

The Dutch Voluntourism Sector

A qualitative web content analysis of responsibility communication

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Department of Environmental Sciences

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Sèrah van den Brink

Registration Nr.: 920118125030

Examiners: prof.dr. René van der Duim (Wageningen University)

dr.ir. Karin Peters (Wageningen University)



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By the time that I had to choose what to do first in my second year of the MSc Leisure, Tourism and Environment, I decided to start with my internship. I did my internship at the Dutch national newspaper de Volkskrant and my research focussed on the Dutch voluntourism sector. At the time of my internship the sector gained much attention from different media outlets, which indirectly had effects on my research and resulted in quite an unusual internship experience, in my opinion. After finishing my internship and making an exceptional trip with de Volkskrant to South-Africa, Zimbabwe and Zambia, I realized that those experiences were the perfect lead-up for me to choose an appropriate thesis subject. As imaginable, it was not always easy for me to keep a clear and motivated mind after researching and writing, an entire academic year long, about the Dutch voluntourism sector.

However, the subject really suited me, and with the gained 'insider' knowledge, as a result of my research at de Volkskrant and my visitation to a variety of voluntourism programs in Southern Africa, I practically became an expert regarding the subject. Therefore, it would have been a waste if I didn't use this advantage for my thesis. Looking back on the past academic year and my thesis writing days, I can say that I enjoyed the entire experience and learned a great deal along the way. Writing this thesis has therefore been a fulfilling experience and has particularly contributed to my skills as a researcher.

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SUMMARY

Voluntourism is considered to be a responsible and alternative form of tourism that is at the same time beneficial to the local destinations, and a perfect way for voluntourists to experience authenticity. However, due to the growing popularity of voluntourism, the true value associated with the voluntourism product is being called into question. Critics argue that the problems begin at the marketing stage, as seemingly altruistic marketing messages are covering-up increasingly commercial operations. Although the beginning of a research agenda has been established around the phenomenon, this research mostly focusses on voluntourism in the context of countries like the United Kingdom. Just like these countries, the popularity of participating in a voluntourism program abroad is also increasing amongst young people in the Netherlands, with the Dutch voluntourism sector sending approximately 7000 voluntourists abroad each year. Despite this growing popularity, the research into the phenomenon in the Dutch context is fairly scarce. Therefore, this research aims to contribute to earlier research by de Volkskrant on the responsibility level of the Dutch voluntourism sector to ultimately contribute to this relatively new agenda. This research uses a qualitative web-content analysis based on the TIES International Voluntourism Guidelines for Commercial Operators to understand the extent to which Dutch voluntourism providers communicate about responsibility efforts, while taking into account the notions of market signalling and greenwashing. The 32 Dutch voluntourism providers can be divided under three organization types, namely: commercial organizations, NGOs and social enterprises. Therefore, the web pages of the three groups are scored across 22 responsibility criteria and measured against the responsibility claims they made in the de Volkskrant study. Findings showed both similarities and differences between the three groups, but there shows to be no clear differentiation in responsibility communication. Moreover, responsibility claims are often not supported with evidence, especially looking at financial and non-financial information and the providers show to have a selective promotion of attractive aspects of responsibility as they primarily report on easily to measure, tangible impacts. Hence, despite of their promising responsibility claims in de the Volkskrant study, the providers show to be over positioning themselves and communicating responsibility insufficiently, which creates suspicions of greenwashing. Therefore, recommendations have been formulated that aim to provide the Dutch voluntourism sector with tools to improve the level of responsibility reflected in their website communications.

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1.1. INTRODUCTION

Voluntourism is a fusion of two concepts, bringing together international volunteering and tourism. Voluntourism is defined as “the conscious, seamlessly integrated combination of voluntary service to a destination and the best, traditional elements of travel — arts, culture, geography, history and recreation — in that destination” (Voluntourism.org, 2015). Voluntourism is often advertised as an alternative form of tourism that is beneficial to the local destinations and through which the voluntourist can experience authenticity, leading to expectations of a responsible tourism ethos (Smith, 2014). Wearing (2001) states that the main objectives of voluntourism is to aid or alleviate the material poverty of some groups in society, to restore certain specific environments or to do research into aspects of society or environment combined with touristic activities.

Since the 90’s the phenomenon of travellers participating in international volunteering and tourism has become more and more popular. Before it was labelled “voluntourism”, organizations that picked up on this trend balked of the idea of calling what they were doing “voluntourism”. In their opinion, they felt their work was far more serious compared to something as insignificant as tourism. However, today many organizations have embraced the term, understanding the appeal it has to the people they most want to reach (McGhee N. , 2014).

Originally, voluntourism activities were only offered by primarily non-governmental organizations, but this has now expanded to different enterprise forms, from openly for-profit to full non-profit organizations. It is estimated that since recent years approximately 10 million people have participated in voluntourism programs worldwide, compared to only 1,6 million people, annually, in the 90’s (Tourism Research and Marketing, 2008). Hence, a clear acceptance and growth within the sector is noticeable. However, it’s growth has caused some problems, as there are cases where the host communities, local environments and volunteers haven been, or are being, exploited, as well as mismanagement of human, social, physical and financial resources, and a continuation of neo-colonialism of local communities (Guttentag, 2009; Palacios, 2010). In addition, critics argue that voluntourism organizations are becoming “*overly profit-driven, over compromising benefits, harming destinations and creating customer dissatisfaction*” (Smith, 2014, p. 942; Benson, 2011; Crossley, 2012; Simpson, 2004).

In addition, Goodwin (2011) claims that “*the status of the organization is no guarantee of responsible practice*” (p. 185), meaning that it is not necessarily true that an NGO, of which is expected to be philanthropic, de-commodified and socially responsible (Wearing S. M., 2005), actually follows up on these expectations. The same accounts for voluntourism providers that market themselves as social enterprises, who claim to apply commercial strategies for social purpose (Mdee, 2008). In addition, Morgan (2010) argues that there is a relative lack of commercial marketing experience among NGOs, and that this enabled innovative tour operators to gain a well-established position in the voluntourism market since the 90’s. When the international volunteering market wasn’t coined voluntourism yet, it could easily be assumed that an NGO offered responsible volunteering practices. However, because of the major developments and commodification of the volunteering sector it can be argued if there is still a clear differentiation between the types of organizations that now operate on the voluntourism market. Hence, because of these developments the true value associated with the voluntourism product is being called into question (Smith, 2014; Goodwin, 2011; Wearing S. , 2001).

As a result, Goodwin (2011) has expressed his concern that it is morally pressing that voluntourism organizations take responsibility for managing their products and operations, and encourage their customers to take steps to become more sustainable. McGhee (2014) argues that in order to create sustainability in voluntourism, and to create and maintain good practices, it is vital to recognize the role of policy and certification in monitoring and evaluating quality voluntourism experiences for everyone involved, and the role that marketing plays within this matter. In addition, according to Krippendorff (1987), tour operators are not entirely responsible for the positive or negative impacts of tourism, but marketers do have a certain responsibility in influencing, leading and managing consumer beliefs and behaviour. A wrongly informed and thus miss-matched voluntourist can cause extensive harm to a local destination, leaving the tourist dissatisfied as well as the people in the destination. Smith and Font (2014) agree with McGhee and Krippendorff, and argue that the problems begin at the marketing stage, as seemingly altruistic marketing messages are covering-up increasingly commercial operations. With use of an online content analysis based on the TIES voluntourism guidelines and the market signalling theory and greenwashing theory as the theoretical backbone of their study, they examined the website communications of UK-based voluntourism providers on responsibility communication and price signalling. They found that the sector needs criteria to aim for so that the examples of irresponsible voluntourism activities and greenwashing, that were brought to light in their research, can be avoided. However, according to McGhee (2014) it is difficult to develop a multi-layered certification process for the voluntourism sector that is at the same time affordable, accessible and easily monitored. At this point, such a certification system isn't developed yet and for that reason the non-committal TIES voluntourism guidelines are currently considered as the primary responsibility guiding principles for the voluntourism sector (McGhee N. , 2014).

As a reaction to these concerns expressed by different academics, the Dutch national newspaper "de Volkskrant", in collaboration with Wageningen University, saw a research gap regarding the voluntourism phenomenon in the Dutch context, and therefore decided to carry out a study to identify the Dutch voluntourism sector and its level of responsibility. 42 Voluntourism providers were identified to be active on the Dutch voluntourism market and participated in the research. Based on the TIES voluntourism guidelines criteria and with use of a questionnaire, the boards of the 42 providers were questioned on the extent to which they think to employ responsible voluntourism practices. Findings showed that the Dutch sector sends approximately 7000 voluntourists abroad each year and exists out of three organization types, namely commercial organizations, NGOs and social enterprises (Van den Brink, 2014). The overall conclusion was that the Dutch voluntourism providers have good intentions and promising responsibility claims, but it was questioned if they actually practice what they preach as they weren't elaborate on explaining "how" they were achieving their claims. In addition, the findings demonstrated that the Dutch voluntourism sector takes on a rather reactive attitude towards regulating the sector and providing positive contributions to the long-term success of the sector. Therefore, de Volkskrant recommended the sector to change this reactive attitude to a more proactive attitude, where they try to prevent negative impacts rather than to cure them. To lend the sector a helping hand in achieving this responsible attitude, de Volkskrant made up a list of practical recommendations for the sector to implement.

In addition, Van Trijp's study, on the website communications of Dutch Gap Year Providers, provided insights into the website communications of some of the Dutch voluntourism providers. Her study concluded that in the website communications: *"...apart from benefiting the local community or environment while volunteering, not much is mentioned on the sustainable practices of the companies*

nor is the (Dutch)gapper encouraged to travel in a sustainable way with respect to the host and the environment.” (2014, p. 82). In addition, Van Trijp’s study showed that the Dutch “...gap year providers represent the gapper as ‘helper’ and the local host as ‘needy’” (2014, p. 83) and that this would only “...lead to the harmful stereotyping and the strengthening of dichotomies between the Western and developed world and the underdeveloped and needy world.” (2014, p. 83).

Hence, Smith and Font’s (2014) findings highlighted that the voluntourism product isn’t responsibly marketed by UK-based voluntourism providers, with cases of greenwashing. In addition, de Volkskrant (2014) expressed its concern about the Dutch voluntourism sector actually practicing what they preach, and Van Trijp (2014) concludes that the website communications of Dutch voluntourism providers do not mention much on what makes their practices sustainable, nor is the Dutch gapper encouraged to travel in a sustainable way. Thus, this study aims to contribute to this previous research, and relatively new agenda by even further unravelling the level of responsibility reflected by the voluntourism sector, only this time in the Dutch context. By partially adapting Smith and Font’s methodological approach to examine the website communications of Dutch voluntourism providers and by comparing these results with the results from the de Volkskrant and Van Trijp’s study, this study aims to understand the extent to which the Dutch voluntourism product is responsibly marketed.

1.2. RESEARCH SCOPE

1.2.1. Preliminary Problem Statement and Relevance

Increasingly the true value associated with the voluntourism product is being called into question and it’s being stressed that voluntourism organizations take responsibility for managing their products and operations. In addition, both the “Agenda 21” (1992) drafted by the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs and the “Ten Key Elements to Ensure Sustainability in Tourism” (2005) drafted by the United Nations Environment Programme and World Tourism Organization, show that marketing plays an important role in the pursuit for sustainable development within the tourism industry and several academics stress that voluntourism providers need to recognize this.

Although there has been a growing interest in the voluntourism phenomenon over the past years by academics (Crossley, 2012; Hammersley, 2014; Knollenberg, 2014; Lupoli, 2014; Simpson, 2004; Taplin, 2014; Wearing S. , 2001) and the concern for unsustainable practices in voluntourism expressed in the Dutch media, see: (Trouw, 2015; NRC Handelsblad, 2015; Movisie, 2015; Van den Brink, 2014; Van den Brink, 2014), not a lot has been known yet about the phenomenon and its marketing communication in the Dutch context. Van Trijp (2014) studied the representation of the gap year product by Dutch Gap Year providers and de Volkskrant performed a research that identified the Dutch voluntourism sector and the extent to which the providers claimed to be applying responsibility guiding principles.

As there is a growing trend noticeable in the popularity of participating in a voluntourism program abroad amongst young Dutch people (Van den Brink, 2014), this research might be a good step towards understanding how the voluntourism product is marketed in the Netherlands, adding to the research gap on voluntourism in the Dutch context and this relatively new agenda. On a broader scale, this research aims to enhance the industries’ awareness on responsibility communication, and how this should be reflected in their website communications and providing them with tools that aim to help them achieve this. Hereby, discouraging them to apply greenwashing practices

1.2.2. Research Objectives

This study examines the extent to which the Dutch voluntourism product is responsibly marketed by exploring how responsibility guiding principles for the voluntourism sector are reflected in the website communications of Dutch voluntourism providers and how these results correspond with the responsibility claims these providers made in the de Volkskrant study.

This research is carried out in order to explore and understand:

- How responsibility guiding principles for the voluntourism sector are reflected in the website communications of Dutch voluntourism providers;
- How these results compare to the responsibility claims the Dutch Voluntourism providers made in the de Volkskrant study.

1.2.3. Research Questions

The research objectives mentioned above lead to the following main research question:

To what extent is voluntourism responsibly marketed by Dutch voluntourism providers?

The sub-research questions below will help in answering the main research question:

1. To what extent are the responsibility guiding principles for the voluntourism sector reflected in the website communications of the Dutch voluntourism providers?
2. To what extent does the level of responsibility reflected from the website communications of Dutch voluntourism providers correspond/differ with the responsibility claims the providers made in the de Volkskrant study?

1.2.4. The Structure of the Report

In the following chapter I discuss the theoretical framework. Here, literature on the concepts of sustainability and responsibility are discussed, supplemented by an elaboration on the responsibility guiding principles for the voluntourism sector, the concept of responsibility communication and the notions of market signalling and greenwashing. In the third chapter the methodology of the study is introduced, elaborating on the nature of the research, how the research is designed, the methods used for data collection and how the data analysis has been carried out. For this study, it was decided to collect web content data and to conduct a content analysis. In addition, this chapter justifies the chosen methods and outlines the process of the web content analysis of a sample of web pages and how the voluntourism providers were sampled. The fourth chapter presents the findings of the study. Chapter five presents the answers on the research questions, connects the theoretical notions discussed in chapter three with the research findings and ultimately presents the recommendations that aim to provide the Dutch voluntourism sector with tools to improve the level of responsibility reflected in their website communications.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In this chapter I discuss the different concepts of sustainability and responsibility, supplemented by an elaboration on the responsibility guiding principles for the voluntourism sector, the concept of responsibility communication and the notions of market signalling and greenwashing. These concepts and notions will be the theoretical backbone to explore the extent to which the Dutch voluntourism product is responsibly marketed.

2.1. Responsibility as the Process, Sustainability as the Direction

Sustainable development, in general, is a much talked about topic that is debated in almost every sector and community across the world. Tourism in particular, presents some specific environmental, social and economic sustainability problems because of the travel choices people make and the interactions they encounter with local communities. According to Goodwin (2011), these actions have positive as well as negative social and environmental impacts on the local destinations. The promotion of development that respects the environment and culture, and reinforces the well-being of local communities, is a key issue in the evolution of modern tourism. Krippendorf (1987) was one of the first that acknowledged the importance that tourism providers take responsibility in achieving this sustainability in tourism. Where most academics were writing about the direction that the tourism industry needed to go, Krippendorf wrote about ways on how to get there, and today many academics are building on this idea. For example, Mihalic (2014) argues that within tourism a clear distinction can be made between sustainable- and responsible tourism, whereas sustainable tourism is seen as the concept and responsible tourism as the actual application of the concept. To connect this to the ideas of academics that have focussed their research on the voluntourism sector, Smith and Font (2014) build upon Krippendorf's idea by seeing *"responsibility as the process and sustainability as the direction"* (2014, p. 943). In addition, Manente (2014) refers to the concepts: "Responsible Tourism" and "Corporate Social Responsibility" (from now on referred to as CSR), as approaches that are capable of encouraging sustainable development in tourism. Also conferences like "The Manila Conference on World Tourism", and "The International Conference on Responsible Tourism in Destinations" recognized the concepts of responsibility, as well as the UNWTO "Global Code of Ethics", which discusses sustainable and responsible tourism. In addition, The Cape Town Declaration of Responsible Tourism calls upon *"...tourism enterprises and trade organizations to adopt a responsible approach, to commit to specific responsible practices, and to report progress in a transparent and auditable way, and where appropriate to use this for market advantage"* (2002, p. 5). This declaration consists out of guiding principles for economic, social and environmental responsibility. These guiding principles are indicative of what needs to be developed for any destination, in order to achieve sustainability in tourism.

Hence, sustainable tourism as a concept can be defined as *"tourism that takes full account of its current and future economic, social and environmental impacts, addressing the needs of visitors, the industry, the environment and host communities"* (UNEP, WTO, 2005, p. 11). To achieve sustainability within the voluntourism sector, an appropriate balance will have to be established between the environmental, social and economic dimensions. A way for voluntourism providers to achieve this balance is to take responsibility regarding these three dimensions, by applying the concepts of responsible tourism, CSR, and CSR/responsibility communication. The tourism department of the city of Cape Town defines the

term responsible tourism as *“an approach to the management of tourism, aimed at maximising economic, social and environmental benefits and minimizing costs to destinations”* (2015, p. 3).

This study focusses primarily on the micro-level and to a lesser extent on the destination-level of voluntourism, as it will examine the website communications of Dutch voluntourism providers. Mihalic (2014) stresses that the concepts of responsibility guiding principles for the voluntourism sector and responsibility communication are closer to the business world and more appropriate for a micro-level research on responsibility. Therefore, within this theoretical framework, I will continue with an elaboration on these specific concepts and how they are useful for this research.

2.2. Responsibility Guiding Principles

There are different initiatives that have given attention to promoting responsibility and sustainability in voluntourism. This in the form of responsibility guiding principles for voluntourism providers, in order to help them with planning and managing their voluntourism programs in a responsible and sustainable way. A few internationally recognized voluntourism focused guideline examples are:

- The International Ecotourism Society(TIES) - International Voluntourism Guidelines;
- Comlahm’s Code of Good Practice for Volunteer Sending Organizations;
- Fair Trade Volunteering;
- International Volunteer Programs Association;
- Voluntourism 101 - Learning Service Guidelines;
- Year Out Group - Operating Guidelines for the Volunteering sector;
- Better Care Network - Voluntourism Guidelines.

From the above mentioned voluntourism guidelines, the guidelines of TIES are deemed most appropriate to use for this study as these are comprehensive and encompass all three sustainability dimensions that were drafted by The Cape Town Declaration of Responsible Tourism (2002). The remaining guidelines that are listed above often only encompass one or two of the sustainability dimensions, such as those of Better Care Network, which solely focus on the social sustainability dimension. Likewise, Fair Trade Volunteering has guidelines that primarily focus on the economic dimension. The TIES guidelines have been formulated after intensive academic research within the field, and it includes some of the most important guidelines of Voluntourism 101 and Comlahm’s Code (Ecotourism.org, 2015). In addition, international scholars like Goodwin and McGhee, whom are dedicated to researching and promoting responsibility in tourism, have made a considerable contribution to the formulation of the TIES guidelines. Hence, the TIES guidelines are empirically and theoretically grounded and can be considered as the umbrella guiding principles for the voluntourism sector.

There are in total 32 TIES voluntourism guidelines, which are presented in Appendix 1, and before they can be used for this research they will have to be translated into evaluative attributes so that the researcher can evaluate and analyse the website content of the three types of voluntourism organizations. For this study, 22 guidelines are considered to be appropriate to be used as evaluative attributes for web-content analysis as these guidelines can be reflected from the website communication of voluntourism providers. The other ten guidelines are internal guidelines, of which it is not expected to be reflected in website communications, for example: *“collaborate with local partners to clearly define what the success of voluntourism projects means to the organization, to*

volunteers, and to community stakeholders” (TIES, 2012, p. 12). An overview of the 22 guidelines that are translated into evaluative attributes is enclosed in Appendix 2.

2.2.1. Responsibility Communication

Although studies on CSR, in the tourism sector are scarce, the few tourism studies that have been focussing on CSR show that a larger number of tourism organizations are incorporating the concept of CSR into their business models with the objective of improving the welfare of their local employees, the quality of life of local communities (Bohdanowicz, 2009) and conserving the environment (Font, 2006).

For voluntourism providers, an important part of their CSR efforts is the way they communicate about their efforts towards stakeholders and consumers (Morsing, 2006), and the way they communicate their responses to economic, social and environmental impacts (Ihlen, 2011). This is called CSR communication (Mahoney, 2013) or others may call it responsibility communication (Smith, 2014). Responsibility communication says something about the level of responsibility of an organization and it exposes its environmental and/or social programs, stances and actions (Perks, 2013). Notable, is the fact that for the voluntourism sector it is not mandatory to disclose responsibility information and therefore it is difficult for stakeholders to ascertain which providers are, in fact, “good” (Gugerty, 2009). In addition, voluntary responsibility communication for voluntourism providers is currently not prescribed by mandatory reporting criteria. Thus, voluntourism providers that choose to communicate about their responsibility efforts can practically say whatever they want. In addition, voluntary responsibility communication can be distributed over an extremely wide range of sources, such as social reports, websites, policy documents, stakeholder consultations and media releases, but according to Birth et al., three channels seem to be of special importance, which are: CSR reports, advertising and websites (Birth, 2008; Mahoney, 2013). Non-committal criteria does exist, which clearly outlines what responsibility aspects the voluntourism providers should cover in their responsibility communications. These criteria are called the TIES International Voluntourism Guidelines for Commercial Tour Operators, which are currently considered as the primary responsibility guiding principles for the voluntourism sector (McGhee N. , 2014).

To connect the concept of responsibility communication to this study, in the de Volkskrant study the Dutch voluntourism providers were asked, with use of a questionnaire, about the extent to which they were applying the TIES responsibility guidelines. As the majority of the sector consequently claimed to employ all TIES guidelines correctly and therefore have responsible voluntourism practices (Van den Brink, 2014), it can be assumed that they are employing CSR correctly. This study examines the extent to which the Dutch voluntourism product is responsibly marketed by looking at the responsibility communication on the websites of the providers. Hence, by examining the extent to which website communications of the providers cover every responsibility aspect that have been set as criteria for sufficient responsibility communication by the TIES voluntourism guidelines, insights can be gained if the providers are actually employing CSR correctly.

2.2.2. Market signalling and Greenwashing

It is recognized by different critics that voluntourists nowadays face an increasing range of voluntourism providers who offer an astounding and undifferentiated choice of programs abroad, with itineraries that focus on different levels and combinations of altruism and hedonism (Coghlan, 2011; Tomazos, 2009; Wearing S. , 2001). Because of this large and diverse choice, voluntourism organizations try to distinguish their brands and products from competitors via their marketing. Different studies identify competitive advantages as reasons behind the adoption of sustainable practices and responsibility communication in tourism businesses (Branco, 2006; Middleton, 1993; Forsyth, 1996). As this study tries to understand the extent to which the Dutch voluntourism product is responsibly marketed with the use of the TIES voluntourism guidelines, it is also interesting to take into account the notions of market signalling and greenwashing. Each notion explains a motivation for voluntourism providers to adopt voluntary responsibility communication, with market signalling representing the "responsible" motivation and greenwashing the "irresponsible" motivation.

The market signalling theory suggests that organizations use responsibility communication as a substantive signal of their superior commitment to their responsibility efforts (Clarkson, 2008; Al-Tuwaijri, 2004; Brammer, 2004; Berthelot, 2003), and that organizations are voluntarily communicating about social and environmental information to signal their actual superior position regarding their responsibility efforts (Healy, 2001; Verrecchia, 1983). According to the market signalling theory, organizations communicate about their responsibility efforts to ensure that stakeholders are aware of the appropriateness of the organizations' actions taken on social and environmental issues (Gray, 1995; Clarkson, 2011a). It also suggests that "responsible" organizations will use responsibility communication to signal that they are actually a "good" organization (Dye, 1985; Lizzeri, 1999). Moreover, it is argued that organizations with the superior responsibility performance will try to obtain a competitive advantage by voluntarily providing relevant information on their responsibility efforts, and that organizations with lower responsibility performance will stay away from communicating responsibility information that would negatively affect their reputation (Prado-Lorenzo, 2010)

On the contrary, the greenwashing theory suggests that organizations use responsibility communication to influence and enhance the stakeholders' perceptions of the appropriateness of their organization's social and environmental actions (Guidry, 2010; Lyon, 2011) and that responsibility communication is a function of political and social pressures (Clarkson, 2008; Gray, 1995). This explanation corresponds with Holder-Webb et al. (2009) whom suggest that organizations that adopt responsibility communication from a greenwashing motivation, do this to build or maintain legitimacy with their social environment. In addition, Elsbach (2003) explains that such organizations often take action on their marketing communications to manage or respond to actual or potential threats to their legitimacy from events like negative media attention. According to Greer (1996), organizations that apply greenwashing tend to pose as a "responsible" organization with a high commitment to responsible behaviour even when in reality they actually do not. The above mentioned, confirms the difficulty of identifying, also from a stakeholder and consumer point of view, whether responsibility communications are really true and "responsible" or just plain greenwashing. Besides, it causes a concern within the Dutch voluntourism sector, as for the past two years, voluntourism providers have intensively been attacked by negative media attention (NRC Handelsblad, 2015; Movisie, 2015; Trouw, 2015). This is a cause to suspect Dutch voluntourism providers, as a reaction to the negative media

attention, to implement greenwashing practices as a way to influence their audiences' perception of the organization.

Another form of greenwashing is when an organization solely communicates about its positive responsibility efforts and cleverly excludes communication about its possible damaging actions (Mahoney, 2013). This form is often employed by organizations that have a low responsibility performance and results in biased and misleading reporting (Guidry, 2010; Cho, 2010; Lyon, 2011). Greenwashing that is employed in this way is very difficult to identify or punish, which makes the threshold to apply greenwashing in this way very low for organizations.

Organizations that apply greenwashing may voluntarily communicate about their responsibility efforts to legitimize their status with stakeholders, and are seen as a "responsible" organization even when they have not made any attempt at actually following-up on what they claim to do on social and environmental actions (Lindblom, 1994). With this, such organizations, try to reinforce and build identities and reputations to create an image of responsibility towards their consumers and stakeholders (Elsbach, 2003), but the responsibility claims they distribute are often not supported by actual reporting on responsibility. Lindblom (1994) and Neu et al. (1998) explain this greenwashing theory very clearly as a *"...legitimation strategy that occurs when firms voluntarily issue CSR reports to promote an impression of legitimate social and environmental values, which may or may not be substantiated"* (pp. 352, as quoted in Mahoney, 2013). Hence, greenwashing implies that voluntary communication of an organization on its responsibility efforts does not automatically mean that these claims correspond with the actual social and environmental efforts of the organization in question.

On the contrary, Parasuraman (1985) argues that it's also possible that some organizations, that actually have responsible voluntourism practices, have failed to see the benefit or need of communicating about their responsibility efforts. Such organizations can't be linked to market signalling nor greenwashing as they're not even aware what kind of competitive advantage responsibility communication can offer them.

After discussing and explaining the definitions of these two notions it can be concluded that it is expected of Dutch voluntourism providers to voluntarily communicate about social and environmental information, with the motivation to use it to signal their actual superior position regarding their responsibility efforts. Hence, leaning towards the "responsible" market signalling theory. This expectation is based on the fact that the providers have claimed in the de Volkskrant study to employ the TIES voluntourism guidelines sufficiently and to offer responsible voluntourism practices. If this study shows that the 22 TIES voluntourism guidelines are also sufficiently reflected from their website communications, this expectation of market signalling can be confirmed, which means that the sector is responsibly marketing its voluntourism products. However, if this study shows that the 22 TIES guidelines aren't sufficiently reflected from the website communications of Dutch voluntourism providers. Meaning that the responsibility claims made in the de Volkskrant study do not correspond with what their website communications send out, it will confirm suspicions of greenwashing. Where the providers voluntarily communicate about their responsibility efforts to pose as a "responsible" organization even when they're not.

2.2.3. Smith and Font study

In chapter one it has been clearly outlined that there is a growing trend noticeable in the popularity of participating in a voluntourism program abroad amongst young Dutch people, but that there still is a research gap concerning voluntourism in the Dutch context. This study aims to contribute to this research gap and relatively new agenda by examining the extent to which responsibility is reflected from the website communications of Dutch voluntourism providers. Smith and Font (2014) had a similar research objective, and used an online content analysis based on the TIES International Voluntourism Guidelines for Commercial Operators to understand the use of responsibility as a market signalling tool by a sample of UK-based voluntourism providers. *"Five influential web pages of eight providers were scored across 19 responsibility criteria and compared against the providers' legal status, product type and price"* (Smith, 2014, p. 942). In this way they were able to explore the relationship between responsibility and price signalling. They used perceptual maps to present their findings, which is *"...a technique used to measure and visualise brands' or products' positioning by evaluating a set of attributes and assigning scale ratings to plot those attributes diagrammatically"* (Smith, 2014, p. 948).

This study is primarily inspired by their theoretical backbone as they used the notions of market signalling and greenwashing to explain the motivation for voluntourism providers to use responsibility communication in their websites. They came to the conclusion that they suspect the UK-based voluntourism providers to apply greenwashing and I thought it would be interesting to retest this theory in the Dutch context.

2.2.4. Conclusion

To achieve sustainability within the voluntourism sector, it is argued that an appropriate balance will have to be established between the environmental, social and economic dimensions (Goodwin, 2011; Krippendorf, 1987; UNEP, WTO, 2005; Responsible Tourism Partnership, 2002). A way for voluntourism providers to achieve this balance is by adopting the concepts of CSR, responsibility guiding principles and responsibility communication, as Mihalic (2014) stresses that these concepts are closer to the business world and more appropriate for a micro-level research on responsibility. Currently, the non-committal TIES voluntourism guidelines are considered as the primary responsibility guiding principles for the voluntourism sector as they cover all three sustainability dimensions. As the majority of the voluntourism sector has claimed in the de Volkskrant study to employ the TIES voluntourism guidelines correctly and claim to have responsible voluntourism practices (Van den Brink, 2014), it is assumed that they are employing CSR correctly. Hence, by examining the extent to which website communications of the providers cover every responsibility aspect that have been set as criteria by TIES for responsibility communication, insights can be gained if the providers are actually employing CSR correctly. In addition, this study is inspired by the theoretical backbone of Smith and Font's (2014) study as they used the notions of market signalling and greenwashing to explain the motivation for voluntourism providers to use responsibility communication in their websites. They concluded that the UK-based voluntourism providers do not responsibly market their voluntourism products and suspect them of greenwashing. Therefore, the notions of market signalling and greenwashing are used in this study to retest their theory in the Dutch context to ultimately gain further insights into the level of responsibility of the Dutch voluntourism sector.

3. METHODOLOGY

In this chapter I explain how I partially adopted the methodological approach of Smith and Font (2014), followed by an elaboration on the nature of the research, the structure of methods that were used, the data collection, the data analysis and the limitations of the research.

3.1. Methodological Approach of Smith and Font

As this study partially adopted the methodological research approach of Smith and Font, I find it appropriate to first discuss how I did it and what the methodological similarities and differences are of both studies.

Currently, the non-committal TIES voluntourism guidelines are considered as the primary responsibility guiding principles for the voluntourism sector (McGhee N. , 2014). Therefore, I used them again for this study, just as in the de Volkskrant study, to analyse the level of responsibility reflected from the website communications of Dutch voluntourism providers. In this way the results from both studies could be compared. I adopted the online content analysis approach of Smith and Font, including the 19 TIES responsibility guidelines as evaluative attributes. However, I added an extra TIES guideline to be used as an evaluative attribute, which I further elaborate on later in this chapter. In addition, this research is not looking to give insights into the relationship between responsibility and price signalling, therefore price signalling is not added as an extra evaluative attribute and is it unnecessary and inconvenient to present the research findings in a perceptual map as Smith and Font did. Another difference is that Smith and Font examined a sample of five UK-based voluntourism providers, whereas this study examined a fixed-sample of 32 Dutch voluntourism providers. Hence, theoretically the two studies correspond considerably as I adopted the two notions of market signalling and greenwashing, but methodologically both studies differ considerably.

3.2. The Nature of the Research

This study is exploratory by nature, as in general, there is relatively little academic research done regarding the Dutch voluntourism sector and the sector's level of responsibility. This study examines the website communications of the Dutch voluntourism sector on the level of responsibility that is reflected, and compares these results to the secondary data from the de Volkskrant study. The intention of this study is therefore not to test new theories or to contribute to a new theory, rather it uses existing theories, concepts and research to gain insights into the level of responsibility that is taken on by the Dutch voluntourism sector.

According to Boeije (2010) a study is exploratory by nature when a new field is emerging or when the researcher examines a topic that is not yet been comprehensively studied. As for the voluntourism phenomenon, the topic has gained some attention from academics over the past decade (Bailey, 2012; Sin, 2009; McGhee N. W., 2013; Smith, 2014). Yet, this research is mostly focussed on Anglo-Saxon countries like for example the United Kingdom. In the case of the Netherlands, little academic research has been carried out focussing on the voluntourism phenomenon and specifically the website communications of the voluntourism providers and their level of responsibility.

In addition, this research is qualitative in nature. The Dutch voluntourism sector claims to offer responsible voluntourism programs (Van den Brink, 2014), and this study is trying to explore the level

of responsibility that is reflected in their website communications. In line with Altheide's (1996) definition of qualitative content analysis, this research tries to capture the meanings, emphasis, and themes of messages reflected from the websites of the voluntourism providers, and tries to understand the organization and process of how they are presented. Hence, as this study wants to explore the level of responsibility taken on by Dutch voluntourism providers, and through qualitative content analysis and comparing these results to those from the de Volkskrant study see how the providers represent responsibility and give meaning to it, qualitative research seems to fit well within these aims.

In considering the nature of this study it is also important to look at how the researcher thinks the world, the truth and knowledge is constructed. Within this research much emphasis is put on the concept of responsibility in tourism as responsibility guiding principles for the voluntourism sector are used as a framework for analysing the website communications of the Dutch voluntourism providers, to ultimately say something about their level of responsibility. For the purpose of this study, responsibility in tourism is seen through the framework of social constructionism. This is supported by the statement of Malkina (2012) that the concept of responsible tourism is an on-going social construction by the minds and ideas of different people and institutions. In addition, Berger and Luckmann (1967) state that reality and phenomena are constructed by the society and therefore there is not a fundamental truth about responsibility in voluntourism out there. This statement is in connection with the view of Gergen (1985), as he stresses that all historical and cultural beings and the ways in which we understand and represent our world are contingent. Thus, what is considered to be responsible behaviour in tourism can be seen as a fluid and dynamic way of seeing the world that might change over time and through social action. In addition, the constructivism approach is sensitive for taken-for-granted knowledge and Jørgensen and Phillips (2002) state that our knowledge of the world should not be seen as objective truth. Therefore, this study does not aim to explore the fundamental truth or reality about responsible voluntourism, as according to the social constructionist view this does not exist.

3.3. Qualitative Content Analysis

This research aims to explore the extent to which the voluntourism product is responsibly marketed by Dutch voluntourism providers. This by investigating how the TIES voluntourism guidelines are reflected from their website communications and how these results correspond with the responsibility claims the providers have made in the de Volkskrant study. An analysis of their website communications was pertinent, as these organizations primarily market and sell their products online. A web-content analysis tool needed to be developed for this purpose. Noteworthy is the fact that this research tool does not have the intention or ability to measure if what the voluntourism providers communicate on responsibility is actually being practised.

A qualitative content analysis is a useful approach for this study, as it enables constructed identities to be assessed through a structured technique where indirect data minimises the relationship between the research and the researched (Pitt, 2007), for this relationship can exist despite of the researcher's questioning, prompting and probing (O'Leary, 2010). Krippendorff defines content analysis as *"a research technique for making replicable and valid inferences from data to their context"* (1980, p. 21), and this technique can be used for quantitative as well as qualitative studies (Mayring, 2004). With quantitative content analysis the researcher explores the frequency of thematic or rhetorical patterns

and then identifies their relationship through presumed statistics (Boettger, 2010). Rather for this study, qualitative content analysis was used, as qualitative content analysis goes beyond solely counting words in text data. Rather, it tries to make a *“subjective interpretation of the content of text data through the systematic classification process of coding and identifying themes or patterns”* (Hsieh, 2005, p. 1278). The aim of qualitative content analysis is to gather a summarized and broad description of the phenomenon that is studied, and the outcome of the analysis is concepts or categories giving an explanation of the phenomenon (Elo, 2008).

For this study, qualitative content analysis of website communications has been applied, also known as ‘web-content analysis’. Web-content analysis is common practice to understand destination- (Choi, 2007) and company marketing (Park, 2007), along with sustainability communications (Jose, 2007). In order to investigate how the TIES voluntourism guidelines are reflected from the website communications of Dutch voluntourism providers, and to specify the level of responsibility that is taken on by the providers, it was necessary to get an understanding of what type of meanings and themes in relation to responsibility could be derived from textual content from websites. In addition, the researcher had to work with a vast and bulky amount of data. Hence, qualitative web-content analysis, and the categorization and grouping of different themes derived from the data, did not only help to get a better understanding of the meaning behind the texts and words, but has also made it easier to work with this vast and bulky amount of data.

In addition, there are different tools that can be used with content analysis. Traditional computerized methods of content analysis operate on the representation of a text, systematically identifying specific characteristics of a message and assess the thematic orientation of texts based on the frequencies of word occurrences (Mallery, 1991; Miller, 2002). Automated web crawling is an example of such a method and analyses a collection of term frequencies for keywords along with analysing if there are positive, neutral or negative mentions within the content (Gill, 2008). Such methods may have their advantages in processing large and vast amounts of data, but for the most part they ignore their extent and may not evaluate the audience impact, meaning what the producer intended with the content (Herring, 2009). In addition, Botterill and Platenkamp (2012) argue that it compels a more subtle phase of analysis when wanting to explore the complexity of ‘meaning’ portrayed in text and image. They state that *“researchers using content analysis are confronted with multiple layers of meaning that emerge from an examination of the backgrounding and foregrounding of the information, the silences and emphases in the material and the selection of descriptions of phenomena”* (pp. 35-36). Semantic content analysis attempts to capture the nuances inherent in the source material and it operates on the representation of a text instead of a linear string of words, meaning that it examines and interprets explicit knowledge representations of texts (Botterill, 2012; Mallery, 1991). Therefore, in order to appropriately analyse the level of responsibility that Dutch voluntourism take on in their website communications, it was necessary to make use of the semantic content analysis tool, as this tool considers linguistic context to make qualitative analysis of implicit text possible. Therefore, the coding units that were used consisted out of sentences or paragraphs, rather than individual words (Mallery, 1991).

3.4. The Data Collection

The Data

The website communications of Dutch voluntourism providers were measured against the TIES voluntourism guidelines criteria and these results were compared with the responsibility claims the voluntourism providers have made in the de Volkskrant study. Hence for this study, the primary data consists of the web-content that was gathered from the websites of the sampled Dutch voluntourism providers. This primary data is analysed on the extent to which the TIES voluntourism guidelines are reflected. The secondary data consists of the results from the de Volkskrant study, where the Dutch voluntourism providers were asked about the extent to which they think to apply responsible voluntourism practices, also with reference to the TIES voluntourism guidelines. Both studies focus on the Dutch voluntourism sector and used the TIES voluntourism guidelines as a framework, and therefore it was interesting to compare results from both studies. This comparison ultimately made it possible to build on the knowledge about the Dutch voluntourism sector, especially regarding the extent to which they responsibly market their voluntourism products.

Primary Data

There is no general agreement on what should be the unit of analysis of web-content analysis. The standard units of context for this study were a sample of pages that were expected to have the largest audience views and responsibility signalling. The following pages were supposed to be most relevant for purposive typical case sampling (O'Leary, 2010; Smith, 2014):

- Homepage (or volunteering section homepage for organizations that do not solely focus on voluntourism)
- CSR/Responsible Tourism Policy/Attached Annual Reports
- If applicable, three different voluntourism programs in three different countries, preferably: Childcare, Community-development and Conservation programs

The data consisted out of the above mentioned text contents that were mostly in Dutch. Therefore after the data collection and analysis, when quotations needed to be included in the research report, it was necessary to translate the data into English.

To book a voluntourism program would require a consumer to see the programs' website pages. Since, website structures differed greatly, the content of the programs, policy sections or attached reports had to be analysed, disregarding the actual URL navigation, but considering the linked content in general. The voluntourism programs were chosen for comparability across organizations in terms of program types, durations and destinations. Analysing comparable programs allowed nuances of responsibility between the contents of the organizations to be perceived more easily. However, when a voluntourism provider only offered programs to one particular continent, then three different programs were selected from that single continent. The same was done with the program types, as it was the goal to include one program for each of the popular program types, which are: Childcare, Community Development and Conservation (Croese, 2011; GeckoGo, 2009). If a provider solely offered voluntourism programs relating to childcare and community development and not conservation, then only the people-related programs were analysed.

Sample

According to McMillan, sampling is one of the most complicated aspects of web-based content analysis (2000). To ensure the representativeness of organization type and context it was decided to take a non-random sample of Dutch websites, which is important to interpretation of results according to Herring and O'leary (2009; 2010). As the internet covers a vast and almost unimaginable amount of content (Herring, 2009), it is useful to know exactly what content is relevant to the research. Fortunately, this study was able to lean on previous work of de Volkskrant, which examined the Dutch voluntourism sector and identified all relevant Dutch voluntourism providers that are active within the sector. Hence, this made it possible to collect an exhaustive and fixed sample, as the target had already been made clear and had been delimited. This non-random and fixed sample entails 32 organizations that offer activities suited as voluntourism programs. These organizations can be divided under commercial organizations, NGOs and social enterprises. An overview and the market share of these organizations can be found in Appendix 3. It should be noted that originally, 42 organizations participated in the study by de Volkskrant, but for this study the commercial organizations Koning Aap, Shoestring and Your Way 2 Go are considered to be one and the same organization as all three are part of KUONI B.V. and offer the exact same product with the exact same website communications. In addition, for six of these organizations it was decided to not include them in this research as they have an insignificant market share. These six organizations send less than ten volunteers abroad each year. For this study, sending less than ten volunteers abroad a year has been set as the minimum for organizations to be recognized within this research, as including these organizations could affect the representativeness of the results.

3.5. The Data Analysis

The text data retrieved through the data collection was first entered into Microsoft Word. Thereafter, the files were systematically uploaded into Atlas.ti, forming the complete dataset using software for analysing qualitative data. This programme made it easier to categorize and connect themes to the gathered data. In Atlas.ti, each file was placed under its organizations' document family. Subsequently, as the Dutch voluntourism sector can be divided under three types of organizations, each of the 32 organizations' document families were, again, divided under one of the three larger document families, namely: commercial organizations, NGOs and social enterprises. Hence, the research findings are discussed in the research findings chapter with reference to each of the three types of organizations

To analyse the data, firstly categorizations and themes were differentiated from the data, where after a list of code names were chosen to refer to each of the categories and themes. This was done as a first step for data analysis, as Boeije argues that it is important to start a content analysis by reading through the raw data and as a next step separating the data into meaningful parts, also known as coding (2010). This tool enabled order to be created in the diverse and bulky collection of data.

In addition, there are two types of coding approaches, there is one way where coding categories are derived from the raw data during the data analysis and there is a way where coding categories are derived from theory before the data analysis is performed. These approaches in coding are also known as inductive coding and deductive coding (Zhang, 2009; Boeije, 2010). Deductive coding is often used when wanting to retest existing data in a new context (Elo, 2008). So is the case regarding this study,

where theories, concepts and previous research of Smith & Font are retested, only in this case applied on a different sample. Hence, this study made use of the deductive approach, where predetermined codes were used to code the data set. The coding scheme for this study has been adapted from the research of Smith et al. (2014) , but slightly altered to fit to this study. Just as with the research of Smith et al. (2014) and that of de Volkskrant (2014), for this study the TIES International Voluntourism Guidelines for Commercial Tour operators guided attribute selection. As previously discussed in the theoretical framework chapter, 22 of the TIES voluntourism guidelines have been deemed communicable and appropriate for web-content analysis. These 22 guidelines were translated into evaluative attributes so that they could be used to evaluate and analyse the web-content. These evaluative attributes were used as the coding categories for this analysis. In table 1 an overview is presented of a categorization matrix that was derived from the TIES voluntourism guidelines and used for the content analysis.

Ultimately, the outcomes of the categorization and coding of the data helped the researcher to report the findings for this study (Boeije, 2010) and later helped in discussing these findings in relation to the research objectives and research questions.

Responsibility Divisions within the TIES Guidelines	Code Feature	Code Name
Sustainable Management	II-1(a)	Company's Needs
Sustainable Management	II-1(a)	Local Communities' Needs
Sustainable Management	II-1(a)	Travelers Needs
Sustainable Management	II-1(b)	Lasting Impact
Sustainable Management	II-1(b)	Quick changes
Marketing and Messaging	II-2(a)	Evidence Backed, Positive, Success and Goals-Related Content
Marketing and Messaging	II-2(a)	Positive, Success and Goals-Related Content but NO evidence
Marketing and Messaging	II-2(b)	Clear Publication of Poverty Marketing
Marketing and Messaging	II-2(b)	Suggestion of Poverty Marketing
Selecting and Working with Volunteers	II-3(a)	Demanding Volunteers to Have a Certain Age and/or Attain Certain Skills and Abilities
Selecting and Working with Volunteers	II-3(a)	Emphasis on Finding Appropriate Match between Volunteer and Program
Selecting and Working with Volunteers	II-3(a)	Undemanding of Volunteers Regarding Age and/or Specific Skills and Abilities
Selecting and Working with Volunteers	II-3(b)	Clear Explanations on the Goals and Objectives of the Programs for Volunteers: "The Human Element"
Selecting and Working with Volunteers	II-3(b)	Clear Explanations on the Goals and Objectives of the Programs for Volunteers: "The Social Importance"
Selecting and Working with Volunteers	II-3(b)	Suggestion of Unrealistic Expectations of the Programs for Volunteers
Selecting and Working with Volunteers	II-3(c)	Pre-trip Orientation Through Fine Print
Selecting and Working with Volunteers	II-3(c)	Pre-trip Orientation Through Training Course
Selecting and Working with Volunteers	II-3(d)	Possibilities for Travelers with Special Needs
Selecting and Working with Volunteers	II-3(f)	Alternative Ways to Contribute to Local Community Goals
Defining Success and Measuring Impact	III-1(e)	Protocol in Case of Inappropriate Behaviour
Transparency in Financial Reporting	III-2(a)	Reporting on Money per Trip
Transparency in Financial Reporting	III-2(a)	Vague and Incomplete Information on Money per Trip
Transparency in Financial Reporting	III-2(b)	Reporting on Donations
Transparency in Financial Reporting	III-2(b)	Vague and Incomplete Information on Donations
Transparency in Non-Financial Reporting	III-3(a)	Reporting on Short- and Long-term Impacts on Local Destination
Transparency in Non-Financial Reporting	III-3(b)	Reporting on Local Community Needs Assessment
Transparency in Non-Financial Reporting	III-3(c)	Show Values of Voluntourism Programs Through Stories of Local Community Members
Transparency in Non-Financial Reporting	III-3(c)	Show Values of Voluntourism Programs Through Stories of Past Volunteers
Managing Social and Economic Impacts	IV-2(a)	(Code of Conduct) Working with Locals
Managing Social and Economic Impacts	IV-2(c)	Combatting Commercial/Sexual Exploitation of Local People
Managing Social and Economic Impacts	IV-2(d)	Background Check, including Certificate of Good Conduct
Managing Social and Economic Impacts	IV-2(d)	Background Check, including CV, Motivation letter and/or References but NO Certificate of Good Conduct
Managing Social and Economic Impacts	IV-2(e)	(Code of Conduct) Interacting with Children
Supporting Biodiversity Conservation and Heritage Preservation	IV-3(a)	Local Wildlife Conservation and Heritage Preservation-related Programs
Supporting Biodiversity Conservation and Heritage Preservation	IV-3(b)	(Code of Conduct) Interacting with Heritage
Supporting Biodiversity Conservation and Heritage Preservation	IV-3(c)	(Code of Conduct) Interacting with Wildlife

Tabel 1 TIES International Voluntourism Guidelines Categorization Matrix

3.6. Research Limitations

This study has a number of limitations. First and foremost, the web-content analysis of the website communications of the Dutch voluntourism sector only studies the responsibility claims that the providers choose to project about themselves, but drawing a conclusion regarding the actual extent to which responsibility is being practiced is impossible as web-content analysis provides patterns from which only speculative answers can be retrieved (Holsti, 1969).

Secondly, for good reasons the TIES voluntourism guidelines were used as responsibility guiding principles to explore the level of responsibility reflected in the website communications of Dutch voluntourism providers. Hence, these guidelines suggest normative or desirable characteristics of how voluntourism should look like. However, someone could argue that different responsibility guiding principles should be used for investigating the level of responsibility reflected from the website communications of Dutch voluntourism providers. This would lead to different interpretations regarding the level of responsibility of the Dutch voluntourism sector.

Thirdly, in some cases a voluntourism provider didn't offer the three different voluntourism program types that were taken as the sample for this research: Childcare, Community-development and Conservation. Those cases occurred infrequently, but analysis of the programs of such providers using the complete code scheme was impossible, which may reduce the research validity.

Fourthly, it is important to discuss my role as a researcher with regards to the data collection and data analysis. It can be questioned if I have become a part of the culture and phenomenon under study and could possibly share many of the common-sense and taken-for-granted understandings expressed in the data. For de Volkskrant I also did a study focussing on the Dutch voluntourism sector and used the TIES voluntourism guidelines as a framework. Together with de Volkskrant, I travelled to Southern Africa to visit several voluntourism projects. Hence, as Jørgensen & Phillips (2002) argue, this may have caused me to be an "insider" instead of an "outsider" looking into the phenomenon and therefore not fully grasping what was needed to be captured (2002). Therefore, there might be text content that I took for granted and consequently did not include these text into the collected data. As a result, there is a possibility that valuable data might have gotten lost.

Lastly, another limitation concerns the translation of the data. The primary data from this study is in Dutch language, as is the secondary data from the de Volkskrant study. However, this study is conducted and written in English. Hence, when quotations had to be included in the report, the data had to be translated from Dutch to English. It was necessary to take into account that specific sayings, concepts or words in Dutch can have different meanings when translated into English. Even though the researcher is fluent in writing, speaking and reading in Dutch as well in English, translation might have caused meaning to be lost from the data.

4. RESEARCH FINDINGS

This chapter presents the results of the data collection and data analysis per TIES responsibility criteria and per organization type. Supplemented by quotations gathered from the data that were assessed as most in accordance with the TIES responsibility criteria and function to give an illustration of how the criteria should be reflected from the website communications of the voluntourism providers. This first section answers the first research question: “To what extent are the responsibility guiding principles for the voluntourism sector reflected in the website communications of the Dutch voluntourism providers?”. In the second I answer the second research question: “To what extent does the level of responsibility reflected from the website communications of Dutch voluntourism providers correspond/differ with the responsibility claims the providers made in the de Volkskrant study?”.

4.1. Website Communications of the Dutch Voluntourism Sector

4.1.1. Reality Check

Commercial organizations

The website communications of the commercial organizations signal that they prioritize the local community’s needs, but the majority puts almost just as much effort in prioritizing the traveller’s needs. The fact that they’re profit driven puts a strong emphasis on responding to traveller’s needs. There was no communication that indicates that the organizations are prioritizing their own needs as a company, which says something about their marketing skills as commercial organizations have a strong self-interest (Wearing S. M., 2005). Lastly, all commercial organizations seem to focus on communicating their sustainable practices and lasting impacts and avoid communicating on quick-changes.

NGOs

The website communications of the majority of the NGOs signals that they prioritize the local community’s needs, but consider the needs of the traveller as just as important. This is remarkable as NGOs are expected to be more philanthropic and decommodified (Wearing S. M., 2005) compared to commercial organizations, and thus are expected to prioritize the local community’s needs. All religiously inspired voluntourism providers are NGOs and seem to primarily offer construction programs. The religiously orientated NGOs show to prioritize the local community’s needs and spend less attention to communicating about the needs of the traveller. They claim to aim for providing better lives and futures for local communities, focussing on communicating their altruistic motivations. The other NGOs, that aren’t religiously orientated and cover the majority primarily offer community development and childcare programs. They focus more on communicating about the two-way experience for both the locals and the volunteer, discussing cultural exchange, transferring knowledge and stimulating better future career perspectives for local children.

The majority of the NGOs provide clear examples of their commitment towards involving local communities in their programs and investigating local needs. None of the NGOs website communications show any sign that their voluntourism programs could possibly jeopardize the fundamental needs of the local communities, such as rights to public lands, destruction of intellectual property or access to natural resources. Generally, the NGOs do not make use of sustainability-related terms to describe their commitment towards achieving lasting impacts and having sustainable practices. However, they do provide information that explains their working method and how it

achieves lasting impacts. The NGOs claim to work primarily with self-regulating and locally owned projects that could use the extra help from volunteers, but aren't dependent on it. In addition, results have shown that the NGOs often have considerably short-lived voluntourism projects. The NGOs often support locally-owned, self-regulating development projects and provide short-term help to for example improve their working conditions by constructing a new building. Hence, with short-term projects the NGOs achieve a quick change, but in the long-run they contribute to the lasting impacts that the local projects are achieving with their development work.

Social Enterprises

Social enterprises put their focus on propagating their social involvement and their strive to prioritize local needs and making an impact. The website communications of the different social enterprises are in line with the definition of a social enterprise, where the focus is put on social impact, rather than making profit. The social enterprises do not prioritize travellers needs as they do not offer much possibilities for travellers with different needs. Their programs are often very specific, where volunteers need specific skills and abilities in order to participate. The majority of the social enterprises emphasize their close involvement with the local communities, in order to ensure that their needs are being met. None of the social enterprises' website communications show any sign that their voluntourism programs could possibly jeopardize the fundamental needs of the local communities, such as rights to public lands, destruction of intellectual property or access to natural resources. The social enterprises use sustainability-related terms to describe their commitment to achieving lasting impacts regarding the local communities and their environments. They use many differing sustainability-related terms. However, they do not support their statements with concrete examples describing how exactly they maintain their sustainable practices and programs that are achieving lasting impacts. Lastly, none of the social enterprises used website content that indicates that their striving for quick-changes rather than lasting impacts.

Quotes that give an illustration of how the – REALITY CHECK – criteria should be reflected from the website communications of voluntourism providers
TIES II-1(a): Voluntourism projects must be developed with the local communities' needs, and not the travellers' or the company's needs, as the first priority
<i>"Costa Rica receives an increasing number of tourists each year and it is now one of the fastest growing economic sectors within the country. Many visitors travel from the United States and Europe, making English a beneficial language to speak that improves job prospects. Learning English at a young age can greatly increase a child's language ability and interest. Through creating visual learning aids and conducting one-on-one lessons, our volunteers play an active role in improving the children's English level from a young age."(from the website of Projects-Abroad, accessed on 03-06-2015 18.02 PM)</i>
TIES II-1(b) Create opportunities for lasting impact, and not quick change, that are sustainable
<i>"We aim to help communities set up sustainable farming programs, and provide assistance in preparing the land and maintaining the crops. African Impact has assisted three farms in the acquisition of land, tools and seeds. Volunteers assist by helping to prepare the land, planting, watering, weeding and harvesting. Our staff and volunteers worked hand in hand with Linda Farm for the disabled to build a plastic bottle greenhouse for additional income generation, with plans for many more exciting projects at the farm including an Eco brick poultry house."(from the website of Activity International, accessed on 04-06-2015 9.10 AM)</i>

Table 2 Quotes TIES Voluntourism - Reality Check - Criteria

4.1.2. Marketing and Messaging

Commercial Organizations

Generally speaking, commercial organizations do not take the effort to support their voluntourism activities, goals and objectives by referring to clear and detailed evidence. Four out of eleven only take the effort to provide evidence to proof the quality of their volunteering experience, but not the impacts of their voluntourism activities. Ten out of eleven organizations doesn't formulate clear local impact monitoring goals and thus does not report on them in their annual report, if they even have one. The one commercial organization that does provide evidence focussing on impacts, does this inconsistently and incompletely, which is unfortunate as monitoring and evaluation is something that needs to be performed accurately and regularly (TIES, 2012).

An important aspect to marketing and messaging in the voluntourism sector is responsible marketing, meaning that organizations make a serious effort in evading poverty marketing. In the website communications of the commercial organizations no clear publication or suggestion of poverty marketing has been found. However, most organizations do use imagery reflecting direct and full frontal profiles of local people, especially young children. This raises the question if permission from the subjects has been asked for and thus if their rights and privacy are respected.

NGOs

All NGOs publish an annual report discussing their reached goals and objectives. This outcome corresponds with the fact that Dutch NGOs are obliged to publish their annual reports (Verder Fiscaal, 2015). For most of the NGOs, the annual reports were not that easy to retrieve from their websites. Besides, all NGOs describe organizational development-, funding- and volunteer focussed goals and objectives, and to a lesser extent or even not at all, local impact focussed goals and objectives. Thus, the NGOs do have evidence-backed, positive goals and success-related content, but their goals and objectives do not focus on monitoring their voluntourism activities or reporting on impacts.

In the website communications of the NGOs no clear publication or suggestion of poverty marketing was found, except for one NGO that had a degrading piece of text regarding locals in its magazine. It can be questioned if this NGO is aware of the fact that its text falls under poverty marketing. Two NGOs seemed to be informed about poverty marketing, as they dedicated text content to describe the meaning of it to the consumer, and they explained to be cautious with regards to poverty marketing and their own website advertisements.

Social Enterprises

The overall website content of social enterprises is quite limited. They often have a limited voluntourism program offer and primarily work with small local partner organizations. Six out of eight social enterprises doesn't publish an annual report discussing their goals and objectives. The two social enterprises that do are NGOs, thus they're obliged to publish annual reports. Their annual reports solely discuss their organizational development-, funding- and volunteer focussed goals and objectives, no reportings on local impact focussed goals and objectives were found. It can be concluded that none of the social enterprises clearly and extensively reports on social and environmental impacts, which is remarkable as social enterprises claim to put local impact before making profit (Mdee, 2008) and these social enterprises make sure to communicate that in their website communications. Hence, the social enterprises show to give much attention to positive, success and goals-related content, communicating promising information towards potential volunteers and emphasizing on their qualities

as an organization. However, they do not take the effort to support their voluntourism activities, goals and objectives by referring to clear and detailed evidence. Lastly, no sign of poverty marketing has been found in the website communications of the social enterprises.

Quotes that give an illustration of how the – MARKETING AND MESSAGING – criteria should be reflected from the website communications of voluntourism providers
<p>TIES II-2(a): Use messaging strategies that clearly convey the goals of the voluntourism programs, why they are important and how they make a difference</p> <p>No quote has been found that illustrates how this specific TIES guidelines should be reflected from the website communications of voluntourism providers.</p>
<p>TIES II-2(b) Avoid all forms of poverty marketing – such as using images or words (e.g. “helping people who can’t help themselves”) which belittle or degrade local people</p> <p><i>“Local Dreamers does not publish advertisements where poverty is being exploited. We don’t talk about ‘poor people’, people whom are less happy than we are, people whom desperately need your help. Although, there are enough people living in Ecuador who’s life circumstances can be considered poorly compared to the living conditions of the average Dutch inhabitant, before the departure of volunteers, Local Dreamers tries to ascent a change in their mind-set regarding this perspective on local people. Someone who doesn’t have warm water in their home or a game console doesn’t have to be less happy than we are.”(from the website of Local Dreamers, accessed on 09-06-2015 10:30 AM, translated by author)</i></p>

Table 3 Quotes TIES Voluntourism - Marketing and Messaging – Criteria

4.1.3. Selecting and Working with Volunteers

Commercial organizations

Six out of eleven commercial organizations communicate that some of their projects require volunteers to have a certain age and/or attain certain skills and abilities, or even require volunteers to stay for a certain amount of time. The commercial organizations offer different voluntourism programs where different age minimums are applied that can vary between 16 and 21 years old. The commercial organizations with larger diversity in voluntourism programs, often provide more possibilities for people with different ages and different backgrounds. Some of the smaller commercial organizations have higher demands regarding age and skills.

Seven out of eleven commercial organizations put emphasis on communicating towards potential volunteers that they want to find an appropriate match between the volunteer and a program, this by taking into account the volunteers’ wishes, interests, skills/abilities and experience. Most larger commercial organizations provide clear and detailed overviews for volunteers to choose from that include duration possibilities, individual or group programs, and professional, un-experienced or experienced volunteering work.

The majority of the organizations tell potential volunteers that specific degrees or experiences aren’t needed and they stress that a flexible attitude, an ‘open mind’, adaptability, initiative, working independently and having respect for local traditions and cultures, is of more importance. Further, something most commercial organizations do not forget to include is pre-trip communications describing “the human element” of the voluntourism experience, in addition to technical details. All organizations put emphasis on describing the positive side of the voluntourism experience, but only four organizations also provide the volunteer with sufficient information on why the specific type of work, no matter how mundane or seemingly insignificant, is necessary and important. With this they avoid unrealistic expectations or misunderstandings by volunteers. Most commercial organizations are

extensive in their program descriptions. Further results show that seven out of eleven commercial organizations provide their volunteers with pre-trip orientation through fine print, as well as through a training course.

Four organizations offer a training course through Stichting Muses. It is preferred when organizations provide their volunteers with fine print as well as a training course (TIES, 2012). Lastly, none of the organizations communicate about possibilities for travellers with special needs, and no one clearly communicates about the possibility that voluntourism is not the right option for some people. In addition, they don't offer advice on other options for those interested to contribute to local community goals.

NGOs

Only four out of thirteen NGOs communicate that some of their projects require volunteers to have a certain age and/or attain certain skills and abilities or require volunteers to stay for a certain amount of time. None of the NGOs ask for certain skills or abilities. Most NGOs only ask volunteers to show maturity, an initiative spirit, patience, open-mindedness, creativity, independence and to have a good physical condition. Their registration process is easy and undemanding, as volunteers often only have to fill out a form in which they state what voluntourism program they want to participate in and shortly after the volunteer pays the entry fee. The majority of the NGOs does keep a minimum age of 18 and often maintains a minimum stay of four to six weeks or even longer. The majority of the NGOs seem to offer little choice possibilities regarding types of voluntourism programs, such as un-experienced or experienced programs.

All NGOs except for one, do not put emphasis on communicating towards potential volunteers to strive for finding an appropriate match between them and a program. However, the NGOs often do present their program types and destinations, the duration possibilities and the choice between individual or group programs, clearly. All NGOs include pre-trip communications describing "the human element" of the voluntourism experience in their website communication. However, the website contents of all NGOs, except for one, are very short and limited. The majority describes the social importance of their work as a organizations, but don't describe why the help of individual volunteers is important. Some NGOs only include a program description of a few sentences, which promotes volunteers to get unrealistic expectations of the programs.

Three out of thirteen NGOs describe to provide the volunteer with pre-trip orientation through fine print. It is possible that the other NGOs also do this, but this doesn't show from their website communication. Six out of twelve NGOs describe in their website communication to offer the volunteer pre-trip orientation through a training course. None of the NGOs offer a training course through Stichting Muses. Further results show that none of the NGOs communicate about possibilities for travellers with special needs and do not provide volunteers with information about alternative ways to contribute to local community goals, when they are not deemed suitable to participate in a voluntourism program. Only one NGO communicates about how it deals with volunteers that are not deemed appropriate to participate in the voluntourism program for which he or she applied.

Social Enterprises

Seven out of eight social enterprises communicate on their website that some of their projects require volunteers to have a certain age and/or attain certain degrees, skills and abilities or require volunteers to stay for a certain amount of time. The social enterprises tend to be very specific in their lists of

requirements for volunteers to be able to participate in programs. Firstly, they ask volunteers to be motivated to do volunteering work, to show maturity, an initiative spirit, to be patient, open-minded, creative, active, independent and in good physical condition. Secondly, they discuss the additional terms, such as minimum age, degrees, experience and background. The majority of the social enterprises offer skilled and unskilled program possibilities.

Six out of eight social enterprises put emphasis on communicating towards potential volunteers that through listening to the volunteers' wishes, interests, skills/abilities and experience; they want to find an appropriate match between them and a program. All social enterprises include pre-trip communications describing "the social importance" of the voluntourism programs and to a lesser extent or not at all, they highlight the emotional journey and personal development that volunteers experience during their time on the program. The social enterprises include clear and extensive program descriptions and this promotes volunteers to get realistic expectations of the programs and avoids possible misunderstandings.

Six out of eight social enterprises describe to provide the volunteer with pre-trip orientation through fine print and five out of eight social enterprises describe to offer the volunteer pre-trip orientation through a training course, of which two social enterprises offer a training course through Stichting Muses. One social enterprise clearly communicates to make the pre-trip training course obligatory for its volunteers. None of the social enterprises communicate about possibilities for travellers with special needs and do not provide volunteers with information about alternative ways to contribute to local community goals, if they are not deemed suitable to participate in a voluntourism program. Only one social enterprise does dedicate text content to discuss possible rejection of volunteers.

Quotes that give an illustration of how the – SELECTING AND WORKING WITH VOLUNTEERS – criteria should be reflected from the website communications of voluntourism providers

TIES II-3(a): Proactively assist prospective volunteers with finding projects that appropriately match their interests, skills, budget and availability

"Projects Abroad considers volunteers with the age of 16 years, old enough to lend a helping hand abroad. For this reason our program offer of worldwide destinations and projects isn't different compared to our offer for older volunteers. Some of our projects can be mentally quite heavy, for this reason we like to give you appropriate advice to choose the right project for you. As an example, you can think of volunteer work with street children, where you are presented with a tough but realistic world that we are not used in the Netherlands." (from the website of Projects-Abroad, accessed on 18-06-2015 13:33 PM, translated by author)

TIES II-3 (b) Provide clear explanations on the goals and objectives of volunteer projects, in order to avoid unrealistic expectations or misunderstanding

"It is not at all wrong for you to have the wish to help poor people in need. However, we want to warn you for common feelings that people feel that are going to do volunteering work in Africa (or another non-western country) with that specific mind-set. We often have the assumption that people we as western people, have better lives than non-westerners. Thereby, it is usually thought that they, if they would handle things the way we do, will get better lives. These assumptions are, in our opinion, misunderstandings, because we live with a totally different culture with different norms, values and customs. A lot of volunteers and development workers start their voluntourism program full of ideals and when time has passed they feel disappointed and frustrated. That's because the problems are often much more complex than they appear at first sight, there are simply too many needy people, they do not always react the way you previously expected and perhaps also because they are not as grateful as you had hoped. Because the desire to help cannot always perfectly be put into practice, often makes feelings arise such as disappointment,

frustration and powerlessness. This state of mind logically has no positive effect on the quality of your stay and your contact with local people. Most Africans just love happy, open and warm people. Thus, in order to engage with the local population in a pleasant and mutually satisfactory way, an attitude of "I-come-to-help-you" is not really conducive. And only when you're composing equivalent and therefore have real contact with people, you actually mean something to them; and they for you!"(from the website of Ontmoet Afrika, accessed on 18-06-2015 17:48 PM, translated by author)

TIES II-3(c) Utilize pre-trip orientation to ensure appropriate levels of cross-cultural understanding, cultural sensitivity, and understanding of gender issues among volunteers

"How does it work? There are three preparation cycles a year, in the spring, the summer and the fall. The spring and fall preparation exists out of two weekends and a reunion day. The summer preparation exists out of a midweek and a reunion day. During our preparation training course, all volunteers gather together that want to do volunteering work abroad through Dare2Go. From this group buddy systems are created, this so that two persons can together go to the project. Dare2Go believes that its of added value to experience such a journey with someone else and in this way you have someone to fall back on. Further, together with your group you go through a few modules that concentrate on different subjects, such as, choice of project, other cultures, development, health and safe travelling and what drives you to want to do volunteering work."(from the website of Dare2Go, accessed on 25-06-2015 11:33 AM, translated by author)

TIES II-3(d) Provide sufficient information on volunteer opportunities that are available to travellers with special needs, as well as clear guidance on accessibility services and assistance available upon request.

No quote has been found that illustrates how this specific TIES guidelines should be reflected from the website communications of voluntourism providers.

TIES II-3(f) Clearly communicate about the possibility that volunteering is not the right option for some travellers due to a variety of reasons, and offer advice on other options to contribute to local community goals

"TravelUnique has the right to refuse registrations c.q. reject if it should be a valid reason. We speak of a good reason when the participant does not meet the requirements of the program. In case of rejection, any payment fee will get refunded within 30 days."(from the website of Travel Unique, accessed on 20-06-2015 16:34 PM, translated by author)

Table 3 Quotes TIES Voluntourism - Selecting and Working with Volunteers – Criteria

4.1.4. Defining Success and Measuring Impact

Commercial organizations

Only two out of eleven commercial organizations give a brief description of their protocol when a volunteer is behaving inappropriately or unethically during their voluntourism program. However, their protocols primarily focus on the infringement of child safety on the programs. Child safety is only one aspect that is sensitive to inappropriate behaviour from volunteers. Inappropriate behaviour on conservation programs, where volunteers work with heritage and wildlife, can also do damage and leave a negative impact. The protocols of the two commercial organizations lack comprehensiveness, but it is better than having no protocol at all, like the rest of the commercial organization has at this moment.

NGOs

None of the NGOs give a description of a protocol when a volunteer is behaving inappropriately or unethically during their voluntourism program. This is unfortunate as applying protocols and controlling volunteers and the harming effects that they can have on local destinations, promote

responsible practices. It stimulates potential volunteers in having more realistic expectations of the voluntourism programs, and it will attract the “right” and “appropriate” volunteers.

Social Enterprises

Only one social enterprise makes the effort to elaborate on their child abuse, harm and exploitation protocol when a volunteer is acting inappropriately or unethically during a voluntourism program. However, just as with the commercial organizations, no website content was found that gives a description of a more general protocol that focusses on unethically or inappropriate behaviour in connection with heritage or wildlife, instead of only children. The Dutch voluntourism sector does not only offer childcare programs, it also offers programs where volunteers work with animals, heritage and adult women and men. These subjects are often just as fragile and sensitive for abuse, harm or exploitation as children are. Such protocols cause for volunteers to have more clear expectations of their voluntourism programs.

Social enterprises stress the fact that they prioritize local needs and focus on achieving positive local impacts, but to achieve that status, protocols on inappropriate behaviour regarding locals, heritage and wildlife are necessary. Hence, it's remarkable that the commercial organizations outsourced the social enterprises regarding this aspect. This outcome says something about the commitment that the social enterprises put behind their social mission statements.

Quotes that give an illustration of how the – DEFINING SUCCESS AND MEASURING IMPACT – criteria should be reflected from the website communications of voluntourism providers

TIES III-1(e) Clearly outline and implement a consistent process in which volunteers who behave inappropriately or unethically can be removed from a project

“When traveling, you are an example to others. When you violate the rules of the code of conduct and you have seriously embarrassed people with your behaviour, then you bring harm to your project. Therefore, you are liable for any damage you cause as well as for the measures that result from behaviour that can't be tolerated. What does this mean? You must pay damages, you must leave the project and you will have to pay for any costs that arise from your behaviour.”(from the website of Travel Unique, accessed on 10-06-2015 16:25 PM, translated by author)

“Following the report of suspected or witnessed child abuse, harm or exploitation:

- *The General Manager of PURE! Project is responsible for informing the child's family of the allegation and any action proposed and for ensuring that every effort is made to remove or reduce immediate or future danger or risk of harm to the child.*
- *In the event of a serious allegation made by a foreigner the overseas police forces will be informed according to legal requirements and obligations.*
- *For reports relating to PURE! Appointed staff members, volunteers, trustees or others acting on behalf of the charity, all contact and activities with or near children will be suspended whilst an investigation is conducted.*
- *Any PURE! Staff member, volunteer, trustee, or other person acting on behalf of the charity found guilty of misconduct will be immediately terminated from duties and will not be allowed contact with the children.*

Any non-PURE! Appointed staff found guilty of misconduct will be reported to Cambodia's Ministry of Education, Youth & Sport, or their respective organisation with request for Termination. Same for Bali, all misconduct will be reported to the ministry.”(from the website of Pure Volunteer, accessed on 10-06-2015 20:10 PM)

Table 5 Quotes TIES Voluntourism – Defining Success & Measuring Impact - Criteria

4.1.5. Transparency in Financial Reporting

Commercial Organizations

Seven out of eleven commercial organizations put effort into informing the volunteer about program costs and how their money is spend. Some organizations show in exact numbers how much program components cost and others give extensive descriptions on getting the volunteer to understand why they have to pay to do volunteering work. Some organizations do not elaborate on why volunteers have to pay to volunteer, but provide a clear and understandable overview that explains exactly how much money has been granted for orientation-weekends, program costs, the selection of volunteers, advertisements and so on. There are also organizations that only describe in percentages how much goes to for example, communication and recruitment, program development and supervision, guidance, accommodation expenses and administrative work. Other organizations put in less effort as they don't provide exact numbers, nor estimated percentages. They solely provide the volunteer with an indication of what they will be paying for, what will be included in their package and what not.

None of the organizations, except for one, give an indication that they are receiving donations, nor do they report about donations. The organization that does report on its donations, doesn't do this through an annual report and tends to be vague and incomplete in its information. If a commercial organization accepts unrestricted funds through individual donations, then it should be clearly explained through annual financial reporting what costs are involved in raising and managing such funds, including transacting fees.

NGOs

All NGOs, except for one, uploaded their most recent annual financial report to their website. In their annual financial reports the NGOs clearly display their financial flows and the fact that they are being audited by accountants. Most of the reports provide an overview of what costs are involved regarding the voluntourism programs: preparation of the volunteers, recruitment and support, administration work etcetera. However, only one NGO takes the effort to provide an explanation on how the money paid by volunteers gets spend by the organization. Remarkable is the fact that only one NGO includes an explanation on how the program fee is calculated on its website. Hence, the majority of the NGOs only provide information about financial information in their annual reports. In order to read this information, first these annual reports need to be found on the right webpage and then downloaded to a computer, which is quite a hassle compared to how easy the commercial organizations present this information in their websites.

All NGOs are accepting unrestricted funds through individual donations as part of their voluntourism operations. They all publish an annual financial report that shows how the donation money has been spend. Most of their reports clearly describe how much donation money goes directly to their partner organizations or to the local communities they work with. Smaller NGOs provide more detailed information compared to larger NGOs, which could have something to do with the size of the organization, meaning that a smaller NGO is able to focus more on details.

Social Enterprises

Only three out of eight social enterprises put effort in informing the volunteer about program costs and how their money is spend. Two social enterprises describe in percentages how the program fee is distributed and elaborate on what is included in the program and what is not. Six social enterprises are vague and incomplete about the calculation and distribution of the program fees.

None of the social enterprises, except for one that has a charitable trust attached to their business, publish annual financial reports. This social enterprise employs a consistent method of calculating and reporting on the amount of both cash and in-kind donations or at least publishes its donation calculation for everyone to read. However, the social enterprise does not describe how these donations are spent and how much has gone to the local community. There's another social enterprise that has a charitable trust attached to its business, but no annual financial report was found on the website. Furthermore, all social enterprises accept unrestricted funds through individual donations as part of their voluntourism operations, but the majority doesn't present how they raise and manage these donations. They sometimes elaborate on the percentage that goes to the local community, but they do not provide a more comprehensive, exact and clear overview.

Quotes that give an illustration of how the – TRANSPARENCY IN FINANCIAL REPORTING – criteria should be reflected from the website communications of voluntourism providers

TIES III-2(a) Implement a consistent method to calculate and report on the amount of money per trip that goes to support the community or destination, and the amount that goes to support the operations of voluntourism programs

"Projects Abroad is an entirely independent organisation which does not receive any funding from governments, religious bodies, political parties, development organisations or other sources. And of course, we don't request money from our partner organisations in the developing world. All our work is 100% funded through your contributions as a volunteer. It is this financial independence that gives us the freedom to set up projects wherever we think it may be useful and in all domains where we think that our volunteers can make a valuable contribution. Your project price, therefore, not only covers the costs that are directly linked to your presence on the ground, but also a share of all the other costs that setting up our high quality volunteering projects requires. The precise use of your particular payment you personally made to Projects Abroad cannot be accounted for specifically, but we really want to be as open as possible. Therefore we have set out here the average percentages of our expenditure and some clear explanations! The percentages represent the average of all our projects. Depending on the country of origin, the destination, the time of year, the type of project and other factors, these figures will vary from project to project." (from the website of Project-Abroad, accessed on 13-07-2015 20:15 PM)

TIES III-2(b) Employ a consistent method of calculating and reporting on the amount of both cash and in-kind donations

<i>Income and Expenses</i>	<i>2012</i>	<i>2013</i>
<i>Occasional donations individuals</i>	<i>6.513,77</i>	<i>7.524,27</i>
<i>Monthly donations individuals</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>700,00</i>
<i>Donations associations and foundations</i>	<i>3.370,03</i>	<i>1.500,00</i>
<i>Interest income</i>	<i>99,02</i>	<i>115,78</i>
<i>Total revenue</i>	<i>9.982,82</i>	<i>9.840,05</i>

(from the website of Luz Alba, accessed on 13-07-2015 18:13 PM, translated by author)

Table 6 Quotes TIES Voluntourism – Transparency in Financial Reporting - Criteria

4.1.6. Transparency in Non-Financial Reporting

Commercial Organizations

Only five out of eleven commercial organizations employ reporting on short- and long-term impacts on local destinations. However, their reporting is inconsistent, incomplete and often covering only a single aspect to measuring local impacts. Their reporting mostly revolves around results of additional benefits for the local communities that are made possible by the voluntourism programs, such as the construction of buildings or water irrigation systems. These additional benefits are tangible results and thus easily measured and mapped, compared to intangible results such as improvements of the literacy level of local communities.

Only four out of eleven commercial organizations report on local community needs assessment, of which some providers use the assessment results provided by their local partner organization. However, the four organizations do not give insights into how they perform these assessments. None of the commercial organizations show the values of their voluntourism programs through the stories of local community members or via the feedback of local partner organizations. However, six out of eleven commercial organizations do show the values of their voluntourism programs through stories of volunteers. Some organizations provide a link to their Facebook page where those interested can read all stories provided by past-volunteers. Other organizations include long and personal stories of past-volunteers and some organizations only use quotations of past-volunteers.

NGOs

Twelve out of thirteen NGOs report on long- and short-term impacts on local destinations. However, their reporting is very inconsistent, incomplete and often cover only one aspect regarding short- and long-term impacts. Just as the commercial organizations, their reporting mostly revolves around results of additional benefits for the local communities that are made possible by the voluntourism programs. These additional benefits such as the installation of electricity or the construction of classrooms are tangible results and thus easily measured and mapped, compared to intangible results.

Six out of thirteen NGOs claim to report on local community needs assessments. Besides one NGO, none of the other NGOs give much attention to explaining how they employ their community needs assessments. In addition, only five out of twelve NGOs show the values of their voluntourism programs through the stories of local community members or via the feedback of local partner organizations. Seven out of twelve NGOs show the values of their voluntourism programs through the stories of volunteers. Most NGOs included long and personal stories of past-volunteers and a few used short quotations.

Social Enterprises

Six out of eight social enterprises claim report on long- and short-term impacts on local destinations. However, their reports are inconsistent and incomplete. No exact descriptions of impacts can be found in their website communication. Most social enterprises stress that they monitor and evaluate their impacts, but it was hard to find content that described what exact impacts they have made. By calling themselves social enterprises, they show that they want to differentiate themselves from other providers, but data analysis shows that they have an even lower score regarding reporting on impacts than the commercial organizations and NGOs. Hence, they're website communication is not in line with what they claim to represent. Clear inclusion of reports on the short- and long-term social impacts

of their voluntourism programs can support their claim of being a social enterprises, where impacts is prioritized.

Five out of eight social enterprises claim to report on local community needs assessment. However, none of them extensively report on the results of their needs assessments. Some use a few sentences to describe from what need the voluntourism programs originated, but those texts cannot be called official reporting. Although they claim to be more involved with the needs of the local communities compared to a regular commercial organization or standard NGO, they did not outscore them regarding this aspect. Furthermore, only two out of eight social enterprises include stories of local community members to show the values of their voluntourism programs. Lastly, six out of eight social enterprises use stories of volunteers to show the values of their voluntourism programs by including long and personal stories of past-volunteers or short quotations.

Quotes that give an illustration of how the – TRANSPARENCY IN NON-FINANCIAL REPORTING – criteria should be reflected from the website communications of voluntourism providers

TIES III-3(a) Make publicly available information on the short- and long-term impact of voluntourism projects in order to help travellers make objective decisions in choosing a volunteer opportunity

"The new building is bigger, cleaner and more safe and it can endure hurricanes and floods. The people are happier and they have more time and energy to do other activities. The time and energy that the children and adults have left now, they can use for other occupations, for example to do homework or to work in the fields. This space also makes it possible to deploy more skilled workers or volunteers and give them more and individual attention. A cleaner and a more protected building also contributes to the health and safety situation of the local people. When World Servants constructed a new school, as a result children were finishing their schools and continued with vocational education to eventually return to their community to make themselves useful as for example a nurse. In addition, with the construction of a water system, the schoolchildren gain better access to drinking water. When the students are thirsty, there's water for them to drink. This has improved their ability to concentrate and with that their learning performance. New buildings constructed by World Servants are not only used for their very purpose but also as meeting areas for the local community to gather. Because these communities now have a better and bigger place to gather, they now have more people who join the meetings and more good ideas are presented for the village. Because of World Servants' work, there is more coexistence and cooperation within the local communities, this to the example of World Servants."(from the website of World Servants, accessed on 16-06-2015 16:17 PM, translated by author)

TIES III-3(b) Include transparent reporting on the results and findings of regular community needs assessments

"Children and adolescents make up 37% of Costa Rica's population, of which 8% live in poverty. It is estimated that 30% of school aged children do not attend school and 60% of teenagers leave education prematurely. Child protection is a serious issue with 21% of reported domestic violence cases affecting children under 14 years of age in the form of physical and sexual abuse. There is slow progress in promoting early childhood development as only 5% of children aged 2-7 years receive services from the National Centre for Education and Child Nutrition and Comprehensive Care Centres(CEN CINAI) and 5% of children suffer from severe malnutrition."(from the website of Projects-Aboard, accessed on 15-06-2015 16:45 PM)

TIES III-3(c) Show, not just tell, the values of voluntourism programs through stories of locals and volunteers

"For Owusu, going to school is very important. He's eight years old and lives in Ghana. He considers his teacher in school as his big hero, because he wants to be a teacher himself when he is older. Currently, Owusu is helping his father on the farm, he does this every day. When he has free time, he likes to play with his friends. Owusu lives in Pokukrom, one of the newest projects of Livingstone Reizen. He has a great time with the dutch volunteers who help build the school: "They like to play with us", he says. "And when they try to dance to our music, it always makes me laugh". The Ganaian boy has one pressing question for The Netherlands: if they can please continue helping poor children in Ghana. His biggest wish is for more schools to be build."(from the website of Livingstone Reizen, accessed on 16-06-2015 18:35 PM, translated by author)

Table 7 Quotes TIES Voluntourism – Transparency in Non-Financial Reporting - Criteria

4.1.7. Managing Social and Economic Impacts

Commercial Organizations

None of the commercial organizations, except for one, describe their code of conduct for volunteers when working with locals and heritage. The code of conduct of this organization, covers subjects like local culture and respecting local norms and values. Communicating about code of conducts stimulates volunteers to form clear and realistic expectations of the voluntourism programs.

Four out of eleven commercial organizations describe their commitment to combatting commercial/sexual exploitation of local people. Most refer to ECPAT/Defence for Children and a single organization claims to employ its own formulated policy. Two out of eleven commercial organizations, perform a background check on volunteers, including a compulsory submission of a certificate of good conduct by volunteers. This is however, only employed for programs where volunteers will be working with children. Voluntourism programs, where volunteers will be working with adults or animals, are also sensitive for abuse. Hence, it is ideal when compulsory submissions of certificates of good conduct get employed for every voluntourism program, no exceptions, but most important are the ones where volunteers are in contact with people in general and animals. There are only two commercial organizations that currently do this. There are also commercial organizations that only do a background check, asking for a CV, motivation letter and/or references, but not a certificate of good conduct. In addition, most commercial organizations do not even describe their procedure regarding background checks on volunteers.

Four commercial organizations describe their code of conduct for volunteers when working with children. Three organizations refer to the child protection guidelines of Better Care Network Netherlands and one organization claims to employ self-formulated code of conducts for volunteers working with children. It is not clear if the organizations that refer to the guidelines of Better Care Network and ECPAT actually employ these guidelines, or that they only provide the volunteers with information about such guidelines, without obligating the volunteer to sign a code of conduct. Only one organization clearly states that volunteers are obliged to sign their code of conduct, and includes comprehensive and clear information about their guidelines.

NGOs

Only three out of thirteen NGOs describe their code of conducts for volunteers when working with locals. Their code of conducts are very limited and only cover aspects regarding; cigarette use, alcohol use and the appropriate type of clothing to wear. There's a possibility that other NGOs also employ a

code of conduct regarding working with locals, but this doesn't show from their website communications.

Only one NGO describes its commitment to combatting commercial/sexual exploitation of local people, and referred to an organization called: "In Veilige Handen". In Veilige Handen is a project of the Association NOV aimed at preventing sexual abuse of children at associations and volunteering organizations. Three out of twelve NGOs perform a background check including a compulsory submission of a certificate of good conduct by volunteers. However, this is only employed for programs where volunteers are working with children. It's ideal when compulsory submissions of certificates of good conduct get employed for every voluntourism program and currently only one NGO does this. The other NGOs often only do a background check where they ask for a CV, motivation letter and/or references. In addition, only two NGOs describe their procedure regarding background checks for volunteers.

Only one NGO describes its code of conduct for volunteers when working with children. The NGO refers to an official document, which incorporated some of the Better Care Network guidelines, and needs to be signed by volunteers before their departure.

Social Enterprises

Two out of eight social enterprises describe their code of conduct for volunteers when working with locals. Their code of conducts primarily covers aspects like local culture and respecting local norms and values. One social enterprise in particular is very comprehensive in discussing its code of conduct, covering subjects like how to deal with waste as a volunteer, water use, shopping, use of fire and wood, norms and values and handling flora and fauna.

Two out of eight social enterprises describe their commitment towards combatting commercial/sexual exploitation of local people. They support the works of ECPAT/Defence for Children, and one of them also refers to the guidelines of Better Care Network Netherlands. In addition, the "10 steps to a child safe organisation Risk Management Road Map" is also being employed by one of the social enterprises. It's a tool to prevent violence and abuse, initiated by the Canadian Red Cross. One social enterprise formulated its own policy to combat commercial/sexual exploitation of local people. They use a chart that shows precisely what volunteers need to do when they suspect that a child is being neglected, or being abused, physically, sexually or emotionally. In addition, one out of eight social enterprises performs a background check including a compulsory submission of a certificate of good conduct by volunteers. However, this is only employed for programs where volunteers will be working with children, or at medical projects. Three other enterprises perform a background check including a compulsory submission of a certificate of good conduct by volunteers for all their programs. The remaining social enterprises often only do a background check where they ask for a CV, motivation letter and/or references. Only two social enterprises include a section on their website describing their procedure regarding background checks for volunteers.

Only two social enterprises describe their code of conduct for volunteers when working with children. Both code of conducts have incorporated the Better Care Network guidelines and the guidelines of the Child Protection Policy of ECPAT.

Quotes that give an illustration of how the – MANAGING SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC IMPACTS – criteria should be reflected from the website communications of voluntourism providers
<p>IV-2(a) Develop and implement a code of conduct regarding working with local and Indigenous communities, families and children, and respecting their rights, needs and priorities</p> <p><i>“For the year 2014 we want to employ volunteers in a slightly different way compared to previous years, in order for volunteers to take on a more supportive role rather than a leading role when caring for the local children. This, so that the local Peruvian volunteers(the tia’s) can take on the leading role and provide the children with close and consistent care. We envision that in 2014 only the Peruvian tia’s are allowed to take the children to bed, to wake them in the morning and to comfort them when they are sad.”(from the website of Luz Alba, accessed on 17-06-2015 18:16, translated by author)</i></p> <p><i>“The volunteer is capable of handing over the daily care of the children to the local staff on the project and he will promote the bond that the children have with the local staff by putting himself in second place and to be constantly aware that he will only temporarily be present at the project.”(from the website of Luz Alba, accessed on 17-06-2015 20:12, translated by author)</i></p>
<p>TIES IV-2(b) Voluntourism providers should not only comply with international standards of responsible business practices, but also proactively support the efforts to combat all types of commercial sexual exploitation in destinations and tourism establishments</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>“Avoid being alone with children;</i> • <i>Meet children in open environments;</i> • <i>Minimise physical contact with children except for reasons of health and safety or under supervision;</i> • <i>Minimise contact with children outside working hours and avoid travelling with children except for reasons of health and safety.”(from the website of Pure Volunteer, accessed on 17-06-2015 21:33 PM)</i> <p><i>“In the case of a child coming to you to report abuse you should:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Let the child speak and listen carefully;</i> • <i>Take the child seriously;</i> • <i>Reassure the child it is ok to talk to you about this;</i> • <i>Record what is said, tell your projects abroad supervisor straight away.”(from the website of Projects-Aboard, accessed on 17-06-2015 18:00 PM)</i>
<p>TIES IV-2(c) Require background checks before selecting volunteers, including (but not limited to) criminal history checks, in order to protect the safety of all parties involved</p> <p><i>“Before we can conform your booking, we ask you to send us your motivation in English explaining why you want to volunteer. You briefly discuss you background, what you expect to contribute and why you want to support a project in Africa. We think this is important as we want to match the right person to the right program. In addition, we ask all our volunteers to submit a Certificate of Good Conduct. You can apply for a certificate at your municipality and we will send you the right documents. If you have any question or if there are any ambiguities, don’t hesitate to ask us.”(from the website of Fair2, accessed on 13-07-2015 20:41 PM, translated by author)</i></p>
<p>TIES IV-2(d) Implement a strict zero-tolerance policy to ensure there is no inappropriate behaviours by volunteers when interacting with children</p> <p>No quote has been found that illustrates how this specific TIES guidelines should be reflected from the website communications of voluntourism providers.</p>

Table 8 Quotes TIES Voluntourism – Managing Social and Economic Impacts - Criteria

4.1.8. Supporting Biodiversity Conservation and Heritage Preservation

Commercial Organizations

Five out of eleven commercial organizations offer conservation and heritage preservation related voluntourism programs. Only one organization clearly communicates to have a strong focus on local involvement as it is important to have local communities as stakeholders in order to make such programs a success. The others are very limited in their program description and do not show to involve local communities. Only one commercial organization communicates about its code of conduct for volunteers when in contact with cultural heritage, historic sites, or artefacts. Of the commercial organizations that offer wildlife conservation programs, none of them actually communicates about a code of conduct for volunteers when working with wildlife, hereby promoting wrong expectations of the wildlife conservation programs by volunteers. It may be assumed that the organizations that do not communicate about their code of conducts on their websites, do inform their volunteers about it in their pre-departure materials and on-the-ground orientations.

NGOs

Three out of thirteen NGOs offer conservation and heritage preservation related voluntourism programs. Most NGOs offer community development or childcare related voluntourism programs, with a considerable number of construction-related programs. The three NGOs offer nature conservation programs and provide a limited description of the programs on their websites. Their website communications do not show to focus on local involvement. None of the NGOs communicate to employ a code of conduct for volunteers when in contact with cultural heritage, historic sites or artefacts, which could relate to the fact that the majority doesn't even offer conservation related voluntourism programs. Of the commercial organizations that offer wildlife conservation programs, none of them actually communicates about a code of conduct for volunteers when working with wildlife, hereby promoting wrong expectations of the wildlife conservation programs by volunteers. As none of the NGOs offers wildlife programs, this automatically rules out the employment of a code of conduct for volunteers when working with wildlife.

Social Enterprises

Four out of eight social enterprises offer conservation and heritage preservation related voluntourism programs. No conservation or preservation program can be successful unless the local community members are the primary stakeholders (TIES, 2012), and this is not being reflected in the website communication of the social enterprises, which is remarkable as social enterprises are expected to have a strong focus on local involvement and social impact. Only one social enterprise shows to engage, educate and empower local communities to be the stewards of their conservation efforts. The other three social enterprises use a lot of text content with sustainability-related terms, but their texts do not give a clear indication on how they involve local communities in their conservation programs. In addition, there's only one social enterprise that clearly and extensively describes its code of conduct for volunteers when in contact with local heritage. Three social enterprises offer wildlife programs, but none of them communicate to employ a code of conduct for volunteers when in contact with wildlife, hereby promoting wrong expectations of the wildlife conservation programs.

Quotes that give an illustration of how the – SUPPORTING BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION AND HERITAGE PRESERVATION – criteria should be reflected from the website communications of voluntourism providers	
TIES IV-3(a) Develop and manage wildlife conservation and heritage preservation-related volunteer projects with the emphasis on local context	<p><i>"This program has the objective to raise awareness for the conservation of all sharks species as they are crucial to the health of the ocean's eco-systems. There is no doubt that sharks have something of an image problem. We believe that through raising awareness and running educational programmes, the next generation can learn the truth about sharks and the importance of shark conservation. As part of the Global Shark Campaign, we will be running awareness campaigns in 18 countries across 4 continents. Our aim is to reach hundreds of schools and people of all ages. These campaigns will range from running workshops with local fishing communities to teaching kindergarten groups the importance of sharks and their conservation."</i>(from the website of Projects-Aboard, accessed on 13-06-2015 15:30 PM, translated by author)</p>
TIES IV-3(c) Implement a strict code of conduct to ensure responsible behaviours by volunteers when they come in contact with cultural heritage, historic sites, or artefacts	<p><i>"African Travels is a Social Enterprise and believes that you can explore and discover new cultures and new places as long as you respect the environment and the culture you are visiting. Before their departure volunteers get a manual with advice concerning dealing with waste, water, shopping, fire, local values and flora & fauna."</i>(from the website of African Travels, accessed on 15-06-2015 13:02 PM, translated by author)</p>
TIES IV-2(d) Implement a strict code of conduct to ensure responsible behaviours by volunteers when interacting with wildlife or working in areas close to wildlife habitats	<p>No quote has been found that illustrates how this specific TIES guidelines should be reflected from the website communications of voluntourism providers.</p>

Table 9 Quotes TIES Voluntourism – Supporting Biodiversity Conservation and Heritage Preservation - Criteria

4.2. De Volkskrant Claims vs. Website Communications

In the Volkskrant study Dutch voluntourism providers were examined on the extent to which they claim to follow TIES voluntourism guidelines. In this study the websites of the Dutch voluntourism providers were examined on the extent to which the TIES voluntourism guidelines were reflected in their website communication. However, it should be noted that for both studies a slightly different selection of TIES guidelines were used. The Volkskrant combined some of the guidelines and made a list of guidelines that were thought to be most relevant, whereas this study used a selection of guidelines that were deemed communicable through website communications. Hence, for the guidelines that were used in both studies, it will be outlined where differences and similarities lie, giving an indication of how the claims made by the Dutch voluntourism providers are in line with what they communicate on their websites.

4.2.1. Reality Check

All Dutch voluntourism providers claimed in the Volkskrant study to prioritize the local community's needs and their website communications reflect the same message, however also complemented by a strong focus on travellers' needs.

The Dutch voluntourism providers claimed to achieve lasting impacts and their website communications show to reflect the same message. However, remarkable is that in the questionnaire of the Volkskrant study the majority of Dutch voluntourism providers gave an overview of what lasting impacts they had achieved until this day, but the majority these examples were nowhere to be found in their website communications.

The majority of the Dutch voluntourism providers claimed in the Volkskrant study that they regularly monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of their voluntourism programs, but did not, except for one, provide any further explanations on how they perform these monitoring and evaluation activities. Subsequently, results show that the website communications of the providers, except for one, also don't include explanations on how they monitor and evaluate. Hence, it can be concluded that in both studies the voluntourism providers do not support their monitoring and evaluation claim with clear evidence.

4.2.2. Marketing and Messaging

In the Volkskrant study the majority of the commercial organizations and social enterprises claimed to employ clear, comprehensive and honest marketing messaging. However, their website communications do not support this claim as they all inconsistently and incompletely include evidence to support their positive-goals and success related content.

On the contrary, the majority of the NGOs claimed to be confused about the definition of clear, comprehensive and honest marketing messaging and some even claimed to not employ marketing messaging at all. However, their website communications reflect evidence-backed, positive-goals and success related website content. Hence, it may be assumed that the majority of NGOs is unknowingly employing clear, comprehensive and honest marketing messaging, as the majority indicated to be quite confused about the definition.

In the Volkskrant study all providers claim to avoid poverty marketing and their website communications support this claim as no obvious poverty marketing was found. However, sometimes the content was a little dubious, as a lot of imagery was included reflecting direct and full frontal profiles of local people, especially young children that are in some cases even scantily dressed. With these images the question is raised if permission has been granted to use these pictures for marketing purposes, and if their rights and privacy are respected. In the Volkskrant study the majority showed to be perfectly up-to-date about the definition of poverty marketing and explained this with relevant examples. However, several providers confessed to be confused with what was meant by “poverty-marketing”. Some even totally misinterpreted what poverty-marketing exactly holds, saying that degrading texts about local people can show potential volunteers why their work is so important, not being aware that such texts stimulate dichotomies between westerners and people from developing countries.

Hence, the Volkskrant study showed that there still is quite some unfamiliarity with the term “poverty marketing” and the website communications support this result with the dubious imagery and the fact that one NGO had degrading texts about local people in its website communication. This happened to be one of the providers that misinterpreted the definition of poverty-marketing. However two other providers perfectly described the meaning of poverty-marketing on their websites and their cautiousness with regards to their own website advertisements. This shows that also the website communications reflect that there is quite a separation between familiarity and unfamiliarity with term “poverty marketing”.

4.2.3. Selecting and Working with Volunteers

In the Volkskrant study the majority of the providers claims to put effort in finding the appropriate match between the volunteer and a program, and it shows that their website communications reflect a different message.

There is a clear difference between the website communications of the three types of organizations as the commercial organizations, in general, show to offer the most program possibilities for different target groups, responding to a great variation of travellers’ needs. In addition, the commercial organizations maintain a lower threshold compared to the NGOs and social enterprises when it comes to minimum age, skills and experience. The commercial organizations put a lot of emphasis on including a system that makes it possible for potential volunteers to fill in their wishes, interests, skills/abilities and experience. The NGOs and social enterprises do this to a considerable lesser extent, often offering less program possibilities, for example, only construction programs or programs where volunteers need specific skills, abilities and experience. They also have less sophisticated and user-friendly website structures compared to the commercial organizations.

The commercial organizations and social enterprises often include extensive program descriptions in their website communications, hereby promoting realistic expectations and avoiding misunderstandings of the programs. The NGOs are often very limited in describing the program, using only a few sentences. This promotes unrealistic expectations and misunderstandings of the programs and can even ultimately mismatch volunteers to the appropriate program.

Furthermore, a considerable amount of commercial organizations and NGOs claim to employ a low threshold regarding their registration procedure for potential volunteers as their programs are often

developed to enable any volunteer to participate and they sometimes even avoid programs where volunteers will be working with children due to possible harm. On the contrary, the majority of social enterprises claims to have a high threshold regarding their registration procedure. Their websites justify this as they often ask the volunteer to be 18 or older, to have specific skills, abilities and experience, to provide a CV and a cover letter, and even in some cases the social enterprises employ a compulsory interview with the potential volunteer.

In addition, all voluntourism providers lack information on their websites about the possibility that voluntourism is not the right option for some people. They also do not include information on the fact that someone's application can get rejected nor do they include advice on other options to contribute to local community goals. Such information needs to be included to stimulate the right people to be matched to the right program.

In the Volkskrant study the majority of the providers claims to provide volunteers before their trip with an information pack about the voluntourism program and a training course. However, results show that this is not always being communicated through their website communications. Pre-trip communications make sure that volunteers get realistic expectations of the voluntourism program.

Hence, it is obvious that each voluntourism provider has a different program offer and a different registration procedure and show to employ divergent approaches to match the right volunteer to the right program. However, in general, their website communications clearly reflect to lack essential information to ensure appropriate matches, namely informing volunteers on the possibility of rejection to participate in a program, informing them about alternative ways to contribute to local community goals and the inclusion of information regarding pre-trip communication through fine print and a training course.

4.2.4. Transparency in Financial Reporting

In the Volkskrant study just over half of the voluntourism providers, primarily NGOs, followed by a few commercial organizations and two social enterprise, claims to be transparent in its financial reporting. Website communications show that all NGOs include annual financial reports on their websites, giving a transparent overview of their financial flows. A few commercial organizations put effort in providing the volunteer with exact numbers or percentages on how program fees are calculated and distributed. Two social enterprises describe in percentages how the program fees are distributed, but none of them gives a clear explanation on how they are calculated. Hence, this shows that just over half of the voluntourism providers supports their financial transparency claim with their website communications.

4.2.5. Transparency in Non-Financial Reporting

In the Volkskrant study just over half of the providers, primarily covered by NGOs, followed by a few commercial organizations and social enterprises, claim to be transparent in their non-financial reportings. The website communications of the NGOs justify the fact that they report on non-financial information the most compared to the commercial organizations and social enterprises. However, results show that the voluntourism providers, in general, have a distorted image of what non-financial

reporting exactly holds, as no one consistently nor completely reports on tangible as well as intangible local impacts.

Most providers that report on non-financial information, solely report on their organizational development-, funding- and volunteer focussed goals and objectives. The few that report on local impacts tend to only report on tangible impacts, such as what additional benefits the programs have achieved for the local communities, like infrastructure improvements. These tangible impacts are easier to measure, map and report on compared to intangible impacts, but that doesn't need to be a barrier as intangible impacts are just as important. Intangible impacts are the achievements revolving around local economic, environmental and especially social sustainability. Social enterprises score the lowest on reporting on social impacts, which is remarkable as they want to differentiate themselves on the voluntourism market. Hence, the website communications of the providers do not support their claim to be sufficiently reporting on non-financial information, as intangible impacts are not being covered.

4.2.6. Managing Social and Economic Impacts

In the Volkskrant study the majority of the voluntourism providers claim to employ a code of conduct for volunteers when working on a voluntourism program. Their codes of conduct solely focus on guidelines when working with local people and they exclude guidelines when working with wildlife and local heritage. Their website communications support this claim, as the codes of conduct that were described on the websites solely focussed on guidelines when working with local people.

The majority of the providers claims to, instead of officially formalized codes of conduct, solely provide the volunteers with non-official codes of conduct, in the form of "do's and don'ts". However, this is not being reflected through most of their website communications, as for only a few of the providers web-content was found describing their codes of conduct. Although, it was communicated in the de Volkskrant study by the providers that they present their code of conducts in the pre-trip communication pack that they give volunteers before their departure. However, including such information in their websites stimulates realistic expectations for volunteers and avoids misunderstandings of the voluntourism programs.

In the Volkskrant study the majority of providers claims to combat commercial/sexual exploitation of local people, often based on their own insights and self-formulated guidelines or through following the guidelines of organizations such as ECPAT/Defence for Children and the Better Care Network. However, the website communications of the majority of the providers isn't reflecting the same message as only five commercial organizations and two social enterprises refer to their self-formulated guidelines or the guidelines of ECPAT/Defence for Children and the Better Care Network. Only one NGO referred to "In Veilige Handen", which is an organization that is committed to combatting commercial/sexual exploitation of local people. Hence, the website communications of the majority of the providers does not reflect the message that they actively combat commercial/sexual exploitation of local people.

In the Volkskrant study the majority of the voluntourism providers claim to thoroughly check the backgrounds of volunteers via an interview, motivation letter, CV and references. Half of the providers claims to ask volunteers to submit a certificate of good conduct and this differs per organization as some only ask for a certificate of good conduct for their childcare programs and others for all their

programs, no exceptions. However, minimum web-content was found, that clearly and comprehensively described how providers perform their background checks. Some voluntourism providers do not even include a section on their website describing their procedure regarding background checks on volunteers. Including such information promotes realistic expectations and avoids misunderstandings of the programs. Hence, it can be concluded that, in general, the website communications of the majority of providers do not reflect the message that they thoroughly check the backgrounds of their volunteers.

5. CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

Firstly, this final chapter answers the sub-research questions: “To what extent are the responsibility guiding principles for the voluntourism sector reflected in the website communications of the Dutch voluntourism providers?” and “To what extent does the level of responsibility reflected from the website communications of Dutch voluntourism providers correspond/differ with the responsibility claims the providers made in the de Volkskrant study?”. Thereafter, the general conclusion is presented which answers the main research question: “To what extent is voluntourism responsibly marketed by Dutch voluntourism providers?”. In the second paragraph I evaluate the findings of the Dutch voluntourism sector in relation to the notions discussed in the theoretical framework earlier in this report, followed by clear recommendations for the Dutch voluntourism sector and further research.

5.1. Conclusion

Level of Responsibility Reflected in the Providers’ Website Communications

Table 10 below summarizes the extent to which the TIES voluntourism guidelines are reflected in the website communications of the Dutch voluntourism providers and the differences and similarities found between the three organization types.

	COMMERCIAL ORGANIZATIONS	NGOS	SOCIAL ENTERPRISES	CONCLUSIONS
REALITY CHECK	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communicate to prioritize local communities- and travellers needs Emphasize their strive for sustainable practices and lasting impacts with use of interesting marketing terms Do not support their claims with clear and comprehensive explanations or examples 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communicate to prioritize local communities- and travellers needs Primarily religiously orientated NGOs solely prioritize the local communities’ needs. Emphasize their strive for sustainable practices and lasting impacts without use of interesting marketing terms Support their claims with clear and comprehensive explanations and examples 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communicate to solely prioritize the local community’s needs Emphasize their strive for sustainable practices and lasting impacts with use of interesting marketing terms Do not support their claims with clear and comprehensive explanations or examples 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> General lack of supporting evidence by commercial organizations and social enterprises, that need to support claims regarding sustainable practices, achieving lasting impacts and prioritizing local communities’ needs
MARKETING & MESSAGING	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Positive, success and goals-related content No supporting evidence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Positive, success and goals-related content Evidence-backed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Positive, success and goals-related content No supporting evidence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Only NGOs support their positive, success and goals-related content with evidence
SELECTING AND WORKING WITH VOLUNTEERS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demand focussed with regards to selecting volunteers Often undemanding regarding the experience and skills of volunteers Extensive in program descriptions Emphasize on describing the volunteering experience 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supply focussed with regards to selecting volunteers Often undemanding regarding the experience and skills of volunteers Limited in program descriptions Limited in describing the volunteering experience Emphasize on describing the social importance of voluntourism work. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supply focussed with regards to selecting volunteers Often ask for experienced and skilled volunteers Extensive in program descriptions Limited in describing the volunteering experience 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Social enterprises are most demanding with regards to the experience and skills of volunteers NGOs are limited in program descriptions and providing information on pre-trip orientation General lack of information regarding: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pre-trip orientation

	COMMERCIAL ORGANIZATIONS	NGOS	SOCIAL ENTERPRISES	CONCLUSIONS
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emphasize on describing the social importance of voluntourism work. • Clearly communicate to provide volunteers with fine print and training courses as pre-trip orientation. • No emphasis on describing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Possibilities for volunteers with special needs • The fact that voluntourism is not mend for all who want to participate • Alternative ways to contribute to local community goals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do not clearly communicate to provide volunteers with fine print or training courses as pre-trip orientation • No emphasis on describing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Possibilities for volunteers with special needs • The fact that voluntourism is not mend for all who want to participate • Alternative ways to contribute to local community goals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emphasize on describing the social importance of their work • Clearly communicate to provide volunteers with fine print and training courses as pre-trip orientation • No emphasis on describing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Possibilities for volunteers with special needs • The fact that voluntourism is not mend for all who want to participate • Alternative ways to contribute to local community goals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Possibilities for volunteers with special needs, • The fact that voluntourism is not mend for all who want to participate • Alternative ways to contribute to local community goals
DEFINING SUCCESS AND MEASURING IMPACT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A minority communicates to employ a protocol when volunteers act inappropriately or unethically when in contact with locals • No information on codes of conduct when in contact with heritage or wildlife. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A minority communicates to employ a protocol when volunteers act inappropriately or unethically when in contact with locals • No information on codes of conduct when in contact with heritage or wildlife. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A minority communicates to employ a protocol when volunteers act inappropriately or unethically when in contact with locals • No information on codes of conduct when in contact with heritage or wildlife. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General lack of information on protocols when volunteers act inappropriately or unethically when in contact with locals, heritage or wildlife
TRANSPARENCY IN FINANCIAL REPORTING	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To some extent transparent in financial reporting • Use percentages to describe how program fees are calculated and distributed • Percentages are not evidence-backed with the publication of financial accounts • Do not report on how unrestricted funds by individual donations are raised and managed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fully transparent in financial reporting • Publish annual financial reports • However, primarily including large annual accounts that are difficult to understand for volunteers and not explaining the smaller details like how each program fee is calculated and distributed. • Communicate to accept unrestricted funds through individual donations • Consistently and completely report on how the donations are raised and managed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Non-transparent in financial reporting • Do not publish annual financial reports • Are vague and incomplete regarding the calculation and the distribution of program fees • Communicate to accept unrestricted funds through individual donations • Do not report on how these donations are raised and managed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Only NGOs are fully transparent in financial reporting • Social enterprises are non-transparent in financial reporting • Commercial organizations only use percentages to give insights into their financial accounts
TRANSPARENCY IN NON-FINANCIAL REPORTING	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reporting is incomplete and inconsistent • Primarily covering short-term tangible impacts as compared to long-term intangible impacts • Do not give clear and comprehensive explanations on how they conduct their community needs assessments • Do not report on assessment results • Show the values of their programs by including stories of volunteers, but to a lesser extent or not at all, those of local community members or local partner organizations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reporting is incomplete and inconsistent • Primarily covering short-term tangible impacts as compared to long-term intangible impacts • Do not give clear and comprehensive explanations on how they conduct their community needs assessments • Do not report on assessment results. • Show the values of their programs by including stories of volunteers, but to a lesser extent or not at all, those of local community members or local partner organizations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reporting is incomplete and inconsistent • Primarily covering short-term tangible impacts as compared to long-term intangible impacts • Do not give clear and comprehensive explanations on how they conduct their community needs assessments • Do not report on assessment results • Show the values of their programs by including stories of volunteers, but to a lesser extent or not at all, those of local community members or local partner organizations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General incompleteness and inconsistency regarding non-financial reporting • The sector: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Primarily covers short-term tangible impacts as compared to long-term intangible impacts • Doesn't report on community needs assessment findings • Includes to a limited extent stories of local community members or local partner organizations to show the values of their programs
MANAGING SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC IMPACTS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited communication on codes of conduct when working with locals, codes of conduct primarily focus on behavioural rules regarding working with children, not including adults 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited communication on codes of conduct when working with locals • Codes of conduct, in particular those of the religiously orientated, primarily focus on more 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited communication on codes of conduct when working with locals, codes of conduct primarily focus on behavioural rules regarding working with children, not including adults 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General lack of information regarding codes of conduct when working with locals(children as well as adults)

	COMMERCIAL ORGANIZATIONS	NGOS	SOCIAL ENTERPRISES	CONCLUSIONS
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Behavioural rules often cover aspects like: respecting culture and local norms and values Take limited effort in combatting commercial/sexual exploitation of locals Only a few refer to organizations like ECPAT/Defence for Children and the Better Care Network No thorough background check, only ask for a CV, motivation letter and/or references Limited employment of a compulsory submission of a certificate of good conduct, primarily only employed for childcare programs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> general behavioural rules covering aspects like cigarette and alcohol use Do not take effort in combatting commercial/sexual exploitation of locals No thorough background check, only ask for a CV, motivation letter and/or references Limited employment of a compulsory submission of a certificate of good conduct, primarily only employed for childcare programs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Behavioural rules often cover aspects like: respecting culture and norms and values Take limited effort in combatting commercial/sexual exploitation of locals Only a few refer to organizations like ECPAT/Defence for Children and the Better Care Network No thorough background check, only ask for a CV, motivation letter and/or references Limited employment of a compulsory submission of a certificate of good conduct, only employed for childcare programs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The sector: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communicates to take limited effort in combatting commercial/sexual exploitation Doesn't employ thorough background checks of volunteers as they inconsistently ask for certificates of good conduct from volunteers
SUPPORTING BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION AND HERITAGE PRESERVATION:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Large offer in conservation and heritage preservation programs Communicate to put emphasis on local involvement. No communication on codes of conduct when working with wildlife or heritage. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Limited offer in conservation and heritage preservation programs Do not communicate to put emphasis on local involvement No communication on codes of conduct when working with wildlife or heritage. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Limited offer in conservation and heritage preservation programs Do not communicate to put emphasis on local involvement No communication on codes of conduct when working with wildlife or heritage. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> General lack of information regarding local involvement with the conservation and heritage preservation programs The sector doesn't communicate on codes of conduct when working with wildlife or heritage

Tabel 10 Conclusion Matrix – Level of Responsibility Reflected from Website Communication

Best Scoring Organization Type

Based on the matrix presented above, it can be concluded that the Dutch voluntourism sector is in need of considerable improvement according to the different TIES responsibility criteria. Although the sector, overall, scored low on taking responsibility in their website communications, the extent to which improvement is needed still differs per criteria theme and per type of organization. Table 11 presents the eight TIES voluntourism responsibility themes and indicates per theme which of the three types of organizations scored better as compared to the others. It should be noted that for two themes none of the organization types outscored one another, as the overall score was low.

8 TIES guideline themes	Best scoring organization type
Sustainable Management	NGOs
Marketing & Messaging	NGOs
Selecting and Working with Volunteers	Social Enterprises
Defining Success and Measuring Impacts	-
Transparency in Financial Reporting	NGOs
Transparency in Non-Financial Reporting	NGOs
Managing Social and Economic Impacts	-
Supporting Biodiversity Conservation and Heritage Preservation	Commercial Organizations
Overall best score	NGOs

Table 11 Best Scoring Organization Type

The NGOs more fully implement the TIES voluntourism guidelines in their website communications compared to the other types, making them the best overall scoring type of organization. However, all Dutch voluntourism providers, including NGOs, relatively scored low looking at the TIES voluntourism guidelines. The entire sector needs to considerably improve their website communications. Hence, it's better to conclude that of all the organization types, the NGOs seem to be taking the lead in implementing the TIES voluntourism guidelines in their website communications.

De Volkskrant Responsibility Claims Reflected in the Providers' Website Communications

Generally speaking, the claims made by Dutch voluntourism providers in the de Volkskrant study are often not supported by their website communications, raising the suspicion that their responsibility claims do not correspond with reality.

Firstly, their claims of prioritizing local community's needs, achieving lasting impacts and monitoring and evaluating programs, are often reflected in their website communications, but not supported with explanations and examples on "how" they achieve these claims.

Secondly, the website communications of the majority of providers do not support their claim to employ clear, comprehensive and honest marketing messaging, as they all inconsistently and incompletely include evidence to support their positive-goals and success related content.

Thirdly, the website communications of all providers do not support their claim to put effort in finding the appropriate match between the volunteer and a program, as essential information is lacking, namely:

- Informing volunteers on the possibility that their application to participate in a voluntourism program can get rejected;

- Informing about alternative ways to contribute to local community goals for volunteers that are not deemed appropriate to participate in a program;
- Information on pre-trip orientation, such as fine print and training courses.

Fourthly, the website communications of the providers do not support their claim to be sufficiently reporting on non-financial information, as intangible long-term impacts are essential and currently not being covered in the reportings of the majority of providers.

Lastly, the website communications of the majority of providers do not reflect their claim that they thoroughly check the backgrounds of their volunteers, as minimum web-content was found that clearly and comprehensively described their procedure for checking the backgrounds of their volunteers and there's a limited employment of compulsory submissions of certificates of good conduct.

Dutch Voluntourism Providers and Responsible Marketing

Firstly, this study shows that the Dutch voluntourism sector has an overall low performance on the communication of responsibility, because the TIES voluntourism guidelines aren't sufficiently being reflected. Their website communications often include positive and goals-related content, but supporting evidence and transparency is lacking, especially reporting on financial and non-financial information is scarce.

Secondly, the claims made by Dutch voluntourism providers in the de Volkskrant study are often not supported by their website communications, which strengthens the suspicion that the claimed responsibility level of their voluntourism practices does not correspond with reality.

Thirdly, the providers have a selective promotion of attractive aspects of responsibility, because they primarily report on easily to measure, tangible short-term impacts as opposed to intangible long-term impacts that are more difficult to measure and map, but are just as important and need to be included.

Lastly, there is no clear differentiation found in the level of responsibility between the three types of organizations. In the de Volkskrant study and on their websites, the Dutch voluntourism providers have made claims regarding the responsibility of their voluntourism practices, but their website communications show to not support many of these claims as TIES voluntourism guidelines aren't properly being reflected. Social enterprises pretend to better address social impacts than commercial organizations or NGOs. However, this study has shown that they do not include reports on the social impacts that they claim to make, nor an elaboration on the monitoring and evaluation systems that they use to measure these impacts. When an organization type makes claims like this, they have to ascertain if this is really true or they have to put more effort into achieving the claim. Otherwise, reality will not correspond with what organizations claim to be, as is currently happening, and that creates suspicions of greenwashing and affects the credibility and reliability of the voluntourism sector in general.

Hence, it was expected of Dutch voluntourism providers to voluntarily communicate about social and environmental information, with the motivation to use it to signal their actual superior position regarding their responsibility efforts. Hereby, leaning towards the "responsible" market signalling theory. This expectation was based on the fact that the providers have claimed in the de Volkskrant study to employ the TIES voluntourism guidelines sufficiently and to offer responsible voluntourism practices. However, this study has shown that the 22 TIES voluntourism guidelines aren't sufficiently

reflected from their website communications and that it is questioned if their responsibility claims correspond with reality. This confirms that the sector does not meet the expectation of employing market signalling. Subsequently, it is suspected that the sector applies greenwashing, meaning that the providers voluntarily communicate about their responsibility efforts to pose as a “responsible” organization when actually they’re not.

5.2. Discussion

Contribution of the Study

This study has scrutinized a field that hasn’t been examined before in the Dutch context, giving insights into the responsibility of the website communications of the voluntourism sector, providing clear recommendations for the sector to improve itself and ultimately creating responsibility awareness among the sector. This study provides the Dutch voluntourism sector with practical tools that show how they can avoid greenwashing practices and improve the responsibility reflected in their website communications. When these tools are applied in the right way, it will make it possible for them to improve their communication practices.

However, the weakness of this study is that it cannot make conclusions about the actual practices of the organizations that were examined. Therefore I agree with McGhee’s argument that it is essential that a multi-layered certification process for the voluntourism sector is to be developed, that acts independently and is at the same time affordable, accessible and easily monitored.

No Clear Differentiation by Type of Organization

The results from this study show that also within the Dutch voluntourism sector there is no clear differentiation by type of organization and that the type of organization does not give a guarantee of responsible practice, which supports Goodwin’s (2011) and Smith & Font’s (Smith, 2014) findings.

Firstly, all Dutch voluntourism providers relatively scored low looking at the TIES voluntourism guidelines. Hence, responsibility is insufficiently being reflected in their website communications. Overall, the NGOs show to be taking the lead in implementing the TIES voluntourism guidelines, but it cannot be concluded that NGOs are that much different or more responsible than the other organization types as they did not score high.

Secondly, social enterprises specifically pretend to better address social impacts than commercial organizations or NGOs communicate. However, they do not include reports on the social impacts that they claim to make, nor an elaboration on the monitoring and evaluation systems that they use to measure these impacts. They also do not include financial reports in their website communications, showing exactly how donations are raised and managed, how program fees are calculated and distributed, and how much money is going directly to the local communities. Most commercial organizations and NGOs show to be more transparent regarding these aspects than the social enterprises.

Hence, looking at the website communications of the voluntourism sector, it shows that there isn’t a clear differentiation by type of organization, because the providers that claim to be different and more “responsible” actually show to implement the TIES voluntourism guidelines insufficiently.

Seeing the Benefit and Need of Responsibility Communication

The fact that the Dutch voluntourism sector has an overall low performance on responsibility communication does not directly imply that the entire sector has irresponsible voluntourism practices. This research only indicates that some of the organizations, that actually have responsible voluntourism practices, have failed to see the benefit or need of communicating about certain responsibility efforts (Parasuraman, 1985). NGOs often put little effort in taking on TIES voluntourism guidelines in their marketing and making claims on responsibility on their direct webpages. However, they do provide interesting information in attached annual reports that often explain their ways of working, how they aim to achieve their goals and what impacts they have reached until this day. Hence, they've failed to see the benefit or need of using such information in their marketing and therefore they're also missing out on the competitive advantage (Porter, 2006) that they can have on organizations that do not include such evidence.

The reason that NGOs are missing out on this competitive advantage, can also be explained by how Herzberg (1966) and Prakash (2002) state that it cannot necessarily be assumed that small firms, or NGOs, know how to communicate on responsibility efforts as they often don't have the marketing communication skills. This explains the fact that most NGOs seem to have the information that is attractive for volunteers to read, but don't make use of this information for competitive advantage.

As long as it's Easy and Attractive

It is recognized that it can be a challenge to report on social impacts, as these often require consistent and regular measurement and reporting on intangible impacts, which are recognized by TIES (2012) as hard to measure and report on. This is in line with Smith & Font's (2014) statement that responsibility communication depends on the complexity of the issue, with organizations choosing to communicate not what is arguably most important, but what is the easiest and most attractive. This study shows that often commercial organizations seem to do this, as they take the effort to include content that elaborates on some of the TIES voluntourism guidelines, making all sorts of claims regarding impacts and sustainability, but often lacking in providing evidence to justify these claims. They do not include content that elaborates on the TIES guidelines, for which they have to include evidence in the form of, for example financial and non-financial reports. Employing these guidelines requires consistent monitoring and evaluation of their voluntourism programs. As Mahoney (2013) states, this is practically biased and misleading reporting, as a reader, at first sight, may think that it is impressive information and gets a feeling of responsibility, but actually no evidence is being delivered and thus not all TIES responsibility guidelines are being covered.

Stimulating Greenwashing Practices?

The previously mentioned insights also refer to the greenwashing theory, as greenwashing doesn't always exist out of false disclosures, but it can also appear in a form where organizations are solely communicating about their positive responsibility efforts and cleverly excluding communication about their possible damaging actions (Mahoney, 2013). Hence, applying greenwashing is something that can sneak into business practices very easily, because the threshold to apply it is very low as the practice is difficult to identify or punish (McGhee N. , 2014). This raises the question if recent media attention, the Smith & Font study, the UNICEF campaign and the Volkskrant study, have only made it more attractive for voluntourism providers to apply greenwashing practices as it is easier to apply

greenwashing to “look” responsible, than having to change unsustainable business practices and policies.

The media, the UNICEF campaign and the two studies had the intention to motivate and stimulate the overall voluntourism sector to act more responsibly. The main concern is now if greenwashing practices are implemented by Dutch providers, as one of the main things that trigger greenwashing practices is when pressure is being performed by potential threats such as media (Elsbach, 2003). When that happens, as a reaction, often organizations quickly try to legitimize their actions and maintain their reputations by implementing greenwashing practices (Elsbach, 2003). Website communication can be used to communicate anything and can cover-up unsustainable practices, making things prettier than they actually are.

Influence of the Media

This study shows that the website communications of UK-based voluntourism providers reflect different TIES voluntourism guidelines as the Dutch voluntourism providers. The biggest difference can be seen with the TIES child protection focussed guidelines on which the UK-based providers scored considerably low (Smith, 2014), whereas the Dutch providers scored higher. The Dutch providers more often described their codes of conduct when working with children, their employment of mandatory submissions of a certificate of good conduct for their childcare programs, and more often referred to the child protection policies of ECPAT/Defence for Children and the Better Care Network.

This difference could be explained by the, in 2014 launched, Friends-International and UNICEF campaign ‘Children are no tourist attraction’ (2015), which presented the possible flaws in voluntourism “holidays” and the harm that voluntourism can bring to local children involved. In addition, the Better Care Network also gained attention in newspapers like the NRC Handelsblad (2015), with its critique on volunteering in orphanages. Van Trijp (2014) confirmed that the UNICEF campaign and the media coverage resulted in a critical public discourse in the Netherlands in late 2014. As Elsbach (2003) states, these potential threats to the legitimacy of the providers may cause them to take action on their website communications to manage or respond to the negative media attention, making sure that they’re showing their commitment to the protection of local children through their website communications.

This raises the question if the motivation to act responsibly comes from intrinsic motivations or solely because of pressure performed by the media and the public. This discussion is also being addressed in the Volkskrant study, in which recommendations are made that stress the Dutch voluntourism sector to make a switch from a reactive attitude to a proactive attitude regarding taking responsibility in voluntourism.

Dissolving the Dichotomous Mind-set

Even though gappers and voluntourists are two different target groups, they do have considerable similarities. Van Trijp (2014) included several Dutch voluntourism providers in her research sample and made concluding remarks about their website communications. This makes a comparison applicable of some of her findings with the findings of this study.

This study shares the same conclusion regarding the website communications of voluntourism providers as Van Trijp did in her study for the website communications of gap year providers:

"...apart from benefiting the local community or environment while volunteering, not much is mentioned on the sustainable practices of the companies nor is the (Dutch)gapper encouraged to travel in a sustainable way with respect to the host and the environment." (2014, p. 82).

In addition, Van Trijp's study showed that the Dutch *"...gap year providers represent the gapper as 'helper' and the local host as 'needy'"* (2014, p. 83) and that this would only *"...lead to the harmful stereotyping and the strengthening of dichotomies between the Western and developed world and the underdeveloped and needy world."* (2014, p. 83). However, my study shows that at least a handful of providers put a strong emphasis on trying to dissolve this dichotomous mind-set. They do this by informing the volunteer that locals are equal to them and often just as happy as they are, and that its more about a cultural exchange rather than "helping the needy". Although Van Trijp's claim does apply on the majority of Dutch voluntourism providers, my research results do not confirm that the entire Dutch voluntourism sector represents the gapper/volunteer as the "helper" and the local host as the "needy".

5.3. Recommendations

Reality Check/Marketing & Messaging:

Generally, the providers need to pay more attention to including evidence to support their claims of achieving lasting impacts, having sustainable practices and prioritizing local communities' needs. Their website communications about the voluntourism programs must clearly communicate impacts and demonstrate why volunteers are genuinely required, and help educate prospective volunteers about the social, environmental and economic issues that the voluntourism programs aim to address (TIES, 2012). They should include information that describes the results of regular monitoring and evaluation of their voluntourism programs and the findings of regularly performed community needs assessments. By including such information, the sector will be able to answer important questions like:

- Why their mission matters;
- What makes their programs effective;
- How this is achieved;
- And who is leading the effort.

Selecting and Working with Volunteers:

Firstly, the providers, in particular NGOs, should pay more attention to being elaborate and comprehensive in their program descriptions. Potential volunteers need to be able to easily find details on language and physical work requirements and restrictions (TIES, 2012).

Secondly, the providers, in particular NGOs and social enterprises, need to pay more attention to including elaborate and comprehensive information on the "human element" of the voluntourism experience, in addition to describing the social importance of the volunteering work or technical details. Providers could use examples to highlight the expected emotional journey that volunteers may

experience during their stay, covering the positive experiences as well as the negative experiences they might encounter.

Lastly, the providers, in particular NGOs, need to pay more attention to communicating clearly on what they can offer regarding pre-trip orientation, covering aspects like fine print and information on their training courses and need to include:

- Sufficient information on voluntourism possibilities that are available for travellers with special needs, as well as accessibility services and clear guidance and assistance available upon request;
- Information that describes the right for them as the voluntourism provider, to turn down travellers looking to join an experience to which their skills, interests, abilities or attitudes are not aligned with the needs and expectations of the voluntourism program;
- Information that describes the possibility that voluntourism is not the right option for some travellers due to a variety of reasons, and offer advice on other options to contribute to local community goals(*ibid.*).

By implementing these pre-trip communications, the voluntourism sector will maximize the volunteers' potential and will be able to create meaningful experiences for both volunteers and host communities, as they make sure that volunteers get the right expectations and understandings of the voluntourism programs and know what is expected of them as a volunteer in advance.

Defining Success and Measuring Impact:

Generally, the providers need to pay more attention to clearly outlining what protocol is followed when volunteers act inappropriately or unethically during one of their voluntourism programs. The partner organization should be able to remove the volunteer from the project in case of unethical or harmful behaviour. Such information needs to be communicated in advance as the volunteer needs to agree with the terms upon he or she could be removed (TIES, 2012). By implementing this recommendation, the providers take effort in controlling possible negative impacts, caused by the behaviour of volunteers.

Transparency in Financial Reporting:

Firstly, the providers, in particular commercial organizations and social enterprises, need to pay more attention to transparency in financial reporting by including more information on how they calculate and distribute program fees. When they describe this in percentages, ideally they could support this with evidence in the form of annual financial accounts. In addition, they need to improve their reportings on donations by clearly describing how donations are raised and managed.

Secondly, the providers, in particular NGOs, need to pay more attention to the representation of their annual financial accounts by including such information directly on their websites on a special webpage instead of in attached reports that use too formal language. Hereby, making such important information easier to retrieve and more readable for potential volunteers.

From a business perspective the providers need to acknowledge that there is an added value in being transparent, as it offers the opportunity for voluntourism providers to differentiate themselves by establishing a positive reputation as a transparent, reliable and responsible organization (TIES, 2012).

Transparency in Non-Financial Reporting:

Generally, the providers need to pay more attention to:

- Non-financial reporting by not only reporting on short-term tangible impacts, such as the construction of roads or buildings, but also long-term intangible impacts, such as the benefits of training and other opportunities that local community members have access to because of volunteers' work. For example, how the access to education, markets or health has improved since the start of the voluntourism program (TIES, 2012).
- Including clear and comprehensive explanations on how they conduct their community needs assessments, and more importantly, they need to report on the results and findings of these regularly performed assessments.
- Showing the value of their voluntourism programs by including stories of local community members or local partner organizations (explaining their experiences in their own words), instead of only using stories of volunteers.

By implementing this transparency in non-financial reporting, the providers will help prospective volunteers to make more objective decisions in choosing a voluntourism program. In addition, *"...having an ongoing community needs assessment system will help ensure transparency in the evaluation process, as well as the credibility of reportings* (TIES, 2012, p. 16). Besides, telling stories and sharing anecdotes from the perspectives of local community members can be an effective way to add to financial and non-financial reporting of the impacts of voluntourism programs. This type of reporting is not necessarily a clear added value, but may serve as a marketing differentiator, *"...because in today's world of social media and instant communications, where travellers have the means to readily share their opinions and find others', being seen as a trustworthy and reliable organization is a clear advantage"* (TIES, 2012, p. 16).

Managing Social and Economic Impacts:

Generally, the providers should pay more attention to:

- Including information on their codes of conduct when working with local and indigenous communities and families, not only on codes of conduct when working with children.
- Complying with and communicate about combatting commercial/sexual exploitation of local people, as part of their commitment to ethical business practice and respect for human rights (TIES, 2012). More information on how they do this needs to be included to inform volunteers about this important issue.
- Improving the thoroughness of their background checks on volunteers by not only asking for a CV, motivation letter or checking the references, but by including a criminal record check through a compulsory submission of certificates of good conduct. This should at least be employed for the programs that are more sensitive for human harm doing, but ideally this should be implemented for all programs.

The voluntourism sector is a sensitive sector, where volunteers often work with marginalized community members, poor families, children and women, and by implementing responsible management policies and practices, the providers will help maximize benefits and minimize the negative foot prints for local communities and local destinations (TIES, 2012).

Supporting Biodiversity Conservation and Heritage Preservation:

The providers, in particular social enterprises, need to pay more attention to specifying how they involve local communities in their wildlife conservation and heritage preservation programs.

In addition, the providers need to pay more attention to including information on codes of conduct when working with wildlife or heritage. It must be clearly communicated to volunteers that unauthorized or improper interaction with wildlife is not tolerated.

By implementing these recommendations the voluntourism providers have the opportunity to positively contribute to the protection of wildlife, the conservation of biodiversity and the efforts to protect and preserve tangible heritage and intangible heritage (TIES, 2012).

5.4. Further Research

As many Dutch voluntourism providers fall short in terms of responsibility communication, it shows that this form of tourism, that has the image of a socially responsible and altruistic activity, presents a need for monitoring, evaluation, and regulation. Ideally, to motivate voluntourism providers to act more responsibly, further research will need to be done examining how a certification process can be developed for the sector that is at the same time affordable, accessible and easily monitored.

Furthermore, the de Volkskrant study (Van den Brink, 2014), Van Trijps' study (2014) focussing on the Dutch Gap Year product, and this study, have made a considerable contribution to our knowledge about the Dutch voluntourism sector. However these studies solely take a deeper look into how the Dutch voluntourism product is marketed. I recommend that further research should focus on how the TIES voluntourism guidelines are actually put into practice by investigating the voluntourism programs on the spot, taking into account the perspectives and opinions of local community members, local partner organizations and volunteers, and trying to identify the methods that are used with which they monitor and evaluate their voluntourism programs.

This research recommendation is based on my experience from earlier this year, where I had the chance to visit voluntourism programs of one of the Dutch voluntourism providers: Activity International. I went to South-Africa, Zimbabwe and Zambia and visited community-development, childcare, and conservation programs, and performed a small case study where local community members and volunteers were asked about the extent to which they saw the TIES voluntourism guidelines being put into practice and where improvement is needed. However, the case study was performed on such a small scale and within a limited period of time, that it was impossible to make reliable conclusions, but it did highlight some interesting findings presented in Appendix 4.

This case study confirmed the need for further research on a larger scale, so that insights can be gained about the responsibility performance of the entire voluntourism chain.

Lastly, what we ultimately want is a responsible voluntourism sector, but it should be noted that responsibility awareness among prospective volunteers is essential to achieve this. In order for prospective volunteers to separate the wheat from the chaff they will have to be made aware of what responsibility in voluntourism exactly holds and on what responsibility aspects they should screen a providers. Hence, I recommend further research to focus on the possibilities for creating responsibility awareness among prospective volunteers. In this way the consumer can help with

revealing unsustainable businesses and will make it difficult for unsustainable businesses to survive and to keep offering unsustainable practices. The Dutch NGO Volunteer Correct has recognized this importance and has made a start in investigating the possibilities, but could use the support and insights of further academic research.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Complete List of TIES Voluntourism Guidelines

<i>II Sustainable Management – Reality Check:</i>
II-1 (a) Voluntourism projects must be developed with the local communities' needs, and not the travelers' or the company's needs, as the first priority.
II-1 (b) Create opportunities for lasting impact, and not quick change, that are sustainable.
II-1 (c) Conduct a thorough analysis of various alternatives, and develop voluntourism programs only if voluntourism is determined as a suitable option.
<i>II Sustainable Management: Marketing and Messaging:</i>
II-2 (a) Use messaging strategies that clearly convey the goals of voluntourism programs, why they are important and how they make a difference.
II-2 (b) Avoid all forms of poverty marketing - such as using images or words (e.g. "helping people who can't help themselves") which belittle or degrade local people.
<i>II Sustainable Management: Selecting and Working with Volunteers:</i>
II-3 (a) Proactively assist prospective volunteers with finding projects that appropriately match their interests, skills, budgets and availability.
II-3 (b) Provide clear explanations on the goals and objectives of volunteer projects, in order to avoid unrealistic expectations or misunderstanding.
II-3 (c) Utilize pre-trip orientation to ensure appropriate levels of cross-cultural understanding, cultural sensitivity, and understanding of gender issues among volunteers.
II-3 (d) Provide sufficient information on volunteer opportunities that are available to travelers with special needs, as well as clear guidance on accessibility services and assistance available upon request.
II-3 (e) Implement steps to gather feedback from participating volunteers and promptly address any negative feedback.
II-3 (f) Clearly communicate about the possibility that volunteering is not the right option for some travelers due to a variety of reasons, and offer advice on other options to contribute to local community goals.
<i>III Measuring, Monitoring and Reporting: Defining Success and Measuring Impact:</i>
III-1 (a) Conduct community needs assessment in order to ensure that the voluntourism program is fulfilling the needs of the community, and to ensure volunteer projects' benefits for local people.
III-1 (b) Collaborate with local partners to clearly define what the success of voluntourism projects means to the organization, to volunteers, and to community stakeholders.
III-1 (c) Implement a system to conduct third-party community needs assessment on a regular basis, not only at the beginning but throughout the project.
III-1 (d) Establish a system to monitor progress and measure impact, taking into account local capacity-building needs and improvements.
III-1 (e) Clearly outline and implement a consistent process in which volunteers who behave inappropriately or unethically can be removed from a project.
<i>III Measuring, Monitoring and Reporting: Transparency in Financial Reporting:</i>
III-2 (a) Implement a consistent method to calculate and report on the amount of money per trip that goes to support the community or destination, and the amount that goes to support the operations of voluntourism programs.
III-2 (b) Employ a consistent method of calculating and reporting on the amount of both cash and in-kind donations.
<i>III Measuring, Monitoring and Reporting: Transparency in Non-Financial Reporting:</i>
III-3 (a) Make publicly available information on the short- and long-term impact of voluntourism projects in order to help travelers make objective decisions in choosing a volunteer opportunity.
III-3 (b) Include transparent reporting on the results and findings of regular community needs assessments.
III-3 (c) Show, not just tell, the values of voluntourism programs

<i>IV Maximizing Benefits and Minimizing Negative Footprint: Benefits for Communities and Local Engagement:</i>
IV-1 (a) Ensure effective approaches to collaborating with local communities by building relationships with community groups and families.
IV-1 (b) Provide local community members with sufficient information on the effectiveness of the volunteer projects, and the expected impact of the volunteer projects both in the short and long term.
IV-1 (c) Seek feedback from local community members regarding their experiences hosting, interacting and collaborating with international volunteers.
<i>IV Maximizing Benefits and Minimizing Negative Footprint: Managing Social and Economic Impacts:</i>
IV-2 (a) Develop and implement a code of conduct regarding working with local and Indigenous communities, families and children, and respecting their rights, needs and priorities.
IV-2 (b) Maximize the opportunities to provide financial benefits for local people by incorporating responsible and equitable employment, capacity building, and fair-trade practices where applicable.
IV-2 (c) Voluntourism providers should not only comply with international standards of responsible business practices, but also proactively support the efforts to combat all types of commercial sexual exploitation in destinations and tourism establishments.
IV-2 (d) Require background checks before selecting volunteers, including (but not limited to) criminal record and criminal history checks, in order to protect the safety of all parties involved.
IV-2 (e) Implement a strict zero-tolerance policy to ensure there is no inappropriate behaviors by volunteers when interacting with children.
<i>IV Maximizing Benefits and Minimizing Negative Footprint: Supporting Biodiversity Conservation and Heritage Preservation:</i>
IV-3 (a) Develop and manage wildlife conservation and heritage preservation related volunteer projects with the emphasis on local context.
IV-3 (b) Implement a strict code of conduct to ensure responsible behaviors by volunteers when they come in contact with cultural heritage, historic sites, or artefacts.
IV-3 (c) Implement a strict code of conduct to ensure responsible behaviors by volunteers when interacting with wildlife or working in areas close to wildlife habitats.

Appendix 2 – List of TIES Voluntourism Guidelines Appropriate for Web-content analysis

<i>II Sustainable Management – Reality Check:</i>
II-1 (a) Voluntourism projects must be developed with the local communities' needs, and not the travelers' or the company's needs, as the first priority.
II-1 (b) Create opportunities for lasting impact, and not quick change, that are sustainable.
II-1 (c) Conduct a thorough analysis of various alternatives, and develop voluntourism programs only if voluntourism is determined as a suitable option.
<i>II Sustainable Management: Marketing and Messaging:</i>
II-2 (a) Use messaging strategies that clearly convey the goals of voluntourism programs, why they are important and how they make a difference.
II-2 (b) Avoid all forms of poverty marketing - such as using images or words (e.g. "helping people who can't help themselves") which belittle or degrade local people.
<i>II Sustainable Management: Selecting and Working with Volunteers:</i>
II-3 (a) Proactively assist prospective volunteers with finding projects that appropriately match their interests, skills, budgets and availability.
II-3 (b) Provide clear explanations on the goals and objectives of volunteer projects, in order to avoid unrealistic expectations or misunderstanding.
II-3 (c) Utilize pre-trip orientation to ensure appropriate levels of cross-cultural understanding, cultural sensitivity, and understanding of gender issues among volunteers.
II-3 (d) Provide sufficient information on volunteer opportunities that are available to travelers with special needs, as well as clear guidance on accessibility services and assistance available upon request.
II-3 (e) Implement steps to gather feedback from participating volunteers and promptly address any negative feedback.
II-3 (f) Clearly communicate about the possibility that volunteering is not the right option for some travelers due to a variety of reasons, and offer advice on other options to contribute to local community goals.
<i>III Measuring, Monitoring and Reporting: Defining Success and Measuring Impact:</i>
III-1 (a) Conduct community needs assessment in order to ensure that the voluntourism program is fulfilling the needs of the community, and to ensure volunteer projects' benefits for local people.
III-1 (b) Collaborate with local partners to clearly define what the success of voluntourism projects means to the organization, to volunteers, and to community stakeholders.
III-1 (c) Implement a system to conduct third-party community needs assessment on a regular basis, not only at the beginning but throughout the project.
III-1 (d) Establish a system to monitor progress and measure impact, taking into account local capacity-building needs and improvements.
III-1 (e) Clearly outline and implement a consistent process in which volunteers who behave inappropriately or unethically can be removed from a project.
<i>III Measuring, Monitoring and Reporting: Transparency in Financial Reporting:</i>
III-2 (a) Implement a consistent method to calculate and report on the amount of money per trip that goes to support the community or destination, and the amount that goes to support the operations of voluntourism programs.
III-2 (b) Employ a consistent method of calculating and reporting on the amount of both cash and in-kind donations.
<i>III Measuring, Monitoring and Reporting: Transparency in Non-Financial Reporting:</i>
III-3 (a) Make publicly available information on the short- and long-term impact of voluntourism projects in order to help travelers make objective decisions in choosing a volunteer opportunity.
III-3 (b) Include transparent reporting on the results and findings of regular community needs assessments.
III-3 (c) Show, not just tell, the values of voluntourism programs

IV Maximizing Benefits and Minimizing Negative Footprint: Benefits for Communities and Local Engagement:

~~IV-1 (a) Ensure effective approaches to collaborating with local communities by building relationships with community groups and families.~~

~~IV-1 (b) Provide local community members with sufficient information on the effectiveness of the volunteer projects, and the expected impact of the volunteer projects both in the short and long term.~~

~~IV-1 (c) Seek feedback from local community members regarding their experiences hosting, interacting and collaborating with international volunteers.~~

IV Maximizing Benefits and Minimizing Negative Footprint: Managing Social and Economic Impacts:

IV-2 (a) Develop and implement a code of conduct regarding working with local and Indigenous communities, families and children, and respecting their rights, needs and priorities.

~~IV-2 (b) Maximize the opportunities to provide financial benefits for local people by incorporating responsible and equitable employment, capacity building, and fair-trade practices where applicable.~~

IV-2 (c) Voluntourism providers should not only comply with international standards of responsible business practices, but also proactively support the efforts to combat all types of commercial sexual exploitation in destinations and tourism establishments.

IV-2 (d) Require background checks before selecting volunteers, including (but not limited to) criminal record and criminal history checks, in order to protect the safety of all parties involved.

IV-2 (e) Implement a strict zero-tolerance policy to ensure there is no inappropriate behaviors by volunteers when interacting with children.

IV Maximizing Benefits and Minimizing Negative Footprint: Supporting Biodiversity Conservation and Heritage Preservation:

IV-3 (a) Develop and manage wildlife conservation and heritage preservation related volunteer projects with the emphasis on local context.

IV-3 (b) Implement a strict code of conduct to ensure responsible behaviors by volunteers when they come in contact with cultural heritage, historic sites, or artefacts.

IV-3 (c) Implement a strict code of conduct to ensure responsible behaviors by volunteers when interacting with wildlife or working in areas close to wildlife habitats.

Appendix 3 – Overview and Market Share of the Sampled Dutch Voluntourism Providers

Organization type:	Name provider:	Volunteers per Year Approx.:
11 Commercial operators	Activity International	700
	Counterpart Travels	25
	Ontmoet Afrika	65-80
	Projects Abroad	700
	Samen Jongeren en Straatkinderen	45
	Travel Active	650
	Travel Unique	80
	Travel 4 Change	200-300
	Vrijwillig Wereldwijd	300
	Xtreme-Gap	20-30
	Koning Aap, Shoestring and Your Way 2 Go (all part of KUONI)	20
13 NGO's	Dare 2 Go	80
	Edukans	119
	Eye For Others	60
	IBO Nederland	271
	KET	92
	Livingstone Reizen	350
	Local Dreamers	10-15
	Luz Alba	15-20
	SamenScholen	60
	SHIB	50-100
	SIW	220
	VIA	30
	World Servants	731
8 Social Enterprises	African Travels	10
	Be-More	700
	Commundo	60
	Doing Good	90-120
	Fair 2	12
	Het Andere Reizen	300-350
	Pure Volunteer	69
	World-Mapping	500

Appendix 4 – Findings Case Study Southern Africa

Findings regarding the implementation of TIES voluntourism guidelines by Activity International and its local partner organizations	
From the volunteers' perspective:	From the local community members' perspective:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Volunteers need to be better informed about financial and non-financial information as they have indicated to be poorly informed about how their program fees are distributed and what the effectiveness and short- and long-term impacts are of the voluntourism programs they participate in. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Feedback from local community members need to be gathered and processed in a more timely and professional manner; Degrading and belittling content of local people in marketing communication needs to be avoided more; More emphasis on making the right match between volunteer and program; More emphasis on cross-cultural understanding, cultural sensitivity and understanding of gender issues, among volunteers; More emphasis on making sure that volunteers have the right expectations of the voluntourism programs Monitoring and evaluation activities of voluntourism programs need to be officially documented and communicated towards local community members; More transparency in financial information; Local community members need to be better informed about non-financial information(effectiveness of the program and its short- and long-term impacts).