

VoiceOver 2015 Questionnaire on development cooperation

18 March 2010

1. Introduction

To gain insight into public support for development cooperation in the Netherlands, NCDO conducts a yearly questionnaire (since the year 2006): the Barometer on international cooperation. This questionnaire is carried out among a representative sample of the Dutch population. The last time it was carried out was in June 2009.

VoiceOver2015, a network of people from developing countries, is very much interested in the opinion of its members on development issues. That is why we decided to create a VoiceOver2015 questionnaire on development cooperation which is in line, and comparable, with the Dutch Barometer. In December 2009 the questionnaire was put distributed among 475 VoiceOver members and was spread through the internet among the target group: people from developing countries.

- A total number 303 respondents started to fill in the questionnaire¹ and in the end 249 respondents finished the questionnaire completely

In total 228 respondents have indicated that they are member of VoiceOver2015. This means that 92% of the total number of people that finished the questionnaire completely are VoiceOver members. Because almost all of the respondents are VoiceOver members, and if not they are potential members of VoiceOver, we refer to the respondents as VoiceOver members.

Most respondents replied to all questions in the questionnaire (N=249). But, we report on the respondents that only partly filled in the questionnaire (N= 303), and did not reply to all questions. The reasons why they did not finish the full questionnaire are unknown (possibly due to faulty internet connections). It would be a pity not to take into account their valuable contributions. With each question and table we will report only upon the actual number of respondents (N) that replied to the question.

¹ At first, 313 people started the questionnaire, but 10 of them turned out not to belong to the target group (nationals of developing countries).

2. Importance

An absolute majority of respondents considers it important or very important (87%) that people in rich countries help people in poor countries to develop themselves. 58% considers this to be very important.

Table 1. In your opinion, how important is it that people in rich countries help people in poor countries to develop themselves? N= 298

	Frequency	Percent	
Totally unimportant	22	7,4	Total 8%
Unimportant	3	1,0	
Neither important nor unimportant	13	4,4	
Important	86	28,9	Total 87%
Very important	173	58,1	
Don't know / no opinion	1	,3	

3. Problems in developing countries

The biggest problem in developing countries, according to just over 50% of the VoiceOver members, is a lack of good policy or public administration. And 20% states that economic conditions are the biggest problem countries are faced with.

Respondents that filled the option 'other' also frequently mention issues related to lack of good policy or good public administration. A few quotes: '*Weak enforcement of policies and laws and poor leadership in developing countries*', and '*Poor enforcement of existent policies and poor local leadership*'. And they often mention a combination of the problems listed in table 2.

Table 2. A number of issues that are or can be a problem in developing countries are listed below. What, in your opinion, is the biggest problem confronting the developing countries? (Choose one option). N= 295

	Frequency	Percent
Economic conditions	59	20,0
Lack of good policy or good public administration	150	50,8
Conflicts, disasters and emergencies	18	6,1
Social inequality	24	8,1
Lack of basic facilities and natural resources	16	5,4
Unbalanced composition of the population	7	2,4
Other, namely	21	7,1

4. Solutions

We asked respondents to what extent, in their opinion, the following solutions actually contribute to the development of a country.

Table 3. To what extent, in your opinion, do the following solutions actually contribute to the development of a country?

In percentages	Not at all	Very little	A little	A lot	A great deal	Don't know	Total
Financing projects focused on the structural alleviation of poverty ²	1.4	10.9	15.8	30.2	41.4	0.4	100% N = 285
Financing projects focused on society building ³	1.4	5	14.3	35.7	42	0.7	100% N=280
The provision of emergency aid ⁴	4.3	13.2	24.3	26.8	30	1.4	100% N=280
The secondment of experts ⁵	2.9	15.5	24.2	36.5	19.1	1.8	100% N=277
Lobbying and influencing policy ⁶	1.5	8	14.9	35.6	38.5	1.5	100% =275
Creating Dutch public awareness of the importance of international collaboration ⁷	0.7	5.1	17.5	37.5	37.1	2.2	100% N=275

All these methods are according to the majority of respondents contributing in a positive way to the development of a country. But there are some nuances to be found among them.

² The improvement of the life of people living in poverty. The focus lies on the improvement of (access to) healthcare, education, water and food. For example, by ensuring that children of poor families eat breakfast at school every morning or by investing in water facilities.

³ The provision of a contribution to the advancement of powerful social organisations and democratic structures in developing countries to ensure that people have more control over their life. For example by helping to set up a farmers' network to enable them to jointly stand up for their interests or the provision of support to women's organisations in the healthcare and education sectors.

⁴ The provision of financial support to the victims of disasters such as droughts, floods or earthquakes. For example through international aid organisations or partner organisations in the afflicted country.

⁵ The secondment of Dutch experts with the experience and expertise required to make a contribution to building organisations and companies in developing countries.

⁶ Requesting the attention of politicians, other policy-makers and the business community for the problems in developing countries. For example by urging politicians to place important issues on the agenda or encouraging the business community to adopt corporate social responsibility.

⁷ Activities to increase the involvement of the public and organisations in the structural alleviation of poverty. To motivate people to make a contribution to a fair world without poverty. For example by the provision of information and organisation of campaigns to draw people's attention to the unfairness in the world.

According to 71% up to 78% of the VoiceOver members considers the following solutions to contribute either a lot or a great deal to the development of a country:

- financing projects focused on the structural alleviation of poverty
- financing projects focused on society building
- lobbying and influencing policy
- creating Dutch public awareness of the importance of international collaboration

Next to that, there are two proposed methods that are considered to be less effective. These are the provision of emergency aid and the secondment of experts. Here most of our respondents think they contribute either a lot or little. There are considerable less VoiceOver members that think these methods are working 'a great deal'. More of them (in comparison to the other proposed methods) believe that these do not contribute at all or very little.

5. Who should take the lead?

Respondents were asked to reflect upon the role of three categories of actors that are and might be held responsible for the enhancement of development: international organisations and institutions, developing countries and rich countries like the Netherlands. From the table below we can conclude that VoiceOver members see a role for all of them: in all three cases a majority of respondents think the mentioned actor should give shape to development. But, they consider it mainly to be the task of developing countries, second the international organisations and third the rich countries.

Table 4. Who, in your opinion, should ideally encourage and give shape to development?
Several answers possible. N = 273

	Frequency	Percentage
The developing countries	203	74%
Rich countries such as the Netherlands	152	56%
International organisations and institutions	181	66%
Don't know / no opinion	3	1%

5.1 The role of developing countries

Looking at organisations and institutions within developing countries, most VoiceOver members (70%, N=267) are of the opinion that professional development organisations and local NGO's are the most suitable for giving shape to the development of and fight against poverty. Secondly, they see national governments and social organisations and institutions as suitable for this task (66%, N=267). Local governments (provinces and municipalities) and the business community are seen by respectively 57% and 55% (N=267) as suitable to enhance development. And 44% (N=267) considers private aid initiatives as the most likely category to reach this aim. With the exception of the last mentioned category a majority of VoiceOver members think it should be a task of all these actors to make an effort regarding development. Around 14 people (5%) mentioned 'other' actors as most designated for the enhancement of development. Among them 6 added an important actor, namely: 'Traditional and community councils', or in other words 'Communities with own solutions to their problems'. Also people added that it is a shared task and responsibility of all the mentioned organisations.

5.2 Organisations and institutions at international level

When asked which international organisations and institutions are the most suitable for giving shape to development in developing countries, we see that respondents expect the most from International development organisations (such as OXFAM and, Medecins sans frontiere) and Regional cooperation arrangements (such as the European Union (EU), African Union (AU) and Mercosur). Respectively 70% and 71% (N=267) mention these two as most suitable. But also the International financial organisations (such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF), World Bank and Regional Development Banks) and Worldwide intergovernmental organisations (such as the United Nations and WTO) have a majority of VoiceOver members that state they are suitable actors for this cause.

Remarkable is that 4% of the 267 people, being 11 individuals, state that none of these international organisations, are fit to this task. One of the respondents clarified his/her answer: *'None of the organisms above should give shape to the development of a country, as each of them has their own agenda and vision of what is development, based in their convenience or standard model. Without the people the process will be vertical always.'*

5.3 The role Dutch organisations and institutions

In the questionnaire respondents were asked to reflect upon the appropriateness of Dutch actors. Here we find almost the same pattern as with the suitability of actors in developing countries: again Professional development organisations are seen as most equipped for the task (74%, N = 268), and second comes national government with 68%.

Where local governments in developing countries are seen by a majority of respondents suitable 'developers', 31% considers Dutch local governments suitable for this job. Dutch business community and social organisations also have, according to a majority of respondents, a task enhancing the situation in developing countries. Private aid initiatives from the Netherlands are seen by almost half (47%) of Voice Over members as 'development actors'. Only 1% states that none of the mentioned Dutch organisations and institutions are useful in enhancing development and fighting poverty in other countries.

Conclusion: we see that VoiceOver members, in general, view development as a shared responsibility of many actors. There is not one of the levels or designated actors that stands out as solely responsible.

6. Personal action

VoiceOver members were asked if they are personally active in development cooperation and the fight against poverty. Almost two third of the VoiceOver Members (N=267) replied to this question that they are personally involved. Around half of the members commented upon their activities. The following picture emerges:

Most are active on what seems to be a voluntary basis (but often this is not exactly clear from the descriptions) within local organisations that aim to enhance development. For example: *'A member of a trade union and a welfare organisation', 'I am coordinating a project aimed at sustainable development options for people affected or infected by HIV'.*

Some are promoting developmental issues in their daily lives, by helping people and/or raising awareness. For example: *'assisting some students to settle their school fees'*, or *'I specialise in writing about developmental issues as a journalist'*. Others are (self)employed in local development oriented organisations or companies: *'I run a company with 3 other directors to promote education in informal settlements in breaking the cycle against poverty'*. Some are working for international bodies voluntarily, and a few are employed there. For example *'I work in the field of AID and Development with International NGOs'*.

7. Conduct of the Dutch public

Many Dutch individuals are undertaking actions in order to enhance or contribute to development in developing countries. We asked the VoiceOver members to what extent they consider it worthwhile for the Dutch public to take part in these activities.

Table 5. To what extent, in your opinion, is it worthwhile for the Dutch public to take part in the following activities?

In percentages	Not at all	Very little	A little	A lot	A great deal	Don't know	Total N=260
Donate to one or more development organisations on a regular basis	2.3	6.9	17.7	33.8	37.7	1.5	100%
Give individual donations to activities that aim to enhance development	4.2	11.2	21.9	31.5	30.4	0.8	100%
Donate goods (such as clothes, shoes, computers, etc.)	11.2	18.1	24.2	23.5	22.7	0.4	100%
View programmes on TV, read an article or book or search for information on the Internet about life in developing countries	3.8	11.9	21.5	32.3	28.5	1.9	100%
Carry out volunteer work in a developing country	1.5	8.5	15	30	44.6	0.4	100%
Carry out volunteer work in the Netherlands for a development cooperation project, activity or organisation	4.2	5.8	20.4	35.4	31.5	2.7	100%
Buy fair trade products	5	11.2	21.9	26.5	30.4	5	100%
Take part in a lottery that supports charitable causes	12.3	17.3	28.8	20	14.6	6.9	100%
Take up a paid job in the development sector	6.9	14.2	28.5	27.3	19.2	3.8	100%
Take part in a development cooperation campaign or activity other than the aforementioned options	2.3	7.3	12.7	38.1	38.1	1.5	100%

From this table we can conclude that VoiceOver members consider it a lot or even a great deal worthwhile for the Dutch public to take part in almost all of the activities. None of the mentioned actions come forward as absolutely useless, although the donation of goods and taking part in a lottery with charitable causes are seen by more than 10% as not at all worthwhile. Also taking up a paid job in the development sector is given less value while carrying out volunteer work in developing countries is considered by 45% of respondents as very worthwhile. If we would score the actions that are considered to be a lot and a great deal worthwhile, the following top 3 emerges:

- Taking part in a development cooperation campaign or activity other than the aforementioned (76,2%)
- Carrying out volunteer work in a developing country (74,6%)
- Donate to one or more development organisations on a regular basis (71,5%)

8. Dutch budget for development cooperation

The Dutch government allocated 4.9 thousand million euros to development cooperation in 2008, equivalent to 0.8% of the country's GNP (Gross National Product). In the 1970's the rich countries (via the United Nations) agreed that they would reserve at least 0.7 percent of their GNP for development cooperation.

VoiceOver members were asked to give their opinion on the height of the Dutch budget for development cooperation. In total 258 respondents answered this question of which 64,3% stated that it should be raised. Most VoiceOver members want an elevation of the budget because of the high needs in developing countries or because of increasing problems due to climate change and economic crisis. Quotes: *'Needs are enormous in developing countries, especially in these times of economic crisis and natural disaster.'* And *'At the current pace, it will be impossible to achieve MDGs by 2015'*

About one fourth (23,6%) states it should remain the same. Most of the members who have indicated this clarify that this is the amount that corresponds with the UN agreements. *'That's the minimum commitment from the DAC. Other countries who have committed and are not contributing to the 0.7% should be the ones to up their contributions. The Dutch are doing just fine; in fact doing more with the +0.1 percent.'* Some of the respondents answered that the question is not about the amount of money but how the money is used. *'I think it should remain the same for now so that we first realise results.'* Another reason mentioned: *'Other rich countries should also participate and Netherlands should also care for its own citizens.'* And 3,5% says it should be lowered, 1,2 % it should be completely abolished. Some reasons: *'Corruption in developing countries is too ripe. Money given out as aid never really reaches the needy people or at least get to finish the projects it was meant for. First tackle corruption, let the developing government be transparent, then aid can work.'* *'The only way to promote development is improving fair competition.'* *'With the goal of eventually phasing out development aid and letting developing countries take charge of their own development.'*

9. Effectiveness of development cooperation

According to 50% of the VoiceOver members (N=256) development cooperation by rich countries (as the Netherlands) does make a structural contribution to the improvement of living conditions in developing countries. Another 46% considers it to contribute partly: partly yes and partly no. Only 2.3% states it does not make any difference to the situation.

International organisations (as the UN, World Bank and EU), national governments of rich countries (as the Netherlands), professional development organisations in rich countries and aid initiatives by private individuals and social organisations in rich countries each have a budget for development cooperation. We asked VoiceOver members: What is your general opinion of the manner in which they allocate their budget? In the table below an overview is given. A majority considers all actors to spend their budget wisely (good or very good). But two exceptions are there: professional development organisations are seen as spending their money somewhat better than others, and international organisations are seen as spending their money somewhat poorer than others.

Table 6 What is your general opinion of the manner in which the following organisations allocate their budget for development cooperation?

In percentages N=254	(very) poor	Neither poor nor good	(very) good	Don't know/ no opinion	Total
International organisations	17.7	26.8	50	5.5	100%
National governments of rich countries	10.6	21.3	61.1	7.1	100%
Professional development organisations in rich countries	10.2	17.7	66.1	5.9	100%
Aid initiatives by private individuals and social organisations	12.9	25.6	50.8	10.6	100%

10. Millennium Development Goals

The leaders of the governments of 189 countries reached agreements in the year 2000 on the reduction of poverty, disease and hunger by 2015. These agreements are laid down in the following eight Millennium Development Goals.

Table 7. What, in your opinion, is the likelihood that each of the following goals will be achieved by 2015?

In percentages	Definitely not	Probably not	Maybe yes, maybe no	Probably yes	Definitely	Don't know	Total
Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger	34.5	27	18.3	13.9	6.3	0	100%
	61.5			20.2			
Achieve universal primary education	10.3	23.8	25.4	26.6	13.5	0.4	100%
	34.1			40.1			
Promote gender equality and empower women	11.9	20.6	22.6	29.4	15.1	0.4	100%
	32.5			44.5			
Reduce child mortality	9.5	23.4	25	31	10.7	0.4	100%
	32.9			41.7			
Improve maternal health	7.1	20.6	26.6	34.5	11.1	0	100%
	27.7			45.6			
Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases	16.7	26.6	27.4	18.7	10.7	0	100%
	43.3			29.4			
Ensure environmental sustainability ⁸	21	33.7	23.4	13.1	8.7	0	100%
	54.7			21.8			
Global partnership development ⁹	15.1	23	27	24.6	9.9	0.4	100%
	38.1			34.5			

In general we can state that the opinion on the likelihood that MDG's will be met by 2015 is divided: there are as much 'believers' as 'non-believers' with just a few exceptions: for two goals the majority of VoiceOver member expects these will not be achieved before 2015, these are: eradicate extreme hunger and poverty and ensure environmental sustainability. There is not one single goal of which a majority expects these will be met, although the promotion of gender equality and the improvement of maternal health are seen as achievable by 44 to 46% of the respondents.

⁸ a sustainable living environment, clean drinking water and better facilities in slums

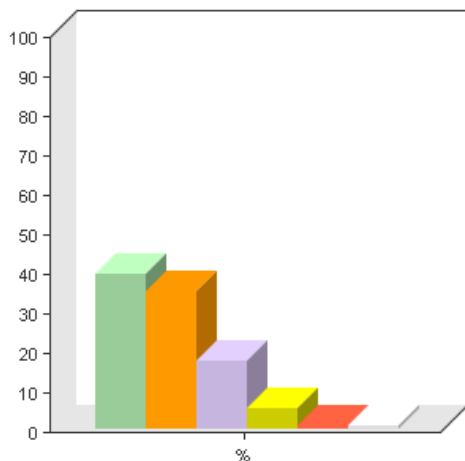
⁹ access to affordable medicines and a fair-trade system by reaching worldwide agreements on development aid

11. Propositions

Respondents were asked to give their opinion on five propositions on development cooperation. The colours are the graphs correspond to the following categories:

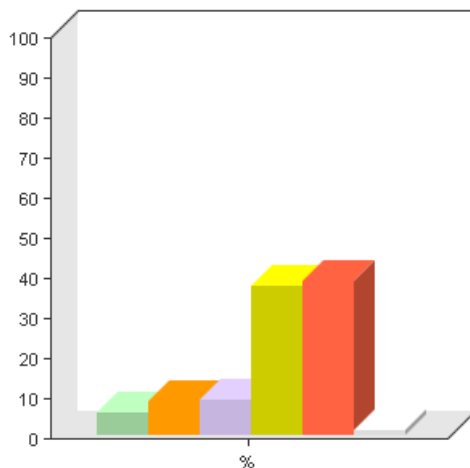
Disagree entirely	
Disagree	
Neither agree nor disagree	
Agree	
Agree entirely	
Don't know / no opinion	

Table and figure 8 The Netherlands must not allocate any funds to development cooperation while there are still people living in poverty in the Netherlands



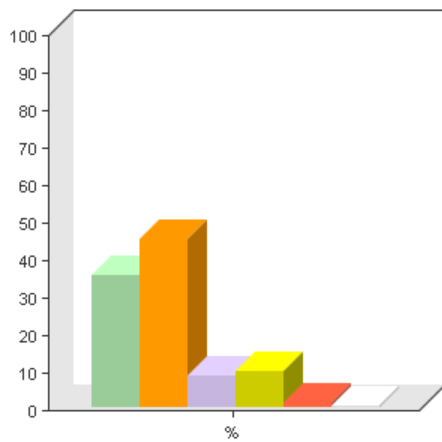
	Freq	Perc	Cum perc
Disagree entirely	99	39,4	74.5
Disagree	88	35,1	
Neither agree nor disagree	44	17,5	
Agree	14	5,6	6.8
Agree entirely	3	1,2	
Don't know	3	1,2	
Total	251	100,0	

Table and figure 9 The problems in developing countries are so severe that countries such as the Netherlands have to step in and do something



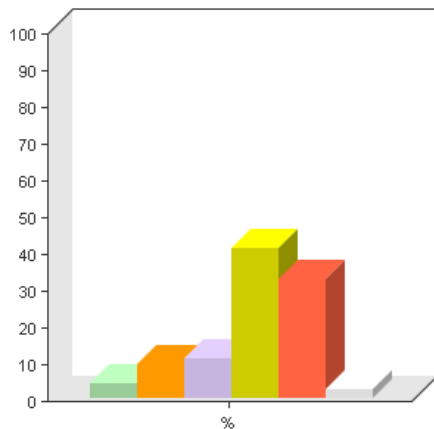
	Freq	Perc	Cum perc
Disagree entirely	14	5,6	14
Disagree	21	8,4	
Neither agree nor disagree	22	8,8	
Agree	93	37,3	75.9
Agree entirely	96	38,6	
Don't know	3	1,2	
Total	249	100,0	

Table and figure 10 The problem of poverty cannot be solved



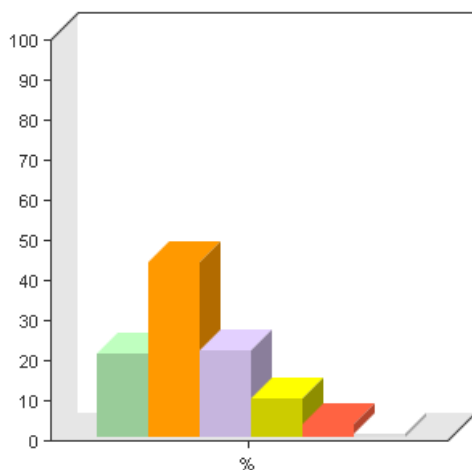
	Freq	Perc	Cum perc
Disagree entirely	88	35,3	80.3
Disagree	112	45,0	
Neither agree nor disagree	21	8,4	10.8
Agree	24	9,6	
Agree entirely	3	1,2	
Don't know	1	0,4	
Total	249	100,0	

Table and figure 11 Getting rid of poverty in developing countries is also in the self-interest the richer countries



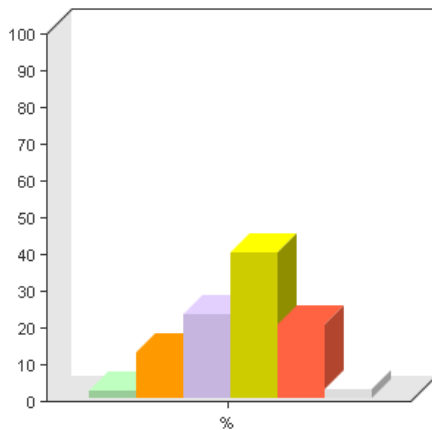
	Freq	Perc	Cum perc
Disagree entirely	10	4,0	13.2
Disagree	23	9,2	
Neither agree nor disagree	27	10,8	73.5
Agree	102	41,0	
Agree entirely	81	32,5	
Don't know	6	2,4	
Total	249	100,0	

Table and figure 12 Developing countries should solve their problems on their own



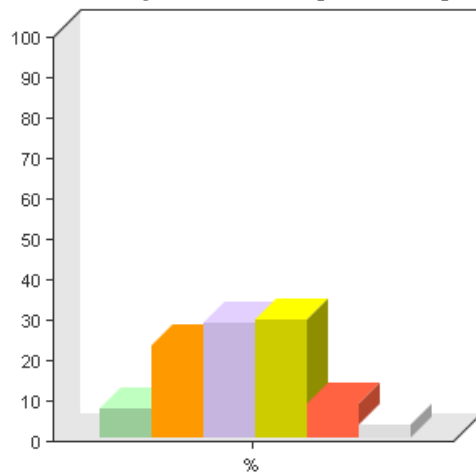
	Freq	perc	Cum perc
Disagree entirely	52	20,9	64.7
Disagree	109	43,8	
Neither agree nor disagree	54	21,7	12.8
Agree	24	9,6	
Agree entirely	8	3,2	
Don't know	2	0,8	
Total	249	100,0	

Table and figure 13 The poor countries are in part poor because of the richer countries' policies and actions



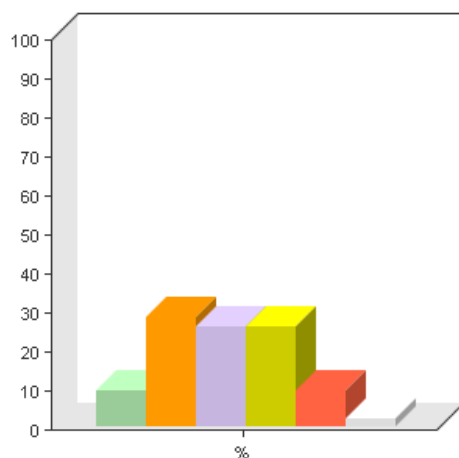
	Freq	Perc	Cum perc
Disagree entirely	5	2,0	14.5
Disagree	31	12,5	
Neither agree nor disagree	57	23,0	
Agree	99	39,9	60.1
Agree entirely	50	20,2	
Don't know	6	2,4	
Total	248	100,0	

Table and figure 14 Development cooperation results in the poor countries' aid addiction



	Freq	Perc	Cum perc
Disagree entirely	18	7,3	30.5
Disagree	57	23,2	
Neither agree nor disagree	70	28,5	
Agree	72	29,3	37.8
Agree entirely	21	8,5	
Don't know	8	3,3	
Total	246	100,0	

Table and figure 15 Development aid keeps corrupt leaders in power (N=246)



	Freq	Perc	Cum perc
Disagree entirely	23	9,3	37.3
Disagree	69	28,0	
Neither agree nor disagree	63	25,6	
Agree	63	25,6	24.9
Agree entirely	23	9,3	
Don't know	5	2,0	
Total	246	100,0	

The general picture that springs to mind when seeing the answers to the propositions is the following:

VoiceOver members consider the problems in developing countries as so severe that countries as the Netherlands have to step in and do something. Even when there are people living in poverty in their own country. The problem of poverty will not be solved soon, but getting rid of poverty in developing countries is also in the self-interest of the richer countries. Developing countries cannot solve their problems on their own and the poor countries are partly poor because of the richer countries' policies and actions. The opinions on development cooperation are very much divided: there is no common opinion on development cooperation causing aid addiction or keeping corrupt leaders in power.

12. General opinion on development aid

A vast majority of VoiceOver members is in favour of development cooperation in general: 85,2% versus 7,4% that is not in favour and 7,4% that does not have an opinion. (N=243).

Reasons people give for being in favour are: Simply because developing countries need it and that it helps the living standard of people in developing countries. *'It assists the effort of poor countries to deal with their poverty problems.'* Or *'It makes a difference but we need to be patient as the process of change is very slow'*.

A lot of VoiceOver members mention that they are in favour of development cooperation provided that development money is spent well. According to many this is not always the case now. A few quotes illustrate this: *'It helps to raise living conditions and improve livelihoods, it should however be structured in a way that creates sustainability. Currently, this is not the case. If well structured and accounted for then it can eradicate dependency and create sustainable development in Africa.'* *'It does help in some cases but not in all. It should continue but with view to eventual self sufficiency'* *'It can really make a contribution for developing countries, but only when funds are invested directly in the receiving country and the beneficiaries are the people that live there. And only when these funds are used for infrastructure, education, health.'*

Reasons why respondents are against development cooperation can be brought back to four categories:

1. Aid addiction and corruption. For example: *'Current system of aid leads to aid addiction and corruption in high places'* and *'It creates more corrupt people and the so called helpers go there for their own interest not to help.'*
2. Money can be spent better. As one respondent states: *'Most of the funds are not used for what they are meant for.'*
3. Non-effectiveness. For example: *'It has taken over 30 years of Development cooperation and not much change has happened in Africa'* and *'There have been no results in the last decades'*
4. Corruption is the obstacle to be tackled first. As respondents say in their own words: *'Unless and until the corrupt leadership are replaced by honest ones, nothing could be changed.'*, and *'Unless corruption is totally eradicated in developing countries, no enough cooperation will alleviate poverty and move the countries to economically and socially self sustained states.'*

13. Background information respondents

Gender

The majority of VoiceOver members that filled in the questionnaire are male, 71% of N= 243, versus 39% female.

VoiceOver members seem to be generally between the age of 26 and 45 (total 52%). The age of respondents is distributed as follows (N=313):

Age	Percentage
18-25	13,4
26-35	33,5
36-45	18,5
46-55	8,6
56-65	1,9
65 up	0,6
unknown	23,3
Total	100,0

Education

VoiceOver members are generally higher educated. 83% has a higher education and 13% a post-doctoral education. Only 4% indicated secondary education as their highest level completed. (N=241)

Occupation

As to the occupation of the VoiceOver members (N=241): 44% is fulltime employed, 17% has part-time employment, 8% is seeking work and 13% is a student. Around 17% indicated they have other occupations. Among them we find many: volunteers, people working in NGO's or social organisations, and people that are self-employed (for example working as a consultant or advisor.)

Nationality

In which country were you born?	Frequency
Afghanistan	7
Argentina	1
Bangladesh	2
Benin Republic	1
Bolivia	1
Bosnia and Herzegovina	4
Burkina Faso	5
Burundi	7
Cambodia	1
Cameroon	5
Central African Republic	1
China	1
Colombia	9

In which country were you born?	Frequency
Costa Rica	1
Democratic Republic of Congo	6
Ecuador	1
Egypt	1
Georgia	1
Ghana	23
Guatemala	1
Honduras	3
India	8
Indonesia	9
Iran	1
Israel	2
Ivory Cost	1

In which country were you born?	Frequency
Jordan	1
Kenya	26
Liberia	3
Malawi	4
Mexico	1
Moldova	1
Mozambique	1
Nepal	7
Nigeria	8
Pakistan	6
Palestinian Territories	1
Peru	1
Philippines	9
Republic of Panama	1
Rwanda	2
Senegal	2
Netherlands	1
Philippines	1

In which country were you born?	Frequency
Serbia	1
SFR Yugoslavia	1
Sierra Leone	9
Somalia	2
South Africa	10
Sri Lanka	2
Suriname	3
Tanzania	2
Timor-Leste	1
Uganda	6
Ukraine	1
Vietnam	2
Yemen	2
Zambia	10
Zimbabwe	7
missing	71
Total	313