town or even in the capital. Towns became more important and SNV's past focus on the countryside declined. In the late 1980s, plans were made to include projects in towns to SNV's emphasis on activities in the rural areas.<sup>81</sup> Despite all attempts at poverty alleviation, the gap between the rich and the poor only increased in many developing countries. This also meant that the experiences of SNVers became more differentiated. In some towns, especially capital cities, everything had become available: luxury hotels and restaurants, sporting facilities, supermarkets, and expensive (but excellent) medical services. For those with a family, educational opportunities for their children and possibilities for social and recreational activities for the

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currentievoordeel geniet doordat een deel van de SNV-kosten door DGIS wordt betaald, waardoor SNV goedkoper een bepaalde opdracht kan uitvoeren (...) Deze angel wordt er niet uitgehaald indien door een cosmetische ingreep een deel van een door DGIS gefinancierd project uit de begroting wordt gelicht en met een omweg naar een centrale aan SNV toegekende budgetlijn wordt overgeheveld om vervolgens als 'eigen bijdrage' van SNV weer bij het project terug te keren. Los van de bureaucratische rompslomp voor de DGIS administratie (...), deze opzet is te doorzichtig om eerdergenoemd probleem te omzeilen.)

<sup>79</sup> For example, Interview 5.

<sup>80</sup> Cf 'Vol vertrouwen in de toekomst', *Nedwerk* 4, 3 (1990), p. 1.

<sup>81</sup> Nico Kussendrager & Jan Simmers, 'Wordt SNV stads?', *Vice Versa* 20, 3 (1986), pp. 1-4.

accompanying partner became important criteria in deciding whether or not to accept a job with SNV. Some SNVers who had started out as idealistic youngsters with strong ideas about what they saw as over-consumption and neo-colonialism slowly moved towards accepting life with a car, good housing and even a swimming pool.

These SNV families could easily integrate into local society but in a number of cases, SNVers lived in an enclave of white people and hardly established any contact with people from the country in which they were living and working. While in the period before, quite a lot of SNVers had idealised village life and wanted to integrate completely, the dilemmas this had created led in the subsequent period to a realisation that cultural background made a difference that could not be denied: 'SNV did not push me to "go local". Those kinds of elements were increasingly abandoned. The trend was to have more distance: after all we do differ from them, we have other needs.'<sup>82</sup> The dilemma about cultural contact remained but the ideal of full integration was abandoned. One couple explained that they had problems living in an area in Zambia: 'a club of whites in a group (*op een kluitje*) is not exactly our idea of integration with the Zambian population'. They had 'nice contact' with their gardener and the house personnel but it remained 'at another level' than contact with family and friends.<sup>83</sup>

In most countries, the possibilities for travelling around grew rapidly and many SNVers and their families used their leisure time to visit other SNVers working in the same country or to go to tourist highlights that were starting to attract foreign visitors in greater numbers.<sup>84</sup> Visits by one couple or family to another were the most frequent form of contact, although people would also link up at annual meetings and on other occasions. The more general expatriate networks were usually linked to specific public places in town, such as a bar or restaurant, although personal visits could be important too. Within these networks, friendships were established, gossip exchanged, information shared and debates held.

In the 1960s and 1970s, working as an SNV volunteer was in most cases a one-off experience and after their contract had ended most returned to The Netherlands. In the 1980s it started to be possible to envisage 'development' as a career and, although initially relatively small, a group of 'development no-

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<sup>82</sup> Interview 243. ('Vanuit SNV kreeg ik niet de aansturing om 'lokaal' te gaan. Dat soort elementen werd steeds meer los gelaten. Het was eigenlijk eerder een trend om meer afstand te nemen: wij zijn nu eenmaal anders dan zij, wij hebben andere behoeftes.')

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.* file 232, circular Zambia, Frans Neuman, Bas Neuman and Lia Nieuwets, May 1986, pp. 3, 6-7.

<sup>84</sup> Foreign Affairs, file 232, circular Zambia, Betsy Dokter & Obe de Vries, 25 December 1984 - 1 January 1985; *Ibid.* circular Zambia, Ron, 22 March 1985.

mads' emerged who moved from one country to another. The consequences of this varied hugely and were contradictory. In some cases these development workers became tired of personal investment in their surroundings: their knowledge of the country and its people remained superficial, and their contacts were restricted to a small circle of other, mainly white, people. They knew that they might soon leave for yet another country and start all over again with having to get to know people, the country, the culture, etc. At the same time, they were used to adapting swiftly to new circumstances and the frequent changes in their lives increased their flexibility and ability to communicate with people from different backgrounds. As SNV required an open attitude on the part of its personnel and stressed the importance of cultural contact, the number of people involved in negative gossip or with racist tendencies remained very low, although there were some cases reported.

While a growing number of SNV families lived in very acceptable conditions, there were still SNVers who lived in difficult circumstances. One couple suffered severe bouts of malaria, had their computer melt because of the heat and had a fridge that was never cooler than 24°C in the hot season. They were not jealous of those living in easier conditions but were struck by the lack of empathy among colleagues in the capital: 'Some of them just didn't have a clue.' As there were only a few Western foreigners in the area, their contact with local people was intense but at the same time they were directly confronted with cultural, social and economic differences. Local people thought that they had a money-making machine as the SNVers had crisp new bank notes of, by local standards, large denominations (that they had received from the bank in the capital).<sup>85</sup> Also in Nepal, where SNV's aim was to develop the most remote areas of the country, circumstances were often harsh. There were projects in places that could only be reached by walking for a week on end.<sup>86</sup>

I once heard an anecdote of an SNVer who lived in a hamlet somewhere in Nepal. Somebody from the field office in Kathmandu came to visit and the SNVer really had gone out of his way to get food on the table because, well, there was nothing much to get. And he had managed to score a cauliflower or something in the village. That SNVer had already complained that so little was available. Now he had organised a real feast for that director. So the director was enjoying his cauliflower and said: 'Oh well, it is not going all that bad with that hardship of yours,' The SNVer was not amused!<sup>87</sup>

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<sup>85</sup> Interview 2.

<sup>86</sup> Archives, SNV Nepal, Kathmandu, 'Jaarverslag 1984', pp. 80-81.

<sup>87</sup> Interview 176.

### The partner of the SNVer

As a result of the increased expertise required of SNV personnel, their average age showed an upward trend. This also meant that an increasing number of SNVers went abroad with a partner and children. In the past it had been nearly impossible for volunteers to be accompanied by a partner and the early SNV advertisements had all explicitly stated 'preferably single' as couples were only considered if both partners were suitable for an SNV contract. The age limit of 35 had further limited the number of people with a family applying in the past. Generally it was only field staff who had been accompanied by their families but in the course of the 1980s, provisions were made to allow dependents to go too.

Initially SNV was hesitant about dependents of its personnel going abroad but family life was regarded as a private matter with which SNV as an organisation had nothing to do. KNV, however, called for a more active policy regarding dependents as the work of an SNVer could, after all, be influenced positively or negatively by his/her private circumstances.<sup>88</sup> This has always been a feature of development work in general: family circumstances, personal relations and cooperation between people can be of crucial importance. These 'micro factors' influence development work much more so than formal policies and objectives.<sup>89</sup> As Aat van der Wel pointed out:

I would call these macro factors! These matters are so important: to stand strong as a family (...) It is an absolute prerequisite for development work that that works out well. We saw it go wrong so often. A minority of the people we knew who arrived as a couple returned home married (...) Of course divorce occurs in The Netherlands too but the intensity with which you interrelate in a developing country makes it all much more extreme. I think stability in a relationship is more important to your job than technical professionalism. If I consider us, it is indeed my relationship with my wife that has made our stay in Tanzania possible.<sup>90</sup>

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<sup>88</sup> Foreign Affairs, file 2735, discussion paper, KNV 'Dependentsproblematiek binnen SNV', March 1982.

<sup>89</sup> Van der Velden & Zweers, 'Personele samenwerking. Beleid, resultaten en perspectieven'. In: Lieten & Van der Velden, eds, *Grenzen aan de hulp*, p. 256.

<sup>90</sup> Interview 167. ('Ik zou zeggen: macro-factoren. Die dingen zijn zo belangrijk; dat je als gezin sterk staat (...) Dat is echt een voorwaarde voor ontwikkelingswerk: dat dat goed gaat. We hebben het zo vaak mis zien lopen. Een minderheid van de mensen die we kenden die getrouwd kwamen, gingen ook getrouwd terug. (...) Natuurlijk wordt er in Nederland ook gescheiden, maar de intensiteit waarmee je met elkaar te maken hebt in een ontwikkelingsland, maakt het allemaal veel heftiger. Ik denk dat stabiliteit in een relatie belangrijker is voor je werk dan technische professionaliteit. Als ik naar ons kijk: het is echt de relatie met mijn vrouw die het verblijf in Tanzania mogelijk maakte.')

It was also pointed out that SNV was in any case interfering as its legal, financial and administrative procedures not only had consequences for the SNVer in question but also for his/her dependents. In many field councils, the partners of SNVers had a right to vote so, at this level, ‘dependents’ had already been drawn into the organisation.<sup>91</sup> Furthermore it was realised that SNV could benefit by welcoming partners into its orbit: ‘As you know more and more SNV DAs (development associates) are arriving in Nepal with a partner. More often than not those partners have excellent qualifications of their own, and/or work experience.’<sup>92</sup> Conditions improved during the professionalisation process but there were still judicial and financial aspects that were disadvantageous for SNVers with dependents. For some couples, this was a reason to change organisation and, for example, take up an assignment with DGIS, even if they felt closer to the idealistic outlook of SNV.<sup>93</sup> SNV’s attempts to address the issue were not appreciated by everyone and a brochure entitled ‘The Partner of the SNVer’ was deemed ‘noncommittal’ (*nietszeggend*) and was apparently not widely distributed: Anneke Ellen complained that she only read in SNV’s personnel magazine *Nedwerk* (later *Network*) about the brochure’s publication.<sup>94</sup>

New factors, such as schooling for children and social and recreational activities for the accompanying partner, came to play a role when accepting an SNV assignment. People with families were less likely to ‘go native’ and they built up their social networks according to their own preferences, at times within the ex-pat community. Problems with privacy had always been an issue but were more intensely felt if it interfered with family life. One woman was quoted in the brochure on SNV partners: ‘People even climbed the trees in order not to miss anything – they wanted to see how we ate, drank, slept, etc. Extremely interesting.’<sup>95</sup>

Generally speaking, the chances of matters working out well were highest if both partners were employed. After they had met several SNVers on a long journey through West Africa, a couple who were keen to work for the organisation decided to accept positions in it only if two contracts were available: ‘What

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<sup>91</sup> Foreign Affairs, file 2735, letter, Gert-Jan van Apeldoorn to SNV, 4 February 1988; Interview 292.

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.* file 2735, letter, Hans Rijneveld, SNV Nepal to Hans van de Veen, 8 November 1989.

<sup>93</sup> Van Amelsvoort, ‘SNV in Tanzania’, p. 129.

<sup>94</sup> ‘Partnerbrochure: Afspiegeling van de maatschappij?’ *Nedwerk*, 1, 1 (February 1987), p. 6; Foreign Affairs, letter, Anneke Ellen to Hans van der Veen: ‘Werkmogelijkheden partners’, 4 March 1987.

<sup>95</sup> SNV archive, Part II, Box 3: brochure, Marijke Swank, ‘De partner van de SNVer’ (September 1986), p. 4.

struck us during our travels was that if there were two partners and one was without work, the unemployed partner would completely “wither away”, especially if they were in the countryside in the back of beyond’.<sup>96</sup> Serious problems could arise if the accompanying partner did not manage to find a niche for him/herself. Local counterparts tried to assist in such cases:

Of course there were sometimes problems. Like a partner of a SNV person who was bored. We would try to make contact with such a person. But it was also the sort of problem that we could not intervene in. Although it could of course influence the job, like with field missions, some wives did not like being alone in the house for long.<sup>97</sup>

Local circumstances were also often a determining factor in the ‘dependents issue’ and even in the selection of SNV personnel. A report on northern Cameroon recommended that the successor also be ‘without doubt a man’, as it seemed ‘next to impossible’ to the present SNVer for a woman to ‘have a chance to show her worth’ (*zich waar te maken*) in the ‘completely male world’ of northern Cameroon. He classified his working area as a ‘dirty, dusty and warm Muslim village,’ concluding with: ‘Fortunately I am single: a Dutch housewife would get sick of all the dust’ (*een hollandse huisvrouw zou rolberoertes krijgen van het stof*).<sup>98</sup> In some countries, people would not accept a female SNVer with a male dependent.<sup>99</sup> Even more problematic was the issue of homosexuality, and there were countries in which it was forbidden by law and/or culturally not deemed acceptable.<sup>100</sup>

If problems proved insurmountable, there was no other option than to return home. In the archives, references are made to couples returning to The Netherlands because of ‘personal problems’ that are usually left unspecified.<sup>101</sup> Fortunately, such cases were few and far between.

### ‘Little kings’

A general pattern was that families returned to The Netherlands when their children got older. At nursery and primary-school level, acquiring a foreign language could still be seen as an advantage and in several larger places Dutch

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<sup>96</sup> Interview 136.

<sup>97</sup> Interview 41.

<sup>98</sup> Archives SNV Cameroon, Box: ‘Landbouw LLC etc, 1984-1987’, file LLC: report, name withheld for reasons of privacy, July 1985.

<sup>99</sup> Foreign Affairs, file 2735, letter, Rob Visser to SNV, 15 September 1987; Interview 185.

<sup>100</sup> *Ibid.*, letter, Van der Veen to Rookhuizen, 17 May 1988. Interviews 174 and 251.

<sup>101</sup> Case in Cameroon 1987 (for the sake of privacy not further specified); Case in file in Foreign Affairs, no permission to quote for the sake of privacy.

schools were established. At high-school level however, it was often difficult to combine an SNV job with good quality schooling for one's children. Families working for SNV mostly had young children aged between 0 and 6 and, sometimes, up to 12 years of age.<sup>102</sup>

For families with children, ties with The Netherlands were stronger. Firstly, most women went to The Netherlands in the final stages of their pregnancy to have their baby, sometimes accompanied by their partner. Time was spent teaching young children the Dutch language and familiarising them with Dutch culture. Typical Dutch festivities, such as Sinterklaas, were important occasions for children, especially when abroad.



*Photo 5.3* 'Full attention for the cheesehead who just arrived at the airstrip of Jinka (Gamo Gofa) together with his parents' ('Volle aandacht voor kaaskop die zojuist samen met z'n ouders op de airstrip van Jinka (Gamo Gofa) is aangekomen'), Ethiopia 1991.

*Source:* SNV photo archives, Red, SNV, Ethiopië, SNVers.

*Photographer:* Bart Eugenhuijsen, 1992.

<sup>102</sup> Zevenbergen, *De deskundige*, p. 75; T.M.A. Wijnhoven, *Werken in het buitenland. Verhalen van Wageningse ingenieurs die in het buitenland werk(t)en* (Wageningen, 1995), p. 8; Interviews 6 and 106; Nico Kussendrager & Reint Rosenstok, 'Stop(t) de hulp?', *Vice Versa*, 23, 2 (1989), p. 3.

I remember seeing parents who had brought videos from The Netherlands to show their children. At that time I thought it was unnecessary but when we had children ourselves later on, I understood. After all, it is important to pass on to your children something about the culture they come from and to which, in all probability, they will eventually return.<sup>103</sup>

Young children were quick to adapt to their new environment in most cases. Regien who lived in Zambia with her two children noticed that initially the language barrier prevented her children from interacting with Zambian children in the neighbourhood. They mostly played with each other and with other white children, classifying all others as ‘the brown kids’ (*de bruine kindjes*). But after a time they picked up some words in the local language, started to know the Zambian children by name and made friends among them. ‘Now they know them all by name, play football and race one another, eat wild berries together and speak a mishmash of English, Dutch and Kaonde.’<sup>104</sup>

SNV children did not live in the same circumstances as most of the other families in their neighbourhood. Usually they had better access to schooling, had more books and toys, and generally enjoyed more amenities than their peers. Although they lived in simpler circumstances than most Dutch children, they received a wider range of food, including sweets, than most of the children amongst whom they lived. This could turn the SNVers’ house into a focal meeting point: ‘The scenes reminded me of the past. Then we used to sit, all of us, in front of the only television in the village and watch *Dappere Dodo* (Brave Dodo).’<sup>105</sup>

Family life abroad had many sides to it. Apart from the gap in material well-being, SNV children were usually taller than other children of their age and were regarded as special because of their colour. This could make them behave like ‘little kings’, something most parents did not deem healthy in the long term.<sup>106</sup> The experience did, however, have positive aspects too:

One thing for which I am very grateful to SNV, although as such it is not really a merit of the organisation, is the fact that my children received an international education. They have a much broader view of the world and interact so naturally with other people of whatever colour or origin and those with different ideas. Segregation in The Netherlands is quite an issue. For our children, the fact that people of different backgrounds live together is quite natural. That may only be a secondary benefit of having been with SNV but I think it is very important: being a world citizen, acceptance and understanding. They got that all for free because they grew up in that

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<sup>103</sup> Interviews 2, 86 and 106.

<sup>104</sup> Foreign Affairs, file 232, circular Zambia, Regien van der Sijp, 17 January 1986.

<sup>105</sup> *Ibid.*, circular, Zambia, Sander e.a., 1 January 1986, p. 7.

<sup>106</sup> Interview 6; SNV archive, Part II, Box 3: brochure, Saskia Kunnen, ‘Met kinderen naar een ontwikkelingsland’ (SNV brochure, August 1985), p. 7.



environment. These are things I think about and, for me, they were an added advantage of having lived abroad.<sup>107</sup>

Sometimes the children of development workers later also worked in international circles. In any case, a striking number of the (former) SNVers interviewed had spent (part of) their youth outside The Netherlands.

### Cultural contact and monomania

Cultural contact remained a central concept in SNV's philosophy. Within the Dutch development landscape, SNV had become one of the organisations that was renowned for its in-depth knowledge of the countries in which it worked and the serious interaction it had with its target groups, especially at grassroots level. The new approaches that SNV envisaged in the late 1980s and early 1990s, such as participatory methods and the process approach, also presupposed not only knowledge about local people but also intensive communication with them. Although SNV had, from the start, paid attention to the wishes of the participants it worked with, over time SNV management attempted to translate this into the organisation's methods and approaches. This tendency to focus on the wishes and needs of local participants also showed in the preparatory course that all SNVers followed before their departure. The part of the preparatory course given in The Netherlands had always involved little specific information on the country where the new recruit was to start working. In the beginning this was not considered very important but at a later stage, a general introduction to development work and cultural contact would be given in The Netherlands, while specific language training and information about the country's history and culture followed during in-country training courses. Several institutes, set up by SNV and then handed over to local management, specialised in giving these courses but they were not always satisfactory and in a number of cases the local management did not live up to expectations.<sup>108</sup>

Many development associates were keen to gain knowledge about their new country. The director of the training centre in Bobo Dioulasso (Burkina Faso) explained the tensions this could cause:

On the one hand, he or she wants – and it could not be otherwise – to remain Dutch, on the other to be African with the Africans. Especially in the beginning, that creates tensions. You notice that they want to adopt every little detail.<sup>109</sup>

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<sup>107</sup> Interview 168.

<sup>108</sup> Interview 3; *Nedwerk* 2, 1 (February 1988), p. 7; 'Taaltraining in Bobo Dioulasso is zwak', *Nedwerk* 2, 1 (February 1988), p. 7.

<sup>109</sup> Nico Kussendrager, 'Opleiding vrijwilligers in Bobo. 'Je houdt als Nederlander altijd je klompen aan'', *Vice Versa* 19, 1 (1985), p. 3.

With increased professional demands, more was expected from SNVers. Larger projects, higher positions and bigger budgets in most cases also implied an increased workload and more responsibilities for the professional SNV personnel. These often did not allow time for intensive study of the local culture, history and language. Administration, report writing, evaluations and planning could take on enormous proportions and left little time for field visits, communication and the building up of social networks within the local society. Some felt SNV was asking too much: 'Life seems to exist of SNV alone,' a female regional representative complained from eastern Cameroon. The 'monomania', as she called it, was only broken by the presence of her child. She did not consider it right that the range of responsibilities she was charged with presupposed the presence of an unemployed partner who would ultimately share in fulfilling SNV tasks.<sup>110</sup>

A factor further contributing to changes in the communication between development workers and participants was a different conceptualisation of cultural contact. While integration and adaptation had earlier been key words, by the 1990s there was more emphasis on contact and understanding. In this sense the 'Dutchness' of SNVers was more widely acknowledged; as there was no way in which they could definitively 'go native', it was accepted that their integration would only be partial.

At the same time, a start was made with the internationalisation of SNV by employing nationals in SNV country offices. This was not always easy. While members of the support staff had traditionally been local people, taking on nationals as SNVers was a new development. Lucy Muyoyeta was one of the very first to join SNV Zambia in 1985. People at the office were clearly not prepared for her arrival and conversations and correspondence continued to be in Dutch. She received differing information about her legal position, the benefits that Dutch SNVers received were not given to her, and her salary level was also unclear. In addition, no thought had been given to the role she was to play in the organisation. Although most SNVers were kind and accepted her socially, she felt she was being treated like a guinea pig and left the organisation after just over a year.<sup>111</sup> Zuhura Yegella also felt that when she started working for SNV Tanzania in the early 1990s, the organisation was a bit insular:

When I joined it was a small, inward-looking organisation: 'We are SNV, this is our staff, our projects'. They were not concerned with others. Now SNV is much more widely known. But that is only recently. In those days it was not known, the infor-

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<sup>110</sup> Archives SNV Cameroon, Yaoundé, Box: '88/'89: '1e ervaringsrapport', 12 May 1986.

<sup>111</sup> Interview 117.

mation system was not good. It acted more like a family; it had its own activities, it wasn't very open.<sup>112</sup>

During her time at SNV the atmosphere changed, especially when more Tanzanians were taken on and SNV increased its network in cooperation with other organisations. However, she regarded this shift towards being a more open organisation as a feature of the last ten years of SNV's history.

### Decentralisation

The workload of SNVers in terms of bureaucracy and paper work increased over time due to a growth in the number and the size of the projects being undertaken, the increased responsibilities of many development associates and SNV's more structured organisation. This period also saw the delegation of tasks from The Hague to country offices, a process of decentralisation that meant an increase in the responsibilities of SNV field staff. They were expected to draw up five-year plans, annual reports and project documents, but Head Office only responded with marginal interest.<sup>113</sup>

SNV became a relatively strongly decentralised organisation and the influence of local circumstances on the various SNV offices increased: SNV Nepal became more 'Nepalised', SNV Mali more 'Malinised', etc. SNV began to resemble an archipelago of independently functioning entities. Ultimately this did not make it easy for SNV The Hague to design an overall policy as any general guidelines were likely to be criticised for either not acknowledging the local context or being too general. Guidelines and policy documents developed by SNV management in The Hague were not always significant in practice. Often the interpretation of these documents was so strongly directed towards the local context that it seemed as if matters just carried on as usual.

The implementation of new policies and strategies and the introduction of new themes in development depended to a large extent on the goodwill of the SNV country director. In the introduction to this volume we quoted Ton Nijzink on the discrepancy between SNV policy and practice: 'It seems justified to suppose that both have their own dynamics, that they sometimes mutually influence each other and at other times function completely independently of each other.'<sup>114</sup>

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<sup>112</sup> Interviews 89 and 176.

<sup>113</sup> IOB, *SNV-Nepal*, p. 45.

<sup>114</sup> Nijzink, *Dag vrijwilliger!*, pp. 77-78.

## Double Dutch

Dutch trends and fashions in development remained of crucial importance. As Kik van den Heuvel, who worked for SNV Tanzania for a long time, put it:

That is always the problem: It is 90% Dutch. Only 10% matters to the countries concerned. Appropriate technology is trendy in Holland, so everything changes to that; gender is trendy in Holland, so everything changes to gender; the environment is trendy in Holland, so everything changes to environment, etc. It has nothing to do with the countries themselves, but Tanzania must adapt to that fashion. It all has to do with political scoring, with votes for the PvdA (the Dutch Labour Party). It is about trends in The Netherlands, what the in-thing there is. That is also what makes an organisation like SNV so chaotic, they switch from one side to the other because of changing Dutch attitudes. The people in the countries involved can't make head or tail of it, but that is of no consequence.<sup>115</sup>

In general, the two directions of interaction worked together: Dutch trends and local development were both constitutive in the practice of development and SNV's development activities formed a multifarious process that involved actors from many different contexts. In the early days of development, decision-making had taken place in the West. Now the practice of development had become a complex interplay of international, national, local and personal factors. The new struggles about control were also taking place at a meso and macro level. The history of the bamboo project in Tanzania, which started in the 1970s, is telling. The plan to supply water through bamboo pipes was initially met with much scepticism in the national Ministry of Water and its architect, Mr Lipangile, was dismissed. Yet it was during this time that appropriate technology became the new 'in-thing' in development circles internationally and Mr Lipangile's idea of using bamboo pipes to supply water fitted with notions of locally produced techniques fulfilling the basic needs in a rural area. As the project was praised by international donors, national politicians and even Tanzania's President Nyerere joined in their approval. Although SNV project leaders were informed by a Dutch research institute that it would be next to impossible to resolve problems with the durability of the material, the stakes had become so high that there was no way back. SNV withdrew its support but the Tanzanian state continued the project until well into the 1990s. The critique of his colleagues notwithstanding, Mr Lipangile had, at one time, an entire floor in the Ministry of Water. When the project was finally discontinued, Mr Lipangile did not mention practical problems as a reason for its demise. According to him, it had been the jealousy of other politicians envious of his success that had finally destroyed it.<sup>116</sup> This example shows how factors from Tanzanian national

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<sup>115</sup> Interview 86.

<sup>116</sup> Interview 86 and telephone conversation with Mr Lipangile, 23 May 2005.

politics, Dutch development policies and international trends all interacted in one project.

The ideal development worker in this period was far less a determinant than his/her predecessor and s/he was expected to coordinate the development that poor people themselves brought about. The stress on participation and empowerment, however, by no means meant an end to the dilemmas outlined in the previous chapter. For people in Third World countries, the development worker was now a common sight and anyone stepping out of a 4x4 with a logo on its side was likely to be classified as such. Mutual expectations about what could be achieved significantly influenced relations between development workers and participants:

It always remains a top-down approach. We come to ask you: what do you want from development? Then the women will of course answer: 'maternity' assistance. They know that that is an answer that will fit the expectations of the organisations. However during my research, it turned out that many women chose to give birth alone, that this was an ideal; to go through the pain and the difficulties on one's own. That sort of information one only gets by indirect means; never through such a straightforward question. Fifty per cent of health care is done by traditional healers, but *that* is never the answer to a question about development.<sup>117</sup>

In such a context of mutual expectations, the interaction between politics and development, at all levels of interaction, became ever more complex.

### Local politics

Each and every decision in some development organisations depended on the response from its head office, whereas in SNV the country offices had considerable manoeuvring space to determine their own course. SNV explicitly chose against imposing decisions about the course of development, expecting local people themselves to make these choices. Such a decentralised structure resulted in a growth in the influence of local politics in SNV programmes, starting at village level and going right up to national politics. At times it proved hard to find a balance between preventing local power struggles entering programmes and imposing conditions for aid.

In the Buba water project in Guinea-Bissau, local leaders determined where the pump would be placed and who would be involved in the maintenance group. This could give rise to new local struggles about control. In one village, the project pump became a source of conflict between the chief's family and the rest of the villagers. The son of a village founder ensured that the pump was built on his compound and that his son became the pump technician. To 'make

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<sup>117</sup> Interview 2.

the pump last longer', he argued, the technician closed off the water for several hours during the day. The villagers did not agree with this decision and on several occasions reacted angrily: 'The pump is from the state, you have no say over it,' they claimed.<sup>118</sup> To avoid this kind of local conflict, people from one village in northwestern Zambia initially decided not to accept a project well in their village and it was only after they saw how surrounding villages were benefiting from the project that they also joined in.<sup>119</sup>

Similar problems were noted by the IOB evaluation committee in the case of SNV Nepal. Although SNV worked in one of Nepal's poorest regions, there were indications that some of the public taps installed by the Community Water Supply and Sanitation Programme were being monopolised by the relatively powerful people in the villages. Furthermore, the selection of villages for the programme was at times based on political motives. Although the committee concluded that the water supply for poor people, especially for women, had improved in general, it was estimated that by 1990 30% to 60% of the taps were either no longer functioning or were in need of urgent repair. A 1992 report even stated that as many as 90% of the taps required maintenance.<sup>120</sup>

Local politics also altered due to the influence of development programmes. While in some cases power structures were reinforced, new power relations could also be created by development activities. Local politics not only entered development; development entered local politics too. 'Development brokers', people who were able to act as mediators between the world of development and poor areas, gained new status and often also material benefits through their role.<sup>121</sup> Some people tried to jump on the bandwagon to get a piece of the pie whenever the occasion arose. In eastern Cameroon, for example, elite formation suddenly took place when there were plans for forest management and wood exploitation by villages in the region. People who had never even lived in the village acted as if they were long-time village leaders, which led to social tensions in the communities involved in the project. The forestry programme's development workers were quick to realise what was happening and stressed the importance of reviewing development as practice rather than as theory.<sup>122</sup>

In some cases SNVers were not drawn into conflicts at all and they remained detached from the implications of development work. In other cases, however, the intertwining of development work and local hierarchies had serious conse-

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<sup>118</sup> Interview 22.

<sup>119</sup> Interview 156.

<sup>120</sup> IOB, *SNV-Nepal*, p. 91.

<sup>121</sup> Bierschenk, Chauveau & Olivier de Sardan, eds, *Courtiers et développement*.

<sup>122</sup> Marta Klein, Brice Salla & Jaap Kok, 'Attempts to establish community forests in Lomié, Cameroon' (RDFN paper, 25f (ii) July 2001), pp. 18, 22.

quences for the relations between development workers and local people. In other words, although it may be analytically possible to separate SNV and local politics, in practice the boundaries between these were blurred. Relations between local participants and development workers entered SNV as an organisation.

These dynamics are hence multi-directional: development activities had their impact on the local context and at the same time local factors entered development organisations. In Buba (Guinea-Bissau), for example, tensions mounted between Dutch development workers and Guinean state officials about the use of materials and the services of a water-supply project. One of the local politicians, for example, frequently asked for his car to be repaired at the project garage. Dutch SNVers and DGIS people interpreted this as abuse, and at some point in 1984 matters came to a head when one of the Dutch volunteers working as a mechanic flatly refused to comply with the politician's demands. José Gomes Lopes, the Guinean project coordinator, could see his point but, not wanting problems with any of the political leaders in the region and knowing that the politician needed transport to carry out his work, he felt that the car should be repaired. It was the clash of two philosophies: the Dutch would not allow any flexibility in the use of project services and materials as abuse was to be avoided at all costs, while the Guinean coordinator regarded it as imperative to work in harmony with all state representatives and saw assisting the functioning of the state and its representatives as part of development. A discussion between the Dutch coordinator and Lopes over the issue only made matters worse: the Dutch coordinator demanded all project activities to be halted indefinitely and the project came to a standstill. Mr Lopes informed the ministerial headquarters in the capital about the matter, and he was told that the Dutch coordinator had no authority whatsoever to stop the project. Project activities were resumed and some time later the Dutch mechanic was sent home. The issue thus involved political contexts at various levels, from relations within the project to district-level and then national politics. As this was the only conflict he faced during his entire time as project coordinator, Mr Lopes stressed that overall cooperation with Dutch development workers had been very good.<sup>123</sup> Local factors often determined the success of development work: if people working in the health sector in a given state had not received their salaries for months on end, development workers in the medical sphere realised that nothing much could be expected of them.<sup>124</sup>

Development workers also used their status too – as white foreigners and development workers – to influence the course of events. Mr Fidèl Oket in

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<sup>123</sup> Interview 23.

<sup>124</sup> Interview 2.

eastern Cameroon remembered how the SNVers working on the project he was coordinating went straight to Yaoundé (the capital) to see the minister as the governor had delayed granting permission to start building (the project concerned a centre to re-integrate juvenile delinquents into society). In the presence of the SNVers, the minister concerned called the governor telling him that things should go ahead. Mr Oket felt that this would have been impossible for a Cameroonian: ‘There is a hierarchy in the state apparatus and you cannot jump from one level to the other,’ but the SNVers, ‘with their impatience and courage’ could.<sup>125</sup>

Many SNVers gained enormous insight into the societies in which they worked over the years. While there had been a tendency in the 1970s to stress democracy, equality and emancipation as universal principles, in the 1980s attention to cultural differences grew once again. The balance between cultural relativism and universal rights was often hard to strike, as a former SNVer’s reflections on Mauritanian political power show:

Being Dutch it ran contrary to our democratic values when we discovered that the village leader did not have one rice field but maybe three or even four plots in the irrigation scheme. The question was whether we should actually have had any problems with it. If a village approves of it, who are we to question such issues? If that man through his status and position takes care of all sorts of things for the village and in exchange gets some more plots, so what? But that is our misplaced sense of honesty. For them it is entirely acceptable. He made sure that the rice was transported out of the village before the rains and that the fertilizer and other inputs got there in time for the start of the agricultural season. It was like payment for his services.<sup>126</sup>

These examples once again point to the dilemma between following the principles that formed the basis of SNV and letting local political processes take their course. In many cases, SNVers were hesitant both about accepting and intervening in hierarchical structures, unequal social relations and undemocratic political processes. This dilemma informed policy-making in SNV in the next period.

### Policy and practice

While SNV and many other development organisations attempted to avoid imposing development activities, the word ‘development’ had created expectations that could not always be fulfilled. There was no way a relatively small organisation like SNV could address all the needs and wishes expressed by poor

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<sup>125</sup> Interview 58. See also IOB, *SNV-Nepal*, p. 91.

<sup>126</sup> Interview 168.



people, while expectations were sometimes unrealistically high. When SNV started to address the issue of water shortage in the Usambara Mountains in Tanzania, local people hoped that all their problems would be solved: 'The farmers thought we were magicians who would miraculously make water appear again.'<sup>127</sup>

In many respects development organisations functioned as states within the state, just as the mission stations had done before them. Since the governments of developing countries often proved unable or unwilling to provide the services needed by their people, development workers were first forced to create conditions in which they could work. Thus, a project aimed at supplying an area with water was doubly appreciated as it provided the village with an access road, a bridge, transport facilities for the duration of the project, and labour and training opportunities.<sup>128</sup>

The benefits of such a project were entirely unintended and unforeseen, and did not bear any resemblance to the formally stated aims of the project. Visiting development workers might come with food and presents for the people in the village or a party might be organised at the end of the work.<sup>129</sup> Material and transport could sometimes be used for the duration of the project.<sup>130</sup> In Cameroon, local field workers, all male school leavers, received motorbikes from the project to facilitate their work but instead of going into the field, they went racing through town.<sup>131</sup> Sidi Diarra, who worked as a driver for SNV in Mali praised the organisation as, in contrast to many other people, he received a decent pension: 'Thank God and SNV I have a pension.'<sup>132</sup> The unintended benefits and advantages led to tactful answers when project evaluators arrived. If a project failed entirely in realising its aim, some of the participants might still want it to continue. For example, local people in Nepal saw that mistakes were made in the planning phase of a project but did not dare to say anything in case the whole project was withdrawn and there were no benefits at all.<sup>133</sup>

The added advantages might be small and diverse, as in the examples mentioned above, but they could also be larger and more structural. Development projects could radically change the local context. In the south of Guinea-Bissau a water project was started in 1978. Before the project began, Buba had been a small village with some two hundred inhabitants and there were no schools in

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<sup>127</sup> Harm Botje, 'Hellingen veranderen in groene terrassen', *Vice Versa* 26, 1 (1992), p. 11.

<sup>128</sup> Interview 94.

<sup>129</sup> For example, Interviews 197 and 223.

<sup>130</sup> Interview 225 (Regulo Talita Djú).

<sup>131</sup> Interview 62.

<sup>132</sup> Interview 195.

<sup>133</sup> IOB, *SNV-Nepal*, p. 124.

the area, no medical services and transport had been a real problem. The project people, at a certain stage totalling fourteen (and their families), needed housing, which meant jobs for the local population and led to the expansion of the village. Some time after the project had started, SNV brought in personnel from the capital because hardly any labour was available in the region. Slowly these people grew into a new community: 'We all came from outside Buba but the project turned us into real Buba people,' a former project employee explained.<sup>134</sup> The fact that SNV had started a project in Buba had made all the difference. At a certain stage, Guinea-Bissau's capital was without electricity, while the project generators in Buba ensured a continuous power supply.<sup>135</sup> The presence of foreigners and local people with an income made it profitable to start a shop in the village and Buba is now a sprawling town of a few thousand people, with schools, shops, a daily market, a military base and two hotels. In 2003, an opposition politician even suggested moving Guinea's capital to Buba.<sup>136</sup> The water-supply project was so important to the region that history is now divided into 'the time before the project came', 'the time that the project was here' and 'the time after the project'.<sup>137</sup> In terms of water supply, the project certainly faced many problems that are still unresolved, but in practice the results of the project have been widely appreciated.

The example of Buba shows the enormous off-spin a project can have, including elements that were in no way part of the project's formal aims. The impact of development work went far beyond the outlines of formal policy-making and could have consequences in the sphere of political relations, trade, social status, job creation, transport facilities, population density and patterns of mobility. At the same time, local political hierarchies, economic structures and social relations at various levels strongly influenced development work. Such consequences and influences made it very difficult both to plan and evaluate development work. It became impossible to disentangle development work from its local context.

## Conclusion

This chapter has discussed SNV's history in the second half of the 1980s and the first half of the 1990s. Three developments were crucial during this phase of SNV's history and all three formed the foundation for the decisions that so

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<sup>134</sup> Conversation, Buba (Guinea-Bissau) 1 April 2005; also 'Buba moest vooral beter', *Vice Versa* 20, 4 (1986), pp. 13-16.

<sup>135</sup> Conversation with a university teacher, Bissau (Guinea-Bissau), 3 April 2005.

<sup>136</sup> BBC News, 23 April 2003.

<sup>137</sup> Interview 21.

fundamentally altered the organisation in the new millennium. Not only the professionalisation process but also the steps taken towards ensuring a greater degree of independence from the Ministry were factors in SNV's decision to become an independent NGO in 2002. The first few nationals taken on locally as development workers by SNV would, in the next period, be joined by many more.

Apart from these three major changes, several other concerns that emerged in this period led to new developments in the following decade. SNV's stress on participation and the local wishes and needs of the people led to an approach that focused on ownership and capacity-building in the period between 1995 and 2005. And finally, dilemmas surrounding expectations and power relations made SNV decide to no longer finance specific projects or programmes but to concentrate on an advisory role. These profound changes will be discussed in the next chapter.





*Photo 6.1* Boating, Zambia, 1990s.  
*Source:* SNV photo archives, Yellow, SNV, Zambia, SNVers.  
*Photographer:* Bart Eugenhuijsen, s.d.

## Building capacity: SNV at the Millennium (1995-2005)

Over the last fifteen years the organisational structure of SNV has changed profoundly and it is now a very different organisation from the JVP and JVC initiatives of 1963. While the first volunteers and SNV staff were exclusively Dutch nations, the number of non-Dutch SNVers grew rapidly after 1990: by 1999 the figure was 40% and this grew to 67% in 2004. Another major change was SNV's departure from project implementation and funding to become an organisation advising on capacity-building of meso-level organisations and government bodies. Its ambivalent relationship with the Ministry finally came to an end when SNV obtained independent status in 2002. These three changes form the core of SNV's history between 1995 and 2005 and are discussed in this chapter.

### Developments in The Netherlands and the wider context

The changes that occurred in SNV since 1995 are part of a complex interplay between global developments, Dutch policies and the organisation's internal dynamics. As discussed in Chapter 5, the first half of the 1990s was marked by various severe crises in a number of regions: Yugoslavia, Rwanda and the Gulf are but a few examples where extreme violence could not be prevented and/or halted by the international community. These 'new wars' – often fought by warlords within states and thus different from the classic model of a war between two states – became a matter of deep concern for global leaders. Humanitarian assistance, peace-keeping missions, conflict resolution, and refugee and migrancy issues had to be organised on an international scale. This was a gene-

ral trend and internationalisation, or 'globalisation' as it came to be known, was one of its important features. New patterns of communication were created through technological innovations such as the worldwide web, the Internet and the mobile phone. And economic relations were referred to as the growth of worldwide capitalism, neo-liberalism and the global marketplace. Good governance and global warming became new notions in politics and the environment. The Al-Qaeda attacks of 11 September 2001 did not minimise these globalising tendencies and the events were interpreted in terms of 'international terrorism' and a global 'war on terror', with military interventions in Afghanistan, Iraq and elsewhere. In a very different way, the Tsunami disaster of 2004, which affected an enormous area of the world, evoked an international reaction on an unprecedented scale.

International development showed a similar trend. Given their very nature, development organisations had always been engaged in international cooperation, intercontinental travel and global relations. Enhanced communication and transport networks and calls for better coordination now increased attempts to manage development work on a global scale and arrive at a stronger international network of knowledge exchange on development issues. The Millennium Development Goals, a UN-initiated and measurable set of targets to reduce poverty and hunger worldwide by 2015 were also organised.

Globalisation led to a new protest movement: Alter-globalists (or anti-globalists) saw these new relations as merely increasing existing inequalities. Massive demonstrations were held – the 'Battle of Seattle' on the occasion of the World Trade Organisation's summit in 1999 being a case in point. In the alter-globalism protest movement, development issues are linked to environmental concerns, anti-war protests (against the US intervention in Afghanistan and Iraq) and critiques of existing economic relations. At gatherings such as those of the World Social Forum and the European Social Forum, attempts were made to find alternative models for world politics and economics. The NGO sector played an important role in organising these meetings.

Within the globalisation and alter-globalisation lines of thinking, development came to be seen on a wider global scale and to be related to international security, global environmental issues, worldwide migration and interculturality. These links also became important in The Netherlands. Debates about its multicultural society and relations with Islamic immigrants and asylum seekers led to considerable political tension, and development, security and migrancy were important issues in the Dutch development sector.

The political instability of the early 1990s led Minister Pronk to emphasize conflict prevention and sustainable peace as part of development cooperation. This new focus not only had consequences for Dutch development policy in general, but also for SNV. For example, in 1996 the Minister attended a cere-

mony at which 3000 weapons were destroyed to signal the end of the war in northern Mali. He then promised Dutch engagement in developing the region, a promise that materialised in the form of a programme assigned to SNV: ‘He (Pronk) opened two doors, namely that of Gao and that of Menaka.’<sup>1</sup> The Minister expected SNV’s engagement in other crisis situations too and, in the case of Rwanda, SNV’s Board was taken to task for not stepping into the lime-light more prominently with its local knowledge about the troubled context there. The Minister also called upon SNV to consider playing a role in Bosnia-Herzegovina.<sup>2</sup> Despite ministerial pressure, however, SNV’s formal engagement in the field of peace-building and conflict prevention remained limited.

Pronk’s decisions in the field of development had far-reaching consequences. His decompartmentalisation (*ontschotting*) and policy review (*herijking*) resulted in a fundamental reorganisation of DGIS and many issues,



*Photo 6.2* Jan Pronk giving a speech on the occasion of SNV’s 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary.  
*Source:* SNV Digital photo archive: 1990-1995 part I: SNV-JUB-06.tif.  
*Photographer:* Unknown.

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<sup>1</sup> Interviews 47 (quoted) and 6.

<sup>2</sup> Foreign Affairs, file snv/2009/00173, meeting minutes, half-yearly meeting of delegation SNV Board and Minister, 20 July 1995, p. 2.



which had previously been dealt with by the Ministry, now came under the responsibility of Dutch embassies around the world. In the second half of the 1990s, cooperation between SNV country offices and local Dutch embassies was of crucial importance. Pronk's aim with the new approach was to arrive at a coherent Dutch policy in the areas of defence, foreign affairs and development.

SNV could, as a rule, count on government support because Jan Pronk had known it for a long time and was kindly disposed towards it. However this changed radically when Eveline Herfkens took over in 1998. She openly doubted the value of expatriate technical assistance and felt that this form of development aid was expensive and ineffective. She even attacked the Dutch development sector by questioning the genuine objectives of many organisations, holding that they were merely pursuing their own interests.

Despite her statements about the need to reform the sector, the new minister to some extent continued the policies of her predecessor. Good governance remained a crucial issue, both as an aim and criterion for aid. Herfkens took up the sector-wide approach that Pronk had introduced aimed at coherent, integrated programmes for an entire sector rather than isolated projects. Such programmes were to be developed in cooperation with the government of the recipient country and frequently required considerable institutional support. Yet in other respects Herfkens's approach differed markedly from Pronk's and it can be viewed as a watershed in Dutch development aid. Not only did she reduce the number of partner countries for bilateral aid, she also, in line with the policies of the World Bank and IMF, felt that free trade should play an important role in development. With this focus on trade, she radically opposed the alter-globalist movement in The Netherlands. Her notion that development cooperation should focus on poverty alleviation and that concerns for other, related themes should be reduced was contrary to the alter-globalist trend of viewing development in a broader context. Herfkens opted for a technocratic, managerial approach to development. Her scepticism about the use of expatriate technical assistance intensified debate in the sector about transparency, the measurement of results, the scale of impact and the role of expat development workers. These debates were not only held in Parliament but also in organisations like SNV, for which the new policy that would end the posting of Dutch technical experts overseas was extremely significant.

After 2002, the Christian Democrat Agnes van Ardenne first became State Secretary and later Minister for Development Cooperation. Van Ardenne continued her predecessor's emphasis on the role of trade and investment in development, regarding the private sector and socially responsible enterprise as crucial in establishing a climate of economic progress. Development was, in her view, not a matter for governments alone but also for civil society, private initiative and economic investment. Her policies included a renewed focus on

bilateral aid, while at the same time emphasising the need for development aid directed towards specific regions. With an emphasis on measuring the effectiveness of aid and a results-oriented approach, van Ardenne required development organisations to justify their existence. As SNV had in the meantime become independent of the Ministry, the Minister's policies regarding subsidies for development organisations were important for SNV's very existence.

### The struggle for independence

In 2002 SNV became a fully independent NGO. From its inception, the organisation had had an ambivalent relationship both with the Ministry and with the private development sector in The Netherlands. SNV's activities in the 1960s and 1970s were marked by tensions between the state initiative JVP and the private JVC. JVC board members continued to view SNV as a state organisation and JVC separated from SNV in the end. In the course of the 1970s SNV moved towards becoming an NGO, having until now attempted to operate independently of the Ministry. Within DGIS and many of the Dutch embassies, SNV was associated with the MFOs rather than with Foreign Affairs.<sup>3</sup> Despite these aspects of its organisational culture, SNV also showed a tendency towards bureaucratic procedures and hierarchical structures that are all too often characteristic of state systems. In addition, the operational staff in The Hague was in ministerial service during most of SNV's history but as they were never fully integrated into the Ministry, they were regarded as *Fremdkörper* ('foreign bodies') in other ministerial departments.<sup>4</sup> Despite the professionalisation process in the late 1980s, the situation only partly changed: field staff were contracted directly by SNV, but The Hague's operational staff continued to be employed as civil servants by the Ministry. Final responsibility for a number of decisions continued to lie with the Ministry. The appointment of the Board's chair was the responsibility of the Minister and only in 1996 was an SNV director appointed from outside ministerial circles for the first time.<sup>5</sup> The position of the SNV Board *vis-à-vis* the Minister had never been very clear and

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<sup>3</sup> Foreign Affairs, file snv/ara/00050, letter, Hans Pelgröm and Hans Simons to Minister, 'Zienswijze SNV,' 5 August 1999; *Ibid.*, file snv/2012/00233, report, 'Positionering van SNV: naar een volledig zelfstandige gesubsidieerde instelling?' s.d., p. 2; *Ibid.*, file snv/ara/00050, report, 'Concept verslag van het jaarlijkse overleg tussen de Minister voor Ontwikkelingssamenwerking en het bestuur SNV, maandag 25 januari 1999'; *Ibid.*, memo, Hans Pelgröm to the administration delegation concerning the discussion with minister Herfkens, 25 January 1999.

<sup>4</sup> Foreign Affairs, file 29, meeting minutes, AJV and Minister, 18 and 19 December 1974, p. 7.

<sup>5</sup> IOB, *SNV-Nepal*, p. 49.

while SNV's quango status later resolved some of the tensions between itself and the Ministry, it also created new ground for conflict. The Minister continued to bear political responsibility for SNV's activities, which was in the final analysis inconsistent with the more autonomous status of SNV.

SNV's ambivalent position laid its relations with the Minister, DGIS and the embassies open to conflict. Both in SNV and in ministerial circles the discussions about its status tended towards disentanglement of the organisation. In the concept version of the first SNV business plan in 1996, it was recommended that SNV should aspire to a more independent position towards the Ministry than the present quango statute.<sup>6</sup> The major impetus for the change, however, came from a report published in 1999 by the IBO (Interdepartementaal Beleidsonderzoek, Interdepartmental Policy Study), investigating the postings of development personnel. Minister Herfkens had, in line with her doubts about the role of technical assistance in development, proposed the study. It concluded that expatriate experts should stop implementing projects and focus on providing advice and services, and that clear criteria should be developed to establish the effectiveness of technical assistants in their new role as advisors and service providers. It was thought advisable that: 'The development organisation SNV will be entirely detached from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs: the administrative and financial interweaving between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and SNV will be ended.'<sup>7</sup>

Reactions to the recommendations made in the IBO report were positive at SNV's Head Office: it was clear to all parties that the current situation had many disadvantages.<sup>8</sup> The harsh critique of Minister Herfkens on the position of foreign development workers and her emphasis on effective aid had made the situation at SNV very tense and uncertainty about the organisation's future intensified personal conflicts.<sup>9</sup> Director Thea Fierens reflected on the challenges past and present in SNV's staff magazine:

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<sup>6</sup> 'Aanbevelingen van de Centrale Raad voor het concept-Bedrijfsplan', *Nedwerk* 10, special (1996), p. 4.

<sup>7</sup> IBO commissions are installed annually by the Cabinet to conduct research on an interdepartmental basis into matters decided upon by the Cabinet. 'Interdepartementaal Beleidsonderzoek naar de bedrijfsvoering van uitzending personeel ontwikkelingssamenwerking' (IBO Report May 1999), p. 4. On-line: [http://www.minfin.nl/binaries/minfin/assets/pdf/dossiers/diversen/beleidsonderzoeken/ibo-s-1998/0\\_bedrijfsvoering-uitzending-personeel-ontwikkelin.pdf](http://www.minfin.nl/binaries/minfin/assets/pdf/dossiers/diversen/beleidsonderzoeken/ibo-s-1998/0_bedrijfsvoering-uitzending-personeel-ontwikkelin.pdf). ('De ontwikkelingsorganisatie SNV wordt volledig losgemaakt van het ministerie van BZ: Aan de huidige bestuurlijke en financiële vervlechting wordt een einde gemaakt.'). See also Hans Pelgröm, 'IBO Report: SNV Must Continue Independently', *Nethwork* 13, 3 (1999), p. 2.

<sup>8</sup> Interviews 168, 291 and 292.

<sup>9</sup> Interviews 291 and 292.

An independent SNV will need to increase its public presence. We need to speak at fora, take part in discussions and produce publications (...) For a moment, it looked as if SNV was in difficulties. Our foundations were shaking. Doubt was being cast on the use of technical assistance.<sup>10</sup>

Instead of passively awaiting the IBO report, steps were taken within SNV to prepare for the changes and to reflect on what future possibilities existed.<sup>11</sup> The issue was of course about how SNV would continue its activities and the discussion by and large revolved around two possibilities: SNV could continue as an independent NGO applying for state subsidies on a regular basis or as an agency with the statute of preferred partner of the Dutch state. The SNV Board chose for the latter but knew that this option would not count on much support within the Ministry: 'It is seen as an attempt to "save one's skin", the consequence of "running with the hare and hunting with the dogs" for too long.' For the embassies, it was logical that SNV, now that it was independent of the government, should seek a closer relationship with the state as a preferred partner.<sup>12</sup> In the end, it was decided that SNV would go it alone and become an independent NGO.

The plan was that SNV would become an independent organisation, separate from the Ministry, as of January 2002 and would at first still receive state funding. In the first year, SNV's budget would not undergo any changes but the subsidies were to decrease gradually later. In the meantime, SNV could study its financial strategy.

### An independent SNV: Consequences and implications

An important consequence of SNV's independent status was obviously a new financial relationship with the Ministry. SNV's financial security had always been a matter of course and in the first years following privatisation too, the Ministry guaranteed subsidies for SNV. It was clear, however, that its new status had huge consequences in this realm. A Subsidy Agreement signed by SNV and the Ministry ensured SNV funding between 2002 and 2006, during which time SNV was expected to study its financial position and future. SNV felt it had to find new ways to finance its activities and make economies to

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<sup>10</sup> Thea Fierens, 'SNV Is Set to Continue as an Independent Development Organisation', *Nethwork* 15, 6 (2001), p. 2.

<sup>11</sup> Interview 292.

<sup>12</sup> Foreign Affairs, file snv/2012/00233, report, 'Positioning (sic) van SNV: naar een volledig zelfstandige gesubsidieerde instelling?', 1998, p. 2. ('Dit wordt door sommigen geïnterpreteerd als een positionering om 'het vege lijf te redden'. In feite betaalt SNV nu daarmee ook de prijs voor het (te) lang van twee walletjes eten.')

reduce expenses as it was to be expected that its government subsidies would eventually be based on the organisation's results and effectiveness.

The first task proved no easy one. Although there was no formal demand stipulated in the Subsidy Agreement about diversifying its funding, SNV initially chose to look for additional donors and aimed to mobilise €5 million in external funding.<sup>13</sup> In 2005, the first annual budget had even envisaged €11 million from additional resource mobilisation but only €2 million was eventually realised, only accounting for 2.3% of SNV's total expenditure. The other 97.7% came from DGIS core funding.<sup>14</sup> Although the idea of external funding was not entirely abandoned, SNV's strategy became 'to opt for a large component of core funding from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in order to maintain an optimal autonomy and independence in its operations'. Yet it was precisely to prevent dependency that DGIS had always required other subsidised organisations, such as the MFOs, to diversify their resources and look for other financial channels. This requirement did not apply to SNV, which led to its strong financial dependency on the Ministry, despite SNV's autonomous position as an organisation.<sup>15</sup>

Similar to the diversification of its financial resources, a reduction in expenses had also not been a formal demand by the Ministry. Between 2002 and 2006, SNV's funding was ensured and an additional budget had been reserved to cover the costs of restructuring SNV as an autonomous organisation. In the Subsidy Agreement between SNV and the Ministry however, ample reference was made to efficiency and budgeting and SNV itself set targets in efficiency. The renewed stress on efficiency was largely expressed in the ratio of 'primary' costs (costs made directly in relation to SNV's activities and organisational structure) and overheads (all support costs). As will be explained later, SNV changed not only in terms of status in this period but also in approach and policy.<sup>16</sup> This change of direction, combined with the efficiency targets, led to a new emphasis on personnel policy, which created considerable unrest in the organisation.

SNV employees with a Ministry of Foreign Affairs contract were given the option to choose between joining the Ministry as a civil servant or joining the newly independent SNV. The Foreign Affairs SNV staff, however, felt that they could not make a decision as SNV's plans had not been properly prepared. They were indignant as they felt that attention was being focused on those already working in SNV and they were worried about their chances of actually ever

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<sup>13</sup> Willem Cornelissen & Maaïke Oosterbaan, 'Evaluation SNV. New Strategy, New Results?' (Rotterdam, 2006), pp. 46-47.

<sup>14</sup> SNV Annual Report 2005, p. 18.

<sup>15</sup> Cornelissen & Oosterbaan, 'Evaluation SNV', pp. 55-56 (quote: p. 55).

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 52-53.

joining Foreign Affairs given their average age (over 40), their unfamiliarity with the workings of the Ministry and SNV's open-sandal woolly-socks image in the Ministry.<sup>17</sup>

Some people left SNV as they no longer recognised the values and ideals in its new policy. Due to the new tasks and functions, most SNV staff had to reapply for their jobs and in some cases, the profile of the SNV'er did not fit the new requirements. These people were replaced by new staff. The situation had already been conflict-ridden at Head Office before the changes and any decision-making was likely to be appreciated by some and to displease others. Not everyone stayed with the organisation. In addition, the new approach, the efficiency norms and SNV's new forms of decentralisation led to a series of reorganisations and people from the administrative staff, advisors and support staff were laid off and a considerable number of people left both country offices as well as Head Office.<sup>18</sup> As additional tasks were allocated to country offices or the regional SNV structures (mainly as a result of SNV's new focus on a demand-driven approach), the number of staff at Head Office decreased from 108 in 2001 to 79 in 2003 and to just 65 in 2005. To put matters into perspective however, it ought to be pointed out that in 1990 the staff at Head Office totalled 69 persons.<sup>19</sup>

Tensions at the managerial level of SNV did not make it any easier to arrive at a more coherent organisation and implement reforms. In 2000 arguments between the then director and the Hague staff even made the national press, with the staff accusing the director of using a 'dictatorial style' and being unable to negotiate Minister Herfkens's new policies in a meaningful way. The situation improved little under the next director who was fiercely criticised for her expenditure patterns, her salary and the management style she used. A number of SNV staff left the organisation as a result of these tensions.<sup>20</sup>

As we will see in the section on SNV's policies, the organisation changed direction and developed a new focus for its activities. This implied that, despite the need for budgeting, the organisation had to look for new development workers and fresh ways of positioning itself. Although attempts were made to reduce costs at Head Office, this proved no easy task as many costs in the past had been covered by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. SNV had to build up an

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<sup>17</sup> Foreign Affairs, file snv/ara/00015, Minutes, 'Ontvlechting van SNV', 20 December 2001.

<sup>18</sup> Various interviews: unspecified for reasons of privacy.

<sup>19</sup> See Appendix 5; SNV Annual Report 2003 and 2005.

<sup>20</sup> Han Koch, 'Ruzie hulporganisatie SNV', *Trouw* (6 January 2000); Han Koch, 'Ontwikkelingsorganisatie SNV verliest topman', *Trouw* (11 July 2000); Harm Ede Botje & Ruth Hopkins, 'Dure armoedebestrijders', *Vrij Nederland* (1 July 2006).

independent human resources department, a financial administration and a complete organisational infrastructure. A budget had been reserved for this, the ‘Dowry’ as it was called, but the investments required were huge. Due to these contradictory tendencies, SNV’s efforts in budgeting have not led to enduring results. The figures for 2005 show that costs in terms of development activities and organisation and administration had increased considerably. Although there was a slight decrease in expenditure at Head Office, this was due to the continuing process of decentralisation whereby some expenses were shifted to field-office budgets. Overall costs – both primary and support costs – increased.<sup>21</sup>

Apart from these drastic changes in the financial sphere, the general relationship with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Development Affairs, DGIS and the embassies changed but as the changes in statute are still quite recent, the new relationship with the Ministry has not crystallised as yet. Some feel that because of SNV’s independent status, the organisation now has more room to manoeuvre, whereas others think that SNV has actually become more dependent on DGIS.<sup>22</sup>

The new status of SNV had consequences in less prominent spheres too. In the judicial arena, the contracts between the Dutch government and the countries concerned had to be revised as SNV had become a private organisation. As in many countries, there was a trend to curb the rights and privileges of private foreign organisations, and most SNV countries were hesitant to undertake steps to put this into practice.<sup>23</sup> Another issue was the archival record that had always been filed at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs; these could now be housed at the SNV office.<sup>24</sup> To mark the profound changes, SNV once more went in search of a new name. In the end, the name SNV Netherlands Development Organisation, which had been chosen in 1993, was kept, although SNV Connecting People’s Capacities is also used.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> SNV Annual Report 2005, p. 18; Cornelissen & Oosterbaan, ‘Evaluation SNV’, p. 52.

<sup>22</sup> Interviews (not specified for reasons of privacy).

<sup>23</sup> Foreign Affairs, map snv/ara/00015, memo, Hans Pelgröm to all field directors, ‘Standaardverdragen’, 10 March 2000.

<sup>24</sup> Foreign Affairs, file snv/2013/00449, letter, staff members archive SNV to all field offices, ‘Overbrenging van archiefstukken van de veldkantoren naar het Ministerie van Buitenlandse Zaken’, 15 March 2002.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, file snv/2013/00198, report, Hill & Knowlton, ‘Van vrijwilligers naar adviseurs: de kroon op het verzelfstandigingsproces’, 7 May 2002.

## Support staff

The new policy and the emphasis on efficiency resulted in support costs being reviewed. The measures to reduce the number of support personnel evoked the most discussion. SNV management proposed cutting the number of secretaries, drivers, guards and cleaners and in future to outsource support personnel as this was thought to be cheaper and more efficient. SNV management argued that it was important to operate in the country context instead of continuing to create separate bastions in which development organisations not only enjoyed conditions far above the country norm but also inhabited a distinct social, economic and cultural sphere. In some countries, SNV support personnel had come to form an in-crowd with relatively high wages and elitist attitudes. The measures should be understood as an attempt to change patterns of material and social privileges, achieve an improved costs-results balance and come to terms with the new approach that involved much less direct involvement in the field.

Those against the new measures issued by SNV management expressed other ideas. They pointed out that the people working in SNV offices often supported not only their direct families but many other relatives too through their wages and for those who had been with SNV for a long time, it might be difficult to find other work. The turnover of the average SNVer has always been high but many of the support personnel have been working for SNV for a very long time and in many country offices their presence has constituted the most important form of institutional memory available.<sup>26</sup>

Support personnel expressed a strong attachment to the organisation in many cases. Mr Ganda Keita started working as an office assistant for SNV Mali in the 1980s and regarded SNV as his family:

I was walking on the street. I was completely alone, I had no mother, father, brother or sister; I was an orphan. Then I heard: 'There is a fight against poverty in that organisation,' so I thought: 'I will go there and look'. To see whether they really help. At first there was some hesitation but now the relationship is very good. In the time before I joined, I must say, I wasn't in good spirits. Really no good spirits. But now I have good spirits. My spirits have improved a lot. It seems to me that it is impossible to fight poverty but one can fight bad spirits. There is no end to poverty, poverty is still there but what has really changed is the spirits, the spirits are better now.<sup>27</sup>

Some reasoned that as SNV's stated aim was to improve job creation, the new measures went against SNV's development goals. Many SNVers also stated that the costs for support personnel were generally relatively low and these were contrasted in the interviews we held with the high travel and board

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<sup>26</sup> Interview 150.

<sup>27</sup> Interview 47.



and lodging costs of SNV management. The measures were also regarded as unnecessary interference in the autonomy of the field offices by SNV management: it should be left to the field offices to decide how to economise. Finally, it was held that the new rules demonstrated the gap between the field and people in The Hague. Outsourcing was regarded as entirely unsuitable in many contexts in the developing world and could even be impossible or irresponsible. Outsourcing offices do not exist in all regions and in remote areas there is no way in which administrative tasks, transport and other matters can be arranged through them. Few outsourcing companies in poor countries offer their personnel fair wages or have adequate forms of insurance for their staff. On top of this, personnel are often not qualified for the work they are asked to do. While SNV management acknowledged that in some cases it might not be easy to look for new ways of organising matters, the stress on outsourcing had to be seen in the light of the ongoing process of local embedding that SNV envisaged.

At the local level, SNV offices were trying to assist their support personnel in looking for new means to secure an income. As a member of the support personnel in St. Cruz (Bolivia) explained:

But now there will be fewer personnel. Maybe I also have to leave. It will only become one secretary and one accountant. It is hard. It is so terrible that it will end. My bottle is nearly finished. It is difficult. All of us at the office are stressed now. I personally have complaints such as backache and neck ache, so now I have to visit a physiotherapist to help reduce the stress. We have our families. It is not just us. After so many years in SNV, I shall have to leave. It is very difficult to start anew. But SNV said that they will help me to start a company.<sup>28</sup>

### Directions in SNV's development policies

In the 1980s management skills had become more important in development work and in the early 1990s this trend only increased, for example through the general emphasis, both nationally and internationally, on donor coordination in the sector-wide approach. The role of national governments was greater in that approach because decision-making about the division of funds largely lay with them. While SNV had earlier dealt directly with the *cercle* (county) in health care in Dioïla, SNV's direct intervention stopped with the new sector-wide approach and the coordination of health services was provided on a national scale by the Malian government. This required managerial and negotiating skills at a higher level on the part of SNVers than before. The change did not always run smoothly. Seybou Diarra, working at the health centre in Dioïla, explained that the change to the sector-wide approach had not only brought about a shortage of equipment and materials but also serious delays in construction: 'All

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<sup>28</sup> Interviews 251, 57, 168, 236, 247, 250, 260, 261 and 286.

beginnings are difficult. The population was used to a certain speed. That speed slowed down,' he commented.<sup>29</sup> The sector-wide approach was contradictory to some extent to rurally integrated development, as the latter had always dealt with various sectors at once. It also contradicted to some extent the new focus on political decentralisation.<sup>30</sup> While the role of central government increased in the sector-wide approach, good governance came to be seen in terms of a democratic model that gave more political manoeuvring space to local authorities and civil society. SNV turned its experience in political decentralisation into a more structural programme. Local government became a practice ground and SNV has been strongly involved in the processes that enhance the control of local authorities and civil society in poverty reduction and development activities.

A key term that came into vogue in the second half of the 1990s was 'ownership'. The term was only seldom specified but broadly referred to people realising their own development process. Instead of viewing people as beneficiaries of aid, SNV sought to cooperate with local people as agents in their own development. It was held that donor-driven development programmes were not likely to have any enduring results, as local people could never truly feel responsible for these activities. Most such projects led only to temporary relief and in many cases whatever results had been achieved disappeared after the project ended. Sustainable development was only possible if people had a real stake in the development processes. The 'ownership' concept built on the legacy of participatory methods, empowerment and the process approach, and aimed at supporting local dynamics of development rather than imposing development projects from outside. In the previous chapter we saw how development had become an established business and, in many respects, a separate world of projects with its own code of behaviour, expectations and even linguistic conventions. Often when a project ended, nobody continued the activities and the results were soon invisible as no one took any responsibility for anything. The ownership concept was meant to close the gap between the 'world of projects' and local contexts, and people were to plan, organise and implement their own development programmes.

Within the SNV management, little attention was paid to the history of the 'ownership' concept and the critique that had been expressed about it. The ownership approach has been taken to task for merely giving a semblance of participation because, in the final analysis, the decision-making process hardly changes, while the ownership concept creates the possibility of converting

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<sup>29</sup> Interview 38.

<sup>30</sup> Cf. Hans Pelgröm, 'IBO Report: SNV must continue independently', *Nethwork* 14, 3 (2000), p. 2.

people into accepting managerial decisions. Bill Cooke has argued that this critique against the approach can be underpinned by the historical continuities between colonial systems of rule and the recent development approach of ownership. He showed how the ownership approach relates back to John Collier, who worked as a US administrator in the 1930s and 1940s. Collier was proud to call himself a ‘colonial official’ and developed the ownership concept and the action research approach as a means of co-opting and controlling the native populations in the US.<sup>31</sup> Such historical links to colonial ideology and control barely informed policy debates but the term rapidly gained currency both internationally and within the Dutch development context. SNV was quick to adopt the ownership concept when it became central in the Ministry of Development Cooperation. On the ground, the critique that ownership can be linked to control was not shared. Thus a woman who set up a cultural tourist tour in Tanzania expressed pride in her achievements: ‘If you do it yourself, it is your own project and it makes you happier. (...) One can compare it to a small door one has to creep through. SNV made it wider and our possibilities are growing.’<sup>32</sup>

### A new policy: SNV’s repositioning

SNV’s Corporate Plan was presented in 1996. The editors of its staff magazine introduced the theme with some irony:

What sort of a thing is a corporate plan? It looks like something that SNV – for years on end – did not know that it was in need of. But now it has woken up, everything is in commotion because it can no longer do without it. Because otherwise the organisation may be abolished. Or incorporated. Or brushed aside.<sup>33</sup>

The most important aim of the Corporate Plan was to look for a ‘common denominator’, to search for the factors that bound SNV as an organisation and, in the process, establish and form its identity. Chairman of the SNV Board Hans Simons explained: ‘The surplus value for the field is to transcend the country

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<sup>31</sup> Bill Cooke, ‘A New Continuity with Colonial Administration: Participation in Development Management’, *Third World Quarterly* 24, 1 (2003), pp. 47-61.

<sup>32</sup> Interview 134.

<sup>33</sup> ‘Wat is dat eigenlijk, een bedrijfsplan?’, *Nedwerk* 9, 4 (1995), p. 1. (‘Wat is dat eigenlijk een bedrijfsplan? Het lijkt op iets waarvan SNV jarenlang niet heeft geweten dat ze het nodig had. Maar nu is ze wakker geschud, is alles in rep en roer omdat ze niet langer zonder kan. Want anders wordt SNV opgeheven. Of ingelijfd. Of onder tafel geveegd.’)

level. Put extremely, SNV now consists of 28 different companies.<sup>34</sup> The situation of diversification was to be addressed by a stronger identity and a clearer profile. In the past, SNV field offices had often functioned quite independently of Head Office and the implementation of the organisation's guidelines and policies was frequently related to the goodwill of field directors and staff. The Corporate Plan emphasised the role of regions and regional managers and the country offices now had to cooperate in six different regions. At a later stage, several countries were organised into clusters with one regional office with a regional manager. In many country offices this was regarded as impracticable and only led to more administrative duties and bureaucratic levels. The differences between countries were also an argument against the regional approach.<sup>35</sup> Such critique reached Head Office when the regional manager for West Africa complained that the 1997 reorganisation had only led to a 'weakening and marginalisation' of the position of the regions, and a 2001 report stated that considerable overlap existed between the regions and Head Office.<sup>36</sup> However some felt that the reorganisation was positive and that SNV had tried to establish a more coherent identity:

Also from The Hague: it is good that a clearer design is given to SNV. I remember a former employee who was recalcitrant about the 'MacDonaldisation' of SNV. But I answered that I did not agree that 'MacDonaldisation' was taking place. But that it has to be clear to everyone that one enters a restaurant when entering SNV. Not a bakery in one country and a hotel in the next. Worldwide it should be a restaurant. That is Point One. And that one may expect good cooking, of good quality. And yes, that that cooking is adapted to local taste; that rice is available if people in the region happen to eat rice. But good rice, well prepared.<sup>37</sup>

<sup>34</sup> *Nedwerk* 10, special (1996), p. 1 (and *passim*); *Ibid.* 11, 4 (1997), p. 1; Also, Foreign Affairs, file snv/2012/00420, Report, 'Repositioning SNV: State of the Art and Approach to Change', 18 November 2001, p. 1.

<sup>35</sup> Interviews 121, 205 and 256.

<sup>36</sup> Foreign Affairs, file snv/2009/00179, memo, Regional Manager/West-Africa to Director, 'Opzet studiedagen MT SNV', 12 August 1998, p. 2; *Ibid.*, file snv/ 2012/00420, report, 'Contours and Principles, Internal Organisation SNV', 16 September 2001, p. 4.

<sup>37</sup> Interview 261. ('Ook vanuit Den Haag is het goed dat er meer vorm gegeven wordt aan SNV. Ik herinner me een oud-medewerker bij een bijeenkomst, die helemaal opstandig was over de MacDonaldisering van SNV. Maar toen heb ik geantwoord dat ik dat niet vond, dat er sprake was van MacDonaldisering. Maar wel dat het voor iedereen duidelijk moet zijn dat je een restaurant binnenstapt. Dat is één. En dat je een goede keuken kan verwachten, van goede kwaliteit. En dat die aangepast is aan de lokale smaak. Dat er rijst verkrijgbaar is, als de mensen in die streek rijst eten. Maar dan wel goede rijst: goed klaargemaakt.')

SNV also took steps to work towards a clearer profile and, especially after the organisation became an independent NGO, the need to find a specific SNV niche in the development sector became more urgent. Such changes should not automatically be interpreted as a sign of a break with SNV's long history of decentralisation. The strategy to focus more on the regional level, for example, meant a more centralised approach if viewed from the perspective of the country offices, but for The Hague such a move to the contrary involved more decentralisation.<sup>38</sup>

The Corporate Plan did not stand on its own and was followed by a major repositioning of SNV's overall development policy. In its 2001 Strategy Paper, SNV clarified the reasons and terms of reference for the drastic choice in favour of repositioning. The core change of the repositioning process was the shift from being a funding and implementing service to a non-funding advisory agency aimed at capacity-building. SNV also aspired to having a greater impact and shifted to meso-level organisations and political bodies, which would have ties both up to the macro level and down to the micro level.<sup>39</sup>

The organisation had originally been founded because it was felt that advice was not enough and, after many years of sending highly qualified advisors in the 1950s, the JVP initiative had been started to send middle-level, hard-working and practical youngsters overseas who would put the advice into practice.<sup>40</sup> This shift from advice in the 1950s to implementation from the 1960s onwards was reversed by the end of the 1990s when SNV decided it would focus on advisory practice instead of directly implementing development projects itself. The implementation part of the SNV programme would be brought to an end and in future SNV would concentrate its development efforts in an advisory role and capacity-building. The shift in SNV's policy coincided with changing emphases in the international development context and with new policies in the Dutch political arena: Minister Herfkens had made no secret of the fact that she was not in favour of technical assistance in the form of sending Dutch experts to developing countries to carry out development activities, and this certainly played a role in SNV decisions:

The budget allocated to SNV by the Ministry remained unchanged. Had SNV not repositioned, the organisation would have disintegrated. The Minister saw no good in technical assistance, so then it is a political risk not to reposition. For how long

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<sup>38</sup> Interview 247.

<sup>39</sup> SNV, 'Strategy Paper' (The Hague 2000).

<sup>40</sup> Cf Chapter 3, Note 182.

can one permit oneself not to? One can't take five or ten years to reposition. So there was considerable pressure there.<sup>41</sup>

Dutch politics were, however, definitely not the only reason for change: the choice to end project implementation and take up an advisory role was also related to SNV's internal dynamics. Development organisations not only created structures that ran parallel to the state; they also came with policies, principles and ideals that were not always in line with local notions. Development organisations might foster 'assistentialism', whereas SNV's aim had always been to make itself superfluous and have people in developing nations take over its activities. There were many examples of development organisations arranging matters in the fields of transport, education, health services, etc. while the local state apparatus was becoming weaker and weaker. SNV's history was no exception here: for example SNV's KLDP (Karnali Local Development Programme) was locally known as 'KLDP Sarkaar', (meaning KLDP government) referring to 'its reputation to get things done where others had failed (or had not even tried!)'. On the one hand, SNV Nepal was proud of its achievements in the district, but at the same there were doubts as to whether 'outsiders' ought to continue implementing development activities in the region. The qualifier 'KLDP government' not only indicated achievement, it also pointed to the problematic of development organisations taking over government tasks. These issues naturally led to the proposal to facilitate and build up the capacity of the local government, the authorities and organisations in the region. Both local leaders and partner organisations, however, expressed their doubts about the plans. Was this transformation not 'too much too early'?<sup>42</sup>

Preparations to change into an organisation of advisors were not restricted to SNV The Hague. There was a clear need for exchange between the field and Head Office: 'Past experiences on change within SNV indicate clearly that change will not materialize if it is solely prescribed by Head Office.'<sup>43</sup> A CORE team was formed of SNV staff working in various regions that consulted each other on a regular basis and visited eighteen countries between September and October 2001, testing the attitude towards the change in policy in the field offices. CORE team members noticed on these visits the extreme complexity of

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<sup>41</sup> Interview 291. ('Het budget dat SNV kreeg van het ministerie bleef ongewijzigd. Als SNV die omslag niet had gemaakt, dan was de organisatie afgebladderd. De minister zag geen heil in technische assistentie, dus dan is het politiek heel gevaarlijk als je geen omslag maakt. Hoelang kun je je dat permitteren? Je kan geen 5, 10 jaar gaan doen over zo'n omslag. Daar zat dus behoorlijk druk op.')

<sup>42</sup> SNV archives Kathmandu Nepal, report, 'Nepal Karnali Local Development Programme' (1999) p. i.

<sup>43</sup> Foreign Affairs, file snv/2012/00420, report, 'Repositioning SNV: State of the Art and Approach to Change', 18 November 2001, p. 7.

SNV as an organisation, reflecting at once the organisation's capacity to adapt to different contexts and a 'lack of coherence and (identification with) corporate identity'. Only in few countries was the need for change as such questioned but some SNVers were not at ease with 'the new "professional-consultant-type" SNV'. In the view of the CORE team, this was 'because they are idealists that want to make a difference, however small, for poor people in this world. They worry that a meso-level-oriented SNV will lose touch with poor people and thus lose the essence of what drives us.' The CORE team concluded that SNV's vision on this issue needed elaboration, that its policies in this respect were not sufficiently internalised and that 'further shifts in mindsets (were) required'.<sup>44</sup> These tensions about aims, policies and decision-making processes have been felt at all levels in SNV.

### Money matters

With its new approach, SNV wanted to focus on strengthening meso-level organisations and local government bodies aimed at furthering development and alleviating poverty. SNV gave these clients advice on strengthening their capacity in organisational terms. The changes thus brought about would be a sustainable form of development as they became part of the organisational and institutional facilities of the organisations themselves. Through the meso-level organisations and local governance bodies SNV hoped to directly address the provision of services, such as health, education, transport, etc, for poor people, thus making a structural impact without losing sight of those for whom its actions were meant. The advisory practice was to be initiated on a demand-driven basis and the meso-level organisations with which SNV hoped to cooperate were expected to take the initiative and ask for advice. In practice, this proved difficult. As SNV was a relatively small organisation and its policies not widely known, not many clients found their way to its offices.

The new capacity-building approach had a number of consequences. The most important were that SNV no longer came with any funding nor engaged in project implementation. Unlike most development organisations, the proverbial bag of money no longer played a role and a more equal and honest relationship was aimed at. Instead of implementing projects itself, SNV intended to enable its clients to implement development projects and programmes themselves. Many SNVers in theory agreed with the new approach and it was regarded as an important, albeit quite radical, step in the direction of equal relations in development. It was widely known that the financial aspect at times attracted people whose intentions lay beyond the development sphere:

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<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 3.

In the past, many organisations were founded because money was available. Naturally that influences the entire functioning of the work. As such I can understand it; when one waves money, people capitalise on it. That is the way things are and development workers took part in that.<sup>45</sup>

SNV's decision to leave out the financial aspect was an attempt to end this system and have a clearer focus on development issues. Not only was project funding phased out but SNV also tried to break with the tradition of workshop allowances. This was a sore point: 'There is tremendous competition between donors. They all give the same training and the people in the NGOs go from one workshop to another (...) Good hotel, nice food, allowances (...).' <sup>46</sup> Quite a lot of people in SNV agreed with the decision, although it was by no means easy, as many other development organisations continued to give per diems to workshop participants. Local people were not all convinced: some objected to SNV's new policy because they deemed it fair that they should be compensated for the time lost.<sup>47</sup>

With the new financial policy, apart from the workshop allowances, other even larger dilemmas were involved. Advice was appreciated. Many organisations realised that problems did not always stem from their financial resources and that much could be resolved by better management, institutional change and sound policy-making.<sup>48</sup> Yet, without any financial resources at all, no activities could be developed. Although SNV helped organisations to find donors, write proposals for financial support and build up a network of organisations in this field, it was often difficult to find financial means to start activities that benefit the poor.<sup>49</sup> Lack of financial support was evaluated as a real problem:

At present, capacity-building is no longer the most important priority because now we understand matters. But we would like to do more things in the area of production. We would need economic support for that, start-up capital. And afterwards we can do it ourselves. Many women have the capacities, as they already did capacity-building.<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> Interview 4. ('Heel veel organisaties zijn in het verleden gewoon in het leven geroepen omdat er geld was. Dat heeft natuurlijk effect op je hele werken. Op zich kan ik dat best begrijpen: Als je daar met geld gaat zwaaien, dat er mensen op inspelen. Zo is dat nu eenmaal en daar hebben we als ontwikkelingsmensen zelf aan mee gedaan.')

<sup>46</sup> Interview 139. ('De donorcompetitie is verschrikkelijk. Ze geven allemaal dezelfde training en de mensen van de NGO's lopen de ene na de andere workshop af (...) Goed hotel, lekker eten, allowances.')

<sup>47</sup> Interviews 201 and 181.

<sup>48</sup> Interviews 32, 48, 137 and 249.

<sup>49</sup> Interviews 4, 78, 260 and 275.

<sup>50</sup> Interview 284.



This not only held for organisations with which SNV had developed a long-standing relationship. New clients had usually had experience with other international development organisations and cherished expectations about forms of cooperation.

In relatively rich northern Tanzania, the advisory approach was well accepted: ‘Advice is better than money. Money will be finished, even the next day, but an idea will remain forever, for the future.’<sup>51</sup> And in Zambia, the matter was referred to rather casually: ‘Material aid of course is welcome, but knowledge is here to stay.’<sup>52</sup> In poorer areas however, people did not agree with this view. One support staff member at SNV Mali felt that development was impossible without money: ‘Why have they become tired in the world? Because I know that they not only fight in Mali, they fight everywhere against poverty. Now the world knows that Holland is tired. When the Dutch were alone, there were only a very few intelligent Malians. Now there are many Africans who can give them a hand to help but in order to develop, one needs money.’<sup>53</sup> People on the ground explained that asking for money did not necessarily mean ‘assistentialism’, they argued that money and advice should go together.<sup>54</sup> The dilemma was forcefully summarised by a woman working at a Bolivian political organisation: ‘Personally I think it is a problem if we do receive money but also if we don’t receive money.’<sup>55</sup>

### Advice in practice

Many SNVers were technical experts and often with a practical background. As the new approach in advisory practice required different forms of expertise than before, the confrontation for SNV’s personnel was at times encouraging, and at times hard:

As such, I thought it was a fair move and I completely agreed with it. But it took a lot of investment from the people, even now too. It isn’t a piece of cake to become an organisation advisor or change manager. One does not change one’s thought patterns and paradigms just like that. In the past they were responsible themselves for implementation, while later they had to stand on the sidelines with local people carrying out an agenda in their own way and at their own pace: Those people have to do it. That is a complete switch.<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> Interview 130.

<sup>52</sup> Interview 119.

<sup>53</sup> Interview 47.

<sup>54</sup> Interviews 16, 64, 72, 179, 198, 206 and 260.

<sup>55</sup> Interview 275 (Delsi).

<sup>56</sup> Interview 175. (‘Op zich vond ik dat een heel terechte *move*, waar ik ook volledig achter stond. Maar het heeft veel investering gekost onder de mensen, en nog. Je

Some of the more technical, practical people left the organisation but, with SNV's recent involvement in the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), the importance of such practical expertise may gain ground again. In September 2005 SNV organised a conference on the MDGs,<sup>57</sup> which received harsh critique from the areas where SNV was active. The MDGs were deemed to be 'technocratic', imposed from above and only to refer to a minimal development agenda. At the international conference in The Hague little attention was paid to this critique: the issue was how local capacities were to be mobilised to achieve the MDGs.<sup>58</sup>

The aim of SNV's repositioning process was to break with the spoon-feeding culture in development so that people would become the planners and organisers of their own development. SNV did not have an easy task explaining its new policy within SNV, to its longstanding partners and to new clients. The advisory practice was initially viewed with reserve:

SNV had of course started with a client-satisfaction evaluation, that methodology. Initially the results were quite negative: 'No we are not satisfied', 'We are not satisfied,' etc. So then the question came: 'What is the problem?' They said: 'Well, in the past the development workers were always here, we could always address them, they did all kinds of things. Now that is over.' And I would think: 'That is just fine! That is actually what we wanted to achieve, that those organisations become more independent.'<sup>59</sup>

Yet for some people, the very fact that SNV was still necessary meant a continuation of the old dilemma of 'making oneself superfluous' (*zichzelf overbodig maken*) and the very existence of SNV. Organisations with a sound structure and effective management barely needed SNV's advice. It was weaker

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wordt niet zomaar organisatie adviseur of een verander-manager. Je verandert niet zomaar je denkpatroon en je paradigma's. Eerst uitvoerend en je verantwoordelijk voelen. En daarna aan de zijlijn en anderen die een ander tempo hebben, een ander denkpatroon, andere agenda's: die moeten het toch doen. Dat is een enorme omschakeling.') Also Interview 247.

<sup>57</sup> <http://www.snvworld.org/public>.

<sup>58</sup> SNV, 'Conference on MDG Localisation in Africa; Options and Experiences: Proceedings' (9-11 August 2005, Kampala), p. 9; SNV, 'Mobilising Local Capacities for the MDGs – Report of the SNV Regional Conferences Prepared for the SNV International Conference' (The Hague, 2005), p. 21.

<sup>59</sup> Interview 256. ('SNV was natuurlijk begonnen met die klanten-tevredenheidstesten, die methodologie. Die vielen in het begin vrij vaak negatief uit: 'Nee we zijn niet tevreden, we zijn niet tevreden', etc. Dus toen kwam de vraag: 'Wat is nou het probleem?' Dan zeiden ze 'Ja maar, voorheen zaten de coöperanten altijd hier: je kon ze altijd aanspreken, ze deden van alles. Maar dat is nu niet meer zo.' Dan denk ik: 'Dat is toch juist prima, dat is toch eigenlijk wat je wilt bereiken: dat die organisaties onafhankelijker worden.')

partners that could benefit from such advice but it was only one step from advising an organisation to telling people what to do. The aim became to make organisations function independently but the services that SNV provided started from the assumption that this was not possible. It is not always be easy to decide if and when an organisation no longer needs advice.<sup>60</sup>

This problem was exacerbated by the differences between poorer and relatively rich areas. In poorer areas, there were hardly any meso-level organisations that could become SNV clients, and SNV's general policy had to be adapted to fit the local situation. The flexible nature of SNV as an organisation allowed for such adaptations and in these areas SNV advisors developed alternative strategies that suited the context. Areas with enough potential clients were, on the whole, better-off and less in need of poverty alleviation. SNV's demand-driven approach reinforced this. Organisations that already had access to the development sector were more likely to ask SNV for advice and in richer areas it was easier to maintain contact and build up networks than in remote areas.<sup>61</sup> The meso-level organisations in these areas often employed people of the same calibre as those working for SNV and as a rule received advice and training from the donors that funded them. The idea of SNV advisors stepping into such an organisation and saying: 'We are experts, we will give you advice!' was felt to be inappropriate but it was deemed useful for SNV and similar organisations to exchange ideas and information as partners.<sup>62</sup> Some thought that people in need did not benefit sufficiently from SNV's activities and that those who handle the development discourse with skill and play to donor fashions set the agenda. Many organisations claiming to represent the poor restrict their activities to the development market. Although cases occur where SNV reportedly cooperates with organisations that are hardly more than a façade to attract donor money, SNV has developed evaluation strategies to ensure that the local NGOs it works with are genuinely interested in reaching poor people. The discussion about how far SNV has succeeded in this is ongoing.

It proved very difficult to measure the impact of SNV's work and an evaluation report indicated that no straightforward evidence existed to prove that SNV's activities effectively reduce poverty and contribute to good governance. While this evaluation report argued that the limited possibilities for measuring impact should not create an excuse for not trying, another report stated that development organisations should be evaluated on the basis of their internal organisation and management and not on any measurement of the effects of

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<sup>60</sup> Interviews 50 and 9.

<sup>61</sup> Interview 81.

<sup>62</sup> Interview with SNVer, information withheld for reasons of privacy.

their activities.<sup>63</sup> While no outright evidence existed about SNV's activities contributing to its overall aims of poverty reduction and good governance, there are 'strong indications' that this is indeed the case.<sup>64</sup>

One of the aims of SNV's repositioning process was to increase the scale of impact and to bridge the distance between the macro and micro level through a focus on meso-level organisations. The stronger emphasis on meso-level organisations is regarded by some as a move away from the grassroots level with the risk of thereby losing SNV's specific knowledge area. Some people held that SNV visits to villages were very short and contact with the local people was restricted to the elite. As an evaluation of SNV Nepal put it:

SNV's good 'brand name' in Nepal is based upon recognition by all the stakeholders that SNV has a proper understanding of and long experience in working in remote areas (...) Through its present repositioning, SNV risks losing this major value added.<sup>65</sup>

Others, however, argue that this is a logical consequence of the changing working context: There is now sufficient local cadre in the countries where SNV is active to organise programmes and projects aimed at poverty reduction in local communities. Instead of having expats 'fixing it', as happened in the past, SNV, with its multicultural and international expertise, should seek to strengthen local organisations that serve the poor people in their own countries. In this debate, much depends on SNV's history in a given region. SNV Bolivia, for example, has a longstanding tradition of working with meso-level organisations in many regions and here the policy change is not seen by many as a radical one. In these regions, the change from one steady advisor to changing teams of flexible advisors was viewed as the major consequence of SNV's repositioning. While for the advisors the chances for professional exchange and cooperation grew dramatically, the in-depth personal and professional knowledge within the counterpart organisations was said to diminish.<sup>66</sup>

These dilemmas and issues have informed debates in and about SNV since the process of repositioning and have by no means finished. SNV management, its staff and all clients and stakeholders have their own opinions about the

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<sup>63</sup> Cornelissen & Oosterbaan, 'Evaluation SNV', pp. 44, 99-102, 120; Hans Dijkstal e.a., 'Vertrouwen in een kwetsbare sector. Rapport van de commissie draagvlak en effectiviteit ontwikkelingssamenwerking' (Unpublished report, April 2006).

<sup>64</sup> Cornelissen & Oosterbaan, 'Evaluation SNV', pp. 44, 120.

<sup>65</sup> Sumitra M. Gurung, Ram P. Yadav & Bert L.M van Woersem, 'Country Programme Evaluation. SNV Nepal. Volume 1: Main report. Findings, Conclusions and Recommendations' (2003), p. 5.

<sup>66</sup> For example, Interviews 245, 250 and 256.

nature of advice, the shift to meso-level organisations and relations between SNV and its clients.

### The end of projects

The change to an advisory role meant the end of SNV's project approach: SNV would henceforth no longer be active in the actual implementation of development projects. The arguments for the change were clear: SNV had become 'superfluous' in this area as enough expertise could be found in local organisations. In addition, foreign-initiated projects often stifled rather than encouraged local initiative and the shift to advice was the ultimate consequence of SNV's stress on 'ownership'. While there were obvious benefits in project implementation, these did not always involve structural changes and tended to reinforce local hierarchies and aid dependency.

The decision to focus on advice at a meso level implied that some of the relationships SNV had built up over the years would come to an end. Unsurprisingly, many of those who could no longer participate in SNV's activities were positive about their experiences with SNV in the past, but reflected negatively on the current changes. As is always the case when profound changes are introduced, the end of the project approach created unrest in some instances. Some people were well prepared and knew that SNV was planning to end its activities in the field of implementation. In other cases though, local people felt that SNV had abandoned participants without adequately preparing them to fend for themselves. In western Cameroon, for example, people were expecting a project to continue for fifteen years until SNV called a meeting to announce that it would finish in three years instead. And then less than two months later, people were called in again and told that it was in fact going to be terminated within three months. This created uncertainty among the local people, as one man put it:

While appreciating the advice – because you can still advance through advice – we very much appreciate the funding. That funding and advice could go hand in hand. We appeal that funding continues. We were in shock when we heard SNV was going to stop funding. When you are feeding a child, and you suddenly stop feeding him/her, that child will feel that impact. That's exactly what happened to us.<sup>67</sup>

Even if people were prepared for the end of a project, it could still be a bitter pill to swallow. In many cases it was only a matter of time before everything the project had achieved started to run down or disappeared and, in addition, it meant a period of unemployment for those who had been connected with it. During the course of our visit to Guinea Bissau, 42 former SNV staff presented

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<sup>67</sup> Interviews 64 and 50.

us with a letter asking ‘in the name of all the workers of the water supply project in the regions of Quinara, Tombali and Bolama Bijagos with head office in Buba (...) [that] the Dutch research delegation submit to SNV and the Dutch government the request to compensate the project workers of Phase 1, Phase 2, Phase 3, Phase 4, Phase 5, Phase 6, Phase 7, Phase of the years 1978 to 1995.’<sup>68</sup> In many cases, former project personnel had had to be dismissed.<sup>69</sup>

To a certain extent these examples reveal exactly why SNV moved away from implementation: the examples can be read as signs of aid dependency. At the same time, however, the examples point to the shared history that people have with SNV and its staff. Referring to both the personal contact and the time and depth of SNV’s cooperation with CICOL (Central Indígena de Comunidades Originarias de Lomerio), Anacleto Peña stated: ‘For SNV, the support has stopped but not for us, as we have a very deep professional relationship with them.’<sup>70</sup> Although the aim was to put an ever stronger emphasis on the wishes and ideals of local participants, once again the decision for change was not theirs. At times, it was assumed within SNV that relations with new clients would be easier, as they only knew its present policy. Thus when SNV opened a new office in Angola, it was stated that in this country SNV was ‘not hindered by any history of volunteerism or direct implementation services.’<sup>71</sup>

Many people who had been involved in SNV projects did not appreciate its decision to end implementation and called for a combination of advice and implementation:

Even today, there are requests that SNV/N not limit itself to advisory services and that small infrastructural activities go alongside it. However, various comments and feedback received illustrate that infrastructure on its own is not enough either and that in order to maximise impact, a balance between hardware and software is essential.<sup>72</sup>

SNV country offices could in some cases opt for a gradual shift from implementation to advice. In Mozambique, for example, it was decided that the project approach would only be abandoned gradually. As Mozambique was still in a phase of post-war reconstruction, SNV felt that only through a twin-track approach – in which the project approach coexisted with its new advisory role – could the changes be introduced.<sup>73</sup> In Guinea-Bissau, the changes were not re-

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<sup>68</sup> Letter presented after Interview 21.

<sup>69</sup> Interviews 44, 54, 62 and 225.

<sup>70</sup> Interview 283.

<sup>71</sup> Jan van Montfort, ‘The one to twenty principle’, *Nethwork* 17, 2 (2003), p. 4.

<sup>72</sup> SNV Nepal, ‘SNV/Nepal in Karnali, 1983-2003. Lessons learned and guidance for future interventions’ (Kathmandu, 2005), p. 1.

<sup>73</sup> Interview 20.

ceived in a uniform manner at all: in contrast to Buba, people in Bafata were far more positive about the transformations. While SNV was in the process of involving local cadre in an agro-forestry project in the Bafata region, war broke out and all the foreigners were forced to leave the country. Between 1998 and 1999, local personnel continued working on the programme despite all the hardships and insecurities of war, an experience that prepared them well to take over in 2001 when the SNV project ended and they formed a local NGO to work in the same area. While acknowledging the encouragement and support received from SNV, they were proud of their achievements: ‘We continue SNV, even in our own small way, but it still exists.’<sup>74</sup> In other contexts too, such as in Tanzania, a number of projects were transformed into local NGOs,<sup>75</sup> sometimes with local participants hardly noticing that SNV had stopped its activities as they had never known that SNV was behind it in any case.<sup>76</sup> The local NGOs that had started as SNV projects frequently had a hard struggle to survive. Under SNV, project funding had never been a problem but as soon as the transformation into a local NGO took place, some of the donors pulled out. And the process of separation could also be accompanied by quarrels, jealousies and competition.<sup>77</sup>

### The views of new clients

With many of SNV’s historical partners unhappy with the policy changes, contact between the two was often discontinued as there was no possibility except to change from implementation to advice or the partner was too far removed from SNV’s meso-level criterion. In regions where SNV already had a tradition of advising meso-level organisations, the area in which SNV worked remained very much the same and only changes of form were made. In other regions though, SNV had to build up new networks of contacts and partners. In Mali, it became more active in supporting the decentralisation process, not only at national level, for example through DNCT (Direction Nationale des Collectivités Territoriales),<sup>78</sup> but also through local governance bodies, notably the newly created CCC (Centre de Conseil Communal, Community Advisory Centre). SNV organised workshops and training in the fields of gender, budgeting and accountability, and facilitated the working of the CCC through logistical support. In Bolivia too, SNV supported political moves towards democratisation and decentralisation by advising the *préfectures*, and provincial and

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<sup>74</sup> Interview 24.

<sup>75</sup> For example, TIP, Faïda, Pamoja.

<sup>76</sup> For example, Interview 146.

<sup>77</sup> For example, Interviews 88, 138, 142 and 145.

<sup>78</sup> Interviews 45 and 46.

community councils.<sup>79</sup> This stress on capacity-building in local government was coupled with private-sector development. Within this general arena, SNV developed specific target areas, notably cultural tourism and market access for the rural poor.

SNV's activities in tourism started with a programme in Tanzania meant to develop forms of tourism that would benefit the local people, contribute to development and respect the region's history, culture and environment. Various tourist modules in northern Tanzania offered tours with a local guide taking visitors not only to the tourist highlights but also to the local school or to a development project. SNV organised meetings and workshops, gave advice on the brochures and organised training for the guides. In 2001, SNV handed over responsibility for the modules to the Tanzania Tourist Board but the module holders have complained that support has since declined.<sup>80</sup> SNV has expanded its tourism programme to the other continents on which it works and has developed new angles, for example in eastern Cameroon it is creating a network of exchange and support in the area of sustainable tourism. As these forms of tourism do not go back a long way, not all people are familiar with the sector's constraints and possibilities. SNV attempts to create a platform that encompasses delegates from the Ministry for Tourism and the various tourism projects, and, in these cases, capacity-building mainly revolves around the exchange of knowledge and increased networking. The new vocabulary can lead to amusing situations. Charles Mbonteh of the Municipal Development Counselling Group (MUDEC) explained, for example, that they were active not only in sustainable tourism but also in pro-poor tourism. When asked what the difference was between the two, he started laughing: 'SNV jargon, ha ha! There is not really a difference. It is just that SNV wants to always be in front with new things.'<sup>81</sup>

Larger organisations, like the Bolivian CEADES (Colectivo de Estudios Aplicados al Desarrollo Social), saw itself as SNV's complementary partner rather than as a client: and SNV's advice was just a bonus because CEADES did not depend on it. When asked what the bonus consisted of, CEADES's Jorge Cortés answered:

SNV is an organisation with many inter-institutional relations: they have ties within the government, with other NGOS, local and international. SNV carries some weight and influence, even at government policy level. In this sense, SNV is a strategic counterpart. Through SNV we enlarge our information channels and our linkages with other organisations. Furthermore, cooperation with SNV enhances our credi-

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<sup>79</sup> Interview 257.

<sup>80</sup> Interviews 129, 130, 134, 141, 143 and 144.

<sup>81</sup> Interview 231.



bility. Through this, access to donor funding is enlarged. This is an indirect consequence. As donors have confidence in SNV, it is a very good reference. So if you can show that SNV is your counterpart, this also positively influences your image in the public's eye.<sup>82</sup>

In 2006, SNV invited 60% of its clients to evaluate the services it provided: 90% indicated satisfaction with SNV's services and 94% felt that these services contributed to capacity-building.<sup>83</sup>

## Change

Over the last ten years, SNV has seen many changes in its internal structure. The major changes in its formal status and policy repositioning were accompanied by numerous smaller ones in administrative procedures, structure and decision-making. The change from project implementation to an advisory role, the growing importance of the regional level, the organisation of SNV advisors in flexible teams, the dissociation of SNV activities from funding issues, and its restructuring in terms of financial and personnel management have already been discussed. In addition, in the course of the 1990s junior positions were created to give younger, less-experienced people a chance to work within the organisation and a Board of Directors replaced the single SNV Director in 2003. Steps were taken in the area of exchange and contact through the new communication media. Better evaluation methods were designed to assess the results of the organisation's new advisory role and SNV's emphasis on being a knowledge-based organisation has grown. Its three broad practice areas – local governance, private-sector development and natural-resource management – were subdivided into new categories and a new vocabulary was introduced with its repositioning as a capacity-building and advisory organisation.

In SNV circles, the crucial change from implementation and funding to advice has been evaluated as theoretically sound but difficult to put into practice. It was also felt that not all the aspects of the new terminology that accompanied the changes were well chosen. New SNV partners, for example, are called 'clients', a term that is in most contexts seen as far too commercial. It was felt that the contract-product-client terminology does not adequately describe the sort of relationship SNV envisages having with the organisations it works with. In some countries, SNV staff continued to refer to other organisations as 'partners'. The critique was clearly expressed by Amagoïn Keïta, who was then working for SNV Mali:

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<sup>82</sup> Interview 249.

<sup>83</sup> SNV Annual Report 2006.

The changes can also be felt in terminology. A word like ‘client’: it means something, it changes a lot. It does not leave people cold. I was in the Ministry and by accident said the word client. The people reacted immediately: ‘No, we are not clients, we are not doing business here; this is about development. We are nobody’s clients! We are not buying anything. We are partners.’<sup>84</sup>

Some SNVers have interpreted the change to a more commercial kind of terminology as being emblematic of the general changes within SNV. They see SNV as moving towards being a consultancy-type organisation; only differing from real consultancies in the way it provides advice for free and chooses its clients on the basis of a poverty-reduction criterion rather than on the basis of their ability to pay. With these critics, the new management-consultancy type of development is being taken to task for a lack of engagement:

SNV’s objective and strategy paper says very little about a clear political engagement by SNV. (...) All we do is provide advice; the rest is none of our business. Simple, neutral, clean. With such attitudes we are not much different from commercial consultants. Just onlookers, just bystanders. The recent incident when SNV did not engage in the debate around the 11 September tragedy underscores this issue. Many in the organisation feel uncomfortable with this trend.<sup>85</sup>

These arguments are challenged by those who hold that engagement does not exclude efficiency and that SNV ought to combine the traditional dedication and commitment of its personnel with a professional approach.<sup>86</sup> SNV’s new approach and position have set a range of changes in motion and it has become a very different organisation. The rate of change was regarded by some as too fast, at times even endangering relationships with clients old and new.<sup>87</sup> Many viewed the changes with mixed feelings. Some felt that SNV was still searching for a new identity whereas others argued that the organisation was moving in the right direction. While it is never deemed positive to remain static as an organisation, the changes in SNV were generally viewed as coming in too rapid a succession and in too many areas at once.

Now SNV is in constant change: changes are coming too fast. For an outsider or for someone new to the organisation, the speed of change is too rapid. Before an approach is well understood, there is already another approach. I think what we need now is consolidation. People have problems locating you if you change that rapidly.

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<sup>84</sup> Interviews 49, 135, 147, 201 and 247.

<sup>85</sup> Foreign Affairs, file snv/2012/00420, Tom Derksen, ‘SNV – Towards a rights based development approach’, November 2001; Interviews 65 and 81; ‘Een professioneel uitzendbureau en niet meer dan dat’, *Nedwerk* 10, special (1996), p. 3; Rinus van Klinken, ‘SNV van ontutdeling naar verzakelijking’, *Nedwerk* 11, 4 (1997), p. 8.

<sup>86</sup> Interviews 18, 78, 247 and 265.

<sup>87</sup> Interviews 88 and 132.

An advantage of all the changes is that it keeps the staff sharp. It always poses a challenge. I don't hate it.<sup>88</sup>

## Gender

Not everything changed at SNV; there was also continuity. The themes of gender and the environment have recently played a pivotal role in SNV's policies and, as we saw earlier, 'women and development' became an issue in SNV in the course of the 1980s. Initially static and monolithic ideas such as 'the position of women' and 'the role of women' informed the approaches to this new theme. Women were expected to change so as to fit into the existing development models. Slowly, however, these ideas made way for an approach in which the range of choices that women had become central: women's empowerment became a key notion. Within SNV, the word 'gender' was used from 1993 onwards to indicate that the existing hierarchical relations between the sexes were not based on biological differences but as a consequence of the socially constructed differences between men and women. While in the 1990s gender was often organisationally classified as a separate category of development, the concept of 'gender mainstreaming' gained currency after 2000. Gender equality was to be included in all policies, projects and programmes as a basic principle not only in planning but also in implementation. Through the gender audit, which was first developed in 1999, SNV tried to assess not only its results in addressing gender issues in the organisations with which it cooperated in its activities but also the structural gender relations within its own organisation.

In many contexts gender as a development theme evoked much debate and sometimes razor-sharp reactions. Delsi, a female member of the board of a Bolivian political organisation for indigenous people, put it as follows:

Society here is very difficult; men have always been against the gender approach. 'Women will never listen to us any more' is their critique. Women are only allowed to go to meetings if they first carry out all their household duties and take the children along.

When she started working on the board in 1994, she was aware that the reasons for her appointment were not totally honest. The male members had decided to include a woman on the board 'because gender is the in-thing now and then we will get more money'.<sup>89</sup>

For many people, the importance of gender as such is clear but they do not regard all the ways of introducing the issue as appropriate. A male Tanzanian

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<sup>88</sup> Interview 133.

<sup>89</sup> Interview 274.

SNVer felt that the gender approach needed to be adapted to local circumstances:

Like with gender, you need to know the perspective and the context. Development workers move with the wind. You must ensure that what you propagate is not foreign.

Like female-headed households, that is not a problem here. Also when Ayo here gets home, he will get home and eat, not get home and cook. That also holds for me. My wife will cook. If I tried to cook, she would tell me to get out of the kitchen. She does not like it. So you talk about gender this and gender that at seminars and conferences, but the women will simply not agree if I cook or if Ayo cooks. We should not waste our time on that.<sup>90</sup>

Women too were not always prepared to accept a gender approach:

A former female SNVer from The Netherlands went to talk to women's groups to start doing something about gender. The women asked: 'Are you married?' She said: 'No'. Then the women said: 'In that case our relationship ends here. You do not live in our reality. How can you advise us on something you know nothing about?'<sup>91</sup>

There is often only a thin line between adapting the gender approach to the local context and compromising the very core of gender equality. All the same, many people feel that matters are slowly changing and that the gender issue has helped to make men and women relate on a more equal footing:

Aua: We did much in the area of women's liberation.

Man from the project committee: Women are important, they participate in all activities. Some even know how to write. They are informed when something is up. Before they only used face oil, now they know how to make it. Before, they only heard about things, about machines and so on, but now they know how to do things.

Woman: We worked so hard. To prepare tomatoes, to make soap. We had heard that onions have oil in them, but now we know how to prepare it (oil and soap). We can put things into practice.<sup>92</sup>

Gender continues to run through all SNV's fields of expertise and is a specific issue of focus in West and Central Africa.

## Environmental issues

In 1990 Jan Pronk referred to the relationship between development and the environment, bringing this issue into the policy-making arena.<sup>93</sup> Within SNV,

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<sup>90</sup> Interviews 133 and 122.

<sup>91</sup> Interview 236 (Bakia).

<sup>92</sup> Interviews 25, 98, 255, 258, 282, 283 and 284.

environmental issues have received growing attention and while mainstreaming gender issues in the organisation was frequently intensely debated, this has not been the case with the environment. Brenda Liswaniso, who worked on both themes in SNV Zambia, only had stories about the opposition she encountered when working on gender. Her experiences concerning environmental issues apparently went more smoothly.<sup>94</sup> This is not to say that the relations between development and the environment were without dilemmas. At times, the themes did conflict: one SNVer remembered a fierce discussion at an annual meeting about whether a ‘not-ecologically-sustainable-but-gender-conscious project should be given precedence over an ecologically-sustainable-but-not-gender-conscious’ project.<sup>95</sup> A biogas project in Nepal put the two themes together: the plants reduced fuel-wood consumption while at the same time women needed to spend less time collecting firewood and cooking.<sup>96</sup>

Development activities and ecological concerns were not always easy to combine. Poverty has often been seen as a reason for overusing natural resources and development has in many cases been interpreted as economic growth, with little consideration being given to any of the ecological aspects involved. SNV has sought ways to arrive at a combined approach to development and sustainable natural-resource management. At the local level this might take the form of creating and exploiting village forests in a responsible manner, while at a wider level, for example in national governments, SNV negotiated for ecological concerns to be integrated into state development policies. In Bhutan, for example, transport facilities were by and large seen as an important means of overcoming the difficulties of isolation and the marginality of many areas, but road-building could have highly negative consequences for the environment at the same time. SNV engaged in careful diplomatic networking between the various national ministries, local government bodies, building companies and the donors to ensure that road construction was realised at minimal cost to the environment.<sup>97</sup>

The environment as a theme was only fully adopted within SNV’s policy after 1995. By this time, it had already become clear in the field that environmental issues could only feature in relation to other themes. In many cases, political issues, economic aspects and ecological concerns could not be easily

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<sup>93</sup> Leo de Haan & Ton Dietz, ‘Milieu in de Nederlandse ontwikkelingssamenwerking met nadruk op duurzaam landgebruik’. In: Lau Schulpen, ed., *Hulp in ontwikkeling*, p. 90.

<sup>94</sup> Interviews 122 and 245.

<sup>95</sup> Interview 290.

<sup>96</sup> IOB, *SNV-Nepal*, p. 5.

<sup>97</sup> ‘Bhutan – Kingdom in the Clouds’ (2000) in DVD series: ‘Een geschiedenis in beeld’; Interview 292.

separated. In Bolivia, forestry was closely linked to the sensitive issue of land rights and community access to productive forests. SNV cooperated with CIDOB (Confederación de Pueblos Indígenas del Oriente Boliviano, Confederation of Indigenous People of Eastern Bolivia) and APCOB (Apoyo para el Campesino Indígena del Oriente Boliviano) to create a Green Label for certified timber. The project aimed at protecting the environment, income generation and community organisation all at the same time.<sup>98</sup>

Over the years many projects changed from being a purely ecological concern to an integrated approach. In eastern Guinea-Bissau, for example, SNV started a project to help control bushfires in 1990. With a long history of colonial intervention in this field, people initially associated the activities with coercive measures and repression. Soon afterwards the intention was to draw agropastoral activities into the project but in practice not much came of this as nearly all the staff were forestry experts. A 1992 evaluation again stressed the need for further integration of environmental concerns and agricultural activities. As of 1994, an approach was attempted that integrated socio-economic aspects and ecological concerns. This combination has remained pivotal, and now the project has been turned into the national NGO Aprodél. Aprodél staff gave the example of creating forest zones between pastures and farm land and as cattle could no longer go onto the fields, relations between the pastoralists and farmers were improving.<sup>99</sup>

SNV was not the only organisation that tended to integrate environmental issues into a broader perspective. In Cameroon the Dja Wildlife Reserve had been created in the 1980s and placed under the auspices of the IUCN World Conservation Union (International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources). As some local villages were moved and people were no longer allowed to enter the Reserve area, there were strong feelings of resentment. From 1999 onwards the IUCN asked SNV to develop activities in the area around the Reserve to compensate for the disadvantages but as the SNVers travelled in IUCN cars and worked in close association with IUCN staff, local people did not distinguish between SNV and IUCN.<sup>100</sup>

There were cases in which projects that had started out with environmental aims changed their mission as they noticed that a focus purely on environmental

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<sup>98</sup> Interviews 246 and 279.

<sup>99</sup> Interviews 24, 25 and 26. SNV Guinea-Bissau and the Royal Dutch Embassy 'GITT (Gestão Integrada das Terras da Tabanca): A terra é do Povo: uma abordagem de autopromoção das populações' (Brochure s.l., s.d.); SNV Guinea-Bissau and the Royal Dutch Embassy 'GFC (Gestão de Floresta Comunitária): A terra é do povo: proteger florestas para servir o bem-estar das populações' (Brochure s.l., s.d.). Also (example from Mali) Interview 41.

<sup>100</sup> Interview 61.

issues was becoming less fashionable in the development world. Thus a Malian organisation changed from *doum* palm plantations to private-sector development as they noticed that their partners, SNV and USAID, had moved in other directions such as economic activities and political decentralisation.<sup>101</sup> The tendencies in the environmental arena gave rise to some critique. For example, in a letter to *Nethwork* it was held that ecological concerns had become a secondary issue within SNV and had been reduced to natural-resource management. The ‘Hallelujah Approach’, the author alleged, had more form than content.<sup>102</sup>

Today SNV is running a collaborative forest management programme with special attention for biogas in Asia, a water management scheme in Latin America and dryland management projects in West and Central Africa. These themes have sprung from the more general practice area of Natural Resources Management.

### National staff

A development that has profoundly influenced the working of SNV was the sharp increase in the number of local personnel employed. Some nationals had joined SNV in the preceding decade, but these were few and far between. Due to the frequent changes in personnel, these early experiences were not always remembered when employing a national staff became more common practice in the 1990s.<sup>103</sup> In some countries in Latin America and Asia, where access to higher education was relatively easy, the increase was gradual but in many African countries the SNV norm of 50% national and 50% Dutch personnel, which was set during the 1995 reorganisation, meant a sudden change.<sup>104</sup> The 1990s and the early years of the 21<sup>st</sup> century saw a spectacular rise in the percentage of local SNV staff and by 1999 the figure was 40% but would grow to 67% in 2004: SNV had changed from being a purely Dutch organisation to being a multicultural organisation with Dutch roots.

Most SNVers saw clear advantages in the increased numbers of local staff. Whereas expatriate development workers need time to adapt to a new culture, to the climate and to learn the language, these problems do not occur with local advisors. Advisors recruited in the country are not only familiar with the cultural habits and the local language, they also have easier access to information about political networks, administrative systems and social relations. Another argument was that the expertise of expatriate workers is re-exported once the

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<sup>101</sup> Interview 40.

<sup>102</sup> Albert Heringa, ‘Two steps forward and one step back’, *Nethwork* 15, 5 (2001), p. 10.

<sup>103</sup> For example, Interview 117.

<sup>104</sup> IOB, *SNV-Nepal*, p. 49.

contract is over, while with local staff the knowledge is more likely to remain available within the country. In addition, expat staff are far more expensive. Many people reason that the choice is obvious if the same work can be done for less money by locally employed staff.<sup>105</sup>



*Photo 6.3* Local staff visiting Rheden during their introductory course in The Netherlands.

*Source:* SNV photo archives, Yellow, SNV, Algemeen, Lokale veldstaf.

*Photographer:* Peter Drent, 1991.

In general SNVers and clients were quick to add that expat personnel also had a role to play. ‘SNV now has more Malians. That is extremely positive. But of course, sometimes people from outside can offer a fresh perspective. I think this cultural exchange is very important.’<sup>106</sup> This argument was also stressed when Minister Herfkens started questioning the value of technical assistance:

(...) We would like to enter into a dialogue with the Minister regarding her vision and whether or not there is need and room for expatriate advisors to play a role in Development Cooperation. We would like to convince her that in the field of capacity-building we are able to create a synergy by working with teams of advisors in

<sup>105</sup> Interview 45.

<sup>106</sup> Interview 46.



which both Ghanaian and Dutch experts work together in ‘a new way of working’.<sup>107</sup>

While the intercultural character of SNV was much valued and SNVers regarded it as a positive feature of the organisation in all respects, the position of national staff has all the same become a vexed question. Non-Dutch staff still at times complained about Dutch being spoken in the offices and, although correspondence is now normally in English or in the national language, some information is still sent to them in Dutch.<sup>108</sup> Salaries for local personnel posed a serious dilemma and differences in income between local and Dutch staff were seen as unfair and detrimental to staff integration and cooperation. However levelling wages might lead to a brain-drain of local expertise into the development sector and create an island of development workers in a country context. Especially in view of SNV’s aim to strengthen local capacities this was viewed as a serious problem. Furthermore, as the judicial and financial position of local staff differed per country, there could be huge variations in income, benefits and rights between people who were working in neighbouring countries.<sup>109</sup> There has been a recent tendency to employ personnel from other countries in a region. While again this South-South exchange is much valued, the fact that these advisors receive an expatriate contract or a third-country national contract has given rise to extra tensions about the various contract forms.<sup>110</sup> It is also seen as naïve to assume that local staff will automatically defend local interests. As John Mlay stated, ‘Numbers are not the issue; the question is whether these locals come up with the local agenda. You often find that the locals just serve the foreign agenda. Now 70% of the staff are local, but will that help to set the local agenda?’<sup>111</sup> Another dilemma is SNV’s rule that a person from a country cannot become the SNV director in that same country and some interpreted this as a lack of confidence in local staff.<sup>112</sup> These are still issues of intense debate in many countries where SNV is active.

SNV does not stand alone in its policy of employing more local staff: the shift from expatriate to local personnel is a wider trend. A parallel may be drawn with the Christian missions in Africa that started out as a Western initiative and initially were expatriate organisations but gradually grew into local churches organised by African Christians. In the international development sector, qualified local personnel are much sought after. As people have started

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<sup>107</sup> Foreign Affairs, file snv/ara/00050, memo, Director SNV to R through DGIS, ‘Ghana’, 5 November 2001, p. 2.

<sup>108</sup> Interview 246.

<sup>109</sup> Interviews 20 and 150.

<sup>110</sup> Interview 128.

<sup>111</sup> Interview 133.

<sup>112</sup> Interview 49.

recognising their (financial) value, the dilemma over the contractual position of local staff has not gone away. It was decided that some 70% of staff should be local but in a number of countries it has proved to be a challenge to find so many qualified people.<sup>113</sup>

While within SNV the debate focuses on the position of local staff, for local participants the logic of SNV taking on local people is at times questioned. Many indeed view it as an asset: contact is easier as the language and cultural background are understood and people are likely to establish long-term relations as they live in the country.<sup>114</sup> Yet, in some cases disadvantages were also mentioned. People expect foreigners to have greater access and more leverage in political channels than a local person.<sup>115</sup> Some local participants have doubts about the managerial and organisational qualities of their fellow countrymen: ‘Now there are many Malians. But let’s face it: Malians are not good at management. It is clear. Better to have Europeans in management (...)’<sup>116</sup> The most important argument against local personnel has been that development is about learning something new: ‘The foreigners bring things from outside, things that we do not know (...) Development is about obtaining new things.’<sup>117</sup>

### The Netherlands?

The percentage of local staff begs the question about the Dutch nature of SNV as an organisation. 1993 saw another name change in SNV. From then on, the organisation would be called SNV Netherlands Development Organisation, a name that had been in use in SNV Nepal for some time already.<sup>118</sup> The new name showed that the B Objective in its original aim had been dropped: it was transformed into Bureau Dienstverlening en Bemiddeling (Services and Mediation Desk). Despite the changes, the new name also clearly referred to SNV’s Dutch background. Currently SNV is described as ‘a Netherlands-based, international development organisation’ and the multicultural aspect of SNV is stressed.

In each country where it operates SNV has developed within the local context of political constellations, social relations and cultural aspects, and the organisational culture and the professional traditions may differ from one

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<sup>113</sup> Interviews 87 and 168.

<sup>114</sup> Interview 284.

<sup>115</sup> Interviews 49 and 58.

<sup>116</sup> Interviews 198 and 164.

<sup>117</sup> Interview 134.

<sup>118</sup> In 1985 SNV Nepal changed its name from Netherlands Development and Volunteer Service to Netherlands Development Organisation, Archives, SNV Nepal, Kathmandu, ‘Jaarverslag 1984’, p. 39.

country to the next. While some hold that SNV's policies are by and large determined by Dutch politics and Dutch public opinion, others feel that the differences between the country offices are too great and that SNV lacks a coherent identity. These differences are largely due to the longstanding interaction between the SNV offices and the national – or even the regional – problems, issues and debates. SNV's CORE team has attempted to address this issue. In view of SNV's new status, a more pronounced character was required for the organisation. The long tradition of decentralisation within SNV did, however, not make this any easier and SNV staff often interpreted decisions as stemming from The Hague and viewed these as an outside intervention. The fact that SNV management tried to involve its staff at the regional and country-office level in the processes of decision-making apparently hardly reduced this interpretation. Local staff expressed strong sensitivity on this point and were often unwilling to take into account factors in Dutch politics, the Dutch media, Dutch evaluations and Dutch public opinion.<sup>119</sup> The increase of local staff members in SNV has been directly connected with the nature of development and the status of SNV as an organisation. In the words of Aat van der Wel, who worked for SNV Tanzania:

SNV is a Dutch organisation, it still is. But it is being watered down. And that is not good: An organisation needs an interested public, a constituency. And what is the constituency in SNV's case? Profiling in The Netherlands continues to remain important, I think. I have nothing against the process of localisation. But one has to ask the question: we come to bring something as an organisation and what do we bring in the case of Tanzanians who work for SNV?<sup>120</sup>

Especially after the first nationals joined SNV, discussions were held about the languages that should be used within SNV. Most reports were already produced in the national language of the country involved, but Dutch remained important in meetings and in all correspondence with The Hague. In 1997, English was formally adopted as the language of communication internationally, while national languages were to be used in the countries in all meetings and correspondence.<sup>121</sup> In French- and Spanish-speaking countries, an adequate knowledge of English tended to limit the number of potential local candidates for SNV positions. By now, hardly any Dutch was being spoken in SNV offices

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<sup>119</sup> Various interviews (no further information for reasons of privacy).

<sup>120</sup> Interview 167. ('SNV is een Nederlandse organisatie, dat blijft het. Maar dat ve-watert wel. En dat is geen goede zaak: Als organisatie heb je ook een achterban, een constituency. En wat is dat dan voor SNV? Die profilering in Nederland blijft, denk ik, belangrijk. Ik heb niks tegen het proces van lokalisering. Maar je moet toch de vraag durven stellen: we komen als organisatie iets brengen; wat is dat dan in het geval van Tanzanianen die bij SNV werken?')

<sup>121</sup> *Nedwerk* 12, 1 (1998), p. 1.

and people were using the national language to communicate, although some local staff still claimed that: ‘The Dutch love to speak their own language.’<sup>122</sup> Some of the support staff who had worked for SNV for a long time knew some Dutch words and expressions and the last thing I heard as I left to return to The Netherlands after a research visit was the Tanzanian SNV driver shouting ‘*Nou, doei!*’ (Goodbye!).

Despite the rapid growth of non-Dutch personnel, there is still a visible legacy of SNV’s Dutch background and elements of Dutch culture in some countries. The Dutch coffee culture is obvious in SNV offices worldwide, the informal, flat structure of working relations are noted by many local staff and the relatively outspoken and direct way of address that is used in meetings and negotiations is frequently mentioned in SNV as a typical Dutch trait. Some Dutch people working abroad still import, for example, Dutch cheese, peanut butter, chocolate sprinkles and liquorice, and treacle waffles can regularly be found in their houses too. Many of them would not want to miss out on Dutch festivals such as Sinterklaas with its mocking poems or Queen’s Day with raw herring at the Dutch Embassy.

Some local staff indicated that over time they too have adopted some Dutch ways. Isabel Miranda from Guinea-Bissau talked about the open way in which Dutch people express their thoughts and criticise things and how this had influenced her: ‘I can also be critical, no problem. I have become Dutch in this respect; I am very upfront now (...) I think SNV has changed me. Before SNV, in my world, I was more timid.’<sup>123</sup> Interaction in SNV teams between people of different nationalities working at similar levels has increased over the years. Despite the growing intercultural character of SNV, the Dutch contact networks that came into existence in the 1980s continue to remain important. These networks now also offer the possibility to build up social contact with other SNVers and expatriates working in the development sector and to exchange information, ideas, and gossip.

For people who are closely involved in the organisation, SNV may still appear very Dutch. For example, at the Ministry of the Environment in Mali, SNV was described as a ‘vector for conveying the Dutch culture in Mali’.<sup>124</sup> Local participants may evaluate this very differently and many do not even know SNV’s country of origin. ‘They have told us where SNV comes from, but I have forgotten! The advisor keeps on telling us.’<sup>125</sup>

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<sup>122</sup> Interviews 133, 77, 84 and 123.

<sup>123</sup> Interview 19.

<sup>124</sup> Interview 41.

<sup>125</sup> Interview 278.

Since SNV started, the possibilities for maintaining frequent contact over distance and for travelling between continents have grown enormously. This shows in the enhanced international character of many SNV teams, and the increased numbers of local personnel and also development workers coming from a third country. It is also clear in exchanges about concepts and policies that the development world is more international than ever before. New possibilities also provide scope for a more coherent and integrated approach. When SNV was founded, contact between The Hague and the field was usually slow and difficult and contact between the various country offices was in many cases even impossible. This resulted in many decisions being taken by people 'on the spot'. Nowadays new technologies allow Head Office in The Hague to disseminate information very fast and, in turn, to remain informed about new developments worldwide. These potentially conflicting tendencies may result in more centralisation and more internationalisation within SNV.



*Photo 6.4* SNVers hosted in Palmira, Lomerio, Bolivia, 1991.  
*Source:* SNV Digital photo archive: 1990-1995 part I: BOL-SNV-02.tif.  
*Photographer:* Guillermo Hopia, 1991.

## Conclusion

It is not easy as yet to fully understand the implications of the radical changes that occurred in SNV over the last ten years. As we saw in this chapter: three major changes stand out: SNV has seen a sharp growth in local personnel, it has become an NGO that is administratively independent of The Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs and, thirdly, SNV has changed from implementing and managing development projects to advising meso-level organisations and government bodies in order to strengthen their capacities. These changes are so recent that the consequences are still unfolding and the interaction between the three areas of change may also lead to new and unforeseen developments. The next chapter attempts to draw together the connections between these new changes and the debates, dilemmas, and questions within and outside SNV.



## Final remarks

This book gives an outline of the history of SNV as an organisation from its inception to the present. The aim was to move beyond an inventory of bureaucratic, formal changes and to offer an interpretation of SNV through the eyes of the people working in or with the organisation. Such a socio-cultural history of a development organisation may not be of immediate, practical use for the development sector. This has long posed a dilemma in the relationship between research and development. In Development Studies as well as in other branches of research, such as economics, agriculture and technical areas, the emphasis has traditionally been on research that can provide information, knowledge and expertise perceived to be applicable in the development sector. The results of such applied research are seen to have immediate consequences for the ways in which development work functions.

In a very different approach, the aim here has not been to mobilise research for development as such, but to provide a critical review of the development concepts, theories and practices through research. This strand of research forms a reflection of, rather than a factor in, development. In some cases, critical reflection has led to an outright rejection of the development paradigm. In what is called post-development literature, development is evaluated as a harmful and degrading paradigm that was imposed by the West on people in developing countries. In this literature the end of the 'Development Era' has been forecast: the classic development model is seen to have been a total failure and the post-development era is now at hand.<sup>1</sup>

It is obvious that this book belongs to the second strand of research in the sense that it offers an historical interpretation of development rather than providing practical models or schemes that can be applied in the practice of

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. Kothari, ed., *A radical history of development studies*.



development. Yet the reflections in this book have not led to the radical conclusions of post-development theory. The main reason for this is that the aim never was to evaluate the history of SNV in any positive or negative way. This is an odd position: when discussing development, one is expected to take a stance and come up with a clear answer to the question: 'Does development help?' Literature on development is, on the whole, outspoken in its judgement of the sector and only a few authors study development as a social phenomenon without pronouncing an opinion as to whether development has failed in its mission and whether it should continue, undergo serious reform or stop altogether. This book differs from this general characteristic in the literature in that the views of (former) SNVers and local participants, rather than those of the author, are presented.<sup>2</sup> In reviewing the perspectives of (former) SNVers and local participants, it becomes clear that their assessment of SNV as an organisation and development policies in general varies sharply. A number of former SNVers have come to the same conclusions as the post-development critics and in interviews with them they strongly condemned the development practice as hypocrite and counter-effective. Others, especially people employed by SNV today, are critical of the approaches that were used in the past but defend the present approach as a viable and worthy way of reducing poverty. Yet others – both former and present SNVers – do not agree with the current approach and expressed criticism about the direction SNV has chosen.

As has become clear throughout the book, local participants are generally more appreciative of SNV and, over the years, SNV's performance has been positively evaluated by countless people in scores of countries. It is apparent from the participants' views that they regard any development activity as a chance to improve their living conditions, as a possible strategy for getting by or an opportunity that may in one way or another benefit the community. In many cases, SNV's development activities were appreciated for reasons very different to the stated aims of the project or development practice. In the post-development literature, it is implied that at grassroots level many people oppose development activities and have rejected the paradigms underlying conventional development activities.<sup>3</sup> While it is true that participants' evaluations were often not congruent with assessments based on policy documents, this does not diminish the fact that local participants frequently expressed satisfaction with the activities undertaken. Many indicated that they had wanted an expansion or at least a continuation of the project. Any sound evaluation of development

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<sup>2</sup> Cf. Inge Brinkman, 'Beyond the 'development era'. Debates on colonialism, the christian missions and development'. In: Paul Hoebink, ed., *The Netherlands Yearbook on International Cooperation* (Assen, 2007), pp. 99-117.

<sup>3</sup> Majid Rahnema with Victoria Bawtree, ed., *The post-development reader* (London, 1997), pp. xvi-xviii.

cooperation ought to take these views into account. Attacks on organisations such as SNV do not usually consider these arguments and conclusions are being drawn regardless of the opinions of those involved. In such cases, people in developing countries are once again being rendered voiceless and denied any say in what is good or bad for them.

SNV has changed profoundly in the course of its existence. In the introductory chapter we identified some broad processes of change in areas such as its secularisation, professionalisation, SNV's status in relation to the Dutch state and its internationalisation. The first process was a crucial factor in the 1960s and 1970s, and SNV's history can only be understood in the light of the legacy of missionary traditions in development and the state's more secular approach. By the end of the 1970s, SNV had definitely moved towards a more secularised conception of development. The separation of JVC from SNV can be seen as the final step in this process. This period also marked the change from a perhaps naïve 'we'll fix it' notion of development to the realisation that development entailed immensely complex processes in the area of worldwide trade relations and structural economic dynamics. The tendency towards a more politically oriented notion of development coincided with a stronger emphasis on democratisation within SNV, leading to a larger say by field staff and volunteers in decision-making processes.

In the 1980s, the era of voluntary service came to a close and SNVers became salaried professionals. This professionalisation process notwithstanding, the legacy of the volunteer period remained important for a long time. Not only did outsiders sometimes still classify SNV as a voluntary service but the working culture in SNV also showed aspects that were clearly related to over 20 years of voluntary service. SNV volunteers were inclined to regard the organisation as a mere 'dispatching' agency and some of them more strongly identified with the local organisations they worked with than with SNV itself. SNV's sharply decentralised character reinforced this tendency. Especially over the last ten years, attempts have been made to create a clearer SNV identity and to arrive at a more integrated organisation. A larger degree of interaction between 'the field' and Head Office in The Hague formed part of these attempts, but many SNV staff still felt there was a distance between 'The Hague' and 'the field'. SNVers from a non-Dutch background, in particular, regarded The Hague as far removed from the daily realities of their work and were often unwilling to take factors from the Dutch context that influenced SNV policy-making into account. The stronger diversification of SNV's personnel in this sense cannot be said to have reinforced attempts to arrive at a more integrated organisation. SNV started out in the 1960s as a Dutch initiative and, from the start, attempts were made to cooperate with local counterparts and to have the

organisation function as far as possible within the local context of development activities. In the 1980s the first steps were taken to recruit SNV personnel locally, a move that took off in the last decade when the number of non-Dutch personnel grew to account for nearly 70% of its staff. Apart from this process of internationalisation, changes in relations with the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs have also crystallised over the last ten years. SNV had its roots in both private and state initiatives, and throughout its history has had an ambivalent relationship with the Dutch state. Several attempts were made to resolve the complex administrative and organisational ties between the Ministry and SNV and by the 1980s SNV had become a *quango* (a quasi NGO). However, this situation proved equally unsatisfactory and in 2002 SNV became an independent organisation, separate from the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs. As SNV at the same time was going through a process of repositioning and changing from implementing development projects to being an advisory, capacity-building service of meso-level organisations, SNV's recent history has been one of radical transformation and intense dynamics.

The recent changes in SNV policy have meant that many previous activities have been discontinued. From conversations with people who have felt the direct consequences of these shifts in policy, we recognise that they were often unhappy with the ending of SNV activities. Numerous examples were given of programmes that had closed in haste and projects that had been abandoned without preparing those involved to take them over. Such experiences have invariably created feelings of loss. Although the reasons for this dissatisfaction are perhaps not always connected with the overall development of a country, this does not reduce people's disappointment with the course of events. In many cases, cooperation between SNV and these people had lasted for years and expectations had been nourished about its continuation. Clear information about the reasons for, and the contents of the changes in SNV's policies were not provided in many cases and people pointed out the importance of historical connections. Even if, for the development organisation, the activities may appear to have been phased out properly and handed over with enough care and attention, local participants may still point to the importance of a shared past, of personal bonds that were forged in the course of history, and of unfulfilled expectations. People do not agree to a straightforward erasure of such historical connections. As the Hon. L.I. Umenjoh in Teze (Cameroon) put it: 'Let me ask you, madam, when you write the history of SNV's forty years in Cameroon, to put a recommendation in your book for the people of Teze. Just so that they can see and read (...)'<sup>4</sup> For SNV, project implementation may be a closed chapter and, in the eyes of many, these historical relations may have turned into

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<sup>4</sup> Interview 64.

unhealthy, unsustainable structures only leading to dependency and to an isolation of development practices from the wider local context. Yet it would be too simplistic to classify the notions these people have about development as ‘old-fashioned’, ‘spoon-feeding’ and ‘non-sustainable’. An easy dismissal of their views would be just as inappropriate as reaching simple conclusions about the development sector as a whole, without taking the views of the local people into account. SNV’s aim has remained the same: to reduce poverty. As long as poor people do not see the advisory practice and capacity-building activities at meso level as translating into a direct reduction in their poverty, their views remain of vital importance in understanding the relationship between the aims and results of development activities. Very few poor people would agree with the conclusion of the Dijkstal report that development organisations ought not be judged on the basis of results and effectiveness but on the basis of internal management.<sup>5</sup>

It is difficult to do justice to the diverse experiences, the varying evaluations and different opinions of those we interviewed. Each and everybody talked about SNV from his/her own perspective and we have framed their experiences with SNV in a wider context of past events and later developments. The documents in the archives likewise revealed a multiplicity of views, ideas and experiences written within a personal framework. Any writing presupposes structuring and integration of some sort and it is the researcher’s task to attempt an interpretation without reducing diversity to a seamless whole. This task frequently posed problems as the aim of this book was to focus on SNV as an organisation and to give a voice to individuals who looked at SNV from their own perspective.

One of our conclusions here is thus that studying the cultural history of a development organisation is to some extent a contradiction in terms. Focusing on the organisation will inevitably lead the researcher into the wider context of Dutch and international development policies, while the particulars of people’s experiences lead one away from such general trends and structural changes and into personal history, a local context and private backgrounds. The larger contours and the main historical lines of SNV as an organisation relate it to the Dutch political context and to the history of international development. Throughout most of its history, SNV has been a relatively decentralised organisation: many decisions were taken in its country offices rather than at Head Office in The Hague. Despite this, SNV’s past is closely connected to Dutch social and political history, and with the main lines of international development history. In this sense, although the book focuses on SNV, it can be viewed as a window on the history of development policies in The Netherlands and

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<sup>5</sup> Dijkstal *et al.*, ‘Vertrouwen in een kwetsbare sector’; Cf. Chapter 6, Note 608.

changes in the international development arena. Seen from within the international development sector, SNV can hardly be called a pioneer organisation. As Paul Hoebink pointed out, Dutch development policy was generally not very progressive and, entangled in a problematic relationship with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, it was hardly in a position to develop an independent, coherent approach.<sup>6</sup> As for most of its history SNV was an organisation caught between the divergent interests of Foreign Affairs, Development Affairs and the private development sector, it was next to impossible for it to steer a strong and independent course that could have turned it into a strong and innovative force in the development world.

At an institutional level, these broader connections can be easily discerned. However when delving deeper and following the finer, more local threads of SNV's past, a very different picture emerges. Closer to the practice of SNV's activities, SNV's past becomes a kaleidoscope of micro factors emerging from 'the field'. Numerous changes and decisions at the more practical level were informed by local politics, social relations between development workers and local partners, and interests formulated by target groups rather than by formal policy-making. In the practice of development, local history rather than Dutch history or international development history is crucial to an understanding of the past. In the case of SNV and with its history of relative decentralisation, each country in which SNV had activities reveals a particular history and profile, often deeply embedded in the local political and socio-cultural context. In many countries, there are vast differences even between regions in the country itself, differences that show in the way SNV has developed in these regions. Each well and each piece of advice has its own particular history, framed in local, national and international factors of change. In the interviews we held, it became clear that development work was acutely influenced by marriage and divorce, friendships and conflicts, and depended on many persons – partners, lovers, children, parents, friends, participants, colleagues, superiors, etc. Seen from below, it was impossible to distinguish between those parts of history that belonged to SNV's history and those parts that did not. A 'history from below' makes SNV as an organisation diffuse: its borders, which appear so neat when writing from above, dissolve into local and personal dynamics. The arguments that underpin managerial decision-making at Head Office in The Netherlands are often unknown to those in the field and these decisions, naturally, do not always fit the logic built up through local and personal circumstances. This tension between the centripetal and the centrifugal obviously not only had consequences for writing the history of SNV we envisaged but also formed one of the major frictions permeating SNV's past. In its extreme form, socio-cultural history

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<sup>6</sup> Hoebink, *Geven is nemen*, pp. 232-234.

would imply writing a biography of one of the persons interviewed, the history of one of the objects referred to or of a relationship in a particular context, or the advice given by one person to another. SNV as an organisation would, however, only form a small part of such a history. It would render any periodisation of SNV's history as an organisation impossible to assess. The chapter division in this book reflects, to a large extent, the general changes and developments in SNV's history, although for SNVers in the field and local participants these were consequential rather than their initiative. The chapter caesura – ranging from the JVC/JVP initiatives, to the start of the Pronk era and the Field Representatives' Meeting of 1973, to SNV's formal name change, and to the decision to write a Corporate Plan – are not even known by many of the local participants. Our aim was to describe the history of SNV through the perspectives of (former) SNVers and local participants: the ways in which they viewed the general changes and tried to fit them into the other facets of their life formed the core of our study. We tried to seek a balance between 'history from below' and institutional history, and attempted to frame SNV as an organisation both in its wider contexts and in its particular personal and local histories.

The general changes in SNV's history have been vast. The context in which the JVC and JVP initiatives were taken differed in many respects from the present world in which SNV operates. This not only holds for the economic and political constellation at the national and international levels but also for the ideologies and paradigms underpinning the policies of the time. In the 1960s, the general view was of a world that could be controlled and constructed. This idea was especially popular in The Netherlands: man as a motor of events and as a creator of wealth and land had always been a strong notion in the Dutch context. This shows, for example, in the Dutch concept of *de maakbare wereld* (the 'makeable' world) and the rapid recovery of the Dutch economy after World War II strengthened this notion of technological superiority over nature and of man controlling the course of history. In terms of development cooperation, this view now appears naïve but many people working for SNV left to go overseas with the idea of 'we'll just fix it'. The people in underdeveloped countries had to change unconditionally in the direction indicated by the developers.

This idea has radically changed; SNV now gives advice and support to local developments. And with its focus on advice, it has, to some extent, returned to the approach before its foundation: SNV was first set up because it was felt that advice alone did not suffice. The new approach has further exacerbated a dilemma that has tormented the minds of development workers since the early naivety disappeared. On the one hand and more than ever before, the focus is on organisations and groups in the countries involved: SNV now attempts to work only at the request of local clients. The clients with their ideas, initiatives and

demands take the lead: they are ‘in the driver’s seat’, as was explained in the interviews. On the other hand, development work by its very nature always constitutes an intervention. Even if the work as such is technical, ‘development is fundamentally about changing how people conduct their lives, and the very claim to technical knowledge is itself a political act’.<sup>7</sup> In this sense, the clients are not in the driver’s seat: they are being subjected to change. Whatever the methods used, the ultimate goal of development organisations is change for the better and an improvement in the existing situation. SNV claims to have expertise in a number of areas; otherwise there would be no need for its activities. The dilemma between participation on an equal basis and the claim to expertise knows no solution, yet needs to be addressed when policies are designed. The historical legacies of colonialism, of earlier development traditions, of different perspectives on what development entails, and of changing relations between development workers and local participants weigh on such dilemmas and cannot simply be erased from discussions. The weight of these histories explains the often emotional debates that surround the dilemmas in development work, although these legacies are hardly ever analysed or interpreted in discussions. Coming to terms with history may be a fruitful exercise and could help to further the debate on development practice.

Many people who had worked with SNV indicated in the interviews that their SNV time was an influential experience in their lives. Some stayed on in the country where they had been posted as volunteers, others met the love of their life, yet others continued working in the development sector. They all spoke with commitment about SNV: ‘This work is *more*. But what this *more* is is difficult to put into words.’<sup>8</sup> The interviews with former SNVers showed that many people had had a lot of fun during their time with SNV. They explained about the unpredictable situations in which they had found themselves and that required so much creativity and flexibility, and they told stories of absurd experiences and cracked insiders’ jokes about SNV. As noted in the introduction, many old SNVers also expressed harsh critique of the organisation but at the same time (or afterwards) stressed their engagement and concern about SNV. The gentle irony, sometimes combined with frustration, with which many looked back on their time with SNV is difficult to interpret historically. Historical studies have, until now, left little room for any analysis of emotions or even opinions. Yet, as some interviewees stated, the notions of idealism, sacrifice and self-denial that are thought to accompany development work may be important

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<sup>7</sup> Frederick Cooper & Randall Packard, eds, *International Development and the Social Sciences*, p. 19.

<sup>8</sup> Interview 20.



*Photo 7.1* Learning to dance, Colombia, 1966.

*Source:* SNV archives, Box 23.

*Photographer:* Unknown.

to outsiders but what makes the people involved tick is the enjoyment and pleasure they have in their work.

In development organisations, the past is often negated or condemned so as to defend the current approach. But in many cases in our discussions, former local participants took the opposite track: they praised SNV's past and were critical of its current approach. New clients were in some cases hesitant about the implications of SNV's policy regarding the financial aspects of development but on the whole felt that the advice they had received through SNV was useful. The stress on financial aspects may be misread as aid dependency and be interpreted as a one-sided focus on the material benefits of aid but from most of our interviews it became clear that people cherish complex notions of development and do not just reduce development to economics or consumption. The idea that pumping money into society and that welfare and well-being will automatically



follow from economic development has never informed SNV's mission. Since its start in the 1960s one of its main aims has been the 'transfer of knowledge' and SNV has now chosen to abandon the financing and implementation role of development, focusing instead on advice, capacity-building, information, networking and knowledge. A broad perspective on development in the sense of change for the better is shared by many of the local participants in SNV's activities. When discussing the meaning of development, people referred to a wide range of concepts and practices.

For me, development means that one is looking to satisfy one's basic needs. For that I need to know who I am. I need to know where I am. And I need to know what is around me. Starting from this position I can proceed, I can start by seeing what is lacking. In health, housing, clothing, food and education (...)<sup>9</sup>

This quote from Baba Diarra from Mali combines aspects of identity, personhood, economics, knowledge, livelihood and the social context. He mentions basic needs and improved material wellbeing but relates these to knowledge, both about oneself and about one's environment. Understanding the history of development may be part of this complex notion of development itself, like material wellbeing, self-fulfilment and increasing knowledge.

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<sup>9</sup> Interview 184.

## Interviews

- Interview 1: **Yvonne van Vliet**, former SNV head office staff, The Hague, 22 February 2005, present: Inge Brinkman, Anne-Lot Hoek, language: Dutch, notes.
- Interview 2: **Gertie Janssen**, former SNVer, Leiden, 23 February 2005, present: Inge Brinkman, Jan-Bart Gewald, language: Dutch, notes.
- Interview 3: **Margriet Reinders**, former SNVer, Leiden, 24 February 2005, present: Inge Brinkman, Sabine Luning, language: Dutch, notes.
- Interview 4: **Simone van Vugt**, former SNVer, Wageningen, 1 March 2005, present: Inge Brinkman, Anne-Lot Hoek, language: Dutch, tape-recorded.
- Interview 5: **Willem Zevenbergen**, former SNV-staff, Zevenaar, 1 March 2005, present: Inge Brinkman, Anne-Lot Hoek, language: Dutch, tape-recorded.
- Interview 6: **Kees Zevenbergen**, SNVer and SNV head office staff, The Hague, 3 March 2005, present: Inge Brinkman, language: Dutch, notes.
- Interview 7: **Harry Sesink-Clee**, former SNV-staff, Bilthoven, 7 March 2005, present: Inge Brinkman, Anske Sesink-Clee, language: Dutch, tape-recorded.
- Interview 8: **Bert Satijn & Hetty Satijn-Bloemen**, former SNVers, Delft, 15 March 2005, present: Inge Brinkman, language: Dutch, tape-recorded.
- Interview 9: **Han van Dijk**, researcher, Leiden, 16 March 2005, present: Inge Brinkman, language: Dutch, notes.
- Interview 10: **Theo and Coby Huber**, former SNVers, Stellendam, 16 March 2005, present: Anne-Lot Hoek, language: Dutch, tape-recorded.
- Interview 11: **Louk Kortenhorst**, former SNV-staff, Heelsum, 17 March 2005, present: Liesbeth Kortenhorst, Anne-Lot Hoek, language: Dutch, tape-recorded.
- Interview 12: **Rob de Coole**, former SNVer, Bunnink, 23 March 2005, present: Anne-Lot Hoek, language: Dutch, tape-recorded.
- Interview 13: **Meindert Witvliet**, former SNVer, Amsterdam, 1 April 2005, present: Anne-Lot Hoek, language: Dutch, tape-recorded.
- Interview 14: **Marc Steen** (informal conversation) SNV-staff, Bissau, Guinea-Bissau, 29 March 2005, present: Inge Brinkman, language: Dutch, notes.
- Interview 15: **Alfredo Handem**, SNVer, Bissau, Guinea-Bissau, 29 March 2005, present: Inge Brinkman, language: Portuguese, notes.
- Interview 16: **Augusto da Silva & Fernando Morne Djú**, Bissau, SNV drivers, Bissau, Guinea-Bissau, 29 March 2005, present: Inge Brinkman, language: Portuguese, notes.
- Interview 17: **Geert Kroon**, SNVer, Bissau, Guinea-Bissau, 29 March 2005, present: Inge Brinkman, language: Dutch notes.
- Interview 18: **Marc Steen, Jan van Maanen & Reinder Bouwmeester**, SNV staff and former SNVer, Bissau, Guinea-Bissau, 29 March 2005, present: Inge Brinkman, language: Dutch, notes.
- Interview 19: **Isabel Miranda**, SNVer, Bissau, Guinea-Bissau, 30 March 2005, present: Inge Brinkman, language: Portuguese, notes.
- Interview 20: **Luit Hummel**, SNVer, car Bissau to Buba, Guinea-Bissau, 30 March 2005, present: Inge Brinkman, language: Dutch, notes.

- Interview 21: **42 former workers of Buba project**, Buba, Guinea-Bissau, 30 March 2005, present: Inge Brinkman, Luit Hummel, language: Portuguese and Krioulo, tape-recorded.
- Interview 22: **Various people of villages near Buba**, former project participants, Buba region, Guinea-Bissau, 31 March 2005, present: Luit Hummel, Catarina, Francelino, Alfucene, Inge Brinkman, language: Portuguese and Krioulo, notes.
- Interview 23: **José Gomes Lopes & Francisco Pereira Junior**, former project co-ordinator and former worker of Buba project, Buba, Guinea-Bissau, 31 March 2005, present Inge Brinkman, language: Portuguese, notes.
- Interview 24: **Filomeno Barbosa & Aua Keita**, former workers of SNV project, now SNV client, Bafata, Guinea Bissau, 1 April 2005, present: Inge Brinkman, language: Portuguese, notes.
- Interview 25: **People of Demba Meta**: ca 10 men, ca 18 women, and many children, project participants, Demba Meta, Guinea-Bissau, 2 April 2005, present: Aua Fatima (project animator), Inge Brinkman, language: Peul (translation into Portuguese), notes.
- Interview 26: **People of Munhini**: ca 10 men, ca 18 women, and many children, project participants, Munhini, Guinea-Bissau, 2 April 2005, present: Aua Fatima (project animator), Inge Brinkman, language: Peul (translation into Portuguese), notes.
- Interview 27: **Geert Kroon**, SNVer, car Bissau to Mansoah, Guinea-Bissau, 3 April 2005, present: Inge Brinkman, language: Dutch, notes.
- Interview 28: **Mustafa Baldei, Jero Baldei & Fode Djaman**, client organisation, Nhacra, Guinea-Bissau, 3 April 2005, present: Geert Kroon, Inge Brinkman, language: Portuguese, notes.
- Interview 29: **Mussa Sani & Talbo Mané**, client organisation, Mansoah, Guinea-Bissau, 3 April 2005, present: Geert Kroon, Inge Brinkman, language: Portuguese, notes.
- Interview 30: **Renee Oste**, SNVer, Bamako, Mali, 4 April 2005, present: Professor Konaté, Anne-Lot Hoek, language: French, notes.
- Interview 31: **Ibrahim Traoré**, former SNV project engineer, Bamako, Mali, 5 April 2005, present: Professor Konaté, Anne-Lot Hoek, language: French, tape-recorded.
- Interview 32: **Dougoufana Bagayoko**, SNVer, Bamako, Mali, 6 April 2006, present: Inge Brinkman, Anne-Lot Hoek, language: French, tape-recorded.
- Interview 33: **Mamadou Keïta**, former project co-ordinator, now SNV client, Bamako, Mali, 6 April 2005, present: Anne-Lot Hoek, Inge Brinkman, language: French, tape-recorded.
- Interview 34: **Oumou Touré (Traoré)** former counterpart organisation, now SNV client, Bamako, Mali, 6 April 2005, present: Anne-Lot Hoek, Inge Brinkman, language: French, tape-recorded.
- Interview 35: **Cheick Oumar Sissoko**, SNVer, Bamako, Mali, 7 April 2005, present: Anne-Lot Hoek, Professor Konate, driver Guindo, Inge Brinkman, language: French, notes.
- Interview 36: **Aliou Badara Coulibaly**, journalist and SNV contact person, Dioïla, Mali, 7 April 2005, present: Inge Brinkman, Anne-Lot Hoek, Professor Konaté, Cheick Oumar Sissoko, language: French, tape-recorded.
- Interview 37: **Monzon Mariko**, village leader and religious authority, Dioïla, Mali, 7 April 2005, present: Inge Brinkman, Anne-Lot Hoek, Profesor Konaté, Cheick Oumar Sissoko, language: French, tape-recorded.

- Interview 38: **Seybou Diarra & Ibrahima Barry**, former counterparts, Dioïla, Mali, 7 April 2005, present: Cheick Omar, Professor Konaté, Anne-Lot Hoek, Inge Brinkman, language: French, tape-recorded.
- Interview 39: **Hamadoun Dicko**, former counterpart, Dioïla, Mali, 7 April 2005, present: Cheick Omar, Professor Konaté, Anne-Lot Hoek, Inge Brinkman, language: French, tape-recorded.
- Interview 40: **Mamadou Ouattara, Tjédian Bougoudogo, Hamadoun Ouologuem & Mamadou Coulibaly**, former counterparts, Bamako, Mali, 8 April 2005, present: Inge Brinkman, language: French, notes.
- Interview 41: **Alassane Boncana Maïga**, former counterpart, Bamako, Mali, 8 April 2005, present: Inge Brinkman, language: French, notes.
- Interview 42: **Jeanette de Regt**, SNV staff, Bamako, Mali, 8 April 2005, present: Inge Brinkman, Anne-Lot Hoek, language: Dutch, tape-recorded.
- Interview 43: **Johan Wachters**, former SNV introduction course teacher, Kati, Mali, 9 April 2005, present: Anne-Lot Hoek, Inge Brinkman, language: Dutch, notes.
- Interview 44: **Damiaan Vreman & Thea Bongertman**, SNVers, Bamako, Mali, 10 April 2005, present: Inge Brinkman, Anne-Lot Hoek, language: Dutch, tape-recorded.
- Interview 45: **Cheick Mohamed Samaké**, SNV client, Bamako, Mali, 11 April 2005, present: Professor Konaté and Inge Brinkman, language: French, notes.
- Interview 46: **Adama Sissouma & Boubacar Dicko**, SNV client and SNVer, Bamako, Mali, 11 April 2005, present: Professor Konaté and Inge Brinkman, language: French, notes.
- Interview 47: **Ganda Keïta**, SNV support staff, Bamako, Mali, 11 April 2005, present: professor Konaté and Inge Brinkman, language: French, notes.
- Interview 48: **Bakary Doumbia & Michel Diawara**, SNV clients, Bamako, Mali, 11 April 2005, present: Professor Konaté and Inge Brinkman, language: French, notes.
- Interview 49: **Amagoïn Keïta**, SNVer, Bamako, Mali, 11 April 2005, present: Inge Brinkman, language: French, notes.
- Interview 50: **Joost Nelen**, SNVer, Bamako, Mali, 11 April 2005, present: Anne-Lot Hoek, language: Dutch, notes.
- Interview 51: **Félix Acho Tikum** (informal conversation) SNV driver, car Douala-Yaoundé, Cameroon, 12 April 2005, present: Inge Brinkman, language: English, notes.
- Interview 52: **Véronique Ngo Lissougué**, SNV support staff, Yaoundé, Cameroon, 13 April 2005, present: Inge Brinkman, language: French, notes.
- Interview 53: **Landlord of SNV building**, Yaoundé, Cameroon, 13 April 2005, present: Inge Brinkman, language: French, notes.
- Interview 54: **Françoise Nguiadem Etoga**, SNV support staff, Yaoundé, Cameroon, 13 April 2005, present: Inge Brinkman, language: French, notes.
- Interview 55: **Ginette G.B. Kombélé-Spinhoven**, former SNVer, Yaoundé, Cameroon, 13 April 2005, present: Inge Brinkman, language: Dutch, notes.
- Interview 56: **Joseph Kamga**, former SNV support staff, Bertoua, Cameroon, 15 April 2005, present: Inge Brinkman, language: French, notes.
- Interview 57: **Jaap Kok** (informal conversation) SNVer, Bertoua, Cameroon, 15/16 April 2005, present: Inge Brinkman, language: Dutch, notes.

- Interview 58: **Fidèl Oket**, former SNV project co-ordinator, Bertoua, Cameroon, 16 April 2005, present: Mrs. Catherine Oket, Inge Brinkman, language: French, notes.
- Interview 59: **Matheus Kala**, former counterpart, Bertoua, Cameroon, 16 April 2004, present: Inge Brinkman, language: French, notes.
- Interview 60: **Charles Pedene**, former counterpart, Bertoua, Cameroon, 16 April 2004, present: Driver Stephen, Inge Brinkman, language: French, notes.
- Interview 61: **Paul Gbalème**, SNVer, Bertoua, Cameroon, 17 April 2005, present: Inge Brinkman, language: French, notes.
- Interview 62: **Marcus Ndifor**, SNV driver, Yaoundé, Cameroon, 18 April 2005, present: Inge Brinkman, language: English, notes.
- Interview 63: **Thur de Kuijer**, former SNVer, written interview, language: Dutch.
- Interview 64: **Citizens of the Ngie district**, former project participants and counterparts, Andek, Cameroon, 14 April 2005, present: Igondoh John Atosoh, Anduicho Lucas Anjokwe, Jerome Akwafi, Hon. L. I. Umenjoh, Stephen Ungitoh, Deborah Ungiloh, Awanakam Godlore Andengakan, Anne-Lot Hoek, language: English, tape-recorded.
- Interview 65: **Fred ter Horn**, former SNVer, Teze, Cameroon, 14 April 2005, present: Anne-Lot Hoek, language: Dutch, notes.
- Interview 66: **Agnes Bijngsi**, former counterpart, Bambui, Cameroon, 15 April 2005, present: Anthony Cameroon, Anne-Lot Hoek, language: Pidgin English (translated) notes.
- Interview 67: **Alex Fonkula**, former SNV servant, Bambui, Cameroon, 15 April 2005, present: Anthony Cameroon, Anne-Lot Hoek, language: Pidgin English (translated) notes.
- Interview 68: **Simon Bijngsi**, former counterpart, Bamenda, Cameroon, 16 April 2005, present: Anne-Lot Hoek, language: English, tape-recorded.
- Interview 69: **Niba Tafor Fidelis & Eric Awa**, director and employee of former counterpart organisation, Bamenda, Cameroon, 18 April 2005, present: Anne-Lot Hoek, language: English, notes.
- Interview 70: **Enow Davos Egbe & Orock Dimas Nkongko**, former project participants, Etoko, Cameroon 19 April 2005, present: Anthony Cameroon, Tambe Dickson Ashu, Anne-Lot Hoek, language: Pidgin English (translated) notes.
- Interview 71: **Ashu Tambong Thomas & Tanyi Tambong Agbor**, former counterparts, Etemetek, Cameroon, 19 April 2005, present: Anthony Cameroon, Tambe Dickson Ashu, Anne-Lot Hoek, language: Pidgin English (translated) notes.
- Interview 72: **Citizens of Manyu**, former project participants and counterparts, Bakwelle, Cameroon, 19 April 2005, present: Tambe Dickson Ashu, Anthony Cameroon, Arrey, Tambong, Valentine, Nkongho, Evelyn, Arreyndip, Lawrence, Arrey, Assam, Tambong, Matthias, Awuh, Lawrence, Anne-Lot Hoek, language: Pidgin English (translated) notes.
- Interview 73: **Paulina Ntui**, former project participant, Ewelle, Cameroon, 19 April 2005, present: Tambe Dickson Ashu, Anthony Cameroon, Anne-Lot Hoek, language: Pidgin English (translated) notes.
- Interview 74: **George Nkemka**, former SNV counterpart, Mamfe, Cameroon, 20 April 2005, present: Tambe Dickson Ashu, Anthony Cameroon, Anne-Lot Hoek, language: English, notes.

- Interview 75: **Miss Evelyn**, former counterpart, Mamfe, Cameroon, 20 April 2005, present: Tambe Dickson Ashu, Anthony Cameroon, Anne-Lot Hoek, language: English, notes.
- Interview 76: **Alice Orok**, former project participant, Etoko, Cameroon, 20 April 2005, present: Tambe Dickson Ashu, Anthony Cameroon, Anne-Lot Hoek, language: Pidgin English (translated) notes.
- Interview 77: **Jean-Marc Sika**, SNV-staff, Bamenda, Cameroon, 22 April 2005, present: Jean-Marc Sika, Anne-Lot Hoek, language: English, tape-recorded.
- Interview 78: **Piet Schermerhorn**, SNVer, Bamenda, Cameroon, 22 April 2005, present: Anne-Lot Hoek, language: Dutch, notes.
- Interview 79: **Bakia Besong**, SNV-staff, Bamenda, Cameroon, 22 April 2005, present: Anne-Lot Hoek, language: English, tape-recorded.
- Interview 80: **George Kwalor Njabfu**, SNV support staff, Bamenda, Cameroon, 22 April 2005, present: Anne-Lot Hoek, language: English, notes.
- Interview 81: **Verina Ingram**, SNVer, Bamenda, Cameroon, 25 April 2005, present: Anne-Lot Hoek, language: English, tape-recorded.
- Interview 82: **Fon Nsoh**, SNV client, Bamenda, Cameroon, 26 April 2005, present: Anne-Lot Hoek, language: English, notes.
- Interview 83: **Lambertus van Heygen**, former Bishop and SNV project co-ordinator, Rijswijk, 12 May 2005, present: Inge Brinkman, language: Dutch, notes.
- Interview 84: **Ashura Katoro**, SNV support staff, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, 18 May 2005, present: Inge Brinkman, Gertrude Mapunda, language: English and Swahili (partly translated) notes.
- Interview 85: **Job de Graaf**, former SNVer, telephone conversation, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, 18 May 2005, Inge Brinkman, language: Dutch, notes.
- Interview 86: **Kik van den Heuvel**, former SNVer, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, 19 May 2005, present: Inge Brinkman, language: Dutch, notes.
- Interview 87: **Paul van Hoof**, SNV staff, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, 20 May 2005, present: Inge Brinkman, language: Dutch, notes.
- Interview 88: **Peniel Uliwa**, former SNVer, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, 20 May 2005, present: Inge Brinkman, language: English, notes.
- Interview 89: **Zuhura Yegella**, SNV support staff, Dar es Salaam, 20 May 2005, present: Inge Brinkman, language: English, notes.
- Interview 90: **Jan Schuthof**, former SNVer, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, 20 May 2005, present: Inge Brinkman, language: Dutch, notes.
- Interview 91: **Mohamed Shekibula**, SNV driver, informal conversation, driving from Dar es Salaam to Iringa, Tanzania, 22 May 2005, present: Inge Brinkman, language: English and Swahili, notes.
- Interview 92: **Deodatus D. Mhindi**, former project worker, Iringa, Tanzania, 23 May 2005, present: Inge Brinkman, language: English, notes.
- Interview 93: **Suzanna Mkude, Robert Mdota & Atika Mlowe**, former project workers, Iringa, Tanzania, 23 May 2005 present: Inge Brinkman, language: Swahili, notes.
- Interview 94: **Felix Nyenza, Amandus Kifyoga & Serio Kitime**, former project participants, Mgama, Tanzania, 23 May 2005, present: Inge Brinkman, Mohamed Shekibula, 8 men, 1 woman, language: Swahili (translated), notes.

- Interview 95: **Benedict Mbandila, Bilas Kimaty & Innocent Mwhava**, former SNV counterparts, Ifunda, Tanzania, 24 May 2005, present: Inge Brinkman, language: English (some Swahili) notes.
- Interview 96: **Marcus Kiwuyo**, former SNV counterpart, Isupilo, Tanzania, 24 May 2005, present: Inge Brinkman, Mohamed Shekibula, language: English (some Swahili) notes.
- Interview 97: **Benedito Nyaulingo**, former project participant, Igumbilo (Iringa) Tanzania, 25 May 2005, present: Inge Brinkman, Mohamed Shekibula, language: Swahili, notes.
- Interview 98: **James Amo**, former project co-ordinator, Ruaha, Tanzania, 25 May 2005, present: Inge Brinkman, language: English, notes.
- Interview 99: **Ramadani S. Matola**, former SNV driver, Morogoro, Tanzania, 26 May 2005, present: Inge Brinkman, language: Kiswahili, notes.
- Interview 100: **Gideon Shangali, Telezia Joseph & Didie Pius**, former workers in centre where SNVer had introductory course, Morogoro, Tanzania, 26 May 2005, present: Inge Brinkman, language: Kiswahili, notes.
- Interview 101: **Frans H.J van de Laak**, former DHVer (Dutch advisory engineers agency), Morogoro, Tanzania, 26 May 2005, present: Inge Brinkman, language: Dutch, notes.
- Interview 102: **Tunga Ra Tunga, Mohamed Jambwali & Artha Sadiki**, former SNV counterparts, Mazimbu, Morogoro, Tanzania, 27 May 2005, present: Inge Brinkman, language: Swahili, notes.
- Interview 103: **Joseph Kundi**, former SNV driver, Morogoro, Tanzania, 27 May 2005, present: Inge Brinkman, Mohamed Shekibula, language: Swahili, notes.
- Interview 104: **Stanley Ndahani**, former SNV counterpart, Dodoma, Tanzania, 30 May 2005, present: Inge Brinkman, language: English, notes.
- Interview 105: **S.L. Kamayugi**, former SNV counterpart, Dodoma, Tanzania, 30 May 2005, present: Inge Brinkman, language: Swahili, notes.
- Interview 106: **Alvin Uronu**, former counterpart organisation, Dodoma, Tanzania, 30 May 2005, present: Inge Brinkman, language: English, notes.
- Interview 107: **Joel Kalagho**, SNVer, Dodoma, Tanzania, 31 May 2005, present: Inge Brinkman, language: English, notes.
- Interview 108: **Mohamed Munyu Shekibula**, SNV driver, Dodoma, Tanzania, 31 May 2005, present: Inge Brinkman, language: English, notes.
- Interview 109: **Abinely Chiwanga & Ngamalieli Kanugha**, project participants, 31 May, 2005, Msalato (Dodoma), Tanzania, present: Inge Brinkman, language: Swahili, notes.
- Interview 110: **Lieke Felten**, former SNVer, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, 1 June 2005, present: Inge Brinkman, language: Dutch, tape-recorded.
- Interview 111: **Carla & Jacob Schoemaker**, former SNVers, Lusaka, Zambia, 25 May 2005, present: Anne-Lot Hoek, language: Dutch, tape-recorded.
- Interview 112: **Renee Lourens**, former SNVer, Lusaka, Zambia, 26 May 2005, present: Anne-Lot Hoek, language: Dutch, tape-recorded.
- Interview 113: **Aldert van der Vinne**, former SNVer, Lusaka, Zambia, 26 May 2005, present: Anne-Lot Hoek, language: Dutch, tape-recorded.
- Interview 114: **Inos Mwale**, driver SNV, Lusaka, Zambia, 27 May 2005, present: Anne-Lot Hoek, language: English, notes.

- Interview 115: **Mutinta Zulu**, SNVer, Lusaka, Zambia, 27 May 2005, present: Anne-Lot Hoek, language: English, notes.
- Interview 116: **Dik IJf**, former SNVer, Lusaka, Zambia, 30 May 2005, present: Anne-Lot Hoek, language: Dutch, tape-recorded.
- Interview 117: **Lucy Muyoyeta**, former SNVer, Lusaka, Zambia, 31 May 2005, present: Anne-Lot Hoek, language: English, tape-recorded.
- Interview 118: **Arie de Kwaaiesteniet**, former SNVer, Lusaka, Zambia, 31 May 2005, present: Anne-Lot Hoek, language: Dutch, tape-recorded.
- Interview 119: **Maurice Ndobela**, SNV client, Lusaka, Zambia, 1 June 2005, present: Anne-Lot Hoek, language: English, notes.
- Interview 120: **Willem Lublinkhof**, former SNVer, Mazabuka, Zambia, 2 June 2005, present: Anne-Lot Hoek, language: Dutch, tape-recorded.
- Interview 121: **Gerrit Struif**, SNVer, Lusaka, Zambia, 3 June 2005, present: Anne-Lot Hoek, language: Dutch, tape-recorded and notes.
- Interview 122: **Brenda Liswaniso**, former SNVer, Lusaka, Zambia, 3 June 2005, present: Anne-Lot Hoek, language: English, notes.
- Interview 123: **Tebuho Yubai**, former SNVer, Lusaka, Zambia, 6 June 2005, present: Anne-Lot Hoek, language: English, notes.
- Interview 124: **Roy van der Drift** (informal conversation) SNVer, Lusaka, Zambia, 7 June 2005, present: Anne-Lot Hoek, language: Dutch, notes.
- Interview 125: **Frans Olthof**, former SNVer, Weert, 18 May 2005, present: Anne-Lot Hoek, language: Dutch, tape-recorded.
- Interview 126: **Victor Ferrari**, former SNVer, The-Hague, 20 May 2005, present: Anne-Lot Hoek, language: Dutch, tape-recorded.
- Interview 127: **E.N. Mtui-Heriel**, SNVer, Arusha, Tanzania, 26 July 2005, present: Inge Brinkman, language: English, notes.
- Interview 128: **Annie Francis**, SNVer, Arusha, Tanzania, 26 July 2005, present: Inge Brinkman, language: English, notes.
- Interview 129: **Mister Loti**, former client, Ng'iresi (Arusha), Tanzania, 27 July 2005, present: Ayo Godlove, Elke Seghers, Inge Brinkman, language: English, notes.
- Interview 130: **Mama Gladness**, former client, Tengeru (Arusha), Tanzania, 28 July 2005, present: Lema, Ayo Godlove, Elke Seghers, Inge Brinkman, language: Swahili (translated) notes.
- Interview 131: **Alex Righolt**, former SNVer, Arusha, Tanzania, 29 July 2005, present: Elke Seghers, Inge Brinkman, language: Dutch, notes.
- Interview 132: **Tom Ole Sikar**, former SNVer, Arusha, Tanzania, 29 July 2005, present: Elke Seghers, Inge Brinkman, language: English, notes.
- Interview 133: **John Mlay**, SNVer, Arusha, Tanzania, 29 July 2005, present: Ayo Godlove, Inge Brinkman, language: English, notes.
- Interview 134: **Ana Palanjo**, former client, Mulala (Arusha) Tanzania, 30 July 2005, present: Ayo Godlove, Inge Brinkman, language: Swahili (translated) notes.
- Interview 135: **Josephine Lemoyan**, SNVer, Arusha, Tanzania, 1 August 2005, present: Inge Brinkman, language: English, notes.
- Interview 136: **Female former SNVer**, Arusha, Tanzania, 1 August 2005, present: Elke Seghers, Inge Brinkman, language: Dutch, notes.
- Interview 137: **Felix Nko**, former SNV counterpart, Usa river, Tanzania, 1 August 2005, present: Elke Seghers, Ayo Godlove, Inge Brinkman, language: English, notes.



- Interview 138: **Peter Kangwa**, former SNVer, now partner organisation, Moshi, Tanzania, 2 and 3 August 2005, present: Elke Seghers, Inge Brinkman, language: English, notes.
- Interview 139: **Job de Graaf**, former SNVer, Arusha, Tanzania, 2 August 2005, present: Elke Seghers, Inge Brinkman, language: Dutch, notes.
- Interview 140: **Japhet Mpande**, former SNV counterpart, Moshi, Tanzania, 2 August 2005, present: colleague teachers and Inge Brinkman, language: English, notes.
- Interview 141: **Nelson Kangero**, former client, Lomwe, (Northern Pare) Tanzania, 4 August 2005, present: Inge Brinkman, language: English, notes.
- Interview 142: **Ibrahim Kawa**, former SNV counterpart, Moshi, Tanzania, 5 August 2005, present: Anenmose L. Maro, Suitbert P. Mumburi, Inge Brinkman, language: English, notes.
- Interview 143: **Elly Kimbwereza, Esrom Mdeme & John Mdeme**, former SNV counterparts/clients, Mbaga (Southern Pare) Tanzania, 6 August 2005, present: Ayo Godlove, Inge Brinkman, language: English (part with teachers in English/Swahili), notes.
- Interview 144: **Yassin Madiwa & Jerome Mwamboneke**, former SNV clients, Lushoto, 9 August 2005, present: Ayo Godlove, Elke Seghers, Inge Brinkman, language: English, tape-recorded.
- Interview 145: **J. Mzoo**, former project worker, Lushoto, Tanzania, 9 August 2005, present: Inge Brinkman, language: English, notes.
- Interview 146: **Omari Salim Mdoe & other leaders of Shashui**, former project participants, Shashui (near Soni) Tanzania, 10 August 2005, present: Ayo Godlove, Yassin, Inge Brinkman, language: Swahili, notes.
- Interview 147: **Zuhura Yegella**, SNV support staff, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, 12 August 2005, present: Inge Brinkman, language: English, notes.
- Interview 148: **Kikilwa Mundiya**, SNV client, Mongu, Zambia, 22 July 2005, language: English, tape-recorded.
- Interview 149: **Kusiyo Mbikos Lewanika**, former SNV counterpart, Mongu, Zambia, 22 July 2005, present: Anne-Lot Hoek, language: English, tape-recorded.
- Interview 150: **Eugene van Kemenade**, SNVer, Mongu, Zambia, 23 July 2005, language: Dutch, tape-recorded.
- Interview 151: **Sister Engelbergus**, catholic nun, Mongu, Zambia, 25 August 2005, language: English, notes.
- Interview 152: **Charlton Nzie**, SNV driver, Mongu, Zambia, 25 July 2005, present: Anne-Lot Hoek, language: English, notes.
- Interview 153: **George Mbangula**, SNV driver, Mongu, Zambia, 27 July 2005, present: Anne-Lot Hoek, language: English, notes.
- Interview 154: **John Mulamfu**, former SNVer, Mongu, Zambia, 25 July 2005, present: Anne-Lot Hoek, language: English, notes.
- Interview 155: **Henry Kaira**, director of former counterpart organisation, Solwezi, Zambia, 28 July 2005, present: Mr. Felix, Anne-Lot Hoek, language: English, notes.
- Interview 156: **Malambo Blann**, former SNVer, Solwezi, Zambia, 28 July 2005, present: Anne-Lot Hoek, language: English, notes.
- Interview 157: **Godfrey Azuza**, former SNVer, Solwezi, Zambia, 28 July 2005, present: Anne-Lot Hoek, language: English, notes.

- Interview 158: **Ernest Phiri**, former SNVer, Solwezi, Zambia, 29 July 2005, present: Anne-Lot Hoek, language: English, notes.
- Interview 159: **Meshias Kabimba & other village people**, former project participants, Solwezi, Zambia, 29 July 2005, present: Inos Mwale, Meshias Kabimba, Anne-Lot Hoek, people from the village, translated from local language: Dutch, notes.
- Interview 160: **Tomas Killodamo**, former SNV project worker, Solwezi, Zambia, 29 July 2005, present: Inos Mwale, Ackim Kalembo, Anne-Lot Hoek, language: English, notes.
- Interview 161: **Ackim Kalembo**, former SNV project worker, Solwezi, Zambia, 29 July 2005, present: Inos Mwale, Tomas Killodamo, Anne-Lot Hoek, language: English, notes.
- Interview 162: **Sibongile Mauye**, SNV staff, Solwezi, Zambia, 29 July 2005, present: Anne-Lot Hoek, language: English, tape-recorded.
- Interview 163: **Willem Lublinkhof**, former SNVer, Lusaka, Zambia, 2 August 2005, present: Anne-Lot Hoek, language: Dutch, tape-recorded.
- Interview 164: **Godfrey Mutokoma**, SNV driver, Lusaka-Choma, Zambia, 3 August 2005, present: Anne-Lot Hoek, language: English, tape-recorded.
- Interview 165: **Bert Witkamp**, former SNVer, Choma, Zambia, 3 August 2005, present: Anne-Lot Hoek, language: Dutch, tape-recorded.
- Interview 166: **Mwimanj Ndota Chellah**, director of former SNV counterpart organisation, Choma, Zambia, 3 August 2005, present: Anne-Lot Hoek, language: English, tape-recorded.
- Interview 167: **Aat van der Wel**, former SNVer, Gouda, 13 November 2005, present: Inge Brinkman, language: Dutch, notes.
- Interview 168: **Eric de Milliano**, former SNVer and former SNV staff, Leiden, 27 October 2005, present: Inge Brinkman, Anne-Lot Hoek, language: Dutch, tape-recorded.
- Interview 169: **Raoul Snelder**, former SNVer, 28 October 2005, Maastricht, present: Anne-Lot Hoek, language: Dutch, tape-recorded.
- Interview 170: **Han Baartmans** (informal conversation) SNV (head office) staff, The Hague, 15 November 2005, present: Inge Brinkman, language: Dutch, notes.
- Interview 171: **Marcel Leijzer**, SNVer and SNV head office, The Hague, 15 November 2005, present: Inge Brinkman, language: Dutch, notes.
- Interview 172: **Marjanne de Jong**, former SNVer, Zeist, 15 November 2005, present: Anne-Lot Hoek, language: Dutch, tape-recorded.
- Interview 173: **Ben Zwinkels**, former SNVer, Den-Haag, 16 November 2005, present: Anne-Lot Hoek, language: Dutch, tape-recorded.
- Interview 174: **Erick Baetings**, SNVer, The Hague, 23 November 2005, present: Anne-Lot Hoek, language: Dutch, notes.
- Interview 175: **Arjan Schuthof**, former SNVer, The Hague, 30 November 2005, present: Anne-Lot Hoek, language: Dutch, tape-recorded.
- Interview 176: **Erik Nijland**, former SNVer, The Hague, 8 December, present: Anne-Lot Hoek, language: Dutch, tape-recorded.
- Interview 177: **Younoussa Touré** (informal conversation) researcher, Bamako, Mali, 30 November 2005, present: Inge Brinkman, language: French, notes.
- Interview 178: **Dr. Dougoufana Bagayoko**, former project co-ordinator, Bamako, Mali, 1 December 2005, present: Inge Brinkman, language: French, notes.

- Interview 179: **Baba Doumbia**, former SNVer, Bamako, Mali, 1 December 2005, present: Inge Brinkman, language: French, notes.
- Interview 180: **Mamadou Golfa & Diabate Chaka** (informal conversation) SNVers, Bamako-Dioïla, 2 December 2005, present: Inge Brinkman, language: French, notes.
- Interview 181: **Badara Coulibaly**, journalist and SNV contact person, Dioïla, Mali, 2 December 2005, present: Inge Brinkman, language: French, notes.
- Interview 182: **Dramane Dao**, SNVer, Dioïla, Mali, 2 December 2005, present: Inge Brinkman, language: French, notes.
- Interview 183: **Fily Camara Coulibaly**, former project participant, Dioïla, Mali, 3 December 2005, present: Badara, Inge Brinkman, language: Bambara and French (translated) notes.
- Interview 184: **Baba Diarra**, former project participant, Nangola, Mali, 4 December 2005, present: Badara, Inge Brinkman, Bambara and language: French (translated) notes.
- Interview 185: **Adama Fall**, former project participant, Nangola, Mali, 4 December 2005, present: Badara, Inge Brinkman, Bambara and language: French (translated) notes.
- Interview 186: **Employees of ASACO**, former project participants, Nangola, Mali, 4 December 2005, present: Badara, Inge Brinkman, language Bambara and French (translated) notes.
- Interview 187: **El Moctar Haidara**, former counterpart, Dioïla, Mali, 5 December 2005, present: Badara, Inge Brinkman, language: French, notes.
- Interview 188: **Bemba Coulibaly**, former counterpart, Dioïla, Mali, 5 December 2005, present: Badara, Inge Brinkman, language: French, notes.
- Interview 189: **Abdoulaye Guindo**, former counterpart, Dioïla, Mali, 5 December 2005, present: Badara, Inge Brinkman, language: French, notes.
- Interview 190: **Fatoumata Dicko, Sitan Coulibaly & 6 other women**, former project participants, Boyan, Mali, 6 December 2005, present: Badara, Inge Brinkman, language: Bambara and French (translated) notes.
- Interview 191: **Amadou Sangaré**, former project participant, Ngoulougoubou, Mali, 6 December 2005, present: 4 members of the community council, Badara, Inge Brinkman, Bambara and language: French (translated) notes.
- Interview 192: **M'péné Sidibé & 10 other women of the village**, former project participants, Ngoulougoubou, Mali, 6 December 2005, present: 2 people from community council, elderly male leader, Badara, Inge Brinkman, Bambara and language: French (translated) notes.
- Interview 193: **Kotou Fombou**, former project participant, Kola, Mali, 6 December 2005, present: Badara, Médecin Chefe de Poste, Inge Brinkman, language: Bambara and French (translated) notes.
- Interview 194: **Déni Balo, Fanta Togola, 8 other village women & 2 male village leaders**, former project participants, ?, Mali, 7 December 2005, present: 20 children, Badara, Inge Brinkman, language: Bambara and French (translated) notes.
- Interview 195: **Sidi Diarra**, former project worker, Dioïla, Mali, 7 December 2005, present: Some family members, Inge Brinkman, language: French, notes.
- Interview 196: **Salif Traoré**, former project participant, Zambalagoubou, Mali, 8 December 2005, present: 10 other men, Badara, Inge Brinkman, language: Bambara and French (translated) notes.

- Interview 197: **Mamadou Sangaré**, former project worker, Dioïla, Mali, 8 December 2005, present: Mr. Balo, rest of family, Badara, Inge Brinkman, language: French, notes.
- Interview 198: **Dramane Keïta**, former counterpart organization, Dioïla, Mali, 9 December 2005, present: Badara, Inge Brinkman, language: French, notes.
- Interview 199: **Boubacar Touré**, former client, Dioïla, Mali, 9 December 2005, present: Badara, Inge Brinkman, language: French, notes.
- Interview 200: **Sidi Al Moctar Touré**, former counterpart, Fana, Mali, 10 December 2005, present: Inge Brinkman, language: French, notes.
- Interview 201: **Cheick Oumar Sissoko**, former SNVer, Bamako, Mali, 11 December 2005, present: Inge Brinkman, language: French, notes.
- Interview 202: **Hadja Aissa Diallo**, former counterpart organization, Bamako, Mali, 12 December 2005, present: Inge Brinkman, language: French, notes.
- Interview 203: **Bas de Gaay Fortman**, former SNV board, Utrecht, 19 december 2005, present: Inge Brinkman, Anne-Lot Hoek, language: Dutch, tape-recorded.
- Interview 204: **Reint Rosenstok**, former SNVer and former KNVer, Almere, 21 December 2005, present: Inge Brinkman, Anne-Lot Hoek, language: Dutch, tape-recorded.
- Interview 205: **Isabel Miranda** (informal conversation) SNV staff, Bissau, Guinea-Bissau, 19 January 2006, present: Inge Brinkman, language: Portuguese, notes.
- Interview 206: **Vicente Tito**, former counterpart, Bissau, Guinea-Bissau, 19 January 2006, present: Inge Brinkman, language: Portuguese, notes.
- Interview 207: **Mamadu Sambo & Avelina Semedo Djaló**, former counterparts, now clients, Bissau, Guinea-Bissau, 19 January 2006, present: Inge Brinkman, language: Portuguese, notes.
- Interview 208: **Francelino Vieira & Venâncio Cò**, former project workers, Buba, Guinea-Bissau, 21 January 2006, present: Inge Brinkman, language: Portuguese, notes.
- Interview 209: **Alfucene Sambu**, former project worker, Buba, Guinea-Bissau, 21 January 2006, present: Inge Brinkman, language: Portuguese, notes.
- Interview 210: **Sabado Cassamá**, former project worker, Buba, Guinea-Bissau, 22 January 2006, present: Inge Brinkman, language: Portuguese, notes.
- Interview 211: **Lamarana Jalo** former project worker, Buba, Guinea-Bissau, 22 January 2006, present: Inge Brinkman, language: Portuguese, notes.
- Interview 212: **Ganhe Balde**, former project worker, Buba, Guinea-Bissau, 22 January 2006, present: Inge Brinkman, language: Portuguese, notes.
- Interview 213: **Baro Balde, Djenaba Balde & other village people**, former project participants, Sintchan Cherno, Guinea-Bissau, 23 January 2006, present: Abdu, Inge Brinkman, language: Peul (translated) notes.
- Interview 214: **Mamadu Cassamá & Secunan Biai**, former project participants, Ntungane, Guinea-Bissau, 23 January 2006, present: Abdu, Inge Brinkman, language: Biafada (translated), notes.
- Interview 215: **Dala Cassamá**, former project participant, Ntungane, Guinea-Bissau, 23 January 2006, present: Abdu, Inge Brinkman, language: Biafada (translated) notes.
- Interview 216: **Yakubu Mane, Lasana Mane & Sirifu Mane**, former project participants, Batambali, Guinea-Bissau, 24 January 2006, present: Abdu, Inge Brinkman, language: Krioulo and Portuguese (translated) notes.

- Interview 217: **Mamadi Sanha, Gumba Sanha & Chambu Sanha**, former project participants, Sakunda, Guinea-Bissau, 24 January 2006, present: Abdu and Inge Brinkman, language: Krioulo, Biafada and Portuguese (translated) notes.
- Interview 218: **Ansumane Sambú**, former project participant, Gambil Biafada, Guinea-Bissau, 24 January 2006, present: Abdu, Inge Brinkman, other village people, language: Krioulo and Portuguese (translated) notes.
- Interview 219: **Regulo Nasumane Baio**, political authority, Buba, Guinea-Bissau, 25 January 2006, present: Inge Brinkman, language: Krioulo and Portuguese (later translated), tape-recorded and notes.
- Interview 220: **Ansu Cassamá**, former project worker, Buba, Guinea-Bissau, 25 January 2006, present: Inge Brinkman, language: Portuguese, notes.
- Interview 221: **Mariama Diata, Quintino Nadegna, Delfina Sante & Nyoman Nadegna**, no relation with SNV, Adegna, Guinea-Bissau, 26 January 2006, present: Abdul, Ansu Cassamá, Inge Brinkman, Krioulo, Balanta and language: Portuguese (translated) notes.
- Interview 222: **Gletcha Nanhasse, Pedro Namone, Alberto Naonsa & Amadu Serra**, former project participants, Gambil Balanta, Guinea-Bissau, 26 January 2006, present: Abdul, Ansu Cassamá, young men, Inge Brinkman, language: Krioulo and Portuguese (translated) notes.
- Interview 223: **Bora Cassamá, Hadja Cadimane, Bambe Sambu, Abubacar Cassamá & Secu Camará**, former project participants, Buba Tumbo, Guinea-Bissau, 27 January 2006, present: Abdul, younger women and men, Inge Brinkman, language: Biafada, Krioulo and Portuguese (translated), notes.
- Interview 224: **Elhaje Mamadi Djassi, Canjura Cassamá and Mamadu Sanha**, former project participants, Injassane, Guinea-Bissau, 27 January 2006, present: Other old men, Inge Brinkman, language: Portuguese and Krioulo (translated) notes.
- Interview 225: **Mamadu Sambu & others**, former counterpart, now client, Bissau, Guinea-Bissau, 29 January 2006, present: Inge Brinkman, language: Krioulo and Portuguese (translated) notes.
- Interview 226: **Luís Gomes**, former counterpart, Bissau, Guinea-Bissau, 30 January 2006, present: Inge Brinkman, language: Portuguese, notes.
- Interview 227: **José António**, former counterpart organisation, Bissau, Guinea-Bissau, 30 January 2006: Present: Inge Brinkman, language: Portuguese, notes.
- Interview 228: **Nicoline Suh**, former SNVer, Bamenda, Cameroon, 22 January 2006, present: Anne-Lot Hoek, language: Dutch, tape-recorded and notes.
- Interview 229: **Markus Ischere**, Helvetas staff, Bamenda, Cameroon, 23 January 2006, present: Anne-Lot Hoek, language: English, notes.
- Interview 230: **Lumumba Mukong**, local consultant, Bamenda, Cameroon, 23 January 2006, present: Anne-Lot Hoek, language: English, notes.
- Interview 231: **Charly Mbontih**, SNV client, Buea, Cameroon, 25 January 2006, present: July Graham, Bakia Besong, Anne-Lot Hoek, language: English, notes.
- Interview 232: **Cletus Ako**, SNV client, Cameroon, 25 January 2006, present: Bakia Besong, July Graham, Charly Mbontih, Anne-Lot Hoek, language: English, notes.
- Interview 233: **Sustainbale tourism project Mount CEO**, SNV partner, Buea, Cameroon, 25 January 2006, present: 2 employees, Mirjam and Ronny de Koning, Bakia Besong, July Graham, Anne-Lot Hoek, language: English, notes.

- Interview 234: **Rafael Fombon**, former SNV counterpart, Kumba, Cameroon, 26 January 2006, present: July Graham, Anne-Lot Hoek, language: English, notes.
- Interview 235: **Ekima Ndongo Likenbi**, SNV client, Limbe, Cameroon, 27 January 2006, present: July Graham, Bakia Besong, Anne-Lot Hoek, language: English, notes.
- Interview 236: **Bakia Besong, July Graham & driver Isac** (travel report) SNVers, Limbe, Kumba and Buea, Cameroon, 23-28 January, present Anne-Lot Hoek, language: English, notes.
- Interview 237: **Maureen Fusi**, SNV support staff, Bamenda, Cameroon, 29 January 2006, present: Anne-Lot Hoek, language: English, notes.
- Interview 238: **Kekomo Jejong**, former SNV project engineer, Bamenda, Cameroon, 30 January 2006, present: Anne-Lot Hoek, language: English, notes.
- Interview 239: **Fon Julius**, former SNV project worker, Bamenda, Cameroon, 30 January 2006, present: Anne-Lot Hoek, language: English, notes.
- Interview 240: **Tineke Louh-Fokkens**, former SNV, Foumban, Cameroon, 1 February 2006, present: Louh Amadou, Anne-Lot Hoek, language: English, notes.
- Interview 241: **Thomas Besong**, former SNV project worker, Limbe, Cameroon, 2 February 2006, present: Anne-Lot Hoek, language: English, notes.
- Interview 242: **Jos van Gennip**, former SNV board, The Hague, 14 February 2006, present: Inge Brinkman, Anne-Lot Hoek, language: Dutch, tape-recorded.
- Interview 243: **Theo Ruyter**, former SNV, Leiden, 16 February 2006, present: Anne-Lot Hoek, language: Dutch, notes.
- Interview 244: **Jos van Gennip**, former SNV board, Brussels, Belgium, 21 February 2006, present: Inge Brinkman, language: Dutch, notes.
- Interview 245: **Eulogio Núñez**, former SNV counterpart organisation, Santa Cruz, Bolivia, 1 March 2006, present: Zoila Villa-Gomez, Anne-Lot Hoek, Inge Brinkman, language: Spanish (translated), notes.
- Interview 246: **Roberto Balza**, former SNV, Santa Cruz, Bolivia, 1 March 2006, present: Zoila Villa-Gomez, Anne-Lot Hoek, Inge Brinkman, language: Spanish (translated) notes.
- Interview 247: **Conny Toornstra**, SNV staff, Santa Cruz, Bolivia, 1 March 2006, present: Anne-Lot Hoek, Inge Brinkman, language: Dutch, tape-recorded.
- Interview 248: **Jürgen Riester**, former SNV counterpart organisation, Santa Cruz, Bolivia, 2 March 2006, present: Zoila Villa-Gomez, Anne-Lot Hoek, Inge Brinkman, language: Spanish (translated), notes.
- Interview 249: **Jorge Cortés**, SNV client, Santa Cruz, 2 March 2006, present: Zoila Villa-Gomez, Anne-Lot Hoek, Inge Brinkman, language: Spanish (translated) notes.
- Interview 250: **Javier Bejarano**, SNV, Santa Cruz, Bolivia, 2 March 2006, present: Zoila Villa-Gomez, Inge Brinkman, language: Spanish (translated) notes.
- Interview 251: **David Limachi**, SNV support staff, Santa Cruz, Bolivia, 2 March 2006, present: Zoila Villa-Gomez, Inge Brinkman, language: Spanish (translated) notes.
- Interview 252: **Karmijn Schipholt & Pablo van Linden**, SNV, Santa Cruz, Bolivia, 2 March 2006, present: Anne-Lot Hoek, language: Dutch, tape-recorded.
- Interview 253: **Frans Huls**, former SNV, Sucre, Bolivia, 3 March 2006, present: Inge Brinkman, Anne-Lot Hoek, language: Dutch, tape-recorded.

- Interview 254: **Martha Noya**, former SNV counterpart organisation, Sucre, Bolivia, 3 March 2006, present: Zoila Villa-Gomez, Anne-Lot Hoek, Inge Brinkman, language: Spanish (translated), notes.
- Interview 255: **Jorge Cardozo**, former SNVer, Sucre, Bolivia, 4 March 2006, present: Zoila Villa-Gomez, Anne-Lot Hoek, Inge Brinkman, language: Spanish (translated) notes.
- Interview 256: **Dick Commandeur**, SNVer and SNV staff, Sucre, Bolivia, 5 March 2006, present: Inge Brinkman, Anne-Lot Hoek, language: Dutch, tape-recorded.
- Interview 257: **Juan José Bonifaz**, former counterpart, Sucre, Bolivia, 5 March 2006, present: Zoila Villa-Gomez, Anne-Lot Hoek, Inge Brinkman, language: Spanish (translated) notes.
- Interview 258: **Barbara Kupfer & Roberto Vilar**, former SNVers, Sucre, Bolivia, 6 March 2006, present: Zoila Villa-Gomez, Anne-Lot Hoek, Inge Brinkman, language: Spanish (translated), notes.
- Interview 259: **Gerónimo Diaz**, former counterpart organisation, Sucre, Bolivia, 6 March 2006, present: Zoila Villa-Gomez, Anne-Lot Hoek, Inge Brinkman, language: Spanish (translated) notes.
- Interview 260: **Margot Dávila**, SNV support staff, Sucre, Bolivia, 6 March 2006, present: Zoila Villa-Gomez, Anne-Lot Hoek, Inge Brinkman, language: Spanish (translated) notes.
- Interview 261: **Hans Heydra & Albert Bokkesteijn**, SNV staff, La Paz, Bolivia, 7 March 2006, present: Anne-Lot Hoek, Inge Brinkman, language: Dutch, notes.
- Interview 262: **Clara Bertran** (informal conversation), researcher, La Paz, Bolivia, 7 March 2006, present: Inge Brinkman, language: English, notes.
- Interview 263: **Ria Hulsman**, former SNVer, La Paz, Bolivia, 8 March 2006, present: Anne-Lot Hoek, language: Dutch, tape-recorded.
- Interview 264: **Edmundo Garafulic**, former SNV counterpart organisation, La Paz, Bolivia, 8 March 2006, present: Anne-Lot Hoek, language: Spanish and Language: Dutch, notes.
- Interview 265: **Michiel Verweij**, SNVer, La Paz, Bolivia, 8 March 2006, present: Anne-Lot Hoek, language: Dutch, notes.
- Interview 266: **Remi Cuppers**, former SNVer, Cochabamba, Bolivia, 9 March 2006, present: Anne-Lot Hoek, language: Dutch, notes.
- Interview 267: **Fernando Rochas**, former counterpart organisation, Cochabamba, Bolivia, 9 March 2006, present: Remi Cuppers, Anne-Lot Hoek, language: Spanish and Dutch (translated) notes.
- Interview 268: **Helena Dassa**, former counterpart organisation, Cochabamba, Bolivia, 10 March 2006, present: Anne-Lot Hoek, language: English, notes.
- Interview 269: **Eliecer Armisto Mora** ('Pepe Amigo') former counterpart organisation, Cochabamba, Bolivia, 10 March 2003, present: Cynthia Monterrey, Anne-Lot Hoek, language: Spanish (translated) notes.
- Interview 270: **Rene Herbas**, former counterpart organisation, Cochabamba, Bolivia, 10 March 2006, present: Cynthia Monterrey, Anne-Lot Hoek, language: Spanish (translated) notes.
- Interview 271: **Juan Rico, Alfonso Guardia & Mario Peredo**, former project participants, Cochabamba, Bolivia, 10 March 2006, present: Remi Cuppers, Anne-Lot Hoek, language: Spanish (translated) notes.

- Interview 272: **Ramon Dassa**, former counterpart organisation, Cochabamba, Bolivia, 11 March 2006, present: Cynthia Monterrey, Anne-Lot Hoek, language: Spanish (translated) notes.
- Interview 273: **Fredesmina Torres**, former counterpart organisation, Cochabamba, Bolivia, 11 March 2006, present: Remi Cuppers, Anne-Lot Hoek, language: Spanish (translated) notes.
- Interview 274: **Delsi Macoñó**, former SNV counterpart, San Javier (Chiquitania) Bolivia, 13 March 2006, present: Zoila Villa-Gomez, Anne-Lot Hoek, language: Spanish (translated) notes.
- Interview 275: **Augustin Parapaino**, former SNV counterpart, San Javier (Chiquitania) Bolivia, 13 March 2006, present: Delsi Macono, Zoila Villa-Gomez, Anne-Lot Hoek, language: Spanish (translated) notes.
- Interview 276: **Marselina Surubi Rodriguez**, (SNV client), San Javier (Chiquitania) Bolivia, 13 March 2006, present: Zoila Villa-Gomez, Anne-Lot Hoek, language: Spanish (translated) notes.
- Interview 277: Informal conversation between **Maria Chacom, Jenny Montano, Marcos Supayabe, Mauro, Joselino & SNVer Cecilia Moreno**, former counterpart organisation, Concepcion (Chiquitania) Bolivia, 14 March 2006, present: Zoila Villa-Gomez, Anne-Lot Hoek, language: Spanish (translated) notes.
- Interview 278: **Polonia Oli**, project participant, Concepcion, (Chiquitania) Bolivia, 14 March 2006, present: Zoila Villa-Gomez, Anne-Lot Hoek, language: Spanish (translated) notes.
- Interview 279: **Miquelito Sorrioco**, SNV client, Concepcion (Chiquitania) Bolivia, 14 March 2006, present: Zoila Villa-Gomez, Anne-Lot Hoek, language: Spanish (translated) notes.
- Interview 280: **Marcelo Surubi**, former counterpart organisation, Concepcion (Chiquitania) Bolivia, 14 March 2006, present: Zoila Villa-Gomez, Anne-Lot Hoek, language: Spanish (translated) notes.
- Interview 281: **Dionisio Roda Flores**, SNV client, Concepcion, Bolivia, 14 March 2006, present: Zoila Villa-Gomez, Anne-Lot Hoek, language: Spanish (translated) notes.
- Interview 282: **Segfredo Bayado**, SNV client, Concepcion, Bolivia, 15 March 2006, present: Zoila Villa-Gomez, Anne-Lot Hoek, language: Spanish (translated) notes.
- Interview 283: **Anacleto Peña**, former counterpart organisation, Pucio (Lomerio), Bolivia, 16 March 2006, present: Zoila Villa-Gomez, Anne-Lot Hoek, language: Spanish (translated) notes.
- Interview 284: **Rosita Chuvilu**, project participant/client, Pucio (Lomerio) Bolivia, 16 March 2006, present: Zoila Villa-Gomez, Anne-Lot Hoek, language: Spanish (translated) notes.
- Interview 285: **Anna Chivu** (informal conversation), village inhabitant, Pucio (Lomerio) Bolivia, 16 March 2006, present: Zoila Villa-Gomez, Anne-Lot Hoek, language: Spanish (translated) notes.
- Interview 286: **Bert Witteveen** (informal conversation), SNVer, Santa Cruz, Bolivia, 17 March 2006, present: Anne-Lot Hoek, language: Dutch, notes.
- Interview 287: **Rienk Wiersma**, former SNV staff, Gouda, 30 March 2006, present: Anne-Lot Hoek, language: Dutch, notes.
- Interview 288: **Frans Alting von Geusau**, former SNV staff, Oisterwijk, 6 April 2006, present: Inge Brinkman, Anne-Lot Hoek, language: Dutch, notes and tape-recorded.



- Interview 289: **Ellen van de Craats**, former SNVer, The Hague, 10 April 2006, present: Maarten van der Hout, Anne-Lot Hoek, language: Dutch, tape-recorded.
- Interview 290: **Riems Middelhof**, former SNVer, written interview, language: Dutch.
- Interview 291: **Thea Fierens**, former SNV head office staff, The-Hague, 6 November 2006, present: Anne-Lot Hoek, language: Dutch, notes.
- Interview 292: **Jan Ubels**, SNV (head office) staff, Leiden, 30 November 2006, present: Inge Brinkman, Anne-Lot Hoek, language: Dutch, tape-recorded and notes.

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## Abbreviations and glossary

AABN	Anti-Apartheids Beweging Nederland (Anti-Apartheids' Movement The Netherlands) founded in 1971.
AJV	Afdeling Jongeren Vrijwilligers (Department of Youth Volunteers within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs) before 1966 called JVP staff, as of 1976 called ANV.
ANC	African Nationalist Congress, South-Africa's national liberation movement since 1912.
ANGOLA COMITÉ	Solidarity organisation for the liberation movements in Angola and Mozambique from 1961 to 1976.
ANV	Afdeling Nederlandse Vrijwilligers (Department of Dutch Volunteers within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs) before 1976 called AJV.
APCOB	Apoyo para el Campesino Indigena del Oriente Boliviano (Support for the Indigenous Farmer of Eastern Bolivia).
ARP	Anti-Revolutionaire Partij (Anti-Revolutionary Party, founded in 1879, Protestant party, as of 1980 became CDA, together with CHU and KVP).
AVN	Association des Volontaires Néerlandais: As SNV was called in some French speaking countries like Mali and Ivory Coast before 1985.
BITH	see ITH.
BOA	Boycot Outspan (Anti-Apartheid organisation against the import of oranges from South Africa) founded in 1970.
BRETTON WOODS ACCORDS	System of rules, institutions, and procedures to regulate the international monetary system, set up in 1944 between 44 allied nations.
CCC	Centre de Conseil Communal (Community Advisory Centre).
CDA	Christen-Democratisch Appèl (Christian Democratic Appeal, founded in 1980 as a fusion of ARP, CHU and KVP).
CEADES	Colectivo de Estudios Aplicados al Desarrollo Social.
CEBEMO	Katholieke organisatie voor medefinanciering van ontwikkelingsprogramma's (Catholic organisation for co-financing of development projects), formed Cordaid in 1999.
CHU	Christelijk-Historische Unie (Christian-Historical Union, protestant party, founded in 1908, as of 1980 became CDA, together with ARP and KVP).

CICOL	Central Indigena de Comunidades Originarios de Lomerio (Federation of the Communities of Lomerio).
CIDOB	Confederación de Pueblos Indigenas del Oriente Boliviano (Confederation of Indigenous People of Eastern Bolivia).
CMDT	Compagnie Malienne pour le Développement des Textiles (Malian Company for the Development of Textiles).
COMITÉ ZUID-AFRIKA	(Committee South Africa, anti-apartheids's organisation) founded in 1960.
COS	Centra voor Internationale Samenwerking (Centres for International Co-operation).
DGIS	Directoraat Generaal Internationale Samenwerking (Directorate-General for Development Co-operation).
DIO	Directie Internationale Organisaties (Directorate International Organisations).
DNCT	Direction Nationale des Collectivités Territoriales (Directorate National Collectivities).
DOG	Dienst Over Grenzen (Service over Borders, church organisation that in 2000 joined with ICCO and SOH).
EDUARDO MONDLANE STICHTING	Solidarity organisation supporting guerillas in Mozambique, Guinee-Bissau, Angola and the Cape Verdian Islands from 1969-1997.
EUROPEAN SOCIAL FORUM	Annual conference held by members of the alter-globalization movement, founded in 2002 (also known as the Global Justice Movement).
EWG	Europese Werkgroep (European Working Group founded in 1962, dissolved in 1968).
FAIDA	Swahili word for 'profit, advantage' (name of former SNV project in Tanzania, at present local NGO).
FERDES	Fonds d'Équipement et de Recherche pour le Développement Économique et Social (Fund for the Equipment and Research for Economic and Social Development).
FIDES	Fonds d'Investissement pour le Développement Économique et Social (Fund for Investment for Economic and Social Development).
FOSTER PARENTS PLAN	International child-centered development organisation since 1937.
GNP	Gross National Product.
HIVOS	Humanistisch Instituut voor Ontwikkelingssamenwerking (Humanistic Institute for Development Co-operation) founded in 1968.
IBO	Interdepartementaal Beleidsonderzoek (Interdepartmental Policy Study).

ICCO	Interkerkelijke Organisatie voor Ontwikkelingssamenwerking (Interchurch Organisation for Development Co-operation) founded in 1964; joint with DOG and SOH in 2000.
IISG	Internationaal Instituut voor Sociale Geschiedenis (International Institute of Social History).
IMF	International Monetary Fund, resulted from the Bretton Woods Accords in 1944.
IOB	Inspectie Ontwikkelingssamenwerking en Beleidsevaluatie (Policy and Operations Evaluation Department).
IOV	Inspectie Ontwikkelingssamenwerking te Velde (became IOB in 1977).
ITH	Bureau voor Internationale Technische Hulp (Bureau for International Technical Assistance).
IUCN	World Conservation Union (International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources).
JVC	Jongeren Vrijwilligers Corps (Youth Volunteers Corps) founded in 1962.
JVP	Jongeren Vrijwilligers Programma (Youth Volunteers Programme) founded in 1963.
KAIROS	Anti-Apartheids organisation founded in 1970.
KAJ	Katholieke Arbeiders Jeugd (Catholic Workers' Youth) founded in 1925.
KAPs	Kleine Ambassade Projecten (small embassies projects).
KDC	Katholiek Documentatie Centrum (Catholic Documentation Centre).
KIT	Koninklijk Instituut voor de Tropen (Royal Tropical Institute).
KLDP	Karnali Local Development Programme.
KNV	Kontaktgroep Nederlandse Vrijwilligers (Contactgroup Dutch Volunteers) contact group of ex-volunteers founded in 1970.
KVP	Katholieke Volkspartij (Catholic People's Party; founded in 1945 as successor of an earlier catholic party, as of 1980 CDA, together with CHU and ARP).
LG	Local Government (together with NRM and PSD working area of current SNV).
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals.
MEMISA	Medische Missie Actie (Medical Mission Action, former catholic missionary organisation, exists since 1925).
MFO	Medefinancierings Organisatie (Co-financing Organisation; organisation in the MFP programme).

MFP	Co-Financing Programme (state subsidy programme for private development organisations, started in 1965).
MUDEC	Municipal Development Counseling Group.
NAR	Nationale Raad van Advies inzake de Hulpverlening aan Minder Ontwikkelde Landen, National Advisory Board Concerning Assistance to Less Developed Countries.
NCDO	Nationale Commissie voor Internationale Samenwerking en Duurzame Ontwikkeling, founded in 1995.
NCO	Nationale Commissie Ontwikkelingsstrategie (National Commission for Development Strategy) founded in 1970. 1970: Voorzitter Prins Claus (later NCDO).
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation.
NJG	Nederlandse Jeugdgemeenschap (Dutch Youth Community), founded in 1945.
NOVIB	Nederlandse Organisatie voor Internationale Bijstand (Dutch Organisation for International Support). Founded in 1956.
NRM	Natural Resource Management (together with LG and PSD working area of current SNV).
ONV	Organisation of Netherlands Volunteers, as SNV was called in some English speaking countries before 1985.
OVN	Organisation des Volontaires Néerlandais, as SNV was called in some French speaking countries like Cameroon before 1985.
OPIT	Overleg Particulier Initiatief Tropenartsen (Association of Private Initiative Tropical doctors).
PEACE CORPS	American volunteers' organization, founded in 1960.
PROVO	Non-violent anarchy movement, founded in 1965.
PSD	Private Sector Development (together with NRM and LG working area of current SNV).
PSO	Personele Samenwerking met Ontwikkelingslanden (Personnel Co-operation with Developing Countries; later: PSO Capaciteitsopbouw in Ontwikkelingslanden, Capacity Building in Developing Countries), founded in 1985.
PVDA	Partij van de Arbeid (Labour Party in The Netherlands).
SAP	Structural Adjustment Programme.
SJALOOM	Third world movement organisation founded in 1963.
SNV	Stichting Nederlandse Vrijwilligers (Foundation Dutch Volunteers, 1965) since 1993: SNV Netherlands Development Organisation.
SOCUTERA	Stichting ter bevordering van Sociale en Culturele doeleinden door Televisie en Radio (Foundation for the

	promotion of Social and Cultural organisations through Television and Radio).
SOH	Stichting Oecumenische Hulp, founded in 1952: Church organisation aimed at emergency relief, in 2000: Joint with DOG and ICCO.
S.O.S.	Steun Onderontwikkelde Streken (Support Underdeveloped Districts, Catholic fair trade organisation of 1959).
TIP	Traditional Irrigation Improvement Programme.
UN	United Nations, international organisation founded in 1945, aimed at worldwide co-operation in the realms of trade, international law, global security etc.
UNV	United Nations Volunteers (since 1970).
VASTENACTIE	Catholic organisation for development co-operation founded in 1961.
VSO	Voluntary Service Overseas, founded in 1958.
WERELDWINKELS	Fair Trade Shops.
WITHALL	Werkcommissie Inzake Technische Hulp aan Laag-ontwikkelde Landen (Working Committee for Technical Assistance to Low Developed Countries) founded in 1949.
WORLD BANK	Resulted from the Bretton Woods Accords in 1944.
WORLD SOCIAL FORUM	Annual meeting held by members of the anti-globalisation movement, founded in 2001.
WTO	World Trade Organisation, founded in 1995.
X MIN Y MOVEMENT	Dutch solidarity movement, founded in 1973.



## Appendix 1: Ministers and State Secretaries for Development Cooperation

28/11/1963-14/4/1965	Dr I.N.Th. Diepenhorst (State Secretary for Foreign Affairs ‘charged with the aid for less-developed territories’)
14/4/1965-5/4/1967	Th. Bot (first Minister without portfolio, ‘in charge of aid to developing countries’)
5/4/1967-6/7/1971	B.J. Udink (Minister without portfolio, ‘in charge of aid to developing countries’)
6/7/1971-11/5/1973	Dr C. Boertien (Minister without portfolio, ‘in charge of development cooperation’)
11/5/1973-19/12/1977	J.P. Pronk (from 18/7/1973: Minister for Development Cooperation)
19/12/1977-11/9/1981	J. de Koning
11/9/1981-4/11/1982	C.P. van Dijk
4/11/1982-14/7/1986	Ms E.M. Schoo
14/7/1986-7/11/1989	P. Bukman
7/11/1989-3/8/1998	J.P. Pronk
3/8/1998-22/7/2002	Ms E.L. Herfkens
22/7/2002-27/5/2003	Ms A.M.A. van Ardenne (State Secretary for Foreign Affairs, in charge of Development Cooperation)
27/5/2003-2007	Ms A.M.A. van Ardenne (Minister for Development Cooperation)

## Appendix 2: SNV chairpersons/directors

### Chairpersons of the SNV Directorate

L.J.M. van de Laar (1965-1973)  
J.F. van Campen (interim, 1973-1974)  
H.R.H. Prince Claus (1974-1980)  
H.R.H. Prince Claus (Honorary Chairman, 1980 - 6 October 2002)  
B. Barten (1980-1988)  
P.J. de Lange (interim, 1989-1990)  
Ms M. Leegwater-van der Linden (interim, 1991)  
Ms A.L.E.C. van der Stoel (1991-1993)  
H.J. Simons (1994-1998)  
Ms T.O. Fierens (1999-2000)  
C.J.M Pronk (Chairman Supervisory Board, 2001-2006)

### Director/Board of Directors of the SNV Executive\*

F.A.M. Alting von Geusau (1963-1964)  
A. van der Goot (interim, 1964)  
W.J.H. Kouwenhoven (1964-1965)  
A.L. Schneiders (interim, 1965-1966)  
W.D.B.M. van Nierop (1966-1969)  
L.P.J. Mazairac (1969-1972)  
W.A. Erath (1972-1975)  
A.A.M. Hermans (interim, 1975)  
W. Zevenbergen (1975-1978)  
E.F. Jacobs (1978-1981)  
J. Dijkstra (interim, 1981-1982)  
M.A. Peters (1982-1989)  
D. den Haas (interim, 1989-1990)  
J. Berteling (1990-1995)  
J.A. Pelgröm (1996-1999)  
Ms T.O. Fierens (2000-2003)

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\* In 1963 the organisation had a *Chef* (director) JVP that changed in 1965 into *Chef* AJV (Afdeling Jongeren Vrijwilligers van het Ministerie van Buitenlandse Zaken/ Department Youth Volunteers of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs). As of 1976 the position was called *Chef* ANV (Afdeling Nederlandse Vrijwilligers van het Ministerie van Buitenlandse Zaken / Department Dutch Volunteers of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs). The *Chef* also functioned as the Secretary of the SNV Directorate. Since 1990 the position has been known as SNV *Directeur* (Director).

**Board of Directors**

T.J.H. Elsen (Chairman Board of Directors SNV 2003- )

Ms A. Jenniskens (2003- )

J.A. van de Gronden (2003-2005)

## Appendix 3: SNV countries\*

### Africa

Angola	1986 -
Benin	1970 -
Botswana	1978 - 2003
Burkina Faso	1968 -
Cameroon	1963 -
Cape Verde	1985 - 1989
Chad	1987 - 1995
DRC Congo	2004 -
Equatorial Guinea	1979 - 1984
Eritrea	1994 - 1997
Ethiopia	1974 - 1979 & 1983 -
Ghana	1977 -
Guinea-Bissau	1978 -
Ivory Coast	1964 - 1982
Kenya	1967 -
Lesotho	1980 - 1988
Mali	1978 -
Mauritania	1986 - 1988
Mozambique	1995 -
Niger	1977 - 2005
Nigeria	1965 - 1968 & 1970 - 1979
Rwanda	1976 -
Sierra Leone	1983 - 1984
Somalia	1979 - 1982
Sudan	1985 - 1997 & 2004
Tanzania	1971 -
Uganda	1979 -
Zambia	1965 -
Zimbabwe	1983 -

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\* Years indicate the first year SNV was active in a country. This did not necessarily coincide with the formal opening of an SNV office.

### Asia

Bangladesh	1972 - 1984
Bhutan	1988 -
India	1965 - 1967
Indonesia	1979
Laos	2000 -
Nepal	1980 -
Philippines	1968 - 2001
Sri Lanka	1969 - 1971 & 1976 - 1984
Thailand	1979 - 1980
Vietnam	1995 -

### Europe

Albania	1993 -
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### Middle East

Jordan	1964 - 1966
Lebanon	1964 - 1966
North Yemen	1977 - 1990
South Yemen	1988 - 1990
Yemen	1990 - 1994
Syria	1964 - 1966

### South America

Bolivia	1968 -
Brazil	1963 - 1979
Chile	1973
Colombia	1964 - 1970
Ecuador	1981 -
Honduras	1987 -
Nicaragua	1979 -
Peru	1967 -

## Appendix 4: SNV activities

<u>Projects</u>	<u>countries</u>
1965: 9	8
1970: 70	12
1975: 176	14
1980: 167	24
1985: 294	24
1990: 420	28
1995: 352	29

<u>Intervention level</u>	
2000: 20% micro 65% meso 15% macro	28

<u>Clients</u>	
2005: 2448	33

### SNV activity (%):

<i>Year</i>	<i>Africa</i>	<i>Asia</i>	<i>Europe</i>	<i>South America</i>
1980	75%	19%	6%	
1985	76%	13%	11%	
1990	66%	15%	19%	
1995	60%	15%	0.3%	24.7%
2000	57%	8%	3%	32%
2005	53%	19%	2%	26%

## Appendix 5: SNVers

<i>Year</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Men</i>	<i>Women</i>	<i>Local</i>	<i>Field staff</i>	<i>Head office</i>
1965	123	61	62			
1970	454	281	173			
1975	444	345	99			
1980	442	350	92		46	
1985	567	425	142		49	61
1990	612	391	221		79	69
1995	596	375	221	122	102	
2000	712	278	434	354		
2005	937	347	590	628		65

Appendix 6: SNV finances  
(expenditures in millions Dfl. or €)

<i>Year</i>	<i>SNV</i>	<i>total budget for Dutch development cooperation</i>
1965	Dfl. 5.5	Dfl. 200.1
1970	Dfl. 13.8	Dfl. 767
1975	Dfl. 25	Dfl. 1,855
1980	Dfl. 27.9	Dfl. 3,983
1985	Dfl. 42.1	Dfl. 4,619.2
1990	Dfl. 67.8	Dfl. 6,076.5
1995	Dfl. 85.9	Dfl. 6,683.1
2000	Dfl. 89	Dfl. 7,000.3
2005	€ 82.3	€ 4,230



## Appendix 7: Chronology

- 1924 KAJ founded
- 1940 Colonial Development and Welfare Act (UK)
- 1944 Bretton Woods Accords: World Bank and International Monetary Fund founded
- 1946 FIDES (Fonds d'Investissement pour le Développement Économique et Social) founded in France
- 1949 FERDES (Fonds d'Équipement et de Recherche pour le Développement Économique et Social) founded in France
- 1949 Point Four Programme: Development programme outlined by US President Harry Truman in his inaugural speech
- 1949 Indonesia gained independence
- 1949 WITHALL (Werkcommissie Inzake Technische Hulp aan Laag Ontwikkelde Landen) founded
- 1953 Flood disaster in the Netherlands
- 1956 NOVIB founded
- 1957 Comité Zuid-Afrika starts its activities
- 1959 VSO founded in the UK
- 1959 S.O.S. founded
- 1960 American Peace Corps founded in the US
- 1961 Angola Comité founded
- 1961 Vastenactie founded
- 1962 The Dutch leave New Guinea
- 1962 EWG founded
- 1963 JVC initiative starts
- 1963 JVP initiative starts, first teams of volunteers sent overseas
- 1963 New Guinea comes under Indonesian rule
- 1963 State Secretary for Foreign Affairs 'charged with the aid for less developed territories'; I.N.Th. Diepenhorst appointed
- 1963 Sjaloom founded
- 1964 ICCO founded
- 1965 SNV founded
- 1965 Th. Bot becomes Minister without Portfolio 'in Charge of Aid to Developing Countries'
- 1965 Dutch MFP started
- 1966 First SNV Veldvertegenwoordigersbijeenkomst (Field Representatives Gathering)
- 1967 B.J. Udink becomes Minister without Portfolio 'in Charge of Aid to Developing Countries'
- 1967 *Vice Versa* started
- 1968 HIVOS founded
- 1968 X min Y founded

- 1969 CEBEMO founded
- 1969 Wereldwinkels founded
- 1970 KNV founded
- 1970 Kairos founded
- 1971 C. Boertien becomes Minister without Portfolio ‘in Charge of Development Cooperation’
- 1971 Anti-Apartheids Beweging Nederland founded
- 1972 KNV is given two representatives on the SNV Board
- 1973 J.P. Pronk becomes Minister for Development Cooperation
- 1973 Important SNV Veldvertegenwoordigersbijeenkomst (Field Representatives Gathering) held
- 1974 Prince Claus becomes SNV’s Chairman
- 1974 SNV formally starts its B Objective
- 1974 ‘Telegraaf-rel’: Dutch newspaper attacks Minister Pronk with negative reports about SNV
- 1977 Jan de Koning becomes Minister for Development Cooperation
- 1978 JVC splits from SNV
- 1981 C.P. van Dijk becomes Minister for Development Cooperation
- 1982 E.M. Schoo becomes Minister for Development Cooperation
- 1985 SNV changes its name from Stichting Nederlandse Vrijwilligers to SNV Organisatie voor Ontwikkelingssamenwerking en Bewustwording (Organisation for Development Cooperation and Awareness)
- 1986 P. Bukman becomes Minister for Development Cooperation
- 1988 SNV formally starts recruiting personnel instead of volunteers
- 1989 J.P. Pronk becomes Minister for Development Cooperation for a second time
- 1993 SNV changes its name to SNV Netherlands Development Organisation
- 1998 Ms E.L. Herfkens becomes Minister for Development Cooperation
- 2000 SNV shifts from its project approach to an advisory role
- 2002 SNV becomes an independent NGO
- 2002 Ms A.M.A van Ardenne becomes State Secretary for Foreign Affairs in Charge of Development Cooperation
- 2003 Ms A.M.A van Ardenne becomes Minister for Development Cooperation



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