THE HOST COMMUNITY’S PERSPECTIVE ON INTERNATIONAL VOLUNTEERS IN THE GHANAIAN EDUCATION SYSTEM

A study on how the assistance of international volunteers is perceived, appreciated and experienced by educational actors from the host community in Sagnarigu district, Tamale.

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Abstract
International voluntary service (IVS) is a practice that exists in various different shapes. The structure of voluntary projects depends on the type of sending organisation, its objectives, implementation and outcomes; as well as the volunteer’s background and individual motivations. Existing literature is mainly focused on volunteers and the sending organizations, whilst the host community’s perspective on the practice is widely neglected in research on the topic. Ghana is a popular destination for international voluntary service, and many international volunteers are involved in educational activities. This research therefore investigates how the host community in Tamale, Ghana, perceives, appreciates and experiences the assistance of international volunteers in the education system, and if this assistance corresponds with the needs of the people from the host community.

Two schools in Tamale that have a long history of working with international volunteers were selected, in order to conduct interviews and focus group discussions with the head teacher, teachers and students. One of these schools has a continuous flow of volunteer and is founded and supported by a European couple. The other school has a sister school in the UK from where a delegation of students and teachers is sent twice a year. Other educational actors, such as government officials and directors of educational organisations, have been interviewed as well. In total, 28 people have been interviewed and 21 people (10 teachers and 11 students) participated in focus group discussions.

Analysis of the transcripts of each interview and discussion reveals that different discourses and ideas of North-South relations influence the thinking of the respondents. International volunteers are perceived along lines of the post-colonial discourse in terms of Western superiority and ascribed capabilities, and Africa and Europe are stereotypically opposed concerning development and regarding child raising practices by respondents. Meanwhile, practical experiences and respondents’ appreciation for the value of their own culture give a more nuanced perception of differences between Europe and Ghana.

The assistance of international volunteers is analysed in terms of Nancy Fraser’s three dimensional framework of social justice. Although educational materials and resources are distributed to both schools by volunteers, contribution to economic social justice is minimal as socio-economic differences remain. In the school-to-school partnership, teachers are consulted about their needs, making them feel recognized, involved and treated as equals. Unequal North-South (power) relations are maintained in the other school as teachers often feel ignored, mistrusted and underestimated after being largely left out by international volunteers. Because of this marginalized position, teachers in this school cannot participate as equals and therefore cannot make claims for redistribution and recognition.

This research both addresses the gap in academic literature and gives voice to people from the host community; a group whose perspective is important but often unheard. The results of the field-study are informative and helpful for prospective international volunteers and the organisations that send them to improve their practice. They also serve to stimulate public discussion on the topic of international voluntary service.
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# Table of contents

List of figures and tables................................................................................. iii

Abbreviations & acronyms............................................................................. iv

1. Introduction ................................................................................................. 1

2. Theoretical framework ................................................................................ 3
   2.1 International volunteering....................................................................... 3
      2.1.1 A short history.............................................................................. 3
      2.1.2 Main features of volunteering .................................................... 5
      2.1.3 Outcomes..................................................................................... 9
   2.2 North-South interactions....................................................................... 9
      2.2.1 Host-guest interactions............................................................... 10
      2.2.2 North-South interactions........................................................... 10
   2.3 Social justice....................................................................................... 11
      2.3.1 Three dimensional framework.................................................. 11
      2.3.2 Application of Fraser's framework............................................. 12

3. Research context ....................................................................................... 14
   3.1 Education in Ghana............................................................................... 14
      3.1.1 History of education in Ghana.................................................... 14
      3.1.2 Education system in Ghana......................................................... 15
   3.2 International volunteering in Ghana................................................... 17
   3.3 Research Location: Tamale (Sagnarigu district)................................. 18
      3.3.1 Demographics............................................................................ 18
      3.3.2 Schools in Tamale (Sagnarigu District)...................................... 19
      3.3.3 Volunteers in Tamale................................................................. 21

4. Research design ......................................................................................... 23
   4.1 Methodology.......................................................................................... 23
   4.2 Research questions.................................................................................. 23
   4.3 Operationalizaton................................................................................... 24
   4.4 Conceptual scheme............................................................................... 25
   4.5 Methods.................................................................................................. 26
      4.5.1 Semi-structured interviews......................................................... 27
      4.5.2 Focus group discussions............................................................. 27
      4.5.3 Observations............................................................................... 28
      4.5.4 Field Diary.................................................................................. 28
   4.6 Sampling.................................................................................................. 28
      4.6.1 Selection of schools...................................................................... 29
      4.6.2 Selection of respondents............................................................. 31
      4.6.3 Respondents overview............................................................... 32
List of figures and tables

Cover photo: International volunteer teaching a primary school class in Tamale, Ghana.
Photo retrieved from: http://tzedek.org.uk/success-stories/story-two

Figure 1: Map of Ghana, (CIA World Factbook) retrieved from:

Figure 2: Map of Ghana clearly showing the three northern regions
(UN Africa Renewal 2008: 4)  p. 16

Figure 3 Typical street scene in Tamale with lots of motorbikes and informal sector
operators along the road (photo by Tabitha Maat)  p. 18

Figure 4 Informal sector operators: women selling food along the street in Tamale
(photo by Tabitha Maat)  p. 19

Figure 5 Fence of Tamale International School (photo by Tabitha Maat)  p. 20

Figure 6 Typical school building in Ghana; one storey block of 3-4 classrooms
with sloped roof (photo by Tabitha Maat)  p. 21

Figure 7 Conceptual scheme (developed by Tabitha Maat)  p. 26

Figure 8 Empty poster sheets at the beginning of a focus group discussion
(photo by Tabitha Maat)  p. 28

Figure 9 A volunteer and teacher are sorting materials that volunteers supplied
in school A (photo by Tabitha Maat)  p. 48

Figure 10 A well stocked library in school B (photo by Tabitha Maat)  p. 49

Figure 11 Construction of new classrooms in school A (photo by Tabitha Maat)  p. 50

Figure 12 Results of a needs assessments during the two focus groups
discussion sessions with teachers (photo by Tabitha Maat)  p. 61

Boxes 1-3 Characteristics of each selected school  p. 30

Table 1: Overview of respondents: individual interviews  p. 32

Table 2: Overview of respondents: focus group discussions  p. 32
Abbreviations & acronyms

CESO  Canadian Executive Service Organization
CEU   Catholic Education Unit
ESP   Education Strategic Plan
EVS   European Voluntary Service
FCUBE Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education
GES   Ghana Education Service
IEU   Islamic Education Unit
ILO   International Labour Organization
IVs   International Volunteers
IVS   International Voluntary Service
IVSO  International Voluntary Service Organization
IVSN  International Voluntary Service Network
IVSS  International Voluntary Service Support
JICA  Japan International Cooperation Agency
JOCC Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteers
JHS   Junior High School
KG    Kindergarten
MDGs  Millennium Development Goals
MoE   Ministry of Education
NGO   Non-governmental Organization
PC    Peace Corps
SCI   Service Civil International
SHS   Senior High School
SNV   Stichting Nederlandse Vrijwilligers
TLMs  Teaching Learning Materials
TTC   Teacher Training College
TVET  Technical/Vocational Education and Training
UNDP  United Nations Development Program
UNESCO United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNICEF United Nationals International Children’s Emergency Fund
UPE   Universal Primary Education
VSO   Voluntary Service Overseas
1. Introduction

When travelling through Ghana in the summer of 2012, a remarkable question was repeated to me over and over again. People wondered whether I was working as a volunteer, and what kind of volunteer I was. It was especially in Tamale, the capital city of Ghana’s Northern region, that everyone assumed I was in Ghana for the purpose of volunteering. Meanwhile, I also noticed that Tamale was one of the Ghanaian places bustling with young, Western people that spend their time working as international volunteers in orphanages or in schools to teach children basic (language) skills. I became intrigued by the inescapable presence of these international volunteers in Northern Ghana, and in order to learn more about the phenomenon I decided to dedicate my field-research to this topic.

Although I expect that the practice of international voluntary work exists in other places in the world as well, my previous travels to Ghana had demonstrated that the phenomenon certainly occurs frequently in this place. Therefore I decided to stick to Tamale in Northern Ghana as my research location.

Studying literature reveals that much has been written about the topic of international volunteering, but mostly concerning the volunteers themselves or the organizations that facilitate the practice. The perspective of a third major stakeholder, the host, seems to be largely absent from literature on international voluntary service (Perold et al. 2013). The lack of attention to the host in research on volunteering stems from the difficulty to determine who is included within the classification ‘host community’, as well as power issues and lesser access to respondents from this group of stakeholders (Wearing & McGehee 2013: 124). Research projects focusing primarily on the perspective of the host community have only recently started on a small scale (ibid: 121), and do not tell us much yet about outcomes of volunteering for host communities (Sherraden et al. 2008: 9). Therefore, there is a need to also include the perspective of host communities in research on the topic of international voluntary service (Perold et al. 2013: 180). My study focuses on the perspective of the host community, in order to both address the gap in the literature on international volunteering and to give voice to a group of major stakeholders whose perspective is currently often unheard.
There is a wide range of activities in which volunteers can engage, varying from environmental conservation to medical assistance, and from agriculture to business development (Wearing & McGehee 2013: 121). Most international volunteer programs try to contribute to social development, and teaching appears to be the most common volunteer activity to do (Coverdell 2013: 2). For example, 32% of all Peace Corps volunteers work in education (Rieffel 2003: 3), and more than 22% of all VSO’s partner-organizations work on the theme of education too (VSO Nederland 2013). Also for gap year students, teaching is one of the most common voluntary activities (Sherraden et al. 2008: 7). Teaching is thus one of the most popular international voluntary activities to engage in, and therefore I focus within my research on this type of voluntary work only.

Since the host community’s perspective is marginally represented in literature on international voluntary service, I approached the topic from this specific angle in my research. I wanted to find out how different educational actors (f.e. head-teachers, teachers and students) perceive, appreciate and experience the assistance of international volunteers in the Ghanaian education system. I furthermore wanted to determine whether or not this assistance corresponds with the needs that these educational actors might have. The research thus tries to answer the following question:

**How is the assistance of international volunteers in the education system perceived, appreciated and experienced by educational actors from the host community in Tamale, Ghana, and does the assistance of international volunteers correspond with the host community’s needs?**

The next chapter of this thesis encompasses a theoretical framework in which all the important concepts and debates related to my research topic will be discussed. In chapter 3, I will illustrate the research context by describing education and international volunteering in Ghana and Tamale. Chapter 4 will be about the research design, describing extensively the research questions, operationalization of the research questions and a conceptual scheme to show the relations between relevant concepts. Methods, sampling and analysis of the data, as well as limitations and ethical considerations can be found in chapter 4 as well. In chapter 5, I will present my empirical data and analyse my findings. I will draw conclusions by linking the empirical findings with the theoretical framework in the last chapter of this thesis. Suggestions for further research and recommendations for future international volunteers and their sending organizations will be offered in this chapter as well.
2. Theoretical framework

In this chapter, important debates and relevant concepts for my research will be discussed. Where necessary, I will clarify how I define or interpret a concept, in order to explain what I mean when the concept will be used throughout the rest of the thesis. Since a wide variety of topics will be touched upon, the chapter is divided into three subchapters, each consisting of several sections.

The first subchapter will elaborate on the concept of international volunteering. In its first section, a short history of international volunteering is discussed. Thereafter, the main features of international volunteering will be presented, to give an overview of the broad scope of programmes that are available. The first subchapter ends with a section on intended and potential outcomes of international volunteering.

In the second subchapter, the broader structures in which international volunteering is embedded are described. The first section explains host-guest interactions and how these are often influenced by representations of the Other. The last section will be about theories of post-colonialism and shows how international voluntary service (IVS) influences relations between the global North and the global South.

The third subchapter is about the concept of social justice as explained through Nancy Fraser’s three-dimensional framework. In the first section, the framework itself is discussed, followed by a section on how the framework can be applied for analysis of my own research data.

2.1 International volunteering

2.1.1 A short history

In Europe, formal volunteering has religious roots that date back to the Middle Ages. In that time, voluntary work was promoted by the Catholic Church in order to run the church and its affiliated institutions. In later centuries, wealthier lifestyles with more leisure time, and a sense of moral obligation to help the poor, resulted in a growth in formal volunteering (Beban & Wrelton 2008: 4). The missionary movement is said to be the first international voluntary service (Palmer 2002: 637; Raymond & Hall 2008: 531).

The first secular international volunteering occurred in the aftermath of the First World War, when many European places that were destroyed during the war needed rebuilding. In 1920, a group of Austrian, English, French, German and Swiss volunteers went to rebuild a village near the town of Verdun in France. This action triggered the establishment of Service Civil International (SCI), the first modern voluntary service movement (Gilette 1999). Other
organizations soon followed this initiative and intended to build cross-border friendships between young people from different European countries (Beban & Wrelton 2008: 4).

A group of European SCI volunteers was sent to India in 1934, and hereby became the foundation for contemporary longstanding volunteer programmes such as the US Peace Corps, the British Volunteer Programme, and eventually also the UN Volunteers Programme (Gilette 1968: 26-34).

After the Second World War, young international volunteers (IVs) again helped a great deal in reconstructing European villages and towns that were damaged during the fighting. This period can also be seen as the formation of the development discourse as it is today, initiated with president Harry Truman’s inaugural speech in which he targets his policies towards helping the underdeveloped areas of the world (Escobar 1995; Esteva 2010).

International voluntary service became heavily politicized during the Cold War. Many developing countries had just gained independence, and the United States of America feared that these newly independent states would fall for communist ideas (Amin 1999: 37). Several governmental bodies emerged to prevent further communist advances, the US Peace Corps being one of these new agencies. Young, voluntary American citizens were sent abroad by the Peace Corps in order to promote democracy (Beban & Wrelton 2008: 4), and to win the hearts and minds of the people in these developing nations (Rieffel 2003: 1; Amin 1999: 39). It was hoped that the presence of the Peace Corps volunteers would ‘show people in the developing world of America’s altruism, and [that] in return the people would reject communism’ (Amin 1999: 39). The communists also had voluntary programs for similar diplomatic objectives, such as the Cuban Literacy campaign (Herman, 2012). International voluntary service thus became ‘a tool in superpower competition’ (Gilette 1999).

Other organizations for IVS played a different role during the Cold War. The Coordinating Committee for International Voluntary Service that was established in 1948 by UNESCO (Gilette 1968: 29) supported volunteers crossing from East to West and vice versa to intensify cross-cultural ties (Beban & Wrelton 2008: 4).

Options for international volunteering were only limitedly available for graduates or people with specific skills during the 1960s and 1970s (Roberts 2004: 25). This picture has changed over the last few decades with the emerge of the gap year phenomenon, offering young, often unskilled people, opportunities to participate in international volunteering. The ‘gap year’ became ‘recognized, institutionalized and professionalized’ (Simpson 2004: 681) over the last two decades, resulting in the ‘unprecedented expansion of international volunteering and service (…), both in numbers of volunteers and sponsoring organizations’ (Sherraden et al 2008: 1) that we
can see nowadays. The sector for volunteer tourism significantly grew since 1990, and a recent study estimated that 1.6 million people participate annually in volunteer tourism projects worldwide (Wearing et al. 2013: 120). The objectives for becoming involved in IVS are greatly varied. Some people want to have an international experience, while other IVs have more in common with ‘social movements in the US for civil rights and modern labour movements’ (Butcher & Smith, 2010), whereby people strive to create social transformation and justice for groups of oppressed or marginalized people.

2.1.2 Main features of volunteering

The Longman Dictionary defines volunteering as the offering of help or services without getting paid or rewarded for it. Voluntary work is explained as work that is willingly done by someone for free, ‘usually for an organization that helps people’ (Longman 2002: 1492). However, the unpaid-criterion does not always go, as some organizations (such as VSO or Peace Corps) offer their volunteers small reimbursements or material tokens of appreciation (Dekker and Hallman 2003: 2) that often ‘amount to less than what [they] would be earning in the same capacity in [their] country of origin’ (Palmer 2002: 637). Taking this potential monetary reimbursement into account, the following basic criteria formulated by the UN General Assembly contain a more workable definition of volunteering: ‘Actions are carried out freely and without coercion; financial gain is not the main motivating principle; and there is a beneficiary other than the volunteer’ (UNDP 2003: 2).

Under these criteria, many different acts can be considered as volunteering. A distinction can be made between informal and formal volunteering, whereby the first denotes voluntary work that is being done for family and relatives (Dekker and Hallman 2003: 73), often spontaneously or on an unofficial basis. Formal volunteering instead is more institutionalized (Wilson 1994: 697) and involves voluntary work with an organization, often after making agreements and signing contracts.

Another distinction can be made between domestic and international volunteering. Domestic volunteering relates to voluntary service that is executed in one’s home-country, whereas an international volunteer is ‘someone who willingly works overseas (most often in ‘developing’ countries)’ (Palmer 2002: 637). In this research, I will focus only on formal international voluntary service.

Types of volunteer sending organizations

There is a wide scope of programmes available for international volunteering. Diverse organizational structures have emerged for supporting the implementation of IVS. A distinction
between international voluntary service organizations (IVSOs), international voluntary service networks (IVSNs) and international voluntary service support organizations (IVSSs) can be made (Sherraden et al. 2006: 172). The latter are organizations that ‘support, fund, conduct research and advocate for international voluntary service’, such as the European Voluntary Service (EVS) for example (Sherraden et al. 2006: 174). IVSNs ‘provide leadership and help coordinate the work of IVSOs (ibid: 173), and IVSOs are the organizations and programs that implement IVS. These organisations actually send or receive international volunteers (ibid: 172). In this research, I will focus only on international voluntary service organizations.

Most large and well-known IVS programs are part of or funded by governmental bodies (PC, VSO), while many smaller IVS programs are part of non-governmental organizations, faith-based groups (Mattis et al. 2012: 32) or so called ‘voluntourism’ projects that combine voluntary work with tourism (Perold et al. 2008: 530). A major distinction is often made between non-profit organizations and for profit (private) organizations offering international voluntary placements (Palmer 2002: 638), but as will be described in the following sections, organizations also differentiate in terms of their objectives, approaches and implementations.

**Objectives**

Although sending organizations have widely differing mission statements, in terms of objectives a few major goals can be discerned. The main goal of many sending organizations is contributing to development and humanitarian relief, whereby international volunteers are usually sent for technical assistance (Lough & Allum 2013: 909) and to achieve capacity building (Devereux 2008: 357). Funding for such IVS programs often comes from the foreign aid budget of governments. They either organize their own programmes or support existing NGO-run IVS programs (Sherraden et al. 2006: 168).

Another major goal is building international or cross-cultural understanding (Palacios 2010: 863; Raymond & Hall 2008: 535), which can serve for fostering international solidarity and peace (Sherraden et al. 2008: 4). Serving self-interest can be a major objective for certain IVSOs as well, such as for-profit volunteer programs and organizations that run volunteerism opportunities (Jones 2004).

Frequently there is an overlap between different goals. Volunteers that are involved in mission trips of religious groups often ‘provide education and development aid in the needy communities, and at the same time preach their religion and belief’ (Lo & Lee 2011: 327). In government-supported volunteer programs, technical assistance of volunteers can both be used to contribute to development, and as a tool of soft power serving political self-interests (Palacios 2010: 863; Lough & Allum 2013: 909) such as winning hearts and minds of people in a
country (Rieffel 2003: 3; Nye 1990: 166). For profit-driven volunteer sending organizations, satisfying the need of its primary customer (the volunteer) is often top-priority (Wearing & McGehee 2013: 123-124) in order to assure their own economic interest.

In my view, most objectives for IVS are fuelled by deeper motivations of solidarity. Some IVSOs, such as VSO, are motivated by aims to achieve a fair and just society based on the principles of social justice. (VSO 2014) Other, often faith-based, organizations such as Islamic Relief, feel morally motivated to help people in need, be it conditionally or unconditionally (Islamic Relief 2013). With such philanthropic acts, however, the autonomy of ‘the person who cries out for help’ is sometimes overshadowed, when it is the helper who decides who is in need of help’ (Gronemeyer 2010: 56). Motivations of political, economic or religious interest fuel IVSO’s objectives that serve self interests.

**Approach and implementation**

For some IVSOs, IVS is the main business, whereas other organizations might ‘run an IVS program as part of their total operation’ (Sherraden et al. 2006: 172). Depending on the type of sending organization and its objectives, working methods might differ in terms of recruitment, payment, duration of the programs and support facilities offered.

In general, programs that aim to contribute to humanitarian relief or development, usually recruit participants with specific (professional) skills (Sherraden et al. 2008: 5) who will commit to IVS for a long term (generally one or two years). One of the in 1966 adopted ILO/UNESCO recommendations concerning teacher status states that ‘teaching should be regarded as a profession’ because this type of public service requires specialized skill and expert knowledge (Robertson 2012: 590). With regards to activities of voluntary teaching this means that international volunteers are considered professional if they have acquired specialized pedagogical competences and knowledge through training on at least higher educational level. Programs that merely aim to increase international understanding through cross-cultural experience, are often short term and mostly only require participants to have a certain age and the will to serve (Sherraden et al. 2008: 5; Devereux 2008: 358).

As mentioned before, some sending organizations offer their volunteers compensations in shape of material tokens or monetary reimbursements (Devereux 2008: 362). It are often individuals with specialized skill, working in long term IVS projects that are eligible for such reimbursements (for example a salary according to local standards). Usually they also receive supporting facilities such as (language) training and intensive preparation before their departure (ibid).
Gap year voluntary projects are usually short term programmes that take generally less than half a year (Simpson 2004: 681), whereas voluntary programs for holidays may even last just a few days (Wearing & McGehee 2013). In most cases, a participation fee should be paid for such projects and for volunteer tourism placements (Sherraden et al. 2008: 5). Within this fee, a short pre-departure preparation and orientation at arrival are habitually offered (Wearing & McGehee 2013: 124), but such support facilities vary widely in quality (Raymond & Hall 2008: 538).

International volunteers that engage themselves within projects regarding education work in various ways. Short-term volunteer tourists are often placed in only one school which has established contacts with the IVSO. Such a school can have multiple international volunteers working there at the same time, and the volunteers often assist teachers or take over certain lessons. Long term, professional volunteers can also act as a teacher for classroom instructions, but mostly they take on a more advisory role as such IVS programs often have a focus on skill and technology transfer (Sherraden et al. 2006: 172). They share their knowledge with student teachers in teacher training colleges, provide in-service training to teachers in various different schools in one area (PC 2014) or help to develop teaching methods (VSO 2014).

Motivations of volunteers

Individual motivations to participate in international voluntary service are often an interplay of altruistic and self-centric underpinnings (Palmer 2002: 638; Cho et al. 2010: 1). On the one hand it can be feelings of moral obligation and the desire to help people living in less fortunate circumstances (Palmer 2002: 638; Wearing & McGehee 2013: 123) that stimulate people to engage in international volunteering. Some volunteers for example want to contribute to a fair and just society where everyone has equal chances to participate. Advancing one’s career prospects and the desire to immerse oneself in another culture or way of life (Palmer 2002: 639; Lo & Lee 2011: 328; Jones 2011: 534) are examples of more selfish reasons why individuals might consider to become international volunteers.

Here as well, motivations often overlap. Motivations to become involved in IVS can be affected by people’s background, religion, prior (international) voluntary experience and available time and resources (Sherraden et al. 2008: 3). People that have access to IVS are most often young, white, educated and wealthy (Sherraden et al 2008: 2; Mattis et al. 2012: 29) and from Northern countries, making international voluntary service in general an elitist activity (Devereux 2008: 361).
2.1.3 Outcomes
The in chapter 2.1.2 described objectives of IVSOs are their intended outcomes. In reality, what IVSOs aim for is not always achieved. Outcomes of IVS are often discussed in terms of efficiency, or which stakeholders benefit most from the practice. An often heard critique is that it are usually the volunteers themselves who benefit most from the practice (Devereux 2008; Simpson 2004), for example in terms of skills or personal development (Devereux 2008: 362).

Regarding intercultural understanding, IVS can result into positive outcomes for both the host community and the volunteer. IVS can create ‘reciprocal relations of mutual learning’ (Palacios 2010: 874) for both the host and the volunteers. Yet, many critics claim that IVS frequently creates or maintains unequal power relations between the North and South. As most IVS programs are only accessible to individuals in the Global North (Mattis et al. 2012: 30), and placements generally occur in the Global South, we can speak of a North to South movement of volunteers (Palmer 2002: 342; Perold et al. 2012: 179).

Long term international volunteer placements are generally more demand-driven. Technical expertise is delivered by IVs when the host community has a specific need or request (VSO 2014, PC 2014). On the other hand, short term volunteer (tourism) placements are frequently supply-driven (Lough & Allum 2013: 910; Perold et al. 2012: 191), which means that sending organizations have more say than host communities in structuring volunteer placements (Perold et. Al 2012: 192). According to research, poor levels of reciprocity between host and sending community (Palacios 2010: 875) are said to reinforce cultural stereotypes and can intensify dichotomies between ‘them and us’ (Raymond & Hall 2008: 531; Simpson 2004: 682; Devereux 2008: 360).

Critics of IVS claim that in general another layer of dependency can be created between the North and the South through volunteer programs. (Wearing & McGehee 2013: 122). They warn that over-reliance on volunteers ‘can create a skewed image of all incoming volunteers to the community’ (Cho et al. 2010: 2), or take it even further and argue that international volunteers take on a role of ‘expert’ or ‘teacher’ claiming western technical, racial and cultural superiority (Raymond & Hall 2008: 531; Lough & Allum 2013: 915), hereby representing a form of imperialism or neo-colonialism (Perold et al. 2008: 182; Lough & Allum 2013: 915; Raymond & Hall 2008: 531). This will be further described in the next sub-chapter.

2.2 North-South interactions
International volunteering does not happen in a vacuum. It is a practice that happens within certain historically shaped, existing structures whereby people from one context interact with people from another context. Direct interactions take place on a micro level between the host
(the local community) and the guest (the volunteer) (van Beek & Schmidt 2012). Simultaneously, on a macro level, international voluntary service can also be seen as North-South interactions (Palmer 2002: 642). This subchapter will deal with the wider structures (on both micro and macro level) in which IVS is embedded.

2.2.1 Host-guest interactions
Whether it is people combining volunteer work with tourism or government programs that try to contribute to development or humanitarian relief, IVS is a practice that occurs at the grassroots level (Cohn & Wood 1985: 168). IVs interact directly with people from the host community and in their work they often encounter cultures that are different from their own. Such cross-cultural interactions are seen as positive when they offer both the host and the guest a space to interact, for reflexivity and to learn from each other (Swan 2012: 241), but often there is no mutual exchange or reciprocity. ‘Volunteering projects always work within a context of inequality’ (Swan 2012: 245) since the process generally only allows Westerners access to ‘the financial resources and moral imperatives necessary to travel and volunteer in a “third world country”’ (ibid). For people from the host community it is rarely possible to reverse the roles and to travel as an international volunteer to other countries as well (Perold et al. 2012: 179-180).

Representation of the Other
As can be read in section 2.1.2, the desire to help people in less fortunate circumstances can be an individual motivation to become involved in IVS. Volunteer tourists often combine this motivation with the desire to look for an ‘authentic’ cross-cultural experience. It is usually the ‘perceived basic otherness and difference of the people being visited that makes them attractive in the first place’ (Swan 2012: 240). This thought is fuelled by notions of Orientalism, a concept that was introduced by Edward Said to describe how ideas of ‘the other’ are ‘constructed by particular groups of people at particular times’ (Willis 2005: 121). Western conceptions of the ‘underdeveloped world’ and its people as ‘the other’ stem from representations of these places and people, based on Western geographical, political and historical positions (Miller 2003: 23). African and Asian countries and its people are often portrayed as ‘backward’, ‘uncivilized’ and in need of help from the West (Willis 2005: 121), representations that frequently fuel individuals to become involved in IVS.

2.2.2 North-South interactions
Orientalism is broader than just the individual level, as it reflects global power relations as well (Willis 2005: 121). It is an example of theories of post-colonialism, in which contemporary relations between countries in the global North and the global South are explained as legacies of
colonialism (ibid). Post-colonial theory is based on insights ‘that colonialism has been and remains one of the most compelling influences on the industrialised countries’ interpretations of and interactions with people from non-western cultures’ (Mbaiwa 2012: 118). Critics claim that international volunteerism recreates unequal power relations that resemble those from colonialism (Swan 2012: 252; see also chapter 2.1.3), whereby the global South is dependent on the help of the ‘developed’ global North (van Beek & Schmidt 2012: 2). However, North-South interactions that are established through IVS are not only criticised. International volunteers from ‘Northern’ countries can function as ‘brokers’ as well, who open up spaces for debate or reflection for underprivileged groups within communities in the Global South. When there is mutual respect and recognition for each others’ culture, these marginalized groups of people can be stimulated by practices of IVS (Keddie 2012). From this perspective, North-South interactions can trigger social transformations for marginalized people.

2.3 Social justice
The principle of social justice relates to a sense of fairness in society. A just education system is often regarded as a precondition for a just society, because it is the only societal system through which everybody passes and it is regarded as a system with intrinsic and instrumental value (Tikly & Barrett 2011: 7; Tikly 2011: 9). According to critical theorist Nancy Fraser, social justice requires all members of society to ‘participate as peers in social life’ (Fraser 2005: 73). Injustice occurs when there are obstacles that prevent people from participating on equal terms with others (Fraser 2005: 73; Keddie 2012: 2), and these obstacles should thus be removed in order to overcome injustice.

2.3.1 Three dimensional framework
Nancy Fraser regards social justice as a multidimensional concept, in which she distinguishes a socioeconomic, cultural and later also a political dimension of social (in)justice (Fraser 2005).

The socioeconomic dimension of injustice relates to having equal access to resources or opportunities. When certain marginalized groups or people in society are unable to access specific resources or opportunities, this restricts their ability to participate actively in society. Unequal access to resources can be overcome by (re)distribution of resources (Fraser 1995: 70-74; Keddie 2012: 4-5), so the socioeconomic dimension of injustice is based upon distributive principles.

The second dimension of injustice, the cultural dimension, refers to situations whereby a dominant culture denies or subordinates the culture, values and language of marginalized groups. The remedy for cultural injustice is the recognition and revaluation of these marginalized cultures.
(Fraser 1995: 70-74). The cultural dimension of injustice thus relates to the (mis)recognition of certain groups of people.

The third dimension of injustice, the political dimension, has later been added to Fraser’s framework. It is about the ability of individuals and groups to actively participate in decision making and having their voices heard in all levels of society (Fraser 2005: 76-79). The political dimension of injustice thus refers to issues of representation. Misrepresentation can obstruct people from participating in decision making. Ensuring participatory justice is often regarded as a prerequisite for accomplishing socioeconomic and cultural justice (Tikly & Barrett 2011: 6), because participatory justice means that people can participate as equals to make claims for redistribution and recognition. Without representation, people are thus not able to ‘participate as peers in social life’ (Fraser 2005), so the political dimension of social justice actually entails the essence of social justice.

2.3.2 Application of Fraser’s framework

When the dynamics of reality are taken into account, Fraser’s three-dimensional framework is seen as a useful tool to analyze cases of social injustice (Keddie 2012: 14). Most authors who write about social injustice stress just one of the dimensions, but for Fraser the dimensions are ‘inextricably interwoven’ (Fraser 2005: 75).

The framework can be applied for analyzing social justice in relation to education. Not having access to quality education (Tikly & Barrett 2011: 6) and unequal allocation of human and material educational resources are examples of distributive injustice in education (Keddie 2012: 5). The cultural dimension of injustice calls for recognition of the culture, values or language of marginalized groups. In education, this can for example be achieved by including histories, perspectives and cultural contributions of non-dominant groups in the curriculum (Keddie 2012: 6). Parental and community influence in deciding on curriculum content can be an example of the political dimension of justice in education, and so are ‘mechanisms for holding schools and the education system accountable for performance’ (Tikly & Barrett 2011: 7).

As can be read in the previous section, contributing to social justice might be an important (sub)motivation for some people to be involved international voluntary work. It can however be questioned if, and to what extent, international volunteer teaching contributes to achieving educational social justice. Because international voluntary teaching is embedded in unequal economic, cultural and political relations, Fraser’s three dimensional framework can be a helpful tool for analysis. IVS is often only a North to South movement (Palmer 2002: 642; Perold et al. 2012: 179-180), whereby young people from rich and well-resourced Northern countries go to Southern countries to help in schools which lack educational resources and quality education.
It is a process of cultural interaction where relatively highly educated young people from a Western dominant culture directly interact with people from non-dominant cultures (Raymond & Hall 2008: 531). With regard to participating as equals in decision making, sending organizations often have more say than people from host communities about where volunteers will go and what work they will do, making IVS a supply driven activity (Perold et al 2012: 192).
3. Research context
This chapter serves to illustrate both the broader and more specific context of my research location. First I will discuss Ghana’s education system through a brief history and an overview of the education structure and characteristics. Then I will describe the occurrence of international volunteering in Ghana and how this has come about in the country. The final section will depict the specific research location in more detail. I will describe the relevant demographics of Sagnarigu district, its schools and the occurrence of international volunteers in Tamale.

3.1 Education in Ghana

3.1.1 History of education in Ghana
The earliest traces of education in Ghana can be found in the northern part of the country, dating back to the early 8th Century. Islam was spread from North-Africa to various Sub-Saharan countries, northern Ghana included. When large parts of the population converted to Islam, ‘schools were established to teach Qur’anic memorization and eventually to teach other Islamic sciences at higher levels’ (USAID 2006: 18).

Formal education in Ghana can be traced back to the 15th Century, when the country was first visited by different European merchants from Portugal, Sweden, Denmark, Germany and the Netherlands. To teach children of the merchants and native women, schools were established in the European forts along the coast. After this education, the so called malattoes served as intermediaries between the indigenous people and the colonial masters (Salifu 2013: 3). Along with merchants came missionaries who needed well-educated assistants to spread the Gospel and Christian belief throughout the country. Missionary schools slowly spread over the interior of the country (Little 2005: 5; To Be Worldwide 2011:1), but remained concentrated in the south of the country. The area in the north, with the highest Muslim population, was largely excluded from Christian missionary efforts (USAID 2006: 21).

In 1874, the British gained full colonial authority of what was then called Gold Coast (Salifu 2013: 2) and the British, secular system then became a model for the Ghanaian education system. A major goal for formal education at that time was the formation of an elite group to help administer the colony. Schools were thus only accessible for a small privileged group of people, largely consisting of elite men who lived in urban areas in the southern part of the country (Little 2005: 5).

Around the time of independence, education was seen as a useful instrument for nation-building as it could encourage critical thinking (Salifu 2013: 3). Although ‘a significant number of Muslims were rather sceptical about the intentions of the Christian-oriented, Western secular
system of education’ (USAID 2006: 21), many realized that without this secular education, Muslims would be ‘left out of national affairs, employment in government institutions and rewarding jobs’ (ibid). This insight eventually led to the emergence of the first so called Arabic-English schools in and around Tamale, the predominantly Muslim capital of the Northern Region. Besides religious subjects, these schools expanded their curriculum to also offer secular subjects.

The government of Nkrumah, Ghana’s first president initiated the 1961 Act, aiming to achieve free Universal Primary Education (UPE) in the country. The system has undergone several series of reforms ever since to shift from purely academic towards more technical and vocational training (TVET), in order to become more in sync with the country’s need for manpower (Little 2005: 5; OECD 2008: 341). The reform measures from 1996, known as FCUBE (Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education) provided an action plan for the next ten years, in which the government would try to address the four major deficiencies in the education system: access, efficiency, quality and relevance (Little 2005: 23; UNICEF 2012: 19).

The government’s commitment towards the achievement of UPE (also Millennium Development Goal 2) continued with the Education Strategy Plan (ESP) for the period from 2003-2015. Measures of the currently still ongoing ESP framework are meant to accelerate the Ghanaian government’s efforts to achieve MDG 2 by 2015. Examples of such measures are: ‘the introduction of a school feeding program, special programs to bridge the gender gap in access to education and targeted programs to improve access in underserved areas’ (UNICEF 2007: 1).

3.1.2 Education system in Ghana
The present Ghanaian education system is characterized by a 6+3+3+4 structure, meaning that there are ‘6 years of primary education, followed by two 3-year stages of secondary education (junior secondary and senior secondary) and 4 years of higher education’ (Nuffic 2011: 4; Little 2005: 14). Primary and Junior Secondary school make up basic education which is free and compulsory (Bosu 2011). Officially, English is the language of instruction in Ghanaian schools, except for in the first years of basic education when the most common indigenous language of the region is used for instruction (Nuffic 2011: 4).

The Ghanaian Ministry of Education (MoE) is responsible for developing educational policies, but decentralization measures that were introduced with the FCUBE reforms ensured that the Ghana Education Service (GES) is now mostly responsible for implementing these policies at regional and district level. However, ‘despite this apparent devolution of power from the centre to the periphery, key aspects of educational activity and school leadership agency still remain outside of the direct control of the school’ (Bosu 2011: 71).
Especially teachers have little decision making power, and their voice is often excluded from initiatives to improve the quality of education (Salifu 2013: 1). Ghanaian teachers also face hard conditions such as high pupil-teacher ratios, little material resources, low wages and no incentives for working in rural areas. These result in high levels of teacher absenteeism, which are estimated to be around 27% in Ghana (Salifu 2013: 3-4), and greatly influence pupil’s learning as a close relationship between teacher attendance or absenteeism and pupil attendance or absenteeism can be found (Ampiah & Adu-Yeboah 2009: 222).

The largest challenges for Ghana’s education system are ‘improving and sustaining the quality of education and addressing persistent disparities in the provision of and access to basic education’ (UNICEF 2012: 19). The historically based gap in access to quality education between the south and the north remains present (Little 2005: 19). In general, Ghana’s three northern regions are characterised by disproportional poverty in comparison to the country’s other regions. As during the colonial times, the northern regions are far from industrial centres, ports and roads that helped ‘stimulate greater economic and human development in southern Ghana’ (Hirsch, 2008). A difference in climate and less rainfall, and therefore smaller harvests in the north also contributes to a marginal economic position in comparison to the south of the country.

A consequence of this economic gap is that ‘few resources can be generated within the region for essential social services’ (ibid) such as health care and education. Compared to national enrolment rates and literacy percentages, the three northern regions are significantly lagging behind. Children often have to help their poor families with farm or domestic labour, constraining them to go to or finish school. There have been several initiatives over the past decade to get enrolment rates in the northern regions up, such as a school feeding program and the provision of small grants for poor families. However, increased enrolment had a heavy toll on the school buildings, facilities and infrastructures as they could not properly process the large amounts of new pupils (ibid.).

Throughout the country, but especially in the three northern regions, girls and women are worse off than boys and men. Certain cultural practices that are concentrated in the north of the country discourage or obstruct girls to go to school. For example, although illegal, female genital
mutilation remains widespread, and many young northern girls are ‘forced into marriage at an early age’ (ibid). Also, perhaps due to the large Muslim population, there remain to be ‘prevalent attitudes that girls shouldn’t go to school’ (ibid) in the northern regions. In 1997, the GES established a Girls’ Education Unit to try to reduce the gender disparities in the education sector. Other policy reforms, such as the current ESP, also aim to reinforce gender equality in schools (UNESCO 2004: 13).

3.2 International volunteering in Ghana

As shown earlier, missionary workers can be seen as the first international volunteers in Ghana, aiming to spread the Christian belief.

In August 1961, the first group of 52 first Peace Corps (PC) volunteers arrived in Ghana to assist the newly independent nation to develop (Rieffel 2003: 1; Amin 1999: 42). Of this so called Ghana 1 group, 85% of the volunteers were assigned to work in the Ghanaian educational system, due to an enormous lack of (mostly science) teachers (Amin 1999: 42). In the 1970s, the Peace Corps expanded its scope to wider community development, but education remains to be the largest sector in which PC volunteers work. According to the Peace Corps, over 600 public schools in Ghana have benefited from the work of their volunteers since the inception of the Peace Corps program (Peace Corps 2011).

Around the time that the Peace Corps came into existence, other governments developed similar institutes as part of Cold War politics and/or ‘to help Third World societies on their path to modern development’ by sending skilled personnel abroad (Butcher & Smith 2010: 32). The British Voluntary Service Abroad (VSO) was established in 1958, the Australian Volunteers Abroad in 1963, the Dutch Stiching Nederlandse Vrijwilligers (SNV) and the Japan Overseas Corporation Volunteers (JOCV, nowadays called Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA)) were both founded in 1965 and the Canadian Executive Service Organization (CESO) began in 1967 (ibid.). Most of these organizations have been or are still active in Ghana and in the field of education.

Ghana has become a popular destination for other international volunteer placements as well. The country’s political stability, the friendliness and hospitality of the inhabitants and English as the official language make it a desirable destination for both volunteers and the agencies that send them (Roberts 2004: 4). Ghana is often promoted as an ideal destination where holiday or leisure activities can be combined with voluntary work in schools and orphanages, so that the tourist experience is supposedly ‘mutually beneficial’ (Butcher & Smith 2010:28) for both the tourist and the local community in which they participate.
3.3 Research Location: Tamale (Sagnarigu district)

3.3.1 Demographics
The research took place in Tamale, capital of Ghana’s Northern Region (see map in section 3.1.2) and home to approximately 370,000 people. This population makes Tamale the fourth largest city in Ghana. According to the most recent Ghana Living Standards Survey, and as has been described before, the Northern Region is one of the three poorest (out of ten) regions in Ghana, and therefore many international NGOs have an office in Tamale (UN-Habitat 2010: 6). Due to their presence, the city of Tamale is sometimes nicknamed ‘NGO capital of the world’ (Weinstein 2011). It might be for the same reason that many international volunteers travelling to Ghana are based in Tamale. Because of this, and due to the fact that my local supervisor is based in Tamale at the University of Development Studies, I picked Tamale as my broader research location.

Islam is the predominant religion in Tamale Metropolis, with 84% of the population being affiliated to Islam (PCU 2000). There are several large mosques located in the city centre, and dozens of smaller mosques are shattered throughout the city and its outskirts. No matter where one finds himself in Tamale, the sounds of the prayer call will always reach him from multiple directions. Compared to cities in the south of Ghana, relatively more women wear veils and Islamic headscarves in Tamale. A large amount of Arabic schools can be found in the city as well (described in more detail in the next section).

Of the district’s total population, 67% lives in urban areas. Quite a lot of communities have slum characteristics such as insufficient water supply, lack of good roads and little domestic toilet provision (UN Habitat 2009: 7). Proper drainage is also lacking in many deprived areas of Tamale, causing flooded areas and small landslides during the raining season. There is less money available for urban planning and social services in the northern regions compared to Ghana’s regions in the south, due to historic relations, differences in climate and the geographic location far from industrial centres (see also section 3.1.2). Relatively more (extremely) poor people live in Ghana’s three northern regions, Tamale included.
Economic activities in the city centre attract people from all over the northern regions to Tamale. Most business revolves around farming or trading (ibid), so many people (both male and female) are involved in growing crops or selling goods. In the city centre there is a large market area with permanent stores and official stalls, but most commerce happens through informal sector operators (UN Habitat 2009: 10). In the centre they often carry goods on their heads so that they can walk around to find customers.

In the outskirts of town, informal sector operators have improvised shops along the roads, sometimes existing of only a crooked wooden table on which the goods are presented. Next to farming and trade, other business involves services such as hairdressing or public transport. Minibuses called ‘trotros’ and (shared) taxis are the main mode of public transport for the city. For private use, a relatively large number of inhabitants uses bicycles and motorbikes (UN Habitat 2010: 9).

At the beginning of my fieldwork period, I started out with drafting a list of schools in the city that have a history of working with international volunteers. The next chapter will show in more detail how I selected the specific schools and respondents for my research. While drafting the list, I learned that since 2012 the Tamale Metropolis district has been divided into two districts. The southern part of Tamale remains to be called Tamale Metropolis district, whereas the northern part of Tamale is now called Sagnarigu district (Ghana Education Service 2014). Together with my local supervisor I decided to narrow my research location further down to only the Sagnarigu district as all schools that I selected for my research are located within this district.¹

3.3.2 Schools in Tamale (Sagnarigu District)

The former Tamale Metropolis district contained approximately 300 primary schools, 100 junior high schools and 10 senior high schools (Ghana Education Service 2006). After the district has been divided into two, the Sagnarigu education office took up 100 Kindergarten (KG) and primary schools, as well as 54 junior high schools (JHS). The district also includes three senior high schools. Although the district came into being in 2012, it was not operative until mid-2013. Therefore, most of statistics are not up to date yet. The following section might thus contain information on the former Tamale Metro district instead of the newly formed Sagnarigu district.

¹ Although the district came into being in 2012, it was not operative until mid-2013. Therefore, most of statistics are not up to date yet. The following section might thus contain information on the former Tamale Metro district instead of the newly formed Sagnarigu district.
high schools (SHS), two teacher training colleges (TTCs), a polytechnic school and a university campus. Although statistical data varies per source and year of publishing, it can be said that the majority of these schools are public schools. Only around ten to fifteen percent of primary and junior high schools are private schools.

As can be read above, Tamale is characterized by a large Muslim population. Traditional Qur’anic schools, called makaranta, are widespread and these schools are places where ‘students study the Qur’an outside of their normal public school schedule’(USAID: 4). During time of independence, it was in Tamale where the first traditional Islamic schools decided to incorporate secular subjects into the curriculum. Nowadays, these private schools still exist. Depending on the language of instruction, they are called Arabic or Arabic-English schools. In the first, all subjects are taught in Arabic and there is still a heavy focus towards religious subjects. In Arabic-English schools students study secular subjects in English, and religious subjects in Arabic. Sometimes, the government supports these schools in the form of teachers, but usually parents have to pay tuition and fees for their children to go Arabic-English schools (USAID 2006: 21).

A fourth category of Islamic schools falls under the management of the Islamic Education Unit (IEU), formally established under the GES in 1987 (USAID 2006: 22). These schools are ‘officially and legally government schools, teach the full government curriculum, and offer some Arabic and Islamic studies. The government supplies and pays for teachers and textbooks for IEU schools’(USAID 2006: 5).

All public schools in Tamale belong to certain units. Besides the IEU, there are the religiously affiliated Catholic Education Unit, Presbyterian Education Unit and Methodist Education Unit. When schools are not specifically affiliated with a certain religion, they are called International schools (JICA volunteer, interview 4). Although Islamic schools are said to be most present in Tamale, the majority of schools that I noticed during my fieldwork period were called International schools. Also, during my research it became apparent that the religious background of pupils does not necessarily determine which school they visit. One of the schools I selected for the research belongs to the Catholic Unit, but the majority of the students is said to be Muslim (student, interview 17).
Even though the GES is responsible for the provision of teaching learning materials (TLMs), many public schools in Tamale lack proper materials. Some school buildings in Tamale look well-maintained, whereas the infrastructure of the majority of schools has many shortcomings. Many buildings look deteriorated. Also, often there is no fence around the school property, and facilities such as running water and electricity are frequently not present.

The salary of teachers from public schools should also be provided for by the GES, but many teachers in Tamale complain that the amount is too low to sustain themselves. Incentives are not offered and teachers complain that they have no opportunities for further education themselves (teachers, focus group discussions 2 & 3). Currently, only 65% of the public school teachers in Tamale is professionally trained. In private schools, this number is only as low as 11% (Ghana Education Service 2006).

Ghana’s Northern Region is characterized by relatively high drop-out rates compared to the rest of Ghana (Ampiah & Adu-Yeboah 2009: 220; UN-Habitat 2010: 9). Girls in Tamale are most vulnerable to drop out of school early due to teenage pregnancies, forced marriages and the obligation to do domestic or farm labour. Also, in quite a lot of Tamale’s communities, parents do not see the importance of sending their daughters to school. Government initiatives are trying to tackle this problem, but a lot of progress in terms of gender equality in education still has to be made in Tamale.

3.3.2 Volunteers in Tamale

As mentioned before, Tamale is sometimes nicknamed NGO-capital of the world. There has been a proliferation of NGOs in the Tamale Metropolis. More than sixty have been recorded at an inventory in 2004 (UN Habitat 2009: 10) and this number is expected to have only risen since then. However, most of these organizations have their headquarters in Tamale, but their operation happens outside of the metropolis (ibid.).

This fact was confirmed when I spoke to several employees of major IVSOs during my fieldwork. The Peace Corps has a sub-office in Tamale, but does not operate within the city itself.
Most of their volunteers are placed in more remote locations (Peace Corps volunteer leaders, interviews 7 & 8). The same currently goes for VSO (program officer, interview 28). There have been volunteers in Tamale metropolis in the past, but at the moment, all of VSO’s volunteers work outside of the region’s capital. JICA used to have an office in Tamale since 1995, but the office recently closed (metro director of education and JICA volunteer, interviews 3 & 4). Nonetheless, there are still JICA volunteers working in Tamale metropolis, active in the field of health and education. Those JICA volunteers focusing on education work together with the Metro Assembly and go to teacher training colleges or help teachers with in-service training concerning mathematics and science (ibid.).

In the field of healthcare, international volunteers can be found in various local clinics and in Tamale’s Teaching Hospital. When it comes to international volunteers in the field of education, most who are placed in Tamale partake in voluntourist programs from larger IVSOs such as Volunteering Solutions or Meet Africa. (director of organization, interview 1). These organizations have links with several schools in and outside of Tamale where international volunteers can be placed. Other international volunteers come to schools in Tamale with much smaller organizations, such as NGOs or private initiatives that support just one project or school in particular (volunteer, interview 2).
4. Research design

The field-research was carried out in Tamale from mid-January 2014 until April 2014. In order to gather data, several qualitative research methods were used, namely: semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions, non-participant unstructured observations and keeping a fieldwork diary.

This chapter will first clarify why a qualitative research methodology was used to approach the research questions. Secondly, I will describe how different methods have been used to collect data for my research. The third section of this chapter explains how the sample of schools and respondents was chosen and an overview of respondents will be provided. Next I will shortly describe the data-analysis. Thereafter, the limitations of this fieldwork will be displayed and finally, this chapter includes a section on ethical considerations.

4.1 Methodology

This research has an interpretivist (Bryman 2008: 366) epistemological background, whereby the focus is on meaning rather than on fact, and on understanding (‘verstehen’) rather than on causality (‘erklären’)(Snape & Spencer 2003: 7). In the study I tried to explore in depth the perceptions, values and beliefs that people from the host community have about international volunteers (Snape & Spencer 2003: 3; Perold et al. 2012: 185). Qualitative methodology is a useful approach for such an angle, because it focuses on ‘the understanding of the social world through an examination of the interpretation of that world by its participants’ (Bryman 2008: 366). I thus tried to take an emic perspective (Snape & Spencer 2003: 4), in order to see the issue through the eyes of the respondents (Bryman 2008: 385). However, it should be kept in mind that the views of respondents about international volunteers are embedded in larger existing realities of North-South relations (see chapter 2.2).

4.2 Research questions

Because of the marginal representation of the host community in literature on international volunteering, my research is focused on their perspective. Like has been discussed in the previous chapters, in Tamale there is a high occurrence of IVS. Since many IVs engage in activities in the educational sector, this research tries to answer the following question:

How is the assistance of international volunteers in the education system perceived, appreciated and experienced by educational actors from the host community in Tamale, Ghana, and does the assistance of international volunteers correspond with the host community’s needs?
Educational actors from the host community are (head)teachers, students and other relevant educational actors. The main research question will be broken up into the following sub-questions:

- **Perception**: What ideas, images and expectations of IVS do educational actors from the host community have?
- **Appreciation**: How is the practice of IVS judged and evaluated by educational actors from the host community?
- **Experience**: What experiences do educational actors from the host community have with IVS and how do these experiences relate to the three dimensional framework of social justice from Nancy Fraser?
- **Does the actual practice of IVS correspond with the challenges and needs of educational actors from the host community?**

The last sub-question was no part of my research proposal. During the fieldwork I realized that the core of what I wanted to explore with my research is whether or not the assistance of international volunteers adequately addresses the needs of the host community. Therefore, the fourth sub-questions has been added.

### 4.3 Operationalization

In order to make my research questions understandable in interviews and focus-group discussions, they had to be operationalized.

Perception is how people see, understand and think about a certain phenomenon. This is based on their observations and prior information about this topic. In order to research the ideas, images and expectations that people from the host community have about international volunteers, I asked the respondents questions such as ‘Why do you think they come?’, and questions about the appearance and background of volunteers.

Appreciation was the easiest concept to operationalize, as it concerns a judgment (either positive or negative) and an evaluation. Participants were asked about positive and negative impacts of the work of volunteers, and were asked to explain why it is either positive or negative. I also asked participants to name specific positive or negative aspects and memories of volunteers.

Experiences are based on events or situations that happen to someone. It can both be memories of what has happened, or things that respondents are presently encountering. Often, experiences have an effect on someone’s mind or feelings. Besides asking respondents directly how the presence of international volunteers affected their (or other actors’) minds and feelings, I
also asked respondents questions about certain happenings. I asked them what volunteers bring with them when they come and how they say goodbye, as well as what respondents have learned from them. Also, I asked who is involved in decision making concerning the volunteers’ actions. The questions I asked were along the lines of Nancy Fraser’s three dimensional framework of social justice (see chapter 2.3). Certain questions were aimed at the distribution of materials, other questions related to cultural recognition and some questions pointed at participation and representation.

Finally, the last question tries to answer if the experiences from reality match with what IVs should ideally do according educational actors from the host community. I inquired about the challenges respondents encounter in their work/school life and what needs they have in order to address those challenges. Other questions addressed what improvements the respondents would like to make themselves to the school, if anyone is currently working on these things and what the ideal volunteer should be and act like. In the focus group discussions with the teachers, the fourth sub question was addressed by first determining their needs and challenges, later on the experiences that the participants have with the volunteers, and finally a discussion about whether these link up or not, and what could be changed to create more correspondence.

4.4 Conceptual scheme

The figure below shows how different concepts and theories (described in chapter 2) concerning international volunteering are related to each other. The arrow underneath the word 'location' shows the generally one directional movement of international voluntary service from the North to the South. The gradient inside the arrow shows the power-imbalance that is created or maintained through practices of IVS. Closer to the Local North, the shade is darker, which means more influence and decision-making power, whereas close to the Local South, the shade is almost white.

The different boxes represent the three major stakeholders when it comes to IVS. The thickness of the line around the boxes represents the level of agency that each stakeholder can express. However, this agency does not occur in a vacuum, but it is embedded within a wider specific context of unequal North-South relations. The solid arrows between boxes show direct interaction and influence between stakeholders, whereas the dashed arrow shows indirect influence.
The focus of my research is on the large orange arrow, in which keywords are used to describe my research question. I wanted to investigate the perspective of actors from the host community on the assistance of international volunteers. The small box next to the orange arrow is about social justice. As has been described in the theoretical framework (in chapter 2), some individuals and IVSOs aim to achieve social justice by practices of IVS. However, I placed question marks behind each dimension as distinguished by Nancy Fraser, because in this research I will examine if a contribution to social justice can be made through the practice of IVS.

4.5 Methods

The following qualitative methods have been used to gather data to answer my research question and sub-questions:
4.5.1 Semi-structured interviews
Initially, I wanted to conduct at least seven interviews in each of the selected schools, one with the principal, three with teachers and three with students. The respondents were asked to participate in in-depth semi-structured interviews. This type of interviews guide towards specific topics with the use of an interview-guide, but they also leave space for the respondents to manoeuvre (Bernard 2006: 212; Boeije 2010: 58). The interview-guides that I used for the semi-structured interviews can be viewed in appendix 8.1.

In some of the interviews, probing was necessary to ‘stimulate a respondent to produce more information, without injecting [my]self so much into the interaction’ (Bernard 2006: 217). Most of the teachers would give detailed answers to the questions by themselves, but probing was needed in interviews with a few of the students to get in-depth answers to the questions.

Other educational actors were also asked to participate in in-depth, semi-structured interviews. Due to time constraints on the side of some of these participants (for example one of the government officials), these interview remained quite shallow. As most of these actors were interviewed in the beginning of the fieldwork period, a slightly altered interview-guide was used. At that stage of my research it was namely important for me to investigate which schools in Tamale could be included in my sample.

4.5.2 Focus group discussions
In both core schools of my research, I conducted two focus group discussions, one with teachers and one with students. The sessions served as means to ‘study the ways in which individuals collectively make sense of a phenomenon and construct meanings around it’ (Bryman 2012: 504). One of my UvA teachers suggested an experienced research assistant who could help me to conduct the sessions. I gave him instructions to take up the role of facilitator, so that I could concentrate on note-taking during the discussions. Although he was not familiar with the topic and working with children in focus group discussions, he proved to be a quick learner. He facilitated the sessions according plan, and whenever I felt it was necessary to add anything, I could jump in with certain remarks or discussion statements.

An overview of the time schedule and plan of the sessions can be found in appendix 8.2. The whole discussion was recorded and the aim was to produce a tangible end product which could serve as an additional data source next to the notes and transcripts of the recordings. Therefore, in each discussion several posters with remarks written on post-it notes were used to support the discussions, and photographs of each poster have been taken afterwards.
4.5.3 Observations
Unstructured non-participant observations (Bryman 2012: 273) were done in each school area. In only one of the core schools, international volunteers were present during my visits. In that specific school, I observed their interactions with the students and other teachers. I chose not to do participant observations and limit myself to observations outdoors, because I did not want to be mistaken for an international volunteer. However, with my appearance being similar to that of many international volunteers it was hard to approach the schools without exciting many of the students.

4.5.4 Field Diary
Fieldwork is always influenced by the researcher's own background, opinions and personal experiences. As it is not possible to enter the field 'blank', I kept track of my feelings, experiences and learning process in a field diary. This diary made me aware of my personal biases and helped me to interpret field notes better (Bernard 2006: 391). It also served as a tool to further develop my research techniques whilst I was in the field.

4.6 Sampling
The main part of the research took place in three different schools in the Sagnarigu district of Tamale. In this section I will describe the choices I made in order to select these specific schools. I will also show how the different respondents have been selected, and an overview of characteristics of the selected schools and respondents will be given as well.
4.6.1 Selection of schools

Various channels (contact persons of several NGOs or volunteer organizations, my local supervisor, employees of Ghana Education Service and some volunteers) have been used to investigate which schools in the research area have a relatively long history of working with IVs. The criterion to determine long history was that at least two volunteers (and preferably more) must have been present in the school. That is because I did not want the respondents to reflect upon their experiences with a specific individual, but the aim was to research their perspective upon international volunteers in a broader sense. Short term volunteers are usually posted in one school, whereas long term professional volunteers often take advisory roles and provide in-service training in a variety of schools. Therefore, in this research, I focused on short term volunteers. This way, I could select schools that have a long history of working with international volunteers, instead of schools where teachers only have sporadic contact with long term volunteers.

From the list of schools that I drafted, non-probability (purposive) sampling (Bryman 2008: 375) was used to select three schools in which the main part of my research would take place. In this selection I aimed to choose schools that would be as representative as possible for the research area. This means that I attempted to pick schools which adequately resemble the variety of schools in the wider research location (Buraway 1998: 12).

Schools with a very specific character, like a school for children with physical disabilities and a school for the deaf, were excluded from the list because these schools are not representative for the wider research location. Also, I excluded the only senior high school (SHS) that was on the list, as I understood that most IVs are present in basic schools (both primary and junior high school level). Also, SHS is not compulsory in Ghana, so the students present in such schools do not adequately represent the population.

The next criterion of selection was the geographic dispersion of the schools in the Tamale Sagnarigu district. One school on the outskirts of the district has been chosen, and two of the selected schools are located more in the core of the district, so that the sample would resemble the wider research context in terms of locations of the schools.

The type of schools was the final selection criterion. As most of Tamale’s schools are public schools, I selected two public schools for my sample, and included one private school. Of the public schools, one school has no religious unit and the other school belongs to the Catholic unit, in order to be representative for the wider context again. Even though many schools in Tamale belong to the Islamic unit, none was selected because there was no mention of international volunteers present in these schools.
In each of the selected schools I approached the principal or vice-principal to ask for permission to conduct the research in their school. A signed letter of permission from the Sagnarigu education office, and several supporting documents from the UvA to explain the purpose of my research ensured that access to all three selected schools was approved. Therefore, no new schools had to be chosen according to the above selection criteria.

**School A:** this basic school is located on the outskirts of Tamale, in a generally rural area. In 2004, the school was established by a European couple to help the people in this deprived area. As of today, this private school is still dependent on the contributions of the couple’s foundation. Besides regular classrooms, the freshly painted building contains a computer room, an office for the head teacher, toilet facilities and a playground. At the moment of my fieldwork, extra classroom blocks (for JHS2+3) and a staffroom were being built. The school has no religious affiliation, so there are both Christian and Muslim students and teachers. A total of 440 pupils go to the school. Recently, a new head teacher and 5 teachers have been appointed whose salary is paid for by the government. However, the other teachers are paid for by the foundation. The school receives a continuous flow of volunteers from Europe. Some stay a few days, others some weeks or months. Some volunteers help in the construction or maintenance of the school, most others assist teachers.

**School B:** this public basic school is located closer to the town centre, but also in a deprived area where many poor people live. The school was established in 1961 and belongs to the Catholic Unit. However, many of the 430 students are Muslim. For long, the government only paid the salary of teachers, so the school’s facilities were on the verge of collapse. In 2007, at the request of Tamale’s archbishop, the Christian Brothers took charge of the school. They do this on a voluntary basis and they have made a great contribution to the infrastructure of the school. In 2011, a partnership with a school in the United Kingdom was established. Twice a year, a delegation from this sister school comes to Ghana for a couple of weeks to interact with the children and teachers and share customs and cultural habits. They also bring funds which have so far been used for construction of a computer room, a library, an administration block with a staff room and toilet facilities for the teachers, as well as a sports court and materials.

**School C:** this public junior high school was established in 1990 in a semi-urban area, relatively close to the centre of Tamale. The school has no religious affiliation and has around 240 students. There is a primary school with the same name about 200 metres from the school, but each has its own management. The building is quite well maintained, and includes a staffroom, office for the head teacher, a storage room and toilet facilities. This school used to work with JICA volunteers who would be positioned in the school for a period of 2 years. At least three of them have been placed in this school and functioned as mathematics and science teachers. Besides regular teaching, they provided in-service training for the Ghanaian teachers and introduced several TLMs as well. Currently there is no volunteer present in the school, and it is unsure if a new one will be coming soon.

Boxes 1-3: Characteristics of each of the selected schools of my sample
4.6.2 Selection of respondents

When asking for permission to conduct the research, I could simultaneously make appointments with each of the headmasters for an interview. In school C it became clear that the last volunteer left a few years ago. Only two of the present teachers had directly worked with the volunteers, and none of the present students were around when the last volunteer was in their school. Therefore, I decided to treat this school as an additional school of my research, and I considered the two teachers and head teacher of this school as other educational actors. In the two other schools, a collaboration with international volunteers was still active. Therefore, these schools became the core schools of my research.

In school A, the head teacher suggested possible respondents for the interviews and focus group discussions. My criteria for selection were that the respondents should have experience with at least two IVs (preferably more), and both males and females had to be included as participants. Three teachers and three students were suggested for an individual interview. Regarding students, I preferred students from the higher classes as I expected them to have more experience with international volunteers, as well as the ability to reflect well and have a relatively good understanding. The same criteria were used to select respondents for the focus-group discussions. I requested the head teacher to suggest 5 to 10 teachers and students for two different sessions. Some of the participants in the focus group discussions were also respondents to individual interviews. In total, 5 teachers and 6 students were selected as respondents to the focus group discussions. Because I did not want to interrupt the lessons too much, the appointments were made at a time most convenient for the teachers and students.

In school B I used the same criteria for selection: respondents needed to have a lot of experience with IVs, there should be both female and male respondents and the students needed to be vocal with a relatively good understanding and ability to reflect. The vice principal of school B suggested three teachers for the individual interviews. One of these teachers was appointed to suggest students for the individual interviews as well. It was this same teacher who suggested respondents for the focus group discussions. He suggested four other teachers besides himself for one session, and five vocal students from the higher grades for another focus group discussion.

Other educational actors that have been included as respondents in the research are various actors who are actively involved with schools on the community level. Examples of such actors are local government officials, directors of NGOs and volunteers. Snowballing (purposive) sampling was used for reaching these people, which meant that I asked my local supervisor and respondents to refer me to anyone of interest (Bernard 2006: 192). Unfortunately, time...
constraints and wrong telephone numbers made it impossible to include some educational actors of interest in the research, such as the chairman of a parent-teacher association, community chiefs and students of the teacher training college.

### 4.6.3 Respondents overview

The tables below give an overview of the different respondents. An overview with more details per respondent can be found in appendix 8.3.

**Table 1: Overview respondents individual interviews**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>Type &amp; level of school</th>
<th>Presence of volunteers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School A</td>
<td>1 head teacher, 3 teachers, 3 students</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Female: 3 Male: 4</td>
<td>Private: nursery, KG, P1-6 &amp; JHS 1</td>
<td>Continuous flow of volunteers since 2004. Some stay a few days, others some weeks or months.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School B</td>
<td>1 head teacher, 3 teachers, 3 students</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Female: 3 Male: 4</td>
<td>Public (CEU): KG, primary &amp; JHS 1-3</td>
<td>Sister school in the UK sends a delegation of teachers and students twice a year since 2011.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School C</td>
<td>1 head teacher, 2 teachers,</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Female: 1 Male: 2</td>
<td>Public: JHS 1-3</td>
<td>Three JICA volunteers who were each posted in the school for 2 years. Currently no volunteers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Various</td>
<td>2 education officials 5 volunteers, 3 organization directors 1 head teacher (TTC)</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>Female: 4 Male: 7</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total participants interviews</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>Female: 11 Male: 17</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 2: Overview respondents focus group discussions**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Class</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School A</td>
<td>Students</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Female: 2 Male: 4</td>
<td>9-15</td>
<td>P5: 2 P6: 1 JHS1:3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School A</td>
<td>Teachers</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Female: 3 Male: 2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School B</td>
<td>Students</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Female: 3 Male: 2</td>
<td>14-17</td>
<td>P6: 1 JHS2: 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School B</td>
<td>Teachers</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Female: 1 Male: 4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total participants</td>
<td>Teachers: 10 Students: 11</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>Female: 9 Male: 12</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.7 Analysis

A variety of data sources have been gathered through the different research techniques. The data consists predominantly of transcripts of the audio-tapes that were taken during interviews and focus group discussions. During interviews that have not been recorded (due to practical reasons such as too much background noise, malfunctioning of the recorder or when there was no chance to ask the respondent’s permission to record the interview), literal notes were taken as much as possible and transcribed as well directly after the interview. Other types of data that were gathered during the fieldwork were: notes taken during the non-participatory observations, photos taken during the research activities, posters with remarks from the participants of the focus group discussions and my fieldwork diary.

Analysis was done with the help of software package Atlas.ti, which both served as a tool to store large amounts of data, as well as enabling cross referencing and analysis. The grounded theory approach has been followed, whereby becoming grounded in the data allowed ‘understanding to emerge from close study of the texts’ (Bernard 2006: 493). Since the research is exploratory rather than confirmative -I did not try to prove or disprove predetermined hypotheses- it was inductive research (ibid). During analysis I tried to identify concepts and categories from the transcripts using ‘open’ coding. The themes that emerged from open coding were linked and compared through axial and selective coding (Boeije 2010: 114 & 118) in order to arrive at conclusions. The results are presented in this thesis with the use of exemplars, which are ‘quotes from interviews that illuminate the theory’ (Bernard 2006: 492).

4.8 Limitations

Several limitations could be foreseen for the intended research. First of all, my position as a researcher had to be taken into account. Because the research involves schools, the impression could be evoked that I was there as an evaluator. Also being a young European woman, respondents could easily mistake me for one of the international volunteer teachers. Because such impressions of me can limit the openness of respondents towards me or their will to cooperate in the research at all, I had to ensure that the respondents understood my position and aims as a researcher. Through an information sheet about my research, supporting letters from the University of Amsterdam, the help of my local supervisor and extensive explanations before the interviews of focus group discussions I tried to ensure this.

In order to increase the reliability of this research, I made use of interview-guides and detailed time schedules for the focus group discussions. Another researcher would be likely to obtain similar findings when working in the same research area with the same research sample
and with the same research assistant using the same interview-guides and plans for the focus group discussions.

Regarding the validity of my research, there may be a selection bias. In my sampling I asked the principals of each school to suggest potential respondents. Even though I had several selection criteria, the final suggestion of participants has been made by the headmaster. The students that have been suggested are likely to be the well-behaved and vocal students. Regarding the teachers, I deem it unlikely that teachers full of criticism would be suggested as well.

Finally, I encountered some practical constraints during the research. Malfunctioning of the recorder caused some interviews not to be recorded (fully). In those few occasions, I tried to take as many literal notes as possible, but the conversation often flows too fast to keep track of everything that has been said. Also, concentrating on note-taking instead on conducting the interview sometimes made me skip a few questions, or forget to probe to fully understand what the respondent has said.

Other constraints were related to time. For example, one of the international volunteers that I interviewed invited me to come observe him in action, but shifts of plans on his side disabled me to be present at his demonstration. Also, mid-way through the research I learned about the presence of volunteers in TTCs. Unfortunately, time constraints only made it possible for me to interview the vice principal of such a school. Further research about international volunteers in TTC would be very interesting as students teachers belong to the group of educational actors as well.

### 4.9 Ethical considerations

Within every research, and especially in cross-cultural research, ethical issues can arise due to power differences between the researcher and the respondents (Scheyvens et al. 2003: 139). It is the researcher’s responsibility to ensure the dignity, privacy and safety of the respondents (ibid: 140), by taking several ethical measures.

I considered it important to ensure the respondent’s anonymity and to treat their information confidentially. Anonymity ‘refers to the researcher’s responsibility to keep the identity of participants private […] so that they will not be personally identifiable in any outputs’ (ibid: 146). Especially when respondents shared negative experiences or criticism about IVs or the sending organizations, it is important that the identity of those respondents stays unknown. That is because I do not want to jeopardize their jobs or cause them harm. Therefore, in case those being criticized might read this thesis, I will ensure the anonymity of the respondents by only sharing what kind of actor they are for each specific quotation. Also, the overview of
respondents in appendix 8.3 will be limitedly detailed in the version of my thesis that will be uploaded online so that their anonymity stays ensured.

Confidentiality is broader and relates to the researcher’s task to ensure that the information obtained is only being used for the purpose of the research (ibid). In my research I tried to be transparent towards the respondents about the research process, and how I would deal with their private information. This information was shared with them before starting the interview, and any questions concerning the aims or process of my research could be asked at any time.

My research has been embedded in theories of social justice. Part of the research is meant to figure out if international voluntary service contributes to social justice in terms of redistribution, recognition and representation (economical, cultural and political social justice). Respect and reciprocity are important aspects of cultural social justice. In order to practice what you preach, I considered it to be very important to give the respondents something in return for taking their time. Each of the participants has been offered the chance to ask me anything, about my research and about myself. Some of the respondents, especially the children that I interviewed, made great use of this offer. Also, the adults have been given the opportunity to receive results of my research if they were interested. After handing in my thesis, I will e-mail those interested a summary of my findings. In case respondents want to learn more about my research, I will refer them to the online version of my thesis. Finally, as the participants of the focus group discussions provided me with personal views and memories, I tried to give something personal in return as well. At the end of each session, I handed out postcards and photographs of my home town to each participant as a token of appreciation.
5. Results & analysis

5.1 Perceptions: Ideas, images and expectations of international volunteers

Perception is a concept used in psychology to describe the process of sensory impulses. In this thesis, when I talk of perception I mean social perception. It is ‘an individual’s ability to create an impression or judgement of other individuals or social groups’ (Uy, 2003), formed by observations and the understanding of existing information about these individuals or groups, which can be used to draw out conclusions and judgments. Perception in this sense is thus how educational actors from the host community think about and judge international volunteers, based on observations of, and existing information about (some of) the volunteers. As the concept of judgement will be discussed in the next sub-chapter about appreciation, this sub-chapter will deal with ideas, images and expectations that people from the host community have about international volunteers.

During the interviews and focus group discussions, various ideas were expressed on the differences between the international volunteer teachers and their African counterparts. The main ideas that came forward were either related to global differences in socio-economic and educational development and to cultural differences in child-raising and interactions with children. These ideas express general ideas about North-South differences and are supported by observations of the volunteers’ physical appearances, behaviour and interactions with children. In this sub-chapter I will describe the most common or remarkable responses from respondents relating to global development, educational development, appearance of volunteers and cultural differences in child-raising and the consequences for classroom interactions. This sub-chapter will end with an analysis of these findings and I will use my interpretations to draw a conclusion for my first sub-question.

Global development

Most educational actors from the host community in Tamale view their own place as less developed than the places where the international volunteers come from. Almost all teachers and students mention that volunteers are coming to help their country to develop 'because Ghana is still a developing country, and their place is already developed' (student, respondent 17). A few teachers and students mention that the assistance of volunteers 'helps the country to develop' (teacher, interview 12). The lagging behind and difference between the two places is described by one teacher as if 'they are flying and we are still crawling' (teacher, interview 15) and a student believes that international volunteers come to Ghana to 'try to close up the gap between Africans and Europeans' (student, interview 19). Some respondents believe that international volunteers
come from places with enough resources and that ‘they come with money’ (student, interview 21). One head-teacher remarked:

’Us in Africa here, when we see a white person, a European or somebody, we think they are coming with money because there is plenty of money there’ (head teacher, interview 20).

Remarkably, all the respondents only counterpose Europe and Africa, and don’t mention other parts of the world, or separate countries as being more developed in comparison to Ghana or Africa as a continent.

Educational development
Most respondents do not only see the assistance of international volunteers as a means to develop their country, but their assistance is also believed to develop the educational system or specific schools:

’I think we can’t, not only this school, but Africans, we cannot do it ourselves. For this they should always come to help us. And why is that? The simple difference between Africa and Europe, just the way the education is, there is a huge gap. So I think we would still need the volunteers’ (head teacher, interview 9).

Especially the Northern part of the country, and the three northern regions of Ghana are regarded as backward in terms of education by some of the teachers.

A student from school A (the donor funded school with a continuous flow of international volunteers) feels that ‘if [the international volunteers] are not here, the school cannot develop’ (student, interview 22). Two students of school A even believe that their school cannot exist without the presence of IVs. A few teachers of this school remark that ‘it wouldn’t be a good idea for the volunteers to stop coming’ (teacher, interview 25) as their workload is relieved by the volunteers, and because the volunteers supply the school with extra material resources. However, it is ‘with those materials they support us, but theoretically, not much’ (teacher, interview 24).

Almost all students and teachers from school B (Catholic school with a sister school in the UK) mentioned in interviews and the focus group discussions that the assistance of IVs has ‘contributed a lot to the development of this school [...], materially they are contributing a lot to the development of the school’ (head teacher, interview 20). According to most of the teachers and students in this school, international volunteers ‘come down to help those who are less privileged to also get an education’ (teacher, interview 14). A student mentioned:

’They can also support this school to be a developed one, so that the students in Ghana can attend education’ (student, interview 17).
When it comes to educational development, international volunteers are thus said to contribute especially in terms of material resources. For some teachers of school A the assistance of volunteers means a relief of workload as well, but the main contribution to the development of their schools is done in terms of material resources.

**Differences in child-raising and consequences for classroom control**

In relation to the pedagogical process, two main aspects are mentioned. All the (head) teachers of school A mention that Europeans raise their children differently from what is done in Africa. The African child is perceived to be ‘stubborn’ (head teacher, interview 9), and should therefore be disciplined with measures of caning every now and then, so that ‘the African child fears the teacher’ (teacher, interview 25).

> ‘The children, sometimes they fear us. They know that if they make noise or do something bad, they know that we use the cane, so then they don’t do that’ (teacher, interview 26).

This method of raising children is unfamiliar for many international volunteers, and therefore all teachers from school A perceive the international volunteers not to be able to control the classroom by themselves:

> ‘When I don’t come to school […] the volunteer can never control the class. She can never control them because she will not cane the kids, and the kids know it. So she will not control the class’ (teacher, interview 026).

In the focus group discussion with teachers from school A, they complained that ‘when the volunteers are around, the children will not pay attention […] [Europe] and Ghana is not the same. Our children are different from your children. At your place you tell them keep quiet, and they be quiet. But here we need to discipline them in a different way’ (focus group discussion).

Remarkably, none of the teachers from school B mentioned that volunteers are not able to control the classrooms well. Instead, all the teachers expressed that they have difficulties themselves with keeping order in their classrooms:

> ‘In this school, we have what we call child protection policy. Because of that, the children are aware that we are not going to use the cane. So discipline has become worn down, because no matter what they do, you cannot cane them […]. It is difficult for us to discipline them’ (teacher, interview 13).

The challenge that teachers face in this school is that they ‘are lacking other ways and measures to discipline. […] We don’t have appropriate alternatives’ (focus group discussion 003).
According to the Ghanaian teachers, cultural differences in child raising and treatment threaten the pedagogical practice, especially in terms of classroom control. In school A this is directly related to the international volunteers, and in school B as the consequence of a new child-friendly polity that has been implemented. Teachers in both schools thus believe that external influences adversely affect the pedagogical process.

**Interactions with children**

Ghanaian children are intrigued by the skin colour and hair structure of the international volunteers that come to visit their schools. The volunteers are mentioned to have a white skin and long, soft hair. Most (head) teachers remarked that children behave excitedly in the presence of volunteers because they want to touch their skin and hair. Whilst entering the school property of school A (observations on February 17th, 2014), I experienced such excitement as pupils rushed towards me to hold my hands or to touch my arms and hair. It appeared to be break-time and throughout the schoolyard, bunches of children were holding hands, jumping around or climbing upon girls who looked much like me and of whom I was later told they were international volunteers. Meanwhile, the Ghanaian teachers all stood together underneath a tree without any pupils playing with them or touching them. One Ghanaian teacher clarified this behaviour as follows:

> 'We don’t have it the way like that, that the child will come around you as a black teacher, holding your hand. [...] They don’t see us as special [...] But whenever they see a new person, they always want to go close to them’ (teacher, interview 25).

Several students also mentioned the volunteers’ interesting skin tone and hair structure during interviews, and one student even described them to be ‘beautiful and handsome’ (student, interview 21). A few respondents mentioned that the volunteers’ skin tone and background is seen by members of their community as a sign of expertise:

> ‘When parents see a white person in a school, the school is perceived to be a very good school! Even though local teacher might do better, this can be reason for parents to send their children to these schools’ (education official, interview 3).

But also children relate the volunteers’ skin tone to a certain level of expertise: ‘Only because of the colour of the teacher […], children always feel there is more to learn from him’ (teacher, interview 16).

Another remarkable aspect of volunteers’ appearance is the way they dress. In school A with a continuous flow of volunteers, the teachers and students praise the volunteers’ efforts to
dress according to local standards. In Catholic school B, however, teachers find that ‘most of [the volunteers] dress in such a way that it is not a good example to a Ghanaian child’ (focus group discussion 3). Two employees of volunteer sending organisations express the importance of volunteers trying to adjust to cultural norms regarding clothing as well, as their dressing serves as an example to the students.

When students are asked about their interaction with volunteer teachers, most mention that the IVs are easier to approach than their Ghanaian teachers: ‘It is easier to go to the whites’ (student, interview 22). A few teachers also see that the students ‘feel free to go to [the volunteers],’ whereas in ‘the way children approach us adults, there are certain things that [they] will not do’ (teacher, interview 15). According to all students, international volunteer teachers are friendly, kind and sociable: ‘they always award us [and] they speak kindly to us’ (focus group discussion 1). Some students of school A even claimed that they prefer international volunteer teachers over their own teachers:

‘We want the whites! Because they will not cane us in the class. If you tell the answer and it is not good, or if you don’t know the answer, the teachers here will cane. But the whites don’t’ (student, interview 23).

‘White’ volunteers are appreciated by teachers for their material contribution, Meanwhile, international volunteers are ascribed certain capacities and characteristics by students, parents and other community members, just because of their skin colour and background.

Analysis: perception

As the above findings show, students and teachers have the idea that the help from people from other, more developed countries will help them to move into the same direction. This thought might be analysed as based on the discourse of post-colonialism, whereby the European model is regarded as superior and serves as an example of where backward nations should be headed to. IVs coming from these places are regarded as well resourced, rich, privileged and knowledgeable. According to respondents, they are seen as do-gooders who come to less privileged areas of the world to try to close the gap between Africa and Europe. There appears to an internalised idea that the way European or ‘white’ people live is superior, an image to which people from the host community want to mirror themselves.

When it comes to educational development, it are especially students who strongly feel that their school is dependent on the help of people from more developed and better resourced places. Both teachers and students acknowledge the contribution that international volunteers can make in terms of the provision of education resources. However, for some teachers the
contribution of IVs in terms of knowledge is considered minimal. For them it is nice to have their workload decreased, but in terms of knowledge the teachers do not feel dependent on the assistance of international volunteers.

The educational host community perceives a large cultural difference with regards to how children are raised and socialised. They analyse this as being a result of distinct biological differences between children in African and European societies. This innate basic otherness is their main explanation for why African and European children should be raised according to different methods. European children are perceived as more obedient than their African counterparts, and they therefore need different modes of discipline. African children are regarded as stubborn, and all teachers express that corporal punishments such as caning are appropriate measures to discipline them.

Teachers in both schools have to deal with difficulties regarding classroom control due to external interference. In school A, IVs that do not use caning as punishments are considered to have difficulties to keep order in the class. According to teachers from this school, the students know they are not going to be punished, and therefore they often misbehave when a volunteer is in front of the classroom. In school B the Ghanaian teachers themselves face difficulties to control the classrooms, which they argue to be a consequence of a child protection policy in their school which prohibits the use of corporal punishments. The teachers voice the challenges they have with this policy, because no alternative measures of disciplining are being offered to them. In both cases, traditional ways of teaching are undermined by external influences.

International volunteer teachers are represented in a stereotypical way and are supposed to always have certain physical features and behavioural traits. Students perceive them often as more kind, friendly and easier to approach than their Ghanaian teachers. The fact that international volunteer teachers are feared less by the students (in school A because they are not caned by IVs whereas their regular teachers can punish them in this way) loosens the boundaries which Ghanaian children have in relation to their elders. Combined with the volunteers’ visible otherness and a special and desirable appearance, students often dare to play with the volunteers and touch their hair and skin; something that they would never dare to do to their Ghanaian teachers.

The remarks from respondents also reveal stereotypical thoughts and discourses on a broader scale, for example on how children are seen. Also, Africa and Ghana are described by respondents as backwards and lagging behind in terms of (educational) development. The European model is considered superior and in order to get to the same level, respondents feel
they are dependent on the expertise and assistance of ‘the whites’. These ideas resemble post-colonial thought and the discourse of unequal North-South relations.

5.2 Appreciation: judgements and evaluations of international volunteering

Appreciation is about judgments. An evaluation is given to a certain activity or process, based upon observations and predominant ideas (Uy, 2003). In this thesis, appreciation thus relates to how people from the educational host community judge and evaluate international volunteerism. This chapter will deal with both their positive and negative evaluations of the practice. As appreciation is related to strong feelings, respondents reflected on how international volunteerism affects minds and feelings of both themselves and other educational actors from the host community. Memorable experiences that reinforce these feelings were also shared by the respondents, as well as their judgements of the practice of international volunteerism itself. The main issues that came forward were feelings of happiness and excitement that are evoked when volunteers are around, as well as different traits that make IVs role models for both teachers and students. The findings will be analysed at the end of this sub-chapter, so that conclusions for the second sub-question can be drawn.

Feelings of happiness and excitement

Almost all respondents mentioned feelings of happiness and excitement that are evoked by the (presence of) international volunteers in their school. Interestingly, it is mentioned by nearly all (head) teachers that it are especially the students’ emotions that are affected by having IVs around. One teacher said: ‘when they are around, the children are very happy’ (teacher, interview 24), and another mentioned that ‘the children always enjoy their presence’ (teacher, interview 14). A teacher from the school that used to work with IVs in the past also remarked that ‘[the students] are always happy to see them’ (teacher, interview 012). One of the students said in an interview: ‘it is very exciting for me when they always come here’ (student, interview 17). Students from both schools also mention that the presence of volunteers ‘makes us happy’ (student, focus group discussion 4), and that the volunteers ‘always help us to feel happy’ (student, focus group discussion 1). These students also mentioned that ‘Madam Tabitha has made us to feel happy today’ (student, focus group discussion 1).

Simultaneously, students mentioned in both focus group discussions that they are sad when they have to say goodbye to volunteers. A head teacher also said that ‘some of [the students] even cry when [the volunteers] leave’ (head teacher, interview 20) and the students ‘don’t want them to go home’ (teacher, interview 26). Yet, only one teacher from school B states in an
individual interview that ‘the relation with [the volunteers] is very good, so teachers are also very happy to have them around’ (teacher, interview 15).

Respondents name different reasons for the happiness and excitement that is evoked by the children because of the presence of international volunteers in their schools. Some respondents relate this to the way the volunteers interact with children (see sub-chapter 5.1), others point at the gifts and resources that most international volunteers provide upon their arrival (discussed in more detail in sub-chapter 5.3). The head teacher of the school with a continuous flow of volunteers appreciates how volunteers help to provide materials for the school:

 ‘The volunteers are doing wonderful work for the school. They provide at any time, [the foundation] responds quickly and [ensures the volunteers] provide the materials’ (head teacher, interview 9).

Another reason mentioned is that the presence of international volunteers breaks up the daily routine. One teacher said that because of the presence of volunteers:

 ‘The children are always exposed to new challenges, new environments, things like that. You know, when we are with one teacher the whole year round, [the students] become bored. So they need some change, change of experience. Even the colour of [the volunteers], if [ the students] see their colour, or different ways in the class, [they get excited] ’ (teacher, interview 13).

Respondents thus widely discuss how the presence of international volunteers affects the feelings and state of mind of the students, but the how it affects (head)teachers is completely left out in the remarks from the respondents of school A. Only one teacher from school B points out how teachers feel because of the volunteers’ presence:

 ‘I think the issue of volunteers coming around, they remind us our work can be done! From time to time they come so it might just be a new way to look at things. They break up the daily routine’ (teachers, interview 15).

**Role models**

In the eyes of most respondents, international volunteers function as role models in various different ways. They are especially valued for their punctuality. In all the focus group discussions, international volunteers are called ‘punctual’ (focus group discussion 3 & 4) and ‘hardworking’ (focus group discussion 2), and ‘they are always in school every day […] and they always come to school early’ (focus group discussion 1). The punctuality of international volunteers is also
acknowledged by a teacher from the school that used to work with IVs in the past. He mentioned that ‘they are very punctual and take their work seriously’ (teacher, interview 016), which is confirmed by a respondent who said that ‘most of [the volunteers] are committed to their work’ (head teacher, interview 9). In an individual interview, one of the respondents elaborated on the punctuality of international volunteers:

‘The nicest thing I learned from them is the discipline. They don’t joke with their time and their schedule. Everything they are planning to do, they make sure they do it’ (teacher, interview 24).

The head teacher of the school with a continuous flow of volunteers also expressed his appreciation for the punctuality of the volunteers in that come visit his school:

‘When the volunteer is supposed to start work, at 8 o’clock they are doing their work. And they do it very, very well. Yes, I appreciate what they do’ (head teacher, interview 9).

Another quality for which international volunteers are valued by most respondents is their ability to encourage students to come to school. Most students expressed that ‘[the volunteers] always want us to come to school.[...] They always teach us how to become good students’ (focus group discussion 1) and ‘when they come they always give me the determination to also learn hard’ (student, interview 18). According to some of the children, students ‘always come to the school when [the volunteers] are there, because they always make us happy’ (student, interview 22). Although a few students mentioned that their regular teachers also ‘encourage us to learn’ (student, interview 21), international volunteers are said to be better at this by one student:

‘It is better, because when they come from other countries, it gives us the determination to always learn hard. Someone has just come to help you learn, so you also have to focus on your education and learn very hard. Because this person could have used that to help other nations, but they decided to come and help you. so you give them the determination and the appreciation to learn hard’ (student, interview 22).

The teachers from the school with a continuous flow of volunteers also acknowledge that ‘because of their presence, children would come to school. They are encouraged to learn and to come to school’ (focus group discussion 2). Unlike them, the teachers from the other school say they are encouraged themselves by the international volunteers as well. They mention that the volunteers ‘encourage us. [...] Their appearance encourages teachers and students in the school to work hard, and to be present’ (focus group discussion 3). The head teacher of school B agrees, for him ‘volunteers coming is inspirational’ (head teacher, interview 020).
Besides being encouraged to come to school and to learn hard, students are also encouraged by international volunteers to behave well. Almost all students mention that the volunteers advise them about moral standards. In both focus group discussions, students said that international volunteers ‘tell us what not to do’ (focus group discussion 1) and ‘they teach us more about life. They teach us what is right and what is wrong’ (focus group discussion 4). One student said: ‘sometimes they want to protect us from negative things. Like stealing. They tell us that we shouldn’t insult, shouldn’t fight’ (student, interview 21). However, the international volunteers are not the only ones teaching students moral education. The favourite subject of some students was Religious and Moral Education, and also ‘whenever you are on the wrong path, [the regular teachers] always explain us that we should be careful whatever we do’ (student, interview 18).

In terms of appreciation about the way international volunteers dress, there is less consensus among the respondents. Students from school A found that ‘they dress nicely’ and ‘they always dress as an example to us’ (focus group discussion 1). When I asked what students want to learn from international volunteers, one replied that she wants to learn ‘how to dress well’ (student, interview 21). The head teacher from this school with a continuous flow of IVs agrees with the students and remarked that ‘the volunteers just dress like our women here’ (head teacher, interview 9). However, the teachers from this school expressed differently and claim that ‘some of them when they come to class, they wear a lot of jewels and things like that’ and ‘some of them don’t dress good, they don’t dress neatly’ (focus group discussion 2). In the other school, both teachers and students agree that ‘sometimes their dressing is not good’ (focus group discussion 4) and that ‘most of [the volunteers] dress in such a way that it is not a good example to a Ghanaian child’ (focus group discussion 3). A student explained this as follows:

‘In the Muslim culture, as a woman, you are not supposed to expose any part of your body. We have the majority of the students here that are Muslims, so when [the volunteers] dress that way when they come, maybe because of the weather, [the students] are not always happy and some of them will be complaining because their religion does not accept that’ (student, interview 17).

In the school that used to work with international volunteers in the past, two teachers remarked that volunteers tried ‘to wear the type of clothing we wear here’ (teacher, interview 12). Two local employees of volunteer sending organisations expressed the importance of volunteers to adjust to the local cultural norms regarding clothing, because the way volunteers dress serves as an example to the students. They consider smoking a habit that is a bad example to students as well.
All teachers from the school with a continuous flow of volunteers remembered ‘one volunteer who was smoking too much. It is a bad example for the children. A bad experience. She was even smoking in front of the children, they could see it. That is not good!’ (focus group discussion 2).

International volunteers are thus appreciated for certain traits like being disciplined and punctual, making them role models to most of the respondents. However, not all of their qualities are valued equally by all respondents, and some traits like dressing and smoking are considered as negative examples for students.

**Analysis: appreciation**

Respondents are almost unanimous about the feelings of happiness and excitement that are evoked by students because of the presence of international volunteers. As described in the previous sub chapter, the visible otherness and attractiveness of the volunteers’ appearance, as well as their more kind and friendly interactions with students might be reasons for these emotions. Also, the fact that many volunteers come with gifts or material resources (further described in the next sub chapter) for the students and the schools might contribute to the happiness and enthusiasm that is felt by the students.

As the students see their regular teachers daily, the presence of international volunteers can break up the daily routine. The students are happy when they receive extra attention in classes where the amount of pupils is high. For example, the students in the first focus group discussion mentioned that they were happy because I spent time with them. My discussion with them was a break from their normal routine, my appearance was distinguishably new and different from theirs and the remark was made after a small break in which I handed out snacks and drinks to the participants. Therefore, I possessed many of the factors that create happiness and excitement among students when IVs visit their schools.

Respondents accredit different role model qualities to international volunteers. Almost all volunteers are said to possess some of these exemplary characteristics, such as the drive to work hard and punctuality. Respondents consider these traits as an example to which they should compare themselves. However, IVs work under different conditions than their African counterparts. Mostly, international volunteers have most of their time available and they have no other responsibilities, whereas Ghanaian teachers often have to take care of their family and children or work part-time jobs besides teaching as well. IVs are only there for a (relatively) short period of time, and they can dedicate themselves completely to the schools they are in. International volunteers and regular teachers thus work in under completely different conditions.

IVs are said to inspire and encourage mostly students and some teachers to attend school and to work hard. As one student explained clearly, because volunteers devote their time to help
out students in a less fortunate place, the students feel responsible to show hard work in return. International volunteers thus stimulate students to study hard, and to behave according to certain moral standards. They are able to inspire and encourage all students from the host schools, because IVs break up the daily routine, they behave differently from the regular teachers and because they possess qualities such as commitment, hard work and punctuality.

With regards to clothing, awareness of cultural norms and volunteers’ efforts to adjust to local standards results in a positive appreciation, whereas ignorance or neglect of what is locally accepted creates an opposite image of international volunteers. It is interesting to observe that some respondents (mainly students) from school A are very positive and enthusiastic about the way volunteers dress, whilst many teachers are negative and disapproving about some of the volunteers’ clothing. Since this school has a continuous flow of international volunteers, the respondents will have met several different IVs from different age groups and different backgrounds who deal differently with cultural sensitivities such as clothing.

In the other school, some international volunteers are said to not dress according to the local standards. Perhaps the IVs from their sister school are not well informed about the standards of dressing in Ghana’s Northern Region where there is a large Muslim population. However, there may also be the issue that most of the students that visit from the UK are young teenage girls who care a lot about the way they dress. In their own school they are obliged to wear uniforms, so it is likely that they seize the opportunity to dress in their own style while they are spending time in Tamale.

5.3 Experiences: redistribution, recognition and representation?

Experiences are based on practice. Memories and current happenings concerning international volunteers are the basis for experiences of the respondents. Sometimes their memories are individual memories, other times many respondents from one school share a collective memory about IVs in their school. Simultaneously, memories can be about (actions of) international volunteers in general, or they can be based on a specific encounter or incidence with one of the volunteers. The same goes for experiences of current happenings. In this sub-chapter, both remarkable and iterative experiences and memories will be discussed. The main issues that came forward are the material and financial contributions of volunteers, cultural exchange and understanding created through IVS, and involvement in decision-making regarding what the volunteers should do and bring with them. These findings will be presented in this section, and at the end of this sub-chapter they will be analysed along the lines of Nancy Fraser’s framework for social justice.
Gifts, material contributions and teaching-learning materials

According to all respondents, most international volunteers do not come empty handed when they visit their schools. In both schools, teachers mention that the volunteers ‘give the students writing materials, pens, books, those kind of things’ (teacher, interview 13), or ‘gifts like toffees, pencils and crayons’ (teacher, interview 15). Students of both schools also mention that ‘they come with books, and some come with balloons, footballs and biscuits’ (student, interview 23) and ‘sometimes they also bring football jerseys, basketballs and all those things’ (student, interview 19). One student from school B explained:

‘When they are coming, they maybe bring some erasers, pencils, pens, and sometimes they bring books for the students and they bring some toys for the KG class. Yes, they always bring those things. Just to strengthen the relationship between [our schools]’ (student, interview 17).

Most volunteers bring such gifts upon arrival, but ‘some of them give things we need for the school […] when they are leaving. Like textbooks. And they just gave a cupboard, and also chairs’ (focus group discussion 2). Students recalled that on her departure, one of the volunteers ‘gave us balloons’ (focus group discussion 1). One student mentioned about a group of international volunteers from the UK that ‘when they were going, they bought cloth materials and designed a logo and wrote [the name of our school] on it to give it to the seamstress’ (student, interview 18).

Besides gifts, some volunteers also bring money with them to donate to the school. In school B, a delegation of volunteers from their sister school in the UK decided to use this money to ‘sponsor a child to undergo surgery’ (focus group discussion 3 & 4). In the other school, ‘some [of the volunteers] pay for the children’s school fees’ (focus group discussion 2). Respondents from both schools remarked that some of the international volunteers ‘came and identified that most of the children need a new uniform’ (focus group discussion 3), so ‘they provide us uniforms’ (focus group discussion 1). Teachers from school A argued that instead of bringing items such as books and toys, IVs ‘who come should bring money and come to us to see what they should buy with it, instead of buying it themselves without
asking us’ (focus group discussion 2). In school B, the volunteers ‘help to appeal for funds to develop the school’ (focus group discussion 3). A teacher also explained:

‘It is interesting to know that the students in [our sister school], every time they are coming, they contribute to a particular fund. And from that fund they are going to help this school. So when they come, they come along with some money to help the school. When they are coming, they write letters to their friends and family to contribute’ (teacher, interview 13).

Often, the money raised by international volunteers is spent to improve the school’s infrastructure. According to the students from school B, a good school has all the ‘necessary facilities [such as] the ICT lab, the library, the science laboratory and even enough classrooms’ (focus group discussion 4). According to all teachers from this school, their ‘partners from [the UK] sponsor us, they donate funds [...] to extend our education blocks’ (focus group discussion 3). All teachers highly appreciate this contribution, as voiced by one teacher:

‘They definitely helped the school a lot in terms of infrastructure. [...] It is through their contribution we have build the assembly hall, the administration block, and the science lab is being build. The basketball court and all that’ (teacher, interview 13).

According to the head teachers, other contributions to infrastructure have been made as well by the international volunteers from their partner school:

`As you can see, with infrastructure, there has been much improved in this school. They have been able to set up the library, they provided some of the books. And the computer-room, they set it up. You see the classrooms, another classroom block, that as well, and you see the whiteboards, all over the place. So materially they are contributing a lot to the development of the school’ (head teacher, interview 20).

A few students and teachers from school A remarked that ‘this school is built with the help of the volunteers and [the European couple who founded this school] and all the contributors from [Europe]. It is much, thanks to them, but [...] the school still lacks a lot of infrastructures. [Currently] we don’t have JHS class 2 and 3, and also we want to have a library’ (teacher, interview 25). Also, a few students and teachers said: ‘what we need in the primary, is that we have class A and class B.'
So we need more classrooms' (student, interview 22). During my visits to school A, I could observe that, an extension to the existing building was constructed to create two classrooms for JHS 2 and 3.

![Construction of extra classrooms in school A](image)

Figure 11– Construction of extra classrooms in school A

In both schools, IVs assisted in the construction of a computer room and provided computers to use. All teachers and most students of school A, however, mentioned that ‘our computer lab [...] should be improved’ (teacher, interview 25), ‘because what we have now is not sufficient’ (focus group discussion 2). Two students explained that ‘we need more [computers]’ (student, interview 22), ‘maybe 10, because we have many students’ (student, interview 21). Right now, ‘they cannot work individually in the computer classroom’ (teacher, interview 25).

Whereas the teachers of school A thus see room for improvement in terms of infrastructure and provision of resources, its head teacher claimed that ‘the materials we have here, through the volunteers, are more than any public school or school funded by the Ghanaian government. We have everything here. All the materials needed here are supplied for by the volunteers’ (head teacher, interview 9). A teacher from the other school also declared that ‘the resources [in this school are] okay, not hundred percent, but okay compared to other schools’ (teacher, interview 18).

There are different categories of material contributions made by international volunteers. Financial contributions are generally used to improve school infrastructure. Books, stationary and the provision of uniforms are examples of materials that belong to the category of educational materials and school resources. And finally, toffees, biscuits, balloons and similar items are considered as gifts. International volunteers or their sending organisations often select which resources they will bring upon their visit. In school A, teachers rather want to be consulted about
what should be brought, whereas respondents from school B feel content about how thing are going in terms of a material contribution. For example, their infrastructure is improved a lot by donations from a fund that was created by their sister school.

**Immaterial contributions and memorable experiences**

Besides providing material resources for schools, international volunteers also tend to contribute in a non material way. Regarding the computer laboratories for example, most students from school A mentioned that the volunteers ‘also teach us the use of the computer. They teach us how to type’ (student, interview 23). The student describes that the Ghanaian teachers also do this, ‘but the Ghanaian ones, when we are using the computer, the time we have to type is small. We need to get more time’ (student, interview 23). One teacher from this school with a continuous flow of IVs explained that ‘if a person is good at computers, the person will be taking the children to the computer lab, to help them, teach them with the computer’ (teacher, interview 25). The teachers from school B remarked that international volunteers in their school ‘also provide computer training for the kids’ (focus group discussion 3).

In the school with a continuous flow of volunteers, students that have difficulties with learning are given ‘remedial teaching’ (director of organization, interview 6) by the volunteers. ‘They take some of the children out to revise with them the things of inside [the classroom]. So they teach them one task so that they also understand what the teacher was saying, [...] to make sure they will not fall behind’ (teacher, interview 24). One teacher from this school, however believes that ‘whenever they are taken separately, what you are going to teach in the classroom, they cannot get it, they will miss it. So when they come back, you have to repeat it again, and this always brings them backwards, it is not moving them forward’ (teacher, interview 25). In the class of a colleague teacher, IVs give students extra attention in a different way:

‘Whenever I am teaching the class, [the volunteers] observe, and after that I give [the students] exercises. [The volunteers] go round to help those who are a little bit behind or don’t understand the work. So that they sit by them and try to help them to do the right thing’ (teacher, interview 26).

Most teachers from school B noted that the IVs from their sister school in the UK, have shared different teaching methods with them:

‘Here we are often more oriented on the teacher. So when they leave we try to adapt their style of teaching, and it is working to the best of the children. We learn the child certain things. We go to the class and leave the child to do their own research, and then [the students] come back to class to present’ (teacher, interview 13).
One teacher of this school wished that the volunteers in her class would ‘not only observe, but also teach and we observe them. So that we also learn from them, that we can use their methods and to compare the different styles’ (teacher, interview 14).

In the other school, one teacher remarked that volunteers suggest different teaching methods, but implementing those is problematic because ‘there is a need of materials. [...] The volunteers that came mostly don’t allow them to be writing at this stage, so I think, in Africa here, we don’t have enough resources. To me, it is books we need, practical books so they can try to write and learn how to go round. Those books, I would need them for the kids’ (teacher, interview 24). She adds that ‘the way we teach is different from the way they teach. At the end of the day, you realize that the children have not learned very much from them, their learning is just playing. [...] With those materials they support us, but theoretically not much’ (teacher, interview 24).

International volunteers can also contribute immaterially to a school by organizing an activity such as a sports tournament or excursion. All teachers and students of school A mentioned the name of a specific international volunteer who organized an excursion just before her departure:

‘She didn’t work with me in my class, but she did something that we never forget. [...] When she was about to leave, she organized the upper class children and took them to the swimming pool, and then she bought food and drink for them, it was so nice!’ (teacher, interview 26).

Another teacher described that ‘in fact as of today, most of the children tell me a lot of tales about this. It will be in their memories forever’ (teacher, interview 25).

It is interesting to see that in school A, with a continuous flow of volunteers, all respondents seem to remember one particular volunteer. Perhaps she was a volunteer who left recently, ensuring that the respondents still have fresh memories about her. However, during the several days that I spend in school A for my research, multiple volunteers have left as well and none of them were mentioned in any of the focus group discussions or interviews. It is more likely that this particular volunteer did something extraordinary and special in comparison to all the other volunteers. As most of the respondents have experienced many different volunteers already, the excursion to the swimming pool that this volunteer organized made her stand out from the crowd.
Besides provision of material resources, respondents remarked that international volunteers thus try to contribute immaterially as well to the schools they work in. However, international volunteers are mainly engaged in additional teaching activities. Whereas their Ghanaian counterparts generally stand in front of the class, international volunteers in school A are said to do additional tasks only, such as remedial teaching, giving computer lessons or organizing sports tournaments and excursions. The international volunteers in school B also take up additional teaching activities only, such as providing computer training.

Some teachers from school A mentioned that they are not receptive for theoretical suggestions made by the volunteers. In school B, however, teachers are open to learn about the different teaching methods that are practiced at their sister school.

**Language differences, cultural exchange and understanding**

International volunteers often come from a different cultural background than the people from the host community. Within the practice of IVS, there is thus a cultural exchange and respondents observe cultural similarities and differences between themselves and the IVs. A main cultural difference is related to language differences, which sometimes creates barriers to understand each other properly. In all three schools (the school that used to work with IVs in the past included), several teachers remarked that *some of the children are not able to understand the way [the volunteers] talk. What I mean by that is, the way we speak our English here is different from the way they speak. They speak faster than us* (teacher, interview 12). The volunteers from school B’s sister school have English as their mother tongue, but according to all teachers from this school:

*’The accent is very sharp. Sometimes we don’t pick up the words, the children will be laughing, but when they finish the thing you know they will not have picked up a single word. So the accent is very, very bad’* (teacher, interview 13).

However, *’the teachers don’t have problems, we know what they want to say, we understand their accent’* (teacher, interview 14). All students also mentioned *’their accent is always different and some of us find it very difficult to understand’* (student, interview 17). One student remarked that it are especially *’the students in the lower primary that often don’t understand. So our teachers will take the time to explain them what [the volunteers] have said’* (student, interview 18).

In school A there is a different challenge concerning language. A few teachers mention that *’most of [the students] don’t speak English very well’* (head teacher, interview 9), and that *’we find ourselves in an environment where the kids are not good at language, and having to use the English for them is difficult’* (focus group discussion 2). Hence, teachers suggested that *’we have to
teach in English only to a higher class, those who understand the language, but not the lower classes, those should be taught in the local language’ (focus group discussion 2). One teacher explained that for this reason:

‘We normally don’t allow [the volunteers] to do the teaching, because then it would be difficult for the children in the class. They would not understand them. But if a Ghanaian teacher is doing the teaching, sometimes it has to be in another language than English, so the Ghanaian teachers are able to explain it to the students’ (teacher, interview 24).

One student explained his preference for Ghanaian teachers over international volunteer teachers, because of ‘the way they talk, their English is easy to understand’ (student, interview 22). In school B however, a teacher who does not speak the local language remarked that in his school ‘fortunately, the children understand the language of instruction, so the language problem is not there, I am not required to speak the local language for people to understand’ (teacher, interview 15).

Whilst talking to teachers and students during my interviews and focus group discussions, I noticed that most respondents had a very high level of English. For the teachers this did not surprise me too much, but especially the level of English of students in school B exceeded my expectations. The students in school A sometimes had more difficulties to understand what I asked them, but it has to be noted that the age of the respondents in school A was considerably lower than the age of the students I spoke to in school B.

Interaction with the volunteers is said to ‘create the children to be aware of what is happening in other countries and other parts of the world’ (head teacher, interview 20). Teachers consider this important for students to learn, because:

‘the world is so global now, so we need to learn and know the cultures, so that you can see what is there. It is part of your life. If you don’t know what is happening in other parts of the world, you miss out’ (teacher, interview 13).

Nearly all students from both schools mention that through the interaction with volunteers, they learn about ‘the culture of their place, like the national anthem, [...] and they teach us songs, they tell us bits about themselves, maybe about their family. And how things are in [their own school] and how they think about Ghana’ (student, interview 17). Another thing that most students said they have learned from international volunteers is ‘about the difference in weather here and there’ (student, interview 19). One student said that they ‘are not just learning things from Ghana, particularly the Northern Region, but we are also learning things from them. As they come, we are also learning the culture of England’ (student, interview 17). Meanwhile, respondents said that
international volunteers ‘also come to learn from us’ (student, interview 18). Almost all students and a few teachers mentioned that ‘for them it is really a new experience’ (teacher, interview 13) whereby ‘we teach [the volunteers] how to dance’ (student, interview 23), and some want to learn ‘how to speak the Dagbani and how to cook’ (student, interview 22).

Nearly all respondents mention that there is an exchange of cultures and that learning goes both ways. Some students explained that ‘we ask them questions about how they live their life there, and they also ask us questions’ (student, interview 18) so that ‘they can learn from us and we can also learn from them’ (student, interview 17). A teacher actually calls this ‘an exchange’ (teacher, interview 14) and the head teacher of one of the schools describes the relationship they have with their sister school as ‘a bilateral one’ (head teacher, interview 20).

A few teachers and students in both schools remarked that if they had the chance, they would also ‘like to go there […] to get a chance to learn how they do their things and try to cope’ (student, interview 18). A student explained why he thinks it would be helpful to also have the opportunity to visit the home of the volunteers:

‘I think they learn more, because they come here. They learn more than us, and they see for themselves, we don’t see, we only ask them and they tell us. And them, they see. Because for us we don’t have the chance to go there, we don’t see there. We only see it on television, but we don’t see it physically. So definitely they learn more than us’ (student, interview 19).

A teacher said: ‘I don’t know what the problem is, I don’t know whether the invitations don’t come, or there are not enough funds to go there’ (teacher, interview 13). According to the head teacher of school B, such an exchange is ‘what we are working on now, it is something that we want, but it will happen in de future’ (head teacher, interview 20).

A few respondents stress the importance to learn about each other’s cultures. One student expressed:

‘Because when you learn about other people’s culture, it helps you to know, the negative thoughts you have about those people, when you learn about their culture, the bad perception you had about their culture, it will be erased off your mind. It helps to understand them better’ (student, interview 19)

By learning things from the Ghanaian culture, IVs will ‘realize that they should not take things for granted, [because] amidst the poverty they find students who are happy and with the desire to be in school’ (head teacher, interview 20). Two students also explain that learning from other people’s cultures can ‘improve my own culture’ (student, interview 19) because by ‘adding [parts of their culture] to our own culture we get an excellent one!’ (student, interview 17).
Through the interactions within the practice of IVS, people from the educational host community and international volunteers get to exchange culture and learn from each other. However, both teachers and students would enjoy the opportunity to have an actual exchange whereby they can visit other places as well. Currently international volunteers are said to learn more from the host community than vice versa, because of their physical presence in the schools in Tamale.

People from the educational host community are confident about the value of their own culture, and they know international volunteers are interested to learn about it. Also in terms of language, they express a positive acknowledgement of their own skills. The problem that not all children understand the international volunteers properly is blamed on the volunteers’ pronunciation in school B, were volunteers are said to have a heavy accent. In school A, the level of English of some volunteers is said to be insufficient, and lack of knowledge of local languages disables IVs to teach the youngest children whose own English skills are not fully developed yet.

**Decision making, cooperation and involvement**

Usually upon arrival, decisions are being made about the tasks of the international volunteers. In school B with a sister school in the UK, the head teacher states that ‘we decide that together with them, we make a plan when they come’ (head teacher, interview 20). In school A with a continuous flow of volunteers, it is less clear who makes the decision. During an interview with the head teacher, the caretaker of the school just walked in and explained that ‘in the school, [the head teacher] is in charge and he will tell them what to do. [He] is responsible for giving them their tasks here’ (caretaker, interview 9). Meanwhile, two teachers from school A contradict this and say:

> Whenever they come, [the volunteers] normally decide, because we cannot decide for them what to do. Because the person cannot always do what you want them to do. So mostly when they come to the class they ask, do you have anything that I can help you with? And then you will tell them, I have this, and that, and that. And then the person will say ok, this is what I can do for you, I help you with that’ (teacher, interview 25)

and

> We don’t decide. When a volunteer comes, he or she decides what they want to do as a volunteer and whatever he or she could be doing, so we cannot choose what they do. But when they come to class, they will not just come and take over the whole class. They will ask you, maybe I can do this to help you. So then together we decide what they can help with’ (teacher, interview 24).
The head teacher himself endorsed this view and mentioned that ‘the ideas that the volunteer has, she brings it to the Ghanaian teacher and together they decide then what they should do, how they should handle’ (head teacher, interview 9). A few teachers see this as ‘working together as a team’ (teacher, interview 26) and ‘cooperating as partners’ (head teacher, interview 9), but most teachers from this school feel that the volunteers should allow the teachers to do their work. Because they are with the children always, and they know how things are done around here’ (focus group discussion 2). Also, almost all the teachers from school A sometimes feel that they are neglected by the international volunteers:

’Whenever they want to do anything for the school, they should involve all the teachers. For sometimes they can come and do something, for example if I want to use some TLMs for the kids, I realize that some of these are not there, while they supply a lot of materials. They should involve us!’ (focus group discussion 2).

The teachers want to be involved in such decision making:

’[The volunteers who] come should bring money and come to us to see what they should buy with it instead of buying it themselves without asking us. Sometimes when they come, they make us feel like they don’t trust us. There is no trust, I feel sad that they decide things for themselves. There should be trust, they should involve us the teachers’ (focus group discussion 2).

Almost all teachers from school A also feel that the IVs focus exclusively on the children. For example, when they are leaving, some volunteers ‘do a party to say goodbye to the children. They only do it for the children, and don’t involve the teachers in it!’ (focus group discussion 2). Besides feeling neglected, some teachers also feel misunderstood by some international volunteers:

’Some of us are subject teachers, so they only enter the class when that subject is on. We don’t always have to come into the class, we are not classroom teachers. They thought that we were lazy and not doing our work, and they complained to [the European director of the foundation]. But they should have come to us for an explanation to ask. They just didn’t understand and made us look bad!’ (focus group discussion 2).

In the other school, students mention that ‘we cooperate with [the volunteers], so they know what we need. By interacting with them they hear our views’ (focus group discussion 4). Almost all teachers of this school call the relationship they have with the volunteers ‘cordial’ (teacher, interview 14) and based on being ‘their equals’ (teacher, interview 13). Two respondents
mentioned that the volunteers *are just like our normal teachers* (student, interview 18), *just they are white and we are black* (head teacher, interview 20).

What tasks volunteers will do and what materials they will bring is thus decided differently in both schools. In school B there is decision-making on equal terms. Both the international volunteers and the local (head)teachers have a say in what should happen. Teachers are recognized and can participate as equals.

This is much different in school A. Although teachers can decide on classroom level what international volunteers can (not) do, on school level they have almost no say. They generally feel neglected, excluded, not trusted and misunderstood by international volunteers. The teachers are put in a marginalized position while international volunteers themselves (and the foundation that sends them) have the most say in the course of events.

**Analysis: experience**

This analysis will largely be done with the help of the framework for social justice, developed by Nancy Fraser. She distinguishes a socioeconomic, cultural and political dimension of social justice, and I will show here how my findings relate to these different dimensions.

First it has to be remarked that both core schools of this research work in a very specific way with international volunteers. They do not necessarily represent the standard schools in which IVS usually takes place. In school B, there is a cooperative school-to-school partnership, and school A is founded and financially supported by a European couple whose foundation also sends gap year students and other IVs to their school in Tamale. These specific relationships created certain distinct circumstances on which the findings and this analysis are based.

In both schools, a large proportion of the contribution from IVs comes in terms of material resources. As is shown in the first sub-chapter, many respondents believe that IVs come from rich and well resources places to their own schools where there is a lack of many educational resources. It is through the help of the IVs that some of these material educational resources are distributed to the respondents’ schools. Respondents have a sense of redistribution, although under conditions of inequality. Especially in school A, it are the volunteers and their sending organisation who decide what is brought to the school. In school B, decisions are made on more equal terms.

It can however be questioned whether the material contribution of international volunteers can be considered redistribution as being described by Nancy Fraser in her framework of social justice. The volunteers’ gifts and donations help to a more equal allocation in terms of basic school infrastructure and educational materials, but the effect and scale on which this happens is too small to actually speak of a contribution to social justice as socio-economic
differences remain large. Also in terms of the allocation of human resources, the contribution of IVs does not make a large difference in terms of social justice. Because most of the IVs have no professional teaching backgrounds, their tasks in the host schools consist generally of additional teaching tasks. With this, the workload of the local teachers can be relieved some, but there is no reallocation of human resources.

The remarks from respondents clearly show that international volunteerism is a process of cultural interaction. Both people from the host community and the volunteers are said to have the chance to learn about each others’ culture and customs through the practice, leading to greater cultural appreciation and understanding. As has been described earlier, respondents’ perceptions of international volunteers relate to the post-colonial discourse where volunteers are accredited to have a certain expertise and knowledge because of their skin tone and background. However, the above findings contradict that respondents would only think in post-colonial terms of Western superiority. The practical examples show that respondents are more confident about the value of their own culture and they also express a positive acknowledgement of their own language skills. They are proud of their own culture and acknowledge that IVs are interested to learn about it.

Although interest and respect for the local culture is shown by IVs, and the local culture is not subordinated or denied by them, there seems to be no contribution to cultural social justice in education because of IVS. Respondents experience a lack of reciprocity, as volunteers are said to learn more than the respondents. Also, the presence of IVs does not adjust the local curriculum. The Ghanaian school system remains based upon the British (Western) model with English as the language of instruction. Recognition of the own culture and local languages is only marginally represented in the curriculum. International volunteers thus do not change the curriculum’s inherent appreciation and preference for the Western system.

According to Fraser, social justice is there when people can ‘participate as peers in social life’ (Fraser 2005: 73). As has just been shown, when it comes to the practice of IVS, the hosts and volunteers are not always able to participate as peers regarding the economic and cultural dimension of social justice. The same goes for political social justice. First of all, respondents claim that they have no chance to also visit the volunteers’ countries of origin. There is no reciprocity in this North to South movement, as only European volunteers have the privilege to visit schools in Tamale. Practicalities such as a lack of funds obstructs the teachers and students from the Ghanaian schools to do the same.

Secondly, teachers in both schools experience decision making about what the volunteers will do and bring with them in different ways. School B has a long-standing relationship with
their sister school from the UK which allows the (head) teachers to be involved in planning and decision making concerning IVs. In school A, however, decisions at school level are generally made by the volunteer sending organisation or the volunteers themselves. Teachers from this school have the feeling that often they are not taken seriously and that their view is not being heard well by the sending organisation. They feel ignored and disempowered when it comes to decision making about what material contributions IVs should make, and therefore they feel unable to participate on equal terms to make claims for the distribution of educational resources. At the classroom level, however, teachers do have the agency to decide what IVs should do. They accredit themselves a certain expertise regarding the teaching profession, and as they feel most IVs lack this professional experience, teachers decide in their own classes what IVs are allowed to do.

5.4 Correspondence with challenges & needs

In order to conclude if the assistance of international volunteers corresponds with the needs of the educational host community, their needs and challenges had to be determined. Teachers were asked in both the individual interviews and focus group discussions about their needs and challenges. General challenges that teachers encountered are a low salary and a lack of parental support for education. In terms of needs, most issues that came forward were the needs for certain material resources or improvements in school infrastructure.

Besides this needs assessment, an inquiry about the ideal practice of IVS was done as well. Issues that came forwards were the length of the volunteers’ stay, as well as the wish to be (more) involved in decision-making (see previous chapter as well). Finally, the wish to make the practice more reciprocal came forward as well.

Challenges & needs

Being a teacher in Tamale can be quite challenging. One aspect that all teachers encounter as challenging in their jobs is the low salary. One of the teachers said: ‘you teach to earn an income. And teachers are the least paid in the country’(teacher, interview 13). Another one agrees and claims that ‘our salaries are very poor, very very poor, as compared to other sectors. For instance the health sector, and other places. Teachers receive lesser payment than the other sectors. So it is hard to sustain a living’ (teacher, interview 24).

A lack of parental support or understanding of the importance of education is another challenge that all teachers face: ‘I think the challenge is most of the time the parents don’t know why the children have to go to school, and don’t help them.[...] The parents they don’t see the importance.[...] They don’t encourage the kids to come to school’ (teacher, interview 26). A few
teachers blame the lack of parental support on the fact that many parents have never received education: ‘We live in a community where most parents have not gone into education, they cannot read and write, so because of that, some of them didn’t want to send their children to school. So now there is a policy that every child should go to school, so more or less I could say that parents are forced to send their children to school’ (teacher, interview 15).

Another teacher also said that: ‘Most of their parents are illiterate, they are not educated. So talk about it, they don’t get the support from the house’ (teacher, interview 14).

The above figure shows the results of a needs assessment with teachers in both schools. Interestingly, the majority of what has been mentioned entails material and financial resources or improvements to infrastructure. In both schools there is a need for a school bus and fans in the
classrooms. Sponsorships for brilliant but needy children is mentioned in both schools too, as well as more classrooms. In both schools, teachers also desire motivations for their work, such as fees for further education. In school A, teachers wish to be involved in decision making. Volunteers should ask them for their needs. For example, the teachers explained that one of their biggest needs at this moment is transportation to come to school. The school lies far from the city centre and taking a taxi to the place every day becomes very expensive. With their low salary it would help teachers a lot if they could be assisted with receiving a motorbike or similar means of transportation.

**Ideal situation**
As described before, teachers wish to participate in decision making regarding what international volunteers should do and bring with them. In school A, volunteers currently *‘don’t investigate the teacher’s problems, they don’t ask us what we need’* (focus group discussion 2), so ideally, a needs assessment should be done by the sending organization prior to the volunteers’ arrival. Otherwise, *‘those who come should bring money and come to use to see what they should buy with it instead of buying it themselves without asking us’* (focus group discussion 2). If such a needs assessment will be done, the practice of IVS might correspond better with the needs of the educational host community.

All respondents unanimously agree that international volunteers should come more often or that those who come should stay longer than what is happening now. Respondents have various reasons for this. A student from school B said: *‘when they come, they should try and stay a little bit longer. Now they come two weeks, three weeks and they are gone. If they stay longer, we learn more from them, and they also learn more’* (student, interview 19). One of his peers also said *‘if they were coming more often I would have learned a lot by the time I leave this school, so if I even have the chance for them just to come today I would invite them because I learn a lot from them’* (student, interview 17). The students would also enjoy to meet international volunteers from different countries as well, in order to learn more from different places in the world. In school A, a student wants volunteers to stay *‘long, because if they be here long, they can always let us laugh, if they are here we always laugh’* (student, interview 22).

A few teachers in both schools desire a larger number of volunteers that come, because *‘then our number of hours can be reduced’* (teacher, interview 15). In school A, all teachers desire a longer duration of the stay of international volunteers. On teacher explained:

*I would wish them to stay longer. For as long as maybe 2 months, 3 months, and so on. But sometimes some people come here maybe 3 days time, and then the person will leave again, and even if that person wanted to help, the children wouldn’t have the help from that*
person, because the time or the days are not much for the person to help the children. More time is better. For the kids to get used to them, and then also the teachers too. Because if you have to work with somebody, when you don’t have much time to discuss the personal things, then the work will not go really well. But when you have a lot of time, when you have a lot to do, you should all do it together’ (teacher, interview 25).

His colleague does not only prefer a longer duration of the stay of volunteers, she also mentioned:

‘I think it is best if they stay the whole term. Because when they come in the middle of the term, they miss a lot. They didn’t see the beginning. And some even leave before the end. So they don’t see anything’ (teacher, interview 24).

Finally, both teachers and students would enjoy the opportunity to have a full exchange instead of only international volunteers coming to their place. They would like the practice of IVS to become more reciprocal, so that they have the chance to see the other places as well, to learn from the experience and to see things with their own eyes. In order to achieve such an exchange, a teacher from school A suggested:

‘What would be good for us is also to share. In sense of a partnership school [...] to have an exchange program. Our children will go there to see and feel how the place is, share with the children there their culture and traditions, and whenever they come back, those children will also come here, so there is an exchange of activities’ (teacher, interview 24).

Analysis: correspondence with needs?

International volunteers contribute to some of the needs and challenges that teachers in Tamale face. Most of the teachers’ needs relate to material resources or financial contributions for improvements in school infrastructure. As can be read in the previous sub-chapter, the largest contributions made by international volunteers are in terms of these material resources or financial contributions. However, what kinds of materials are supplied, or what money is spent on does not always correspond with the most pressing needs of the teachers from the host schools. The teachers from school A feel generally neglected as they are not being involved in decision-making hereon. In order to create (more) correspondence between the assistance of international volunteers and the host community’s needs, an inquiry on what the teachers think they need should be made by the sending organisation.

As for the challenge of low salaries, this is largely a government responsibility. School B is a public school, so all of its teachers are on government payroll. Although school A is a private school, recently the government agreed to pay some of the teachers’ salary. However, most of the
teachers are still paid by the foundation. For these teachers, IVs could make a difference if they inform the foundation that teachers are in need of higher salaries. Yet, donors to the foundation might rather see their money spent on something more concrete. In that case, teachers would be helped a lot if they would be provided with means of transport so that they can get to school easier. Once again, these examples show how important it is to assess the needs of the educational host community together with them, in order to make the assistance correspond well.

There are two main aspects which the host community likes to see improved on the practice of IVS. The first is the duration of the stay or the frequency with which volunteers come. For various reasons, all respondents would like to see more volunteers or have them stay for a longer period of time. A short stay is said not to be helpful at all, and preferably, volunteers should come a whole term so that they can experience the whole process from beginning to end. When volunteers would stay longer, students believe they can learn more from them, and teachers feel that a higher number of IVs will diminish their workload.

Both students and teachers would also like to have the opportunity to make the relation more reciprocal. Currently, the cultural exchange that the host community is experiencing is only passive, but instead they would also like to have the chance to visit another place to experience what life is like over there. The suggestion from one teacher from school A to create a partnership with a school in Europe sounds like an initiative through which such an exchange could work. Besides, it would create mutual (cultural) learning on a much broader scale when European children also get in touch with Ghanaian people.
6. Conclusions & recommendations

In the first part of this chapter, an overview of my main findings and conclusions will be given. Thereafter, I will make some recommendations for policy and practice, and this chapter will end with recommendations for further research.

6.1 Main findings and conclusions

Most of this research was focused on two quite specific schools that each work in a special way with volunteers. School A is founded and financially funded by the foundation of a European couple, and through this foundation, international volunteers (some with a professional background, most without) are continuously sent to the Ghanaian school. The duration of their stay varies from a few days to a few months, but generally not a day goes by without any IV present in the school. In school B, there is a school-to-school partnership with a sister school in the UK. To strengthen the relationship, a delegation of teachers and students from this sister school visits the school in Ghana twice a year for a couple of weeks.

When respondents were asked how they perceive the practice of IVS, this led to various quite stereotypical responses about the role that IVs can play in terms of development. Respondents believe that their country, education system and school is lagging behind and should be assisted by people from better off places to become developed as well. Especially in terms of nationwide development and the provision of material resources within the school, the respondents feel dependent on what European people can offer them. International volunteers are believed to possess certain knowledge and capabilities, just because of their skin tone and background. This can be analysed as being part of the post-colonial discourse. Similarly, perceptions on child raising practices were also stereotypically framed, opposing European and African children and how each category should be raised and disciplined accordingly.

Even though the post-colonial discourse causes respondents to ascribe Europeans specific capacities just because of their background, the reality is more complex. In the daily practice, classroom teachers do not give IVs much responsibility as they are generally considered appropriate for taking up additional teaching tasks such as remedial teaching or providing ICT lessons. Many teachers from school A believe that IVs are not capable of controlling classrooms, that they do not know the local curriculum and that students do not always understand them well. Within this specific context, teachers feel they have more professional skills than the volunteers who are (usually) not educated as teachers. Therefore the teachers from this school are not open to theoretical suggestions from IVs. In school B, however, teachers are more recipient towards learning about different teaching methods from international volunteers. Some of the IVs that
visit their school are actual teachers in the UK with a professional background. In practice, the perceived expert role of IVs that is an expression of post-colonial thought is thus not taken for granted.

Meanwhile, when asked about their experiences with IVs, respondents gave other practical examples which revealed a much more nuanced perception of cultural and linguistic differences between Europe and Ghana. Most responses actually reveal an appreciation for their own culture as valuable, and respondents feel that IVS offers volunteers the possibility to learn about their culture. Respondents in both schools also have a positive acknowledgement about their own language skills. When there is misunderstanding in IVS, respondents blame this on the language skills of the volunteers. Their language is said to be badly influenced by accents in school B, and a lack of knowledge of local languages or an insufficient English level makes it hard for students in school A to understand the IVs in their school. The respondents’ positive acknowledgement of their own culture and language skills contradicts with the dominant discourse of post-colonialism whereby people from a European background are perceived to have certain qualities and knowledge simply because of their skin tone and background.

Although there is said to be mutual learning about each others’ culture, the IVs are considered to learn more because of their physical presence in the host school. In school B there are plans to create an exchange program so that teachers and students from the Ghanaian school can also visit their sister school in the UK. In school A as well, both teachers and students expressed the wish to also be able to travel to Europe to see for themselves where most IVs come from. However, thus far none of the respondents had the opportunity to reverse roles. Up to now, international volunteerism in both schools remains unilateral as it comprises a North to South movement only. Such unequal power relations between the North and the South can be seen as well in the issue of decision making in school A. Whereas teachers want to be involved in decision making regarding the material resources that IVs bring upon their arrival, it is usually the sending organization that decides what the volunteers should bring with them. In this school, the practice of IVS is generally supply driven, which means that the sending organisation has the most say in structuring the volunteer placement (Lough & Allum 2013; Perold et al. 2012). Such poor levels of reciprocity can reinforce stereotypes and intensify dichotomies between ‘them’ and ‘us’ (Raymond & Hall 2008; Simpson 2004 & Devereux 2008).

Besides showing interest in their culture, international volunteers are also appreciated by teachers and students for trying to adapt to the local customs and traditions. It is positively appreciated when volunteers try to take local norms into consideration in terms of dressing. However, in an area with a large Muslim population, certain Western styles of clothing worn by
volunteers are not appreciated. The same goes for specific behaviour such as smoking. Respondents consider this a negative trait that can be a bad example for students.

Especially by the students, international volunteers are very much appreciated. Their presence is said to evoke feelings of happiness and excitement among students. Since volunteers break up the daily routine, and because certain role model qualities such as punctuality and commitment are ascribed to them, they stimulate students to work hard and they motivate them to be present in school. International volunteers are able to do so, because they and their Ghanaian counterparts work both under very different conditions. Volunteers are always there since they have no other responsibilities. They are only around for a (relatively) short period of time, whereby they can dedicate themselves completely to their work in the Ghanaian schools.

Simultaneously, the appearance of IVs is represented in a stereotypical way. As a form of Said’s concept of Orientalism, IVs are considered to be visibly ‘other’ than the respondents. Because of their different skin tone and hair structure, students want to touch IVs and play with them. Most volunteers are considered to have certain behavioural traits as well, such as friendliness and kindness. Students from school A also seem to fear IVs less than their regular teachers, since the volunteers are said not make use of corporal punishments. In addition, teachers from this school claim that IVs focus generally on the students only. For example, extracurricular activities such as a goodbye party are usually only aimed at the students. These factors contribute to the positive image of international volunteers among students.

The thinking of my respondents is largely influenced by different discourses and ideas about North-South relations at the same time. There is not one single discourse, but for people from the host community there are multiple layers of thinking about the practice of IVS.

Contributing to social justice is a motivation for some people to engage in international volunteering. Also, some IVSOs have contributing to social justice as (one of) their objective(s). Therefore, in my analysis I tried to figure out whether or not the practice of IVS can make a contribution to educational social justice by using Nancy Fraser’s three dimensional framework.

Concerning economic social justice, respondents have a sense of redistribution because of the material contributions from IVs. Material and financial resources are allocated to the host schools, but this distribution does not alter the larger socio-economic differences and unequal power relations. There is thus no actual contribution to economic educational social justice by the practice of IVS.

Regarding cultural social justice, respondents express an unprecedented appreciation for their own culture and language skills. They see their culture as valuable and recognize that IVs can learn from their culture. In the school curriculum, however, there is only limited recognition
for the own culture. As the Ghanaian school system is based upon the British system, and with English as the main language of instruction, there is inherent appreciation for Western culture. Since IVs do not adjust the curriculum or school system to have more recognition for the local culture, their practice does not contribute to cultural educational social justice.

About political social justice, different things happen in both schools. The respondents from school B seem to be happy with the way the partnership is implemented. They feel heard and listened to, and have the possibility to participate as equals with the volunteers that come, in terms of decision making as well as while the IVs are actually visiting their school. In school A, however, teachers feel they have no influence in the larger decision making process regarding IVs. Who comes when, and what they will do in general is decided by the volunteers themselves and their sending organisation. Also, in decision making on what kind of material resources IVs should bring, teachers feel usually excluded. However, in terms of decision making of what happens in their own classes, teachers feel they can use their agency to make decisions by themselves. Yet, they wish to be more involved in the whole process of IVS. This does not only apply to decision making, but teachers from school A for example also wish to participate in extracurricular activities that are organized by the IVs.

When teachers are involved and able to fully participate in the process of IVS, they have the ability to act as peers in social life. Without proper representation, teachers are not able to make claims for redistribution and recognition. Participatory justice is regarded as a prerequisite for accomplishing social justice (Tikly & Barrett 2011). Therefore, IVS can only make a contribution to social justice if teachers and other people from the educational host community are provided the opportunity to participate as peers.

6.2 Recommendations for policy and practice

In this research, two different forms of working with international volunteers have been compared. As my findings and conclusions show, a partnership with another school can be a good a foundation for IVS. As teachers and volunteers or their sending organizations can all participate in decision making concerning material and financial contributions to the school, the different actors can act as equals. A partnership or sister school will also enable to make the relationship more reciprocal, for example by organizing an actual exchange whereby people from the host school also have the chance to travel abroad to their partner school. Such a program focused on reciprocity would be highly valued by many teachers and students from the host schools.

When there is no partnership or sister school, IVS can be made more participatory when teachers are involved in the whole process. Whenever there are inquiries about their needs,
material contributions seem to correspond better. Teachers also like to be recognized in extra-curricular activities such as goodbye parties.

The host school might have plenty of needs, but the importance of one need is greater than the other. A needs assessment is a good tool to investigate which needs are most pressing, so when IVSOs want to contribute materially and financially, they can try to address these specific needs.

As a result of their different cultural background and lack of experience with the local school system, IVs mostly perform additional teaching activities. Whenever they engage in remedial teaching, it seems best to find a time for this after school because students will otherwise too much of the ongoing lessons. Volunteers could otherwise also go around the class to help students when they work individually, instead of taking them out of the classroom. Another activity that seems to be suitable for volunteers (dependent on their actual expertise) is providing ICT lessons or the organization of a sports tournament or excursion.

Ideally, international volunteers should stay relatively long so that the students and teachers can get used to them. It seems best if their stay is in sync with the terms of the school calendar so that IVs are there during the whole process. Otherwise, a longer stay is always preferred over a shorter stay.

6.3 Recommendations for further research

As mentioned in the introduction of this thesis, research to the perspective of the host community on practices of IVS have only recently begun. Therefore, a lot of further research on the topic can be done. During some interviews, respondents mentioned that international volunteers also assist quite a lot in teacher training colleges. Time constraints denied me the possibility to involve respondents from one of Tamale’s teacher training colleges in my research. As my results are thus only based on basic schools, it would be interesting for further research to include educational actors from TTCs as well to fully grasp the perspective of Tamale’s educational actors towards international volunteers.

Furthermore, this research has shown that there is a wide variety of schools that work with international volunteers. In this research, respondents of two quite specific schools made up the majority of the research population. For one there is a school-to-school partnership, whereas the other school is both founded and financially supported by the foundation of a European couple. Both of the schools are only faced with short term, generally unprofessional IVs. Further research would be interesting in schools that work with professional, long term IVs who are embedded in large organizations such as VSO or PC.
Additionally, it would be worthwhile to conduct a similar research in other Ghanaian places or even different countries where international volunteerism is a popular phenomenon. Comparing my results and conclusions with such studies enables researchers to find larger patterns to make generalizations, and to see what is a consequence of the local specifics. As my research was based in a (semi) urban setting, it might for example be interesting to repeat the research in a rural setting and compare the results. The practice of IVS that I have examined in this research comprised a North to South movement only. There are initiatives whereby people from the South travel to countries in the North to volunteer, as well as North to North international volunteerism. Similar research on the host community’s perspective on these forms of volunteerism will be interesting to compare to my findings and conclusions as well.
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8. Appendices

8.1 Interview guides

(Head) teachers

1) **Introduction of myself and the research:** Explanation of confidentiality, voluntary participation, no wrong or right answers, etc. Asking for permission to record the interview and announce that respondents can ask me any questions as well as I am taking their time.

2) **Background of respondents:** Since when are you a teacher? Why did you become a teacher? Since when have you been in this school? Have you taught in other schools before? Which class or subjects are you currently a teacher of? Have you been to teacher training college? Etc.

3) **Experiences as a (head) teacher:** How is it to work in this school? What is good, what can be better? How is this school compared to other schools? What are the challenges you encounter as a teacher (in this school/in general)? With what do you need help? Who can help you in this? Is anything currently done to help you? By whom? Why do they help? Etc.

4) **Experience with volunteers:** Do you have a lot of experience with international volunteers? When do they usually come? How many do come? How long do they stay? Where are they from? What kind of people are they? Why do they come? What do they do? Who decides what they will do? What do they do really well? What can they improve? Do they bring anything when they come? How would you describe your relationship with them? How do they treat you? How do the students react towards the volunteer(s)? Is that different than how the kids react to you? How do you feel about this? What do you learn from them? What do they learn from you? What would happen if they would stop coming to the school? Do you want them to keep on coming? Can their work be done by others too? Etc.

5) **Ideal situation:** If it was up to you, would you always have volunteers coming over? How often? How long would they stay? What would they do? Where should they be from? Etc.

6) **Wrap up of interview:** Do you have anything else to add? Any questions for me? Are you interested in a follow up of my results? By what means? Though email or via a presentation just before I leave?

Students

1) **Introduction of myself and the research:** Explanation of confidentiality, voluntary participation, no wrong or right answers, etc. Asking for permission to record the interview and announce that respondents can ask me any questions as well as I am taking their time.

2) **Background of respondents:** How old are you? Where do you live? In which grade are you? Since when are you in this school? Do you have any brothers and sisters? Are they in this school too? Etc.

3) **Experiences in school:** How do you like being in this school? What is your favourite subject? Who is your favourite teacher? Why? Which subjects do you not like? What is good about this school? What could be better? What would you improve if it was up to you? Who should help to
make the school better? Who is doing this currently? How are they helping? Why are they helping?

4) **Experiences with volunteers:** Do you have a lot of experience with international volunteers? When do they usually come? How many do come? How long do they stay? Where are they from? What kind of people are they? Why do they come? What do they do? Who decides what they will do? What do they do really well? What can they improve? Do they bring anything when they come? How would you describe your relationship with them? How do they treat you? How do you treat them? Is that different from how the Ghanaian teachers treat you? Can you understand them? Do you like their way of teaching? Why? Who teaches best, the volunteers or the Ghanaian teachers? What do you learn from them? What do they learn from you? What would happen if they would stop coming to the school? Do you want them to keep on coming? Can their work be done by others too? Etc.

5) **Ideal situation:** If it was up to you, would you always have volunteers coming over? How often? How long would they stay? What would they do? Where should they be from? Etc.

6) **Wrap up of interview:** Do you have anything else to add? Any questions for me?
8.2 Focus group discussion plans

**Teachers**

**Materials needed**
- Post-its
- Pens, pencils, pencil sharpener
- Tape, stapler
- Sheets of paper
- Large sheets (taping several sheets to one another)
- Refreshments: drinks and snack
- Postcard/photo as thank you
- Something that serves as talking stick

**Time Planning**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>How long?</th>
<th>What?</th>
</tr>
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<tr>
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<td>5 min</td>
<td>Introduction</td>
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<tr>
<td>5-30</td>
<td>15-25 min</td>
<td>Part 1: Challenges and needs</td>
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<tr>
<td>30-60</td>
<td>25-30 min</td>
<td>Part 2: Features of volunteers</td>
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<td>60-75</td>
<td>15 min</td>
<td>Break: Drink &amp; snack</td>
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<tr>
<td>75-105</td>
<td>25-30 min</td>
<td>Part 3: Experiences with volunteers, appreciation &amp; impact</td>
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<tr>
<td>105-120</td>
<td>10-15 min</td>
<td>Part 4: Link experiences/impact with needs</td>
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<tr>
<td>120-130</td>
<td>5-10 min</td>
<td>Wrap up, further remarks, questions?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Hand out post-cards as thank you</td>
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</table>

**Questions & Tasks**

**Introduction:** Introduction of ourselves, explanation of research & purpose of focus group discussion. Explanation of recording and confidentiality, voluntary participation and no right or wrong answers (I want to hear the respondent’s opinions). Respondents can also ask me any questions. Setting of ground rules and writing down characteristics of participants (name, gender, teacher of which class and since when in this school)

**Part 1:** What challenges are there for you as teachers (in this school/in Ghana)? What do you need to overcome the challenges? Who can help you in this? Is anyone currently helping in this? How are they helping? Is it working out? What improvements in help/assistance could or should be made? Tabitha summarizes the responses on large post-its that are stuck onto a larger sheet.

**Part 2:** Everyone gets a piece of paper and a pen(cil). Think of the international volunteers you have met so far in this school (those who you have worked with, but also those who you have only seen or spoken to shortly). Write down 3-5 remarkable things about them (can be features, appearance, behaviour, character, actions etc). The participants are asked to read out what they have written down and the remarks are discussed in the group. Do others agree or disagree and why?

In the middle of a large sheet of paper, volunteer is written down. The remarks mentioned by respondents are summarized by Tabitha on post its which the participants have to stick on the sheet. If stuck close to the word, it means it is very common for volunteers to have this feature, the further away from the word, the less common or general it is.

**Short break with drink and snack (15 min)**

**Part 3:** Participants are asked to mention their most memorable experience with international volunteers. Is this considered as a negative or positive experience? Tabitha summarizes them on post-its which are stuck on a sheet with positive vs. negative experiences (+/-).

Then the respondents asked to tell which impacts they see of the work of the volunteers. Again, this is written on post-it and stuck to positive or negative side (+/-). If all experiences and impacts are neutral or positive/all neutral or negative: ask if there can be anything added on the other side.

**Part 4:** See sheets with post-its on needs (part 1) and impacts (part 3). Discussion whether they correspond or not? What should be done differently by volunteers (or other actors) to address needs? Which actions should they keep on doing as they are? What can be improved?

**Wrap up, further remarks/questions and thank you-s. Remember to take photos of the sheets with post-its!**
**Students**

**Materials needed**
- Post-its
- Pens, pencils, pencil sharpener
- Tape, stapler
- Sheets of paper
- Large sheets (taping several sheets to one another)
- Refreshments: drinks and snack
- Postcard/photo as thank you
- Something that serves as talking stick

**Time Planning**

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<tr>
<th>Timeline</th>
<th>How long?</th>
<th>What?</th>
</tr>
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<td>5 min</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-30</td>
<td>15-25 min</td>
<td>Part 1: Defining school and learning</td>
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<td>30-60</td>
<td>25-30 min</td>
<td>Part 2: Features of volunteers</td>
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<td>60-80</td>
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<td>Break: Drink &amp; snack &amp; energizer</td>
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<tr>
<td>80-105</td>
<td>30-35 min</td>
<td>Part 3: Experiences with volunteers and picture of ideal volunteer</td>
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<tr>
<td>105-115</td>
<td>5-10 min</td>
<td>Wrap up, further remarks, questions?</td>
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**Questions & Tasks**

**Introduction:** Introduction of ourselves (both facilitators and participants), explanation of research & purpose of focus group discussion. Explanation of, recording and confidentiality, voluntary participation and no right or wrong answers (I want to hear the respondent's opinions). Respondents can also ask me any questions. Setting of ground rules, involving the students. Which rules do they want to add? (Examples: Only one person is talking at the time, everybody gets the chance to participate etc.) Writing down characteristics of respondents (name, gender, age and class they are in).

**Part 1:** Discussion about topics relating to school, learning and aid from volunteers: What makes a school a good school? What do you learn in school? How do you learn these things? What is the most important to learn in school? Why is that important? Who helps you to learn these things? When do volunteers come to the school? What is their role? How do they help you?

**Part 2:** Everyone gets a piece of paper and a pen(cil). Think of the international volunteers you have met so far in this school (those who you have worked with, but also those who you have only seen or spoken to shortly). Write down or draw 3 remarkable things about them (can be features, appearance, behaviour, character, actions etc). For example: the way they dress, where are they from, how they behave, how long are they here, why are they here, what do they do when they are here, how they interact with you? The participants are asked to read out what they have written down and the remarks are discussed in the group. Do others agree or disagree and why? In the middle of a large sheet of paper, volunteer is written down. The remarks mentioned by respondents are summarized by Tabitha on post its, which the participants have to stick on the sheet with volunteer written in the middle. If stuck close to the word, it means it is very common for volunteers to have this feature, the further away from the word, the less common or general it is.

**Short break with drink and snack and energizer (20 min)**

**Part 3:**
Participants are asked to mention their nicest experience with or memory of a volunteer. Tabitha summarizes this on a post-it which is stuck onto the sheet under positive (+). Then they are asked for the worst experience/memory with a volunteer. Again add to the sheet, this time under negative(-). The remarks are discussed in the group. If time allows: discussion of the best volunteer. The best volunteer you can imagine, what would he or she be like? What would he or she do? How would he or she help you to learn? What would they teach you?

**Wrap up, further remarks/questions and thank you-s. Remember to take photos of the sheets with post-its!**
8.3 Respondent overview

**Individual interviews**

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<th>#</th>
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<th>Respondent</th>
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### Focus group discussions

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