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Is volunteer exit ending?

A qualitative study into volunteer exit reasons and life after volunteering

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Preface

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Executive summary

Volunteers play a crucial role in development cooperation. No matter where a person volunteers, at their local sports club, an international non-governmental organisation, or a local initiative, every volunteer has a positive impact on a certain issue or another person's life. Nevertheless, all volunteers will stop volunteering at one point in time, either forced or by choice. This research will focus on the step after the decision to stop volunteering. Multiple options arise after quitting a volunteering task, varying from continuing with volunteer somewhere else to spend more time on their hobbies. This research aims to explore this life after volunteering options of a volunteer.

Nevertheless, to understand the options and choices a volunteer has, it is crucial to take their exit reasons into account. A certain reason to stop volunteering could explain why a person behaves the way they do after volunteering. In the current (limited amount of) research on volunteer exit, it became apparent that two major categories can be identified for volunteer exit, (1) personal and (2) organisational reasons. However, academics mainly investigated volunteer exit from professional NGO's. This research will add to volunteer exit literature by researching PI volunteers and will explore the differences and similarities of this type of volunteers compared to the established literature.

The link between exit reason and life after volunteering will be explained by three different pillars, (1) willingness to volunteer, (2) availability, and (3) capability. These pillars explain why a volunteer starts a certain volunteering task. By broadening the goal of the framework, this research is using the framework to explain life after volunteering. This research aims to answer the following question:

'How are former volunteers spending their time after quitting?'

To answer the research question, a grounded theory research method is used. The lack of previous research on life after volunteering stimulated a narrative inquiry approach. Therefore, this research will focus on the personal stories, experiences, and thoughts of the interviewees to gain a deep

understanding of volunteer exit and life after volunteering. 10 ex-volunteers active in a private initiative took part in this research.

After an in-depth analysis of the data, seven major themes were found in order to answer the research question. These aggregate themes could be divided into the two topics within this research, (1) volunteer exit reasons, and (2) life after volunteering.

In sum, the findings on volunteer exit of former private initiative volunteers were more or less in line with the established literature. However, this research shows that a certain type of volunteers, executing volunteers, address financial insecurity as one of the exit reasons. This group leaves the (foreign) volunteer organisation when the personal financial state is pressing. Additionally, this research finds that volunteers stop because they start to dislike the task or that after a long period they have to be challenged. This might be explained by the long commitment to the organisation a PI volunteer usually has. The volunteer duration in the PIs of the respondents varied from 6 to 28 years. Last, mission drift appears to affect volunteer exit. Mission drift might be explained because of the given that most of these volunteers 'owned' the PI and could influence the course of the organisation. It has been observed that most PIs expanded after reaching their initial goal.

The second part explored life after volunteering. This research concluded with four different options ex-volunteers could be categorised in. (1) Stop but continue in the same organisation is the first category. These volunteers changed the structure of the organisation and continued. The volunteers observed in this category are all board volunteers. Volunteers that (2) stop with all volunteering make up the next category. It seems that volunteers in this category stop because of serious family reasons. (3) Stop but immediately start a different volunteering task. And the last category is (4) stop, take some time off and continue later with a different task. The last category comprised all the executing volunteers interviewed. The reason for stopping with volunteering for a certain amount of time appeared their return to the Netherlands, it was a kind of adaption period. Interestingly, they all stated that they wanted to return to the initiative at some point in time.

From the gathered data, practical and theoretical implications have been formulated. First, this research helps volunteer organisations manage their (former) volunteers. Depending on the reason for volunteer exit, it pays off to keep in touch with the volunteer. Because after a period, they might be willing to return to the organisation. The other side might be useful as well. When a volunteer leaves with a different reason, they are not likely to return.

Furthermore, this research is (one of) the first research focussing on life after volunteering. It can be a basis for future research on life after volunteering to test the generalizability or extending the framework. Moreover, this research is the next step in private initiative research. It follows the research on PI exit and exit strategies up. Many additional research questions can arise after reading this research and be the start of new research.

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1. Introduction

Helping another person without receiving a monetary reward has been happening for a long time and nowadays volunteering has redeemed its place in society. Whereas one volunteer helps refugees in learning their language, another volunteer volunteers at their sports club. These days volunteering can be done through many forms and shapes.

The world has become relatively smaller in comparison with a few decades ago, which enhanced alternative volunteer possibilities. The invention of the commercial airplane, international train tracks, and cars made it easier to travel long distances. Over time, these long-distance travels became more affordable too. Nowadays, many people travel inter-continentally and visit new cultures and countries. At the same time, the worldwide web created a whole new opportunity to share information. If something happens in the world, within a few seconds it is shared all around the globe. Globalisation as the phenomenon is called has stimulated a different kind of volunteering, across border volunteering. The connections and relations that people make during their travels lead to many new volunteering projects. The opportunity to visit other countries and societies paired with the information accessibility are drivers for the growing across border volunteering organisations. Whereas in the last century mainly giant non-governmental organisations (NGO's), developed countries and religious communities provided cross border aid, nowadays an increasing group of individuals start initiatives in order to help societies in need (Brok & Bouzoubaa, 2005).

Not only across border volunteering is gaining popularity but also short-term episodic volunteering (Doosje, 2018). Volunteering appears to shift towards low effort resulting in high rewards (Hustinx & Lammertyn, 2003; Doosje, 2018). With more short-term volunteers, volunteer organisations face an interesting challenge to attain sufficient and suitable volunteers. The volunteer market can be compared with the employee market, where there should be a balance between supply and demand (Meijs, Ten Hoorn & Brudney, 2006). In an imperfect market, volunteer exit could have a major impact on the sustainability of an organisation. Volunteer retention grows in importance when volunteers are scarce. Perhaps if the exit reasons of a volunteer are known, volunteer organisations can take accurate measures to retain these volunteers.

Looking at the academic literature, it shows that volunteering has been a popular research topic over the last decades. Academics mainly focused on motivations to volunteers and why people volunteer (Wilson, 2012). The other side of volunteering, volunteer exit, has not been researched as much. As one of the few academics researching volunteer exit, Hustinx (2010) explored volunteer exit reasons in the Red Cross Foundation. In their research two different categories have been identified: (1) personal exit reasons and (2) organisational exit reasons. Where a richte understanding of volunteer exit is established, the generalizability to all volunteer organisations has to be proven. Furthermore, current research appears to stop at volunteer exit and/or exit strategies. The question leading this research is:

"How are former volunteers spending their time after quitting?"

To answer this research question, two different themes should be covered. Both topics are addressed in this research and in the finding, aimed to extend the literature on volunteer exit.

First, volunteer exit. As said before is volunteer exit an under researched topic with only a small number of academical literature written on this subject. The literature mainly specialised themselves on ex-volunteers in professional volunteer organisations (amongst others: McLennan, 2008; Hustinx, 2010; Willems & Dury, 2012). However, a growing number of small-scale or fourth pillar initiatives have been set up (De Bruyn & Huyse, 2009). In order to broaden the understanding on volunteer exit, this research will explore exit reasons in small-scale volunteer organisations.

The second theme that will be addressed is life after volunteering. The academic gap studied is a person's volunteering behaviour after quitting. Therefore this research will explore the different options that a volunteer has and tries to connect with observed exit reasons. The findings in this research can help volunteer organisations understand the behaviour and needs of the volunteers. Furthermore, by understanding the reason for exit, the volunteer organisations could react accordingly to keep or regain the volunteer. This practical implication in combination with the academic contribution means that the results of this research could have valuable potential.

Hence, the results account for the next step in volunteering literature and broadens the volunteer exit literature. But the implications of this research do not limit themselves to the literature. It provides a handout for volunteer managers, small scale initiatives, and NGO's on volunteer retention. If the volunteer leaves for a certain reason, the volunteer organisation could respond appropriately in order to maintain a sustainable relation with a potential return to the organisation after a certain period.

2. Literature Review

This chapter offers a review of the literature necessary to answer the research question: *"How are former volunteers spending their time after quitting?"* First, this chapter will elaborate on reasons for volunteer exit and divide these exit reasons into different categories: (1) personal exit reasons, (2) organisational exit reasons and (3) the influence of mission drift. Next, the literature on motivations to volunteer is reviewed using the volunteerability framework of Meijs and colleagues (2006). Last, this research uses former private initiative (PI) volunteers as its population, thus the last paragraph discusses these development initiatives and addresses the unique character of these volunteers.

2.1 Reasons for volunteer exit

Over the last decades multiple scholars have investigated reasons to quit a volunteer task (amongst others: McLennan 2008; Hustinx 2010; Willems, et al., 2012; Haivas, Hofmans, & Pepermans, 2013; Willems & Dury, 2017). The functional motive framework of Clary and colleagues (1998) has been widely used in these studies. Clary et al. (ibid) distinguished six functional motives of a person to take part in volunteer work: 'career', 'values', 'understanding', 'social', 'protective' and 'enhancement' (ibid). Even though these six motives have been analysed for applying to volunteer exit, Willems and colleagues (2012) concluded that the framework is too limited in identifying reasons to quit volunteering. The functional motive framework focuses on an individual perspective, where in real-life external factors must be considered (ibid).

McLennan (2008) found in a case-study among Australian firefighters that exit reasons could be categorised within two main groups. First, personal reasons, which included age and health. Secondly organisational reasons which contained (1) paid work and family, (2) the organisation in which they volunteer and (3) changing distance from the place of volunteering (ibid). In consensus with McLennan (ibid) categorised Hustinx (2010) exit reasons by personal and organisational factors. However, personal reasons from Hustinx (2010) perspective are external reasons that influence the choice to stop volunteering. The volunteer's age or health is not included as a category but is part of the leisure category. This research uses the same categorization as the scholars above (personal and organisational) but adds reasons accordingly.

2.1.1 Personal reasons to stop volunteering

Within the category of personal reasons, one could distinguish external and internal reasons for volunteer exit. Internal reasons are, for example, health, and age. Work, leisure, and family can be seen as external personal reason.

Internal personal reasons

Health and age
One reason for volunteers to quit is their own age and health (Hustinx, 2010; McLennan et al, 2008; Schulpen & Kinsbergen 2012). McLennan and colleagues (2008) found that over a quarter volunteers addressed personal health or age as the reason to stop volunteering. Age reasons might be explained by a long duration of volunteering at the same organisation. Schulpen & Groot Kormelinck (2011) stated that the emotional connection of the volunteer with their beneficiaries explains why certain volunteers spent a long time at one organisation. Furthermore, Simons (2016) found that many initiatives expanded their work, or continued within a different community, after an initial project was finished. Therefore, some scholars argue that physical limitations caused by an elder age force volunteers to stop with their initiative (Schulpen and Kinsbergen, 2012; Willems and Dury, 2017).

The part above might imply that age is a strong predictor of discontinuing volunteer work. However, McNamara & Gonzalez (2011) stated that it is not the age of an individual that made them stop volunteering, but rather poor health, taking care of an older relative, not attending church anymore or the lack of prior volunteer experience. Combining the literature, perhaps age is rather a mediating factor in volunteer exit than the primary reason.

The health component can be divided into physical health and mental health. Volunteers that stop volunteering because of their physical health, experience trouble in executing the task. Physical health reasons for exit might be caused by illness or age. To stimulate volunteer retention, an organisation should pay attention and monitor the mental health of volunteers (Fengyan Tang, Morrow-Howell, & Choi, 2010). It is suggested that volunteers find workarounds to a volunteer task whenever they are physically troubling but stop volunteering when the mental challenges are too big (ibid). A volunteer organisation should monitor the mental health of their volunteers and must act properly in addressing mental problems to maintain volunteer satisfaction and continuity (Fenyang Tang et al., 2010).

External personal reasons

Family

Within the volunteer exit literature family reasons appeared to be one of the most influential categories to stop volunteering (McLennan, 2008; Hustinx, 2010). Academics found that the lack of time spent with a partner or family drives this exit category (ibid). Family reasons comprise changes, shifting priorities and/or other matters regarding one's family that lead to volunteer exit. Examples of family reasons to stop volunteering are (1) family building or taking care of young children and (2) sick, disabled, or elderly family members (Hustinx, 2010). These reasons lead back to the lack of available time spent with a partner or family (McLennan, 2008; Hustinx, 2010).

Work

The next personal reason for volunteer exit concerns work-related motives. Hustinx (2010) argued that work-related reasons to stop volunteering were (1) starting a new career, (2) having a demanding job or (3) not working during the daytime. Regarding the research population of PI volunteers, work-related exit reasons could have a major influence on volunteer exit. In most cases

PIs are operated from the aid giving country. Meaning that the hands-on aid is managed from a distance. PI volunteers usually have a normal job next to running the private initiative (Kinsbergen & Schulpen, 2011). Conflicts between volunteering and paid work might enforce an exit from the PI. Next to the above-mentioned work-related exit reasons, promotions, job change or unmet expectations when building a curriculum vitae be seen as predictors of volunteer exit (Hustinx, 2010).

Leisure

The next category in exit reasons is about leisure activities of the volunteer. Hustinx (2010) included personal health and age in this category, but because of the perceived importance of these concepts for this research, these reasons are a separate category. Volunteers appear to leave their task when they prioritise other leisure activities such as (1) sports, (2) cultural activities or (3) associational memberships over volunteering (Hustinx, 2010).

Second, previous research classified moving as a common reason to stop volunteering. This does not change the motivation to volunteer, but rather the convenience of volunteering. McLennan and colleagues (2008) argued in their study on reasons of Australian firefighters to quit volunteering, that almost 40% of the respondents said moving away from the organisation was one of the leading reasons to stop volunteering.

2.1.2 Organisational reasons to stop volunteering

The second overarching exit reason category are organisational reasons. The volunteer market can be compared with the labour market (Meijs et al., 2006; Walker, Accadia & Costa, 2016). In order to attract and retain employees or volunteers, the organisation should present a save and stimulating work environment. When a starting volunteer agrees to execute a certain task, this psychological contract that has been agreed on should be met by the volunteer and the organisation (Walker et al., 2016). If the rewards do not match the workload anymore, then a volunteer is likely to leave the organisation (ibid). By using the categorization of Hustinx (2010), this paragraph explains the organisational impact on volunteer exit in three sub-paragraphs (1) the organisation of the volunteer work, (2) governance and (3) affection.

Organisation of volunteer work

Hustinx and Lammertyn (2003) concluded that volunteering was shifting towards a more reflexive form. This means that volunteering tasks were more short-timed and would only be accepted if it fitted a person's time-schedule and perceived rewards (ibid). Regarding the actual volunteering work, two different reasons to exit exist: (1) a perceived mismatch with a volunteer's expectations and skills and (2) the lack of support and supervision (Hustinx, 2010).

First, volunteers have to experience the usefulness of their task (ibid). Volunteering should challenge and simultaneously providing volunteers with new skills and expertise. Nevertheless, the volunteering task should not take a lot of time (ibid). A volunteer organisation should balance and monitor the volunteer's progress. If the workload, required skills or time-dependency does not fit the originally agreed description or the rewards of the work anymore, a psychological contract breach occurs (Walker et al., 2016). Perceived organisational support is the key element in overcoming the misalignment between organisation and volunteer (ibid). Thus, an organisation should provide the volunteer with challenging tasks, learning opportunities and support them in their volunteering.

Moreover, the lack of coordination and recognition are the next predictors of volunteer exit. Hustinx (2010) concluded that the lack of equipment and training is a predictor of volunteer exit. Especially if the training component was outdated, did not enhance a volunteer's career opportunities or made little sense to their specific volunteer work, then a volunteer is more likely to quit an organisation (ibid). In contrast to this statement made by Hustinx (ibid), Fengyan Tang and colleagues (2010) could not find evidence for the relationship between the training component and volunteer exit. This could be explained by the definition of training in the two studies. Where Fenyang Tang and colleagues (2010) used a single training-day or a short briefing as parameter for training, whereas Hustinx (2010) focussed more on the content of these trainings. The effect might thus differ over a longer time period, making training an important factor in volunteer retention.

Organisation of the volunteer work comprises multiple categories that all lead back to two concepts, (1) up-to-date materials and (2) appreciation for the volunteer's work. An inability of an organisation to meet these requirements for sustainable volunteer relation could lead to volunteer

exit. The lack of perceived appreciation translates into less information sharing from the volunteer or the feeling to be left alone (ibid). Personal contact is thus of great importance in keeping volunteers at the organisation (Hustinx, 2010; Walker et al., 2016).

Governance

The way an organisation is governed is the second category in organisational reasons to stop volunteering. Hustinx (2010) stated that the hierarchical structure of a volunteer organisation could discourage volunteers. They felt that there was a structural inability to achieve change between the different vertical organisation levels (ibid). Another reason could be the perceived distance between volunteers and the local leaders (Hustinx, 2010; Bryant & Posdeev, 2016). The lack of skills in volunteer management can and should be compensated with specific training in order to get the most out of the manager and the volunteer (Bryant & Posdeev, 2016). To create a long-lasting relationship with the volunteer, the (paid) staff must understand their role and the role of the volunteer (ibid). By balancing their time and energy on the right subjects, such as recognition and guidance, the benefits can be maximised (ibid).

Governance reasons can also influence volunteer exit on a different scale. Volunteers active in across border initiatives have to deal with local and national governments. Schulpen and Kinsbergen (2012) implied that the support of a local government is crucial in the success of a project. If local governments do not support the initiative, then it will be hard to set up the project. Many PIs do not even have contact with the local governments because of potential corruption, fear of losing control and/or compromising the quality of the project (Kinsbergen, Schulpen, & Ruben, 2017). On the other hand, the volunteer is responsible for good governance in the local community where they operate. Managing the local partners and maintaining good relations is crucial in the project's success (Schulpen & Kinsbergen, 2012).

The home-country can play a significant role. Even though PIs cannot receive funding directly from the government, they receive their funds from (international) non-governmental organisations (INGOs) (Schulpen & Kinsbergen, 2012; Bouzoubaa & Brok, 2005). A government can decide to spend their development budget on another part of the world, meaning that small-scale

development initiatives do not receive funding anymore (Bouzoubaa & Brok, 2005). Shifting priorities of the donating NGOs might lead to a forced PI exit because of a lack of funds.

Affective component

Similar to the organisational structure, volunteer exit is determined by the affective component of the organisational framework (Hustinx, 2010). The main components are the perceived feelings of satisfaction, recognition and appreciation (ibid). A good predictor of volunteer satisfaction is the personal relationships with fellow volunteers (ibid). Volunteers can influence the efforts of colleague volunteers through socialisation and signalling mechanisms (Becker and Connor, 2005; Haski-Leventhal and Bargal 2008; Willems et al., 2012). Factors of bullying, gossip, the absence of team spirit and/or competition between volunteers enhanced the probability of volunteer exit (ibid).

As said before is being recognised by superiors an important factor in volunteer retention (Hustinx, 2010; Fengyan Tang et al., 2010; Walker et al., 2016). Recognition can come in many forms, ranging from interest in a volunteer's personal life to benefits for the work done. Fengyan Tang and colleagues (2010) stated that even a small (monetary) stipend results in sustainable volunteer retention of older adults. The lack of benefits, on the other hand, is a predictor of volunteer exit (Hustinx, 2010; Willems and Dury, 2017). In conclusion one could argue that "recognition essentially [is] related to taking volunteers seriously, respecting them as persons with certain gifts and ambitions, and treating them as full members of the organisation (Hustinx, 2010 p249)"

Last, volunteers might expect a certain amount of monetary rewards for their activities. Even though monetary rewards are not the key element for volunteers, they appreciate it. Especially if the task increases in difficulty volunteers might ask for a monetary reward (Kumar, Kallen, & Mathew, 2002). Previous research stated that monetary rewards are not crowding out intrinsic motivation (Kumar et al., 2002; Fiorillo, 2011). Intrinsically motivated volunteers who get monetary rewards spend more hours volunteering than those who are intrinsically motivated and are not monetarily rewarded (Fiorillo, 2011). On the other hand, Kinsbergen and Tolsma (2013) concluded that volunteers with a higher income, volunteer less. Potential explanation for this difference could be the research population, Italian Social Care and Educational Services and PI

volunteers, respectively. Overall, literature appears not to be single-minded regarding the effect of monetary rewards for volunteers. What they agree on is that recognition outweigh monetary rewards (Kumar et al., 2002; Fiorillo, 2011).

2.1.3 Mission drift

There are reasons to believe that the exit reasons of private initiatives and regular NGO volunteers differ slightly. When starting a private initiative people are usually very intrinsically motivated and the connections they establish in the development project are seen as friends or even family. The project feels as their primary goal in life, making it way harder to give it up (Schulpen & Kinsbergen, 2012). This suggests an ownership bias. The cost of giving something up is way greater than the cost of attracting an object or thus a project (Kahneman, Knetsch, & Thaler, 1991).

Rather than giving up what the PI volunteers started, they continue in a different project or expand the scope of their current project. This leads to the last exit reason, mission drift. Scientific literature takes a fairly negative stance towards mission drift (Simons, 2016). However, a change of goals does not necessarily mean anything negative. An organisation can for example change their goal to make a bigger impact. Therefore, mission drift is defined as a process of change in which an organisation deviates from its (core) goals and which may involve shifting and/or replacing these targets (Tremblay-Boire, 2011; Simons, 2016).

The strong emotional connection of private initiative volunteers with their cause results in more active volunteering compared to volunteers in professional development organisations (Kinsbergen, Tolsma, & Ruiter, 2013). Furthermore, except for one-off projects, the active years of volunteering in a PI are quite long (Schulpen & Groot Kormelinck, 2011). During this time a PI might reach their initial goals, but deep involvement in the local communities could let them start a new project or drift off from the initial goal. Eventually, this might lead to unhappiness by donors, because they expected to support a certain project when their money is spent on a whole new project. Furthermore, the PI might lose the connection with the initial goal and reason they started the PI.

2.2 Volunteerability

In 2006, Meijs and colleagues stated that the volunteering market had many similarities with the labour market**.** They used the concept of employability and transformed it to the philanthropic field (Meijs, Ten Hoorn, & Brudney, 2006). Volunteerability is defined, based on the article of Meijs et al. (2006), as *"the individual's ability to overcome related obstacles and volunteer, based on their willingness, capability and availability (Haski-Leventhal et al., 2018, p1140)."*

As with employability does volunteerability seek balance between supply (volunteers) and demand (volunteer organisations) (Meijs et al., 2006; Doosje, 2018). Volunteering organisations are looking for volunteers, where volunteers are looking for challenging and interesting opportunities. This research will mainly focus on the volunteer itself (supply side).

The supply side of volunteerability can be used to understand barriers for volunteering (Meijs et al., 2006). The concept can be divided into three fundamental elements: willingness, availability and capability (Meijs et al., 2006; Haski-Leventhal et al, 2018; Doosje, 2018). Willingness is about the motivations of a potential volunteer to act (Haski-Leventhal et al., 2018; Meijs et al, 2006). The concept of availability is about the time that a person has to volunteer (ibid). And the last pillar, capability, is about skills and self-efficacy in relation to the task. Whenever one or more of the elements are present, then the likeliness of a person to volunteer will grow.

2.2.1 Willingness

The willingness to volunteer is primarily measured in terms of motivation for volunteering (Haski-Leventhal et al., 2018). Ryan and Deci (2000) stated that willingness' internal process is driven by intrinsic motivation. However, more and more extrinsic motivational factors take stage, such as reward and recognition and social rewards (Haski-Leventhal et al., 2018).

Motivation to volunteer (MVT) is a well-researched subject. It can be divided into a sociological and a psychological perspective (Hustinx, 2010). The sociological perspective explains MVT as a part of cultures and as an expression of values and beliefs (ibid). The psychological perspective

argues that the motivation to volunteer is based on a trade-off between benefits and costs. Whenever the costs outweigh the benefits, a person is less likely to volunteer. MVT is usually measured by the Volunteer Function Inventory (VFI). The VFI identifies a finite set of motives that volunteer work can help satisfy (Wilson, 2012). Research by Finkelstein (2008) stated that people start volunteering for value driven motives, but that the amount of their contribution has more to do with self-related motivations (Finkelstein, 2008, p1355). This relates to the contribution Hustinx and Lammertyn (2003) made. They found that the willingness to volunteer depends on personal interests, rather than the need of society (Hustinx & Lammertyn, 2003). To fulfil the need for self-realization, volunteers demand relatively short volunteering tasks with a lot of freedom and tangible results (ibid).

Furthermore, willingness depends on the set of norms and values of an individual (Haski-Leventhal et al., 2018). Hitlin (2003) found that self-transcendent values, including universalism and benevolence, relate to a greater willingness to volunteer.

2.2.2 Availability

The second aspect in the volunteerability framework is availability. Meijs and colleagues (2006) define availability as the readiness to allocate time to a task or even reschedule for the volunteering. Availability is a very important aspect in the motivation to volunteer. In the end, when someone does not want to allocate time for volunteering, they are not likely to volunteer. Multiple scholars indeed address the perceived lack of time as the key reason for not volunteering (See amongst others: Anderson, Maher, & Wright, 2018; Sundeen, Raskoff, & Garcia, 2007; Wilson, 2012). However, availability is not a prerequisite to volunteer. Meijs et al. (2006), states that when one of the three pillars applies to a person, it will be more likely that a person will volunteer. One pillar can thus outweigh the absence of another pillar.

Research in America (Sundeen and Raskoff, 2000 p188 in Sundeen et al., 2007 p281) and Canada (Canadian Centre for Philanthropy, 2004 in Sundeen et al., 2007 p281) concluded that the most common barrier to volunteer is the lack of time to make a one-year commitment. It might be the deterred effect of (semi) long-term commitment that started a new way of volunteering. People are nowadays mainly volunteering based on a biographical match (Hustinx, 2010). These so-called

reflexive volunteers are viewing their involvement as personal development and are mainly active for personal goal setting (Hustinx, 2010). Rather than building a relation with the organisation, reflexive volunteers tend to build a relation with the task (ibid). This change in the view on volunteering is reflected in the rise of short-term and intermittent types of involvement (See amongst others: Hustinx & Lammertyn, 2003; Hustinx, 2010; Cnaan & Handy, 2005). The rise in episodically and online volunteering might lead to more volunteering (Haski-Leventhal et al., 2017), since it can fit a person's schedule at any time.

One could argue that having a lot of free time leads to more volunteering. However, scholars concluded the opposite. The most volunteering group of people are full-time workers that are married and have children (Sundeen et al., 2007; Wilson 2012). This contradictory conclusion might be explained through their children (Wilson 2012; Haski-Leventhal et al, 2017). Parents could increase their volunteering time because of their children's school activities or sport associations (ibid). It is thus not solely the actual availability that influences, but perceived availability as well.

2.2.3 Capability

The last indicator of volunteerability is capability. Capability includes actual skills, perceived skills of the volunteer and perceptions of skills needed to volunteer (Haski-Leventhal et al., 2018 p1144). A person is more likely to volunteer when a person perceives themselves capable of doing a specific volunteer activity (Doosje, 2018). Volunteerability is not only about the skills that a person already holds but also about potential learning opportunities provided by the volunteering task. The capability also increases when job learning and task-specific training. Self-efficacy is defined by Ormrod (2006) as the degree of a person's belief in its own ability about the completion of tasks and reaching goals. Self-efficacy shows for volunteer retention and is important when increasing volunteering (Eden & Kinnar, 1991). Meaning that self-efficacy not only increases capability to volunteer but also affects the willingness to volunteer.

This same volunteer subject is called assets in the original research by Meijs and colleagues (2006). Assets are defined as the mix of "talents, capabilities, knowledge and expertise" (ibid, p69) that a volunteer wishes to apply in the activity. Meijs and Brudney (2007) divide assets in high and low,

where high assets can be seen as fitting and sufficient skills regarding a volunteer initiative. Rather than only focussing on the skills and perceived skills required, competencies and resources are part of the asset side of volunteerability (ibid). When the assets match availability and the assignment, then there is a winning scenario, and the volunteer will more than likely take up the task.

2.3 Private Initiative volunteers

Recent literature implied that the concept of traditional volunteering does not exist anymore (Putnam, 1995). Instead of long-term commitment, volunteering is shifting more and more towards short-term commitments with less effort (Hustinx & Lammertyn, 2003; Hustinx, 2010). Putnam (1995) described the shift as the phenomenon of decline of "serious volunteering" and stresses the lack of involvement an average organisation requires to operate. Nowadays, volunteers are choosing their tasks based on self-realization and external motivational reasons. They want a great deal of freedom or rewards and are more often looking for a task that takes little time but has a big impact (Hustinx & Lammertyn, 2003 p168; Haski-Leventhal et al., 2018).

PI volunteers, on the other hand, usually cannot be placed in the category mentioned above. A growing number of celebrities and (volunteering) tourists are spreading across the globe to raise awareness for and solve small-scale issues in development areas (Kinsbergen et al., 2013; Kinsbergen & Schulpen, 2011). PIs are an under researched group of development cooperation. Since introducing small-scale charities by Bouzouba and Brok (2005) mainly Dutch researchers (amongst others; Schulpen and Kinsbergen) and Belgian researchers (Delvetere & De Bruyn, 2009) studied the subject of private initiatives. Rough estimates on the number of PI volunteers in the Netherlands have varied between the 6.400 and 15.000 PIs (Bouzouba & Brok, 2005; Voorst, 2005 p 9) . However, Kinsbergen and Schulpen (2011 p 166) mention that the margin is broad, and that there is no consensus of the used definition of private development initiatives. Having said that, these numbers from 2005 are still leading as the total number of private initiatives in the Netherlands nowadays. Since PIs are small-scale and voluntary initiatives, they do not have to be registered by any governmental institution, making it hard to keep track of the exact number of PIs in the Netherlands (Kinsbergen & Schulpen, 2011).

Furthermore, PIs are most times started by volunteers wishing to make an impact, commonly sparked by personal relations and new contacts or experiences, more and more enabled by globalization (Kinsbergen & Schulpen, 2013). Kinsbergen & Schulpen (2013) stated that tourists that came across problem areas, felt that they did not have a choice other than helping a local community by solving the issue. Fechter (2019) used an example of an older couple that wanted to volunteer in an NGO. When researching volunteer options, they came across a YouTube-video of a Cambodian schoolteacher reaching out for help. The couple concluded that the urge to help was so strong that they acted upon it (ibid). However, in many cases setting up a PI is not as planned as the couple in the example. The idea to start a small-scale development initiative can be there in an impulse.

2.3.1 Volunteer exit of private initiative volunteers

When speaking of exit in the context of private initiatives, most research focuses on organisational exit (Schulpen & Kinsbergen, 2011). However, when these organisational reasons apply to PI volunteers, there are multiple similarities in exit reasons. Schulpen & Groot Kormelinck (2011) divided exit reasons in two different groups, internal and external exit reasons. One of the most common reasons to stop the private initiative is the completion of the project (ibid). Another reason is age or health problems that force a volunteer to stop with the initiative (ibid). These reasons overlap with exit reasons of volunteers in professional development organisations but are less common in NGOs than in PIs. Furthermore, governance reasons for exit apply in both types of development cooperation. There is usually a difference between professional and voluntary development cooperation. The first type of governance exit reasons is based on the organisational structure, not feeling accepted by managers or organisation leaders and/or not being able to make a change in the organisation (Hustinx, 2010). In a PI, the exit reasons on governance are usually based on resistance of the receiving community.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Strategy

To answer the research question on life after volunteering, an inductive research strategy is used. Inductive theory uses observations or data in order to formulate theories (Locke, 2007). Academics argued that by using an inductive method the self-serving biases would be limited (ibid). Scholars would not get attached to theories prematurely and thus look at the totality of results before making theoretical claims. The absence of theories or concepts on life after volunteering supports the choice of an inductive research strategy. However, this does not mean that there is nothing to compare to. In the case of this research, it means that literature on exit reasons for volunteers, motivations to volunteer, and the literature on private development initiatives are reviewed. The insights of the research are used to enrich the literature on the fairly new concept of PIs and adds to the research on volunteer exit reasons. Since the research on PIs is mainly focused on the motivations, characteristics and the success of the initiatives, this research adds to the understanding of these unique development cooperation initiatives (amongst others: Voorst, 2005; De Bruyne & Huyse, 2009; Schulpen & Groot Kormelinck, 2011). Because of the lack of proven theories on this particular topic, grounded theory is most suitable for this research (Charmaz & Belgrave, 2007).

The exploratory theory formulation is conducted through a qualitative research strategy. Qualitative research focuses more on the meaning of words, rather than the meaning of numbers (Bryman, 2012 p380). By using the epistemological position of interpretivist, qualitative research is focused on the understanding of the social world through the eyes of participants in the research (ibid). This results in conclusions that are based on the interactions between individuals rather than the phenomena out there (ibid). In the case of this research, it means that a broad and in-depth understanding is required of the exit reasons and the life after volunteering options of a volunteer. Only then it is possible to draw conclusions on an ex-volunteer's life after volunteering.

3.2 Research Design

To gain a valuable understanding of life after volunteering, a grounded theory is chosen as the research design. Ultimately, the use of a grounded theory leads to different outcomes like concepts, categories, properties, hypotheses, and theories (Bryman, 2012 p570). These outcomes can be seen as building blocks towards creating theories. A substantive theory and a formal theory are the two different outcomes of a grounded theory. "Substantive theory relates to theory in a certain empirical instance or substantive area (ibid, p570)." A formal theory implies a higher level of abstraction and a broader range of applicability of the formulated theory (ibid). This research aims therefore towards substantive theory formulation.

The process of getting towards a conclusion can be seen as an iterative process. Starting with the initial data, the research method, the relevant literature, and concepts continually have to be adjusted to the gathered information. Coding is thus the key process in grounded theory (ibid, p568). Especially in the first stage of data collection, this research will mainly use open coding. Carried out through an intense understanding of the data to identify concepts that might lead to substantive theory formulation.

3.3 Population

As stated by Bryman (2012, p714) the population is a "universe of units from which a sample is selected." This research aims to find volunteer reasons to quit and connect these findings to volunteering related choices after quitting. The entire population, therefore, entails all volunteers that once were active in a certain volunteer task. A schematic overview of the research population identification can be found in Figure 1.

Originally, three levels of development aid can be identified: multilateral, bilateral, and civilateral (Develtere, 2005 p317; Kinsbergen & Schulpen, 2011; De Bruyn & Huyse, 2009). Multilateral foreign aid is the support of a country or project through institutions without borders (as the United Nations or the European Union) (Kinsbergen & Schulpen, 2011). Bilateral aid is conducted by a government of usually but not exclusively developed countries (ibid). The international support of non-governmental organisations such as Oxfam Novib or Doctors without Borders can be characterised as civilateral aid (ibid, p162). Develtere (2005) stated that the classification of

development cooperation is mainly based on the professionality of the development agencies. Most research on volunteer exit is based upon one of the above-mentioned professional development cooperation categories.

However, a fourth pillar of development aid can be added to the categories above in the form of philanthropic development aid (De Bruyn & Huyse, 2009; Kinsbergen & Schulpen, 2011). This category is in contrast to the above-mentioned voluntary. Private development initiatives are a development cooperation type that can be allocated to the fourth pillar (De Bruyn & Huyse, 2009). These small-scale initiatives have a voluntary nature and try to solve a development issue in a foreign country. The character of PIs does not require them to be administered by the government.

This research defines private initiatives by seven characteristics provided by Kinsbergen & Schulpen (2013, p51-52):

"(1) A group of people who (2) give support in a direct way (3) to one or more developing countries. They offer (4) structural support for organisations, communities or groups of people rather than one-off, individual support. The fact that (5) PDIs do not receive direct funds from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, that they are (6) small in scale and their (7) voluntary character."

The fifth characteristic, PIs do not receive direct funds from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, is mainly focused on the funding of development cooperation in the Netherlands (Ibid). It might differ between countries and their specific funding structure.

Second criterion is that the research population comprises ex-PI volunteers. In order to examine the reason for stopping with volunteering and the life after this decision, it is necessary that a volunteer stopped with a project. Therefore, former PI volunteers are more suitable in this research. This does not rule out current PI volunteers completely since a volunteer could still continue volunteering in a PI after they quit.

The last criterion to answer the research question is a geographical limitation. This research will focus on Dutch respondents in particular. When comparing the Dutch PI literature with the rest of the world, one could conclude that Dutch scholars are the frontrunners in this research area. The research on volunteer exit in PIs has, to my knowledge, been exclusively researched by Dutch scholars. In order to add value to the literature on volunteer exit and the Dutch PI research, a new

fresh subject is researched. The second reason to choose Dutch PI volunteers is that the research is conducted in the Netherlands, making it convenient to find suitable respondents.

Figure 1: Schematic overview of the research population. The darker the group, the more suitable they are in this research.

3.4 Sample selection

Figure 1 shows that the research applies to only a certain part of the once stopped PI volunteer population. Multiple sampling methods were used to find suitable respondents for this research. The first sampling method is based on convenience sampling. Convenience sampling is defined as recruiting participants who are readily available and easy to contact (Koerber & McMichael, 2008). However, convenience does not mean that no effort should be put into reaching and recruiting participants part of the research population (ibid).

The researcher first used his own network to find former PI volunteers. This led to only one participant. Unfortunately, COVID-19 made it impossible to attend events and ask (ex) PI volunteers in-person to help in this research. That is why different experts in the small-scale volunteering were contacted to find suitable participants in this research. The respondents that were introduced by the experts were all contacted through email or via social media. The second sampling method was snowball sampling. Due to the relatively low response on the call of the volunteering experts and the fact that PIs (and thus the volunteers) disappear when discontinued,

another sampling method was necessary. That is why after every interview the respondent was asked if they knew any former PI volunteers that would be willing to talk about their experience in the PI. The respondents that were found through the snowball method were initially contacted by the interviewee. After this initial contact, contact proceeded via email or WhatsApp.

3.5 Data collection

In order to obtain an in-depth understanding of a volunteer's experience, interviewing is especially a helpful data collection method (Bryman, 2012). 10 interviews with former PI volunteers generated the main sources of data. The interviewee overview can be found in Table 1.

To understand the stories and experiences of the respondents, unstructured interviews were conducted. The focus of the conversations was on the narratives of the volunteers. Since the goal of this research is the understanding of the experiences, the meaning and the subjects that took part in this interview, this type of data collection is suitable (Zhang & Wildemuth, 2009). By using the unstructured interview method, the interviewer does not come to the interview with a pre-defined theoretical framework and predetermined questions on the social phenomena researched (ibid). The role of the interviewer is more of a listener rather than firing questions to the interviewee. A potential downside of this interview method is that the social phenomena studied do not get the attention necessary (ibid). Therefore, the researcher should encourage the respondents to talk about experiences and perspectives relevant to their research (ibid). To maintain the course of the conversation, the researcher wrote four overarching themes to be addressed during the interviews. The first topic is why and how the volunteer started volunteering in the PI. Second was about how they experienced volunteering and whether they encountered any problems. Third, was about their decision to stop and why they made that decision. The last topic was how they were spending their time after volunteering.

The conversations started with a brief introduction of the interviewer and some general questions regarding the research and the anonymity of the interviewee. In order to create a safe environment in which the interviewee could speak freely, a certain level of anonymity has been created. Moreover, the conversations usually started with some general questions to create a certain level of comfort. The respondents will be addressed by Interviewee A, Interviewee B, e.g. and their volunteering role to guarantee their anonymity. Table 1 shows an overview of the respondents

spoken within this research. Furthermore, all interviewees were asked approval for recording the conversation. After giving approval, the conversation got recorded and later on transcribed. The transcripts of the interview were shared with the interviewee to eliminate mistakes before gaining permission to use the conversation as data in this research.

The interviews more or less followed the outline listed above. However, because of the unstructured characteristic, all the interviews were different. The conversation always ended with the question if the researcher missed an important theme or if the interviewee wanted to add something. Before closing the conversation, the respondents were asked if they knew people that would fit the research, and if they might be able to connect the researcher with them. Because of the common language, the researcher and the interviewees spoke all interviews were conducted in Dutch. Additionally, all interviews took place via an online environment because of the COVID-19 virus. The data collection took place in approximately one month (between May and June). This information can also be found in the table underneath.

Interviewees	Duration interview	Date	Function
Interviewee A	51:28	07-05-2020	Executing volunteer
Interviewee B	58:15	08-05-2020	Secretary
Interviewee C	01:22:07	11-05-2020	Chairmen
Interviewee D	01:08:38	14-05-2020	Executing volunteer
Interviewee E	01:01:26	15-05-2020	Chairman/Treasurer
Interviewee F	37:24	16-05-2020	Secretary
Interviewee G	50:44	18-05-2020	Chairmen
Interviewee H	49:40	19-05-2020	Chairmen
Interviewee I	53:26	04-06-2020	Chairmen
Interviewee J	48:48	05-06-2020	Executing volunteer

Table 1: Interviewee overview

3.6 Data analysis

The data analysis of the collected information during the interviews is based on the Gioia method (Gioia, Corley, & Hamilton, 2012). The aim is to analyse and structure the data to gain a deep understanding of the researched social phenomenon. Gioia and colleagues (2012) proposed a method that enhanced grounded theory development. Regarding the data analysis, this means that three different but sometimes repeating steps should be taken. First, initial data coding. This can be seen as open coding, giving all observations an initial code (ibid). Second step is organising the first order codes into second-order themes. This is an iterative process where the codes are connected, reviewed and combined into different themes (ibid). Last step is the most abstract. The themes should be combined into aggregate dimensions (ibid). These steps helped the researcher form the data structure.

The software of ATLAS. ti was used to analyse the gathered data in this research systematically. The first step was to open code the data in a way that it resembles the actual data. This first round of coding led to over 900 codes. Examples of codes, translated in English, are: 'after 28 years of volunteering it has been enough'; 'I was very disappointed with myself'; 'I felt the urge to take action'; and 'I would love to return [to the initiative]'.

The second step was transforming the big number of codes into second-order themes. In this phase the codes are categorised by links between categories (Bryman, 2012 p569). It became apparent that different codes were similar and could be formed into a theme. Even though the researcher started with mainly inductive thinking, after a few rounds the themes could be linked to the literature. For example, the first order codes 'I was very disappointed with myself' is part of the second-order theme 'health-related reasons.'

After combining and filtering the large sum of data, the researcher switched to a more visual approach. The software made it difficult to find the relations between the different themes. Instead of using the software, the researcher used post-its and his wall in order to visualise the relations, themes and links within the observed data. This method seemed to be very effective and helped to get a broad understanding of the phenomenon. Appendix B shows an overview of the codes that are most relevant for this research. In the last coding round, seven aggregate themes were identified. These themes could be divided into volunteer exit reasons and life after volunteering categories. They are the basis for chapter four, the findings.

4. Findings

In this section, the reader is introduced to the findings of this research. During the data collection, it became clear that the respondents usually had multiple reasons that lead to volunteer exit and that multiple topics are key to understanding how volunteers spend their time after quitting. First, the reasons that private initiative volunteers have for quitting a project or volunteering are discussed. It is important to understand the different reasons the (ex) volunteers have for exiting to understand the choice for life after volunteering to find potential relations and differences between volunteers. Subsequently, the actions of volunteers after quitting are discussed and linked to the concept of volunteerability.

4.1 Reasons to stop volunteering

The initial assumption within the sample group was that everyone quit their PI volunteering. Interestingly, two respondents (Interviewee B, E) choose to continue their volunteering in the same initiative. Both were part of the board of a PI in the function of secretary and treasurer, respectively. Their PI guided the aid beneficiaries in the local communities with expertise, a powerful network and money to enrol local projects. These two interviewees decided for various reasons to continue after their project stopped or the relationship with the local party was discontinued (Interviewee B, E). All the other interviewees resigned their activities in the PI.

Throughout the interviews became apparent the various, but sometimes overlapping, reasons for a person to stop with their volunteering tasks in a private initiative. Six out of ten respondents, regardless of their position in the private initiative, state that they have a hard mentally leaving an initiative.

'I quitted physically, but not mentally. I still have contact with the people in the project.… They can always call me when they need something (Interviewee I).'

In agreement with the findings of Hustinx (2010), observed this research multiple reasons for a single volunteer to exit their volunteer task. The reasons leading to volunteer exit can, in line with the classification of Hustinx (2010), be divided into two main categories: personal and organisational reasons. Table 2 shows the categorization of the motive's volunteers had to quit.

Since there are usually multiple reasons for volunteer exit, it is possible that one interviewee has identified personal, and organisational reasons. Throughout the next paragraphs, the observed exit reasons will be described starting with personal reasons and followed by organisational reasons.

	Personal Reasons	Organisational Reasons
A	X	
B		X
C	X	
D	X	
E		X
F	X	
G	X	X
H	X	X
I	X	
J	X	

Table 2: Overview of exit category per interviewee

4.1.1 Personal Reasons

Personal reasons for volunteer exit are most apparent in this research. This corresponds to previous literature (Hustinx, 2010; McLennan, 2008). The data shows that changes in personal life appear to be decisive in the choice to stop volunteering. Personal reasons like family, health, personal financial insecurity and moving to another place were mentioned during the interviews. Where Hustinx (2010) and Kinsbergen and colleagues (2012) state that age is an important factor of volunteer exit is it not observed in the data collected in this research. Underneath I will elaborate on the personal exit reasons found in this research.

4.1.1.1 Family Reasons

Five out of ten interviewees addressed any form of family reasons as a part of their decision to stop volunteering. The explicit reasons vary from building a family (Interviewee D, J) to the caretaking of her sick partner (Interviewee G).

Taking care of children was one of the reasons multiple times mentioned for stopping with volunteering (Interviewee A, F). The time-consuming work for the PI meant less attention for the children. Instead of always thinking about and working for the initiative, spending time with the children was prioritised over volunteering (Interviewee F). Second, after leaving the Netherlands to execute hands-on volunteering, the children would be raised in the country of destination. They graduated secondary school after six years of volunteering. Leaving Interviewee A the choice of staying in South-Africa or return to the Netherlands. They choose to return to the Netherlands in order to stay complete as a family.

'We didn't want to send our eldest daughter back to the Netherlands on her own. Our priority is and remains our family (Interviewee A).'

Another observed motive to stop volunteering is the caretaking of a family member. After a severe illness of her partner, Interviewee G became the full-time caretaker of her partner. The combination of the caretaking and running the private initiative became too time consuming and asked too much of her mental health, fuelling the decision to stop volunteering.

Furthermore, family building was mentioned as a reason to stop volunteering. Both Interviewee D and J met their partner during their time volunteering in the private initiative. One reason to stop volunteering was that they wanted to share their culture, life in the Netherlands and their family and friends with their partners. Interviewee J left the PI not only with a partner but also with two children. Wishing for them to learn about the Dutch culture they are attending Dutch primary school.

'In the end, I wanted our children to know something about the Netherlands and the Dutch side of the family (Interviewee J).'

Although family reasons to stop volunteering can differ from taking care of children, a partner or family building, the interviewees that mention family related reasons, generally agree that family is one of the most important aspects in their choice to stop volunteering.

4.1.1.2 Health

Health reasons to stop could be divided into physical and mental health problems. Both were observed during the conversations with the different respondents. It is important to stress that health reasons are purely focussed on the volunteer. When a family member's health accounts for volunteer exit, it will be regarded as a family reason for volunteer exit instead of health reason.

First, volunteer exit because of physical problems. This research only observed volunteer exit because of temporary but severe illness (Interviewee D). The environment of the volunteering was suboptimal for recovery, forcing Interviewee D to stop volunteering and returning to the Netherlands. Because of this sudden and forced return, Interviewee D never could let go of the volunteering project. This resulted in two more returns to the beneficiary country.

Even though mental health has not been addressed by any interviewee as a direct cause of volunteer exit, it was often mentioned during the interviews. Especially the executing volunteers experience a mental challenge during their time at the PI. Being confronted with poor circumstances, drugs abuse and violence worked on their mental health. However, the journey of the project and the progress one made outweighed the negative side of the volunteering task.

4.1.1.3 Financial insecurity

The next exit reason is personal financial insecurity. This research found that the uncertainty of financial means is influencing a volunteer's decision to stop volunteering. However, this exit reason is only observed in a certain group of volunteers.

Based on this research it is possible to divide the respondents into two groups. First, board volunteers. This group of volunteers rather have a supporting function to the aid beneficiary and in the PI. Second, there were three interviewees (executing volunteers) who went abroad to do street work to solve local issues or take part in development aid. These people moved to the developing country and lived there for a longer period. They found sponsors in their personal circle, in the form of friends and family, that provided them with enough money for board and lodging

(Interviewee A, D, J). This financial support gave the volunteer the freedom to focus on the project. Thus, when speaking about financial insecurity, this research talks about personal financial insecurity.

An interesting observation is found with these executing volunteers. Multiple interviewees A, D, J list personal financial insecurity as a reason to return to the Netherlands. It got hard to continue, financially we were having some issues (Interviewee D). Even though, Interviewee D received a small volunteer contribution, the absence of financial security to live, but also to return to the Netherlands in case of emergency added to the decision to stop volunteering.

4.1.1.4 Leisure

The leisure category comprises exit reasons that have to do with time availability (Hustinx, 2010). Nevertheless, this category does not limit itself to time availability reasons. Other exit reasons, such as looking for another challenge or moving are included in this category as well. This research identified two different reasons in this category.

Migrating to a foreign country is another observed reason to leave a PI. The researcher is aware of the fact that PIs in many cases are based in the Netherlands, working towards the beneficiary abroad. By moving to a foreign country, the volunteer experiences distance with the board, fundraising activities and events organised. Before the move, the board and Interviewee I decided that they would continue in the form they were in. However, attending meetings via an online environment and the shifted focus towards different volunteering made it infeasible to continue volunteering in the PI (Interviewee I).

'At some point [the board membership] will get a little diluted too. You're not that close anymore

(Interviewee I).'

Not having the energy to continue the initiative is the last personal reason for volunteer exit. PI volunteers usually spend multiple years in an initiative. In this research, it varied from 6 years to 28 years. At some point, it has been enough. Doing the same thing year after year and spending a lot of time and energy in the PI became exhausting (Interviewee C). After a certain amount of time, the fun seems to disappear, and other hobbies or volunteering will be prioritised. Gained experiences and skills will be used for other (short-term) volunteering (Interviewee C).

4.1.2 Organisational reasons

Apart from personal reasons, organisational reasons are mentioned as a trigger to stop volunteering. Even though these organisational reasons are less present in the stories of the interviewees, the effect of organisational reasons for quitting cannot be underestimated.

4.1.2.1 Organisation of volunteer work

Interviewee B stopped with the volunteer function in the local board because of cultural differences. Somewhere during the volunteering, Interviewee B set up a Dutch support foundation to fund the local foundation. Eventually, unsurmountable cultural differences between Interviewee B and the local board fuelled the decision to leave the local organisation and to continue with the Dutch PI independent of the local foundation. These cultural differences expressed themselves by a lack of transparencies of the cash flow. Interviewee B could not explain to the donors what happened with their money. Nevertheless, base structures were set up and a powerful network has been built in the beneficiary country and in the Netherlands. This led the decision to continue as an independent private initiative. Changing the structure and partners, but continuing volunteer work the PI.

4.1.2.2 Governance

Mistrust between the local executing organisation and the Dutch funding organisation could be a reason to stop with the volunteering tasks. As a Dutch volunteer, the goal is to address local issues. PI volunteers make it their life goal to solve these particular issues (Schulpen & Kinsbergen, 2012), aim to spend every euro raised to the aid beneficiary. Multiple participants (Interviewee E, G, H) noticed that this did not happen as strict as the volunteers wished/expected. The absolute distance

between the PI and the project executor made it somewhat impossible to keep a strict eye at the usage of the money. Sometimes is there a local organisation that checks the progress of the project, but not always. Interviewee H used to get furious when money got obscured, but later he accepted this.

' [The aid beneficiaries] knew we were on top of it, but things didn't go the way they should. I think that's what's bothering all the projects (Interviewee H).'

It seems that information asymmetry is an underlying exit reason. Most of the interviewees manage their project from the Netherlands, trusting a local partner with financial help. Even though precise and accurate financial statements were asked of the partners, there were some grey areas. Like Interviewee G stated: "I know what money can buy you, but I do not know what iron costs." A local partner controlled the progress of the project, but if it went wrong (as with Interviewee E) it had a heavy mental and emotional impact on the volunteer.

4.1.3 Mission drift

The last observed reason to quit volunteering is mission drift. This motive does not fall within one of the two categories listed (personal or organisational reasons). Mission drift as observed, is a combination of the two. At some point the volunteer loses connection with the project, not giving the volunteer the satisfaction, it once did. The projects executed are not in line with what the volunteer wanted to achieve at the beginning (Interviewee H). Local communities notice you when you are developing a certain area. The PI will receive many requests to help other projects (Interviewees G, H). These foundations both expanded and continued with their initiative, even though the initial goal and mission of the foundation were lost. Three projects after the start of the initiative, Interviewee H lost the connection with the foundation. The initial goal was reached a long time before and the motivation to continue with another project was lost (Interviewee H).

'We had set a target of 100 big water tanks, but we realized 83 of them. In addition to this target, we placed 7 large water towers and also the large water pipeline (Interviewee G).'

Overall, it became apparent that usually multiple reasons play a decisive role in volunteer exit. These reasons were to be divided in personal reasons, organisational reasons and somewhat of a combination, mission drift. Table 3 summarizes the volunteers exit reasons.

Reason for volunteer exit	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J
Family reasons	X			X		X	X			X
Health				X						
Financial	X			X						X
Leisure			X						X	
Organisation of volunteer work		X								
Governance					X		X	X		
Mission Drift							X	X		

Table 3. Categorised exit reasons per volunteer

4.2 Life after volunteering

How the interviewees spend their time after volunteering is different for all the volunteers. Two of the respondents continued their initiative but in a different form. One person spent the time after quitting by not doing any volunteering. Three of the interviewees took on a different volunteering task immediately after they quit volunteering for the PI and four people took a period of rest before starting another volunteering task. Table 4 summarizes the observations in the data, regarding exit reasons and life after volunteering.

Life after volunteering will be described based on the volunteerability framework of Meijs and colleagues (2006). Using willingness, availability and capability as drivers for volunteering, this research tries to connect the exit reasons and the volunteerability of the respondents interviewed.

	Stop, but continue	Stop with all volunteering	Stop but immediately start different volunteering	Stop, take some time off and continue later
Family reasons		X		X
Health				X
Financial				X
Leisure			X	
Organisation of volunteer work	X			
Governance	X			
Mission Drift			X	

Table 4: Life after volunteering per exit category

4.2.1 Stop, but continue

The first category comprises volunteers that at some point leave a project or local organisation but continue in the same PI. The research observed two respondents in this category (Interviewee B and E). One reason is that a project is stopped because the volunteer was swindled by their local partner (Interviewee E). The volunteer experienced this period as mentally challenging and blamed itself for the disappearance of the money. With it came the doubt to continue the project. However, Interviewee E eventually decided that it would be a waste to stop the project. He changed the concept and the work methods of the initiative and partnered only with two trusted foundations.

'Because of this very disappointment, I told myself: Sorry, but then I quit. On the other hand, [the project] became a part of me…. At one point I calmed down a bit and thought, I shouldn't throw away everything that has been built up in those years by an awful experience (Interviewee E).'

The other case was a Dutch funding organisation that could not justify the distribution of the donations to the donors. The local chairman did not share information with the funding foundations. This lack of transparency made Interviewee B decide to continue as a stand-alone organisation, cutting all ties with their local partner. It would have been a shame to discontinue since a strong network has been build and basic structures have been set up (Interviewee B).

Willingness. Volunteers that quit their volunteering tasks, but eventually continue in a different form still feel the urge to help people through their project. They seem not to be able to let go of what they build or do not have the feeling that they are done. It appears that there is a drop in the willingness to continue. Allowing the volunteer to stop with the project or the partnership. All the work that has been done no longer feels rewarding, intrinsically and extrinsic. However, this negative view of the project seems to disappear after the first blow of disappointment has left. Seeing the results of their former actions and projects and the rewarding feeling of helping those who need it take the upper hand. The willingness to volunteer returns to the level it was before the negative experience.

Availability. Availability of the volunteer does not seem to influence this category volunteer too much. As observed with Interviewee B and E, it is more of an agency problem. Here the local partner has the power to share the information they feel is necessary and the volunteer can be seen as the principal who cannot check if the agent is telling the truth. This category seems not to influence the volunteer time availability either the location since both does not change for the volunteer themselves.

Capability. The capability to volunteer could face the same dip as willingness. At least, Interviewee E blamed himself for the mistrust and the failure of the project. He felt let down by his own ability to make a good judgement. He felt mentally and emotionally drained and did not think that he still got what was needed to run a good organisation. However, just as with the willingness to volunteer, these thoughts were disregarded, and the positivity returned. Interviewee B followed a slightly novel approach. She used her capability to leave the local organisation and felt that more was needed to run a transparent and successful initiative.

Ex-volunteers that fall under the first category seemed to have problems with their foreign counterparts. Options lie with mistrust or a disrupted relationship with their partners. However, volunteers in this category eventually continue their work in the organisations. They implement changes in structure, partners or working methods to increase the trustworthiness of the organisation and to decrease the chance of failure. The willingness, availability and capability to volunteer are still there. That explains the choice to continue volunteering, but only in a changing environment.

4.2.2 Stop with all volunteering

People that stop with all future volunteering make up the next category. Multiple reasons can lead to stopping with volunteering, however, within the population of this research only one person stopped with volunteering altogether. During the course of the PI, Interviewee G celebrated many achievements. During the active years in the PI, life revolved around the local communities supported through the initiative. That changed when the partner of Interviewee G got ill, triggering a shift in priorities. At the same time, legal problems with the project occurred. Many hours were spent with different local and national legal departments to retrieve a container with confiscated goods. This time and energy-consuming period, led to the decision to stop, but also to not do any other volunteering after the PI. Interviewee G decided that it was time to think about itself.

'For years my life has revolved around caring for others, now prioritise myself. [I may have] invested too much in others for a while. It is enough (Interviewee G).*'*

Willingness. Volunteering became more of a burden than joy for Interviewee G. The cost of volunteering (in time or energy) began outweighing the benefits. Altruistic rewards, like the happiness of the local communities or intrinsic happiness when organising fundraisers were outperformed by concerns of personal health, energy and goals. It seems that the motivation to volunteer decreases significantly caused by project based and non-project related challenges in the volunteer's life. Eventually, Interviewee G decided that it was not rewarding to continue the volunteering.

Availability. Time availability seems of great influence on whether to not start any volunteering tasks after quitting. Being a full-time caretaker meant 45 visitations to the hospital a year and providing at-home care. Interesting is that Interviewee G is the only person who stresses a total abundance of time. Availability seems to be the primary motivation for this interviewee to stop volunteering.

Capability. Capability does not seem to have a big effect on this category. After a long period of activeness in the initiative and achieving more than initially hoped for, Interviewee G knew that it possessed the capabilities to run the initiative. The presence of the necessary skills got confirmed by organising two big events a year, raising money to support the project and the results in the beneficiary country. It seems that the capability to volunteer gets overruled by the willingness and the availability to volunteer.

The second category, 'stopped with all volunteering', appears to be caused by unforeseen and pressing (family) factors. All the energy of the (ex) volunteer seems to be allocated somewhere else. This has the biggest impact on the availability to volunteer since the time availability just is not there anymore. The capability to volunteer maintains the same because the volunteer has already proven themselves. Last, the willingness to volunteer decrease significantly because of changing priorities. The capability to volunteer does not compensate for the lost willingness and availability, resulting in a total stop of volunteering.

4.2.3 Stop but continue immediately with different tasks

This category is based on volunteers that stop volunteering but immediately start with new volunteering tasks. When zooming in on the reasons to stop volunteering, Interviewee C, H and I all had different reasons to quit. They stopped because it was time to do something else, mission drift and moving to a foreign country, respectively. Interestingly, when looking at the bigger picture, these respondents behave quite similar. First, all three had reached the initial goal of the initiative and were a successful initiative. Furthermore, they all made an unforced choice to leave the PI. At last, all the interviewees were looking at new challenges to get out of their comfort zone. Interviewee C felt after 28 years volunteering in the PI that it was time for something else. The experiences and skills that were added in those years should be put to a different volunteering task.

It seems that these interviewees all decided to prioritise enjoyable and a shorter timeframe when choosing a new volunteering task.

Willingness. People that can be categorised in the 'stop, but immediately continue with different volunteering' category seem not to have lost the motivation to volunteer. However, they are looking for a different reward. In the PI, everything that you did was for the long run, and results became goals over multiple years, now they wanted to finish a task and see a result (Interviewee C, H). It seems that willingness to volunteer, seeking for results, but also helping people in need, drive these interviewees. However, they choose new tasks based on what they enjoy and what makes them feel good.

Availability. The interviewees in this category all were the initiators of the project and were the people that somewhat carried the organisation in terms of workload. Quitting the volunteering task gave the volunteers a lot of free time. They all wished to keep volunteering, do things they enjoy and spend their time helping others. This time availability added to their choice to start other volunteering tasks. In contrast to the PI, that was across the border, they started the new volunteering task closer to home. The convenience of the location might play a role in starting different volunteering after quitting.

Capability. After a long time in the same volunteering position, the interviewees wanted to get challenged. Doing the same work over and over, became a little boring (Interviewee C). The new volunteering tasks of Interviewee C, H, I followed their interests, skills and willingness to learn new things. They did some less time-consuming, but challenging volunteering and got triggered by exploiting their skills and talents.

The third category comprises people that stopped volunteering but continued directly in other foundations. These people chose their path and, thus, were not forced to quit volunteering. They rather were looking for something new. Even though this category looks very similar to the first category in terms of volunteerability, there is a slight difference in capability. Ex-volunteers that continued somewhere else wanted to use the skills to make an impact in different environments

than only the one the PI was active in. Their availability to volunteer was still high just like the willingness to volunteer.

4.2.4 Stop, take some time off and continue later

The last observed category comprises respondents who initially did not proceed with volunteering, but eventually started a different volunteering task. Interestingly, Interviewees A, D, J are all part of this category. These respondents all went to a foreign country as executing volunteers. The interviewees in all pointed to a challenging period to get familiar with the Netherlands again.

'Back in the Netherlands, my family and friends soon became annoyed with me, because I always commented on little things. The cultural differences were immense those days. The Netherlands and [the country of volunteering] were two totally different worlds. (Interviewee D).'

During this adaption period, the volunteers seem not to be starting new volunteering. The focus is on finding housing, work and readjusting to the Dutch culture. After this adaption period, they started new, within their comfort zone and fairly unchallenging volunteering jobs. Eventually, Interviewee A and J both returned at their ecclesial community to start new volunteering. Choosing to do this task because of having an affinity with the subject and it is fairly easy (Interviewee J).

The three above-mentioned Interviewees have the wish to return to the country they have been volunteering. Interviewee D went back to the project two times and would love to return. These volunteers seem to have a strong intrinsic motivation to return and are all fully aware of the impact they have made.

Willingness. The motivation to volunteer appears to decrease for some time after returning to the Netherlands. Interviewee D addressed saving a child's life multiple times during our conversation. It seems that for these people the perceived rewards of volunteering again in the Netherlands, compared with the volunteer work in the PI, are not enough to start volunteering in a different organisation. The volunteers stay emotionally connected with the project and people in the development initiative in such a way that other volunteering does not meet their expectations in the first stage of returning to the Netherlands. A second explanation is the re-adaption of the volunteer

in the Netherlands. After returning to the home-country the volunteers addressed that is was quite stressful and hard to be comfortable again (Interviewee A, D, J). After a period of settling in, they were open again to do some (easy to do) volunteering again.

Availability. As said above can the first period after the return be quite hectic. Volunteers have to find a job and getting used to the Dutch culture. After settling in, the availability to volunteer increases again. It seems that volunteers take up new volunteering at organisations or communities they have been familiar with, e.g. an ecclesial community. This volunteering work appears to be within the comfort zone of the volunteer.

> *' [The volunteering task] is quite easy for me and does not cost a lot of energy. That is then something you can do next to it. (Interviewee J).'*

Capability. The observation that the executing volunteers seemingly cannot let go of the project they volunteered in, influences their life after volunteering decision. Interviewee A, D and J wish to return to the country they volunteered in again, to continue with (a different kind of) volunteering. Based on the conversations, it might seem that the Dutch volunteering tasks are more of a bridge to what they are most willing to do, returning to the volunteering country. That could explain why ex PI volunteers take new tasks within their capability and skill set. The intrinsic rewards of experiencing the impact on a person's life appear to affect volunteering again.

The fourth and last category are volunteers that after some time off decide to volunteer again. In this research, it became apparent that especially executing volunteer are categorised in this last category. Mainly because of the adaption to a new environment, where other practical issues such as housing are prioritised. In terms of volunteerability does the willingness and the availability drop significantly and even though the capability to volunteer stays neutral, they take on less challenging volunteer tasks when they start again.

5. Discussion and conclusion

The previous chapter discussed the most important findings of this research. To answer the research question about how former volunteers, spend their time after quitting, 10 (ex) PI volunteers were interviewed. It is important to analyse the findings by looking at the established literature and beyond that. Therefore, this section will first conclude on the most interesting findings and after that propose a model for life after volunteering. Currently the literature on volunteer exit focuses mainly on motivations and exit strategies. This research contributes to volunteer exit literature by providing the next step in volunteer exit literature, life after volunteering. It aims to do so by researching a fairly unique type of volunteers, PI volunteers.

Underneath the main findings will first be summarised. Moreover, interesting observations regarding this research are discussed. Furthermore, the contributions to the literature and the practical implications will be argued. Next, recommendations for future research and the limitations of this research will be explained followed by implications for future research. The thesis will end with a concluding remark.

5.1 Conclusion

The aim of this thesis is to explore choices after stopping with volunteering. By using a qualitative research design, it attempts to answer the question: *'How are former volunteers spending their time after quitting?'* To answer this research question, it is important to know why volunteers stop. After that, this exit reasons can be grouped into different options in life after volunteering.

During the research it became apparent that the exit reasons of PI volunteers do not differ that much from those in existing literature (amongst others: McLennan 2008; Hustinx 2010; Willems, et al., 2012). The classification of Hustinx (2010) into personal and organisational reasons for exit appeared usable in classifying the different exit motives observed in this research. Schulpen and Groot Kormelinck (2011) and Schulpen and Kinsbergen (2012) identified specific reasons for PIs to stop their activities. Classifying internal and external reasons that found quite some overlap with the classifications by Hustinx (2010). This research categorised the exit reasons in line with

Hustinx (2010), however finding three additions, (1) personal financial insecurity, (2) mission drift and (3) a more prominent role for 'not liking the task anymore'.

During the research it became apparent that four different categories could be identified when connecting exit reasons to life after volunteering. First, ex-volunteers that quit a project or a certain function but continue in the same organisation. Interviewees B and E experienced problems in their relationship with the local partner. Deciding to stop the partnership and continue the project in a different setting. With different partners or as an independent foundation. Second category is people that stop volunteering and do not start again. Ex-volunteers in this category seem to experience a life-changing personal event, such as a chronic illness of a family member and prioritise this over their volunteering tasks. Third, there are ex-volunteers that immediately start volunteering in a different organisation or foundation. Former volunteers that identify with this category stopped by choice, rather than that they were forced by external forces. The willingness to volunteer was still there, but due to different reasons, they were looking for another challenge. Last there are volunteers that initially stopped volunteering but after a certain period started a new volunteering task.

This research divided the respondent into two different PI volunteer categories; board volunteers and executing volunteers. It seems that there is a difference between the groups, regarding life after volunteering. Executing volunteers interviewed, all took some time off before starting a new volunteering task. One explanation for this observation is the acclimatisation time for returning to the Netherlands. However, after they settled, they took on new, easy to do and not very time intensive volunteering tasks, while at the same time maintaining their relationship with the PI they once volunteered at. Eventually, all executing volunteers had the desire to return. On the other hand, board volunteers were scattered between the four life after volunteering categories. Making this an interesting finding in this research. The four different categories mentioned above can explain the options a volunteer has in life after volunteering. Table 5 shows an overview of the respondents and their respected life after volunteering category.

	Life after quitting volunteering in PI			
	Stop, but continue	Stop with all volunteering	Stop but immediately start different volunteering	Stop, take some time off and continue later
A				X
B	X			
C			X	
D				X
E	X			
F				X
G		X		
H			X	
I			X	
J				X

Table 5: Life after volunteering per respondent

At last, the volunteerability framework can be used to explain life after volunteering. Meijs and colleagues (2006) identified three parameters to explain the decision of a person to start or not start a volunteering task. These three pillars of volunteerability are used to explain life after volunteering. Table 6 shows the willingness, availability and capability that each ex-volunteer experienced, ultimately leading to a certain category in life after volunteering.

	Willingness	Availability	Capability
Stop but continue	Small drop, recovers quite fast	No influence	Small drop, recovers quite fast
Stop with all volunteering	Decreased	Decreased	No influence
Stop but immediately start different volunteering	No influence	No influence	No influence
Stop, take some time off and continue later	Decreased	Decreased for a period of time	No influence

Table 6: Volunteerability per life after volunteering category

5.2 Discussion

First point of discussion is whether additional exit reasons should be added to the established literature. The researcher had the privilege to speak with a lot of different volunteers in different functions, all with their own motivations to volunteer and reasons to stop. Looking at the exit reasons, there is a lot of overlap with the framework by Hustinx (2010). However, it is good to keep in mind that the type of volunteer is different between the two researches. This research interviewed volunteers in a small-scale development cooperation, whereas Hustinx (2010) researched former volunteers of the Red Cross Foundation. The difference in the scale of organisation scale could possibly explain three observed additions to the framework.

Hustinx (2010) identified the lack of recognition, satisfaction and appreciation as reasons to quit volunteering. Basically saying that when a person feels valued and rewarded by the organisation, one is more likely to continue. However, Hustinx (2010) does not talk about monetary 'rewards' or conditions to continue volunteering, such as sponsorships or financial support. In this research it became apparent that personal financial insecurity could be a reason to stop volunteering. The volunteers that experienced this type of exit reasons were people that 'left everything behind' to do executing volunteering in a foreign country. They stressed that they could do so through financial

support of family, friends and other sponsors. With sudden changes in sponsoring or costs, they felt obliged to quit volunteering.

Second potential addition to the reasons to quit literature is mission drift. PI volunteers always start their initiative with a clear goal, helping a local community solving an issue. However, after a project is finished, many volunteers shift their goals towards a follow-up project, that way affecting a bigger community. After multiple projects and goal shifts, the connection with the initial goal of the organisation seems to be lost, leading to volunteer exit. Last, PI volunteers usually volunteer for a longer period at one initiative (Schulpen & Groot Kormelinck, 2011). The shortest volunteering period observed in this research was six years. With the rise of reflexive volunteering (Hustinx & Lammertyn, 2003; Doosje, 2018), they seem to be 'different'. Multiple interviewees stated that they were looking for something else, that it has been enough or that they wanted to see short time results instead of long-term achievements. This search for change potentially should have a more prominent place in volunteer exit research.

Second point of discussion is the observed difference in connection with the organisation after quitting. Literature on PI volunteering states that volunteers find it very difficult to leave the project or initiative behind Kinsbergen & Schulpen (2013). The emotional connection between the PI initiator and the aid receivers is very strong (Ferchter, 2019). In line with the findings of previous research, this research observed the strong connection with the local communities. All the interviewees that stopped (A, C, D, F, G, H, I, J) were still in touch with the locals they had helped during their time in the PI. However, the nature of this relation seemed to be different between executing and board volunteers. Executing volunteers appeared to be open for a return to the initiative, continuing their work. Board volunteers, on the other hand, preferred relational contact. They were keen on hearing how the aid beneficiaries were doing, but did not want to get involved anymore. This observation contradicts the established literature, that stated that PI volunteers have a very hard time to let go.

Another point of discussion entails family reasons to stop volunteering. Table 4 show that family reasons could lead to a different life after volunteering option. This research aims to show the exit motives and connect them with life after volunteering. Family reasons seem to be such a broad and difficult category that life after volunteering is not predetermined. Hustinx's (2010) family exit

reasons category comprised (1) family building or extension, (2) the care of young or disabled children, (3) leisure activities of the children, (4) irregular hours or weekend work of the partner, (5) intensive care for a sick, disabled or elderly family member and (6) going through a divorce. In this research it became apparent that a broad scale of family reasons was listed as exit motive. Family building (Interviewee D), taking care of (young) children (Interviewee A, F and J) led to a period without volunteering and later returning to volunteering again (Life after volunteering category 4). On the other hand, the intensive care for a sick family member (Interviewee G) led to stopping with volunteering altogether (Life after volunteering category 2). Accordingly, it is questionable whether family reasons for volunteer exit as one category could explain the relation between volunteer exit and life after volunteering.

The fourth discussion point is about the return of volunteers. This research found interesting observations regarding the emotional connection of a volunteer with the task. Different volunteers showed that they were still emotionally attached to the initiative and are actively seeking new opportunities to bounce back to the initiative (Interviewee A, D, I, J). They all defined their exit as shifting priorities, varying from personal financial insecurity (Interviewee A, D, J) to moving abroad (Interviewee I). Their willingness to volunteer in the initiative did not change, but they prioritised different aspects over the volunteering task. Volunteer organisations could make use of this by keeping close contact with the ex-volunteer. If a volunteer overcomes their barrier to stop volunteering, they might want to return to the organisation in the same or a different role. In other words, whenever a volunteer exits because of personal, non-organisational related reasons, they might want to return after these reasons are solved. It could be beneficial for organisations to stay in touch with these volunteers to achieve a successful return of the volunteer.

That brings us to a discussion point related to but opposing to the last. This research observed that some volunteers choose not to bounce back to the same organisation but start volunteering in different organisations. These volunteers are characterized by the influence of the organisational aspects in their decision to stop. Interviewee C, F, G and H all showed that 'it was enough'. The motives to stop volunteering by these respondents are characterized by the loss of motivation to continue the same initiative. Subsequently, they are not 'done' with volunteering altogether and will use their skills in different organisations. 'Unforced' exits based on a volunteer own

engagement with the projects can predict a definite split with the organisation as an active volunteer. Examples of these reasons are that a volunteer (1) already asked everyone in their network for organisational support (Interviewee F), (2) lost connection with the initial goal of the volunteer task (Interviewee H), (3) spend such a long period in the initiative that it was time for someone to take over (Interviewee C), (4) they are totally done with volunteering (Interviewee G). In other words, when a person makes a well-considered choice to leave a volunteering position because of task/organisational reasons, they are not likely to come back to the same organisation.

Last, the findings of this research should be carefully assessed before applying them to different organisations. De Bruyn and Huyse (2009) dedicated a whole new category of development cooperation to small-scale initiatives, such as PIs. The authors differentiated on professionalism of the organisations and added that all these initiatives were voluntary. Additionally, Kinsbergen and Schulpen (2013) added that these organisations do not receive direct monetary support of the government. This could imply that the exit reasons and life after volunteering could differ significantly between these types of development cooperation. Nevertheless, as this research shows volunteers are behaving quite similar regarding volunteer exit reasons.

5.3 Contributions to the literature

This research has strengthened various findings from previous research. First, as mentioned before, the exit reasons that were observed are in line with what previous research has found (amongst others: McLennan 2008; Hustinx 2010; Willems, et al., 2012; Haivas, Hofmans, & Pepermans, 2013; Willems & Dury, 2017). Nevertheless, this research suggests adding multiple categories for exit below. Second, the volunteerability framework (Meijs et al., 2006) has been confirmed in explaining volunteer motivation to volunteer and is useful to describe volunteer behaviour after quitting.

Moreover, this research contributed to the literature by adding two categories of exit reasons and giving one reason a more prominent notation in the literature. As said before, there is great overlap in the findings of this research and previous literature. However, this research presented three extensions on the existing literature in the form of personal financial insecurity, mission drift and

just do not like it anymore. Personal financial insecurity was mainly observed in volunteers that did executing volunteering in a foreign country. They could do so through support of family and friends in the home-country. Future research could examine if personal financial insecurity as an important reason for volunteer exit is observed throughout all volunteers or specific to these volunteers. Second, goal displacement or losing connection with the project after leaving the initial goal could be a new insight in exit reason theory. The effect of goal displacement on volunteer exit may be researched in future research. Last, volunteers that spend a long time at one organisation, might look for something new. They dislike the task or cannot find the motivation to continue the volunteering.

Furthermore, this research uses the volunteerability framework of Meijs et al. (2006) to explain the actions of life after volunteering. Initially this framework is used to find the right candidates for a volunteering opportunity and/or explaining why a volunteer volunteers. This research broadens the applicability of the framework and applied it to determine and explain life after volunteering. Instead of focussing on why a person will or will not start volunteering (the initial meaning of the research), it focuses on why a person behaves as he/she does, and on how different reasons for exit could be taken together and their actions be explained through the framework. Therefore, this research stresses that the volunteerability framework can be used in a broader context.

5.4 Practical implications

This research found different implications and results in order to get a better understanding in volunteer management and behaviour. By understanding the needs of the volunteers in the organisation the management could take sufficient and accurate action to maintain a long-lasting relationship. Even if the volunteer leave, sometimes they are still willing to return after their initial reasons to stop are solved. This paragraph looks into the practical implications of the results.

First, volunteers that stop based on personal reasons, not influenced by organisational reasons are possibly willing to return at the volunteer organisation in the same or a different function. Since the volunteer market works like the labour market, with supply and demand, are organisations always looking for the best volunteers (Meijs et al., 2006). When a volunteer quit because of forced,

non-organisational reasons then they appear to maintain a connection with the volunteering task. Possible reasons for forced, but temporary personal reasons are the caretaking of small children or work-related changes such as a promotion. After a period, the ex-volunteer retrieves the availability to volunteer and might be willing to return at the organisation. An organisation should in these cases stay in touch with the volunteer.

The opposite is applicable as well. Some volunteers have deliberately chosen to leave the volunteering function because (1) they have lost the connection with the organisation or task, (2) they do not like it anymore or (3) it has been such a long period that they want to volunteer elsewhere. This type of volunteers is not likely to return to the same organisation. As a demand organisation for volunteers, it is helpful to know about the exact exit reasons of the volunteer. If they belong to this category, it does not seem worthy to keep in touch with the volunteer with a return as goal.

In the end, the volunteer organisations have a key position regarding these practical implications. An organisation must have a great understanding volunteer's willingness, availability and capability, to maintain a sustainable relationship. The organisation should act accordingly to, in a later stage, re-attract the volunteer. If a volunteer quit because of personal reasons, it might be beneficial to keep in touch with the volunteer to establish a return but only if the volunteer has overcome the reason for the exit. Nevertheless, in different cases it is more effective to leave the volunteer be.

5.5 Future research

This research provided insightful findings in volunteer research and looked into the, in scientific literature, relatively new phenomenon of life after volunteering. These findings did not only contribute to the already existing literature on volunteer exit but have practical implications for volunteer organisations as well. Since life after volunteering has not yet been studied and academics have only conducted limited research on volunteer exit reasons, this research might provide inspiration for future research.

First recommendation for future research is about the population used in this research. As elaborated on in the second point of discussion (paragraph 5.2), the exit reasons of the PI respondents differ from previous PI exit reason literature. Past research, for example, added much value to age as a reason to stop volunteering (Kinsbergen & Schulpen, 2013). This research has not observed age as an exit reason. Another interesting observation is that the board volunteers could quite easily let go of the initiative. They limited themselves to relational contact without interfering in the practical side of the initiative. One explanation could be that the respondent groups differ significantly in this research comparing to previous exit reason literature of PI volunteers. Future research could study the nature of this difference.

The effect of family exit reasons is a second input for future research. Where all the exit reason categories lead to a specific type of life after volunteering, family reasons appear to lead to two different life after volunteering options. These are (1) stop, take some time off and later return again and (2) stop with volunteering. Since there are plenty of different family reasons for volunteer exit, it might be insightful to study the family reasons in order to understand if one category is sufficient in volunteer exit. Thus, future research could focus on the family reason category and their respected life after volunteering consequences.

Building on existing literature on volunteer exit motivations, this research can be considered as the next step in the form of life after volunteering. Therefore, future research could look into the generalisability of the life after volunteering framework created. This might be done through a mixed-method study, where a researcher first could execute a qualitative study to validate the proposed life after volunteering framework proposed in this research for professional volunteer organisations. After the qualitative part, the scholar should research a quantitative component to verify this framework of life after volunteering.

5.6 Limitations

The research investigated a relatively new phenomenon in volunteer research and provided insightful findings that added not only to the volunteering literature, but to some extent to the understanding of ex-volunteer behaviour. However, this research has its limitations that should be kept in mind and also encourage future research.

First, the findings depend on a small sample of ex PI volunteers. The advantage is that every story mattered, and they could freely elaborate on their experience. These conversations provided valuable insights in the social phenomenon researched. However, because literature showed many exit motives, the sample size of 10 respondents was fairly small. It might be the case that a bigger respondent group included more different exit reasons. The small respondent group led for example to a category comprising only one interviewee that stopped with volunteering altogether. Even though this is a limitation, the insights are valuable enough to consider it in this research. Future research could up the sample size to confirm the categories observed in this research. Second, the proposed categories could be examined using a quantitative research strategy to validate the actions after volunteering.

Second, the findings of this research should be carefully assessed before generalizing to different volunteering groups. PI volunteers do not typically fit in the trend that volunteering showed in the last two decades. Reflexive or short-term volunteering with high rewards gradually became more present in volunteering (Hustinx and Lammertyn, 2003). The respondents in this interview have been active in the PI with a minimum of six years, ranging to 28 years. Meaning that they rarely fall in the trend observed in volunteering. For future research, it would be good to include the different types of volunteers into the research.

5.6 Concluding Remarks

Over the past decades, volunteering has grown immense. Volunteering shifted from a more local type, to a more global opportunity to solve issues, help people in need and develop qualities and skills helpful in everyday life. Globalisation and the rise of the worldwide web made former unreachable and unknown areas accessible for 'normal' people. This led to a great variety and increase of small-scale volunteer initiatives. These private initiatives try to solve a specific issue in a local community, creating a deep emotional connection with the project and the locals. These volunteers became key in this research.

As all volunteers, at some point in time these volunteers will stop with volunteering. This action of stopping can either be forced (e.g. through illness) or voluntary (e.g. wanting to do something else). Over the past decade, a few academics have been researching volunteer exit (amongst others:

Hustinx, 2010; McLennan, 2008; Willems & Dury, 2012), roughly dividing exit reasons of volunteers in professional volunteer organisations into two groups; personal and organisational exit reasons. Contributing to this phenomenon explores this research the exit reasons of unprofessional volunteer organisations, PIs, confirming and adding to the established literature on volunteer exit.

The gathered data on volunteer exit is used to explore volunteer actions after quitting the volunteer task. Being one of the first, if not the first, research focusing on life after volunteering, four categories have been identified to classify volunteers. This new information could and should add new insights on volunteer retention and volunteer exit. Eventually increasing the one thing volunteering is all about, creating a positive impact on the quality of life all around the globe!

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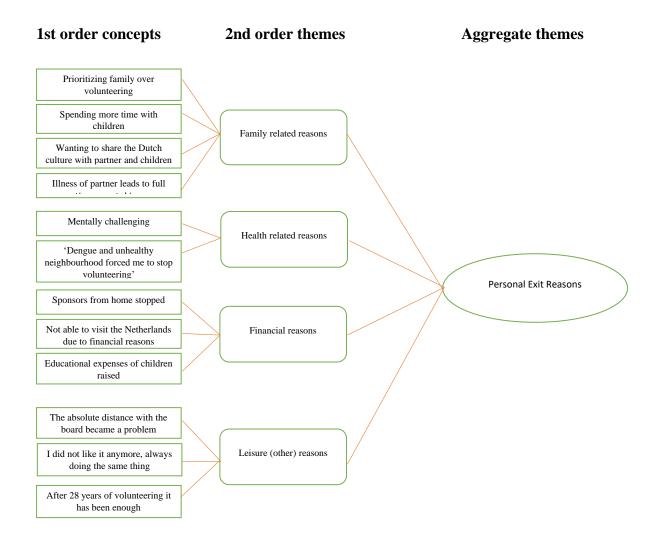
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Appendix

A. Data Structure

1st order concepts　　　　**2nd order themes**　　　　**Aggregate themes**

1st order concepts	2nd order themes
Prioritizing family over volunteering	
Spending more time with children	Family related reasons
Wanting to share the Dutch culture with partner and children	
Illness of partner leads to full ...	
Mentally challenging	Health related reasons
'Dengue and unhealthy neighbourhood forced me to stop volunteering'	
Sponsors from home stopped	
Not able to visit the Netherlands due to financial reasons	Financial reasons
Educational expenses of children raised	
The absolute distance with the board became a problem	
I did not like it anymore, always doing the same thing	Leisure (other) reasons
After 28 years of volunteering it has been enough	

Aggregate theme: Personal Exit Reasons

Cultural differences between board and donors

Lack of transparency

Organisation of volunteer work

Local board withheld information

Mistrust in local partners

Governance

Organisational Exit Reasons

Lost connection with initial goal

Continually expanding the goals of the initiative

Lost connection

Mission drift

'I was very disappointed with myself'

Temporary setback

Overcoming setbacks

Huge donor and beneficiary

Changing organisation structure

Shame to throw away what is started

Personal happiness

Stop but continue in the same initiative

Time to think about oneself

Changing priorities regarding time spending

Serious family reasons

Serious time-consuming alternatives

Stop with all volunteering

Bored with the task

Wanting to see results in the short term

Time to do something else

Need for change

Stop, but continue with a different volunteering task

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Moving to the Netherlands

Adapting to the new environment              Adaption

                                                                                    Stop, take some time off and
Not time-consuming                                                                          continue later
volunteering

This volunteering is temporary               Easy volunteering
before returning to the foreign
country

Even now [the project] is always
on my mind                                   Return to project

'I would love to return [to the
initiative]'
```

B. Used Quotes of the Conversations

Aggregate theme	Second-order code	Interviewee	Quote
Personal exit reasons	Family related reasons	A	We zagen het niet zitten om onze oudste dochter alleen terug naar Nederland te sturen. Onze eerste prioriteit is en blijft ons gezin
Personal exit reasons	Family related reasons	J	Uiteindelijk wilde je ook dat onze eigen kinderen ook wat van Nederland, of ja familie leren kennen.
Personal exit reasons	Leisure	I	Op een gegeven moment gaat het ook een beetje verwateren. Je zit er niet meer zo dicht op
Mission drift	Lost connection	G	We hadden eigenlijk 100 van die grote watertanks als doel gesteld, maar we hebben er 83 gerealiseerd. Daarbij ook nog, wat wij niet als doel hadden gesteld, 7 grote watertorens en ook nog de grote waterleiding
Organisational exit reasons	Governance	H	Ze wisten wel dat we erbovenop zaten, maar toch gingen er dingen die niet gingen zoals ze moesten. Volgens mij hebben alle projecten daar last van
Stop with all volunteering	Serious time-consuming alternatives	G	Ik heb jarenlang genoeg voor andere gedaan, nu denk ik aan mijzelf. Misschien wel te veel in andere geïnvesteerd. Het is nu wel eventjes genoeg

Stop but continue in the same initiative	Overcoming setbacks	E	Met deze toch zeer teleurstellende ervaring erbij, was voor mij eigenlijk sorry, maar dan stop ik er maar mee. Aan de andere kant het bloed vloeit waar het is, het had toch ergens een warm plekje.…... Ja op een gegeven moment ben ik toch weer een beetje tot rust en bedaren gekomen en gedacht, ja nou ja, ik moet het maar niet door een slechte ervaring helemaal alles weggooien wat in die jaren is opgebouwd.
Take some time off and continue later	Adaption	D	In NL vonden ze mij daar een zeikerd in, want ik had altijd commentaar op kleine dingen in NL. Vooral in die tijd was het best wel een schrokcultuur en een hele andere wereld
Take some time off and continue later	Easy volunteering	J	Het gaat me makkelijk af en kost me niet zo veel energie. Dat is dan ook iets wat je er goed bij kan doen.