

# In between tourism and development co-operation?



A case study on the relation between volunteer tourism  
and sustainable development in Huanchaco, Peru

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*'We became to understand each other well, there wasn't much difference between us, the only difference is language, for the rest we resemble each other in many things. We have the same feelings and even through we are from different cultures, we see that those that come here want to get to know and value our culture. Nothing has come between us if anything it's the opposite, we felt extremely united with the foreign volunteers.'*

Padre Tumba – Founder of 'Corporación de Educación Popular'<sup>1</sup>

*'The volunteers are doing tourism in a participatory way with the community, differentiating them from tourists who only come to get to know the local way of life and its history. Volunteers get close to people, they exchange ideas, experiences and advice; their presence is useful to the community.'*

Marilyn – Manager of Otra Cosa restaurant<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Interview with Padre Tumba, founder of C.E.P, 21<sup>st</sup> of April, translated from Spanish

<sup>2</sup> Interview with Marylin Velasquez Arevalo, manager at Otra Cosa restaurant, 19<sup>th</sup> of April 2007, translated from Spanish



## **Abstract**

It is estimated that at least 10.000 Dutch private initiatives are active in developing countries. In many cases they work with volunteers to achieve the goals they have set. This research examines in which ways volunteer tourism organized by private initiatives in developing countries relates to sustainable development. A case study has been conducted amongst a private initiative in Huanchaco, Peru, which is acting as an intermediary between local projects and Western volunteers. The criteria are local participation, education and sustainability. The findings revealed suggest that an embedded volunteer policy, local participation of the partner organization, focusing on specific expertise and mutual willingness for co-operation are the key points for a successful and sustainable intervention. This research contributes to the discussion on the impact of volunteer tourism and private initiatives in development co-operation by focusing on the perception of the private initiative, local organizations as well as the Western volunteers.

Keywords: Volunteer tourism, development co-operation, sustainable development, education, local participation

## **Resumen**

Las estimaciones mencionan que por lo menos unas 10,000 iniciativas privadas Holandesas estan activas en paises en via de desarrollo. En muchos casos estas iniciativas privadas trabajan con voluntarios para alcanzar sus metas que se han fijado. Este thesis examina la manera que el turismo voluntario organizada por iniciativas privadas en paises en via de desarrollo esta relacionado con un desarrollo sostenible. Un estudio de caso ha sido llevado a cabo entre un iniciativa privada en Huanchaco, Perú, que es un intermediario entre proyectos locales y voluntarios occidentales. Los criterias son de participaciòn local, educaciòn y sostenibilidad. Los analisis finales revelan que un politica coordinado de voluntariado, participaciòn local, concentrandose en experiencias especificos y un deseo mutuo de co-operaciòn, estos son los puntos fundamentales de éxito y intervenciòn sostenible. Este thesis contribuye a la discusiòn en el impacto de turismo voluntario y iniciativas privadas al cooperaciòn de desarrollo enfocandose en la percepciòn de iniciativa privada, organizaciones locales y de voluntarios occidentales .

Palabras claves: Turismo voluntario, cooperaciòn al desarrollo, desarrollo sostenible, participaciòn local, educaciòn y sostenibilidad



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## Introduction

Development co-operation used to be a task of national professional organizations, supranational organizations and governments, who to state some examples deliver food in times of hunger and organize vaccination programs for millions of people. Nowadays a new way of development co-operation is rising, small scale private initiatives. Although these private initiatives are working mainly on a local level, the great number of initiatives is responsible for a new channel in development co-operation. Estimations show that in The Netherlands alone there are between ten and fifteen thousand individual and group initiatives in developing countries (NCDO 2005).

An increasing number of people feel the need to 'do good' and become active in development co-operation. It has become relatively easy for people descended from Western countries to travel around the world, where they come in contact with poverty and other social and environmental problems. They feel socially connected with the people in developing countries they meet and are willing to make an impact themselves to improve the living conditions of a local community or project, by starting an initiative in development co-operation (Bouzoubaa & Brok 2005; Bodelier & Vossen 2007; Schulpen 2007). The purpose of most private initiatives is to improve the living conditions of people in developing countries (Bouzoubaa and Brok 2005: 14) and contribute to poverty reduction. However, not much research has been conducted yet into which ways these private initiatives relate to sustainable development on a local level.

Private initiatives work in most cases with volunteers to fulfill the goals they have set. Volunteers fulfill a special role in tourism, because their tourist role is integrated with work-oriented activities. According to Wearing (2001: 1) a volunteer tourist is seeking a tourist experience that is mutually beneficial, by contributing to their own personal development but also to the social, natural and or economic environment in which they participate. The difference with mass tourism and other forms of alternative tourism is that volunteer tourists not only want to participate in the local community, but aim to contribute to a project or organization, where they are doing voluntary work.

Volunteer tourism is in many cases considered as a sustainable form of tourism. Though volunteer tourism is a reaction to conventional forms of tourism, it should not be seen automatically as more sustainable than mass tourism. Sustainability depends on whether volunteer tourism projects fulfill the needs of local inhabitants and if the latter are involved by the volunteer work (Wearing 2001). Besides involvement of the local community other requirements for the sustainability of volunteer tourism are that the local project members be trained by the volunteers. Through this educational aspect, volunteer tourism may ensure long term benefit to the community, but to truly be a form of sustainable development it must also be economically, culturally, socially and

environmentally sustainable. Volunteer tourism facilitated by private initiatives, is a new way of combining development co-operation and tourism.

This thesis explores the role and vision of the different stakeholders towards sustainability in volunteer tourism organized by private initiatives. The objective of this thesis is to analyze in which ways volunteer tourism organized by private initiatives in development co-operation relates to sustainable development. In this case sustainable development refers to the sustainable development of the organizations where the volunteers are working and the local community in which these organizations are active. An important choice was to focus on the three main parties of stakeholders in volunteer tourism; the private initiative, the local organizations and the Western volunteers, however the focus is mainly on the impact of volunteer tourism for the organizations and local community. Private initiatives are initiated in many Western countries, a choice was made to focus on Dutch private initiatives, to connect theory and case study.

A case study was conducted at Otra Cosa, a Dutch founded private initiative in Huanchaco, Otra Cosa functions as an example for Dutch private initiatives in development co-operation. The aim of Otra Cosa is to contribute to the local community by matching volunteers to local partner organizations. They co-operate with local organizations, whose goal(s) is to increase the development chances of individuals, in the disciplines of education, community development, employment generation, natural resource management and health care.

The data presented in this thesis were obtained through a three-month qualitative research in from March to June 2007. As for research methods, two main approaches were used, interviewing and participant observation. Conducting qualitative interviews with Otra Cosa, the partner organizations and international volunteers illustrates volunteer tourism from different perspectives. A project member in charge of volunteers was interviewed for each of the seven selected partner organizations of Otra Cosa. In parallel an international volunteer working for each of the organizations was also interviewed. In total sixteen formal qualitative interviews were conducted. Participatory observation was useful to obtain additional information about the functioning of Otra Cosa, the volunteers and the partner organizations. Living in the local community of Huanchaco, being part of the volunteer community, documents from the municipality and being a volunteer myself have been of high value in writing this thesis.

The outline is as follows: the first chapter explores the relation between volunteer tourism, development co-operation and sustainability. The term sustainability will be analyzed and connected to the theory on private initiatives and volunteer tourism. The criteria for sustainability in tourism, introduced by Mowforth and Munt (1998), are used as a framework throughout the thesis, the reason being that all aspects of their criteria contain are applicable to private initiatives, in terms of volunteer tourism. These criteria are 'locally participatory', 'educational' and 'sustainable', the latter can be further divided into 'ecological sustainability', 'social sustainability', 'cultural sustainability' and 'economic sustainability'.

Chapters two, three and four are the empirical chapters of this thesis. The second chapter illustrates the local context, wherein Otra Cosa is operating, the characteristics of Otra Cosa and the Western volunteers and their vision on sustainability. These are outlined and linked to the theoretical part on private initiatives and volunteer tourism. Subsequently chapter three focuses on the educational element of volunteer work and the participation of local organizations. In order to analyze the difference between the local partner organizations, they are divided into ‘organizations where expertise is necessary’, ‘organizations where expertise is preferable’ and ‘organizations where mainly enthusiasm is required’. In chapter four the economic-, social-, cultural- and ecological sustainability criteria are applied to volunteer tourism at Otra Cosa’s local partner organizations.

The thesis will be closed with a comprehensive conclusion, in which the outcomes of the criteria of Mowforth and Munt will be used to answer the question in which ways volunteer tourism relates to sustainable development.



## The relation between volunteer tourism, private initiatives and sustainability; an exploration



In order to analyze in which way volunteer tourism organized by private initiatives relates to sustainable development, this chapter will provide a theoretical framework by connecting the concepts of volunteer tourism, private initiatives in development co-operation and sustainability. The first section will outline the term sustainability and define the criteria for sustainable development, which are applicable to both private initiatives and volunteer tourism. Further on, it discusses volunteer tourism into the context of changes in tourism behavior and highlights the characteristics of volunteer tourists. Subsequently it examines the rise and characteristics of, in particular, Dutch private initiatives in order to relate private initiatives and volunteer tourism with the defined sustainability criteria.

### 1.1 How to define sustainability in tourism?

Awareness about sustainability issues, which referred originally to the natural environment, but nowadays also covers social, economic and cultural issues, has developed significantly over the last thirty years. Today, most governments, international development agencies, trade associations, academic institutions and non-governmental organizations acknowledge that, without sustainability, there cannot be development that generates benefits to all stakeholders, solves extreme poverty and preserves natural resources (UNEP and WTO 2005: iii).

International recognition of the fact that environmental protection must be integrated with socio-economic issues of poverty and underdevelopment culminated in the 1992 Earth Summit. The achievement of this conference was Agenda 21, a cross-national agreement on working towards sustainable development (WCED 2001). The most commonly used definition of sustainable development is still that given in the Bundled report of the World Commission on Environment and Development (1987), i.e. sustainable development is *'a process to meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.'* Sustainable development is therefore about creating a better life for all people in ways that will be as viable in the future as they are at present (UNEP and WTO 2005).

Tourism is not automatically associated with sustainable development. The fact is, however, that tourism is an activity that touches upon many different sectors and therefore affects many aims and work areas regarding to sustainable development directly or indirectly. The World Tourism Organization has defined that sustainable development in tourism relates to ecological, economic and socio-cultural aspects of development in mutual connection (WTO). Sustainable development in tourism implies a holistic perspective encompassing all the sectors relevant to development, with tourism being one tool for development that is utilized as and when appropriate. Sustainable development in tourism is geared to meeting the "greater good" or human needs through tourism (Wall in Higgins-Desbiolles 2006). Making tourism more sustainable is not just about controlling and managing the negative impacts of the industry. Tourism is in a very special position to benefit local

communities, economically and socially, and to raise awareness and support for conservation of the environment. Within the tourism sector, economic development and environmental protection should not be seen as opposing forces, they should be pursued hand in hand as aspirations that can and should be mutually reinforcing. Policies and actions must aim to strengthen the benefits and reduce the costs of tourism (UNEP and WTO 2005: 5).

Volunteer tourism, which is the subject of this research, is characterized by different supply and demand structures to conventional mass tourism, which incur a different economic, sociocultural and ecological impact on host communities (GTZ, 1999) and create different sustainability issues, which must be examined in greater detail than usual.

Measuring sustainability is usually done in research with indicators. Due to the fact that there are no standard indicators to measure the sustainability of volunteer tourism, different indicators to measure sustainability in tourism can be used. Mowforth and Munt composed a framework of criteria for sustainability in tourism. They do however agree upon the fact that their list might not represent the absolutely true nature of sustainability, because sustainability is not reducible to only absolute principles, but must always be considered in a relative way. It remains a relative concept due to the varying perceptions of the individuals using the criteria, and relative in terms of the moral values of the individuals interpreting these values. With this in mind, it is worth considering the criteria for sustainability in tourism as defined by Mowforth and Munt. They discuss sustainability in terms of four aspects of sustainability along with local participation and education (1998: 105-113).

<b>Criteria for sustainability in tourism</b>	
1. Sustainable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* environmentally</li> <li>* socially</li> <li>* economically</li> <li>* culturally</li> </ul>
2. Educational	
3. Local participatory	

*Table 1 Criteria for sustainability in tourism*  
*Source: Mowforth and Munt 1998: 105*

The sustainability criteria consist of four elements. Ecological sustainability refers to the impacts, effects and implications to the natural environment (Mowforth and Munt 1998; Aabo 2006). Ecological sustainability normally refers to the need to minimize the negative environmental impacts of tourist activities. Volunteer tourism can also benefit the environment in a positive way, by volunteers who are involved in environmental projects or by sharing thoughts and contributing to awakening about environmental issues.

The second criteria, social sustainability, refers to the ability of a community, whether local or national to absorb inputs, such as extra people, for short or long periods of time, and to continue functioning either without the creation of social disharmony as a result of these inputs or by adapting its functions and relationship so that the disharmony created can be alleviated or mitigated (Mowforth and Munt

1998: 106). In other words volunteer tourism should respect human rights and equal opportunities for all in society. It requires an equitable distribution of benefits, with a focus on alleviating poverty.

Volunteer tourism has impact on the relationships within a society, especially in terms of interaction, lifestyles, customs and traditions. The impact of volunteer tourism is culturally sustainable, when people are able to retain or adapt elements of their culture which distinguish them from other people. The volunteer tourists who are the guests in a community have to recognize and respect the different culture whilst avoiding any form of exploitation.

Economic sustainability refers to a level of economic gain from the activity sufficient either to cover the cost of any special measures taken to cater for the tourists and to mitigate the effects of the tourist's presence (Mowforth and Munt 1998: 111). Economic sustainability, which means generating prosperity at different levels of society and addressing the cost effectiveness of all economic activity. Crucially, it is about the viability of enterprises and activities and their ability to be maintained in the long term (UNEP and WTO 2005).

The second aspect of sustainability in tourism is that it should contain an educational element. Mowforth and Munt underline that there are different ways of looking at education in tourism. Education in tourism can refer to training of the hosts about the wishes and habits of the tourists who are visiting them. Another form of educational input is technical assistance without a paternalistic attitude. A good method to measure if technical assistance in volunteer tourism is sustainable is when the host community initiates the projects where technical assistance is needed (Mowforth and Munt 1998).

The debate surrounding the issue of whether host communities are objects of tourism or are controllers of tourism is important and is related to local participation. There has been a shift in perspective from the debate about the degree of inclusion or control by the host community towards a perspective of necessary involvement of the host community. The objective of volunteer tourism is to contribute to organizations or projects in developing countries. Therefore local participation of the host community is required to be able to meet the local needs.

Although it does not contribute directly to the sustainable development of the host community, volunteer tourism should also maintain a high level of tourist satisfaction and ensure a meaningful experience to the tourists, raising their awareness about sustainability issues and promoting sustainable tourism practices amongst them (GTZ 1999).

## **1.2 Private initiatives in development co-operation**

Private initiatives exist since a few decades, though the amount of private initiatives has increased drastically over the last ten years. Individual citizens, companies and civil organizations all want to play a role in development co-operation. It is estimated that in The Netherlands alone between ten thousand and fifteen thousand individual and group initiatives are active (Bouzabaa and Brok 2005). The debate on private initiatives is reaching a larger public by, for example, the publication of the report about private initiatives by Lau Schulpen last November and the publication of the first

magazine of 'Private Initiatives' by the organizations Wilde Ganzen and NCDO<sup>1</sup>. In 2005 Bouzoubaa and Brok explored the phenomenon of private initiatives in development co-operation.

The next paragraph outlines the characteristics of private initiatives in development co-operation and their relation with volunteer tourism and sustainability.

### *1.2.1 The rise of private initiatives*

Otra Cosa, the case study of this research, is a Dutch private initiative and acts in this research as an example for Dutch private initiatives on a whole. Otra Cosa is the intermediary organization between local organizations and Western volunteers. To connect this theoretical part with the case study, this paragraph is focused on private initiatives from the Netherlands. Bodelier and Vossen (2007) call this group of people 'practical idealists'. In contradiction to the anti-globalists at the end of the 1990's practical idealists do not blame globalism, the United States or the international corporate society. They have a pragmatic approach to reduce poverty in developing countries often combined with the preservation or improvement of the natural environment (Bodelier and Vossen 2005). Private initiatives are defined by Schulpen as a separate channel for development co-operation, besides the traditional organizations in development co-operation. It departs from the idea that private initiatives are development organizations first of all and as such are part of the broader discussion on international development co-operation (Schulpen 2007).

The start of an own initiative begins in a lot of cases with a holiday or stay abroad. The possibilities for people to travel are growing, which also makes that solidarity does not end at the borders of a country, because the world is literally becoming smaller. People see with their own eyes the poverty on the streets and want to contribute to help these people. This personal confrontation with poverty is the main trigger to start a private initiative. World relations are also becoming smaller due to television, newspapers and Internet. News on television or in news papers about poverty or natural disasters can be an eye opener to start a foundation, collect money or find other ways of support. Due to globalization it has become possible to carry out projects with help of the Internet, cheap telephone costs and payable flight tickets. The motivation to start a private initiative in development co-operation is mostly a feeling of solidarity and concern for the people in developing countries, mostly it concerns people they have met personally. 'Feel good by doing good' is a statement that explains the motivation of these pragmatic idealists. Furthermore running a project in a developing country is seen as a challenge and a learningful experience which gives the people involved the chance to work on personal development goals and life experience (Bodelier and Vossen 2007).

Characteristics of private initiatives are that they work small scale, qua employees as well as qua income. Private initiatives work mainly with help of volunteers. Schulpen (2007) underlines that the number of organizations who offer a post in a developing country to volunteers have expanded in the last few years. There are private initiatives that make use of existing volunteer-sending

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<sup>1</sup> Wilde Ganzen supports worldwide people who strive for a better future for their community and NCDO stands for National Committee for International Cooperation and Sustainable Development and involves people in the Netherlands in international cooperation and supports them with information, subsidies and advice.

organizations, organizations have not been set up because of the private initiative, but are an additional partner organization, which makes it more difficult to measure the output of the intervention, either if it concerns funds or which is the case in this case study, volunteers. Relating to the thematic and geographic work field, the initiatives do not differ in policy from the traditional actors in development co-operation. The four main themes are simultaneously education, health care, gender and water supply (Bouzoubaa and Brok 2005; Schulpen 2007). A reason found for starting a private initiative is the lack of confidence in the big NGOs. Bureaucracy and large overhead costs are the main reason for discontentment with the work of the big NGOs. A personal reason is that people feel that there is no space for implementing their own ideas when working for a NGO. Most of the private initiatives agree although on the fact that the work of NGOs and private initiatives can exist beside each other (Bouzoubaa and Brok 2005).

Professional development organizations are calling private initiatives sometimes ironically 'hobbyists' or 'do-it-yourselfers' (Beerends and Broere in Bouzoubaa and Brok 2005). Though there has been a switch in the policy of development co-operation. In the light of neo-liberalism the Dutch government has decreased the budget for development co-operation and on the other side has made more budget available for private development organizations. Although private initiatives are independent of the traditional actors in development co-operation, by receiving financial co-operation they are linked with MFO's and TMF<sup>1</sup> organizations. The four MFO's<sup>2</sup>: Hivos, Impulsis (ICCO, Kerkinactie and Edukans) and Novib, have their own front desks, where private initiatives can hand in a proposal for financial co-operation.

The digital loket Linkis gives the initiator of a private initiative some guidelines to approach the right organization in order to find support. Probably the most accessible database of private initiatives in the Netherlands is the database of Linkis. The website of this service organization for private initiatives seeking financial support started in June 2004 and serves as the 'central gateway for information and funding of small-scale development projects' (Linkis 2005: 4). The annual reports of Linkis (2005 and 2006) show that over the three year period 2004-2006 the Linkis-organizations (excluding the NCDO) received a total of 6,669 applications of which 2,536 (38.4%) were sanctioned (Schulpen 2007: 22). A rough analysis of these numbers underlines that the more traditional development organizations support one third of the private initiatives financially and support their objectives.

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<sup>1</sup> TMF means Thematische MedeFinancieringsorganisaties

<sup>2</sup> MFO means MedeFinancieringsOrganisatie

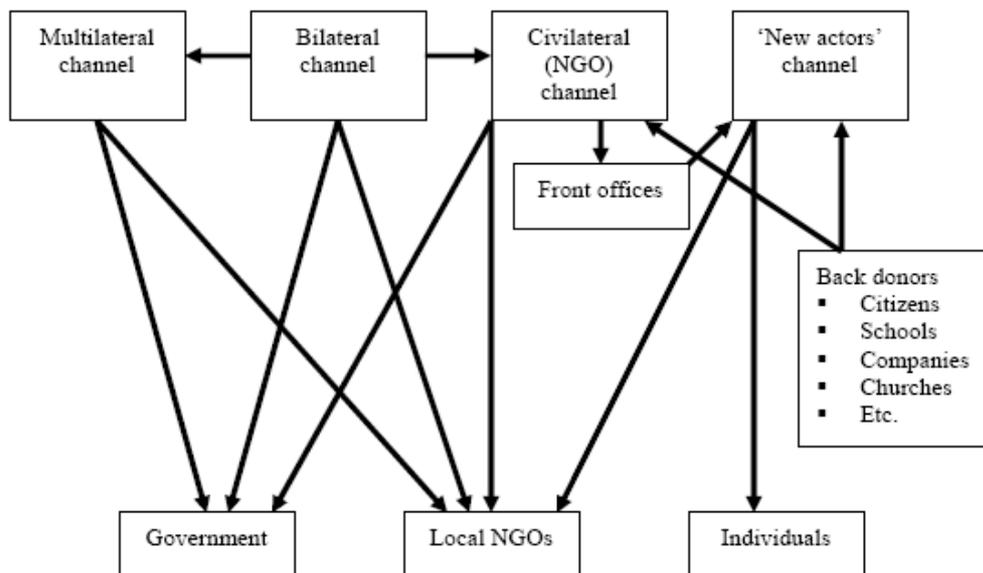


Table 2 Overview of development co-operation in the Netherlands

Source: Schulpen 2007

It falls outside the scope of this research to analyze the channels for development co-operation in detail; however an overview of development co-operation and the role of private initiatives in this are outlined in table 2. Private initiative belong to the ‘new actor’ channel in development co-operation and work mainly through local NGOs and individuals in developing countries (Schulpen 2007). If this way of working of private initiative relates to sustainable development the next paragraph outlines what sustainability means in relation to private initiatives.

### 1.2.2 Private initiatives and sustainability

It is extremely out-dated to want to be in control of the development project as a Western actor. ‘Ownership’ is a term used to explain the importance that people in developing countries not only should participate in development co-operation, but should give direction to the development by being the ‘owner’ of the intervention. In this way there is much more goodwill to continue the process and local knowledge and capacity is used (Bouzoubaa and Brok 2005). Sustainability for private initiatives entails that the project or organization continues functioning when the private initiative steps out. In other words the project or organization has to be able to continue functioning when the private initiative stops their intervention. Schulpen (2007) describes this as ‘*To have success capacity building is necessary; training of the partners in the developing country, to enlarge the feeling of involvement of the local community. When there’s no capacity building, the projects are pressed forward to the local community*’.

One strategy to achieve this co-operation and participation with local partners is by carrying out a good analysis of the context and existing initiatives before starting an initiative. Schulpen outlines that it is difficult to measure to what extent private initiatives make a proper analysis of the local situation, before starting a private initiative. He suggests that besides this, the local power

relations and contacts with other organizations in the same line of work are particularly important. He supposes that in many cases private initiatives are working in splendid isolation, not knowing which other actors are active in the same work field or area and without co-operating with governments or other governmental bodies (Schulpen 2007).

A lot of private initiatives are active in the field of education. Bouzoubaa and Brok found that 75% of private initiatives are active in projects that have a link with education and in Schulpen's research it is found that even 86% of private initiatives are related to education. Not all these initiatives are aimed at changing the structure of the authorities who are responsible for these services or bringing materials that are not available. Building a school with help of foreign donations can be defined as temporary assistance or even emergency assistance (Schulpen 2007), which does not guarantee that the school will be used and that the teachers will receive salary. Initiatives that are aimed at co-operating with partner organizations and those which understand that development co-operation is not just a one-off intervention, especially for the case of education, are more open to a long term strategy and co-operation with other stakeholders.

In general private initiatives are 'learning by doing' and do not make use of an institutionalized learning process. A monitoring and evaluation system, with the purpose of measuring the impact of the activities on the lives of the focus group, is often missing. Schulpen pleads that private initiatives should make use of a structured evaluation programme and be willing to share their learning processes with other 'colleague' private initiatives and other stakeholders. In general private initiatives report their activities by sending informal newsletters to interested donors (Schulpen 2007).

The majority of private initiatives are low budget organizations that function with the help of volunteers to realize the goals they have set. Otra Cosa differs from the average private initiative in the fact that they match volunteers to local partner organizations, these being all independent from one another. In other words, Otra Cosa is using volunteers to fulfill not only the goals of Otra Cosa itself, but also to help realize the objectives of the partner organizations by sending technical assistance. The next section outlines the role that volunteers fulfill in private initiatives.

### **1.3 Volunteer tourism**

To understand what role volunteers play in the local partner organizations, this section places volunteer tourism in the context of changes in tourism and outlines the profile of volunteer tourists and their motivations to work temporarily in a developing country. Subsequently the relation between volunteer tourism and sustainability will be discussed more deeply.

#### ***1.3.1 The rise of volunteer tourism***

Since the 1950's mass tourism has been implemented as a strategy to solve all the existing problems in Latin America. The main focus has been to create leisure resorts for residents of industrialized countries. These developments were accepted without hesitation by Latin American countries for their contribution to the economy. Besides economic prosperity, there were no preoccupations for the negative sociocultural and ecological effects of tourism. Tourism was regarded as the development

motor which brought modernization and industrialization. Mass tourism focuses on specific locations offering an all-inclusive holiday, offering rest, comfort, consumption and relaxation. People who book an all-inclusive holiday are not looking for contacts with local residents; contacts with local residents of a place are limited, due to the fact that mass tourism is spatially concentrated and most services are offered in hotels (Dahles and Keune 2002). The structure of the economies in developing countries is historically based upon 'imperial' domination over trading links and governance. Mass tourism has in many cases elements of this unequal relationship, by a lot of foreign ownership and leakages to foreign countries. Another major concern about sustainability of mass tourism is that it significantly contributes to environmental degradation, negative social and cultural impacts and therefore is not sustainable. These undesirable side-effects have led to the growing concern for the conservation and preservation of natural resources, human well-being and the long-term economic viability of communities (Choi and Sirakaya 2006).

As a reaction to mass tourism several forms of 'new tourism' have emerged. 'New tourism' refers to observed changes in the preferences of international tourists away from mass packaged forms of tourism (Mowforth and Munt 1998; Stoddart and Rogerson 2004). The new tourist appears to be an inward-looking individual who seeks out places and people with whom s/he can engage meaningfully, without the inhibiting barriers of colour, class, creed or caste. These tourists are portrayed as post-materialists or post-modernists, who are in search of opportunities that permit them to 'feel good' by 'doing good' (Singh 2004). Since the concept of new tourism was considered as an alternative to mass tourism, another term is alternative tourism<sup>1</sup>, which can be defined as: *'forms of tourism that set out to be consistent with natural, social and community values and which allow both hosts and guests to enjoy positive and worthwhile interaction and shared experience'* (Wearing 2001: 32). The motivation of new tourists are in line with the objectives of private initiatives, they both want to 'feel good' by 'doing good' or in the case of alternative tourism at least, by not being harmful to the local environment and community.

Volunteer tourism is one of the forms of alternative tourism; other examples are ecotourism, cultural tourism, community-based tourism, ethical tourism and pro-poor tourism. The main difference between volunteer tourism and the other forms of alternative tourism is that volunteer tourism is used as a method for poverty reduction. The development of tourism is not the objective, this is illustrated by comparing community-based tourism with volunteer tourism.

Community-based tourism is tourism where the local community is involved in the development and management of the tourism project. Community-based tourism can be initiated by an

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<sup>1</sup> Higgins-Desbiolles differentiates the following labels for the alternative to mass tourism include "alternative tourism" (Smith & Eadington, 1992), "responsible tourism" (Harrison & Husbands, 1996; Wheeler, 1991), "new tourism" (Krippendorf, 1987; Mowforth & Munt, 2003; Poon, 1993), "soft tourism" (Krippendorf, 1987; Sharpley, 2000a), "low-impact tourism" (Wearing & Neil, 1999, p. 5), "special interest tourism" (Douglas *et al.*, 2001) and "sustainable tourism" (Wheeler, 1993). In this thesis the term alternative tourism and new tourism are used.

external NGO wanting to start a tourism project or by the local community itself. *'Community-based tourism is tourism that takes environmental, social and cultural sustainability into account. It is managed and owned by the community, for the community, with the purpose of enabling visitors to increase their awareness and learn about the community and local ways of life'*.<sup>1</sup> Community-based tourism initiatives are often organized to provide economically viable alternatives to the existing policies of governments. A lot of these community-based forms of tourism are mediated by NGOs, who are trying to fight the structural inequality between a tourism sector with a lot of power in the Western countries and the less powerful countries in the destination areas.

Tourism projects that are community based, do not exclude the involvement of foreign stakeholders in this process. Foreigners have access to different resources to local community members, which they can use to give more power to the host community. The presence of these particular Western entrepreneurs in local tourism-related business life is related to their access to capital. In general, foreign entrepreneurs possess more economic capital (money), social capital (networks with the country of origin and access to market data) and cultural capital (speaking more languages, knowledge of the tourism market and preferences of tourists) (Dahles and Keune 2002). The difference with foreign stakeholders in mass tourism is that their life is intertwined with community life. They generate income and employment, as well as consuming and reinvesting their income in the local community. Dahles and Keu assume that foreigners' economic activities turn out to be very beneficial to the local community (Dahles and Keune 2002: 160).

Volunteer tourism has a lot of interfaces with community-based tourism. The influences and impacts of volunteer tourism can be the same on communities; the principles are more or less the same and volunteer tourism also focuses on small-scale projects. The main difference is that community-based tourism focuses on developing tourism within a community, while volunteer tourism focuses on existing projects that need technical assistance of volunteers (Both 2004). In other words developing volunteer tourism is not the objective. Volunteer tourism focuses on increasing the benefits of poor people, but not through developing tourism but again by implementing volunteer tourists in existing projects, not to create a tourism opportunity, tourism accidentally occurs (Both 2004). Because tourism in itself is not the objective of volunteer tourism, volunteer tourists do have a different relation with people in the organizations they are working and the role they fulfill in the local community.

### ***1.3.2 Host-guest relation in volunteer tourism***

Volunteer tourism has been responsible for a change in tourism, by combining traveling and working. In general the notion of the tourist role is separated from work-oriented activities. In the case of volunteer tourism this division does not count, the host and guest relations also provide a further aspect. The interaction with the host-culture is an important element of volunteer tourism; the contact is extremely intense due to the fact that volunteers and persons from a local community often work together on a project on a daily basis. Natan Uriely and Arie Reichel state that therefore the employer-

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.fairtourism.nl/>

employee relationship may add elements of tension in the host-guest relation (Uriely and Reichel 2000). On the other hand daily contact can also open up the minds of the concerned persons in a positive way. In relation to volunteer tourism Pizam, Uriely, and Reichel (2000) stated in their study of working tourists in a *kibbutz* in Israel, that those who have an intense social relationship with their hosts have a more positive attitude of the host culture and destination, than other tourists. The more intensive the relation between the workers and their 'employers' was, the more satisfied the tourists were.

Both tourist and local people have their prejudices and stereotypes about the other, which are based on mental perceptions. Tourism studies have mainly researched the images the guests have of the hosts, what is introduced by Urry as the 'tourist gaze'. In addition to Urry, Maoz introduces the term 'local gaze', the way in which local people perceive tourists. Their gaze is mainly constructed upon their previous encounters with tourists, although stereotypes play a role. The mutual gaze, which is not only about how the tourists see the locals, but also how the locals examine the tourists, is the subject of this case study. The images guests' hold of their hosts may be modified after a stay in their country, though it is more difficult to change the images the locals hold of tourists. In order to change the image, there needs to be a close, real contact between two equal groups with mutual aims (Allport in Maoz 2006), which is the case with volunteer tourism.

Most research about volunteer tourism highlights the needs of the volunteer tourists. Less research has been conducted from the point of view of the people of the local community. Nancy McGehee is known as a researcher with specific interest for attitudes of host residents in volunteer tourism. She argues that in the case of Tijuana, Mexico, there was a strong agreement with the positive impacts of volunteer tourism and disagreement with the negative impacts by the local residents. McGehee asks for care to be taken regarding the cultural elements of volunteer tourism and warns people to be aware of the power relationship between volunteer tourists and their hosts (Gard McGehee 2005).

Yet, that it is clear that volunteer tourists fulfill a special role in tourism and the contact with the local community is more intensive than is the case of other forms of tourism, which affects the mutual images of the hosts and guests it is interesting to explore the profile of the people volunteering (guests) in developing countries.

### ***1.3.3 Profile of volunteer tourists***

Wearing (2001: 1) describes volunteer tourists as '*those tourists who, for various reasons, volunteer in an organized way to undertake holidays that might involve co-operating or alleviating the material poverty of some groups in society, the restoration of certain environments or research into aspects of society and environment*'. Although tourism is not the objective, for the volunteer tourist leisure is still an important component of volunteer tourism. The concept of travel and also the possibility to work in unfamiliar situations have the greatest appeal to volunteer tourists. Volunteers are also willing to devote time and money to contribute to volunteer efforts (Wearing 2001). These characteristics of

volunteer tourists suggest that these individuals must be in a certain social and economic situation to afford the opportunity to participate in volunteer tourism. Tourists must have a certain amount of disposable income to be able to travel, as well as pay for the experience itself, because there is often a fee associated with participating in volunteer projects. These features of a volunteer tourist tend to favour individuals of Western societies, mainly Europeans, North Americans and Australians (Rando 2004).

Demographically a high percentage of volunteer tourists are young adults between eighteen and twenty-five years old. They have the ability to travel due to the absence of a career and not having children, thus they are able to travel and do volunteer work for months or even years (Wearing 2001). Volunteer work is often related to doing a practical period following university attendance, or taking time off before following a university education. This time off is known as the 'gap year' (Simpson in Rando 2004). A second group of volunteer tourists are recently retired individuals. The high rate of volunteers in this age bracket can be explained by the fact that these individuals no longer have ties to a career or dependent children. And that they also have the time and disposable income to participate in volunteer tourism (Rando 2004).

There are several motivations for volunteer tourists to participate in volunteer tourism. Wearing (2001) differentiates five motivation categories to define the motivation of volunteer tourists. The first category is *altruism*, which enhances all elements that are related to idealism, helping others and 'doing good'. The second category is *travel/adventure* which is related to the excitement of travel and getting to know new places and people. *Personal growth* is the wish to learn on a personal level or related to professional development. Learning by *cultural exchange* is primarily concerned with experiencing a new culture and the people of the local culture as well as other cultures by working with people from other countries. *Professional development* is the motivation category which highlights the desire to gain expertise in a certain work field or develop certain expertise further.

#### ***1.3.4 Volunteer tourism and sustainability***

The demand for volunteer tourism is huge. The concern is whether the needs of local people match what volunteer tourists are looking for. Volunteer experiences are often titled as development aid for developing communities, when according to Tourism Concern '*aid should focus on the needs of local people rather than those of tourists*' (Higgins-Desbiolles 2006).

In most communities there are no policies in order to regulate volunteer tourism. This means that anyone who has access to resources can start a volunteer program. More and more people, mostly descended from Western countries are starting volunteer programs. McGehee argues to involve the local community before starting a volunteer program it is necessary to achieve ownership and involvement of the host community (VolunTourism.org). Wearing (2001) pleads for community involvement as well, which is in his eyes is inherent to sustainability. Wearing states that the lack of skills local communities encounter can be overcome through the implementation of volunteer tourism projects. These projects should focus on the transferring of skills through volunteers and the use of

these volunteers to train residents. Education is in his eyes an important issue in volunteer tourism (Wearing 2001).

Both volunteer tourism and private initiatives in development co-operation want to contribute to the sustainable development of an organization or more widely speaking a local community. For private initiatives regarding to sustainability it is most important that ownership belongs to the partner organization, that the private initiative makes a good context analysis before starting the initiative and co-operates with other local stakeholders and partner organizations. Working with volunteers can be sustainable when the needs of the local community are on the base of the intervention, when the local community participates in the volunteer work and when skills are being transferred from the volunteer towards the local community. The following chapters will provide the empirical findings of the case study, by focusing on Otra Cosa, as an example of a private initiative in Huanchaco, Peru.

# 2

## Private volunteer initiatives, Otra Cosa as an example



This chapter shifts to the empirical findings of the case study. Otra Cosa is based in Huanchaco, Trujillo on the coast of Northern Peru. This research is based on seven local projects in the Huanchaco district. The local context of the case study will be outlined and the characteristics of Otra Cosa will be compared to the characteristics of private initiatives as described in the theory about private initiatives in terms of sustainability.

### 2.1 The local context

Over the last twenty-five years Huanchaco has become a refuge for Peruvian people from all over the country, from the Amazon, but mainly from the rural areas in the mountains. All these people needed living space, but did not have the money to buy an ‘expensive’ house. A new neighbourhood has been created, called ‘Las Lomas’ and the newest neighbourhood ‘El Tablazo’. Nowadays there are around 38,000 people living in the Huanchaco district. Huanchaco district includes besides the urban areas of Huanchaco, El Milagro, Huanchaquito alto en bajo and Villa del Mar and eight rural areas, where in total around 600 houses are located. Huanchaco existed of 2715 houses in 2005 and El Milagro accounts for more than 6000 houses (INEI).

The social services and infrastructure in most of the neighbourhoods of Huanchaco are poorly developed in contradiction with the ‘modern’ part of Huanchaco. Since a few years ‘Las Lomas’ and ‘El Tablazo’ have access to electricity, but the roads are still non paved and an important part of this neighbourhood has no access to water, but depends on the water truck of the municipality to provide them with water. For medical services, pharmacies and secondary education, the people of these areas still depend on the modern part of Huanchaco. Sixty percent of the population of Huanchaco lives below the Peruvian poverty line (Grove 2004).

Coherently, the economic situation in Huanchaco is quite unstable. There are a lot of temporary jobs and unemployment. The main economic activities are fishing, handicrafts, breeding of birds and pigs, recycling of products from the garbage dump, small entrepreneurs, construction workers and taxi, bus and motor taxi drivers. Factors such as the growth and decline of the fishing industry are contributing to the changing identity of the town. Over recent years tourism has increased in Huanchaco, although exact numbers are not known, the more modern coastal part of Huanchaco seems to benefit from tourism activities.

The people who visit Huanchaco are mainly foreigners who come for surfing, or people who stay over for one or two days to visit the nearby archeological attractions, such as ‘Chan Chan’ and the ‘Huacas del Sol y de la Luna’. The other kind of tourism in Huanchaco is regional and national tourism, people who come to Huanchaco to relax with their families or friends at the beach. The local

economy benefits from tourism by offering guided tours, the sale of handicrafts, renting rooms, hotel and restaurant business and the sale of food in the streets.

About the origin of the word Huanchaco, professor Don Manuel Landauro, refers to the fact that in ancient times the region of Huanchaco was known as Guaukocha, which means ‘gran laguna’, big lake. The sea has always been of big importance for the ‘Huanchaqueros’. It has been their daily living and the way to come in contact with other villages and their cultures. For long time fishing was the most important economic activity in Huanchaco. The fishermen construct little boats from cane, which are called ‘caballitos de totora’. The cane grows on the cane fields along the northern beach in Huanchaco. Nowadays the amount of fishermen is decreasing rapidly and this for several reasons; fishing is not as profitable as it once was, and fishermen are stimulating their children to obtain education and have a profession other than fishing. This slowly brings an end to a long fishing tradition which may only be preserved in the future as an exploited form of cultural tourism. The ‘caballitos de totora’ are a symbol of the town’s identity. You can find them on every painting, website or flyer. The local artisans sell miniature ‘caballitos de totora’ and a lot of restaurants are decorated with them (McNulthy 2004).

The tourism season is divided in a low and high season. In the low season from mid-April through mid-June it is hard to make a living. In mid-June, foreign tourists begin to arrive, and business is decent through July and August. September, October and November are somewhat slow, and then from December through March, Huanchaco is full of tourists (Hatch 2002). Volunteer tourism quantifies a small percentage of tourism in Huanchaco<sup>1</sup>, though the term volunteer is quite well known in Huanchaco. Volunteers are generally welcome guests. They stay a long time in the community, spending money on a daily basis and integrating more with the local community than the short-term tourists.

## **2.2 Otra Cosa**

Otra Cosa is a Dutch private initiative, founded by Janneke Smeulders and Peter den Hond. Both are graduated master students from Wageningen University in integral water management and rural development studies. The idea for Otra Cosa started in 1995, when Peter was living in Australia. First they explored the possibilities of starting a vegetarian restaurant with an organic garden in Surinam, while they were doing their internships over there. Peru was their second country of interest, where they were located for study and volunteer work. They were inspired by a Dutch woman who in three years had founded a restaurant and a school for deaf children in Cusco. After carrying out market research into the possibility of starting a vegetarian restaurant in Huanchaco and writing a business plan in The Netherlands, they started in September 2004, the Otra Cosa restaurant, the economic base for the whole Otra Cosa organization.

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<sup>1</sup> In Huanchaco itself are two initiatives. One is Otra Cosa, the case study of this research and the second one is an initiative called AFS. This is an international organization, who are active in 60 countries worldwide. In Huanchaco is a contact person who coordinates the intermediation for the projects of AFS in Huanchaco. Otra Cosa and AFS are both working with Mundo de Niños in Huanchaco. Further on their projects are different, though most projects do have a social character.

Otra Cosa describes itself as original, stimulating and responsible. Otra Cosa tries to sell original tourist products, which stimulate people into getting to know more about the Peruvian life which lies behind the tourist facade. Otra Cosa tries to be as responsible as possible in its social and ecological environment. They try to sell products that are complementary to the local or regional market. They did not start with a premised plan for expanding their activities, though by living in Huanchaco they were able to discover the hidden needs of the community in which they could intervene, of which starting Otra Cosa volunteer agency was one of their activities. Besides the volunteer agency Otra Cosa is made up of a restaurant, a travel agency and Janneke has founded her own initiative Fairmail. Otra Cosa's travel agency was initiated by contacts with the suppliers of ingredients or products for Otra Cosa restaurant in the North of Peru. Janneke started her own initiative Fairmail, by discovering that there were no similar initiatives. Otra Cosa volunteer agency was the first organization that introduced volunteer tourism in Huanchaco. By making this context analysis they became a local actor and had the possibilities to intervene in local matters and hereby are fulfilling one of the objectives related to sustainability of private initiatives.

Comparable with motivations of other private initiatives Otra Cosa wants to improve the living conditions of people in developing countries. The main motivation for starting Otra Cosa was the desire to contribute to the development of other countries, and an alien feeling towards the institutionalized way of the development sector. The founders share the opinion that working for a big development organization makes it impossible to directly control the consequences of your work: *'We prefer to work small scale, by seeing the consequences of their work, than working on a large scale, not knowing how it effects people exactly'.<sup>1</sup>*

Otra Cosa did not choose to donate money to local partner organizations, because of the difficulty of obtaining influence and control over how this money would be spent. For this reason they have chosen to support local initiatives by sending 'hands and heads', with the important criteria that the projects request the volunteers themselves. In this case the projects are not pressed forward to the local community.

Although Otra Cosa is working intensively with the local partner organizations on one hand, on the other hand they try to work independently from other social entities. Otra Cosa prefers to keep some public distance, in order to be free in the activities they wish to develop. For example Otra Cosa is not connected to a Chamber of Commerce or the local Chamber of Tourism, due to expected political interests. The municipality does know about the volunteer agency, but is not involved, except for the library project. This shows that Otra Cosa is co-operating with local partner organizations, but prefers to avoid too much contact with governmental institutions, which avoids a more embedded local policy.

Otra Cosa does not only want to help the local projects, they also believe that by offering volunteer tourists the possibility to discover the real life in Huanchaco, they allow them to be more

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<sup>1</sup> Interview with Peter den Hond, founder of Otra Cosa, 24<sup>th</sup> of March 2007, translated from Dutch

aware of the world and to achieve mutual understanding of why people are living in less beautiful circumstances and of what they can do as an individual, to contribute. They hope that the volunteers achieve a world-wide awakening, which will influence their lifestyle at home and create a platform for development co-operation. For this reason the fee for participation is rather low, to not exclude people on economic reasons only. The partner organizations do not pay for receiving the volunteer(s).

The volunteer agency of Otra Cosa works with organizations and socially responsible companies, though these may have a commercial policy. The basic criteria for the placement of volunteers is that the organizations have as (one of) their goal(s) to increase the development chances of individuals in the local community. In general Otra Cosa co-operates with volunteer projects, based around the following themes: health, education, sport, art and culture and natural resources. Four organizations have *education* as their main function, which is in line with the theory that most private initiatives would like to be active in education projects. These are Espaanglish, the Library project, Asociación Christiana de Jovenes (A.C.J.) and Centro Educación Popular (C.E.P). In the *sport* category, there is a surf school called Un Lugar. Fairmail belongs to the theme *art and culture and education*. Mundo de Niños is an orphanage which covers several themes. The partner organizations are located in Huanchaco and in 'El Milagro', part of the Huanchaco district. The appendix gives a description of the surveyed organizations. In chapter 3 and 4 the partner organizations will be analyzed more deeply. Firstly, the next section provides an overview of the characteristics of the volunteers of Otra Cosa.

### **2.3 Volunteer Profile**

The volunteer tourists of Otra Cosa, who joined the come from the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, the United States and Switzerland. In terms of age profile, six out of seven international volunteers are between nineteen and twenty-four years old. This is in line with the statement of Wearing and Dean, who argue that most volunteer tourists are young adults between eighteen and twenty-five years old, who have not started a career or family yet. Three of the volunteers are having a 'gap year' before following a university education, one volunteer is doing her internship and the other two have respectively quit their job and education because of discontent about their occupation. The second group of volunteers is early retired people, who are free from career ties or dependent children and have the time and disposable income to participate in volunteer tourism. One volunteer of Otra Cosa belongs to this segment, she is sixty-five years old and has been retired for two years.

Apart from one person all the volunteers have done volunteer work before. Most of the former volunteer work took place in their hometowns, ranging from working at a festival to teaching snowboarding. Three volunteers have experience with volunteer work abroad. One volunteer participated for a few consecutive summers in working holidays on a farm and an old house in Eastern Europe. The sixty-five year old woman has spent two months abroad each year since her to do voluntary work. This is her third experience, before she went to Burkina Faso and Tanzania.

The motivation to do voluntary work differs from one another. The volunteers of Otra Cosa can be divided into the motivation categories as defined by Wearing. Most of the volunteers mention an element of *altruism*, such as contributing or doing something useful: *'I could combine this volunteer work with needs of other people'*.<sup>1</sup> In the category of *travel/adventure* no arguments are specifically mentioned, although all the volunteers combine doing volunteer work with a trip to other parts of Peru and/or other countries afterwards. This confirms that in volunteer tourism the leisure element also plays a role. A lot of the motivations are related to *personal growth*, volunteer work is seen as enriching to their lives and a way of taking a look behind the scenes of different organizations. Christine mentions: *'I'm really big on community development, civic engagement, so I thought it good be a good experience for me and the kids'*<sup>2</sup> and Laura states: *'Teaching them about photography, that has been successful, according to my opinion. I didn't know I was quite a good teacher, so that might be something for my own future'*.<sup>3</sup> Learning by *cultural exchange* is primarily concerned with experiencing a new culture and the people of the local culture as well as other cultures by working with people from other countries. The volunteers argue that doing volunteer work gives them the opportunity to stay for a longer period in one place and in this way they get to know the place, one volunteer describes this as *'living in another world'*. In this opinion they differ from mass tourists, clarified by Christine's quote: *'A lot of people want to know the whole country a little bit and I just prefer to get to know a bit of the country very well'*. Meeting other people and cultures is also mentioned literally by one volunteer. For the people who are taking time off before university education, doing volunteer work contributes to their *professional development* by gaining expertise in the field they want to study or by discovering if what they have in mind is really what they want to do later on. These volunteers differ from the ones who already have experience in a certain area and want to share their experience by doing volunteer work. One volunteer doesn't see her work as volunteer work, but as a way to become involved with the company by investing time.

The next section relates the vision and characteristics of Otra Cosa and the volunteers by relating them to the sustainability criteria.

## **2.4 Otra Cosa and sustainability**

The owners of Otra Cosa try to avoid the word sustainability, which is in their opinion too complex. All the volunteer projects of Otra Cosa try to add a positive value to one of the themes of health, sport, education, art and culture and natural resources, however Otra Cosa is aware that the mere fact that volunteers come to Huanchaco has negative influences in itself, especially ecological. Because of these side-effects Otra Cosa is careful with calling itself sustainable, for the reason that it is impossible to measure the positive and negative influences of the mediation of volunteers on a global and even

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<sup>1</sup> Interview with Elke Nitzschke, volunteer at Espaanglish, 18th of April 2007

<sup>2</sup> Interview with Christine Batson, volunteer at the Library Project, 16<sup>th</sup> of June 2007

<sup>3</sup> Interview with Laura Peka, volunteer at Fairmail, 1<sup>st</sup> of June 2007, translated from Dutch

<sup>4</sup> Interview with Peter den Hond, founder of Otra Cosa, 24<sup>th</sup> of March 2007<sup>1</sup> Interview with Elke

local level.<sup>1</sup> As mentioned in the theoretical part sustainability should always be considered relatively, and we a look will be taken upon the defined criteria.

To meet the criteria of local participation it is important that the local community participates in the projects of the private initiative to create local ownership of the project. Most of the organizations Otra Cosa works with are existing organizations, which are not initiated by Otra Cosa. These organizations request volunteers to contribute to the development of the organization. In these cases the ‘ownership’ of the organization is in local hands. Otra Cosa is responsible for the matching between the volunteers and the organizations, while the organizations are responsible for the task description and the guidance of the volunteers. Otra Cosa works with demand driven by the local organizations. They take stock of the specific requests considering amount of hours the volunteer has to work, expectations of what the volunteer has to do and so on. Subsequently Otra Cosa places the vacancies on their website and is responsible for the first selection. This entails that a volunteer has to submit a curriculum vitae, cover letter and a description in Spanish of what one day of volunteering would be like for them. The partner organization has the last voice in accepting the volunteer.

On average one out of three volunteers will be accepted. There are a few general criteria for all volunteers applying. These common criteria are that the volunteer has to speak at least a basic level of Spanish and has to commit to a minimum stay of one month. The argument the organizations mention for this period is that the volunteer first has to adapt to the work and they have to learn things, before they can put things into practice and be of benefit to the organization. Soft skills such as enthusiasm, self-confidence and taking responsibility are other criteria taken into account.

The period the volunteers work for differs from one to six months, depending on the aims of the project as well as the personal time planning of the volunteers. Otra Cosa believes in no-pampering. They operate business wise and prefer no ‘cuddling’ with the members of the local projects. Their strategy is to give individuals or organizations a chance, but they have to take them their selves, *‘We are responsible for the initiative, but the projects are responsible for the success. For example the language school of David is growing, for which he is responsible for at least 80%’.*<sup>2</sup>

The volunteers and local project members have been asked to evaluate the expectations and processes of the volunteer work. When a volunteer has finished working in a project s/he completes an evaluation that is shared with the partner organization by Otra Cosa. The evaluation of volunteer work is currently more focused on the opinion of the volunteer. Although it is not formally asked from private initiatives to monitor their projects officially, a well developed evaluation system could function to measure the impact of the volunteer work and to be used as a tool for improvements.

Otra Cosa is very aware of the need to be sustainable. In many cases they meet the criteria of sustainability, for example by making a context analysis before having started the volunteer agency and taking the requirements of the partner organizations into account. Improvements can be reached in the field of incorporating their activities to a local or regional plan and in the field of evaluation and

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<sup>2</sup> Interview with Peter den Hond, founder of Otra Cosa, 24<sup>th</sup> of March 2007, translated from Dutch

monitoring. The characteristics of the volunteers illustrate that they want to contribute to the local partner organizations, although their motivations might differ.

# 3

## Local participation and the educational elements of volunteer tourism



In the theoretical part of this thesis the criteria to analyze sustainability in volunteer tourism were defined as local participatory, educational and sustainable. In this second empirical chapter the local participatory and educational criteria will be applied to the volunteer tourists who are working at the partner organizations of Otra Cosa. The first section gives insight into the local participation of Otra Cosa's partners and the participation of the volunteers in the partner organizations by analyzing the tasks and responsibilities as well as the co-operation between the local partner organizations and the Western volunteers. The second section outlines the educational elements which play a role in volunteer tourism in order to explore whether a transfer of knowledge from the volunteer towards a focus group exists and what the impact of this knowledge transfer is.

### 3.1 Local participation at the partner organizations

After having introduced the volunteers in the former chapter and briefly the local partner organization, this section focuses on the co-operation between the local partner organizations and the volunteers during the voluntary work. Comparing the organizations on several characteristics resulted in a classification of partner organizations; 'organizations where expertise is necessary', 'organizations where expertise is preferable' and 'organizations where mainly enthusiasm is needed'. An important area in this case study is the participation of the partner organizations with regard to the volunteer work. This will be judged, firstly, by analyzing the function the volunteers fulfill in the project and matching mutual expectations. Secondly, volunteer work enables the project members and volunteer tourists to work together and get to know each other on a deeper level than that of normal encounters between tourists and local persons. The host-guest relation will be outlined, and consistent with this host-guest relation, the difficulties they encounter and occurring disagreements.

#### 3.1.1 Organizations where expertise is necessary

The organizations which fall into the first category are Espaanglish, the Library Project and Fairmail. In these organizations the volunteers are part of the strategy of the organization, which entails that working with volunteers is embedded in the policy of the organization. The owner of Espaanglish is David, who is also the volunteer coordinator. He is in charge of training the volunteers and of coordinating the classes. The volunteers have to be able to stay for at least one month, this being the length of one course, though when a volunteer is not able to teach David takes over the class. Each teacher teaches two classes in the afternoon, four times a week. The role of the volunteers is essential, in the words of Espaanglish's manager himself, it can be stated as following:

*'Espaanglish is organized as follows: I am the owner and the manager and the volunteers are the teachers. I am the leader who has to tell them what to do, when to do it and why. The volunteers are in*

*some way the main part of this story because without them I would be nothing, Espaanglish would be nothing without them. They are employees and the main part of it all'.<sup>1</sup>*

The criteria for the volunteers here are more strict and specific than the criteria for the other organizations. At Espaanglish and the Library Project the volunteers are in charge of teaching English to local people, which means that the volunteers have to speak native or fluent English and preferably have some experience in teaching. Their specific knowledge of English is essential for the success of these two organizations. The criteria to volunteer at Fairmail is to have experience in photography and or design. The volunteers of Fairmail have flexible, but pre-defined tasks. The tasks are mainly based around providing creative skills training to teenagers, promoting the cards via their own network and design. At Fairmail Janneke is the manager and coordinator of the volunteers. The way that volunteer work is structured at Fairmail is that she consults with the volunteer about the volunteer work and the general tasks, but the volunteer decides him or herself how to implement and fulfill these tasks. Janneke describes this process as follows:

*'The volunteers are free in the way how they want to teach. Because of this freedom they are extra motivated. The volunteers have different working methods. Some volunteers consider talent for example as an important criteria for the students. I think this is less important, because the purpose of the classes is that the students develop creativity and confidence. Actually I am the boss of Fairmail, though I am always interested in the opinions of the volunteers'.<sup>2</sup>*

Peter, the manager of the library project also gives some freedom to the volunteer to set up the classes:

*'What I'm trying to do, and I'm learning as I go along, is give the volunteer teachers enough flexibility and enough scope to let them choose specifically what they want to do, and they plan their lessons accordingly. I then go through that plan with them twice a week. It's not a formal lesson plan. But you can write down on a piece of paper this is what I'm going to teach them today. So yes Holly was fine, her friend Henny was fine. They did great, they did a lot'.<sup>3</sup>*

Fairmail and the Library project are managed respectively by a Dutch and an English manager. Therefore there are no differences in cultural background, which seems to reduce the difficulty of different point of views between the manager and the volunteers sometimes found when a local project member and an international volunteer are deliberating. David, who has a Peruvian nationality, values

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<sup>1</sup> Interview with David Mercedes, owner of Espaanglish, 19<sup>th</sup> of April 2007, translated from Spanish

<sup>2</sup> Interview with Janneke Smeulders, owner of Fairmail, 6<sup>th</sup> of April 2007, translated from Dutch

<sup>3</sup> Interview with Peter Murphy, manager of the Library Project, 1<sup>st</sup> of June 2007

teachers who talk a lot with the students in class: *'My system is more about talking. I want the volunteers and the teachers to talk a lot in class and they have conversations with the students about everything, much more than sitting down and writing because for me that's not learning'*.<sup>1</sup>

Different views on how to organize and structure the language classes causes frustration in the eyes of volunteers, who would like to have a bigger voice in the way the volunteer work is organized. Elke mentioned that in her case it was difficult to co-operate with David on class content:

*'I think that there is a big lack of organization. That is not because of difference in age. I think that he should take things more seriously; maybe this is the way of Peruvian lifestyle. In my case, the first two weeks I tried to teach the way David was thinking. I combined his ways of working with my ways of working, which worked out quite well. For example on Monday the volunteers came to his house to prepare the lessons. But the time I spent with him in front of his computer to get the lessons prepared, only ended in discussions. I prepared my lessons the next morning, making copies etc. I came to some kind of organization for my classes'*.<sup>2</sup>

This argument is understandable, because of the fact that the volunteers are the ones who have to teach, on the other hand, David is the manager and is therefore finally responsible for the functioning of Espaanglish. Local participation of the partner organizations in defining the specific requirements and role for the volunteers, benefits the objective of the organization and towards the volunteer's feeling of contributing to the organization, as for example at Fairmail and the Library Project. What must be clear is that the ownership of the organizations belongs to the local partner organization and not to the volunteers. Recommendations and points of view are good to be shared; however implementation is the task of the local organization.

### **3.1.2 Organizations where expertise is preferable**

The second category is the organizations where a certain expertise is preferable, but is not precisely defined or embedded in the volunteer policy of the organization. The organizations in this category are C.E.P., A.C.J. and Mundo de Niños, which do all work with children. These three organizations do have Peruvian management, though Mundo de Niños was founded by a German citizen. For these organizations it is known that Otra Cosa is not the only organization sending volunteers to support their projects. Mundo de Niños also receives volunteers from A.F.S., *programmas interculturales*<sup>3</sup>, C.E.P. currently collaborates with a French woman who mainly sends French volunteers and also works with individual teachers who give lessons on a voluntary basis<sup>4</sup> and A.C.J. also works with

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<sup>1</sup> Interview with David Mercedes, owner of Espaanglish, 19<sup>th</sup> of April 2007, translated from Spanish

<sup>2</sup> Interview with Elke Nitzschke, volunteer at Espaanglish, 19<sup>th</sup> of April 2007

<sup>3</sup> Informal talk with Señora Sofía from A.F.S., 9<sup>th</sup> of April 2007

<sup>4</sup> Interview with Padre Tumba, founder of C.E.P., 21<sup>st</sup> of April 2007, translated from Spanish

Peruvian volunteers.<sup>1</sup> Besides this all organizations depend on external funding for their projects. A.C.J. is part of the World Alliance of YMCA's and gets funding from several NGOs, Mundo de Niños is a German non-profit making association with strong support from Spain, whose aim is to rehabilitate street children in Peru. The association organizes, finances and supervises a voluntary aided project in Peru<sup>2</sup> and C.E.P. received in 2006 and 2007 52.3% of their budget from foreign funds<sup>3</sup>. A.C.J. arranges their finance partly by donations, mainly from abroad. Another difference of the category 'organizations where a certain expertise is necessary' is that these organizations work with more local employees. In this case the coordination with the volunteers is more complex and the tasks of the volunteers are more flexible.

Preferred criteria for the volunteers are that they have experience in education, health, social work, management, sports, culture or art. The position of the volunteers in these projects is mainly assisting the teachers and social workers, although there is also space for activities in which they have expertise or interest to be included. For example at C.E.P. it is possible to teach English or if they want to do sports with the kids, they will do sports, at least when the supervisors agree upon it. The advantage of these activities organized by the volunteers is that they differ from the activities they are normally taught. At C.E.P. Alice organized a workshop for mothers about hygiene and contraception. Also Karina would like to organize an own activity during volunteering at Mundo de Niños:

*'I have organized a music workshop for them twice a week. I have bought two guitars, and I play the guitar. I'm going to teach all the boys. But the thing is you need material, if you want to do something, and then it's up to you if you want to spend your money on it. There are also the tips from Otra Cosa. It's possible in one month to get 50 soles, and buy something to do an activity. I was thinking on buying t-shirts, just white t-shirts and paint. So each of them could paint their own t-shirt, like their name and drawing. A bit more organized'.<sup>4</sup>*

The communication between the local colleagues, the children and the volunteers is not always optimal. The first cause of this is the level of Spanish of the volunteers. A basic level of Spanish is required, though for working with children this is not always sufficient. The local partner organizations differ in their opinion about the contribution of the volunteers. At C.E.P. each volunteer is warmly welcomed and fully supported for the work they want to develop. Padre Tumba, the founder and director of C.E.P. is extremely satisfied with the Otra Cosa volunteers: *'I see the situation as pretty good, up to now the volunteers sent by Otra Cosa have been very responsible, they've completed their job with dedication and devotion. It's perhaps on our part that things could be improved because the volunteers always want to more but we are limited. They try to*

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<sup>1</sup> Interview with Nicolás Quiroz, employee of A.C.J., 18<sup>th</sup> of April 2007, translated from Spanish

<sup>2</sup> [www.mundodeninos.org](http://www.mundodeninos.org)

<sup>3</sup> Tesis Padre Tumba para optar el Grado de Doctor en Planificación y Gestión, 2007

<sup>4</sup> Interview with Karina Erland, volunteer at Mundo de Niños, 6<sup>th</sup> of June 2007

*do the maximum possible within the limitations of the school*'.<sup>1</sup> The difference with A.C.J. is that they see each volunteer as an additional value to the development of the school.

At A.C.J. a more specific coordination for the selection of volunteers is necessary, based on experience in the thematic work fields that they are working on. The need for experienced volunteers is also confirmed by one of the volunteers: *'The 2<sup>nd</sup> day I got there I got a whole classroom for myself with small kids. I got chucked into the deep-end. I have experience so it didn't scare me. I helped them with their homework. For a volunteer that has never taught, that would be difficult*'.<sup>2</sup> In these three organizations the focus group is mainly children and the volunteers are only working as temporarily employees. In projects where the volunteers are working with children the question must be asked if this is the right way operating. For example in Mundo de Niños where the children all have a background related to drug problems and have difficulties in interpersonal communication this is questionable, since it is impossible for them to build any bonds. Therefore the communication between the local project members and the volunteers must be managed very well. In the weekly meeting the Mundo de Niños volunteers discuss things with their supervisors, but during work the volunteers sometimes feel a lack of supervision:

*'But I think it would be great if there was more communication between the volunteers and the people working there. Also with the teachers, because they are the ones you have to ask if you have a problem with one of the boys, if something has happened. They are the ones you need to go to. For example if something bad happens, like one of the boys has been bothering you, just problems, if you go and tell them about it, they're just like, yeah I'll talk to them. But then the next day the boys might be angry with me, if instead I was there when she/he wanted to talk to the boy, that's cooperating, that's working together. This is more, like I'll take care of it*'.<sup>3</sup>

On the other hand Anita, coordinator at Mundo de Niños, explains that the difference in working attitude towards authority and language problems causes problems between the volunteers and the children:

*'They (the boys) become very confident with them (the volunteers) and that's when they sometimes start to lack respect towards the volunteers because they are young and sometimes on occasions they confuse the friendship that someone gives them and try to abuse of the trust that someone has placed in them or could offer them. It has been known for example that they use swear words in Spanish and they (the volunteers) don't understand and they start laughing*'.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Interview with Padre Tumba, founder of C.E.P, 21<sup>st</sup> of April 2007

<sup>2</sup> Interview with Allice, volunteer at A.C.J., 20<sup>th</sup> of April 2007

<sup>3</sup> Interview with Karina Erland, volunteer at Mundo de Niños, 6<sup>th</sup> of June 2007

<sup>4</sup> Interview with Anita Johanson, coordinator at Mundo de Niños, 17<sup>th</sup> of April 2007, translated from Spanish

In addition to the fact that a volunteer needs to have the right profile to fulfill the volunteer work according to the wishes of the local partner organization, the amount of volunteers volunteering at the same time on a project is something to be supervised. When the amount of volunteers related to the employees in an organization is out of balance, the coordination of tasks is more difficult. Anita, coordinator at Mundo de Niños explains: *'Now we have four volunteers and two more girls are coming from Otra Cosa next week, which makes six already, so suddenly it is a lot for us. We also feel bad when the volunteer comes, that's to say we accept and accept, we've fallen into this mistake and the volunteer comes and is bored here; we don't want that'*.<sup>1</sup> Most partner organizations prefer a continuous process for the arrival of volunteers. For Otra Cosa it is not always possible to arrange for the departure of one volunteer to coincide with the arrival of another. However, this could be more of a focus point for the Otra Cosa volunteer agency to monitor the flow of volunteers for the local partner organization.

Another problem the local partner organizations have noticed is that some volunteers do see volunteer work as an offer without engagement. For the organizations it is important that the volunteer sticks to the time schedule that has been arranged. In practice the volunteers sometimes feel free to change their schedule, which underlines the statement that voluntary work is seen by some volunteers as an offer without engagement: *'Also there are volunteers who go off traveling to Cajamarca or Cuzco and you never see them again. It's inconvenient, it affects the planning of work; or you are expecting a volunteer on a certain day and they don't turn up, then later on they turn up and you have no longer included them, it affects planning and it is difficult to know what to do when this happens'*.<sup>2</sup>

Preferably, the local organization should have a bigger voice or intern tune in concerning the requirements and flow of volunteers assisting their organizations, to prevent that too many people from volunteering at the same time without the right knowledge. In the organizations that work with children it is very important that the coordination between the local project members and the volunteers are adapted to each other, in order to work as a team for the children and not against one another. Therefore, the expectations of the role the volunteer will fulfill in the project should be clearly defined in advance and the volunteer should be aware that the volunteer work is not without engagement.

### ***3.1.3 Organizations where enthusiasm required***

The third category is of organizations where mainly enthusiasm or other soft skills are required. At the Otra Cosa restaurant and Un Lugar surf school, the volunteers are of additional help to the organization. Their task mainly consists of assisting the local partner organizations in their daily tasks, which refers more to working with the 'hands' than with the 'head'. Decisions are made by the local

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<sup>1</sup> Interview with Anita Johanson, coordinator at Mundo de Niños, 17<sup>th</sup> of April 2007, translated from Spanish

<sup>2</sup> Interview with Nicolás Quiroz, employee of A.C.J., 18<sup>th</sup> of April 2007, translated from Spanish

partner organizations. For the volunteers this gives clearness about the tasks they have to fulfill, or at least about the fact that they are working for someone. On the other hand the boss-employee relation can cause some friction, for example when the leisure element is playing a role for the volunteer.

Un Lugar is a surf school set up by Juan Carlo. He runs the school by himself. In the busy season, when there are a lot of kids, the volunteers give a hand with looking after the boards, cleaning or even constructing a house. The communication between Juan Carlo and the volunteers is sometimes difficult, April explains:

*'It's a very different experience, sometimes it's confusing for me. I don't have to know what exactly is going on. Sometimes he does something I don't understand, I just think, ok, whatever. We have communication problems, and I don't think only because of my Spanish. I think he has hard time communication problems communicating with other people. I have a very basic level of Spanish, I think Peter was pretty aware of my little knowledge, but I have had some Spanish classes at high school. I can express what I want'.<sup>1</sup>*

Juan Carlo of Un Lugar points that there are some problems in the expectations of the volunteer work. He sees the volunteers as real workers, and does not like when the volunteers are too holiday-minded: *'They come for holidays. The last ones came here on a holiday, that's what they showed me because they did not want to do things'.<sup>2</sup>* This example underlines as well that it is very relevant that expectations about the responsibilities of the volunteers are fine-tuned.

Otra Cosa restaurant was started as an initiative of Peter and Janneke, but ownership has since been taken over by four local Peruvian women. Otra Cosa restaurant's organizational structure includes a manager, two head cooks, and a cleaning lady. With the extra help from flexible persons and volunteers they manage to keep the restaurant running. The volunteers help by working in the kitchen or by serving food. When there are no volunteers their own personnel has to work more hours by volunteering themselves: *'The aim of having volunteers is to avoid spending the revenue on another person. You would think that it would be easy because you can have a lot of volunteers and not pay much in salaries, but we have some staff like Annie and Veronica who work as kitchen assistants, one in the morning and one on the evening'.<sup>3</sup>* The relation with the volunteers is informal and the tasks and working hours are deliberated with the volunteers. In terms of local participation there is no misunderstanding about the fact that the volunteers are the employees and the local project members the boss.

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<sup>1</sup> Interview with April Mietz, volunteer at Un Lugar Surf School, 3<sup>rd</sup> of April 2007

<sup>2</sup> Interview with Juan Carlo Huarote, owner of Un Lugar Surf School, 30<sup>th</sup> of May 2007, translated from Spanish

<sup>3</sup> Interview with Marylin Velasquez Arevalo, manager at Otra Cosa restaurant, 19<sup>th</sup> of April 2007, translated from Spanish

### 3.2 Educational elements

The second aspect of sustainability is that it should contain educational elements. In general in tourism, the first form of education referred to is that of the tourist visiting and learning about other cultures. A second form of education to refer to, is that which relates to the training of the 'hosts' so that they have a better understanding of the wishes of the 'guests' who are visiting them (Mowforth and Munt 1998). Though in volunteer tourism education also has another meaning, due to the fact that volunteers are recruited to transfer knowledge towards the focus group of the local partner organization. There are several key questions regarding the transfer of knowledge from volunteers towards the focus group. Firstly, we must consider if a transfer of knowledge towards a focus group exists and if so, if this knowledge is being transferred to the right focus group. And accordingly what impact does the transfer of knowledge have towards the focus group. To optimize the impact of the knowledge transfer during volunteer work, it is important that the selection of volunteers is coherent to the requests of the organizations. This section focuses on how the knowledge of the volunteers is transferred towards the focus groups and what the impact of this transfer is.

#### 3.2.1 Knowledge from volunteer towards the focus group

The transfer of knowledge by volunteers towards a focus group is mostly embedded in the organizations where expertise is necessary, these organizations are Fairmail, Espaanglish and the library project, where education is the core activity of the organization. For the organizations where a certain expertise of volunteers is preferable, it depends on the activities the volunteers fulfill as to how far there is an exchange of knowledge from the volunteers towards a focus group. For the organizations where a certain expertise is not required, there is a limited transfer of knowledge to a focus group. These volunteers mainly support the organization and not a specific focus group.

Of the organizations where education is the core business, Fairmail is the only project that makes use of the capacity of volunteers to train local people, who can train other people in the future. The five teenagers, who are being trained now by volunteers, will be the teachers of a new group of teenagers. With this insight, they have made it possible to strengthen the local capacity. The teenagers descend from two other partner organizations Mundo de Niños and A.C.J., which signifies that there is an organization behind each teenager and that these teenagers have fewer changes in society. By organizing a workshop the teenagers with real interest have formed the Fairmail team.<sup>1</sup> Though Janneke also admits that it can be difficult to define who can be part of Fairmail and who can not: *'A woman asked me if it was possible for her daughter to join the photography classes. At that moment I was wondering about who is poor and who is not'?*<sup>2</sup>

When knowledge is being transferred to a focus group, the second question is regarding the people who are supposed to benefit from the volunteer work. The English classes of Espaanglish are supposed to give poor people the ability to follow English classes. This is one of the reasons that Otra

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<sup>1</sup> Interview with Janneke Smeulders, owner of Fairmail, 6<sup>th</sup> of April 2007, translated from Dutch

<sup>2</sup> Interview with Janneke Smeulders, owner of Fairmail, 6<sup>th</sup> of April 2007, translated from Dutch

Cosa is supporting Espaanglish as well. With the help of the volunteers, the prices of the classes are lower than other language schools in the surrounding area. However, there is no supervision of the people who are enrolling for a class and most of them do not belong to the focus group Espaanglish focuses on. This problem is acknowledged by David: *'So there is a dilemma regarding people who in reality have money and know that English is important; I don't want these people here in the school, because this school is supposed to be for people who don't have much money. So there is a conflict of interest between accepting these people and not accepting them'*.<sup>1</sup> By moving the school to Las Lomas, a poor area of Huanchaco, he is trying to reach the persons who are not able to pay classes at a 'normal' language school.

To measure the impact of the knowledge transfer is difficult, though Elke mentions: *'With the English classes I think they get something out of it. They can't pretend that they have studied English, but when they apply for a job in a hotel or restaurant they have some skills, it might help. Perhaps the manager might appreciate the effort'*.<sup>2</sup> At the library project English is taught to 60 pupils from Huanchaco and 40 pupils from a primary school in Las Lomas, the poor neighbourhood of the Huanchaco district. On the first day, a volunteer called Christine, was introduced by a teacher of a school in Las Lomas with the following words: *'You need to pay attention to this woman, she comes from a developed country to teach you English, so you can have a better future, so don't waste her time'*.<sup>3</sup> In this case the work of the volunteer is more seen as a top-down approach, which should stimulate the children to pay attention. Though for the children themselves this urgency is not visible, although they are really positive, like Christine explains: *'they truly want to learn, eventually it will help them to get better jobs. But for the kids it's hard to see the long term picture. I think mostly the parents support them to learn English to have a better future. They don't learn English until 7th grade in public schools. In private schools they start learning English when they are young'*.<sup>4</sup> In those cases when the volunteer is teaching skills to the right focus group it is still difficult to measure the impact this has on a longer term. However, when skills are being transferred to the right target group, this is relation to sustainability a very good example of volunteer tourism.

The focus groups of the organizations where 'expertise is preferable' is relatively big. At C.E.P. around 200 children are attending classes and A.C.J. is working with amongst 1000 people, Mundo de Niños is working with maximum fourteen boys. In these organizations are more local people and volunteers working together.

At Un Lugar and Otra Cosa restaurant knowledge exchange is mainly based on intercultural learning between the volunteers and the local employees and between the volunteers and the focus groups of the organizations. This aspect will receive more attention in the section about cultural sustainability.

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<sup>1</sup> Interview with David Mercedes, owner of Espaanglish, 19<sup>th</sup> of April 2007, translated from Spanish

<sup>2</sup> Interview with Elke Nitzschke, volunteer at Espaanglish, 19<sup>th</sup> of April 2007

<sup>3</sup> Interview Christine Batson, volunteer at the Library Project, 16<sup>th</sup> of June 2007

<sup>4</sup> Interview Christine Batson, volunteer at the Library Project, 16<sup>th</sup> of June 2007



## The sustainability of volunteer tourism



After having taken a look at the first two elements of sustainability; local participation in Otra Cosa's volunteer projects and the role of education in this, this empirical chapter focuses on the economical, social, cultural and ecological elements of sustainability of volunteer tourism at the local partner organizations of Otra Cosa.

### 4.1 Economic sustainability

Economic sustainability refers to *'a level of economic gain from the activity sufficient either to cover the cost of any special measures taken to cater for the tourists and to mitigate the effects of the tourist's presence'* (Mowforth and Munt 1998: 111). The mission of volunteer tourism is to improve the circumstances of the focus group. This chapter focuses on how far volunteer tourism relates to economic consequences for the focus group or organization they are volunteering for. Furthermore volunteers are working at the local partner organizations without receiving a salary. This means that for the local partner organizations working with volunteers is cheaper than hiring local employees. The following questions might be asked: Do volunteers besides offering their 'hands' and 'heads' also donate money? And are volunteers replacing the work for local employees?

A project that illustrates the economic consequences of voluntary work is Fairmail. Fairmail has a direct influence on the economic situation of the teenagers who are working for Fairmail. The mission of Fairmail is to bring beautiful cards on to the market and allow the country that provides these cards to benefit from it. Fairmail achieves this by giving five teenagers the possibility to have an education in photography and develop their creativity. These teenagers who are the producers of the cards are living in Mundo de Niños or in El Milagro in Trujillo. Fifty percent of the profit is held back for the education of the teenagers. This money is exclusively for the teenagers themselves, which has been stated in a contract between the teenager and Fairmail. Besides an investment for their education Fairmail reserves money for their insurance, this also benefits their families. The teenagers earn pocket money with the packing of the cards. This money is not bound to any rules and can be spent according to their own needs, which also stimulate their parents to stay enthusiastic about Fairmail. Many postcards from developing countries are printed in the Western world. Fairmail has chosen to print the cards at a local print shop and use local products for the manufacturing of the cards. Fairmail cards are sold in the 'Wereldwinkels' and at some private selling points in the Netherlands, The United States and Peru. Their main selling strategy is an Internet shop.

A second aspect of economic impact of volunteer work is donation, in money or goods, directly by the volunteers or indirectly by encouraging their social network to donate. Karina, who is volunteering at Mundo de Niños already mentions the fact that she is going to encourage her friends at home to support this organization:

*'Now I know that it's possible for example to donate money each month, through the website of Mundo de Niños, its controlled form Germany. Now I know the place, when I come home, and some of my friends would like to donate money to for example the Red Cross, I can say: "hey do it here, I know the little place, they need the money". And I think I would also like to give 25 or 50 soles a month when I leave or when I get a job. To give some money, because I know where the money is going to end, they need it. It makes you aware of the problem of street children in South America and when I go home I can tell people about it and try to make them more aware. People know about it but at the same time they don't really realize what it exactly means to be a street child'.<sup>1</sup>*

Espaanglish and Mundo de Niños have also been able to improve their organizations with the help of donations in money or in goods by volunteers. C.E.P. has been supported with a few thousand Dollars which were collected by volunteers of Otra Cosa.<sup>2</sup> Although the exact amount of money donated to the local partner organizations are not known, the partner organizations are aware that the volunteers can bring in some extra funding, which might make working with volunteers more attractive to them.

A third aspect is that the volunteers are working without receiving a salary. The financial structure of the local organizations has to be clear and transparent for all stakeholders involved, as well the volunteers. In some cases this can otherwise lead to discrepancies. Elke, volunteering at Espaanglish had some queries about the financial organization of the language school:

*'To appreciate the volunteer work, somebody should pay something in the whole system. Who should pay? The volunteer offers his time and energy. But it shouldn't be that someone profits financially of this situation. So, how can we improve this program? As it is now, David has certain costs to run the school. But when the school is successful, he earns more than needed to run the school. There is no supervision on this. Not only the people who should take advantage of it. I think David should get a salary that is limited. The other benefits should go to the project. There should be a supervisor above'.<sup>3</sup>*

This example shows that volunteer work still has a relationship with financial questions. Transparency about the financial structure could give the volunteers more confidence in the way the organization is organized, although also in this case the financial structure is the responsibility of the project or organization itself.

Most organizations are working with volunteers for budgetary reasons or because the knowledge is not available locally. The jobs that are done by volunteers are in many cases jobs that otherwise would not be fulfilled because of costs. Peter, manager from the library project underlines:

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<sup>1</sup> Interview with Karina Erland, volunteer at Mundo de Niños, 6<sup>th</sup> of June 2007

<sup>2</sup> Juany Murphy, 28<sup>th</sup> of April 2008

<sup>3</sup> Interview with Elke Nitzschke, volunteer at Espaanglish, 18th of April 2007

*'Volunteers are not ideal. Ideally we would have well-paid professional experienced teachers but we don't have the budget for that and the municipality here and the education system here in Peru doesn't have the budget nor enough trained English teachers to provide English teaching for the primary school for age 6 to 11 pupils. So, what we are trying to do is supplement what is provided and what is paid for, by something that is free to the students and to the parents'.<sup>1</sup>*

Also in projects where volunteers are of additional help, Juan Carlo would have asked more help from the kids with the surfing classes and other organizations would be left for example with an old-fashioned website. In other cases the volunteer work that is done is an extra benefit for the local projects, because otherwise they would need to pay money for the service: *'I have made a website for Fairmail, which has an online shop as well. The costs to construct are very expensive. I do not think that they would have paid that money for it'.<sup>2</sup>* Volunteers also help with the marketing of the different volunteer projects, for example by promoting the surf school and Otra Cosa restaurant to other tourists. For this reason the volunteer work is sustainable, because it does not replace the jobs, which would have been otherwise available for local persons.

Additionally volunteer tourists, as well as other tourists spend money on a local level for their daily costs, *'I pay a local family 140 soles a week, rent a surfboard, eat and drink in Huanchaco. So I think daily 20 soles. And I'm teaching them English, so they can get money from other tourists. I think Otra Cosa is doing a really good job by supporting the local economy and tourism. They are bringing in money that probably would be spent somewhere else and they bring them in for a long time'.<sup>3</sup>* These different economic consequences of volunteer tourism show that volunteer tourism affects in many positive ways the sustainable development by improving the economic situation for the focus group and or the partner organizations. Volunteer tourism does not compete with jobs on the local market and besides this they also contribute to the local economy.

#### **4.2 Social sustainability**

Social sustainability refers to *'the ability of a community, whether local or national to absorb inputs, such as extra people, for short or long periods of time, and to continue functioning either without the creation of social disharmony as a result of these inputs or by adapting its functions and relationship so that the disharmony created can be alleviated or mitigated'* (Mowforth and Munt 1998: 106). In other words what is the influence of the presence of the volunteers of Otra Cosa in the local community of Huanchaco. Volunteers stay longer in the local community, use different accommodation and have different contacts than other tourists. The members of the local partner organizations and the volunteers have been asked in which ways volunteer tourists differ from 'normal

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<sup>1</sup> Interview with Peter Murphy, manager of the Library Project, 1<sup>st</sup> of June 2007

<sup>2</sup> Interview Jeroen Bijsterbosch, volunteer at C.E.P, Fairmail and Un Lugar, 27<sup>th</sup> of March 2007, translated from Dutch

<sup>3</sup> Interview Christine Batson, volunteer at the Library Project, 16<sup>th</sup> of June 2007

tourists', April mentions: *'Most tourists come to Huanchaco for a day or two, just to see the beach. I'm here a longer time and I'm more involved in the community. So I meet other people and not only tourists. That would have been more difficult if I didn't do this work. You go to all the places in town and not only the hotspots'.<sup>1</sup>* What is interesting is that the volunteers feel different or maybe even superior to other tourists, because of the fact that they stay longer in one place and know the place better than someone who just arrives: *'I don't see myself as a normal tourist. People are asking me always buy this or buy that. Then I'm saying I live here people, please leave me alone'.<sup>2</sup>* Also the members of the local partner organizations do have different views on volunteer tourists. David from Espaanglish states that he appreciates that the volunteers do not only visit Peru for its cultural heritage, but prefer to get to know the people of Peru:

*'For me I believe that the only reason that a person comes from another country and wants to stay in a country like Peru and work as a volunteer is that they are looking for something extra. For me a country is its people, the people make the country, and you can't claim to know a country if you only go to 'Chan Chan' or 'Macchu Picchu' and the like, you will know its culture and its archeological ruins of what once was this country, something which is also beautiful and important; but these people have another meaning for traveling by staying and seeing why the people are like they are, finding out why South American guys stroll along blowing kisses to all the ladies, or why they are the happiest of all. A normal tourist wants to know all this but doesn't have much time, They take photos like Japanese people, if they had the time they'd do other things or they're not used to it or they just don't want to. If a tourist decided to stay for longer in a country, for me it means something more in terms of personality'.<sup>3</sup>*

Other members of local partner organizations do see less difference with normal tourists. For example Juan Carlo, who states that volunteers only come for a holiday and are not responsible for the tasks they have to do or incapable of sticking to the working schedule.

Otra Cosa tries to stimulate integration between the volunteers and the local people. They believe therefore that there should not be too many volunteers at the same time on the same projects. Peter outlines: *'When there are three or four volunteers on one project they integrate less on the work floor, as well as in their spare time, with the Peruvians. When there are more than two persons renting a room in a house of a local family, this disturbs the family relations as well. English will be the spoken language and the volunteers will be ignorant to the things that are happening in the family'.<sup>4</sup>* At the moment this is not the case, which enables contacts between the local families and the volunteers. Housing of volunteers by local families creates understanding for each other's culture.

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<sup>1</sup> Interview with April Mietz, volunteer at Un Lugar Surf School, 3<sup>rd</sup> of April 2007

<sup>2</sup> Interview with Tanja Wijker, volunteer at Otra Cosa restaurant, 8<sup>th</sup> of April 2007, translated from Dutch

<sup>3</sup> Interview with David Mercedes, owner of Espaanglish, 19<sup>th</sup> of April 2007, translated from Spanish

<sup>4</sup> Interview with Peter den Hond, founder Otra Cosa, 24<sup>th</sup> of March 2007, translated from Dutch

Most of the accommodations of the volunteers are in the richer part of Huanchaco, close to the beach. Unless a volunteer is not open to social contacts, there is always a certain community, which exists for most of surfers, who try to integrate with the volunteers and become 'friends'. The volunteers are in this case not only connected to the partner organization where they are volunteering, or house they are living in, but also connected to local society. In some cases the partner organizations do not appreciate the social network of the volunteers: *'What happens is that the foreign girls attract the boys like honey here and unfortunately some of the girls fall in love with what we call "bricheros". We've had the case where a girl was coming with a boy that we knew that had been here, that used drugs, but the girl knew how to manage the kids very well'*.<sup>1</sup> Although volunteers do make, good or bad, Peruvian friends in Huanchaco, almost all of the volunteers appreciate the fact that there are other international volunteers around. During the weekly volunteer lunch organized by Otra Cosa, they share experiences or talk about a theme in volunteer work. The volunteers mention emotional support of other volunteers, sharing experiences and hanging out together in their spare time, as an important value. Because of this limited contact volunteer tourism does not create an imbalance in the social relations on a local level. A negative point for the social sustainability might be that people or organizations, who are not renting a room to volunteers or are not working with volunteers in their organizations, and would have liked to, are having negative feelings towards volunteer tourism.

#### **4.3 Cultural sustainability**

Cultural sustainability refers to the impact that tourists have on the relationships within a society, the advantages of interaction on lifestyles, customs and traditions. Culture is dynamic, so this does not mean that tourism causes only negative effects. Cultural sustainability refers to: *'the ability of people to retain or adapt elements of their culture which distinguish them from other people'* (Mowforth and Munt 1998: 109). This section highlights the most common cultural elements which play a role in volunteer tourism. Due to the fact that it has not been studied what the effects were on the local level, the focus of this section relates to cultural sustainability at the partner organizations of Otra Cosa.

With volunteer tourism the host-guest relation is extremely intensive, making cultural differences more visible. Volunteers always look at situations from a Western point of view, and in some cases they would like to transfer their norms and values towards the partner organization or focus group. First of all in the projects where education is the core business, there are differences between the Peruvian way of teaching and 'the Western' way of teaching. Some volunteers have difficulties with this system:

*'And other costumes and values as well, for example when they are eating they are sitting at three different tables, and they don't eat at the same time, like for lunch, the one who is going to school eats first. You're just standing there and watching them, and I hate that. In my former work, we all sat down together. It was really a big deal, that everybody was*

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<sup>1</sup> Interview with Anita Johanson, coordinator at Mundo de Niños, 17<sup>th</sup> of April 2007, translated from Spanish

*sitting down and trying to have a nice conversation, about what did you do today, was it nice. Different things, like a family situation. And they don't have that. I can't see it and it's something that bothers me very much'.<sup>1</sup>*

Alice had a similar experience with the difference in teaching methods while volunteering at A.C.J.: *'The children sit down the whole time. I asked them to stand up, shake their bodies out, so they felt more as a group working together. But the others were surprised and asked me why are you doing that and continued their homework'.<sup>2</sup>* An opposite strategy of a volunteer, what Alice was practising, is to adapt to the Peruvian way of teaching. She underlines that she is involved for too short a time to make a difference: *'In developing countries you have different systems of teaching. Some things I don't agree upon, but I am here only for a month and don't stick my nose in it too much'.<sup>3</sup>* Still, in both ways of dealing with the difference in teaching systems, the volunteers have the feeling that Western ways of teaching are in most cases better than the Peruvian ways. In some cases the Peruvian organizations take over some aspects, like Nicolás mentioned that he learnt from a different teaching method:

*'When a volunteer came, we got to observe a different dynamic; another example is the volunteer who did the puppet workshop, which certainly changed our usual timetable, but made you realize that there are activities which can be recreational but which have an educational base, academic reinforcement isn't everything, homework isn't everything, there are also other ways of educating. All this has been quite useful to us'.<sup>4</sup>*

The local partner organizations do in some cases have problems with the way some volunteers are dressed. For example at Mundo de Niños, the boys are between eight and eighteen years old. To show their affection they are used to getting a hug from the supervisors of Mundo de Niños. Though this becomes complicated when the boys reach puberty and the clothing style of the volunteers is in many cases more underdressed than the other employees of Mundo de Niños:

*'There was one girl who was coming with very short skirt, we told the volunteer that there are kids, boys coming into adolescence and adolescents; and sometimes they get a crush on a volunteer, then when the older ones hug you they no longer hug you like a child does, so they grab your waist and give you a kiss here, brushing your neck; so we always say that they must have respect. One volunteer told me that it didn't bother her. I don't know if she didn't realize that they were doing it with other intentions'.<sup>5</sup>*

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<sup>1</sup> Interview with Karina Erland, volunteer at Mundo de Niños, 6<sup>th</sup> of June 2007

<sup>2</sup> Interview with Elke Nitzschke, volunteer at Espaanglish, 18<sup>th</sup> of April 2007

<sup>3</sup> Interview with Elke Nitzschke, volunteer at Espaanglish, 18<sup>th</sup> of April 2007

<sup>4</sup> Interview with Nicolás Quiroz, employee of A.C.J., 18<sup>th</sup> of April 2007, translated from Spanish

<sup>5</sup> Interview with Anita Johanson, coordinator at Mundo de Niños, 17<sup>th</sup> of April 2007, translated from Spanish

Also in Otra Cosa restaurant the appearance of the volunteers is important, as they are working with customers:

*'Us Peruvians we have a bit of prejudice or you could say ethic for certain things. Such was the case when one volunteer arrived from the USA to work as a kitchen hand. A lady saw him coming out of the kitchen with his hand in his long, greasy hair; the lady came up to me and told me that he would look better with his hair tied back and cleaner. He accepted the suggestion'.<sup>1</sup>*

In most cases the partner organizations correct the volunteers when they are not dressed in the way they think is appropriate. In many cases the local people and volunteers show interest in the culture of each other. In Otra Cosa restaurant the volunteers get a lot of personal attention from the manager as well as from the other women of Otra Cosa. They help the volunteer when he or she is not feeling alright and they share information about each other's cultures: *'Of course, like dancing, preparing food. They always try and help and make them understand. Olga and Rosa are like mothers to them, always advising them and listening if they have a problem and they also teach us a lot of things and help us open up our minds'.<sup>2</sup>* Not only for the volunteer's colleagues, but also for the focus group of the partner organizations, conversations between Peruvian people and volunteers make both their world bigger. At Espaanglish the students ask a lot of questions to their foreign teachers to learn more about the culture of the volunteer: *'They want to know how life is elsewhere, what the differences are. I am sure that I am learning things from them as well'.<sup>3</sup>* Sometimes there is no understanding for the differences in culture, *'They ask a lot of questions about my country. They accept anything I say, they are at the age of accepting. One student said: 'I don't have to learn from you, because you are a gringa.' And I didn't see him back. I don't know what was going on'.<sup>4</sup>*

For Peruvian people and mainly children, who in many cases do not have the possibility to travel, the contact with volunteers might be very impressive in a positive manner, but maybe in negative ways too. By getting to know Western people personally, hearing stories and seeing the new technologies, they form a positive picture of living in a Western country, where they all would like to travel to and at least give them an inferior picture of their own situation. It makes them aware of the economic differences and less or not ashamed to ask money from volunteers. Furthermore being in contact on a daily base with foreign volunteers from different parts of the world they are going to be influenced in some way: *'The kids they like it when foreign volunteers come, they become to like them very quickly, they see them in a different way and want to be more like them, to have more*

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<sup>1</sup> Interview with Marylin Velasquez Arevalo, manager at Otra Cosa restaurant, 19<sup>th</sup> of April 2007, translated from Spanish

<sup>2</sup> Interview with Marylin Velasquez Arevalo, manager at Otra Cosa restaurant, 19<sup>th</sup> of April 2007, translated from Spanish

<sup>3</sup> Interview with Elke Nitzschke, volunteer at Espaanglish, 19<sup>th</sup> of April 2007

<sup>4</sup> Interview Christine Batson, volunteer at the Library Project, 16<sup>th</sup> of June 2007

*independence, they trust them more. With a Peruvian volunteer it's a slower process, with the foreigner it's immediate'.<sup>1</sup> Summarizing volunteer tourism contributes in many ways to cultural sustainability, intercultural understanding is broadened and for all people involved it is learningful. In some cases the volunteers do not have the cultural sensitivity to feel what they can and can not do in relation to the volunteer work. In these cases cultural differences are making the volunteer work more difficult.*

#### **4.4 Ecological sustainability**

Ecological sustainability refers to: *'the impacts, effects and implications to the natural environment'* (Mowforth and Munt 1998; Aabo, 2006). In the case of Otra Cosa the question is in which ways volunteer tourism has an influence on the natural environment. The surveyed partner organizations did not have to improving the natural environment as a direct goal, though indirectly there have certainly been some effects. The most visible influence is the difference in treating garbage and recycling. Most Western volunteers as well as Otra Cosa try to stimulate recycling and awareness about garbage in their volunteer work: *'I would like to talk about the beach and garbage. The other day they brought candies and threw the paper on the floor. I told them that it was their library, where they live, maybe you want to pick it up. They looked at me like they' never thought about that. So maybe indirectly, we make them think about other places and where they live'.<sup>2</sup> Also Karina, who is volunteering at Mundo de Niños, promotes this idea:*

*'No one has talked about it so far. But I think it is an important thing because when the youths were living on the street, they would just throw plastic and things everywhere. And they still do it sometimes, and then I'm like give it to me and we can put it in the bin. So it is also a big part of their education. Just being clean and not wearing dirty clothes, wash their hands, have a shower, things like that. It's a big thing'.<sup>3</sup>*

The local partner organizations also acknowledge the effects of the volunteers on this theme.

*'The volunteers are very well educated people, for example, if they accompany a child to school, they tell them, if they're eating something, to throw their rubbish in the bin. Also they've helped us to collect rubbish off the beach with the kid; we've also had volunteers supporting us with recycling by going to collect plastic bottles and cans and then making things with them'.<sup>4</sup>*

With the tips from the Otra Cosa Restaurant a former volunteer made nightlights from recycled plastic bottles for each of the boys from Mundo de Niños and at C.E.P. several projects have been developed by former volunteers in the natural environment field. Related to ecological sustainability in the volunteer projects of Otra Cosa there is a positive relation.

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<sup>1</sup> Interview with Nicolás Quiroz, employee of A.C.J., 18<sup>th</sup> of April 2007, translated from Spanish

<sup>2</sup> Interview Christine Batson, volunteer at the Library Project, 16<sup>th</sup> of June 2007

<sup>3</sup> Interview with Karina Erland, volunteer at Mundo de Niños, 6<sup>th</sup> of June 2007

<sup>4</sup> Interview with Anita Johanson, coordinator at Mundo de Niños, 17<sup>th</sup> of April 2007, translated from Spanish

# 5

## Conclusion



Over the last few years the number of private initiatives in development co-operation being set up has increased drastically, compared to the more moderate growth in previous years. The scholarly debate that has arisen subsequently ascertains that working with volunteers is a broadly implemented method in the strategy of these initiatives to reach their goals. By linking volunteer tourism to these private initiatives in development co-operation and involving all stakeholders, a holistic approach between local and Western actors on small scale development co-operation is outlined.

The objective of this thesis was to analyze in which ways volunteer tourism organized by private initiatives in development co-operation relates to sustainable development of the organizations where the volunteers are working and the local community in which these organizations are active. Otra Cosa is being stated as an example for the estimated 10,000 to 15,000 Dutch private initiatives in developing countries. The sustainability criteria as defined in the theoretical chapter are local participatory, educational and sustainable.

Otra Cosa as an intermediary agency gives space to the local organizations to define the characteristics of the requested volunteers. Otra Cosa is working demand driven by the local partner organizations, though in their monitoring and evaluation more attention is given to the experience of the volunteer than to the evaluation of the partner organizations.

Otra Cosa is not involved with the management of the partner organizations and the influence of the volunteers towards the policy of the organizations is limited. In all the organizations, ownership belongs to the local organizations. The volunteers have the most influence towards the policy of the organization, where they are recruited for their specific expertise and therefore are more equal to the local partner organizations. In these organizations they have a bigger voice and are used as a sparring partner for the project owners. Two out of three of these organizations do have foreign ownership, which makes the cultural differences between the project members and the volunteers smaller, compared with the organizations that have Peruvian ownership. Where volunteers played a big role in the organization with Peruvian management, more disagreement about policies arose. Which implicates that it is important that volunteers are recruited for their expertise, though that the management is in local hands.

The transfer of knowledge by volunteer tourism towards the focus group of the local partner organization is a condition that contributes to sustainable development. There are differences between the local organizations in the tasks that the volunteers have to fulfill and the role of educational transfer towards the focus group. The best example of knowledge transfer is where the volunteers have as a task to teach the local community skills which they can go on to teach other people in the community, which is the case with Fairmail.

The volunteer projects where languages are taught are another good example of knowledge that is less available on a local level. This gap in local knowledge can be easily overcome by working with volunteers. In other organizations it is more difficult to implement the knowledge of the volunteers, due to the short stay of the volunteers and the differences in working methods and approaches. Another restriction is that people who are volunteering at Otra Cosa are mostly young and do not possess a certain expertise area, although the volunteer work they are applying for is most often in line with their future job perspective. When the volunteers are not specifically selected for their knowledge, volunteer work can still be useful in terms of intercultural learning. Learning in volunteer tourism is mutual; the volunteers describe volunteer work as a way for personal growth, cultural exchange and professional development and the partner organizations are mostly satisfied about the volunteers of Otra Cosa. For the local organization it is a way of getting to know different lifestyles and working methods. In terms of sustainability in volunteer tourism it is the most sustainable when skills are transferred by the volunteers toward the focus group, but volunteer tourism is not unsustainable when volunteers and project members are 'just' learning from each other.

The sustainability criteria consist of four elements. Economic consequences of volunteer tourism are an increased income for the focus group, for example at Fairmail the teenagers are taught by the volunteers how to take better photographs, which subsequently means that their income increases when more post cards are sold. Another effect of volunteer tourism is that it reduces the costs for certain groups in the local community. The participants of Espaanglish's language classes have to pay less for enrolment compared to regular language courses and by working with volunteers the classes for the children of the Library Project are for free. In this way volunteer tourism can improve the living conditions of people, who have fewer chances than the 'average' community members.

In the researched organizations volunteers are fulfilling jobs that are additional to the employees of the partner organizations. This means that these jobs would otherwise not have existed or that the local personnel would have had to work harder. Volunteer tourism is sustainable for not competing with local jobs. Donation of money or goods by the volunteers or the network of the volunteers towards the local partner organizations is a side effect of volunteer work. Exact amounts of money donated by volunteers are not known. Most partner organizations rely for their financial on foreign funds and see the donations of volunteers as a welcome replenishment. At some organizations volunteer work might have been used as a method to expose the organization to Western people in order to gain access to external funds in the future. For the sustainability of the local projects it might be sustainable as well to have access to foreign funds, though private initiatives who are working with volunteers should be aware that this is not the main reason for participation with volunteers.

The difference between volunteer tourists and 'normal' tourists is not unanimous. The volunteers are appreciated by the partner organizations for their interest in the people of Huanchaco, though other members of partner organizations do have difficulties when because of travel or leisure the volunteer can not stick to the original time schedule that has been agreed upon. Therefore, it will

be more sustainable when volunteer tourism is less seen as tourism and more as work by the volunteers themselves to benefit more to the local organizations. Volunteer tourists have more contacts with different groups in the local community, because of the housing in local families, work in a local organization and the friends they are make with local persons. Still, also for volunteer tourists there is an invisible barrier between the 'authentic' local life and the places and people they are meeting. Volunteer tourists are sleeping at local families, hang out in bars mostly frequented by tourists and eat mostly in restaurants where food is served for tourists and at tourist prices.

The amount of volunteers in Huanchaco is too small to affect the local culture in such a way as to change lifestyle, customs and traditions. However at the organizational level the presence of foreign volunteers is affecting the organization according to the focus groups.

Positive effects for cultural sustainability by volunteer tourism are the possibilities to broaden the world view for both the local partner organizations and their focus group and the volunteers. In some cases the local partner organizations appreciate the way volunteers take care of certain difficulties and adapt elements of their approaches to their own policy. Also the people who are taught by volunteers do have interest in sharing world views and all kinds of knowledge.

Difficulties for cultural sustainability are found in differences in teaching systems, where mainly the volunteer has difficulty adapting. Secondly, volunteer's way of dressing, which is in many cases too informal for Peruvian organizations. When young people are being taught by Western volunteers this has a huge impact on their daily life and view of Western society; exposures to wealth and language problems are factors that influence the cultural exchange more negatively. Cultural differences do have positive and negative effects on sustainability.

In Peru there is, in general, less attention for the natural environment. The volunteers have in many cases by talking about the subject or by initializing small projects about the natural environment improved the awareness for the natural environment by the local partner organizations and play therefore a significant role for ecological sustainability.

The objective of this research was in which ways volunteer tourism organized by private initiative in development co-operation relates to sustainable development. This research has shown that volunteer tourism relates in many positive ways to sustainable development, though there are negative relations as well.

The most important mind shift for volunteer tourism to contribute in a positive way to sustainable development is that the partner organizations and the local community should be the focus point of the private initiative and not in the first place the wishes of the volunteer. When the partner organizations do have a policy for working with volunteers and know what expertise is needed, the private initiative can function as a supplier of this knowledge. The role of the private initiative or intermediary organization is to be aware of the results of the volunteer work and preparation of both the volunteers and the local partner organizations. For volunteers it is important that they realize that their role is limited and that working methods do differ from Western ways of working. Volunteer tourism should not be seen as a holiday, but as a temporarily non-paid job abroad. When these

elements are taken into account volunteer tourism does contribute to sustainable development and can be a wonderful experience for the local organizations, the private initiative as well as the Western volunteers.

## Epilogue

In the mean time between leaving Huanchaco and the writing of this report several things have happened related to Otra Cosa. Janneke and Peter have decided to expand the Fairmail concept to other countries as well and have left Huanchaco behind. Though not without taking care of Otra Cosa, which has been taken over by Juany and Peter Murphy, an English Peruvian couple. Many of their projects are still located in Huanchaco district, though Otra Cosa is actually offering projects in Chiclayo, Moyabamba, Iquitos, Leymabamba, Siches and Nazca as well. The last 18 month 150 volunteers have been working in the different volunteer projects and a workshop has been organized for the local partner organizations.

Doing this research has given me the possibility to get to know a lot of beautiful initiatives in Peru and to meet a lot of dedicated and inspiring persons. The process of the writing of this report has been a bit more time consuming than estimated. So, thanks to all the people who have supported me to continue. Especially Elisabet, for your patience and positive feedback during the guidance. I also want to thank all the people who have been contributing to this thesis. Firstly, Peter, thank you for giving me the chance to do this research project at Otra Cosa. The people of the local partner organizations, which are Padre Tumba, Anita, Janneke, Marilyn, Juan Carlo, Peter M. and David. Thanks to all of you for your willingness to share your experiences, point of views and friendship. The volunteers Alice, Tanja, Jeroen, Karina, Christine, Laura, Elke, Mylene, Oscar, Holly and April for sharing your thoughts about the volunteer work and sharing spare time and friendship. I also would like to thank Juany and Maria for the support with Spanish interviewing. Finally, special thanks for Amy to take a look at my very Dutch English and Laura for the lay-out of the report.

I am still fascinated by the way in how people in different cultures are living their lives business wise and personally and will continue exploring intercultural learning and mutual understanding.

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## Appendix Profile local partner organizations

**Espaanglish** is a language school. Espaanglish is managed by David Mercedes. David is 24 years old and he's originally from Chimbote. He moved to Trujillo to study English in the Centre Cultural and because there is more tourism in Trujillo. After his degree in English he continued to study for another year to become a teacher as well. He previously taught Spanish to tourists, but didn't have a place to teach. Otra Cosa provided him a school in their backyard. Besides teaching Spanish to tourists he started to teach English and French to local people, who wouldn't normally have the money to study these languages. Students follow courses for one month, which are taught by the same volunteer, and only have to pay around a third of the normal cost for language classes. Most students have a low income and (want to) work in tourism, restaurants, and hospitals or on cruise ships to support their incomes. David, the local manager, does receive a salary as his work provides the continuity and quality which is essential for the language schools functioning. The language teachers are foreign volunteers, who are coordinated by David.

**Otra Cosa** is a vegetarian restaurant, the objective is to bring high quality service to national and international tourists. The restaurant was initiated by Peter and Janneke, but is now property of the women who are working in the restaurant. They have an informal way of service, making the customers feel as if they were at home. They feel a corporate sociability. With the tips they support organizations that are helping the poorest people. Furthermore they sell Mundo de Niños products in the restaurant, bags made by women, and the Fairmail post cards. The coffee and sugar is organic and comes from Sicches. The restaurant of Otra Cosa has always been closely connected with the volunteer agency. The current owners of Otra Cosa have worked with volunteers in the past, when the restaurant belonged to Peter and Janneke. They appreciated the help of the volunteers and therefore continue to work with volunteers.

**A.C.J.** is a worldwide organization for young Christians, the international name is YMCA. A.C.J. has been active in Peru for 87 years, and they mainly work in the area of social development and are active in Trujillo and Arequipa. North of Trujillo there is a village named El Milagro. The poorest part of this village is lying on and around a big garbage dump. The children of these families work on the dump to collect plastic and glass to sell. A.C.J. tries to stimulate the children to go to school and to keep on learning and developing themselves to find other ways of living. A.C.J. has four areas of interests, which are education, health, productive areas and civic empowerment. The project is aimed at working with the children, teenagers and the women of the community.

The organization structure of A.C.J. consists of a health, education and civic empowerment department. Two persons are working in the area of health, four persons in the area of education and two persons in the area of coordination. One person is working in the field of civic empowerment and one person is responsible for the area of Christian formation. A.C.J. is working with a thousand persons and 250 children. The organization has the capacity of four teachers who are working in shifts. Besides international volunteers A.C.J. is also working with Peruvian volunteers. Because of the quantity of work all extra help is welcome. At A.C.J. there is one person responsible for the recruitment of volunteers. In the daily practice the coordination is with the teachers.

**Un Lugar** is the surf school of surfer Juan Carlo. Juan Carlo is around 30 years old. He originates from Lima, where he attended primary and secondary school. He started to study at the university, but he didn't finish. He has done several jobs during his life. Amongst 7 year ago he arrived in Huanchaco for a beach festival and he actually never left. He started with handicrafts and later with surfing. Nowadays he has his own surf school 'Un Lugar'. Besides being a commercial surf school Juan Carlo wants to help the local youth by offering free surf classes and skateboarding lessons to the kids who can't afford it. He encourages them to participate in (national) competitions, and by this raising their self awareness. During summertime (December until April) he works with around 30 to 50 local youngsters (between 5 and 16 years old) who get pretty well organized daily surfing lessons. The rest of the year only a small group of (between 4 and 8) kids continue borrowing surfing equipment and taking classes, but classes are only given once a week. The number is much less then because the water gets colder (the school has old second hand wetsuits) and the summer holidays have ended by then. In the winter time this dies out completely as the water is too cold. Some of the kids hang around his place a lot during summer to help him run and clean the place and do occasional maintenance. Some of the best kids also help in teaching the beginners. He gives kids without the money to buy a board the chance to learn to surf (from each other) and brings the talents to national competition level. In practice about half of the summer students pay for their classes, the other half learns for free. Under Juan -Carlo's wings he teaches them about key values like respect and helping each other (*Otra Cosa*). Juan Carlo and Peter knew each other personally. When Peter started the volunteer agency he asked if Juan Carlo needed some help. Juan Carlo accepted the help, explaining that he could use some help of volunteers especially from January till March. A few years ago he didn't have a house, the volunteers helped him with constructing a house, besides assisting with the surfing classes.

**C.E.P.** is a private school, they aim at giving humanistic, ecological and free education to the children of the shanty town Ramon Castillo in Huanchaco from kinder garden till university. Their theme is '*Educarnos para un mundo mejor*' which means '*Let's educate ourselves for a better world*'. Despite the very active help of father Tumba, who is the founder, the school is not oriented towards any religion. Anyone is welcome and there is no discrimination. The parents are actively involved in running and building the school. Their vision is that in the year 2015 they will have realized around

the school an ecological and intercultural town and an agro industrial coop which is sustainable and runs itself. In 2002 the association registered itself in the books as a foundation with the member Víctor Hugo Tumba Ortiz as president. In 2005 the C.E.P. institution was officially created. Peter visited C.E.P. in 2006, when C.E.P. was starting to operate. Peter and Padre Tumba discussed the organization and structure of the school.

Now, in 2007, twelve teachers are working there, three social workers and on average six volunteers. Besides the areas of the organization, secretary, education and administration of the school, C.E.P. has a human promotion area. The human promotion area focuses on health, social work and a canteen, where breakfast and lunch is prepared for the children. They offer workshops for the mothers of Ramon Castillo and provide the kids with clothes and other useful products for school. There are amongst 200 children who are attending school at C.E.P.

**The Library Project** teaches English to pupils from the public schools in the Huanchaco district with the help of volunteers. The municipality and the education system in Peru doesn't have the budget and enough trained English teachers to provide English teaching for the primary school for age 6 to 11 pupils. With the library project what they try to do is supplement what is provided and what is paid for, by something that is free to the students and to the parents. The objectives of the library projects are not fixed yet. In the future they would like to offer the children a second level course. But their first priority is to get all these children through the first level course and we know that there are a lot of other schools waiting. Currently they cooperate with 2 schools and 50 students, although there are 41 schools in the Huanchaco district. 6 Months ago there was no library in Huanchaco. An American volunteer girl came with money from a church in America and she worked with Otra Cosa. They agreed upon the building and borrowing the books, and a library was set up. Three months ago the municipality appointed a librarian who works fulltime at the library. One of his ideas was that the library shouldn't be just a place where people can borrow books, it should be a social-cultural centre of the village that does other things. And one of the ideas he talked about, was English classes for children. So he came to talk about some basic English classes for the poorer kids of Huanchaco and this idea got correspondence. Otra Cosa provides the volunteers for the project. They started a pilot project a month ago. On May 2<sup>nd</sup> the first course with the volunteer Holly started and Christine has arrived and is taking over her classes. All the basic facilities are arranged. They have got some teachers, they have a place to teach and there are students. They are working with basic materials at the moment, which is what they would like to improve. Of the 41 Schools in the Huanchaco district the library project is now cooperating with two of them. The first one is in Las Lomas and the second one is on the edge of Huanchaco. The head master of the school in Las Lomas is a woman, and she's positive and cooperative. The other one is a much bigger school, it's bigger to run and more bureaucratic. The library project chose two of the core schools in Huanchaco from the poorest areas and went to see them, their teachers. They explained what sort of courses they'd be offering and asked the head teachers which parents would be interested to send their children. The first week 285 children

applied and there's only place for 50. The teachers are actually asked to select pupils who are good workers and with reasonable conduct. But there are no hard selection criteria yet. Huanchaco district is big, it stretches quite far, and it's on the outskirts of Trujillo on this side of town. Some there's a lot of other schools that are interested, and the mayor who came to open it, is interested in expanding it. This is I guess, politically, something the librarian he appointed is doing, and he agreed with it, and he's providing a few things so. So I don't know what will be on his political programme next time he will be elected. He's politically supported this, so I guess he sees this as something he's supported.

**Mundo de Niños** is an orphanage initiated by the German Andreas Clamer. The objective of Mundo de Niños is social reintegration of the boys who are living in Mundo de Niños. The capacity of Mundo de Niños is fourteen boys. The project workers of Mundo de Niños visit the kids who are living on the streets of Trujillo. They are mostly abandoned by their parents and have in many cases problems with alcohol and drugs. They try to motivate them to live in Mundo de Niños, but the boys always have to be motivated to go with them. When the boys are living in Mundo de Niños they first have to adapt to the rules of the house. After this period of adaptation they get the possibility to develop themselves personally and creatively. They go to school and are producing yoghurt and candles for the local and international market. These projects are serving to prepare and inspire them for a job in the future. At the age of 18 the program for the boys comes to an end and they are ready to live their life independently. Mundo de Niños is financed by donations, particularly from private donations from Germany. On a local level they get donations of products, like rice, sugar, eggs and milk. Otra Cosa and Mundo are neighbours. Before Otra Cosa started their volunteer agency Peter came to play with the children at the weekends. When they started their volunteer office, Peter offered to send them some volunteers, which was a good pilot scheme. This was the start of their co-operation. Later on two boys helped in the Otra Cosa restaurant and two other boys are photographers for Fairmail. Otra Cosa also sells Mundo de Niños candles and chocolates in its restaurant.



