

# The motivational factors and popular destinations in volunteer tourism

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<p>The research problems are: what are the most popular volunteer tourism destinations and what are the most important motivators to do volunteer tourism. The thesis also finds out what kind of person is most likely to be interested in doing volunteer work, i.e. what is his/hers age, occupation and country of living.</p> <p>The report explains the theory behind the concept volunteer tourism, the voluntourist as well as explains two different motivation theories. The theory part also has data about the most searched and popular destinations when looking for a volunteering project as have been researched two years prior to this report.</p> <p>A quantitative research was conducted with a questionnaire that consists of 15 questions. The questionnaire was handed out online in several Facebook groups that had both Finnish and international members. The questionnaire was answered by 52 persons. The questionnaire was active during February and March 2016.</p> <p>In conclusion the research shows that the major part that answered the questionnaire and are interested in doing volunteer work were under 30-year-olds students. The results concerning popular destinations were in line with another research made two years earlier. These conclusions are that Asia is the most popular region where to do volunteer tourism, Africa the second popular and Europe the third.</p> <p>The motivational factors are not so easily defined in this report, but the most important 'push' motivator, the thing that drives to volunteering is willingness to help. The most important 'pull' motivator, the thing that draws to a certain destinations was considered to be culture.</p>	
<b>Keywords</b> Volunteer tourism, tourism motivators, tourist, destination	

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# 1 Introduction

This report studies and explains the relatively new phenomenon of voluntourism. The word comes from volunteering and tourism, two fields that are more and more coming together as one business.

The aim of this report is to find out the motivational factors and most popular voluntourism destinations. As a cross reference I have used tourism theory books and Internet resources to compare what kind motivators can be driving towards volunteering, and if there is any difference in the earlier studies and this study when finding out popular volunteering destinations.

The interest for this topic comes from personal willingness to do volunteering and voluntourism. It seems there are as many projects as there are people, and I wanted to take a closer look into this phenomenon, to see why it has become so wildly popular in recent years, and which areas of the world it affects the most.

The theory of this report consists of chapters explaining concepts of volunteering, voluntourism, motivational factors in tourism and travelling and voluntourist. Also one chapter presents the popular destinations and project types in volunteer tourism. As the base of theory I have used theory books and internet resources; reports, experiences and web pages of volunteer organizations.

I will present in this report the question whether voluntourism is a sustainable form of tourism or not, and as a harmful example is a chapter about orphanage tourism. I have read and referenced articles found in Internet, that explain why this phenomenon can cause harmful impacts on societies where it is practiced. The research process is explained in chapter five. In this study I used quantitative data collection and the study conducted by a questionnaire which was handed out and active during February and March 2016.

## **2 Volunteering and voluntourism**

Volunteering and voluntourism are two separate concepts, even though they of course are very closely connected. In the following chapters they are both defined separately and also the similar factors are defined. In the third sub chapter it has been reflected on two different types of tourists that do volunteering.

### **2.1 Volunteering as a term**

The origins of volunteering can be traced as far as the 19<sup>th</sup> century, when it was common for missionaries, doctors and teachers to travel to help others. Only in the recent years has volunteer tourism become a global phenomenon. According to Lasso Communications survey, in the year 2009 the volunteer organizations increased 62 % in sending more volunteers abroad than the previous year. (Benson 2011, 1-3.)

A volunteer either works in their home country or leaves abroad to work for a non-profit community. The volunteer is usually not paid salary, but the accommodation and food are provided. Voluntary work is mostly done in the social and environmental fields, such as schools, orphanages or children's clubs, natural parks and zoos, as well as a variety of development projects, such as construction, environmental adaptation, or nursing homes. (Maailmalle.net 2015.)

Volunteering seen by volunteers is giving help for those who need it; alleviation of poverty, a moral duty and for some volunteering is an opportunity and a way to discover and /or improve them. (Pacific Standard 2013.)

The volunteer can choose which field he will be working in, since usually the volunteer is not required to have a special know-how or education. This can lead to number of problems, which will be analysed later in this report. Volunteers can choose either to seek a volunteer job by themselves, but it is more common to go through an organization. Without the organization the volunteer cannot necessarily be sure of the legality and the destination of the money in the chosen project. Organisations that are tour providers and work in collaboration with other volunteering organizations, such as Kilroy, send an employer to witness in person the project is working legally and in ethical settings before signing collaboration or sending volunteers to the destination. (Kilroy 2016.)

## **2.2 Volunteer tourism or 'voluntourism'**

Wearing defines volunteer tourism as tourists wanting to participate in holidays where in an organized way they help aiding of poverty in society and the restoration in environment. (Wearing 2011, 3.)

Environmental volunteering can take place in various locations, like rainforests, biological reserves or conservation areas. Popular volunteering locations are Africa, Central and South America and South-, and South East Asia. The voluntourist also has a chance to participate in different activities and interact further with the community. Thus the concept of voluntourism is bilateral; the main motive of the volunteering experience can be of personal nature: gaining confidence, feeling good for helping, enhancing ones CV etc. The voluntourist spends more than a regular tourist when participating in local activities. The trips consequences continue much further than the actual trips length; when the volunteer returns home, he can feel empowered, reinvented and expanded. (Wearing 2011, 3.)

Even though the basic concept of volunteering and volunteer tourism is to help for charitable causes, there are some companies for which it is purely about making profit. So how are regular volunteering and volunteer tourism, voluntourism, different? In voluntourism, there are more choices. The voluntourist can decide where to go, what to do, for how long. In voluntourism, one can decide between destination, time period, project and tourism activities, when traditionally one can choose either to work or not. The voluntourist chooses voluntourism because of various reasons; limited period of time, unique experience, additional activities, safe but exotic destination, and they hope to make a difference. (Aleksander & Bakir 2011, 17-19.)

## **2.3 VOLUNtourist or volunTOURIST**

Before the definition of voluntourism by Wearing, it was considered students or young career professionals from developed countries entering less developed countries to work with non-profit organisations that work for social or environmental cause. (Daldeniz & Hampton 2011, 30.)

The VOLUNtourists are traditionally participated in social or environmental development project, and volunTOURISTS more in hospitality. A case study was conducted among two types of volunteers in a rural development area in Nicaragua and a study on diving tourism in Malaysia. The following table explains the differences in project aspects, motivation and impacts between the two different types of voluntourists.

(Daldeniz & Hampton 2011, 33-36.)

Table 1. VOLUNtourist and volunTOURIST (Daldeniz & Hampton 2011, 33-36.)

Aspect	VOLUNtourist – development project	volunTOURIST – diving and hospitality
Legal status in country	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- On tourist visa</li> <li>- Need for visa runs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- On tourist visa</li> <li>- Need for visa runs</li> </ul>
Costs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Travel to country</li> <li>- Costs for visa runs</li> <li>- Nominal rent and food</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Travel to country</li> <li>- Costs for visa runs</li> <li>- Rent and food</li> </ul>
Duration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Minimum 3 months, most 6-12 months</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Minimum 3 months, most 6 months per location</li> </ul>
Motivation I	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Cv and self-enhancement</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Escape the rat race</li> </ul>
Motivation II	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Travel the world and live abroad for longer</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Holiday lifestyle ;extend backpacking trip</li> </ul>
Motivation III	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Don't know what else to do</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Travel the world and live abroad longer</li> </ul>
Motivation IV	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Do something useful</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Don't know what else to do</li> </ul>
Positive impacts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Projects for local development</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Unintentional impacts</li> </ul>
Negative impacts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Filling jobs locals could fill</li> <li>- Cultural tensions between volunteers and hosts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Remove pressure on dive shops to train locals</li> <li>- Cultural tensions between dive professionals and locals</li> </ul>

The volunteers in Nicaragua seemed to have made more difference in an enhancement project, since the other group stated there were no intentional impacts. However, it can be counted that the volunteers in Malaysia were spending money, like a tourists, therefore providing for the local economy. The volunTOURISTS primarily motive was of selfish nature; escaping the rat race of ones' home country. This could also explain the nature of the volunteers' projects, choosing between more and less beneficial projects for the local community (Daldeniz & Hampton 2011, 33-39.)

The Wearing definition for volunteer tourism consequently applies to both groups, and the major difference is perhaps the way these two groups consider themselves as a volunteer. The VOLUNtourist dislikes being called a tourist, since he is there for other purposes as well, and is aiming to get accepted among the society as a local. The volunTOURIST recognizes the tourism aspect even if the other motives for volunteering are purely for non-charitable and providing aid. (Daldeniz & Hampton 2011, 33-39.)

### **3 Motivational factors**

Needs, motives and motivations are generated when a person creates an impulse that leads to a need and the need leads to a feeling of dissatisfactions until it is satisfied. Motivation plays a fundamental part in tourism. Travel needs and motivations lead to expectations of the holiday, and the outcome of it is dependent on the expectations. (Tourism Theories 2014.)

Motivational factors are also connected with tourist typology as different kind of tourist has different motivations. Tourists can be classified either dependable or venture based on their psychographic personality types. This is of course only a general classification because no tourists is perfectly either or another. (Tourism Domain 2015.)

The tourist also has always more than one motivation, and people's holidays represent a compromise between all of their motivations. One motivation can become dominant when the holiday is purchased to fill the only one, or the holiday is purchased to ensure that all of the motivations can be at least partially fulfilled. (Horner & Swarbrooke 2008, 56.)

The true motivators of one's mind are often not expressed because one can fear their motivation not be seen as being acceptable. Also, one may not always recognize one's own motivation since they may be subconscious or unconscious. The tourist might as well be aware of the conflicts that arise between one's motivation and their real behaviour. One can claim going to France on a holiday to learn French, but in reality they know that they will be speaking only their own language. As tourist rarely take holidays alone, and the company may affect one's motivation for the trip. This is called shared motivation. Not very often members of one group share the exact motivations and then the trip becomes a compromise between members. The compromise may be seen as the dominant members motivation being more strong, the members of the group going their own way sometimes to fill their own motivations or each member can choose on one day what to do and thus everyone fulfils their own. (Horner & Swarbrooke 2008, 56.)

The tourism industry seems to believe that the aspect of gender in motivators is one of the most significant ones when thinking of demographics. However there is some evidence suggesting that there is surprisingly little difference. There has been little research about cultural and national differences when thinking of motivators. There are similarities in some nations and cultures of course, for example people in north European countries and north American states are motivated by the desire to head somewhere warm and sunny. There are some universal motivators however such as romance and nostalgia, the desire



to see sights, even though the actual behaviour is affected by the nationality and culture of the tourist. (Horner & Swarbrooke 2008, 59.)

### 3.1 Motivation theories

Travel motivations can be studied from different fields of science, but the most significant ones are psychology, social psychology and anthropology. As one significant motivation theory, Abraham Maslow created a pyramid figure of human needs; a theory that is the most widely used. (Tourism Theories 2014.)

From bottom to top, it has five layers

1. Physiological needs (such as hunger or thirst),
2. Safety and security, including shelter;
3. Social needs, love and belonging;
4. Esteem, the need to be accepted and valued by others;
5. Self-actualization.

Phillip Pearce, a professor in James Cook University in Australia has proposed a travel motivation pyramid based on Maslow's theory. (Pearce 1982, 146-149.)

1. relaxation (rest <> active)
2. stimulation (stronger emotions)
3. social needs (family, friends)
4. self-esteem (self-development through cultural, nature or other activities)
5. self-realization (search for happiness)

The original travel needs are according to this example, the first being the most common. This example however is serving only to the western world, where the 5<sup>th</sup> level of self-realization may not be able to serve the group in other societies where community life is more highly valued. (Tourism Theories 2014.)

In 1983, Beard and Raghob developed a model called the Leisure Motivation scale, the purpose of which was to clarify motivators into four different types, and this was also based on Maslow's work. (Swarbrooke & Horner 2008, 54-55.) The four types are:

1. The *intellectual* component that assesses how the tourists wishes to participate in leisure activities that are mental activities such as learning, discovery, thought or imagery

2. The *social* component that assesses how much the tourists wishes to participate in activities for social reasons. This includes two components that are the need of friendship and the second is the need for the esteem of others

3. The *competence-mastery* component that assesses how much the tourist wishes to participate in activities with the purpose to achieve, master, challenge, and compete. These activities are usually physical.

4. The *stimulus-avoidance* component that assesses the wish to escape life's over-stimulating situations. It is the need to avoid social contact and seek calm conditions.

Of course, these motivators are not universally applicable, because some people have no desire to take a holiday at all. (Swarbrooke & Horner 2008, 54-55.)

### **3.2 Push and pull motivation**

Travel motives can be roughly divided to push and pull factors. Pull factors are external and are designed to pull a tourist towards the particular destination, by creating a motivation to travel to see or experience things that only this one destination can offer. Push factors come from inside the tourist himself. Push factors can be for example the desire to escape, to seek relaxation or the will to explore and learn something new, a desire that can be fuelled even more with external pull factors of a destination. (Tourism Theories 2014.)

Most people travel not by one but a series of motives and needs. It depends of many different things, for example the social status and situation in life. It is common for people of the same travel group to seek satisfaction for very different needs when they travel. (Tourism Theories 2014.)

## 4 Destinations of volunteer tourism

Go Overseas is one of the leading volunteer program review websites, and has annually conducted a research of the most popular and searched volunteer tourism destinations. The latest one was conducted of year 2014 and it was published 14<sup>th</sup> October 2014.

### 4.1 Top searched countries and regions

In figure 1 are presented the most searched countries in volunteer tourism according to Go Overseas (2014.)



Figure 1. Top countries (Go Overseas 2014.)

According to Go Overseas, the most searched country 2014 was the Philippines. The main reason the country piqued interest more than before was the Typhoon Hayan that struck the Philippines in November 7<sup>th</sup>, 2013. Disaster volunteering has been identified as an increasing trend over the past few years, seeing that two more of the top 15 countries are Haiti and Japan which were both struck with a disaster a few years back, even though they have dropped a few ranks back between 2012 and 2014. (Go Overseas 2014.)

Table 2. Most searched volunteer tourism destinations 2014 (Go Overseas 2014.)

<b>Rank</b>	<b>Country</b>	<b>Searches (relative)</b>
1.	The Philippines	3.45
2.	India	3.12
3.	Thailand	2.96
4.	Nepal	2.72
5.	Cambodia	2.37
6.	South Africa	2.36
7.	Costa Rica	2.08
8.	Vietnam/Peru	1.36
9.	Australia	1.35
10.	Kenya	1.27
11.	Uganda	1.22
12.	Ireland	1.13
13.	Brazil	1.07
14.	Haiti	1.02
15.	Japan	1.00

Table 2 shows the countries that were most searched in 2014 concerning volunteer tourism. & of these countries are Asian countries, making it the most popular continent.

A study was also conducted comparing the most popular regions in volunteer tourism, dividing the world in 9 regions: Asia, Africa, Australia, Oceania, Europe, North America, Central America, South America and Middle East.

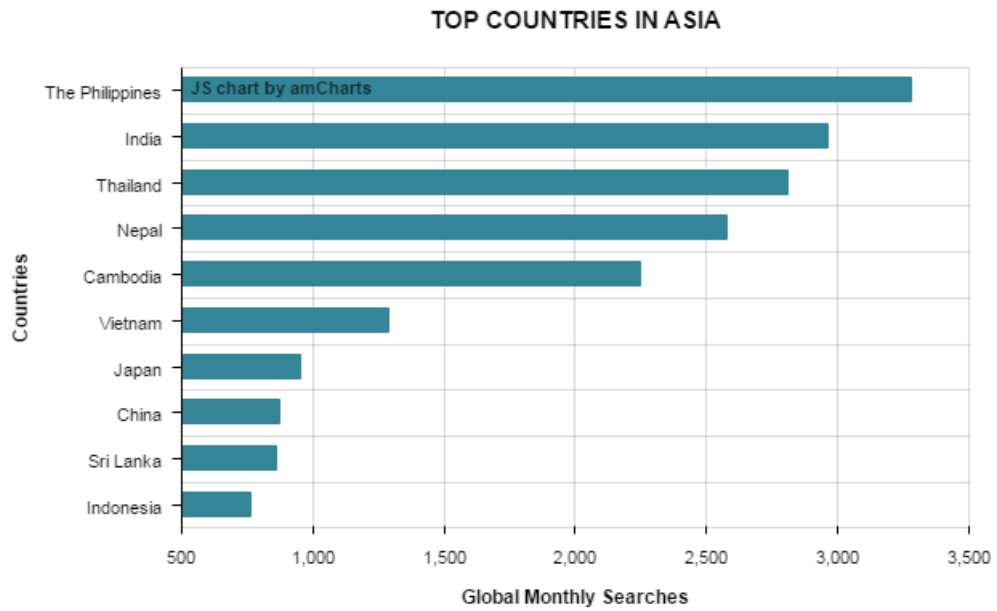


Figure 2. Top countries in Asia (Go Overseas 2014.)

In both figure 1 and 2 one can see The Philippines is the most searched country both in Asia and worldwide. The popularity of this region has many reasons, the main ones being the diversity of projects offered, diversity of countries, being the top destination for travelers, and the affordability of the region for long-term volunteers and the economic need of the region. (Go Overseas 2014.)

The second most searched region in volunteer tourism is Africa.

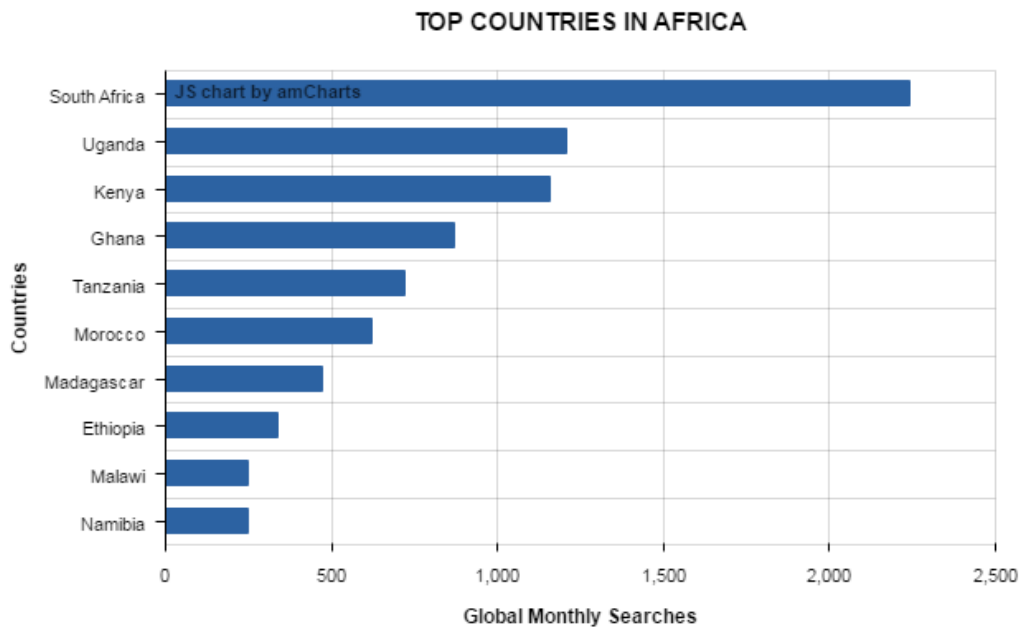


Figure 3. Top countries in Africa (Go Overseas 2014.)

In Figure 3 one can see the top searched country is South Africa. Even though South Africa is not in the most pressing need of help among African countries, South Africa can offer many different programs, and especially nature and wildlife programs are popular. The world's ten countries in lowest GDP per capita are in Africa, and all but 4 of the 25 lowest GDP per capita countries are African countries, so it is clear volunteers recognise the need in African countries and are keen to volunteer there. (Go Overseas 2014.)

The third most searched region for volunteering opportunities is Europe, in particular Western Europe. Even though this region is not in particular economic need of help, the region has other reasons that make it so appealing in terms of volunteering.

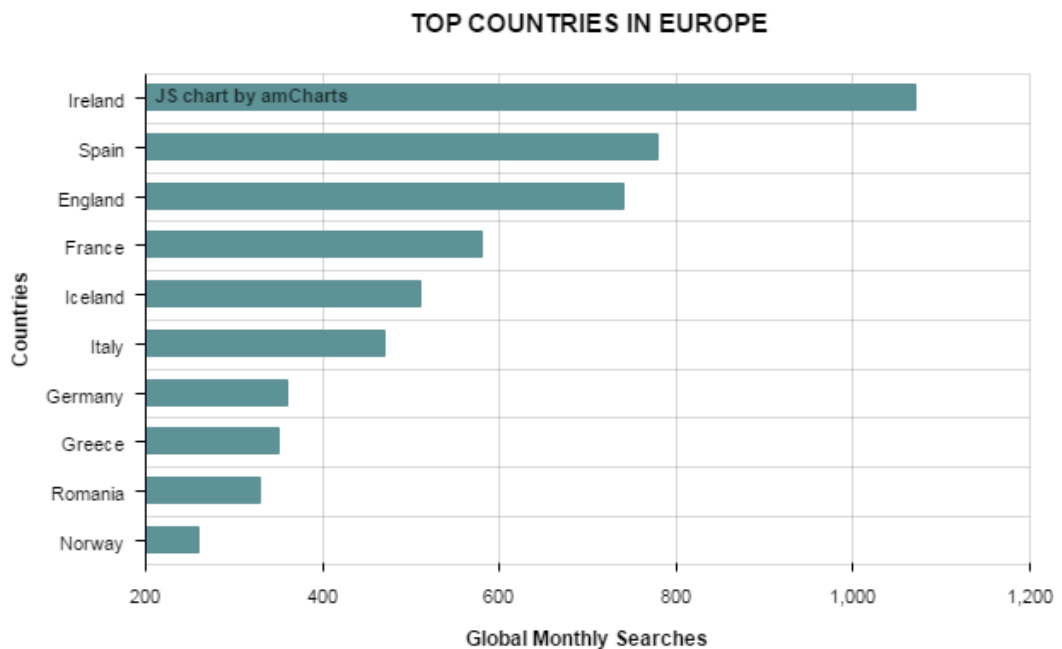


Figure 4. Top countries in Europe (Go Overseas 2014.)

The relatively short distances in continental Europe and the ease of travel and working for EU citizens make the continent an easy destination for Europeans. Volunteers planning to spend their time in Europe are more commonly trying to find meaningful travel experiences, whereas in other regions the need of help is a greater motivation. (Go Overseas 2014.)

Accordingly as the meaningful travel experiences is more important motivation factor in Europe than elsewhere, it can be noted that the searched to volunteer in Europe by no means are located in the more help needing parts of the continent.

The rest of worlds' top countries are presented below.

Figure 5. Rest of the world (Go Overseas 2014.)



Figure 5. Rest of the world (Go Overseas 2014.)

It is no surprise that in Oceania, Australia is most popular because of the mere size and economic situation of the country. As the society is not in economic need of help one can deduct that Australia is popular for its environmental projects. In Middle East Syria and Israel are most popular, and in Syria particularly ‘disaster volunteering’ explains the popularity. In other regions of the world it is not so easy to deduct the reasons for a particular country’s popularity.



## 4.2 Top 5 types of volunteering programs

A research was conducted also to find out the most searched types of volunteering programs and as a result five program types were differentiated.

Number 1 by searches in programs is medical volunteering. Medical programs abroad are known to provide the volunteers' opportunities to access patients in a different way and level, and the possibility of practicing health care in different political and cultural settings is highly appreciated. (Go Overseas 2014.)

The second most searched program is teaching volunteering abroad. An idea of children being the future and a way to make long-term impact on an economically disadvantaged area is the main attract in teaching. Education is also recognized as the most effective way to have an impact in children's lives. (Go Overseas 2014.)

The third and fourth most searched programs are conservation and wildlife programs. In many countries where there is or has been poverty, nature and wildlife are ignored as one of the lesser problems than for example getting food on the table. Also, wildlife is an attractive way for monetary gain in areas where there's an economic need of help. The wildlife is unable to defend itself, which makes it a very popular volunteering program. (Go Overseas 2014.)

In the 5<sup>th</sup> place comes orphanage volunteering. Armed conflicts in restless areas lead to a higher number of orphans than in areas where populations live in peace. Especially in Uganda and Cambodia political unrest and wide spread poverty have left many children orphaned. Orphanage volunteering is however conflicted with cases where some orphanage volunteering does more harm than good, as many orphanages have children that are not actually orphans at all with their only goal to raise money from well-meaning volunteers. Of harmful orphanage tourism there is an example later in this report. (Go Overseas 2014.)

### **4.3 Sustainable tourism?**

When volunteering is generally thought being a way to help and protect, some argue that voluntourism is at best a very simplified way of development and in reality is actually doing more harm than good. At worst, voluntourism is thought to be a perpetuation of colonial behaviour, when the developed countries travel to help in less developed ones. The voluntourists are usually well-off and privileged, a total opposite of the community they are working for. It creates a very uncomfortable situation, especially when the volunteers enter the project without understanding of the culture and the know-how of the work, and all that is understood of the culture is the poverty and the neediness of the community. It makes the community to have to act as the grateful part and the volunteer being the superior giver. Also, the feeling the volunteer gets from these projects, can usually be a complete opposite of what one thought and hoped to achieve. The feeling of guilt, not being needed and shame. (Blackledge 2013.)

The main criticism against voluntourism is the fact that it is becoming more industrialized. The volunteer tourism business is around 2 billion dollars and in 2007 the average cost of a volunteer was 3000 dollars per trip. This money perhaps could be used better and could do more help if it was directly donated to the projects. (Blackledge 2013.)

Some argue that since volunteering is doing good in some way, it doesn't need to be totally destroyed but better organized, like limiting volunteering to only conservation and environmental projects. According to Friends-International, an organization which fights against orphanage tourism, the best way to help in "vulnerable" communities is to aim help at education and community-based initiatives. (Pacific Standard 2013.)

#### **4.3.1 Harmful voluntourism: Orphanage Tourism**

Friends-International with the backing of UNICEF is campaigning against orphanage tourism in Cambodia, where it is a very large business. In Cambodia, it is common for street children to approach tourists to ask them visit the orphanage before they leave elsewhere. Usually, the routine in the orphanage includes a short performance of the children, and then the tourists are asked to donate a small amount of money to run the orphanage costs. The visits are thousands in numbers, and the demand creates supply. The children are kept in poor conditions and in reality the majority of the children are not orphans at all, but either rented children from their parents or taken away from them by false promises. (Child Safe 2015.)

When volunteering in an orphanage, it is usually a short period of time, a year at most, and after that the volunteer that has become safe and familiar to the children leaves again. Some of the children require daily care and assist, and the short term volunteering undermines the children's right to a long term and meaningful relationship with the staff. (Child Safe 2015.)

The western societies would probably see visiting an orphanage in their own country as shocking, just to go there, take some pictures and work there for a few days or months as a part of tourist experience, so why is it acceptable in less developed countries? The problem lies in the education and information that is available. The tourists often feel guilt for their wealth, and wish to give something back. What could be more effective way than presenting suffering orphans? The tourists rarely thinks this is a scheme to lure them into the orphanages to pay, and that the volunteers are wanted for orphanages only for the money. (Blackledge 2013.)

#### **4.3.2 “What could go wrong when trying to do right?”**

Daniela Papi has been joining and leading volunteering tours over a decade and shared some of her negative experiences from these trips in an article in Huffington Post magazine named “What could go wrong when trying to do right?”

According to Papi, an example of giving things away for free in tours as a part of volunteering can destroy local markets, create jealousy inside the community and create a culture of dependency. Papi has witnessed tour operators in Cambodia that charge 45 \$ to give an opportunity for tourists to be driven out to a poor village and give out school supplies to poor families of their own choice. This is like buying pellets to feed the goats except that they are people and not goats. Papi has also witnessed a tour operator in India that allowed tourists to hand goats to poor families. During one tour a person from the community told the tour director that the person who had been put in charge of deciding which families can have the goats, had been charging the families for this opportunity in secret. (Papi 2012.)

As solutions for these problems, Papi suggests making thorough research about the tour operator or whatever organisation one wishes to work for. When one finds an irresponsible organization or tour operator one must speak up, and people need to vote with their money; spending more time in seeking socially responsible organizations. One must also try to find an organization that in case of special abilities needed for the opportunity, does

a careful and demanding matching solution. There is no help if unskilled people travel somewhere to take up the time of communities in need of help.

(Papi 2012.)

#### **4.4 Volunteering Organizations**

In Finland, the most popular volunteer tourism organization is Kilroy Travel. The agency is mostly directed to attract young people and students, as they get discounts from Kilroy's programs. Kilroy has many opportunities to do volunteer work in Asia, South America and South Africa. These volunteer opportunities are often combined with one's holiday and the duration can be tailored according to one's desire. There are opportunities in animal care, environment and social work. (Kilroy 2016.)

Internationally, AIESEC is the largest volunteer organization in the world that is also run by volunteers, usually students. AIESEC offers volunteer projects in almost any field, as there are new projects being developed all the time. These projects are either professional internships or volunteer projects that last from 6-8 weeks. It is represented in 126 countries and has over 70 000 active members all over the world. (AIESEC 2016.)

Service Civil International is also a very large volunteer organization all over the world. It has branches in 45 countries, including Finland and numerous other partner organizations. The work however is not considered as volunteer *tourism*, but actual volunteer work that can last from a few weeks up to a year. (SCI 2016.)

It is difficult to find information about the most active volunteer nations, but according to a research conducted by research carried out in 2015, by data platform Gallup and Charities Aid Foundation the most charitable country in the world is Myanmar. The World Giving Index gives countries scores on volunteering, helping strangers and donating money, which are then combined to give it a global ranking. The US was on second place, and New Zealand on the third place. However, New Zealand is the world's 4<sup>th</sup> most active nation in volunteering. In fourth place comes Canada, where up to 77% of the people offered their time for volunteering. (The Guardian 2015.)

## **5 Research process**

This study is about finding out the popular destinations among volunteer travellers and the motivational factors of volunteering. The thesis writing began as a result of a Sustainable Tourism course, where the report was a part of the course. The questionnaire was handed out as a public link in February 2016 and the link remained open for 4 weeks.

### **5.1 Methodology**

The research was conducted as quantitative. The primary purposes of a quantitative study are to make comparisons, examine relationships, test hypothesis, predict, explore and construct concepts and theories. Usually surveys result in quantitative data, but also content analysis can result in data that is counted, i.e. quantitative data. Quantitative data is analysed using statistical techniques and programs, and the more answers in a survey one has, the more reliable the statistical analysis is. (Walliman, 2011)

The questionnaire used to collect data in this report was ultimately answered by 52 persons from different nationalities and backgrounds. The questionnaire consists of 15 questions and was handed put as a public link on multiple Facebook groups.

Questions 1-4 were of personal details, age, occupation, country of living and gender. Questions 5-7 were concerning possible previous experience in volunteering. 8-12 were questions of possible projects, countries and plans how to participate in volunteer work. Number 13 was the only open answer question: "What good and/or bad impacts do you think volunteering may cause?" Questions 14 and 15 were of motivational factors.

### **5.2 Reliability and validity of the study**

In quantitative research, reliability means the consistency and repeatability of the study, and validity answers if one has researched and measured the right things. These two concepts should be taken into consideration already in the planning process of the study,

because they are impossible to change after the study is conducted. (Kananen 2011, 124-129.)

Reliability refers to the consistency of the study results. The only way to measure the reliability is to repeat the measurement and the study, but this is difficult. Also, reliability is not guaranteed with a new measurement, because peoples opinion may change over time, and the survey itself can affect their behaviour. The best way to ensure the reliability and validity in the study is to describe the population within the questionnaire is conducted, with background variables. (Kananen 2011, 124-129.) As I have done in the questionnaire, there are many variables concerning the background and life situation of the answerer, thus profiling the answerer as well as possible.

The most important subconcept of validity is external validity. It answers how well can the findings of the study to be generalized to the population. This is typical to quantitative research. Because it is not possible or reasonable to examine every single member of the population, in quantitative research one small part is included in the study, thus forming a "miniature model" or sample of the population in question. If the study is based on sample it is possible to be compared with the population. The background variables of the study answerers can be compared with the backgrounds of the rest of the population, i.e. age and/or occupation. (Kananen 2011, 124-129.) In this study, the sample is under 30-year olds Finnish students interested in doing volunteer work.

Internal validity measures how well the study was conducted, meaning the research design, variables and etc. These two, External and internal validity play the most important part when evaluating the validity of the study. When making the thesis, it is not sensible to repeat the study to prove the reliability and validity. However, one must document the research stages and means carefully, in order for it to be sometime later repeated, even if just hypothetically. (Kananen 2011, 124-129.)

As this questionnaire was conducted online, it reduces the trustworthiness as one cannot be sure if a person has for example answered the questionnaire more than once. As in qualitative study it is common to have about 100 answers for the study to be beneficial, this questionnaire only collected half of them, thus reducing the reliability. When thinking of internal validity, the study questions were clear and the background variables well thought in order to profile the answerer. External validity, the generalizability in this study is not very high, as the questionnaire was conducted by both Finnish and other nationalities. The major part however was Finnish, so in some measure the study results could be generalized with the Finnish student population. As almost all respondents were under 30-

year olds, it can be said that this study's results do not reflect the attitudes and opinions of the population as a whole. The major part of respondents was students, and the student traveller still represents fully one-fifth of all international arrivals in the travel industry (Groups Today). This can be beneficial for those offering travelling and volunteering opportunities especially to students, such as Kilroy.

## 6 Results

Study results are analysed with the help of statistic program Webropol. In the study results I pay closer attention to the profiling questions such as occupation, age and gender, and also to the motivational factors and destinations of volunteer tourism.

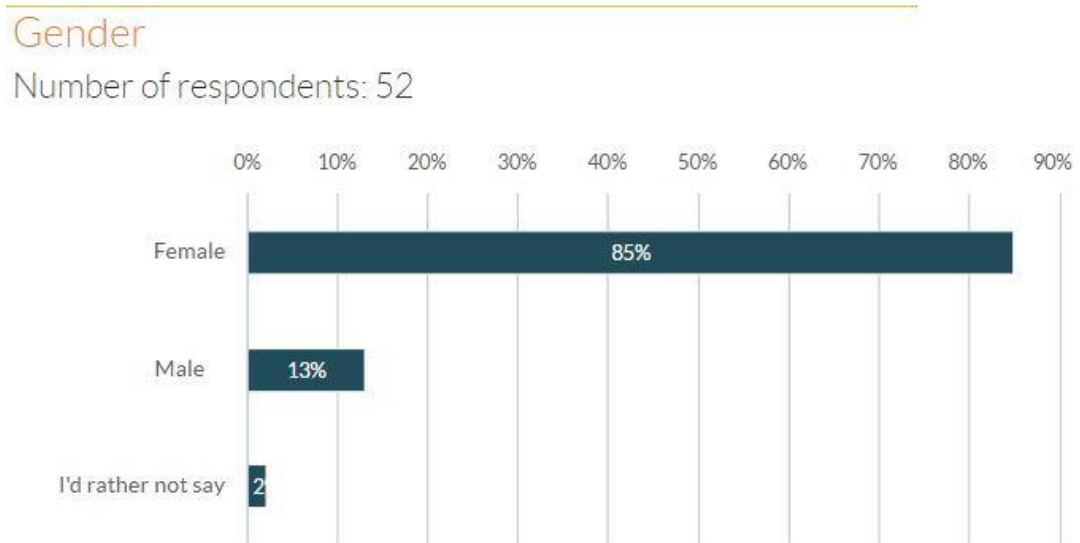


Figure 6. Question 1:Gender (n=52)

85 % of the respondents were females, 13 % were males and 2% was not specified. From this one can perhaps draw a conclusion that females were more active in responding the questionnaire, since the groups the questionnaire was published were not seen to be occupied more by females than males. One can still suggest that males may not be as interested in doing volunteer work, since the survey was published with a plea to complete it if one had been doing volunteer work in the past or was interested in doing some in the future.

In figure 7 one can see the occupational dividence. 37 % were in working life, unemployed were 4 %; 52 % were students and 8 % were something else. This can be expected as the majority, 67,3% of the answerers were 18-25 year olds. The option something else generated answers such as travelling and working and entrepreneur. As the survey was

answered by people who were interested in volunteer tourism, it can be perceived that life situation is an affecting factor in volunteering.

## Occupation

Number of respondents: 52



Figure 7. Question 2: Occupation (n=52)

The majority of the respondents were students, and even though students may be more financially challenged than people in working life, volunteering is one of the cheapest ways to travel. There are volunteering programs that even pay for the volunteers travel expenses and the volunteer pays minimal or no fee for the program. These kind of opportunities are of course attractive to students who have more free time to travel, but cannot afford expensive vacations.

Surprisingly, people in working life are also very interested in volunteer tourism even if they have limited time to do volunteer work.

The respondents nationalities are presented in Figure 8. The numbers are based on how many of the answerers were of certain nationality.



Number of answers: 52

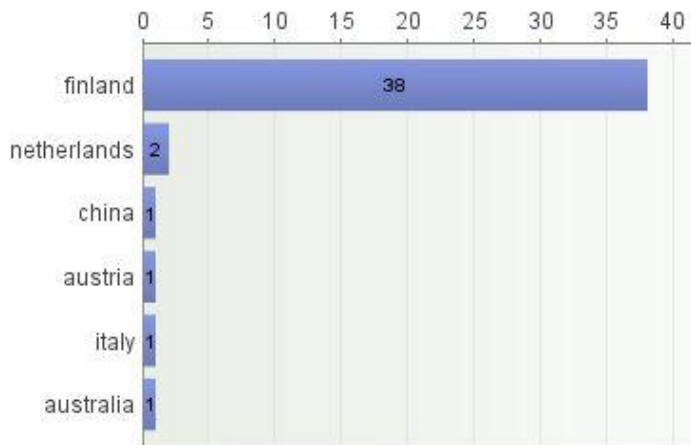


Figure 8. Question 3: Country of living (n=52)

Almost all respondents, 38 out of 52 were Finnish, but there were some international people who answered the questionnaire as well. It was good to have some different nationalities, but unfortunately it is impossible to draw conclusion on Finnish and foreign respondents based on this.

17 % of respondents were 25-30 year olds and 15 % were over 30 year olds. 67 % of respondents were 18-25 year olds. The groups where the survey was published were my own Facebook profile, many student organisation groups and schools, and a group concerning Finnish travellers experiences abroad.

## Age

Number of respondents: 52

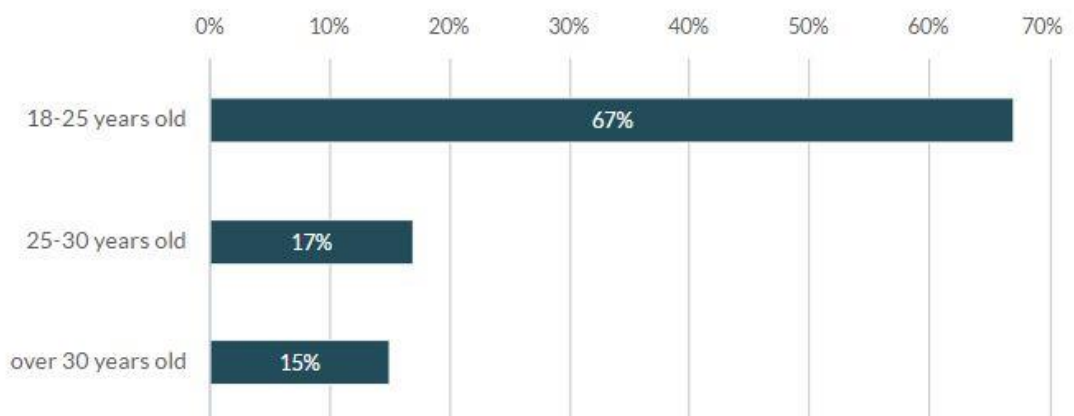


Figure 9. Question 4: Age (n=52)

The majority of respondents that are over 30 year olds were from the Finnish travellers group, as I made regular check on the answerers while the link was open, and the percentage of over 30 year olds was zero before posting on Finnish travellers group.

Question 5 asked if the respondents had done any volunteer work in the past and 60% said they had. This number was surprisingly high, but it could be explained by the fact that one of the Facebook groups the questionnaire was handed out in was a group of an organization that arranges some volunteer exchanges. Question 6 was where had one volunteered in the past.

Table 3. Question 6: What country/countries did you volunteer in? (n=30)

Number of respondents: 30

▶ Hide

- Ireland ▶
- Vietnam ▶
- Vietnam ▶
- Uruguay ▶
- Udanda ▶
- finland ▶
- Finland ▶
- Egypt / Finland ▶
- Finland, Vietnam ▶
- Finland, Greece ▶
- New Zealand and Australia ▶
- finland ▶
- France, Spain, Finland ▶
- Tanzania ▶
- Finland ▶
- Canada ▶
- India ▶
- The Philippines, Finland ▶
- Greece and Panama. ▶
- Egypt ▶
- The Netherlands ▶
- Switzerland ▶
- Tanzania ▶
- Finland, the USA ▶
- Kenya ▶
- South-Africa ▶
- Finland ▶
- Spain (Tenerife) ▶
- UK, Canada ▶
- Macedonia ▶

In this table 3 there are the countries that the respondents have volunteered in prior to this study. According to this table the most popular volunteering destinations were placed in Europe, however the countries varied very much and it is difficult thus to say which region after Europe was most popular.

In question 7 the respondents were asked what kind of project did they volunteer with previously.

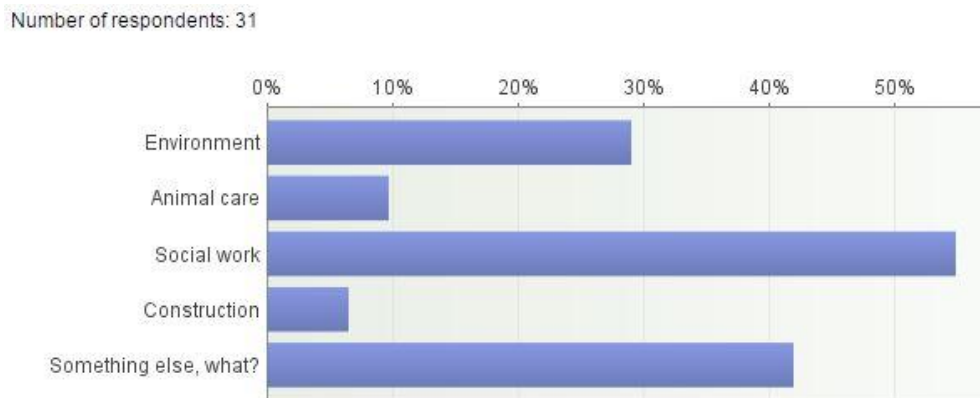


Figure 11. Question 7: What kind of project did you volunteer with? (n=31)

In figure 11 can be seen that over 50% had volunteered with some sort of social work and over 40% responded 'something else, what?' And the answers were the kind where the volunteer had done more than only one thing, such as education, work camp and tourism industry.

In question 8 the respondent chose from chart whether they were going to do volunteer work while travelling.

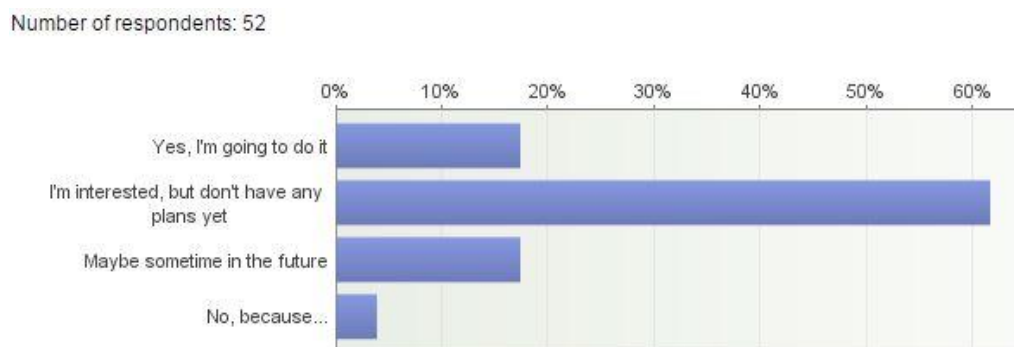


Figure 12. Question 8: Have you considered doing volunteer work while travelling? (n=52)

Everyone except two answered yes, and the two gave reasons they cannot because of having children and a house loan.

Table 4. Question 9: In which country or continent have you considered volunteering in? (n=52)

	N	Percent
Asia	33	63.46%
Africa	28	53.85%
Australia	16	30.77%
Oceania	8	15.38%
North America	10	19.23%
Central America	13	25%
South America	18	34.62%
Europe	19	36.54%

Table 4 shows the respondents preferable destinations for volunteering, and the results are in line with the research earlier mentioned in this report. Go Overseas had researched that Asia, Africa and Europe were the three most popular destinations, and these results from my questionnaire give very good indication that the research was correct and the preferences have not changed in two years.

According to Go Overseas, medical volunteering was the most searched volunteer program, and animal care was on 4<sup>th</sup> place, and this differs from this reports study results. As the respondents were mostly 18-25 year olds, one explanation can be that medical education takes a longer time to complete, and students from this age group have not yet completed or are ready to do medical volunteering.

Table 5. Question 10: What kind of project are you interested in? (n=52)

	N	Percent
Animal care	29	55.77%
Environment	24	46.15%
Social work	28	53.85%
Construction	4	7.69%
Something else	10	19.23%
I don't know	4	7.69%

In table 5 animal care, social work and environment were top three. Animal care and environment were on places 3 and 4 on the report from Go Overseas, and on second place was teaching, when on first place in that report was medical volunteering.

As mentioned earlier in this report, volunteer tourism is often for a shorter period of time than actual volunteering as can be seen from table 5.

Table 6. Question 11: How long do you plan to volunteer? (n=52)

	N	Percent
Less than one month	11	21.57%
1-6 months	35	68.63%
7-12 months	3	5.88%
over 12 months	2	3.92%

Table 6 shows that the results correspond with this theory. Major part of the respondents would spend 1-6 months working with a volunteer project, when actual volunteer programs usually are at least 3 months and in many cases more than 6 months. Also, as the respondents were mostly students, they would not have an opportunity to work with a project more than a few months as they would have to go back home for their studies.

In question 12 the respondent were asked how they would participate in doing volunteer work. Even though this study concerned volunteer tourism, over 75% chose they would go through a volunteering organization and less than 20% chose to go through a tour operator.

Number of respondents: 52

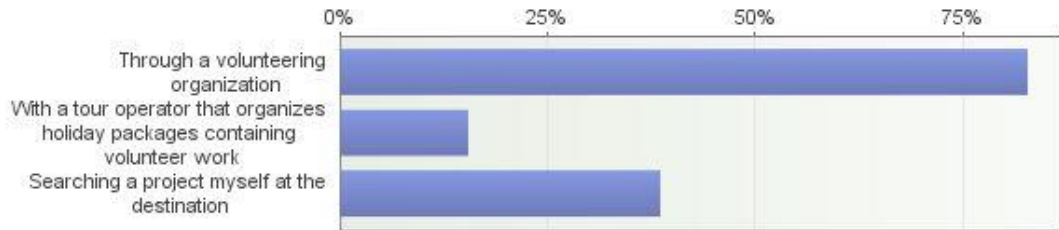


Figure 13. Question 12: How would you participate in volunteer work? (n=52)

This may mean that people who are interested in doing volunteer work during their holidays still do not want to participate in a ‘package tour’. Also, these tour operators often charge much more from a change to participate in volunteer work.

The most attractive question by the view of this report is motivational factors that drive people to do volunteer work. The motivational factors in this question were of personal nature, so called “push factors”.

Table 6. Question 14: What are your motivational factors for doing volunteer tourism? (n=52)

	N	Percent
Life situation (gap year, unemployed etc.)	21	40.38%
Enhancing my CV	29	55.77%
Making new friends	26	50%
Travelling to exotic places	36	69.23%
Will to help	42	80.77%
Learning new skills	37	71.15%
Being able to travel for longer	18	34.62%
Something else, what?	2	3.85%

Table 6 shows that the will to help was clearly the biggest motivational factor in voluntourism. However, even will to help is not 100 % so not every respondent chose this to be their motivation in doing volunteer work. This demonstrates well the fact that volunteering can nowadays be perceived as a trend of acquiring new skills and enhancing the CV. Also, volunteering can also be done in places and among people that do not necessarily

need help because they cannot survive on their own. Volunteering can also be as simple as an unpaid internship that is quite common among young people to get their first touch in working life. As this report is about volunteer tourism, it is not surprising that in third place motivation comes travelling to exotic places. One can say with relative confidence that the word volunteering is often connected with “third world countries”, in exotic places perceived from the Western mind set. Learning new skills, making friends and enhancing ones CV are also important factors in volunteering, however one can think that in every life situation when choosing a place to work or study or live, new skills and friends are always important.

Table 7. Question 15: What is important to you when choosing a project and destination? (n=52)

	N	Percent
Climate	16	30.77%
Language	25	48.08%
Culture	29	55.77%
Safety of the destination	23	44.23%
Location of the project	24	46.15%
Project that requires special skills I possess	11	21.15%
Good previous reviews of the project or organizer	23	44.23%
Destination in need of help	26	50%
Something else, what?	2	3.85%

In Table 7 are presented the respondents motivational factors that drive them to choose a certain project or destination. In this question the answers were more even than in push motivation factors. The option destination in need of help is almost the same as the push factor ‘will to help’, but the push factors being 80% chosen by the respondents is in contradiction with the ‘destination in need of help’, that was chosen only by 50%. One can think that the respondents feel they can help in any kind of volunteering project, be it or not a destination that specifically needs more help than others. One can also think if the respondents have chosen ‘will to help’ because they think it is what they are supposed to choose when thinking of volunteering. The climate was chosen only by 31% which is a surprisingly low result when the subject is volunteer *tourism*. Language and culture are relatively important to respondents, and it can be reasoned with that it is always easier to work among people that one shares a language with. The least chosen option was ‘project

that requires special skills I possess', which can mean that professional volunteer work is less popular. Professional volunteer work could be for example volunteering as a doctor.

## 6.1 Good and harmful impacts of voluntourism

The questionnaire had one only open answer, number 13: "what good and/or bad impacts do you think volunteering may cause?"

The question is very relevant today because voluntourism is a rapidly growing business and when it is treated only as such, the harmful impacts may be more serious and long lasting than the volunteers may be aware of. As this was a voluntary question, the respondents were only 28, as many of the respondents could have been too little informed about volunteering in order to give their opinions. Almost of the respondents had listed both good and bad impacts.

Good impacts were in more than a half of the answers listed as the personal growth, making new friends and learning new skills. Also benefitting the local community with skills that the local population doesn't possess, cross cultural understanding and the good feeling that generates from doing good were the main points in all of the answers.

Bad impacts were more variable in the answers. Many were aware of the problems that arise from some of the volunteering organisations that act in less responsible way that could be wished for, and feel that it may be difficult to find a trustworthy organisation and make sure that the money goes into the right place. Also the short term volunteering especially in social volunteering such as teaching was recognized to be harmful for the local community. Working with a project that requires some special skills that the volunteer does not possess was also mentioned in multiple answers.

Personal bad impacts were few; loneliness, possible dangerous conditions, the expensiveness of the project, lack of cultural understanding and the possibility of the volunteer not being mentally strong enough to work in poor conditions were mentioned.

Below are direct answers the respondents. All the respondents are anonymous.

*'I think volunteering in a different part of the world you live in could open your mind to different cultures and let you see the world and everything in a wiser and larger perspective. I also think it is a "must do" experience for the personal growth of yourself'*



*'Is good when there is an specific program that benefits the community in the long term and there are people making sure that happens, is bad when you think you are helping, but you don't because you don't know the reality of the community (Like giving houses for free to people who are not used to those, without teaching them how to use them for example).'*

*'Bad: May harm the local and traditional culture. People in the local community may not see their conditions or lifestyle as "poor" or in need. Possible exploitation. Finding a trust worthy organisation where financial proceeds actually go to the right places, such as the local community of the volunteer destination.'*

*'Having volunteers change all the time might have negative effects in the local environment. For example when dealing with children. Sometimes volunteers might take the jobs locals would do'*

## 7 Discussion

The discussion looks into the results of the study. In a research-oriented thesis, the trustworthiness and the ethical viewpoints of the study are examined. In the discussion, it is important to form conclusions on the basis of the results and to present development ideas and suggestions for further research.

The results show that volunteer tourism is a popular phenomenon particularly under 30-year-old students. The motivational factors were not as very clearly defined, as there was not one or two motivations above others. I am pleased with the research results concerning the most popular destinations in volunteer tourism. The three continents that were chosen by respondents the most popular, Asia, Africa and Europe, were in line with the research that was conducted by a volunteer program review website Go Overseas. Not only does it prove the research by Go Overseas was right, it also proves that people interested in volunteering are like minded. To me it was a slight surprise that Europe was the third most popular region, and in this might be an opportunity to develop volunteer tourism programs in Europe.

As it was considerably easier to find negative reports about voluntourism than positive, I think there might be a possibility to develop volunteer tourism. People are becoming more and more 'aware' tourists, and if volunteer tourism had better reputation and more positive media appearance, it might appeal to more responsible tourists. This is how the organizations would also respond to these tourists and develop their own projects into being more ethical and responsible.

The thesis process has been very long, and the difficulties have arisen mostly from the fact that the report has been written in pieces. The writing began already in spring 2015, and was developed into a thesis from another form of report that was a part of sustainable tourism course. In the beginning it was clear what subject I wanted to write about but the research subject and the issue was difficult to decide. Whether to write from sustainable tourism point of view or conduct a quantitative or qualitative research, and how this research would be done were all the most difficult questions and most difficult part in writing this thesis.

In spring 2016 I began writing the thesis actively and published the questionnaire after a first thesis seminar in February. The link remained open online from 3<sup>rd</sup> February till 3<sup>rd</sup> March, and during this time reached 52 respondents. The challenge here was how to get more respondents as this is a quantitative research, and after I had searched through all

channels I could think of I had to settle for this number as I was in a hurry to begin analysing the results.

Writing the theory part of the thesis was the easiest part, because I enjoy reading and writing. However, it was sometimes difficult to find trustworthy resources as voluntourism is a subject that divides a lot of opinions.

All in all, the fact I learned and will come in useful in next report writing is that planning is the key. Had I planned everything in advance and not while I was already writing, the thesis would have been very much easier and quicker to write. I have learned to write academic English more fluently and also I have become more fluent in reading academic English that before this was sometimes hard to understand.

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## Questionnaire

### The motivation factors and popular destinations in volunteering

This questionnaire maps the common motivational factors that drive to volunteering and the destinations that are most popular among volunteer travelers. The questionnaire will take a few minutes to complete and the answers will be analyzed in a thesis of tourism management.

#### Personal information

1. Gender \*

- Female
- Male
- I'd rather not say

2. Occupation \*

- Working
- Unemployed
- Student
- Something else, what?

3. Country of living \*

4. Age \*

- 18-25 years old
- 25-30 years old
- over 30 years old

### The motivation factors and popular destinations in volunteering

5. Have you done volunteer work? (If not, you can jump to the next page) \*

- Yes
- No

6. Which country/countries did you volunteer in?

7. What kind of project did you volunteer with?

- Environment
- Animal care
- Social work
- Construction
- Something else, what?

8. Have you considered doing volunteer work while travelling? \*

- Yes, I'm going to do it
- I'm interested, but don't have any plans yet
- Maybe sometime in the future
- No, because...

9. In which country or continent have you considered volunteering in? Please specify the country after the continent

- Asia
- Africa
- Australia
- Oceania
- North America
- Central America
- South America
- Europe

10. What kind of project are you interested in?

- Animal care
- Environment
- Social work
- Construction
- Something else
- I don't know

11. How long do you plan to volunteer?

- Less than one month
- 1-6 months
- 7-12 months
- over 12 months

A tour operator such as Kilroy organizes holiday packages including accommodation, participating in some volunteering work such as working in an elephant sanctuary, meals and activities. A volunteer organization is considerably less expensive and it is common for volunteers to stay for a longer period of time working with a long term project.

12. How would you participate in volunteer work?

- Through a volunteering organization
- With a tour operator that organizes holiday packages containing volunteer work
- Searching a project myself at the destination

13. What good and/or bad impacts do you think volunteering may cause?

14. What are your motivational factors for doing volunteer work? You may choose multiple options

- Life situation (gap year, unemployed etc.)
- Enhancing my CV
- Making new friends
- Travelling to exotic places
- Will to help
- Learning new skills
- Being able to travel for longer
- Something else, what?

15. What is important to you when choosing a project and destination? You may choose multiple options

- Climate
- Language
- Culture
- Safety of the destination
- Location of the project
- Project that requires special skills I possess
- Good previous reviews of the project or organizer
- Destination in need of help
- Something else, what?

Thank you!